

S0461 White, Park Jerauld (1891-1987)
Papers, 1911-1981
64 Folders

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Dr. Park J. White donated his papers to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection on April 26, 1986.

Park Jerauld White served as the director of pediatrics at Homer G. Phillips hospital from 1945 to 1966. He helped develop it into the only pediatrics training facility for black physicians in St. Louis. Under his direction, nearly thirty successful pediatricians completed their residency at the hospital.

White received an undergraduate education from Harvard College, entered Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1913, and served as a medical officer in the army before he began an internship at St. Louis Children's Hospital in 1920. He also undertook part-time research work on influenza bacteriology at Washington University's Medical School. This research led White to an interest in public health issues that provided the basis for his efforts to integrate health care in St. Louis.

In the 1920s, Dr. White helped form the St. Louis Conference on Race Relations, an association of legal and medical professionals that attempted to get community groups to appoint blacks to their boards of directors. In 1925 White published "Segregation and the Health of Negroes," an essay that argued for the elimination of racial segregation and better jobs and education for blacks as a means of improving public health. White based the essay in part on a study he conducted three years earlier that showed the rate of black infant mortality as double that of whites.

The struggle to improve health conditions for blacks characterized much of Dr. White's career. In 1923 he started a course on medical ethics at Washington University's Medical School that emphasized the impact of poverty and race on health, in addition to pioneering discussion on birth control and comparative health. Park taught the class for 26 years. He opened a private pediatric practice in 1924, one of the earliest such practices in the city administering to an integrated clientele. In addition to urging the elimination of patient segregation at Children's Hospital in the 1940s, Park was instrumental in getting the city government to regulate lead-acid battery casings that emitted toxic fumes when burned for fuel by indigent families. Park also sponsored a 1949 resolution by the Missouri Medical Association to open its membership to black physicians.

White helped found the Greater St. Louis Committee for Nuclear Information in 1956, a group that worked to ban nuclear weapons tests by measuring the absorption of the tests' radioactive fallout in baby teeth (see collection S0069). In 1957 he published an article in *Today's Health* on lead paint poisoning among the children of the urban poor that helped

publicize the problem nationally. The Urban League of St. Louis awarded White a citation in 1962 for his leadership in opening the St. Louis Medical Society to black doctors.

Because of the flexibility of pre-med studies at the time of his education, White also was allowed to enroll in a broad program of literature and language classes. Throughout his career, White relied on this background to write original poems on scientific, medical and social themes. Several professional medical journals published his work, including the New England Journal of Medicine. In 1972, the Children's Hospital published a book of White's poems, entitled Verse - and Verse.

White retired from private practice in 1955. He continued to publish journal articles and poetry until his death in 1987.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Park J. White Papers, 1911-1981, document Dr. White's efforts to integrate medical care in St. Louis; his tenure as director of Homer G. Phillips Hospital; and his life-long hobby of writing and publishing poems. The collection is divided into five series: 1) Articles, Books, Correspondence and Papers, 1911-1982, folders 1-11; 2) Homer G. Phillips Hospital Activities Reports, 1955-1962, folders 12-18; 3) Homer G. Phillips Resident Recommendations, 1958-1975, folders 19-26; 4) Poems, 1934-1976, folders 27-48; 5) Poems, 1976-1981, folders 49-64.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series 1, Articles, Books, Correspondence and Papers documents Dr. White's writings on medical ethics, integration, former St. Louis Children's Hospital director Williams McKim Marriott, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. It includes an unpublished paper written by White as a student in 1916, White's 1928 essay, "Segregation and the Health of Negroes," and a 1932 article on medical ethics and professional conduct. The series also contains one folder of correspondence concerning abortion legislations, medical ethics, the disposition of White's personal papers and the publication of his poetry and articles. It also includes two books: A Godly Heritage, St. Louis Children's Hospital Centennial History, 1879-1979, by Marion Hunt (St. Louis: 1979); and Verse - and Verse, White's 1972 book of poetry published by the St. Louis Children's Hospital. Arranged chronologically.

Series 2 contains annual reports of the pediatrics division of Homer G. Phillips Hospital from 1955 to 1962. This includes statistical information on white and non-white newborns, premature infants, stillbirths and infant deaths; overcrowding at Homer G. Phillips and the need to expand social service. Arranged chronologically.

Series 3 contains letters from Dr. White to medical colleges and hospitals recommending former Homer G. Phillips interns for positions and fellowships. Arranged alphabetically by the former residents' last names.

Series 4 and 5 contain Dr. White's poems on medical, scientific and social topics. Series 4 includes poetry written by White from 1934-1976. Series 5 includes poetry written from 1976-1981. Both series are arranged alphabetically by the title of the poem.

FOLDER LIST

BOX 1 (045118)

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SERIES 1 - ARTICLES, BOOKS, CORRESPONDENCE AND PAPERS, 1911-1982

1. Williams McKim Marriott 1885-1936 Memorial Addresses. St. Louis: Washington University, January 3, 1937
2. Hunt, Marion, A Goodly Heritage: St. Louis Children's Hospital Centennial History, 1879-1979. St. Louis Children's Hospital, 1979
3. White, Park J., "His Doctrines." Unpublished paper, 1911
4. White, Park J., "Segregation and the Health of Negroes." Hospital Social Service XVII (1928), 224
5. White Park J., "The Teaching of Medical Ethics and Professional Conduct." The Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges, November 1932
6. White, Park J., "Prescriptions." Unpublished paper, July 1937
7. White, Park J., "The Way Out." The Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges, November 1946
8. White, Park J., Verse - and Verse, St. Louis: St. Louis Children's Hospital, 1972. Verse - and Verse Correspondence and Newsclippings, 1972
9. Correspondence, 1978-1979
10. White, Park J., "Medical Leonardo of Boston. Oliver Wendell Holmes, MD (1809-1894): An Evaluation of Versatility." Perspectives In Biology and Medicine, Spring 1981
11. Hunt, Marion. "A Coming of Age with Pediatrics - Park Jerauld White Attending Physician, Outlook Magazine, XIX (Spring 1982), 18-24

SERIES 2, HOMER G. PHILLIPS HOSPITAL ACTIVITIES REPORTS, 1955-1962

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18. Homer G. Phillips Hospital Activities Reports, 1962

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