



Swift (Homer F.) papers

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
Creator - ctb:	Van Slyke, Donald D. (Donald Dexter)
Creator - ctb:	Cole, Rufus
Creator - ctb:	Smith, Edric Brooks
Creator - ctb:	Gasser, Herbert S. (Herbert Spencer)
Creator:	Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research
Creator:	Rockefeller University
Creator - aut:	Swift, Homer Fordyce
Title:	Homer F. Swift papers, Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research Scientific Staff
ID:	FA201
Date [inclusive]:	1913-1956
Physical Description:	0.38 Cubic Feet
Language of the Material:	English

Preferred Citation

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Biographical/Historical note

Homer Fordyce Swift, 1881-1953, physician and scientist.

Born in Paines Hollow, New York, to Charles Fayette and Nancy Maria (Fordyce) Swift. He attended Adrian College (Michigan) 1898-1900, and received a Ph. B. from Western Reserve University, Cleveland in 1902. From 1902 to 1904, Swift attended Western Reserve Medical School and later graduated MS. from New York University and Bellevue Hospital Medical College in 1906. From 1906 through 1908, Swift was an intern at Presbyterian Hospital in New York. He served as an assistant in

Pathology and Dermatology at New York University and Bellevue Hospital Medical College from 1908 until 1910. In 1910, Swift received an appointment as assistant and assistant resident physician at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research's hospital and in 1912 he was made an associate. During this period, Swift's research focused on evaluating the use of salvarsan, a chemotherapeutic drug developed by Paul Ehrlich, for the treatment of syphilis. The treatment that he helped develop was known as the Swift-Ellis method and was widely employed at the time.

In 1914, Swift accepted an appointment as Associate Professor of Medicine at Columbia University, a position he held until 1917 at which time he took a similar post at Cornell University School of Medicine. Shortly thereafter, Swift obtained a leave to join the Presbyterian Hospital's military unit sent to Europe once the United States joined World War I. During the war, Swift was appointed Consultant to the First Army Corps and then the Third Army Corps. He also became a member of the American Red Cross Trench Fever Commission which looked for a cause and studied the effects of this louse-borne malady.

After World War I, Homer Swift returned to New York again joining the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, initially as an associate member and then as a member (1922). During this period, he studied different varieties of streptococci. Swift also investigated the mechanism of rheumatism and its link to streptococcus infections. In this work he collaborated with Rebecca C. Lancefield. In 1946, Swift retired but continued his investigations as a member emeritus of the Institute. Shortly before he died in 1953, he was recognized for his accomplishments in the study of rheumatic fever and was awarded the Distinguished Service Award of the American Rheumatism Association.

Biographical note

1942-1945	Special Investigator, OSRD study of streptococci
1945-1946	Chairman, American Council of Rheumatic Fever
1941-1953	Chairman, General Advisory Committee for Cardiac Program, New York State Department of Health

Professional Service

1918-1919	American Red Cross Trench Fever Commission
1918-1919	Consultant in Medicine to First Army Corps and Third Army (A.E.F. and Army of Occupation)

1923-1948	Member, Board of Directors, Russell Sage Institute of Pathology
1942-1946	Member, Council of New York University
1942-1946	Consultant to U.S. Secretary of War

Membership Alpha Omega Alpha, Alpha Tau Omega, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Fellow, American College of Physicians (President 1938), American Heart Association (President 1938), American Medical Association, N.Y., American Society of Clinical Investigation (President 1928), American Society of Immunology, Association of American Physicians, Century Club, Harvey Society (President 1925-1926), New York Academy of Medicine, New York State Medical Society, Nu Sigma Nu, Society of American Bacteriologists, Theta Nu Epsilon

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Scope and Contents note

Includes biographical material, bibliographic material, clippings, correspondence, and photographs.

Correspondents include Rufus Cole, Herbert Gasser, Edric Smith, Donald D. Van Slyke, and family members.

Subjects include American Expeditionary Force, rheumatism, trench fever, and World War I.

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Arrangement note

Primarily chronological.

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File Plan note

Former Classification: I 450 Sw54

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Access note

Access to this collection is restricted pending permission from Rockefeller University.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Biochemistry
- Streptococcus
- Biology -- Research
- Cell and biomolecular sciences
- Medical research
- Medical sciences
- World War I
- Trench fever
- Rheumatism
- Life sciences
- Medicine, Preventive

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Biography, Photographs, Bibliography, Clippings	box 1	folder 1
Personal Correspondence, 1917 May-June	box 1	folder 2
Personal Correspondence, 1917 July-October	box 1	folder 3
Personal Correspondence, 1917 November-1918 February	box 1	folder 4
Personal Correspondence, 1918 March-June	box 1	folder 5
Personal Correspondence, 1918 July-October	box 1	folder 6
Personal Correspondence, 1918 November-1919 May	box 1	folder 7
Administrative Correspondence, 1913-1938	box 1	folder 8
Administrative Correspondence, 1938-1953	box 1	folder 9