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Dr. DeHaven Hinkson (1891-1975) was a prominent African American physician in Philadelphia who served in both World War I and World War II. He was the one of the first African American doctors put on staff at Philadelphia General Hospital, and the first African American to be head of an army hospital. The Dr. DeHaven Hinkson papers, 1898-1982 (bulk 1910-1970), contain correspondence, news clippings, photographs, notebooks, pamphlets, military and medical artifacts, and numerous other materials documenting his medical training and career, military service, veteran's rights involvement, and membership in fraternal organizations.
Biography/History

DeHaven Hinkson was born on December 5, 1891 in Philadelphia. In 1915 he graduated from Medico-Chirurgical College (now Graduate School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania) and began an internship at Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital. During World War I, he was commissioned as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army Medical Reserve Corps. From 1918-1919, he served with the 365th Field Hospital in France. After returning from the war, Hinkson set up a medical practice in Philadelphia and worked with gynecologists at Douglass Hospital. To further his medical education, which was difficult to do in the United States due to a lack of opportunities for African American doctors, Hinkson received a fellowship from the Barnes Foundation to study surgery, gynecology, and obstetrics at the University of Paris and the University of Vienna from 1932-1933. Albert C. Barnes also tried to install Hinkson at Philadelphia General Hospital in the mid 1930s, but failed in his initial attempts due to racial prejudice. Eventually, Hinkson and Dr. Douglass Stubbs became the first African Americans appointed to the staff of Philadelphia General.

Hinkson continued his connection with the military over the years through the Medical Reserve Corps, being promoted in rank along the way, and was a Major when he was called to serve in 1941. Hinkson was asked to establish a station hospital at the Tuskegee Army Air Force Base and consequently was the first African American to be head of an army hospital. At the end of the war, Hinkson was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, and he returned to his practice in Philadelphia, where he also served in the gynecologic departments of both Douglass and Mercy hospitals, becoming the head of the department at Douglass. After those two hospitals merged, Hinkson continued his affiliation. Hinkson died at the age of 84 in 1975. He was survived by his wife, Cordelia Chew, whom he married in 1921, and their two daughters.

Dr. Hinkson was a member of many professional associations and other organizations including the Retired Officers Association. He was a charter member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity's Rho chapter in 1914, and belonged to and served on the executive board of the Alpha chapter of Sigma Pi Phi fraternity (Boule). He also served as president of the Armstrong Association (Urban League), and as a charter member and president of Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). In addition, Dr. Hinkson was very involved with veteran's affairs, and was a charter member and president of the George T. Cornish Post #292, American Legion, which provides services and care for veterans.

Scope and Contents

The collection largely documents Hinkson's medical training and career, military service, veteran's rights involvement, and membership in fraternal organizations. Relating to his medical career, the collection includes correspondence (notably some letters from physician and art collector Dr. Albert C. Barnes),
pamphlets and brochures about medical topics, hospital photographs, and a patient notebook covering various medical topics such as gas attacks and eclampsia (circa 1913-1935). Material pertaining to his military service includes correspondence from World War I and World War II, materials about an attempt to establish Colored Infantry Regiment in 1940 including briefs and correspondence with members of Congress, and documents from Hinkson's time at a station hospital in Arizona (1942). Relating to Hinkson's advocacy for veteran's rights, the collection includes documents and speeches from the Allied Veterans Association and materials from the George T. Cornish Post #292 of the American Legion. There are also materials relating to other fraternal organizations in which Hinkson was involved, notably Alpha Phi Alpha and the Alpha chapter of Sigma Pi Phi, including pamphlets, brochures, annual reports, and photographs, mostly dating from circa 1955-1963. Hinkson collected newspaper clippings on topics he was interested in, such as African American history and veterans, and such clippings are represented in the collection dating from the 1940s to the 1970s. There is also research on the history of African American soldiers, including the Civil War's United States Colored Troops (USCT) at Camp William Penn, to which corps an ancestor of Hinkson belonged.

Some objects are stored with this collection, including a medal, textiles, two military hats, belts, an American Association of Vienna book (1931-1932), a leather doctor bag, soldier sewing kit, and shaving kit.

Some documents in the collection are associated with Dr. Russell F. Minton, another prominent African American physician in Philadelphia. It is unclear if any of these materials may have been created or collected by Minton instead of Hinkson.

A rough inventory of the Hinkson collection is available on-site.

Administrative Information

African American Museum in Philadelphia
Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Sarah Leu through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.

Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions

Contact African American Museum in Philadelphia for information about accessing this collection.
Immediate Source of Acquisition Note
Accession AAMP.G83.003.

Processing Information Note
Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact African American Museum in Philadelphia directly for more information.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials Note

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Mercy-Douglass Hospital (Philadelphia, Pa.)
- Sigma Pi Phi

Geographic Name(s)

- Paris (France)
• Philadelphia (Pa.)

Personal Name(s)

• Hinkson, DeHaven, 1891-1975
• Minton, Russell F.

Subject(s)

• African American physicians
• African American soldiers
• African American veterans
• Medicine
• Professional associations
• United States--Armed Forces--African American officers
• Veterans
• Veterans--Services for--United States
• World War, 1914-1918
• World War, 1939-1945