

Guide to Beijing Archives on the Western Medicine in China, 1800-1950

(Note: this is a first draft and will be updated with Chinese information later in 2013)

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Beijing Municipal Archives 北京市档案馆

Chen Qi 陈琦 (北医) chenqi79@163.com

David Luesink (IUPUI) dluesink@iupui.edu

Orientation:

The material in Beijing Municipal Archives concerning the development of Western medical institutions in that city in the first half of the twentieth century is very substantial for a variety of reasons. These archives contain all government documents from the first part of the Republican period, from 1912-1928 when the official capital of the Republic of China was in Beijing. These include over 5000 discrete files with tens of thousands of pages on health and hygiene, and large holdings on almost two dozen medical institutions in the city. Beijing was also the home of the Peking Union Medical College, China's pre-eminent medical school and a graduate training institute, and the PUMC is well represented in the BMA with 141 files and over 4000 pages of documents.

After 1928 Nanjing became the capital and the name of Beijing was changed to Beiping, or "northern peace" to represent its subordination to the new southern capital, Nanjing. The archive continued to collect local government documents for Beijing through to the present. The archives are divided into a section on Ming and Qing documents, a section on Republican documents (which most concerns this project), and several sections on the People's Republic of China organized by topic.

Foreign researchers need to have a letter of introduction from a Chinese *danwei* and their passport. Chinese researchers can use their Chinese ID. The archive is open from 9:15 am to 5:15 pm, and is located at 北京市丰台区蒲黄榆路 42 号. The website is www.da.bj.cn. Further information is available in a review by Arunabh Ghosh at "Fresh from the Archives" (<http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/643>)

A large number of documents are already digitized and can all be viewed on archive computers. Be aware that the archive limits the total number of documents viewed per

day, and photocopying is also restricted. Check with staff before beginning because these rules seem to have changed since the review listed above was published.

Republican Archives

The following information is based on keyword searches in the onsite computer catalogues.

1. KW: 卫生 *weisheng* public health/health/hygiene

5838 items viewable at 30 items per page over 195 pages. These all seem to be files related to the 北师警察厅卫生处 of the 1910s, the 北京卫生处 of the 1910s and 1920s, and the 北京市卫生局 in the 1930s and 1940s. Most files are very long, at least 30 pages, but many have 50-100 pages, and a significant number over 200 pages. There is a 265 page file on cholera from 1947, and a 275 page file dealing with a 1945 report on the influence of the use of coal fires on food quality.

Some well-represented topics in *weisheng*:

- Opium and its regulation
- Regulation of food quality
- Army health
- Correspondence with and about all medical institutions in Beijing
- Financial records related to the Health Bureau/Ministry and medical institutions supported by it
- Plague and epidemic prevention
- School health
- dentistry
- Substantial records on public health from the Japanese occupation, 1938-1945

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| 2. 医药 | yi yao | (medicine) 349 items |
| 3. 药物 | yaowu | (pharmaceuticals) 20 items (legal cases) |
| 4. 防疫 | fangyi | (epidemic prevention) 531 items |

Specific Disease searches

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|-----|--------------|--|
| 霍乱 | huoluan | (cholera) 237 items, all from 1938-1948 decade of war. Prevention is a key word among these investigation of sites, etc. |
| 痘 | dou | (smallpox) 187 items |
| 瘟疫 | wenyi | (plague) 3 items |
| 鼠疫 | shuyi | (bubonic plague) 0 items |
| 流行性 | liuxinxing | (epidemic) 2 items |
| 传染病 | chuanliubing | (contagious disease) 207 items |
| 麻疯 | mafeng | (leprosy) 1 file (1948, 70pp) |
| 伤寒 | shanghan | (typhoid fever, TCM febrile disease) 43 items |
| 疾病 | jibing | (disease) 153 items |
| 肺结核 | feijiehe | (tuberculosis) 11 items |
| 梅毒 | meidu | (syphilis) 7 items |

淋病 linbing (gonorrhea) 2 items
性病 xingbing (sexually transmitted disease) 28 items

The 1928 China Medical Guide includes 22 medical institutions in the city of Beijing. Below are the results of searches for these names and some variations.

- 1) 陆军医学院 Army Medical College 4 items
- 2) 普仁医院 British Charitable Hospital 0 items (mistaken entry)
- 3) 中央医院 Central Hospital 60 items
- 4) 内城官医院 City Dispensary (Municipal Government) 21 items
- 5) 外城官医院 City Dispensary (Police Department) 65 items
- 6) 同仁会北京医院 Dojin Hospital 0 items (see below 12a)
- 7) 道济医院 Douw Hospital 6 items (1930s, 40s)
- 8) 法国医院 French Hospital 6 items
- 9) 德国医院 German Hospital 12 items
- 10) 卫生实验所 Hygienic Laboratory 49 items
- 11) 京师传染病医院 Isolation Hospital 45 items
- 12) 美国同仁医院 Methodist Hospital 2 items
- 13) 首善医院 Metropolitan Hospital 6 items
- 14) 中央防疫处 National Epidemic Prevention Bureau 14 items
中央防疫 28 items
- 15) 北京大学医科 National Medical College 0
北京大学医学院 “ 74 items
医科 44 items (all seem to be variations of 北医)
- 16) 京师警察厅实办公共卫生事务所 Peking Police Public Health Demonstration Station 3 items
- 17) 北京医院 Peking Hospital 3 items
- 18) 京师公益产科医院 Peking Maternity Hospital 14 items
- 19) 北京协和医科大学 Peking Union Medical College, 141 files, 4000-5000 pages
- 20) 中国红十字会北京医院 Red Cross Hospital 2 items (114 pages)
红十字会 213 pages
- 21) 妇婴医院 Sleeper Davis Hospital 12 items
- 22) 北堂医院 St. Vincent Hospital 0 items.

Peking Union Medical College Archives 协和医院档案馆

Orientation:

Anyone interested in the history of Western medicine in China in the first half of the twentieth century soon comes across the broad influence of the Rockefeller Foundation and its China Medical Board which ran a world-class medical school in Beijing. The best

place to start in thinking about this institution is to read the work of CMB scholar, Mary Bullock, including both her 1980 book specifically on the medical school, and her more recent 2011 book on the broader reach of CMB philanthropy in China.

Archives: The main repository of the Rockefeller Archives is located in Tarrytown, NY. This is possibly the largest single archive for holdings concerning China and Chinese medicine before 1950 in the entire world, with the caveat that almost all of their sources are in English. Recently the PUMC in Beijing has been allowing some researchers to visit their archives, held in a recently renovated half-basement of the original buildings of the Rockefeller PUMC. These records also appear to be almost completely in English, and the CMB bureaucracy likely has duplicates of most correspondence in the Rockefeller Archive Center in Tarrytown. However, it appears that some reports that were attached to correspondence sent originally to CMB officers in Beijing had only one copy, and in these cases such files may be available only in Beijing.

Access to these archives for foreign researchers requires direct permission from the PUMC archive directors, introduction letters from a local *danwei* are of no use. My recommendation is for the prospective to be thoroughly familiar with the relevant archives at RAC in NY before attempting to use the archives at the PUMC so that gaps in the record can be clearly identified and listed on the application for admission. Otherwise, the researcher is in the difficult position of having to write down keywords of files to be searched without having first looked at the archive catalogues. These catalogues are bilingual, the English titles of files having recently been translated by PUMC staff. All these caveats aside, for anyone researching a topic on medical history in China who has already done the relevant research in RAC and in the secondary literature, the PUMC Beijing Archives may hold valuable records.

There is little on the scientific content of PUMC activities, most files contain personnel files. However, even these are limited. In the finding aid for The China Medical Board, Inc. Collection, 1914-1971 held at the Rockefeller Archive Center, there is a note based on an interview by J. William Hess with Mary Ferguson in 1974:

“When the Japanese took over the P.U.M.C., Mary Ferguson went through files in her office and the director’s office and pulled out everything that might be injurious to people in Peking. She put on a “white director’s coat” and put the material in the incinerator. When she came back after the war, in 1946, she had no time to work in that material. The files were there. She doesn’t know what happened after the Communists took over. She doesn’t think they would have destroyed them.” JWH. (p. 4)

National Library of China 国家图书馆

This stunning architectural wonder with a center piece reading room that doubles as a perfect panopticon holds probably one of the best collections in China of Republican-era books, including at least hundreds of medical titles, far more than could be surveyed here. Many of these are translated texts from Japanese. They are not organized according to

their period, however, and readers must know their business to be able to sort through the large number of recent books on medical topics. The catalogue is searchable online remotely, and many late Qing and republican journals have been digitized and are available to view on their website.

[Here is a basic search page.](#)