



Creator Unknown.

**Notes from medical lectures by Dr. William Shippen, Jr.
circa 1762**

Abstract: This collection consists of one volume of lecture notes taken by an unidentified student who attended a series of lectures on anatomy, blood, and midwifery, given by Dr. William Shippen, Jr. in Philadelphia, possibly in 1762.

Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 097, Item 138
Creator: Creator Unknown.
Title: Notes from medical lectures by Dr. William Shippen, Jr.
Inclusive Dates: circa 1762
Extent: 1 v. (115 p.) ; 21 cm.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 097, Item 138, Notes from medical lectures by Dr. William Shippen, Jr., Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Item 138: Shelved in SPEC MSS 097

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/>

Source: Gift of Moyerman Family, 1972.

Processing: Processed and encoded by Evan Echols, March 2009.

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Biographical Notes

William Shippen, Jr. (1736–1808) was an influential professor of anatomy and surgery at what is now the University of Pennsylvania, helping to expand the study of midwifery and involved in the establishment of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

William Shippen, Jr., son of William Shippen and Susanna Harrison, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on October 21, 1736. He received a classical education at Nottingham Academy then went on to study at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), graduating with an A.B. in 1754. Shippen next served a medical apprenticeship under his father in Philadelphia. In 1758, with financial aid from his uncle, Edward Shippen III, he went to England to study under Drs. John Hunter, William Hunter, and MacKenzie. After completing his dissertation, entitled "De Placentae cum Utero Nexu", Shippen graduated Doctor of Medicine from the University of Edinburgh in 1761. Following a short visit to France, he returned to Philadelphia in May 1762. On November 16, 1762, with his father's assistance, Shippen inaugurated a series of lectures on anatomy, surgery and the practice of midwifery. His lectures on anatomy were the first ever delivered in America and incorporated anatomical drawings and casts made by the famous Dutch painter, Jan Van Rymdyk. By 1765, Shippen offered a course in midwifery to both women and men.

In July 1776, Shippen became Chief Surgeon on the Flying Camp in New Jersey. In October, he gained appointment as Head of all Hospitals West of the Hudson River. On May 11, 1780, he was elected Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in the newly reorganized University of the State of Pennsylvania. He remained in that position through the subsequent changes of the University until his resignation in 1806. From 1791 to 1802, Shippen served on the staff of the Pennsylvania Hospital. Shippen was also one of the originators of the College of Physicians, 1787, and served as its President from 1805 until his death. He was elected to the American Philosophical Society in November of 1777.

Shippen married Alice, daughter of Colonel Thomas Lee and Hannah Ludwell of Virginia, about 1760. The couple had eight children. Shippen died of anthrax on July 11, 1808, in Germantown, Philadelphia.

The author of this collection was a student who attended William Shippen, Jr.'s lectures on midwifery, anatomy, and surgery, circa 1762.

Sources:

"William Shippen, Jr. (1736-1808)." University of Pennsylvania. <http://www.archives.upenn.edu> (accessed March 18, 2009).

Scope and Content Note

This volume of lecture notes was taken by an unidentified student who attended a series of lectures on anatomy, blood, and midwifery, given by Dr. William Shippen, Jr. in Philadelphia, possibly in 1762. It also includes a list of medical books.

The first section of the volume covers Shippen's lectures on human anatomy. Shippen spent much of the lecture discussing the religious and philosophical aspects of anatomy, pointing out "wisdom of the great creator in the mechanism of the human frame." He also discussed the history of the science of anatomy, documenting the transfer of knowledge from the ancient Greeks and Romans, to the Arabs, then to Medieval Europe through the Muslim conquest of Spain. Shippen then went on to explain the basic functions of the human body as he understood it, describing the body as a perfect, circular system.

The second section of the volume contains notes on Shippen's lectures on the nature of blood. During these lectures he described the function and structure of blood and discussed "red globules" seen through microscopes that carry "vital spirits" throughout the body. He also describes the structure, function, and path of arteries and veins in the human body. This section also covers Shippen's lectures on bloodletting. He believed that bloodletting in the diseased allowed the blood to travel throughout the body with greater celerity and that bleeding at specific points on the body could be used to treat specific diseases. The "Lymphalick" or Lymphatic system and the "five secretions" were discussed in the final lectures on blood.

The last section of the volume covers Shippen's lectures on midwifery and child birth. He discussed the ways in which mother and child are anatomically linked, physical process of childbirth, proper technique for assisting childbirth, as well as the qualities necessary in a midwife. He believed that a midwife needed sympathy, patience, as well as "the utmost delicacy in words and behavior." Shippen also brought up the issue of women being reluctant to admit a man into the room during childbirth and to allow a male to serve as the midwife. He noted that in his own experience, the pain of childbirth and fear of death usually overcame fear of immodesty or shame.

The final two pages of the volume consist of a list of medical books titled "Catalogue of Books." Each book title, such as "Hamilton's Midwifery" and "Cheyne on the Body and Mind," is accompanied by a price. The collection as a whole provides a detailed look at eighteenth-century understanding of human anatomy and medical practice.

This volume has a paper cover with a leather spine and missing its back cover. Six separate lecture notes were bound together into a single volume. The notes are written in ink and some pages are discolored and stained.

Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Shippen, William, 1736?-1808.

Topical Terms

Anatomy--18th century--Sources.

Medical education--18th century--Sources.

Midwifery--18th century--Sources.

Phlebotomy--18th century--Sources.

Form/Genre Terms

Lecture notes.

Occupation

Physicians.

Related Materials in this Repository

This item forms part of MSS 097 Diaries, Journals, and Ships' Logs collection.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Notes from medical lectures by Dr. William Shippen, Jr., circa 1762 [Item 138]
