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# Guide to the Thomas Wilson Burrows Surgical Kit circa 1887



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## **Table of Contents**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Descriptive Summary     | 3 |
| Information on Use      | 3 |
| Access                  | 3 |
| Restrictions on Use     | 3 |
| Citation                | 3 |
| Acquisition Information | 3 |
| Biographical Note       | 3 |
| Scope Note              | 4 |
| Related Resources       | 4 |
| Subject Headings        | 5 |
| INVENTORY               | 5 |

## **Descriptive Summary**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Identifier</b> | ICU.SPCL.BURROWSKIT   |
| <b>Title</b>      | Burrows, Thomas Wilson. Surgical Kit  |
| <b>Date</b>       | circa 1887  |
| <b>Size</b>       | 1.4 linear feet (1 box)   |
| <b>Repository</b> | Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center<br>University of Chicago Library<br>1100 East 57th Street<br>Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.        |
| <b>Abstract</b>   | Late nineteenth-century amputation kit made by Haussmann, McComb & Dunn Co. in Chicago, Illinois, and belonging to Dr. Thomas Wilson Burrows (1862-1930). |

## **Information on Use**

### **Access**

The kit is available for research.

### **Restrictions on Use**

Items are fragile. There is one broken hinge on the box, and the lid is cracked. Place items back into the kit according to the order shown in the accompanying photograph and ensure that the lid closes properly.

### **Citation**

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Burrows, Thomas Wilson. Surgical Kit, [Box #, Folder #], Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

### **Acquisition Information**

This surgical kit was donated to the John Crerar Library by Thomas Wilson Burrows' son, Dr. Samuel J. Burrows.

### **Biographical Note**

Dr. Thomas Wilson Burrows was born in County Tyrone, Ireland on October 1, 1862 to Samuel and Eliza Burrows. The family immigrated to the United States in 1866 and settled in Chicago. Thomas graduated from Rush Medical College in 1887, and practiced medicine for five years in Serena, Illinois. He obtained additional education in Dublin, Ireland and spent parts of two years in large hospitals in London and Vienna. In 1892, he established a practice

in Ottawa, Illinois where he built a reputation as a respected surgeon. He practiced medicine in Ottawa, Illinois for forty years.

Dr. Burrows married Agnes Jacobs Burrows (1870-1955) on June 6, 1893. The couple had five children who survived into adulthood: Samuel, Richard, Amena, Anne, and Edyth. Dr. Burrows died on September 27, 1930 while travelling with Agnes and Amena in Europe.

The surgical kit was made around 1887 by Haussmann, McComb & Dunn Co. (Hermann Haussmann, J. C. McComb, and Sola Dunn), which resided at 122 Randolph Street, Chicago, from May 1, 1886 to 1901. The company changed its name to Haussmann and Dunn in 1901 and moved to 211-213 Madison.

The kit was made during an era when surgeons prioritized careful preservation of tissue, rather than quick removal. Anesthesia, medical and surgical specialties, and surgical antisepsis were all important developments between 1840 and the 1880s that impacted the design of surgical instruments. Tools became lighter and more delicate as anesthesia gave surgeons more time to operate on a patient. As surgeons increasingly specialized, there was a proliferation of different types of tools and they were sold in sets tailored to particular procedures. This kit is an amputation kit. By 1876, tools were nickel-plated to withstand the corrosive effects of antiseptic liquids. American instrument makers were also interested in beautifying their tools, and used materials such as ivory and ebony - both of which appear to be used in the tools in this kit.

### **Scope Note**

The kit is housed in a veneered red oak box, which is lacquered, and sports brass inlay, brass hinges, and a locking mechanism. The box measures 42 cm long, 16.5 cm wide, and 9.5 cm high. One brass corner is detached. The veneer is adhered with hide glue. The box has a brown velvet interior with slots for tools, a removable tray, and a covered compartment in the lid.

The kit contains 32 tools, four unidentified pieces of tools, and a small vial of MSD apothecene and adrenalin tablets.

### **Related Resources**

Browse finding aids by topic.

Beaumont, William. Collection

Bernard, Claude, Dessins originaux pour le Précis iconographique de médecine opératoire et d'anatomie chirurgicale, par C. Bernard et Ch. Huette, Crerar Ms 84

Byrne, John, Clinical Notes on the Electric Cautery in Uterine Surgery, Crerar Ms 46

Clark, Charles M., Record of Cases both Surgical and Medical, Operations, Post Mortem Examinations, etc., Crerar Ms 85

Holmes, Bayard Taylor. Papers, Crerar Ms 91

Langenbeck, Conrad Johann Martin, Chirurgie, Crerar Ms 87

Senn, Nicholas. Papers

## **Subject Headings**

- Amputation
- Amputation--History
- Medicine--History
- Surgeons
- Surgery
- Surgical instruments and apparatus
- Surgical instruments and apparatus--History
- Surgical instruments and apparatus industry--United States
- Surgical instruments and apparatus industry--United States--History
- Surgical technology

## **INVENTORY**

### **Box 1**

Veneered red oak box with brass inlay

### **Box 1**

Nine knives of various sizes

### **Box 1**

Bone cutter

### **Box 1**

Cutting needle

### **Box 1**

Amputation bone saw with removable blade

### **Box 1**

Aitkens chain saw

### **Box 1**

Metacarpal saw

### **Box 1**

Hey skull saw (neurosurgical craniotomy saw)

### **Box 1**

Mallet (to be used with chisel)

### **Box 1**

Probes, including probe with ear scoop

### **Box 1**

Trocar and cannula

**Box 1**

Clips and clamps, including a tenaculum

**Box 1**

Eustachian tube catheter

**Box 1**

Trepan with bladed cylinder

**Box 1**

Baunscheidt's Lebenswecker

**Box 1**

Vial of MSD apothesine and adrenalin tablets

**Box 1**

Unidentified pieces of tools