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[Melvin D. Yahr L-dopa Case Records](#)

Yahr, Melvin D. (Melvin David), 1917-2004.

**Melvin D. Yahr L-dopa (Levo-dopa) case records, circa 1930-1945,
circa 1951-1985.**

18.1 cubic feet (19 records cartons)

#M-0210

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Melvin Yahr, neurologist, was born in New York City on November 18, 1917. He received his A.B. (1939) and M.D. (1943) from New York University and served internships in neurology at Lenox Hill and Montefiore Hospitals. He joined the department of neurology at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons (P&S) in 1948 as a research assistant and rose through a series of academic appointments, eventually becoming H. Houston Merritt Professor of Neurology in 1970.

Yahr's main research interest throughout his career was Parkinson's Disease. In the late 1960s, he conducted one of the earliest randomized clinical trials of the amino acid L-dopa (levo-dopa), which showed its dramatic results in ameliorating Parkinson's Disease. L-dopa was the first, and remains the most commonly used, medical treatment for the disease. With Margaret Hoehn, he authored "Parkinsonism: Onset, Progression and Mortality" (1967), a classic article which established the "Hoehn-Yahr scale" for determining the severity of Parkinson's.

Yahr served as chairman of the department of neurology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine from 1973 to 1992, and was thereafter chairman emeritus and Aidekman Family Professor of Neurological Research. He was active in many scientific organizations and served the Parkinson's Disease Foundation in various roles from 1958 to his death.

Melvin Yahr died in New York City on January 1, 2004.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: The records are comprised of about 15 cubic feet of clinical records of patients with Parkinson's Disease, most of whom appear to have been included in Yahr's early clinical trials of L-dopa. The records date from about 1965 to 1985, with the majority being from the late 1960s through the early 1980s. The bulk of these records came with the 2004 accession with about another .5 cubic feet being received in 2015.

There is a relatively small amount of correspondence. The 2004 accession included correspondence with pharmaceutical companies, 1968-1977, while the correspondence in the 2015 accession concerns a variety of topics largely unrelated to Parkinson's or L-dopa and is dated 1951-1975.

There are about 40 to 50 reels of film and about a dozen videotapes. Most of the film cans are not titled; those that are generally have the names of patients who are included in

the patient records and date from the late 1960s. The videotapes also appear to be of patients.

Another cubic foot of clinical records are of patients with epidemic encephalitis (“encephalitis lethargica”) seen by members of the Matheson Commission on Epidemic Encephalitis, which was conducted by the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the 1920s-1940s. The records date from approximately 1930 to 1940. It is not known why Yahr took these records with him when he left Columbia for Mount Sinai in 1973, but it may be related to speculation at the time that epidemic encephalitis and Parkinson’s Disease might be related.

LANGUAGE: English.

ACCESS: Boxes 1-18 are stored off-site and will take 1-2 days to retrieve. Researchers must call in advance to use the collection.

Because the records include Confidential Health Information (CHI) as defined by Columbia University policies governing data security and privacy, access is allowed only under the terms of Archives and Special Collections’ [Access Policy to Records Containing Confidential Health Information](#).

Access to the film is restricted until it can be transferred to a more stable medium.

PROVENANCE: Gift of Juna Kollmeier, Yahr’s research assistant, 2004 (acc. #2004.06.28); gift of the Mount Sinai Medical Center Archives, 2015 (acc. #2015.013)

SUBJECTS

Yahr, Melvin D. (Melvin David), 1917-
Matheson Commission.
Clinical trials.
Dopa – Therapeutic use – Testing.
Epidemic encephalitis.
Parkinson’s disease – Treatment.
Parkinsonism – Drug therapy.
Medical records.

Melvin Yahr, 1917-2004.

L-dopa case records, 1930-1945, c. 1965-c. 1985.

L-dopa case records

Box 1: A – Ben

Box 2: Ber – Bre

Box 3: Bri – Dil

Box 4: Du – Gilbert, E.

Box 5: Gilbert, S. – Hof

Box 6: Hor – Lab

Box 7: Lau – Manc

Box 8: Mand – Met

Box 9: Mi – Per

Box 10: Pet – Sab

Box 11: Sac – Singer, M.

Box 12: Singer, Y. – Wein

Box 13: Weis – Z; miscellaneous Parkinson's cases (may not have been in L-dopa trials)

Box 14: Miscellaneous Parkinson's cases (may not have been in L-dopa trials)

Box 15: Miscellaneous Parkinson's cases (may not have been in L-dopa trials)

Correspondence with pharmaceutical companies, 1968-1977

“List of deceased Parkinson's patients”

Matheson Commission on Epidemic Encephalitis: Patient records, A – L

Box 16: Matheson Commission on Epidemic Encephalitis: Patient records, M – Z

Boxes 17-18: film and video

Box 19 (**accession #2015.013**)

1 Brain Bank record, 1959-1969

2 Dept. of Vocational Rehabilitation, NYS, 1955-1956

3 Epilepsy, 1956

- 4 Grant application, l-dopa study, 1968
- 5 Hoffmann-La Roche: IND Status, 1969
- 6 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1952, 1956
- 7 National Institutes of Health grant #90-08 (U.S. & Yugoslavia), 1971-1972
- 8 National Institutes of Health: Guam report, 1971-1972
- 9 New Jersey Convulsive Disorder Project, 1951-1954
- 10 Parkinson Information Center: Final Progress Report, Jan. 1 – Sept. 30, 1970
- 11 Patients to come – summaries, 1971-1974
- 12 Peripheral neuritis and hypothyroidism, 1954
- 13 Pre-trial paper for IND application, undated
- 14 United States Pharmacopeia, 1967-1972, 1975

Unnumbered case files for 15 patients in 16 folders, D-We