



# Washburn (Benjamin E.) papers

---

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 20, 2021.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue

Sleepy Hollow 10591

[archive@rockarch.org](mailto:archive@rockarch.org)

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

## Table of Contents

---

Summary Information .....	3
Biographical / Historical .....	3
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	5
File Plan .....	5
Administrative Information .....	5
Related Materials .....	6
Controlled Access Headings .....	6
Collection Inventory .....	6
Field Office Files .....	6
Field Office Files - Trinidad .....	7
Field Office Files - Jamaica .....	7
Field Office Files - West Indies and Caribbean .....	8
Scrapbooks .....	8
Miscellany .....	9
Benjamin E. Washburn photographs .....	9

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository:</b>	Rockefeller Archive Center
<b>Creator - aut:</b>	Washburn, Benjamin Earle
<b>Creator:</b>	Rockefeller Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm Disease
<b>Creator:</b>	Rockefeller Foundation. International Health Division
<b>Creator:</b>	Rockefeller Foundation
<b>Title:</b>	Benjamin E. Washburn papers
<b>ID:</b>	FA038
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1905-1960, 1913-1939
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4.69 Cubic Feet 4 document cases
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Biographical / Historical

---

A physician, public health officer, and author, Benjamin E. Washburn was born in Rutherford County, North Carolina, in 1885. Dr. Washburn received undergraduate (1906) and graduate (1909) degrees in English and history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and graduated from the University of Virginia in 1911 with a degree in medicine. It was during his internship in Wilmington, North Carolina, that he met Zillah Howe, a nurse from Michigan, whom he married October 6, 1912.

Following a brief private practice in Rutherford County, North Carolina, Dr. Washburn began his long connection with Rockefeller organizations as an employee of the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission. As field director for Haywood, Stanley, and Caswell counties in North Carolina, he led a hookworm eradication campaign; he later (May-December 1914) became a full-time health officer in Nash County, North Carolina, as part of a program of community sanitary work funded by The Rockefeller Foundation.

In 1915 Dr. Washburn was appointed field director for the International Health Commission's campaign for control of hookworm in British Guiana and Trinidad. Returning to North Carolina in 1916, Washburn, as county health officer in Wilson County, developed a program of health work intended to serve as a model for other counties and as a training center for International Health Board field staff. In

1917, Dr. Washburn was appointed director of the new state Bureau of County Health Work where he was responsible for the creation of cooperative health programs in ten North Carolina counties.

Dr. Washburn left North Carolina again in 1930 to direct the IHB's Hookworm Campaign in Jamaica and remained to inaugurate and oversee the Malaria Campaign, the Tuberculosis Commission, and the Bureau of Health Education. In 1935, he was appointed regional director for the International Health Division in the West Indies and Central America. Washburn retired from The Rockefeller Foundation in 1939.

Upon retirement, Washburn returned to Rutherfordton, North Carolina, where he was active in state and local public health affairs. He also served as health editor for the Raleigh, North Carolina, "Progressive Farmer" from 1940 to 1951 and wrote several books devoted to his health interests.

Dr. Washburn is the author of "Jamaica Health Stories and Plays" (1929); "The Health Game" (1930); "A Country Doctor in the South Mountains" (1955); "As I Recall" (1960); "Rutherford County and Its Hospital" (1960); and "A History of the North Carolina State Board of Health, 1877-1925" (1966).

For a full list of activities, organizations and honors, see "Who's Who in America," v. 27, 1952-1953, p. 2537.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Scope and Contents

---

The Benjamin E. Washburn papers contain few items of a personal nature. Consisting of reports, correspondence, scrapbooks, diaries, photographs, books and journals, the papers concern Washburn's employment with the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission (1913-1914) and the International Health Board/Division (1915-1939).

The papers focus on Dr. Washburn's Jamaica years. In addition to various reports and complete scrapbooks, they include correspondence regarding the Hookworm Campaign with the Jamaican Central Board of Health, The Rockefeller Foundation, and the United Fruit Company. Washburn's highly regarded venture in popular health education, the journal "Jamaica Public Health," is also among the Jamaica material.

After the transfer of the IHD Regional Headquarters for the Caribbean region from Kingston, Jamaica, to Havana, Cuba, in 1937, diaries required of Foundation staff are the only documentation of Dr. Washburn's professional activities.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Arrangement

---

The Benjamin E. Washburn papers are divided into four series:

Series 1 - Field Office Files

Series 2 - Scrapbooks

Series 3 - Miscellany

Series 1022 - Photographs

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## File Plan

---

Former Classification: IV 2A 13

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Publication Statement

Rockefeller Archive Center

15 Dayton Avenue

Sleepy Hollow 10591

[archive@rockarch.org](mailto:archive@rockarch.org)

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

### Conditions Governing Access

Open for research. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC. Researchers interested in accessing digital media (floppy disks, CDs, DVDs, etc.) or audiovisual material (audio cassettes, VHS, etc.) in this collection must use an access surrogate. The original items may not be accessed because of preservation concerns. To request an access surrogate be made, or if you are unsure if there is an access surrogate, please contact an archivist.

## Conditions Governing Use

Reproduction/duplication of archival items is routinely provided in accordance with "fair use." If the RAC does not hold copyright for an archival collection, or items within a collection, it is the user's responsibility to contact the copyright holder, or make a fair effort to do so, prior to publication.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Related Materials

---

### Related Materials

Nelson C. Davis Papers.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Controlled Access Headings

---

- Public health
- Jamaica
- Trinidad
- North Carolina
- West Indies

---

## Collection Inventory

---

### Field Office Files, 1916-1937

Physical Description: 1.5 Cubic Feet

#### Scope and Contents

This series contains the reports, correspondence, publications, memos, and diaries generated as a result of Dr. Washburn's employment with the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission and the International Health Board. The material is arranged geographically and chronologically in four subseries corresponding to Washburn's work in Trinidad, North Carolina, Jamaica, and the Caribbean region.

## Arrangement

The material in this series is arranged geographically and chronologically in four subseries:

Subseries 1 - Trinidad Subseries 2 - North Carolina Subseries 3 - Jamaica Subseries 4 - West Indies and Caribbean

Each subseries is further arranged by type of record.

## Field Office Files - Trinidad

### Arrangement

This subseries is arranged by type of record.

Title/Description	Instances	
Correspondence - Colonial Office, 1914-1915	box 1	folder 1
Reports - Hookworm, 1914-1917	box 1	folder 2
Reports - Hookworm, Alamance County, 1914	box 1	folder 3

## Field Office Files - North Carolina

### Arrangement

This subseries is arranged by type of record.

Reports - Cooperative County Health Work, 1917-1920	box 1	folder 4
Miscellany, 1917-1919	box 1	folder 5

## Field Office Files - Jamaica

### Scope and Contents

The Jamaican files are grouped in several categories. The first, General, contains items which concern all aspects of IHB/D work on the island. Also included in this category are several Jamaican publications (1905-1938) on related subjects, such as mosquitos or vomiting sickness. Dealing with a particular tropical disease with which the IHB/D was active or considering involvement, the remaining Jamaican material is grouped under that malady -- Hookworm, Malaria, Tuberculosis, Yaws, and Yellow Fever.

### Arrangement

This subseries is arranged by type of record.

Title/Description	Instances	
General - Administrative Chart, 1925	box 1	drawer 6
General - Reports - Background, Health Work, undated	box 1	folder 7
General - Reports - Cooperative Public Health Work, 1927, 1933	box 1	folder 8
General - Reports - Island Medical Department, 1929, 1932, 1935-1936	box 1	folder 9

General - Reports - Island Medical Department, 1929, 1932, 1935-1936	box 1	folder 10
General - Reports - Water Supply, Kingston & St. Andrew, 1931	box 1	folder 11
General - Publications - Jamaica Public Health, 1926-1935	box 2	folder 12-19
General - Publications - Bureau of Health Education, 1926	box 3	folder 20
General - Publications - Miscellaneous, 1905-1938	box 3	folder 21
General - Correspondence - Future of International Health Division (IHD) Work, 1937	box 3	folder 22
Hookworm - Correspondence, 1918-1928	box 3	folder 23-24
Hookworm - Reports - Infection Survey, 1918	box 3	folder 25
Hookworm - Reports - Relief and Control, 1919-1920	box 3	folder 26
Hookworm - Reports - Campaign, 1919-1921	box 3	folder 27-28
Hookworm - Reports - Commission, 1918-1926	box 3	folder 29
Hookworm - Reports - Commission, 1918-1926	box 3	folder 30
Hookworm - Miscellany, undated	box 3	folder 31
Malaria - Survey and Correspondence, 1928-1932	box 4	folder 32
Tuberculosis - Reports and Correspondence, 1927-1933	box 4	folder 33
Yaws - Memorandum and Reports, 1932-1936	box 4	folder 34
Yellow Fever - Background Reports, undated	box 4	folder 35

## Field Office Files - West Indies and Caribbean

Title/Description	Instances	
Monthly Diaries, 1936-1939	box 4	folder 36-38

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Scrapbooks, 1916-1937

Physical Description: 1.5 Cubic Feet

### Scope and Contents

The professional scrapbooks, covering the years 1916-1929 and 1932-1937, were kept by Dr. Washburn or a subordinate. They contain clippings from local newspapers in North Carolina and Jamaica and offer an almost daily record of Dr. Washburn and his staff. The personal scrapbooks, 1916?-1925 and 1931-1934, contain magazine and newspaper clippings on such subjects as North Carolina history, English royalty, and baldness. The scrapbooks are primarily bound volumes; in the early years they are fragments pieced together in approximate chronological order.



## Arrangement

The scrapbooks in this series are divided into professional and personal groupings, both of which are chronologically arranged.

Title/Description	Instances	
North Carolina Public Health Work (Fragments), 1916-1919	box 4	folder 39-40
Jamaica Public Health Work (Fragments), 1921-1924	box 4	folder 41
Jamaica Public Health Work, 1925 - September 1927	box 5	folder 42-44
Jamaica Public Health Work, September 1927 - March 1933	box 6	folder 45-47
Jamaica Public Health Work, March 1933 - March 1935	box 7	folder 48-50
Jamaica Public Health Work, March 1935 - March 1935	box 8	folder 51-52
Personal, circa 1916-1925, 1931-1934	box 8	folder 53-54

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Miscellany, 1913-1960

Physical Description: 0.5 Cubic Feet

### Scope and Contents

This series contains items not directly related to Washburn's career with Rockefeller-associated agencies. Included are a manuscript draft of his book "As I Recall," several articles by Washburn on such subjects as hiccups, book and class notes reflecting his health concerns, and items pertaining to Rutherford Hospital, Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

### Arrangement

This series is arranged alphabetically by type of record.

Title/Description	Instances	
Family Tree, undated	box 9	folder 55
Manuscript Draft - "As I Recall", undated	box 9	folder 56
Notes - Class - London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, 1929-1930	box 9	folder 57-59
Notes - Study, undated	box 9	folder 60
Reports and Correspondence - Rutherford Hospital, 1949-1959	box 9	folder 61
Writings, 1913-1960	box 9	folder 62

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Benjamin E. Washburn photographs, 1915-1933

Physical Description: 0.5 Cubic Feet

## Scope and Contents note

Subjects covered include local living conditions and customs, aspects of International Health Board/Division work, and scenic views.

## Arrangement note

Photographs are arranged by geographical area:

Trinidad North Carolina Jamaica West Indies Venezuela Surinam Dutch Guiana British Guiana

## Biographical / Historical

A physician, public health officer, and author, Benjamin E. Washburn was born in Rutherford County, North Carolina, in 1885. Dr. Washburn received undergraduate (1906) and graduate (1909) degrees in English and history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and graduated from the University of Virginia in 1911 with a degree in medicine. It was during his internship in Wilmington, North Carolina, that he met Zillah Howe, a nurse from Michigan, whom he married October 6, 1912.

Following a brief private practice in Rutherford County, North Carolina, Dr. Washburn began his long connection with Rockefeller organizations as an employee of the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission. As field director for Haywood, Stanley, and Caswell counties in North Carolina, he led a hookworm eradication campaign; he later (May-December 1914) became a full-time health officer in Nash County, North Carolina, as part of a program of community sanitary work funded by The Rockefeller Foundation.

In 1915 Dr. Washburn was appointed field director for the International Health Commission's campaign for control of hookworm in British Guiana and Trinidad. Returning to North Carolina in 1916, Washburn, as county health officer in Wilson County, developed a program of health work intended to serve as a model for other counties and as a training center for International Health Board field staff. In 1917, Dr. Washburn was appointed director of the new state Bureau of County Health Work where he was responsible for the creation of cooperative health programs in ten North Carolina counties.

Dr. Washburn left North Carolina again in 1930 to direct the IHB's Hookworm Campaign in Jamaica and remained to inaugurate and oversee the Malaria Campaign, the Tuberculosis Commission, and the Bureau of Health Education. In 1935, he was appointed regional director for the International Health Division in the West Indies and Central America. Washburn retired from The Rockefeller Foundation in 1939.

Upon retirement, Washburn returned to Rutherfordton, North Carolina, where he was active in state and local public health affairs. He also served as health editor for the Raleigh, North Carolina, "Progressive Farmer" from 1940 to 1951 and wrote several books devoted to his health interests.

Dr. Washburn is the author of "Jamaica Health Stories and Plays" (1929); "The Health Game" (1930); "A Country Doctor in the South Mountains" (1955); "As I Recall" (1960); "Rutherford County and Its Hospital" (1960); and "A History of the North Carolina State Board of Health, 1877-1925" (1966).

## Controlled Access Headings:

- Photographs

Title/Description	Instances	
Jamaica, 1924-1933	box 7	folder 70
<u>General Physical Description note:</u> Mounted on board, captions on back, some fading, 1 unmounted		

## Scope and Contents note

Hookworm, diseases, doctors, Jamaica Staff, yaws.

---

Miscellaneous	box 7	folder 71
---------------	-------	-----------

General Physical Description note: Mounted on board, captions on back, some staining, 2 unmounted

## Scope and Contents note

Jamaica Staff, public health, privys, sanitation.

---

South America	box 8	folder 72
---------------	-------	-----------

General Physical Description note: Mounted on board, captions on back, some fading, staining

## Scope and Contents note

Diseases, malaria, spraying, incubators, Paris Green, drainage ditches, privys, health officials, staff.

---

South America	box 8	folder 73
---------------	-------	-----------

General Physical Description note: Mounted on board, captions on back, some fading

## Scope and Contents note

Diseases, malaria, spraying, Paris Green, drainage ditches, health officers.

---

Trinidad	box 8	folder 74
----------	-------	-----------

General Physical Description note: Mounted on paper, mounts badly stained, prints faded, stained, yellowing, creased, torn

## Scope and Contents note

Diseases, leprosy, yaws, hookworm, elephantitis, privys, housing, living conditions, Hinduism.

---

North Carolina - Cooperative Health Work, 1916-1917	box 8	folder 75
---	-------	-----------

General Physical Description note: Mounted on thin paper, embrittled, heavy silvering, losses, staining, fading,

## Scope and Contents note

County buildings, privys, homes, India, religious monuments, parades, diseases, elephantitis.

---

Jamaica - Hookworm Campaign and Staff, 1920-1923	box 8	folder 76
--	-------	-----------

General Physical Description note: Mounted on paper, badly embrittled, heavy silvering, yellowing, fading, severe adhesive staining

## Scope and Contents note

Health officers, diseases, hookworm, leprosy, Jamaica staff, privys, houses, drainage ditches.

---

Miscellaneous Countries, circa 1915

box 8

folder 77

General Physical Description note: Mounted on paper, badly embrittled, heavy silvering, staining, fading, yellowing

## Scope and Contents note

West Indies, Venezuela, Surinam, Dutch Guiana, British Guiana. Landscapes, seascapes, travel, houses, towns, diseases, leprosy, indigenous peoples.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)