

## Directory of History of Medicine Collections

**Organization Name:** WHO Library and WHO Archives

**Organization Type:** Archive; Library

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**City:** Geneva

**State/Province:**

**Zip/Postal Code:**

**Country:** Switzerland

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**Web Site:** <http://www.who.int/library>

**Online Catalog:**

**Other:** <https://www.who.int/archives/en/>

**Abstract:** The World Health Organization is the United Nations specialized agency for health. It was established in 1948. The objective of the WHO is the attainment by all people of the highest possible level of health. The WHO historical collections are held by both the Library and Archives. WHO Library The WHO Library's mandate is to maintain a complete and comprehensive collection of WHO materials. Thus all publications and non-restricted technical documents from the WHO's inception are available in the WHO Library in hard copy and full-text through WHOLIS, its database and online catalog. WHO Archives The WHO Archives contains unpublished WHO records of permanent value, as well as the extensive WHO historical photograph collection. Records in the WHO archives are open to the public free of charge when they are 20 years or older. Records falling within the public domain, including printed publications or non-restricted technical documents (for example documents from World Health Assembly) can be consulted by the public in the WHO Library. Any confidential or personnel records are not open to the public. Some restrictions might apply to certain group of records, and special permission is required to access these files. Consulting the WHO Historical Collection Any person wishing to consult the historical collection should submit a completed research request form which can be obtained from <http://www.who.int> or by sending an email to [archives@who.int](mailto:archives@who.int). Following the reception of the form, an appointment is made and/or information is provided by mail. When the visitor first arrives on-site a "round table" process begins whereby the researcher, a WHO Archives staff member and a WHO Library staff member meet to discuss the research needs and identify all materials available for research from both the Library and Archives. The relevant materials and finding aids (both on-line and paper copies) are then made available for research in the Historical Reference Room located in the Library. SERVICES: Photocopying and reference service are available. Opening hours are from Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Holdings:** The WHO Library Historical Collection contains 5,375 catalogued monographs and documents on the history of public health. An essential part of the Collection is the documentation on the history of the WHO and its predecessor organizations, so far mostly uncatalogued. Among these are: Conférence Sanitaire Internationale, 1st-12th, Process Verbaux (1851-1912); Office international d'hygiene publique (OIHP), bulletin mensuel (1909-1930), Proces verbaux (1909-1946); Health Committee on the League of Nations, Bulletin (English and French) 1932-1940), Minutes (English and French) 1921-1940; Health Organization of the League of Nations, various reports/publications of the various Commissions (English and French (1921-1938); Société des Nations epidemiological publications (weekly, monthly and annual, 1922-1947); League of Nations, Health Section, Eastern Bureau, Weekly Fasciculus (English and French), 1925-1951. Within the Historical Collection is the Rare Book Collection consisting largely of documentation on epidemics, such as plague, cholera, smallpox and yellow fever, dated as early as the 16th century. The Historical Collection is searchable in WHOLIS and a selection is available online on the separate Historical Collection website. It is a

non-circulating collection accessible to researchers by appointment. WHO Archives The collection includes over 3,000 linear feet of records documenting the history of public health and programmes established by WHO. Among these are: records of the Office International d'Hygiène Publique (OIHP), 1907-1946; records of the United National Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) relating to the health activities of the country missions, 1943-1946. (Note: the majority of the UNRRA records are kept at the United Nations Archives in New York); records of League of Nations : Health Section Files (Note: these are microfilm copies, originals are held in the archives of the League of Nations, Geneva : 1933 - 1946; records relating to the Smallpox Eradication Programme (Note: these records include records from various Headquarter's programme involved in the Smallpox Eradication Programme and WHO Regional Offices) : 1948 - 1984; Collection on Malaria of the Documentation Centre Communicable Diseases, WHO Headquarters : 1914 - 1984; records of the Central Registry, WHO Headquarters. sub-fonds 1: Records of the Central Registry, 1946-1950 sub-fonds 2: Records of the Central Registry, 1950-1955 sub-fonds 3: Records of the Central Registry, 1955-1983 sub-fonds 4: Project Files, 1945 - 1984; Black and white photographs, 1946-1980 records related to WHO major medical programmes for example the polio eradication programme, malaria eradication, public health etc.; records of WHO Headquarters offices including senior management records of the International Disease Classification, 1960-1984. The WHO Archives are searchable through electronic and paper finding aids. In the near future the fonds list and selected finding aids will be made available on-line. The Archives are accessible to researchers by appointment. The External Access to Archives Policy is available at [http://www.who.int/archives/about/Access\\_policy.pdf](http://www.who.int/archives/about/Access_policy.pdf) .

**Collection Subject Strengths:** History of Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases; History of Public Health

**Other Collection Subject Strengths:**

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