

# **Preliminary Inventory of the Robert L. Phillips Collection, 1890s-2003 Collection Number 10081**

Greensboro Medical Historical Library, Moses Cone Health System Medical Library

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## **Collection information**

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## **Contact Information:**

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## **Descriptive Summary**

### **Repository**

Moses Cone Health System Medical Library, Greensboro Medical Historical Library

### **Creator**

Phillips, Robert L.

### **Title**

Robert L. Phillips Collection, 1890s-2003

### **Call Number**

10081

### **Language of Materials**

Materials in English

### **Extent**

Items: About 15,300 items

Linear Feet: 29.5

### **Abstract**

Neurosurgeon, historian, and writer, Robert L. Phillips spent much of his life dedicated to documenting the history of health and medicine in Greensboro and Guilford County, North Carolina. Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, Phillips served in the United States Marine Corps in World War II and later graduated from West Virginia University. He went on to study at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia where he received his M.D. degree. After completing an internship and residency in surgery, he moved to Durham, N.C., where he finished his residency in neurosurgery in 1959. He then moved to Greensboro, N.C., where he lived for the rest of his life. Between 1985 and 2001, Phillips wrote over nineteen books on the history of health and medicine in Greensboro and Guilford County, North Carolina. Using his extensive collection of research materials as a starting point, Phillips established the Greensboro Medical Historical Library in 1985. He continued to collect materials relating to the history of health and medicine in Greensboro and Guilford County, N.C., for the Library until his death in 2003. The Robert L. Phillips Collection consists of research materials, clippings, subject files, correspondence, letters, writings, manuscripts, and photographs related to the history of health and medicine in Greensboro and Guilford County, N.C. The bulk of the collection is comprised of research materials used by Phillips in writing his books. Other materials relate to his career as neurosurgeon at the Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital and his involvement with the Greensboro Medical Historical Library. Some of the subjects represented in the collection include physicians, hospitals, sanitariums, tobacco, smoking, fluoride, integration, medical training, the Moses H. Cone Health System, and the Greensboro Medical Historical Library.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Restrictions to Access**

No Restrictions

### **Acquisitions Information**

Received from Robert L. Phillips of Greensboro, N.C.

### **Processing Information**

Collection is minimally processed, but usable with staff assistance.

### **Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], in the Robert L. Phillips Collection #10081, Greensboro Medical Historical Library, Moses Cone Health System Medical Library.

### **Copyright Notice**

Copyright is retained by authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law.

## **Online Catalog Headings**

These and related materials may be found under the following headings in online catalogs.

Auctioneering (Guilford County, North Carolina)  
Bible Study  
Equipment and Supplies, Hospital  
Fluoride  
Greensboro (N.C.)  
Greensboro (N.C.) Social life and customs

Greensboro Academy of Medicine  
Greensboro Area Health Education Center (GAHEC)  
Greensboro Medical Historical Library  
Guilford County Medical Society  
History of Hospitals  
History of Medicine  
History of Medicine (Greensboro, N.C.), 19th Century  
History of Physicians  
History of Primary Care  
History, 19th Century  
History, 20th Century  
Hospital Administration  
Hospitals (Greensboro, N.C.)  
Infirmaries (Greensboro, N.C.)  
Institutes (Greensboro, N.C.)  
Libraries, Hospital  
Long, John Wesley  
Lund, Herbert Z.  
Medical history (Greensboro, N.C.)  
Medical Staff, Hospital  
Medicine History  
Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital (Greensboro, N.C.)  
Race relations  
Ravenel, Samuel Fitzsimons  
Sanitariums (Greensboro, N.C.)  
Smoking  
Social service and race relations  
Surgery Department, Hospital  
Village of Brown Summit  
Wesley Long Community Hospital (Greensboro, N.C.)

## Biographical Note

Neurosurgeon, historian, and writer, Robert L. Phillips spent much of his life dedicated to documenting the history of health and medicine in Greensboro and Guilford County, North Carolina. Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, Phillips served in the United States Marine Corps in World War II and later graduated from West Virginia University. He went on to study at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia where he received his M.D. degree. After completing an internship and residency in surgery, he moved to Durham, N.C., where he finished his residency in neurosurgery in 1959. He then moved to Greensboro, N.C., where he lived for the rest of his life.

His first book, *History of the Greensboro Academy of Medicine, 1946-1984*, was published in 1985. A year later, he wrote *The Life and Writings of John Wesley Long, MD*, published in 1986. Other books written by Phillips include: *100 Years of Caring and Progress in Medicine; Greensboro* (2003); *A Biography of Herbert Z. Lund, M.D.: The Medical Prophet from Temple Square* (1997); *The History of Auctioneering in Guilford County* (1995); *History of Greensboro Area Health Education Center* (2000); *History of Integration of Medicine in Greensboro, North Carolina: Chronological Documentation* (1990); *History of the Hospitals in Greensboro, North Carolina: Including Sanitariums, Infirmaries and Institutes* (1996); *Medical Happenings in*

*Greensboro from 1826 to 1904* (1992); *Medical Shoulders During the 19th and 20th Centuries in Greensboro, North Carolina: Biographical Sketches of over 800 Physicians in Greensboro* (1993); *Separate-But-Equal: The Genesis of a Mindless Myth* (2003); *SFR: A Biography of Samuel Fitzsimons Ravenel of the Carolinas* (1989); *The Story of Fluoride and Tobacco in Greensboro, N.C.: Chronological Documentation of the Historical Struggle* (1995); *They Did It! 21 Profiles of Non-Physician Heroines and Pacesetters in Greensboro's Medical Care History* (1998); *The Village of Brown Summit, Past and Present* (1993); *Visual Medical History of Greensboro* (2001); and *Willett's Bible Study: The Anatomy and Genesis of a Successful Bible Study*.

Using his extensive collection of research materials as a starting point, Robert L. Phillips established the Greensboro Medical Historical Library in 1985. He continued to collect materials relating to the history of health and medicine in Greensboro and Guilford County, N.C., for the Library until his death in 2003.

## Collection Overview

The Robert L. Phillips Collection consists of research materials, clippings, subject files, correspondence, letters, writings, manuscripts, museum items, and photographs related to the history of health and medicine in Greensboro and Guilford County, N.C. The bulk of the collection is comprised of research materials used by Phillips in writing his books. Other materials relate to his career as neurosurgeon at the Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital and his involvement with the Greensboro Medical Historical Library.

Some of the subjects represented in the collection include physicians, hospitals, sanitariums, tobacco, smoking, fluoride, integration, medical training, the Moses H. Cone Health System, and the Greensboro Medical Historical Library.

## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Papers and Museum Items, 1890s-2003.

About 15,300 items  
Linear Feet: 29.5

#### Box 1

Research Materials related to Robert L. Phillips's biography of Samuel Fitzsimons Ravenel, *SFR: A Biography of Samuel Fitzsimons Ravenel of the Carolinas*.

#### Box 2

Research Materials

- History of health and medicine in Greensboro, North Carolina
- Professional Papers
- Papers related to the GMHL
- Research related to surgery
- Reference resources for Civil War items
- Writings by Robert Phillips
  - 100 Years of Caring and Progress in Medicine: Greensboro*

*Medical Happenings in Greensboro from 1826 to 1904: A Chronicle*  
*Separate-But-Equal: The Genesis of a Mindless Myth*  
*History of the Hospitals in Greensboro, North Carolina: Including*  
*Sanitariums, Infirmaries, and Institutions.*

**Box 3**

Research Materials

Materials related to museum objects for display cases  
Materials related to the History of Medicine Lectures and Speakers  
General research materials related to the history of medicine and health care in Greensboro and Guilford County

**Box 4**

Research Materials

Clippings related to tobacco and smoking  
Papers related to Moses H. Cone Hospital, 1984-1994, and Phillips's career

**Box 5**

Museum Items

Catheters, medicine set, Dictaphone belts, doctor's kit, circa 1930s

**Box 6**

Museum Items

Pocket hone, wooden cases containing medical diagnostic instruments, leather doctor's bag with instruments

**Box 7**

Emergency Kit

**Box 8**

Photographs

Used in Dr. Phillips's publications

**Box 9**

Greensboro Medical Historical Library Files

Includes newsletters, minutes of meetings, financial papers, construction plans, notes related to the lecture series, by-laws and advisory board materials, dedications, information on the planning of the original bio-medical library, circa 1965, letters, and documents of contributions.

**Box 10**

Subject Files

Computers to Subarachnoid Hemorrhage

**Box 11**

Clippings, 1890-1969

**Box 12**

Clippings, 1980-1998

**Box 13**

Clippings, Correspondence, and Professional Papers, undated

**Box 14**

Subject Files  
A&T University to Guilford County History

**Box 15**

Subject Files  
Harvard to UNC 200 Years

**Box 16**

Subject Files  
Hospitals: Charter Hills to Wesley Long Community Hospital

**Box 17**

Subject Files  
L. Richardson; Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital; Extendicare; Humana;  
Women's Hospital

**Oversized Materials**

Laminated clipping of Wheeling News Register article, dated 6 June 1945, about Dr. Phillips and his patrol involved in a perilous mission in Japan  
Painting of Ed Apple  
Plaque of contributors to the Greensboro Medical Historical Library (work print)  
Poster titled "Black Magic: The Magic of Black Inventors and Scientists" used in researching articles  
Print representing surgical tools, circa early 19th Century  
Personal x-rays of Robert Phillips  
Microfilm representing a Record of Operations by Dr. Wesley Long, 1907  
Photographs of "Dr. Williams," Herbert Z. Lund, Marie Hutchins, Wesley Long, Samuel Fitzsimons Ravenel, and Ed Apple