

**Records of the Public Health Service, 1912-
1968**

Record Group 90

**National Archives and Records Administration
Pacific Region (Laguna Niguel)**

Records of the Public Health Service, 1912-1968

Record Group 90

Public Health Service

Medical Officer in Charge, Point Loma Quarantine Station

Letters Received 1889-1894

Letters Sent 1889-1908

Medical Officer in Charge, San Diego

Letters Received 1904-1910

Letters Sent 1900-1906

Phoenix Indian Medical Center, Indian Health Service, Phoenix, AZ

Environmental Health Program and Project Files 1950-1968

Public Health Service

The Public Health Service, originally called the Marine Hospital Service, has its origins in an act of July 16, 1798, which authorized hospitals for the care of sick and disabled American merchant seamen. The scope of its activities was greatly expanded by subsequent legislation, and it became part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1955 after having been part of the Department of the Treasury from 1798 to 1939 and the Federal Security Agency from 1939 to 1953.

The Public Health Service operates marine hospitals, hospitals for specific diseases, medical facilities for Federal penal institutions, quarantine and health stations, and research institutions and laboratories. It conducts research in the cause, prevention, and control of disease and disseminates health information.

Medical Officer in Charge, Point Loma Quarantine Station

This quarantine station was one of six established in 1889 by Act of Congress as a result of the outbreak and spread of cholera in Europe. Two square blocks were purchased in 1890 to house the facility.

During the 1890s the port of San Diego was used mainly by coastwise ships. Health concerns were minimal. Beginning in 1899, however, steamers began arriving from the Orient where outbreaks of bubonic plague reached epidemic proportions. Additionally, yellow fever became a concern with ships which had embarked from Central and South American ports. The resultant overcrowding of the quarantine station led to a Special Act of Congress in 1903 which transferred six blocks of land from the Navy to expand the facility.

When a ship docked or anchored, inspectors boarded it and completed reports on the ship's voyage and the health of the passengers and crew. A medical officer examined the crew and passengers for evidence of contagious disease. A vessel inspector checked the ship for abnormal degrees of rodent and vermin infestation. If inspectors discovered problems, they quarantined and fumigated the ship. Otherwise, they issued a clear bill of health.

The station at Point Loma had responsibility for San Diego Bay and reported to a district office in San Pedro. The station closed during the 1960s. These are the only known records.

Medical Officer in Charge, Point Loma Quarantine Station

Series: **Letters Received, 1889-1894**

Linear Measure: 3 in.

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope Content: The letters originated primarily with the Supervising Surgeon General in Washington. The correspondence concerns the purchase of land and a launch for the station, the construction of facilities and their furnishings and maintenance, and personnel matters. Also included are forms, notices, vouchers, circulars, death notices, telegrams, and letters concerning yellow fever and other communicable diseases.

Access Restrictions: None.

Other Restrictions: None.

Boxes: 1

Location: V12 71

Medical Officer in Charge, Point Loma Quarantine Station

Series: **Letters Sent, 1889-1908**

Linear Measure: 10 in.

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope Content: These press copybooks contain letters, circulars, vouchers, disbursements, receipts, reports, notices, schedules, statements, synopses, and telegrams relating to bids and acquisitions, construction of facilities, furnishings and supplies, fumigation and disinfection, health matters, lists of eligibles, and personnel. Also included are letters and specifications pertaining to the purchase and building of a launch, wharf, and smallpox compound. The volumes also contain copies of annual and statistical reports, and correspondence with political and business leaders concerning appropriations for the station.

The press copybooks contain both handwritten and typewritten copies, many of which are faint or even illegible - particularly in the third volume.

Access Restrictions: None.

Other Restrictions: None.

Boxes: 2 (2-3)

Location: V12 71

Medical Officer in Charge, San Diego

This station opened in 1900 under the Marine Hospital Service. It provided medical care for beneficiaries determined by Federal law. It also conducted physicals for those persons appointed to Government service.

Charles E. Decker served as the station's Medical Officer until he died of tuberculosis in 1903. His name was placed on the Rolls of Honor of the Public Health Service. One of his successors, Milton H. Foster, also received notoriety when he performed autopsies on three victims of bubonic plague in 1900 at Port Townsend, Washington. Dr. Foster performed the autopsies without surgical gloves.

Additional records for this office are not known to exist. They may have been destroyed by an alcohol explosion in the San Diego office in 1927.

Medical Officer in Charge, San Diego

Series: **Letters Received, 1904-1910**

Linear Measure: 3 in.

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope Content: This bound correspondence includes letters, telegrams, check registers, circulars, and vouchers, primarily from the Assistant Surgeon General. The letters pertain to administrative matters such as property and personnel. They also concern repayment of private physicians and hospitals for emergency services, particularly as a result of the explosion aboard the U.S.S. Bennington.

Access Restrictions: None.

Other Restrictions: None.

Boxes: 1

Location: V12 72

Medical Officer in Charge, San Diego

Series: **Letters Sent, 1900-1906**

Linear Measure: 5 in.

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically.

Scope Content: These press copy books contain letters, telegrams, forms, schedules, endorsements, notes from telephone calls, lists of eligibles and duty rosters, vouchers, and notices that deal with the administration and programs of the Marine Hospital. Also included is the announcement of the death of Assistant Surgeon Charles Decker on October 21, 1903. Up until that time Decker had written the majority of the correspondence. Loose correspondence in the third volume pertains primarily to the U.S.S. Bennington disaster. The majority of the correspondence is addressed to the Surgeon General and other officials in the Department of the Treasury. There are also letters to ships' captains and members of the public.

Access Restrictions: None.

Other Restrictions: None.

Boxes: 1 (2)

Location: V12 72

Phoenix Indian Medical Center, Indian Health Service, Phoenix, AZ

Early medical services for Native Americans lacked an overall plan. Each of the physicians hired by the government often had a clinical practice encompassing large areas. The physician hired for the Navajos in 1890 served an area of about 12,000 square miles and a population of approximately 18,000. The Bureau of Indian Affairs recognized the inadequacies of medical care for Indians and as a result employed Dr. Ales Hrdlicka in 1908 to investigate Native American health in the United States.

Several years later, a hospital opened at the Phoenix Indian School at a cost of \$12,000. By 1934, a new 60-bed Phoenix Indian School Hospital facility consisting of 2 wards, a dozen private rooms, a kitchen, fracture beds, and sterilization facilities was fully operational. Responsibility for the entire operation including all surgical and medical work rested with Dr. Fred Loe and eleven staff doctors and nurses.

In addition to the Phoenix Indian School Hospital, the Indian Tuberculosis Hospital, opened in 1912, was located off campus north of the school hospital. The combined units of the tuberculosis sanitorium (East Farm) and the Indian school hospital were referred to as the Phoenix Indian Medical Center.

In 1955, responsibility for Native American medical care transferred from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Public Health Service. While planning for new, larger, and consolidated facilities, the Public Health Service continued to make renovations and to add services at the widely separated and antiquated facilities at the Phoenix Indian School Hospital and the East Farm Tuberculosis Sanitorium.

Ground breaking ceremonies for a new 200-bed Phoenix Indian Medical Center took place on June 22, 1968, and the dedication ceremonies were held on December 12, 1970. The Phoenix Indian Medical Center currently serves as a referral hospital for 10 Native American field hospitals in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah and is used as a training and research facility, as well as serving a Native American population of approximately 55,000 individuals.

Phoenix Indian Medical Center, Indian Health Service, Phoenix, AZ

Series: **Environmental Health Program and Project Files, 1950-1968**

Linear Measure: 6 ft. 3 in.

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically by program or project name, thereunder alphabetically by folder title.

Scope Content: Records document the administration of health programs and construction projects; provide information on the effects of the economy and industrialization on Indian reservations and within non-reservation Indian communities in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah; and report on resources available through Federal, State, and Local health programs as well as the management of health training programs and evaluations of those programs. The records describe projects and related problems, project costs, and tribal participation in task force studies and surveys. The files contain official correspondence in connection with Public Law 86-112 relating to the development of housing facilities, health centers, hospitals, and water and sewage systems.

Access Restrictions: Access to some records may be denied for reasons of privacy, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552, Exemption (b) (6)).

Other Restrictions: None

Boxes: 15 (1-15)

Location: V12-65 to V12-70