

# **Guide to the Portland Free Dispensary Letters Collection 2005-010**

**Finding aid prepared by Karen Peterson**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Oregon Health & Science University Historical Collections & Archives  
2005/06/01  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Oregon Health & Science University Historical Collections & Archives
<b>Title</b>	Portland Free Dispensary Letters Collection
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1929-1931
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 Linear feet
<b>Location</b>	R440 Old Library, Historical Collections & Archives, Oregon Health & Science University.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	This collection is a wide variety of correspondence to and from the Portland Free Dispensary in its last year (1929-30) before moving up to the medical school campus on Marquam Hill in 1931.

### Preferred Citation

Portland Free Dispensary Letters Collection, Accession # 2005-010, Historical Collections & Archives, Oregon Health & Science University.

## Biographical/Historical

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The People's Institute was organized in 1904 to improve living conditions for the women and children in the northern end of Portland. The impetus for the Institute was a report by Valentine Prichard, supervisor of the public school kindergartens and principal of a training school for kindergarten teachers. This report, given in 1902 to Dr. Edgar P. Hill, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, along with Caroline Ladd and her daughter Helen Ladd Corbett, described the deplorable conditions of the women and children in north Portland. Unable to provide even the bare necessities for their children, single mothers and their offspring lived in dark, unkempt rooming houses and tenements. Children, surrounded by immorality, often turned to crime, growing up idle and becoming a menace to society. Miss Prichard and a staff of workers visited homes to establish the needs of the women and children and to decide what could be done to help them and to establish the aims of the organization.

The Ladd family donated land at Fourth and Burnside Streets to construct a building for the People's Institute. The first floor housed the Men's Resort, a mission that had already been established by the church, and the second floor housed services for women and children. Caroline Corbett was appointed to form a club to support the effort, and Valentine Prichard was pressed into service as the Institute's organizer. The first meeting was held November 11, 1904; Prichard was voted in as supervisor, officers were elected, and the People's Institute Settlement Work was established. Dr. Hill realizing that the work would need more than one church for support, opened membership to all women who would aid the organization financially or through service.

The aims of the People's Institute centered in four areas--social, educational and industrial, humanitarian, and civic activity. Three centers formed: at Fourth and Burnside (1904 - 1912), Albina, (1912 - 1918), and the South Portland Center at the Fourth Presbyterian Church (1912 - 1915). Each center offered the following services: a kindergarten, sewing school, cooking school, Little Housekeepers Class, Stereoptician Sunday School, gymnasium, lectures for adults, manual training, Girl's Club, Boy's Club, Boy's Brigade, Boy's Printing Club, music, Dramatic Club picture loan, library, free baths, Mother's Club, and the Free Employment Bureau for Women. They also organized and supervised Portland's first public playgrounds in 1906, which they turned over to the Park Board in 1909.

In 1906, after the San Francisco earthquake and fire, the Institute gave clothes, food and medical care to the refugees arriving in Portland. Many doctors and nurses provided free services during the crisis, and some expressed interest in continuing free health work, including Drs. Noble Wiley Jones, Edna Timms and Gertrude French. In addition, the Free Employment Bureau for Women found that many women were not fit for employment due to poor health. They tried to interest the city and county in medical aid to the indigent but were foiled in their efforts. In 1907 the Executive Board of the People's Institute decided that the best way to aid the poor was to help them to achieve health so that they could help themselves. Hence, the Free Dispensary was formed with \$30.00 provided by The Mother's Club and was held in the Boy's Club room at Fourth and Burnside. Drs. French, Timms and George Whiteside offered their services as the first attending physicians, while many others were willingly on call. The Visiting Nurse's Association joined the work as well.

In the spring of 1909, Dr. Clarence J. McCusker made a report to the University of Oregon Medical School about free medical care being given at the dispensary. The faculty responded by offering to affiliate with the clinic, providing equipment and services to men, as well as to women and children. Mrs. Jacob Kamm donated \$1000 for the project, and five more rooms were opened on the first floor of the Men's Resort. The Medical School moved the necessary equipment to the new location and supplied a salary of \$25.00 per month for an attendant. They requested additional support from the Board of Regents of the University of Oregon, and supplemental funds were acquired by subscription from the Arlington Club of Portland. Later, appropriations from the city and county were provided to meet growing expenses.

George B. Storey, Earnest Tucker and Kenneth A. J. Mackenzie, later made chief of staff, were appointed and authorized as trustees to sit with representatives of the People's Institute, the Visiting Nurses Association and the Men's Resort. On January 10, 1910, the first joint meeting of the organization met, and fourteen physicians from the Medical School were assigned to staff the dispensary, now named the Portland Free Dispensary.

Between 1910 and 1913, the dispensary was not extensively used for teaching purposes. But in 1913 attendance became compulsory for students of the Medical School. The dispensary grew in size and in service as a teaching center with, according to Larsell and Prichard, Portland's finest and most capable physicians attending. It was moved to larger quarters on 4th and Jefferson Streets in 1916, leaving the Institute's other projects housed at Fourth and Burnside and at the Lower Albina location. By 1921, the dispensary was taken more under the auspices of the Medical School as an outpatient clinic. In 1923 a Free Baby Clinic was added and in 1926, under the direction of Drs. Noble Wiley Jones and T. Homer Coffen, administrators of the Department of Medicine at the University of Oregon Medical School, new specialty clinics were established at the dispensary: a cardiac clinic directed by T. Homer Coffen, an endocrine clinic run by Homer P. Rush, a diabetic clinic under the direction of J. R. Montague and Blair Holcomb and a tuberculosis clinic coordinated by Ralph and Ray Matson and Marr Bisailon.

The dispensary quickly became overcrowded, and the location was extremely noisy, making examinations and accurate diagnoses difficult. But it was not until 1931, after 24 years, that a gift of \$400,000 from the General Education Fund of New York made it possible to move the clinic to the Medical School campus on Marquam Hill. The money was given with the understanding that the Portland Free Dispensary would turn over its work and financial resources to the Medical School. The four-story Out-patient Clinic was built, and the dispensary medical services were transferred to these new and modern facilities, providing better services to patients and instructional clinic opportunities for students.

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## Scope and Contents

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The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence to and from the Portland Free Dispensary, 1929-1930. (See the index for a complete listing of persons and organizations).

## **Arrangement**

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There appears to be no logical order, neither chronological nor alpha/numerical, with lists and reports interspersed randomly with correspondence. Some of the materials are written by hand in pencil or ink, while the bulk is type written originals or copies. The materials are in good condition and legible. An index is provided. The collection is housed in 3 folders labeled A, B, C, in one document box. Extraneous items such as reports or miscellany are not listed in the larger Index, but directly in the folder they are located. Name and Organization indexes are labeled Folders D and E.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Oregon Health & Science University Historical Collections & Archives 2005/06/01

### **Conditions Governing Access**

Collection is open to the public.

### **Conditions Governing Use**

The OHSU Historical Collections & Archives is the owner of the materials and makes available reproductions for research, publication, and other uses. Written permission must be obtained from the OHSU HC&A before any reproduction use. The OHSU HC&A does not necessarily hold copyright to all of the materials in the collections. In some cases, permission for use may require seeking additional authorization from the copyright owners. No special equipment is needed for the collection.

### **Custodial History**

No information pertaining to provenance was known at the time of processing. The collection was de-accessioned from the OHSU Pacific Northwest Archives May 31, 2005. It was then accessioned into the OHSU Archives June 2005.

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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## **Function(s)**

- Administrative Records

## **Genre(s)**

- Correspondence
- Financial records
- Miscellany

## **Geographic Name(s)**

- Oregon

## **Personal Name(s)**

- Baird , David W. E., M.D., 1898-1974
- Couch, Ralf, Business Manager
- Dillehunt, Richard B., Dean, University of Oregon Medical School, 1920-1943
- Fenton, Ralph A., MD
- Prichard, Valentine
- Thomson, Elnora, R.N.; F.A.P.H.A; Director Nursing Education U.O.M.S., 1873-1957

## **Subject(s)**

- Legislation
- Medicine and Health
- Medicine, Preventive -- Oregon
- Poverty
- Public health

B1

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## Collection Inventory

**B1**

Folder A

Suggested plan for merger with UOMS 1930 June 2

“Report of Work of Dispensary for the Year 1928” no date

Check stubs from the Budget Committee of the Portland Community Chest no date

Folder B

10th Annual Meeting of The Multnomah County Health Association 1930 June 30

Lists of drugs for surgery and clinics no date

Schedule of Daily Clinics 1931 January

Number of 1st visits, number of revisits, number of laboratory tests, number of metabolic rates no date

“Approximate Supplies Required for One Year, 1930” no date

“List of Fees Charged to Those who can pay – 1930”

“List of Designations to Peoples’ Institute & Portland Free Dispensary on Pledges to the Community Chest for 1930”

Check stubs from the Budget Committee of the Portland Community Chest

Folder C

“Copy of Report sent to Dr. Dillehunt: Report of Work of Dispensary for Year 1928” 1929

“A Bill for an Act” Section 3322: [provisions for mothers with dependent Children]

“Institutions having courses in Psychology and Social Service for Students”

“How Agencies and Executives Can Help Us Carry Out a Sound, Logical Publicity Program” [From the Community Chest]

Check stubs from the Budget Committee of the Portland Community Chest

Folder D Name Index

A Anderson, Nora; Ashley, B. J., M.D.

B Baird, W. E., M.D.; Beck, L. C. Blgrave, C. E. Blumenauer, Blanche R. (Mrs. S. M.) Brown, Ruth L. Burns, Walter J. (Mrs.)

C Carey, Helen, M.D. Cassady, W. G. Cliff, M.D. Couch, Ralf Crowe, Marion (Miss)

D Davis, Michael M. Dieck, Robert (Mrs.) Dillehunt, Richard, M.D. Doyle, Jane V. Dwight, A. F. DuBruille, Emma M. Dyer, Aileen

E Eggers, (Miss) Else, J. Earl, M.D. Epler, Edith I.

F Feary, Amelia Fenton, Ralph A., M.D. Fleming, M. L., M.D. French, Gertrude, M.D. (Miss) Funk, George R.

G Gable, Warren Gerlinger, George T. (Mrs.) Goddard, Elizabeth

H Hanson, Robert J. Herdman, Hugh, H. Huckleberry, E. R., M.D. Huntley, Clyde G.

K Karo, Mildred; Kiehle, Frederick, A., M.D. Klotz, Walter C., M.D. Knox, J. H. Mason, M.D.

L Levin, William, M.D.; Losh, Edward; Lynch, Margaret (Miss)

M MacLaren, W. G.; Mann, Bessie (Mrs.); McOmber, Etta (Mrs.); Mercer, May R.; Minahan, C. L.; Montgomery, Lucille, (Miss); Moore, Harry H.; Morse, Clay S.; Myers, Harold B.

N Noll, Loraine

O Orr-Dunbar, Saidie; Owen, E. P., M.D.

P Parsons, Philip A.; Payne, DeWalt, M.D.; Phelps, Grace; Porter, W. W. (Mrs.)

R Riley, R. E.

S Sanders, A. B.; Schreyer, Cecil L.; Selling, Lawrence, M.D.; Snedecor, Estes; Sommer, Ernst A., M.D.; Stephenson, C. B.; Stricker, Fredrick D.; Strong, Frederick (Mrs.)

T Thomson, Elnora E.; Timm, H. M. (Mrs.); Tucker, Dorothy E.

W Wheeler, Mary Phelps; Wherry, W. P., M.D.; Whiteside, Lura Dell; Woodruff, H.

Z Zabuski, Louise (Miss)

Folder E Organization Index

A Abbott Laboratories; American Association of Hospital Social Workers; American Board of Otolaryngology; American Red Cross, Linn County Chapter; American Red Cross, Portland Chapter

B Bellevue and Allied Hospitals; Board of County Commissioners, Multnomah, County

C Care Maternity Center Association; City Health Bureau, School Department; Civic Emergency Committee; Committee on Health Centers; Committee on Social Work Information; Committee on the Costs of Medical Care; Cornell University Medical College; Clinic of Council of Jewish Juniors/ CouncilOf Jewish Women

D Deschutes County Public Health Association; Doernbecher Memorial Hospital for Children

E Eastern Oregon State Tuberculosis Hospital

I Internal Revenue Service, Treasury Department

J Julius Rosenwald Fund, Chicago

K Klamath County Public Health Unit

L Laue-Davis Drug Co

M Multnomah County Public Health Association

O Oregon Medical Society; Oregon State Board of Health; Oregon Social Workers Association; Oregon Tuberculosis Association

P Pacific Protective League; Pacific Wholesale Drug Co.; Portland Business Bureau; Portland City Hall; Portland Community Chest; Portland Council of Social Agencies; Portland Federation of Women's Organizations; Portland Public Health Survey Committee; Presbyterian Hospital, New York; Public Welfare Bureau, Inc.

S Sanborn & Co.; Security Savings and Trust Company; Shriners' Hospitals for crippled Children

U United Charities of St. Paul, St. Paul, Minnesota; United States Public Health Service; University Hospitals of Cleveland, Lakeside Hospital; University of Oregon; University of Oregon Medical School; University of Oregon Medical School, Out-patient Clinic

V Visiting Nurse Association

W White House Conference on Child Health and Protection; Wisconsin Anti-Tuberculosis Association; Women's Association, First Presbyterian Church

Y Yawman and Erbe Mfg. Co.