


MS 002 Guide to the Ernst William Bertner papers; 1917-1952

Ernst William Bertner

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Ernst William Bertner Papers

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Overview of the Collection

Repository:	Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library, John P. McGovern Historical Collections and Research Center, 1133 John Freeman Blvd. Houston, Texas 77030
Creator:	Ernst William Bertner, MD (1889-1950)
Title:	Papers of Ernst William Bertner, MD
Dates:	1917-1952
Quantity:	5 linear feet; 2 oversized boxes
Abstract:	Dr. Bertner, one of founders of the Texas Medical Center in Houston Texas, was its first President from 1945 to 1950. He was also the acting director for the first four years of the existence of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. Dr. Bertner was active in leading many medical organizations and institutions in the first half of the 20th century in Texas and in the nation. These papers provide information about his life, including his service in World War I, his contributions to medical organizations, such as the Texas Medical Association and the American Cancer Society, and to the development of the Texas Medical Center and its institutions.
Identification:	2
Location:	Historical Research Center (HRC), 8272 El Rio, Suite 190, Houston, TX 77054. phone: 713.799.7145
Language:	The records are in English.

Biographical Note

Dr. Ernst William Bertner was born at Colorado City, Texas, August 18, 1889. After graduating from the local high school and the New Mexico Military Institute at Roswell, New Mexico, he entered the Medical Branch of the University of Texas, Galveston, receiving his MD in 1911.

Following his graduation, he took intern and residency training at the Willard Parker Hospital, Saint Vincent's Hospital and the Manhattan Maternity Hospital, all in New York City. He came to Houston in July, 1913, where he engaged in practice until World War I, when he enlisted in the Medical Corps.

He was assigned to the British Army, and went overseas in July, 1917. In March, 1918, he was transferred to the American Expeditionary Force, and assigned to

Headquarters Medical and Surgical Consultants at Newfchateau, France.

Dr. Bertner had a varied and exciting career in France and served actively on most of the front lines. He was wounded by shrapnel and confined to a hospital for a short period of time. He was soon returned to duty. At one time he was caught in one of the famous German pincers movements and was one of the few surviving Medical Officers.

He was discharged from the Army in June, 1919, at Camp Dix, New Jersey with the rank of Major. The following month he resumed his practice in Houston. In May 1921, he went to Baltimore, Maryland, for post-graduate work at Johns Hopkins Hospital, in surgery, gynecology, and urology. He resumed practice in Houston in May 1922, and since that time limited his work to surgery and gynecology.

He was married at St. Louis, November 30, 1922, to Miss Julia Williams, daughter of the late W.E. Williams formerly General Manager of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad in Texas.

Dr. Bertner was always an active member of organized medicine, in the county, state and national organizations and served as seventy-second president of Texas State Medical Association. He served as President of the Harris County Medical Society, President of the Post Graduate Medical Assembly of South Texas, President of the Texas Surgical Society, and President of the Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Central Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. He was State Counsellor and a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. He was a member of the American Medical Association, American Urological Association, American Gynecological Association, Central Association of Gynecologists, and Interurban Gynecological Society.

Dr. Bertner was active in hospital organization, having formerly been Chief of Staff of Jefferson Davis Hospital in Houston, and very active in building the first unit of that institution. Later, he became identified with Hermann Hospital and did much towards the development of the institution, where he served as Chief of Staff. He was also on the Surgical Staff of Memorial Hospital and Southern Pacific Hospital in Houston.

He served as Vice-Chairman of the Houston Board of Health and Executive Committeeman of the Texas Social Hygiene Association. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Houston, a 32nd degree Mason, Knight Templar, Shriner and Knight Commander of the Court of Honor of the Scottish Rite, and a member of the Houston Club, Ramada Club, and Houston Country Club.

Dr. Bertner was one of the founders of the Texas Medical Center and was its President since it was chartered November 1, 1945. He was named by the University of Texas as acting director of the M.D. Anderson Hospital for Cancer Research when that institution was conceived. He was responsible for the professional organization and the operation of the hospital for the first four years of its existence. He served as professor and chairman of the department of

gynecology for the Baylor University College of Medicine since its establishment in Houston 1943 until his death.

During World War II he was in command of the Emergency Medical Service of the Office of Civilian Defense, and received a Presidential Citation for this service.

Dr. Bertner was a past Vice-President of the American Cancer Society and served on its Board for several years. He was chairman of the Executive Committee of the Texas Division and received the American Cancer Society award for distinguished service in cancer control in 1949. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Houston Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of the Citizen's Committee for Reorganization of the Executive Branch of the Government, an outgrowth of the Hoover Commission Report.

Taken from a Biography written May, 1950, Series II, Box 3, folder 6.

Dr. Bertner died July 28, 1950 in Houston following a two year battle with cancer. He was survived by his wife, Julia Williams Bertner, two sisters and a niece.

Taken from Texas Cancer Triangle, official newspaper of the American Cancer Society, Texas Division, September, 1950, Series I, Box 1, Folder 1.

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Scope and Contents

Julia Williams Bertner Naylor (widow of Dr. Bertner) and Dr. William D. Seybold, MD donated the material in Series I, III, IV, and V in 1974 and 1975. This material contains information about Dr. Bertner's service in World War I, letters to Julia Williams, biographical information, scrapbooks and commemorative memorabilia, and letters of condolence to his widow.

The Papers of R. Lee Clark, MD (MS70) contained materials that dealt with Dr. Bertner's tenure at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. These papers were transferred in 2006 to the Bertner collection as Series II. Contents include materials which relate to Dr. Bertner's personal life, as well as speeches, interviews, and articles in connection with the establishment of the Texas Medical Center. Interviews about Dr. Bertner by Mrs. Naylor in the early 1970s are also included.

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Arrangement

[Series I-Personal](#)

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Related Material

Additional information on Dr. Bertner can be found in the Papers of William D. Seybold, M.D. (MS4). Also see the Papers of R. Lee Clark, M.D. (MS70) Box 74, Folder 2; Box 104, Folders 7 and 11.

Several photographs were withdrawn from the collection and transferred to the Graphic Works Collection. See Bertner in Subjects Physicians and Seybold in Donors.

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Administrative Information

Custodial History

Mrs. Julia Williams Bertner Naylor and William D. Seybold, MD donated papers to the Archive in 1974 and 1975. The Collection was organized by Randy Sparks in 1983. In 2006, papers were added to this Collection from the R. Lee Clark, MD Collection (MS70). At that time Series II Correspondence, Professional was added and the other Series numbers were adjusted. Other than some rearrangement of plaques for storage purposes, the order of the Collection was maintained in its 1983 format. This Guide replaces all previous Guides.

Preferred Citation

Ernst W. Bertner, MD Papers, Manuscript Collection No. 2, John P. McGovern Historical Collections and Research Center, Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library

Processing Information

The collection was reviewed for duplicate materials and to establish or re-establish the order. Duplicate reprints were discarded. Paperclips and most other binding material were removed. When necessary, materials were interleaved with archival bond or put into mylar envelopes. Some articles and reports on acidic paper were copied onto archival bond and then discarded. Legal documents folded and housed in letter-sized folders were unfolded and the letter-sized folders replaced with legal-sized folders.

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Index Terms

This record series is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Cullen, Hugh Roy 1881-1957

Jones, Jesse Holman, 1874-1956

Naylor, Julia Williams Bertner

Rivici, Emanuel

Seybold, William D.

Texas Medical Center, Inc. (Houston, Texas)

Young, Hugh Hampton, 1870-1945

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Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Personal

This series contains biographical information, obituaries, documents from his World War I service, personal correspondence including letters to Julia Williams, memorials, pages from scrapbooks and memorabilia.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Biography and Obituaries: Contains a brief biography of Bertner written in 1945 and obituaries published in a variety of journals and magazines.
	2	New Mexico Military Institute: Contains a copy of the school's 1950 "Sally Port" and a program from the 1947 graduation ceremony where Berner delivered the address.
	3	World War I: Contains correspondence, memorabilia from France, military communications, and clippings.
	4	Personal Correspondence: (1920-22) Letters from Bertner to Julia Williams before their marriage.
	5	Stag Dinner Program: Two copies of the program from Bertner's 1922 Stag Dinner hosted by Dr. Ralph Cooley and Barney B. Morton.
	6	Correspondence: Letters between Bertner and his friends from 1945-50.
	7	Mrs. Bertner's Correspondence: Invitations, letters of condolence, and other letters to Mrs. Bertner from 1950-51.
	8	Masonic Honors: Masonic pamphlets and letters of congratulation following Bertner's appointment as Knight Commander of the Court of Honor (1947).
	9	Bertner Scrapbook (pages only): Newspaper clippings (1935), address to the graduates of the University of Texas School of

- Medicine in Galveston, Texas (1943), program from Baylor's commencement exercises (1943), and telegrams and letters (1935, 1945-46).
- 10 Bertner Memorabilia: Includes business cards, driver's license, poem about nurses at St. Luke's Hospital, and railroad passes.
- 11 Houston Chamber of Commerce: Program from the Chamber's 1940 centennial year. Bertner served as a director.
- 12 Jesse Jones Honorary Banquet: Program from a 1936 banquet honoring Jones for Texas Centennial Exposition.
- 13 Hugh Roy Cullen: Program from a dinner given in the Cullen's honor by Methodist Hospital, and invitation to the Cullen's 1953 Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary Celebration and clippings.
- 14 Hugh H. Young: Two articles by Dr. Young; one titled "Two Texas Patriots" and the other called "Crawford W. Long: The Pioneer in Ether Anesthesia."
- 15 Dr. Howard Atwood Kelly: An article about Kelly by Thomas Cullen and print of Kelly autographed by Cullen.
- 16 Memorials: Letters making donations to the Texas Medical Center in Bertner's honor and letters of thanks from TMC.
- 17 Texas Agricultural Experiment Station Publications: Two pamphlets published by this state agency reflecting Bertner's interest in improving his ranch lands.
- 18 Life of Osler: Newspaper review of Cushing's book about Osler.

Box Folder

- 2 Artifacts: Contains a silver case, leather wallets, address book, small book, cardboard statue of Mrs. Bertner, one plaque: from Alpha Kappa Kappa .

Series II: Professional - R. Lee Clark, MD

This series contains material transferred from the Papers of R. Lee Clark (MS70). Included are interviews, speeches, articles and correspondence by Dr. Bertner. Transcripts and notes made in connection with interviews about Dr. Bertner with Mrs. Naylor (Dr. Bertner's widow), John Freeman, and others are in this series. Some personal information about Dr. Bertner deals primarily with his World War I service.

Box Folder

- 1 1 The Bertner legacy; Bertner - General News Releases.
- 2 Trust indenture creating the Bertner Foundation.
- 3 Transcripts of interviews about Dr. Bertner by Mrs. Naylor; Miss Hanselman; Mr. Freeman; work Plan; Seybold Papers.
- 4 Invitations; misc. notes; news releases; obits.
- 5 Introd. Kiwanis Club 6/12/46; Citation Baylor 6/12/50; Stag Dinner; WWI letters.
- 6 Reference list; Biographical sketch; radio talk 1945; Pup Tent 6/30/47.

	7	Cancer Fighter and the First President of the Texas Medical Center, by William Seybold, MD; interviews by William Seybold, MD.
	8	Interviews by Johnson; 4th Cancer Symposium Voice 5/12/50; Mr. R.A. Shepherd.
	9	Letters to Bertner from Susan Barnett re: Texas Medical Center 1946-1950.
	10	Correspondence 1946-1952.
	11	Speeches and medical papers.
Box	Folder	
2	1	Correspondence 1944-1946 re: Dr. Emanuel Rivici.
	2	Manuscripts of Dr. Emanuel Rivici ca 1940, 1948; others; correspondence.
	3	Madison Group on Dr. Emanuel Rivici.
	4	Correspondence 1944.
	5	Various 1945; Texas Medical Center.

Series III: Professional Activities

This series contains clippings and ephemera dealing with the establishment of the Texas Medical Center; awards and publications.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Texas Medical Center: Clippings, a list of Medical Center buildings, their cost and their use, a speech made by Bertner on the Medical Center, Frank C. Smith's 1946 speech to the Kiwanis Club on Bertner and the Medical Center, pamphlet from the 1944 dedication of M.D. Anderson Hospital, and a program from the 1946 Dedicatory Dinner of the Medical Center.
	2	Bertner Award: Pamphlets and correspondence related to the Award.
	3	Publications: Various publications containing articles by or about Bertner.
	4	Resolution of Thanks: 1946 resolution in Bertner's honor from the Board of Regents of the University of Texas.
	5	Methodist Hospital: Pamphlet entitled "Laying the Cornerstone of the Methodist Hospital" (1950).
	6	Medical Education: Two general articles on the subject of medical education.
	7	Post Graduate Medical Assembly of South Texas: Program from the 1935 meeting of the assembly.
	8	History of Doctors in Texas from the "Houston Post".
	9	Rice University Bulletin (1946).
	10	Resolutions: Resolutions passed by various organizations after Bertner's death.
	11	Resolutions: Resolutions passed by various organizations after Bertner's death.

Certificates and Appointments: The American College of Surgeons; U.S. Treasury Department; Gorges Memorial Institute; American Cancer Society; Texas Surgical Society.

Series IV: Certificates and Appointments.

This series contains professional and social organization certificates and appointments.

Box Folder

Oversize Certificates and Appointments: Texas Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Manhattan Maternity and Dispensary Hospital, St. Vincent's Hospital.

Series V: Scrapbooks and Plaques.

This series contains scrapbooks which contain newspaper clippings from local Houston newspapers in the 1940's and 1950's dealing with the Texas Medical Center; two plaques.

Box Folder

Box Folder

Box Folder

Oversize Scrapbooks: Clippings documenting Bertner's career in two large books. One plaque: from American Cancer Society.