

# Arthur H. Aufses, Jr., MD Archives

## Finding Aid - Robert Abbe papers and reprints (AA007)

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Generated by Arthur H. Aufses, Jr., MD Archives on June 11, 2021

Language of description: English

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# Robert Abbe papers and reprints

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## Table of contents

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Summary information .....	3
Administrative history / Biographical sketch .....	3
Scope and content .....	4
Notes .....	5
Access points .....	5
Physical condition .....	5
Series descriptions .....	6

## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Arthur H. Aufses, Jr., MD Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Robert Abbe papers and reprints
<b>Reference code:</b>	AA007
<b>Legacy ID from CMS [alternative]:</b>	AA.001005
<b>OCLC Number [alternative]:</b>	961828927
<b>Date:</b>	1888-1928 (date of creation)
<b>Physical description:</b>	* 3 boxes (8 inches) * electronic material
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Dates of creation, revision and deletion:</b>	Created October 2016 by Michala Biondi.

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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### Note

"A native New Yorker, Robert Abbe (April 13, 1851-March 7, 1928) was born at 7 Dutch Street in lower Manhattan, and was the fifth and youngest son of seven children born to George Abbe, a New York merchant, and Charlotte Colgate, the daughter of the founder of the Colgate Soap Company. Their family home was at 32 East 20th Street, down the block from Theodore Roosevelt's family, and a few blocks north of the Colgate family home where their maternal grandparents frequently welcomed them.

Abbe attended public schools and took evening classes at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art to develop his talents for drawing and painting. He earned an undergraduate degree from the College of the City of New York in 1870 and joined the faculty there after graduation, teaching drawing, geometry, and English. He then enrolled in the College of Physicians and Surgeons (NYC), completing an MD degree in 1874.

He was on the House Staff at St. Luke's Hospital from 1874 to 1876. He then became an Attending Surgeon at the outpatient department of New York Hospital from 1877 to 1884. In 1884 he was appointed Attending Surgeon at St. Luke's, actively serving until 1924 when his poor health forced him to retire. He was also an Attending Surgeon at Roosevelt Hospital (now Mount Sinai West) from 1897 until retirement, as well as the Cancer Hospital, New York Babies Hospital, Ruptured and Crippled (today's Hospital for Special Surgery), and Woman's Hospitals. Abbe served as the professor of didactic surgery at the Women's Medical College of New York from 1878 to 1880, and was a professor of surgery at The New York Post-Graduate Medical College between 1888 and 1897. He was also a lecturer in surgery at the

College of Physicians and Surgeons starting in 1898. In later years he gave up all other appointments to devote his entire time and energies to St. Luke's Hospital.

In 1891, at the age of forty, Abbe married Catherine Amory Palmer, the widow of close friend, Courtland Palmer. They were together for twenty-one years before Catherine passed away in 1920. After his marriage, Abbe began to visit Bar Harbor, Maine. He became interested in the Native American relics he found around the Bar Harbor area and began collecting them. He decided to create a museum to house his growing collection, and dedicatedly worked towards this end, building support from various interested parties. The Abbe Museum of Stone Age Relics was dedicated five months after his passing. It continues to serve the public and honor Robert Abbe's memory today.

Abbe's inquisitive nature led to his reputation as a pioneer in plastic surgery. A request to graft hands onto a man who had lost them in an explosion led to his successful experimentation with re-attachment of amputated limbs and cut veins on cats, dogs, and sheep. Some of his notable procedures include developing and disseminating a procedure for repairing hair cleft lip deformities, (known as the Abbe Flap), the construction of a congenitally absent vagina, and a procedure to relieve immobility of the temporomandibular joint. He published many papers describing these new procedures, as well as the more common ones he conducted.

After Pierre and Marie Curie's discovery of radium in 1898, Abbe began corresponding with them about their work. In 1903 a curious Abbe went to visit their laboratory in Paris, and returned home with a supply of the element, with which he experimented, first on himself, then on small animals, and eventually on patients. He is often credited as being a founder of radiotherapy in America.

His interests, however, were not limited to medicine. Abbe continued to enjoy drawing, painting oil portraits and watercolors into adulthood, and he began experimenting with the developing art of photography as well. When the Lumière brothers developed a new method of color photography (circa 1903), Abbe became an early experimenter with their autochrome plate methods when the technique became available to the general public in 1907, photo-graphing his family in the gardens of their Bar Harbor home, producing delicate and lovely images. When the first post-World War I air transports from London to Paris began service, he was one of the first to take a flight across the Channel in 1920.

He was a member of numerous medical societies, including the Medical Society of the State of New York, The American Surgical Association, the International Surgical Association, the New York Surgical Society, the Practitioners' Society, and the American Radium Society. He served as Vice President of the Academy of Medicine, and was a member of the Century Association and the University Club. In 1911 Abbe was made an associate fellow at the American College of Physicians (Philadelphia).

A few years before he died, it became apparent that Abbe was suffering from an aplastic anemia, probably due to his handling of radium. He survived for several years due to monthly blood transfusions, but finally succumbed to his condition and died on March 7, 1928 at the age of 77."

## **Custodial history**

The Robert Abbe Papers and Reprints were transferred to the Mount Sinai Archives from the St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Library in June of 2016, after the 2013 integration of the two hospital systems.

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## **Scope and content**

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This small collection, (inclusive dates: 1888-1928), is comprised primarily of eight folders of reprints of Abbe's published articles on a variety of medical case studies, and a number of reprint articles about

Abbe by others (1 folder). The remaining twelve folders include: an address by Abbe to soldiers leaving for World War I from Maine; a 70th birthday dinner menu, and a bound volume of transcriptions of congratulatory letters on the same occasion; out-going letters to nephew Hubert Howson and niece Helen Louise Howson, Robert Abbe MacKenzie, a distant relative and namesake, and Carrie Bath, the St. Luke's Director of Nursing, recommending two Bar Harbor, Maine women for the program; an article on his donation of artifacts of prominent medical figures to the College of Physicians of Philadelphia; several small drawings and doggerel ("comic verse composed in irregular rhythm") by Abbe; recollections of him by Robert Abbe MacKenzie; a memorial book of quotes from Abbe's writings; and a few photographs including formal portraits of Abbe, and prints of images he made of his family in Maine, taken from Lumiere autochrome plates, as well as the original autochrome plates. Note that the photographs have been removed from the collection and added to the Mount Sinai Archives Photograph Collection, and need to be requested separately for viewing.

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## Notes

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### Title notes

### Physical condition

The autochrome plates are closed to general viewing and handling due to fragility; access on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the archivist. Digital images, and physical prints are available.

### Restrictions on access

This material is available for use; however, the autochromes are fragile and only a digital copy may be used by researchers. Contact the Archives (MSArchives@mssm.edu) for more information.

### Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Level of detail:** Full

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## Access points

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- Abbe, Robert, 1851-1928 (subject)
- St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center
- Robert Abbe Museum of Stone Age Antiquities
- Autochromes (photographs) (documentary form)
- Photographs (documentary form)
- Collected works (documentary form)
- Radium (subject)
- Surgery, Plastic (subject)

## Series descriptions

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
AA007.B001.F001	<b>File - 70th birthday dinner menu</b>	1921-04-13	1 folder
AA007.B001.F002	<b>File - Abbe Museum-related</b>		1 folder
AA007.B001.F003	<b>File - "An Address to the first drafted men from Bar Harbor and Hancock County, Maine on leaving their homes for camp on September 19, 1917"</b>  <i>Creator:</i> Abbe, Robert, 1851-1928	1917	1 folder
AA007.B001.F004	<b>File - Correspondence to Carrie Bath</b>	1917 1915; 1917	1 folder
AA007.B001.F005	<b>File - Correspondence to Hubert Howson and Helen Louise Howson</b>	1920 1917; 1920	1 folder
AA007.B001.F006	<b>File - Correspondence to Robert Abbe MacKenzie</b>	1921-1925	1 folder
AA007.B001.F007	<b>File - "The custodianship of mementos of Rush, Jenner, Pasteur, Lister, and Currie in the cabinet of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia" pamphlet</b>		1 folder
AA007.B001.F008	<b>File - Doggerel</b>	circa 1922-1923	1 folder
AA007.B001.F009	<b>File - "In memory of Dr. Robert Abbe" book</b>	1928	1 folder
AA007.B001.F010	<b>File - Personal recollection of Dr. Abbe by Robert Abbe MacKenzie</b>	1990	1 folder
AA007.B001.F011	<b>File - Photographs</b>	1898-1924	1 folder
AA007.B001.F012	<b>File - Reprints about Robert Abbe written by others</b>	1953-1956	1 folder
AA007.B001.F013	<b>File - Reprints</b>	1888-1889	1 folder
AA007.B001.F013.I001	<b>Item - "Dupuytren's finger-contraction: further remarks on the theory of its nervous origin" from The Medical Record</b>	March 3 1888	1 item
AA007.B001.F013.I002	<b>Item - "Complete obstruction of the colon successfully relieved by using Senn's plates. A proposed substitute of catgut rings" the New York Medical Journal</b>	March 23, 1889	1 item
AA007.B001.F013.I003	<b>Item - "A contribution to the surgery of the spinal cord" from The Medical Record</b>	February 9, 1889	1 item
AA007.B001.F013.I004	<b>Item - "Intestinal anastomosis" from the Transactions of the Philadelphia County Medical Society</b>	May 8, 1889	1 item

AA007.B001.F013.I0	<b>Item - "The Surgical treatment of inveterate tic douloureux" from the New York Medical Journal</b>	August 3, 1889	1 item
AA007.B001.F014	<b>File - Reprints</b>	1890-1893	1 folder
AA007.B001.F014.I0	<b>Item - "A Case of hemiplegic epilepsy probably diabetic simulating cerebral abscess " from the New York Medical Journal</b>	August 9, 1890	1 item
AA007.B001.F014.I0	<b>Item - "Paranephric cysts" from the New York Medical Journal</b>	August 9, 1890	1 item
AA007.B001.F014.I0	<b>Item - "Spinal surgery. A report of eight cases" from The Medical Record</b>	July 26, 1890	1 item
AA007.B001.F014.I0	<b>Item - "Cases of gall-bladder surgery" from the New York Medical Journal</b>	January 30, 1892	1 item
AA007.B001.F014.I0	<b>Item - "A tooth-plate lodged in the lower oesophagus more than a year. Removed by external oesophagotomy" from the New York Medical Journal</b>	March 19, 1892	1 item
AA007.B001.F014.I0	<b>Item - "Intestinal anastomosis and suturing" from The Medical Record</b>	April 2, 1892	1 item
AA007.B001.F014.I0	<b>Item - "A new and safe method cutting oesophageal strictures" from The Medical Record</b>	February 25, 1893	1 item
AA007.B001.F014.I0	<b>Item - "The surgery of gall-stone obstruction" from The Medical Record</b>	May 6, 1893	1 item
AA007.B001.F015	<b>File - Reprints</b>	1894-1896	1 folder
AA007.B001.F015.I0	<b>Item - "Sarcoma of the Kidney: its operative treatment, " from the Annals of American Surgery</b>	1894	1 item
AA007.B001.F015.I0	<b>Item - "The surgery of the hand, " from New York Medical Journal</b>	January 13, 1894	1 item
AA007.B001.F015.I0	<b>Item - "Hare Lip and Cleft Palate, " address to the New York Clinical Society and "Post-Graduate" 10:15-21</b>	1895 1894-12-01	1 item
AA007.B001.F015.I0	<b>Item - "Perforating typhoid ulcer - peritonitis-operation-recovery, " from The Medical Record</b>	January 5, 1895	1 item
AA007.B001.F015.I0	<b>Item - "Fixation of the round ligaments in Alexander's operation, " from the Annals of Surgery</b>	December 1896	1 item
AA007.B001.F015.I0	<b>Item - "Intradural Section of the spinal nerves for neuralgia, " from the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal</b>	October 1, 1896	1 item
AA007.B001.F015.I0	<b>Item - "Tubercular peritonitis, " from The Medical Record</b>	August 1, 1896	1 item
AA007.B001.F016	<b>File - Reprints</b>	1897-1900	1 folder

AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "Epilepsy from cortical cicatrix; trephining; subdural implantation of rubber tissue. Hartley's operation for trifacial neuralgia; extradural implantation of rubber tissue over foramina ovale and rotundum." From Annals of Surgery</b>	January 1897	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "The appendix 'in the interval.' - A new method of studying its pathology, " from The Medical Record</b>	July 10, 1897	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "The Prognosis and treatment of acute general peritonitis, " from The Medical Record</b>	May 29, 1897	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "Large multiple neurofibromata of the cervical sympathetic, " from the Annals of Surgery</b>	April, 1898	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "A new plastic operation for the relief of deformity due to double harelip, " from The Medical Record</b>	1898	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "New method of creating a vagina in a case of congenital absence, " from The Medical Record</b>	December 10, 1898	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "Pancreatic cysts - three cases; operation-recovery; drop finger, " from The Medical Record</b>	July 22, 1899	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "Sarcoma of kidney in an infant; recovery after nephrectomy, " from the Annals of Surgery</b>	September, 1899	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "Effects of intracerebral and subcutaneous administration of tetanic antitoxin in tetanus as observed in nine cases, " from the Annals of Surgery</b>	March 1900,	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "On cancer of the breast, " from The Medical Record</b>	April 7, 1900	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "Spinal fracture - paraplegia, " from The Medical Record</b>	March 3, 1900	1 item
AA007.B001.F016.I0	<b>Item - "Surgery of the fifth nerve of tic douloureux, " from the Journal American Medical Association</b>	May 5, 1900	1 item
AA007.B001.F017	<b>File - Reprints</b>	1901-1904	1 folder
AA007.B001.F017.I0	<b>Item - "Further report on Beatson's operation for recurrent mammary cancer, " from The Medical Record</b>	1901-12-14	1 item
AA007.B001.F017.I0	<b>Item - "'Inoperable' recurrent cancer of the breast; relief by Beatson's method, " from the New York Medical Journal</b>	1901-08-03	1 item

AA007.B001.F017.I001	Item - "Optimism vs. pessimism in the surgical treatment of cancer, " from The Medical Record	1901-12-14	1 item
AA007.B001.F017.I002	Item - "The Problem of appendicitis from the medical and surgical points of view, " from The Medical Record	1901-02-16	1 item
AA007.B001.F017.I003	Item - "The abdominal route for approaching rectal tumors, " from the Transactions of the American Surgical Association	1902	1 item
AA007.B001.F017.I004	Item - "Consideration of mammary cysts in the differentiation of breast tumors, " from The Medical Record	1903-08-15	1 item
AA007.B001.F017.I005	Item - "Simplified operation for intracranial resection of the trigeminal in inveterate neuralgias, " from the Transactions of the American Surgical Association	1903	1 item
AA007.B001.F017.I006	Item - "Subdural interposition of rubber tissue without removal of the Gasserian ganglion in operations for tic douloureux, " from the Annals of Surgery	January 1903	1 item
AA007.B001.F017.I007	Item - "On what lines is the treatment of malignant disease advancing?" from The Medical Record	1827	1 item
AA007.B001.F017.I008	Item - "Radium and radioactivity, " from the Yale Medical Journal	June 1904	1 item
AA007.B001.F018	File - Reprints	1905-1910	1 folder
AA007.B001.F018.I001	Item - "Exophthalmic goitre reduced by radium, " from Archive of the Roentgen Ray and Allied Phenomena	March 1905	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I002	Item - "Explosion of a radium tube, " from The Medical Record	1906-04-21	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I003	Item - "Radium in surgery, " from The Journal of the American Medical Association	1906-07-21	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I004	Item - "The trained nurse and surgery, " from the New York Medical Journal	1906-04-28	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I005	Item - "Illustrating the penetrating power of radium, " from Archives of the Roentgen Ray and Allied Phenomena	February, 1907	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I006	Item - "The specific action of radium as a unique force in therapeutics, " from The Medical Record	1907-10-02	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I007	Item - "Test of the string-cutting method for impermeable esophageal strictures, " from The Medical Record	1907-11-30	1 item

AA007.B001.F018.I001	Item - "Anesthesia at St. Luke's Hospital," from Medical Record	1908-08-13	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I002	Item - "Aneurysmorrhaphy. Personal Experience with the modern method of treating aneurysm," from the Annals of Surgery	July 1908,	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I003	Item - "Radium as a specific in giant cell sarcoma," from The Medical Record	1910-01-01	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I004	Item - "Radium in surgery," from the Archives of the Roentgen Ray and Allied Phenomena	February, 1910	1 item
AA007.B001.F018.I005	Item - "Radium's contribution to surgery," from The Journal of the American Medical Association	1910-07-09	1 item
AA007.B001.F019	File - Reprints	1911-1916	1 folder
AA007.B001.F019.I001	Item - "Reflections on sarcoma of the kidney," from Maine Medical Journal	June, 1911	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I002	Item - "Resection of the posterior roots of spinal nerves to relieve pain, pain reflex, and spastic paralysis - Dana's Operation" from The Medical Record	1911-03-04	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I003	Item - "A suggestion for an improved method of using radium," from The Medical Record	1912-02-10	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I004	Item - "Malignant disease of the tongue and mouth," from The Medical Record	1913-03-01	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I005	Item - "The use of radium in malignant disease," from The Lancet	1913-08-23	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I006	Item - "Radium Beta Rays. The efficient power," from The Medical Record	1914-11-28	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I007	Item - "A simple subcutaneous cut to cure "trigger-finger" or "snap-finger," from The Medical Record	1914-03-07	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I008	Item - "Papilloma of the vocal chords cured by radium." from the Medical Record, April 13	1912	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I009	Item - "Lymphangioma and radium," from The Medical Record	1915-08-07	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I010	Item - "Roentgen ray epithelioma, curable by radium" from The Journal of the American Medical Association	1915	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I011	Item - "Uterine fibroids, menorrhagia, and radium" from The Medical Record	1915-03-05	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I012	Item - "The legacy of tobacco, 1915-1916"	1916	1 item

AA007.B001.F019.I0	<b>Item - "Radium efficiency in non-malignant surgical conditions, " from The Medical Record</b>	1916-07-08	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I0	<b>Item - "Paget's disease of the bone. Excellent repair after surgical operations, " from The Journal of the American Medical Association</b>	1918-02-09	1 item
AA007.B001.F019.I0	<b>Item - "The use of isolated beta rays of radium, " M. Hayez, Imprimeur de L'Academie Royale de Belgique</b>	1921	1 item
AA007.B002	<b>File - Bound volume of letters (typed from original manuscripts) to Dr. Abbe on the Occasion of his 70th birthday</b>	1921	1 volume
AA007.B003	<b>File - Autochromes Lumiere</b> <i>Conditions governing use:</i> the autochromes are fragile and only a digital copy may be used by researchers. Contact the Archives (MSArchives@mssm.edu) for more information.	circa 1911	1 box of autochromes