

# Colebrook/Wright Papers

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ACC/1984/1



Papers of Leonard Colebrook (1883-1967) and Sir Almroth Wright (1861-1947), including Wright's writing on women, correspondence, and biographies of both Wright and Colebrook.

Catalogued by Harriet Wheelock  
June 2011

**CW**  
**Colebrook/Wright Papers**

**Collection**  
**1910-1980s**

*Extent:*

9 files

*Creators:*

Wright, Sir Almroth Edward, 1861-1947

Colebrook, Leonard, 1883-1967

Colebrook, Vera

*Description:*

Papers of Leonard Colebrook and Sir Almroth Wright, including papers relating to Wright's writing on women, correspondence between the two men, and papers relating to biographies of both Wright and Colebrook.

*Arrangement:*

Papers have been divided by subject, and the files arranged chronologically

*Administrative History:*

Almroth Wright was born in Yorkshire in 1861, the son of an Irish clergyman. Wright studied medicine at Trinity College Dublin, taking his medical degree in 1883. Wright was appointed Professor of Pathology at Netley in 1892, moving in 1902 to St. Mary's Hospital where he founded the research laboratory. In both institutions he researched extensively in bacteriology and immunology. During the First World War Wright established a research unit to study the bacteriology of wound infection, attached to the British Army Hospital in Boulogne. Wright returned to St. Mary's after the War and continued to work until 1946, when he retired aged 85. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland in 1933. Wright died in April 1947.

At St. Mary's Wright taught many of the leading immunologist and bacteriologist of the twentieth century including Sir Alexander Fleming and Leonard Colebrook. Colebrook was born in 1883 and studied medicine at St. Mary's Hospital, where he received lectures from Sir Almroth Wright, who became a friend and research partner. During the First World War he served in the RAMC researching into wound infections at St. Mary's and in Wright's laboratory in Boulogne. Following the war he worked on the prevention of puerperal fever, establishing the effectiveness of Prontosil. During the Second World War he worked on burn injuries and from 1942-1948 was director of the Burns Investigation Unit of the Medical Research Council. He died in September 1967.

*Custodial History:*

Wright's papers seem to have been preserved following his death by Leonard Colebrook, and after his death by his wife Vera Colebrook.

*Acquisition:*

The papers were donated to the archive by Vera Colebrook in 1984.

*Access Conditions:*

Access subject to the conditions laid out in the Heritage Centre Access Guidelines

*Reproductions:*

Copying of archive material is subject to the conditions laid out in the Heritage Centre Copying Guidelines

*References:*

Leonard Colebrook, Almroth Wright – provocative doctor and thinker (London: William Heinemann, 1954)

*Related Collections:*

The Wellcome Library hold material relating to both Leonard Colebrook and Sir Almroth Wright, some of Wright's papers are also held by Trinity College Dublin.

**CW/1**  
**Sir Almroth Wright on Women**

**Section**  
**1910-1951**

*Extent:*

4 files

*Creator:*

Wright, Sir Almroth Edward, 1861-1947

Colebrook, Leonard, 1883-1967

*Description:*

During the first decades of the twentieth century Sir Almroth Wright wrote a number of articles, letters to the editor and a book, *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage*, expressing his views on women and female suffrage.

This section contains copies of some of the printed works, as well as some research notes made by Wright and by Colebrook.

**CW/1/1 Newspaper and journal articles**

**1910-1917**

*Extent:*

6 items

*Creator:*

Wright, Sir Almroth Edward, 1861-1947

*Description:*

Collection of newspaper and journal articles on women's suffrage by Wright including a copies of:

- '*The Medical Aspects of Women's Suffrage*' from St. Mary's Hospital Gazette (1910)
- '*Suffrage Fallacies. Sir Almroth Wright on "Militant Hysteria"'* (1912)
- Two letters to the editor (1912 and 1917)
- a review of Wright's book (1913).

- CW/1/2 Epigrams [c.1913]**
- Extent:*  
31 pages
- Creator:*  
Wright, Sir Almroth Edward, 1861-1947
- Description:*  
Typed epigrams on women, presumably created during the writing of *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage*. Sheets are made up of small slips of typescript, attached to large sheets, some of the sheets contain additional manuscript notes.
- CW/1/3 Notes for 'The Unexpurgated Case' [c.1913]**
- Extent:*  
41 pages
- Creator:*  
Wright, Sir Almroth Edward, 1861-1947
- Description:*  
Typescript notes, with some manuscript annotations, laying out some of the arguments to be covered in Wright's work on women, notes are divided into sections.
- CW/1/4 Leonard Colebrook's notes c.1948-1951**
- Extent:*  
10 pages
- Creator:*  
Colebrook, Leonard, 1883-1967  
Bourne, Aleck William, 1886-1974
- Description:*  
Newspaper cuttings and manuscript notes relating to Sir Almroth Wright and his writing on women, including two letters from Aleck Bourne to Colebrook

**CW/2**  
**Letters from Sir Almroth Wright**

**File**  
**12 January 1916 - 4 January 1945**

*Extent:*  
64 pages

*Creator:*  
Wright, Sir Almroth Edward, 1861-1947  
Colebrook, Leonard, 1883-1967

*Description:*  
Series of 23 letters from Almroth Wright to Leonard Colebrook, with one copy reply, covering both professional and personal topics. The early letters include references to the vaccination work carried out by the two men as part of their War Service. The letters contain reference to others working in the field including Sir Alexander Flemming.

File also includes typescript copies of letters from Wright made by Colebrook.

**CW/3**  
**Life of Sir Almroth Wright**

**File**  
**1929-1954**

*Extent:*

c.100 pages

*Creator:*

Colebrook, Leonard, 1883-1967

*Description:*

File of newspaper cuttings, typescripts and letters relating to the life of Sir Almroth Wright. File includes a series of obituaries and memoirs of his life, including three written before his death, also newspaper cuttings and letters relating to Colebrook's biography of Wright and some biographical notes made by Wright himself.

File contains a copy of the will of Wright's wife Jane, and letters from Wright's daughter and grandson to Leonard Colebrook, written following Wright's death and discussing his life and estate.

Also Vera Colebrook's own copy of Leonard Colebrook's biography of Almroth Wright, inscribed 'To my favourite collaborator & critic - who also loved 'the old man' for his [ ] humanity. Leonard Colebrook 1954.'

**CW/4**  
**Works of Leonard Colebrook**

**File**  
**1947-1958**

*Extent:*

4 items

*Creator:*

Colebrook, Leonard, 1883-1967

*Description:*

Copies of articles by Colebrook;

- *'The treatment of burns and scalds in a modern burns centre'* (1958)
- *'Infection Acquired in Hospital'* (1955)
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File also contains an article on *'Asepsis in spinal anaesthesia'* and a typescript copy of a speech on *'The future of medical research'* mentioning Colebrook and his work (1947).



**CW/5**  
**Life of Leonard Colebrook**

**File**  
**1967-1974**

*Extent:*

c.100 pages

*Creator:*

Colebrook, Vera

Abraham, Edward Penley, 1913-1999

Mudd, Stuart, 1893-1975

*Description:*

File of letters and other documents relating to publications on the life of Leonard Colebrook. File includes letters between Vera Colebrook, W C Noble and Stuart Mudd, relating to the writing and publication of Nobel's biography of Colebrook, including Vera's notes on the text.

File also contains correspondence between Vera and Edward Abraham about his piece on Colebrook for the Dictionary of National Biography. Also '*Leonard Colebrook. Reminiscences on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Birmingham Burns Unit*' by Vera Colebrook (1971) and part of a draft autobiography written by Vera Colebrook.

**CW/6**  
**Miscellaneous Papers**

**File**  
**[1940-1980s]**

*Extent:*

11 items

*Creator:*

Colebrook, Leonard, 1883-1967

Colebrook, Vera

*Description:*

Miscellaneous papers including manuscript notes and newspaper cuttings, also letters from Vera Colebrook to Trinity College Dublin about the donation of some of Sir Almroth Wright's books to the medical faculty.