



# Historical Society of Pennsylvania

## Vaccines

As much as we may hate getting them, vaccines are an integral part of infectious disease control in the modern world. While we take vaccines for granted now, the history of vaccines is a storied one that begins with an early Chinese vaccine against smallpox (ca. 1000 CE). Diseases such as smallpox, measles, whooping cough and yellow fever were very real concerns before the advent of inoculation. In fact, Philadelphia experienced many epidemics within a short frame of time during its earliest years. These epidemics had a lasting effect on Philadelphia, other colonial cities and the rest of the world before vaccines eradicated diseases such as small pox. Benjamin Franklin's own four-year-old son died of smallpox and he became an advocate of inoculation. However, inoculation did not catch on right away, and many early advocates were considered outcasts due to their beliefs. Eventually, vaccines become commonplace and the invention of a variety of vaccines, including the smallpox, yellow fever and flu vaccines, served as a turning point in modern medicine.

**Search Terms:** variolation; Lady Mary Montagu; Benjamin Rush; Benjamin Franklin; Louis Pasteur; Edward Jenner; Cotton Mather; Caspar Wistar; Philadelphia Vaccine Society; Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania

### **Recommended Collections:**

LCP Wm\* .99 v.1 *Letter from Doctor Edward Jenner, to William Dillwyn, Esq. on the effects of vaccination, in preserving from the small-pox: To which are added sundry documents relating to vaccination, referred to and accompanying the letter (1818)*

LCP Am 1781 Bid (b.w.) Af.404.20-21 (Franklin) Franklin, Benjamin, and William Heberden. *Some Account of the Success of Inoculation for the Small-pox in England and America : Together With Plain Instructions By Which Any Person*



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*May Be Enabled to Perform the Operation and Conduct the Patient Through the Distemper.* London: W. Strahan, 1759.

3134 Vols 2-4 Samuel Hollingsworth Wallis daybooks 1820-1829

He was a physician in the Muncy region of Lycoming County, which was still fairly undeveloped (Muncy borough was incorporated in 1826). These volumes state the name of each patient, where he or she lived ("mouth of Beach Creek," near B Eagle Bridge," "lower end of Muncy-town,"), what each person owed him, and what the sum was for (visits to members of the family, medicines, vaccinations). Daybook A includes notes on six lectures by Benjamin Rush.

Kf. 991 vol 2 *Royal Jennerian Society for the Extermination of the Smallpox By the Extension of Vaccination.* London, 1823.

*Rush family papers, 1748-1876*

Collection#LCP134

\*Extensive information on *Benjamin Rush* and *Benjamin Franklin* is available in the PC1 card catalog.

### **Other Sources of Information:**

College of Physicians of Philadelphia - The Historical Medical Library - 19 South 22nd Street, Philadelphia—[www.collegeofphysicians.org/library/](http://www.collegeofphysicians.org/library/)

Drexel Legacy Center @ the Drexel University College of Medicine, Queen Lane Campus – 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia—[www.drexelmed.edu](http://www.drexelmed.edu)

Library Company of Philadelphia – 1314 Locust St., Philadelphia—[www.librarycompany.org](http://www.librarycompany.org)



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