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## Guide to the Elias Samuel Cooper Papers, 1844-1978

### Collection number: MS 458

California Historical Society

North Baker Research Library  
San Francisco, California

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Elias Samuel Cooper Papers,

**Date (inclusive):** 1844-1978

**Collection number:** MS 458

**Creator:** Cooper, Elias Samuel, 1822-1862

**Extent:** 4 ft.

**Repository:** California Historical Society, North Baker Library  
San Francisco, California 94105-4014

**National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) Identification Number:**  
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**Language:** English

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#### Biography

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Dr. Elias Cooper was born in Ohio in 1822. He began the study of medicine at the age of sixteen and graduated from the University of St. Louis at the age of eighteen. Dr. Cooper practiced medicine in Danville and Peoria, Illinois from 1840-1855 before moving to San Francisco in 1855. Upon his arrival in San Francisco, Cooper established the Cooper Eye, Ear and Orthopedic Infirmary. He soon became a figure of controversy among the members of the established medical community because he advertised his medical practice and because he offered free lectures and demonstrations of his surgical techniques. Cooper was also favorably recognized for his contributions to medicine which included the use of chloroform during surgery, the use of alcoholic dressings to avoid infection and corrective surgical procedures for the clubfoot. Cooper was also a pioneer in the use of animals for testing surgical procedures.

In 1858 Cooper established the first medical college in San Francisco, The Medical Department of the University of the Pacific. The college existed from 1858 through 1864. (The college was subsequently reactivated by Cooper's nephew, Dr. Levi Cooper Lane, in 1870 as the Medical College of the Pacific. In 1882 the school was renamed Cooper Medical College and in 1912 the name was changed to the Stanford University of Medicine. Since 1960 the school has existed as the Presbyterian Medical Center.) In 1860 Cooper founded one of the first medical journals in San Francisco, *The San Francisco Medical Press*.

Another first credited to Cooper was that of having performed the first cesarean section in San Francisco in 1857. Cooper was able to save the life of the mother, Mary Hoges, but was unable to save the child. The operation was subsequently the subject of a malpractice suit brought by Mrs. Hoges who alleged that the operation was unnecessary. Mrs. Hoges was encouraged to file the suit by the physician who assisted during the operation, Dr. David Wooster. Although the case ended with a hung jury and was not retried, Wooster continued his attacks upon Cooper in the *Pacific Medical and Surgical Journal*. Cooper was eventually able to respond to these attacks in print through his journal, *The San Francisco Medical Press*.

Cooper died in 1862 of nephritis following a prolonged illness. Obituaries were highly laudatory of Cooper's contributions to medicine. His dedication to his work was praised by Dr. Cooper's friends who said He would rather cut than eat. (*Oakland Tribune*, January 28, 1940).

### Scope and Content

The Dr. Elias Samuel Cooper Papers consists of four feet of personal papers covering the period 1844-1862. The collection includes correspondence to and from Cooper regarding family matters, case reports, medical articles, lectures on medical and surgical procedures and the formation of a medical college and medical journal. The collection also includes lecture notes, his medical advertisements, articles written by Cooper, account books and an incomplete biography. In addition, the collection contains the research notes and materials accumulated by Dr. Ludwig Emge during his research on Cooper's life.

- Anesthetics--Chloroform
- California State Medical Society
- Cooper's Eye, Ear and Orthopedic Infirmary
- Emge, Dr. Ludwig
- Hoes, Mary P., 1857-1862
- Lane, Dr. Levi Cooper, (1828-1902)
- Medicine
- Pacific Medical and Surgical Journal
- Physicians
- San Francisco-Hospital
- San Francisco Medical Press
- San Francisco-Medical Schools
- San Francisco--Medicine--History
- Surgery
- Wooster, Dr. David (1825-1894), 1858-1862

### Material Transferred

Transferred to the Fine Arts Collection: pencil drawing of Dr. David Wooster, dated 23 May 1892.

Transferred to the Library: pamphlets and other printed materials.

Box 1, Folder 1 **Correspondence, 1844-1854**

Folder 2 **Correspondence, 1855**

- Folder 3      **Correspondence, 1856**
- Folder 4      **Correspondence, 1857-1862**
- Folder 5      **Correspondence, n.d.**
- Folder 6      **Ephemera**
- Folder 7      **Printed Materials**
- Folder 8      **Autobiography**
- Box 2, Folder 9 **Scrapbooks**
- Folder 10     **List of subscribers and exchanges for the Medical Press**
- Folder 11     ***Journal of Pharmacy, 1837***
- Folder 12     **Cooper-Hoges Malpractice Suit, trial testimony**
- Folder 13     **Cooper-Hoges Malpractice Suit, Cooper's notes**
- Box 3, Folder 14 **Emge Research Materials-Correspondence, 1930-1978**
- Folder 15     **Emge Research Materials-Bibliographical Materials**
- Folder 16     **Emge Research Materials-Typewritten copies of Cooper Correspondence**
- Folder 17     **Case Reports**
- Folder 18     **Case Reports**
- Folder 19     **Case Reports**
- Folder 20     **Case Reports**
- Box 4, Folder 21 **Case Reports**
- Folder 22     **Case Reports**
- Folder 23     **Case Reports**
- Folder 24     **Lecture Notes-**  
                  **Hernia**  
                  **Varicocele and Cirscocele**  
                  **Dislocation of the Forearm**  
                  **Cotalgic Hip Disease**
- Folder 25     **Lecture Notes-**  
                  **Enlargement of Bone by Osseous Deposits**  
                  **Study of Medicine**  
                  **Incisions into Joints on Cases of Synovits**
- Box 5, Folder 26 **Lecture Notes-**  
                  **Inflammation**  
                  **Granulations**
-

- Inflammation of the Bone**  
**Spina Bifida**
- Folder 27    **Lecture Notes-Treatment of Gangrene**  
**Pruritis Anis, Ulcers**  
**Necrosis**  
**Naevus Maturus**
- Folder 28    **Lecture Notes-**  
**Irritation**  
**Restoring the Secretions**  
**Tissues of the Human Body**  
**Hemorrhoids**  
**Aneurism**
- Folder 29    **Lecture Notes-**  
**Practicability of Ligating Abdominal Aorta**  
**Anesthesia by Compression of Carotid Arteries**  
**Excision of Joints**  
**Gonorrhoea**  
**Ecraseur**  
**Surgical Operations on Young Children**  
**Eye Disease**  
**Choloform**  
**Uterine Tumours**  
**California State Medical Society**
- Folder 30    **Lecture Notes-**  
**Bone Reproduction**  
**Effect of Atmosphere Admitted to Wounds**  
**Removal of Floating Cartilages**  
**Chronic Rheumatic Arthritis of the Hip**  
**Ganglion**
- Folder 31    **Lecture Notes-**  
**Obliterating an Aneurysm Tumour**  
**Ligating Arteries**  
**Purulent Infection or Pyemia**  
**Affections of Synovitis Sheath**  
**Division of Tendon Achilles**  
**Injury of Joints**  
**Gypsum Bandages**  
**Exsection of Knee Joints**
- Box 6, Folder 32 **Lecture Notes-**  
**Anatomy and Surgery of Bones and Joints**  
**Synovial Sheaths**  
**Hypertrophy of Bone**  
**Difficulties of Declaring a Prognosis**  
**Sprains**
- Folder 33    **Lecture Notes-**  
**Pseudoarthrosis**  
**Concussion of the Brain**  
**Ulceration of the Bladder**  
**Neuralgia of the Kidneys**  
**Postoperative treatment for a clubfoot**
-

**Necrosis  
Ganglion**

Folder 34    **Lecture Notes-**  
**Hernia**  
**Pruritis Ani**  
**Coxalgia**  
**Aneurism by Anastemosis**  
**Enlargement of Bone by Osseous Deposits**  
**Extraction of an Arrow**  
**Diarrhea and Dysentary**  
**Ligating Arteries with Satellite Veins**  
**Effect of Climate of California on Healing of Wounds**

Box 7        **Financial Records**