

QUICK FACTS

Source: The New York Academy of Medicine

Size: Approximately 600,000 pages

Content Types: Rare books and pamphlets, as well as periodicals and professional papers, including speeches, manuscripts, articles, notes, photographs, and more

Date Range: Seventeenth through twentieth centuries

Available: March 2024

Newly Digitized Materials: 100% QA of all English-language optical character recognition (OCR)

Disciplines Supported: Cultural studies, disability studies, ethnic studies, gender studies, health and medicine, history of medicine, legal and policy studies, psychiatry, psychology, social work, sociology of medicine, women's studies

Complementary Gale Archives:

- *Archives of Sexuality and Gender*
- *The Making of Modern Law: American Civil Liberties Union Papers, Part I and II*
- *Public Health Archives: Public Health in Modern America, 1890–1970*
- *Women's Studies Archive*

Usage Highlights:

- Discover text that includes handwriting at all search levels (basic, advanced, and document level) with Gale's handwritten text recognition (HTR) technology
- Mine this content within *Gale Digital Scholar Lab*
- Enhance student instruction with the forthcoming Learning Center
- Cross-search content from other *Gale Primary Sources* archives
- Find related resources in the *Gale eBooks* collection using the Related Resources feature
- As a complement to searching, browse content in the file order in which it was arranged by the source library

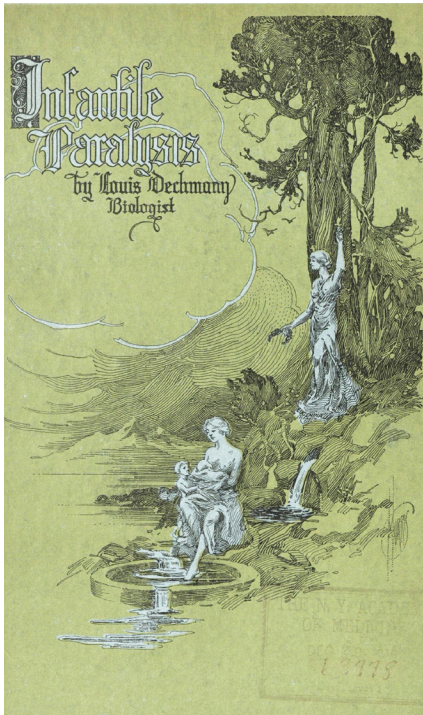
HISTORY OF DISABILITIES: DISABILITIES IN SOCIETY, SEVENTEENTH TO TWENTIETH CENTURY



Image provided by the Connecticut Children's Aid Society from the Douglas C. McMurtrie Cripples Collection (F54 McM), New York Academy of Medicine Library. Children at the Newington Home for Incurables, Newington, Connecticut, circa 1899.

DELIVER GREATER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

History of Disabilities demonstrates how society has presented and treated individuals with disabilities historically. Materials in this inaugural collection in the new series include records of treatments, methods of education, forms of remediation, and more. Reports and proceedings of organizations and institutions that sought to help or heal those with disabilities are included, as well as records of policies and programs. Through this collection, researchers will grasp the many forms of institutional discrimination, political exclusion, and social control under which disabled individuals struggled. Materials chronicle how individuals were classified and treated and how some overcame physical or mental challenges to defy perceptions of being disabled.



Infantile Paralysis and Its Rational Treatment, by Louis Dechmann, Biologist, 1916, pamphlets about disabilities from the New York Academy of Medicine Library.

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

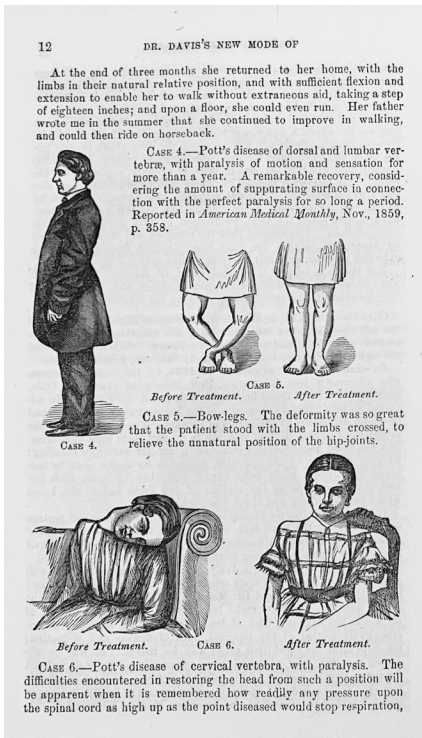
Disability is a definition imposed by society on people who may or may not agree to be characterized that way. Historically, the term has been applied in a pejorative manner to many groups of people who did not meet society's norms. Beyond mental and physical disabilities, unwed mothers, the poor, and criminals (delinquents) were also considered to be disabled up through the middle of the twentieth century.

Disability studies are included in numerous academic curricula and programs around the globe. According to Dr. Alan Foley, director of the Center on Human Policy at Syracuse University, "Disability studies refers generally to the examination of disability as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon." *"History of Disabilities: Disabilities in Society"* focuses on the social aspects of disabilities, how we have historically interacted with people with disabilities, and where this has led us as a society.

These books, pamphlets, periodicals, and manuscripts from the New York Academy of Medicine Library mainly span the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with some content dating back to the seventeenth century. Materials are primarily from the United States and United Kingdom and in English, but some content is included from other countries in languages that include German and French.

VALUE OF THE ARCHIVE

- **Accessible Content:** The optical character recognition (OCR) text for all English-language documents is backed by rigorous quality-assurance testing to ensure the content is as error-free as possible, thereby greatly increasing accessibility via screen readers.
- **Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (EDI):** The archive provides a comprehensive and authoritative compendium on disabilities studies, mainly from a social perspective, which is emerging as the next academic frontier for those focusing on EDI initiatives.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:** The collection conveys firsthand how attitudes toward those with disabilities have changed over time, from the beginnings of clinical inquiry into disabilities in the late 1600s through to the emergence of modern therapies in the 1900s. This makes the archive an ideal companion for digital humanities projects.
- **Inherently Intersectional:** Accounts of disability history by those who lived and witnessed it make the archive an ideal starting point to analyze gender, sexuality, race, and class. The cross-search capabilities with complementary *Gale Primary Sources* archives further enhance the research experience.
- **Stands Alone & Complements Existing Archives:** With a broad and deep collection of primary sources, this archive helps fill a gap in disability history content, giving researchers a more comprehensive look at disabilities in society.



Page from *Medical Testimony in Regard to Dr. Davis's New Mode of Treating Joint Diseases*, by Henry Gassett Davis, New York, published by Hall, Clayton & Medole, circa 1862. Pamphlets about disabilities from the New York Academy of Medicine Library.

ABOUT THE SOURCE LIBRARY

The New York Academy of Medicine was established in 1847 as an independent organization interested in promoting public health and regulating and improving the profession of medicine in New York City. Through original research, policy, and program initiatives, the Academy provides the evidence base to address the structural and cultural barriers to good health and drive progress toward health equity.

The Academy Library provides insights into the formative texts and medical thinking in which contemporary practice is rooted, thus demonstrating society's attempts to understand our bodies, minds, and health across time and culture. The Library's major historical holdings include a rare collection of pamphlets, gray literature, and Western medical texts spanning from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century.

SAMPLE CONTENT

- *The Conquest of Deafness: A History of the Long Struggle to Make Possible Normal Living to Those Handicapped by Lack of Normal Hearing*
- *Consumption: Its Prevention and Cure by the Water Treatment: With Advice Concerning Haemorrhage from the Lungs, Coughs, Colds, Asthma, Bronchitis, and Sore Throat*
- *Crippled Child Bulletin*; published by the National Society for Crippled Children
- *Electrical Psychology: Its Theoretical and Practical Principles*
- *Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes and the Blind, Montreal, Quebec—Annual Report*
- *A Laconic Narrative of the Life & Death of James Wilson, Known by the Name of Daft Jamie: In Which Are Interspersed, Several Anecdotes Relative to Him and His Old Friend Boby Awl, an Idiot Who Strolled about Edinburgh for Many Years*
- *Lectures on Epilepsy, Pain, Paralysis, and Certain Other Disorders of the Nervous System*
- *Light for the Blind: A History of the Origin and Success of Moon's Institution for Embossing and Circulating the Bible and Other Books in Moon's Type for the Blind, in English and Foreign Languages*
- *Studies in Mental Inefficiency: Issued by the Central Association for the Care of the Mentally Defective*
- *Study of Abnormal Man in Connection with Establishing Laboratories to Investigate Criminal, Pauper, and Defective Classes*
- *The Treatment of Mental Disorders, Ancient and Modern: In Commemoration of the Centenary of the Building of the Devon County Lunatic Asylum, 1845*

COLLECTIONS INCLUDED

Collection Titles	Size
Douglas C. McMurtrie Cripples Collection	~300 volumes, containing ~3,000 bound items (pamphlets, articles, periodicals, reports)
Pamphlets about disabilities	~3,000 pamphlets
Books about disabilities	~1,700 volumes
Serials and periodicals about disabilities	~208 periodicals
Charles Loomis Dana Papers, 1876–1932	~10,000 pages
Alexander E. Macdonald Papers, 1865–1906	~20,000 pages

- Douglas C. McMurtrie Cripples Collection:** The McMurtrie collection provides a record of the development of rehabilitative care in the early twentieth century that evolved as transnational medical networks expanded along with the transmission of information and ideology. McMurtrie espoused the “gospel of rehabilitation”—an insistence on returning disabled persons to independence and self-sufficiency. He was deeply interested in the rehabilitation of not only soldiers returning from the battlefields of the First World War but all who lived with disabilities, especially children. McMurtrie was a talented printer, typographer, bibliographer, and bookbinder, and his collection is bound and cataloged. While the collection is primarily in English, it also includes content in German, French, and a few other Western languages. Most of the material dates to the 1910s and the early 1920s.
- Pamphlets about disabilities:** The Academy’s extensive pamphlet collection consists of health-related publications covering topics such as nutrition, proper hygiene, and exercise, as well as medical innovations and research from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *History of Disabilities: Disabilities in Society* houses a selection of more than 3,000 rare pamphlets from this collection related to disabilities, including descriptions of disabilities, treatments, reports, treatises, policies, advertisements for equipment, and more. Many of these publications weren’t commonly retained or collected by libraries and are unique to this archive.

- **Books about disabilities:** The archive includes around 1,700 books showcasing the history of various disabled groups from the Academy Library. Please note that much of the terminology in this collection may be considered offensive to contemporary audiences, but these historical terms were common at the time these works were published. Categories include Amputees, Blind, Cripples, Deaf, Defectives (Mental), Delinquents, Disabled, Exceptional Children (“exceptional” meaning “not typical” or disabled), Handicapped, Idiots, Speech Disorders, and more.
- **Serials and periodicals about disabilities:** These serials and periodicals provide insights into the institutions and organizations that worked with people with disabilities. Some of the publications come from around the globe, providing a greater understanding of how people with disabilities were treated, cared for, and generally understood in different countries and health systems. Annual reports of asylums and hospitals provide a history of the operations of institutions for the disabled and the challenges they faced in maintaining their services. Journals also offer articles about the latest treatments, research, and efforts to rehabilitate and employ people with disabilities.
- **Charles Loomis Dana Papers, 1876–1932:** Dr. Charles Loomis Dana was a New York physician specializing in neurology; professor of nervous and mental disease; president of the New York Academy of Medicine, New York Neurological Society, and American Neurological Association; and founding member of the Charaka Club, a group of doctors formed to explore the historical, literary, and artistic aspects of medicine. This collection documents Dana’s medical career and professional life. His papers include published articles and reprints, manuscripts for speeches and books, handwritten notes, and research materials documenting topics like handwriting, telepathy, insanity, psychiatry, alcohol, medical history, early physicians, and printing. Some of the more common conditions found in Dana’s cases include depression, anxiety, paranoia, insomnia, dementia praecox, migraines, neurasthenia, psychasthenia, epilepsy, lateral sclerosis, tinnitus, encephalitis, and encephalitis lethargica.
- **The Alexander E. Macdonald Papers, 1865–1906:** Dr. Alexander E. Macdonald was a prominent American physician and psychiatrist and a leader in the development of New York City’s public institutions for the treatment of mentally ill persons. Macdonald served in numerous leadership positions including Chief of Staff of Charity Hospital on Blackwell’s Island, Medical Superintendent at the New York City Asylum for the Insane on Ward’s Island, and General Superintendent of New York City Asylums for the Insane, later reorganized as Manhattan State Hospital. Macdonald was also a professor of psychological medicine and medical jurisprudence at New York University. Dr. Macdonald’s notable achievements include his frequent consultation as an expert witness in trials such as the Guiteau, Rhinelander, and Stokes cases, as well as his work caring for the “tubercular insane” and the introduction of tent life for their treatment. Dr. Macdonald published widely and was a member of several medical organizations including the New York Academy of Medicine, the American Medical Association, the Medical Society of the State of New York, the Medical Society of the County of New York, and the New York Psychiatric Society.

GALE DIGITAL SCHOLAR LAB

With the help of feedback from librarians, faculty, and students, Gale continuously refreshes its award-winning, data-mining research environment. Open even more valuable research pathways with *Gale Digital Scholar Lab*, the intuitive, cloud-based analysis platform that helps tell impactful visual stories with historical data—and helps students build valuable new skills for the workforce.

With Gale Digital Scholar Lab, your library can:

Remove Barriers to Digital Humanities: Using streamlined tools and the comprehensive Learning Center, the *Lab* sets users of all skill levels right to work analyzing any plain-text data, regardless of technical experience.

Harness the Power of Data-Led Scholarship: With the *Lab*, sourcing, cleaning, and analyzing content from *History of Disabilities* alongside millions of pages of other *Gale Primary Sources* has evolved using enhanced visualization techniques and natural language processing.

Boost Usage of Your Institutional Investment: Using the *Lab* shows increased usage of *Gale Primary Sources*.

Now researchers can:

Work in Groups: Using *Gale Digital Scholar Lab: Groups*, students and faculty can collaborate in real time with others in the institution, directly within the platform.

Acquire New Digital Skills for the Workforce: The comprehensive Learning Center is continually updated with sample projects and learning content to promote digital literacy in the classroom and the workforce beyond.

LEARNING CENTERS FOR GALE PRIMARY SOURCES

Gale now offers instructional support on nearly 40 *Gale Primary Sources* archives, and counting, to make them as accessible as possible—at no additional cost to the library. Built with the student researcher in mind, Learning Centers pursue an urgent goal: to help connect the library's interdisciplinary content to student success.

Learning Centers promote usage and amplify data literacy by:

- Orienting new users with the content available in a digital archive
- Providing guidance and best practices for searching, browsing, citing, and reusing primary sources
- Kindling inspiration for new research topics



Learn more at gale.com/disabilities