

THE STARK CENTER

Sydell Herbst and Christopher Gian-Cursio collection

**The H.J. Lutchter Stark Center for Physical
Culture & Sports**

The University of Texas at Austin

Finding Aid

*Sydell Herbst and Christopher Gian-Cursio collection: 3 Boxes, 2 Oversized Boxes, ca.
1800 – 1984, undated*

Abstract

Christopher Gian-Cursio was a naturopathic doctor, nutritionist, author, editor, and researcher. The collection reflects Gian-Cursio's professional career as a practicing Natural Hygienist and his extensive research into the development and pioneers of the health movement in America, especially James Jackson's "Our Home on the Hillside" Hygienic Institute in Dansville, N.Y. Also included in the collection, are a substantial number of clippings on a broad variety of health-related subjects such as food and nutrition, cancer, chiropractic care, fasting, sexual health, a small assortment of newspapers from the middle-to-late 1800s, and correspondence with other leading figures of the Natural Hygiene movement, including Jesse Mercer Gehman and Herbert Shelton. The collection also includes an extensive complement of books, which are listed in the University of Texas Libraries catalog.

Access

Access to the Sydell Herbst and Christopher Gian-Cursio collection is restricted to visitors of the H.J. Lutchter Stark Center for Physical Culture and Sports. The Stark Center welcomes access inquires and encourages research appointments. For more information, phone (512) 471-4890, email info@starkcenter.org, or visit www.starkcenter.org.

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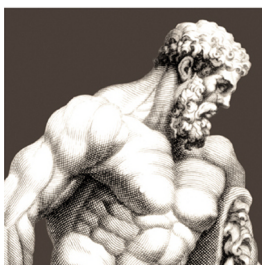
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Preferred Citation

Sydell Herbst and Christopher Gian-Cursio collection, H.J. Lutcher Stark Center for Physical Culture & Sports, The University of Texas at Austin.

Subject Index

Materials

Audio Reel
Chart
Journal
Microcopy Resolution
Test
Notepad
Newspapers

Milk/American Dry
Milk Institute
National Association of
Professional
Practitioners
Smithsonian Institution
The Vegetarian Society
of New York, Inc.

Margolin, Shoshana
Mega, John J.
Ricciardi, Michael
Shelton, Herbert
Smith, Gerrit
Sutherland, John
Preston
Trall, Russell
Vetrano, Virginia
Welch, William

Organizations

The American Natural
Hygiene Society, Inc
British College of Health
The Dansville Institute
Health for All
Health Freedom Brigade
Historical Society
Lakemont Health Resort
The Long Island
McFarlin Clothing
Company
Medical Freedom
Defense Committee

People

Alcott, Bronson
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Bass, Stanley S
Carque, Otto
Davis, John W.
Floyd, Oscar
Gabriel, Jean
Gehman, Jesse Mercer
Harriton, Abraham
Hazard, Susan
Jackson, James C.
Jenning, Issac
Kent, Tamar
March, Alden

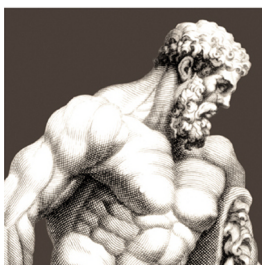
Places

Bethlehem, N.H.
Dansville, N.Y.
London, England
New Jersey
Rochester, N.Y.

Publications:

Newspapers

The Albany Patriot
The Albion
American Jewish Ledger



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American Temperance
Intelligence
The American
Vegetarian
The Banner of Light
The Chicago Sun
Chicago Tribune
Dansville Herald
Democrat and Chronicle
The Echo
Herald of Health
The Island
Liberty Pass
The Lily
The New York Herald
The New York Times
New-York Tribune
Strength and Health
Magazine
Sun-Times

Publications: Papers and Articles

The American
Phrenological Journal
Coffee, Tea and
Chocolate: The Deadly
Stimulants

Confessions of A School
Master
The Dio Lewis Treasury
Fasting in Acute Disease
Malnutrition the
Medical Octopus
Man's Constitutional
Diet
The Medical Works of
Edward Miller, M.D
The Negro
New Organization Seeks
to Increase Health
Services
Rational Soil Culture
Essential for the
Production of Superior
Foods
Religion of Reason
The Seven Essentials of
Health
Solitude of Self
Some Thoughts on
Allergy

Subjects

Abolition
African-Americans
American Dry Milk
Institute

Anatomy
Anti-Fluoride
Anti-Pasteurization
Anti-Vaccination
Buisson method
(alternative to
vaccination)
Cancer
Chiropractic
Diseases
Education
Environment
Fasting
Food Preparation
Health
Hydropathy
Hydrophobia
Natural Hygiene
Naturopathy
Nutrition/Food/Fasting
Rabies
Science Magazine
Self-Healing
Service Citizens Medical
Reference Bureau
Sexual Health
Suffrage
United States Public
Health
Water-Cure



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Biographical Note

Christopher Gian-Cursio was born in Rochester, New York on February 4, 1910 to Antonio Gian-Cursio and Maria Bianchi. He was an early adopter of and advocate for alternative medicine, naturopathy, and, what he would come to call, Natural Hygiene. In the early 1930s Gian-Cursio attended Dr. Benjamin Lust's American School of Naturopathy, which in 1902 was the first institution to introduce naturopathy to America. His professional career began with the establishment of his orthopathy practice—which holds that prevention and treatment of disease and illness is possible by fasting, dieting, and eschewing nearly all medical treatment and medicines—in Rochester, New York in 1934. On July 11 of that same year, he married Vingenzia "Jenne" Gugino in Batavia, NY, with whom he parented three sons and two daughters.

In 1944 he acquired Warner Castle, a 22-room private residence built on a corner of Highland Park in Rochester, and transformed it into a convalescent home. The following fall, the New York State Department of Education had Dr. Gian-Cursio arrested and prosecuted on a charge of practicing medicine without a license after one of his patients died upon returning home following six weeks of treatment. Although he was acquitted of the charge in May 1946, it would be only the first of at least eight trials that Dr. Gian-Cursio would face throughout his career; he would eventually be imprisoned by the state of Florida. The first acquittal in 1946 also marks the beginning of his long-time activism on behalf of "medical liberty": the right of Americans to choose treatment according to their beliefs about healing.

In 1952, Dr. Gian-Cursio relocated from Rochester to New York City, but returned each month to Buffalo, Rochester, and Batavia to attend to his remaining patients there. At this time, he took a position as editor of the *Journal of Natural Hygiene*, and continued to be a prolific author and speaker at conferences and events across the country.



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He was estranged from his wife at the end of his life and he lived with his personal assistant until his death on July 26, 1985 in Rochester, NY.

Scope and Content

The bulk the collection comprises subject files covering various topics, from both Gian-Cursio's career as a practicing naturopath and natural hygienist, to the substantial amount of research he did on the early history of health reform movements in America. The materials included in the collection include, photocopies of diaries and letters of early health pioneers, photocopies of articles, full newspapers and newspaper clippings, microfilm printouts of newspapers, photocopies of both excerpts and full books, commercially-produced pamphlets, and numerous professional papers and articles written by both Gian-Cursio and others. The materials cover a broad date range, with much of the research material dating from the mid-to-late 1800s, and material related to Gian-Cursio's practice and treatment of patients mostly dating from the mid-to-late 1900s. The collection contains a few photographs, a small assortment of postcards, and an open reel magnetic audiotape.

Collection Arrangement

Series: Subject Files, undated, ca. 1800 – ca. 1980

Box 1, Folder 1: Abolition & Slavery, 1841 – 1954

Box 4: Abolition & Slavery: Microform of The Abolitionist & The Liberty Press,
ca. 1841 – ca. 1843

Box 4, Folder 2: Abolition & Slavery: Inscribed placeholders from microform,
1841 – 1954

Box 1, Folder 3: Alcott, Bronson, 1831 – 1856

Box 1, Folder 4: Anatomy, 1908 – 1962

Box 1, Folder 5: Anti-Fluoride, 1928 – 1966

Box 1, Folder 6: Anti-Pasteurization, 1925 – 1949

Box 1, Folder 7: Anti-Vaccination, 1909 – 1939

Box 1, Folder 8: Anti-Vivisection, 1923 – 1945

Box 1, Folder 9: Cancer, 1975 – 1979



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- Box 1, Folder 10: Chiropractic Practice, 1939 – 1979
- Box 1, Folder 10A: Clymer Health Clinic, undated
- Box 1, Folder 11: Environmental Effects on Humans, undated
- Box 1, Folder 12: Health For All Articles, undated
- Box 1, Folder 13: Jackson, James Caleb & Jackson “Our Home on the Hillside”
Institute #1, 1845 – 1925
- Box 1, Folder 14: Jackson, James Caleb & Jackson “Our Home on the Hillside”
Institute #2, 1845 – 1925
- Box 1, Folder 15: Jennings, Issac, undated
- Box 1, Folder 16: March, Alden, 1832 – 1964
- Box 1, Folder 17: Milk & American Dry Milk Institute, 1925 – 1945
- Box 1, Folder 18: Natural Hygiene, 1850 – 1947
- Box 1, Folder 19: Nutrition #1, 1881 – 1958
- Box 1, Folder 20: Nutrition #2, 1881 – 1958
- Box 2, Folder 21: Rabies & Hydrophobia #1, 1948 – 1980
- Box 2, Folder 22: Rabies & Hydrophobia #2, 1948 – 1980
- Box 2, Folder 23: School Education, 1869 – 1965
- Box 2, Folder 24: Self-Healing, 1933 – 1980
- Box 2, Folder 25: Sexual Health, undated, 1973
- Box 2, Folder 26: Smith, Gerrit, 1825 – 1980
- Box 2, Folder 27: Spirituality & Transcendentalism, 1967
- Box 2, Folder 28: Trall, Russell T., 1862 – 1864
- Box 2, Folder 29: Women’s Suffrage & Rights, 1799 – 1979

Series: Leaders of Natural Hygiene Movement - Shelton, Herbert and Gehman, Jesse Mercer, ca. 1940 – ca. 1981

- Box 3, Folder 30: Gehman, Jesse Mercer, 1945 – 1962
- Box 3, Folder 31: Shelton, Herbert, 1940 – 1981

Series: Gian-Cursio, Christopher, undated, 1953 - 1980

- Box 3, Folder 32: Correspondence of Gian-Cursio, Christopher, 1953 – 1980
- Box 3, Folder 33: The Dansville Institute, 1978 – 1980
- Box 3, Folder 34: Imprisonment of Gian-Cursio, Christopher, 1964



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Box 3, Folder 35: Journal of Gian-Cursio, Christopher, 1968

Box 3, Folder 36: Speeches & Lectures, undated

Series: Publications, 1846 - 1984

Box 5: The Albany Patriot (microfilm photocopies), 1854-1849

Box 5: American Temperance Intelligence, 1835

Box 3, Folder 37: Journal of Neurophysiology, 1950

Box 5: Liberty Press, 1846

Box 3, Folder 38: Newspaper & Magazine Clippings #1, 1973 – 1984

Box 3, Folder 39: Newspaper & Magazine Clippings #2, 1973 – 1984

Box 3, Folder 40: Newspaper & Magazine Clippings #3, 1973 – 1984

Box 3, Folder 41: Newspaper & Magazine Clippings #4, 1973 – 1984

Box 3, Folder 42: Newspaper & Magazine Clippings #5, 1973 – 1984

Box 3, Folder 43: Newspaper & Magazine Clippings #6, 1973 – 1984

Box 5: New-York Tribune, 1865

Box 5: The New York Herald, 1861 – 1863

Box 3, Folder 44: Science Clippings/Magazines/Articles/Papers in Packets, 1901 –
1939

Series: Miscellaneous, undated, ca. 1820 - 1980

Box 3, Folder 45: Ephemera, undated, ca. 1820 – ca. 1980

Box 3, Folder 46: Microcopy Resolution Test Chart, 1963

Box 3, Folder 47: Notepad, undated

Box 3, Folder 47A: Photographs, 1902, undated

Series: Audio, 1958

Box 3, Folder 48: Open Reel Audio Tape: Diseases of Respiratory Tract &
Abolishment of Fear in Living, 1958