



Archival Collection Finding Aid

Name/Title:	Study of Water Fluoridation and Dental Health Collection
Subject(s)	water fluoridation, teeth
Archival Collection #:	117
Accession #:	2000.45.1
Source:	National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Health
Date Acquired:	2/24/1999
Span Dates:	1916 - 1995
Processor(s):	Chris Carron

Abstract:

This collection includes original research documents and artifacts used in the traveling exhibition *The Fluoride Story* organized by the donor. Some of the documents relate specifically to the study of the effects on dental health of adding fluoride to the drinking water supply of Grand Rapids, Michigan from 1945 - 1960. Other documents relate to earlier research that led to the study or the subsequent dissemination of the research results. Some of the artifacts in the "realia" series are original tools involved in the study, while others were collected to help tell the story in the exhibition.

History:

Research by Dr. Frederick S, McKay, Dr. H. Trendley Dean, and others into the effects of fluoride in drinking water led to a 15 year study in which Grand Rapids became the first city in the world to add fluoride to its water supply. The results of the study indicated that the addition of fluoride decreased incidence of cavities by 60%. The Public Museum hosted the exhibition *The Fluoride Story* in 1995 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the public health experiment. Many of the documents and artifacts were collected by the exhibit sponsors from Mrs. H. Trendley Dean, wife of one of the researchers responsible for the experiment.

Series Descriptions:

No.	Series Name	Description
I.	Correspondence, 1926-1944	Letters indicating the importance of fluoride in drinking water to dental health, and advocating for further scientific research; Telegram of the City of Grand Rapids' agreement to participate in the study.
II.	Research Documents, 1936-1947	1936 notebook of Dr. Dean's observations of dental health in Oklahoma; 1947 MCBEE cards used to record data as part of the Grand Rapids experiment; and photograph of a lady using a needle tool to sort the cards.
III.	Published Research, 1916-1962	1916 booklet, "Mottled Teeth"; 1962 book "Fluoride Drinking Waters."
IV.	Audio-Visual Materials, c. 1951-1995	Wooden case containing glass slide presentation used by Dr. Dean to disseminate results of the Grand Rapids study; videotape of fluoride toothpaste television advertisements compiled for the exhibit.
V.	Realia, c. 1940-1995	Dr. Dean's dental tools; needle for sorting computer cards in Rapids study; specimens of fluoride; series of teeth showing stages of decay; containers of fluoride products; teeth molds and teeth impressions. (each of these items was assigned a unique accession number)

Container List:

Container	Folder	Series	Description of Contents	Dates	Count
Box 1	1	I.	2 letters, 1 telegram	1926-1944	5
	2	II.	7 computer cards, 1 photo	1947	8
	3	III.	1 article	1916	2
Box 1		V.	all artifacts	1950-1990	23
Oversize			Commemorative Poster	1945-1995	1