

Guide to the Paul Harold Lavietes Papers

MS 1589



July 2008

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
(203) 432-1735
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1589

CREATOR: Lavietes, Paul Harold, 1907-1990

TITLE: Paul Harold Lavietes papers

DATES: 1937-1987

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.5 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, writings, and research material relating to the professional career of Paul H. Lavietes. The papers include items relating to his investigation for possible Communist sympathies by the Veterans Administration and the House Committee on Un-American Activities and document his involvement in medical research, various controversies over drug treatments for diabetes, conflict of interest in the pharmaceutical industry, and the John Punnett Peters Memorial Lectures.

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Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1589>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Ruth Lavietes, 1990 and 1991.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Preferred Citation

Paul Harold Lavietes Papers (MS 1589). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

Paul Harold Lavietes was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1907. He received his B.S. degree from the Sheffield Scientific School, Yale University in 1927 and his M.D. from the Yale School of Medicine in 1930. Lavietes was a physician on the staff of the Yale School of Medicine from 1932 until his retirement in 1987. He also served as a consulting physician at several Connecticut hospitals, including the Veterans Administration Medical Center in West Haven. He was investigated for possible Communist sympathies by the Veterans Administration and the Committee on Un-American Activities during the McCarthy era, and acquitted of all charges after an administrative hearing by the Veterans Administration. Lavietes was a founding editor of the Yale-sponsored *Medical Letter on Drugs and Therapeutics* and a long-time member of its advisory board. In 1971 he became the founding medical director of the Community Health Care Plan in New Haven, a post from which he retired in 1981. Lavietes specialized in internal medicine, particularly metabolic diseases. He died in 1990.

Scope and Contents

The papers consist of correspondence, writings, and research material relating to the professional career of Paul H. Lavietes. The papers include items relating to his investigation for possible Communist sympathies by the Veterans Administration and the House Committee on Un-American Activities and document his involvement in medical research, various controversies over drug treatments for diabetes, conflict of interest in the pharmaceutical industry, and the John Punnett Peters Memorial Lectures.

Arrangement

The papers are arranged in six series: I. General files, 1943-1987, n.d. II. Loyalty case files, 1956, n.d. III. Research files, 1951-1987, n.d. IV. John Punnett Peters files, 1937-1975. V. Writings, 1939-1973. VI. Photographs, 1937-1955, n.d.

Collection Contents

Series I: General Files, 1943-1987, undated

General files chiefly consist of the professional correspondence of Paul Lavietes from 1943 to 1987, typically with fellow physicians and researchers. There are also memoranda and meeting minutes for the Gaylord Farm Association and the Yale-New Haven Hospital Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee. The files are arranged alphabetically.

| | | |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| b. 1, f. 1 | Caldwell B. Esselstyn Foundation | 1978 |
| b. 1, f. 2 | Eginton, Warren W. | 1983 |
| b. 1, f. 3 | Gaylord Farm Association [meeting minutes and correspondence] | 1983 |
| b. 1, f. 4 | Keating, F. R. [correspondence and background information on thyroxine] | 1964 |
| b. 1, f. 5 | Lavietes, Philip [father of Paul Lavietes] | 1943 |
| b. 1, f. 6 | <i>Medical Letter</i> [letter from Paul Lavietes resigning from board of the journal due to Alzheimer's disease] | 1987 |
| b. 1, f. 7 | Mitchell, Malcolm S. | 1977 |
| b. 1, f. 8 | Nugent, Dr. Charles A. | 1953 |
| b. 1, f. 9 | Peters, Richard M. | 1982 |
| b. 1, f. 10 | Unidentified ere: Pavloff picture] | 1982, undated |
| b. 1, f. 11 | Welt, Louis G. [obituary for] | 1974 |
| b. 1, f. 12 | Yale-New Haven Hospital Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee [meetings minutes and background material] | 1979 |

Series II: Loyalty Case Files, 1956, undated

The loyalty case files, arranged alphabetically by type of material, concern the 1956 investigation of Paul Laviertes for suspected Communist sympathies by the Veterans Administration and the Committee on Un-American Activities. These files include legal documents and correspondence, lawyers' briefs, affidavits in support of Laviertes's character, transcripts of official testimonies, and related personal correspondence.

| | | |
|------------|--|---------------|
| b. 2, f. 1 | Accusation and statements [legal documents] A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1956 |
| b. 2, f. 2 | Affidavits for Paul H. Laviertes A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1956, undated |
| b. 2, f. 3 | Correspondence A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | 1956 |
| b. 2, f. 4 | Testimony [assorted pages from hearing] A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at beinecke.library@yale.edu to request access to the digital copy. | undated |

Series III: Research Files, 1951-1987, undated

This series consists of research files from Paul Laviertes's years as a physician and as a critic of the pharmaceutical industry and its influence over the medical profession. The files are arranged alphabetically in five sections: Bendectin studies, Pharmaceutical industry, Reference notes, University Group Diabetes Program, and Other. The bulk of the material pertains to the controversy over the anti-nausea drug Bendectin as a possible cause of birth defects, to Laviertes's battles with the pharmaceutical industry, and to the University Group Diabetes Program's research on diabetes treatments. Other items in the series include Laviertes's notes on reference sources and his research files for other medical interests, including the drug aminoglutethimide.

In the 1960s, Laviertes became an outspoken advocate of federal regulation of the prescription of drugs, especially those affecting diabetes and other metabolic diseases. He believed that doctors were encouraged to prescribe unnecessary medications as a result of the medical profession's financial support by the pharmaceutical industry, which included advertising in journals like the *Medical Tribune*, sponsorship of medical research, and financial contributions to medical societies' conferences. In Laviertes's view, only strict federal guidelines could counteract this influence. The files for Bendectin, the pharmaceutical industry, and the University Group Diabetes Program all reflect Laviertes' interest in these issues.

In the early 1980s, the medical and legal trials over the anti-nausea drug Bendectin and the birth defects it had caused attracted Laviertes's attention. The Bendectin studies material is comprised of his correspondence, news clippings, research notes, and other background materials, as well as the trial deposition of Isalene Apperson Smock, a medical secretary who helped Bendectin's manufacturers gather clinical information about its possible dangers.

The pharmaceutical industry files contain information on drug company sponsorship of medical conferences, and drafts and background information for Laviertes's 1966 speech to the American Society of Internal Medicine on the influence of drug companies on the medical profession. There is also material pertaining to the 1971 expulsion of Dr. Louis Lasagna from the Advisory Board of *The Medical Letter*. Lasagna was accused of having a conflict-of-interest in his opposition to the removal of the drug Panalba from the market, stemming from his connections to the drug's manufacturer, Upjohn.

The University Group Diabetes Program (UGDP), a consortium of university medical centers, including Yale, sponsored multi-year and multi-clinical trials of different diabetes treatments in the late 1960s and the 1970s. When the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) labeled particular hypoglycemic agents according to UGDP findings, the CIBA-GEIGY Corporation stridently protested in both FDA hearings and the federal courts. By 1975, drug companies had begun a major media campaign against the UGDP's conclusions and convinced the FDA to audit the UGDP's research protocols and practices. The files include medical studies, legal material, correspondence, and other items relating to the controversy over oral hypoglycemic agents and the UGDP, and to Laviertes' role in that controversy.

Bendectin studies

| | | |
|------------|---|---------------|
| b. 3, f. 1 | "Bendectin and Birth Defects: A Review of the Evidence" [report] English | 1980 |
| b. 3, f. 2 | Correspondence | 1982 |
| b. 3, f. 3 | Heartburn in pregnancy [notes] | 1982, undated |
| b. 3, f. 4 | Histamines and antihistamines in pregnancy [research material, drafts, reports] | 1951-1982 |
| b. 3, f. 5 | Public Citizen Health Research Group [petition to remove Bendectin from the market] | 1981-1983 |

Bendectin studies (continued)

| | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| b. 3, f. 6-11 | Research notes and background material | Circa 1980 |
| b. 3, f. 12 | Smock, Isalene Apperson [deposition in Bendectin trial] | 1982 October 5 |
| b. 3, f. 13 | "The Use of Antihistamines in Pregnancy" [working draft of report] English | 1982, 1987 |
| Pharmaceutical industry | | |
| | American Society of Internal Medicine | 1966 |
| b. 4, f. 14 | Correspondence | |
| b. 4, f. 15 | Research material [speech by Lavietes and background material] | |
| b. 4, f. 16 | Athletic Injuries, Third Annual Conference [New Haven County Medical Association, Waterbury, CT; correspondence on drug company involvement], | 1963 April 18 |
| b. 4, f. 17 | "Fixed Combinations of Antibiotics" [speech by William Kirby on the pharmaceutical industry before the Monopoly Subcommittee Senate Select Committee on Small Business] English | 1969 |
| b. 4, f. 18 | Lasagna, Louis [correspondence and other material on dropping of Lasagna from board of <i>Medical Letter</i>] | 1969-1971 |
| Reference notes | | |
| b. 4, f. 19-25 | Alphabetical | |
| b. 4, f. 26-27 | Chronological | 1958-1965, undated |
| University Group Diabetes Program (UGDP) | | |
| b. 5, f. 28 | "Acceptance of Uncertainty and Controlled Clinical Trials" [letter to the editor] English | 1971 |
| b. 5, f. 29 | Analysis Coordination Committee meeting [meeting minutes] | 1976 February |
| b. 5, f. 30 | Articles [photocopies from various publications] | 1975-1976 |
| b. 5, f. 31 | CIBA-GEIGY Corporation | 1975 July-Sep, undated |
| b. 5, f. 32 | "Competitive Problems in the Drug Industry" [hearings before the Senate Select Committee on Small Business] English | 1975 |
| b. 5, f. 33 | Cornfield, Jerome [correspondence and presentation at Food and Drug Administration hearings on proposed labeling for diabetic drugs] | 1975 August- November |
| b. 5, f. 34 | "Diet in the Management of the Diabetic Patient" [correspondence drafts background material] English | 1971 |

University Group Diabetes Program (UGDP) (continued)

| | | |
|-------------|--|------------------------|
| b. 5, f. 35 | Feinstein, Alvin [comments on the UGDP in the <i>Medical Tribune</i> , correspondence] | 1976 June-Jul, undated |
| | Food and Drug Administration audit | 1977-1978 |
| b. 5, f. 36 | Final meeting of UGDP auditors | 1977 September-October |
| b. 5, f. 37 | Report and statements | 1978 October 16 |
| b. 5, f. 38 | UGDP statement on audit | Circa 1978 |
| b. 5, f. 39 | Food and Drug Administration hearing on oral hypoglycemic agents [Lavietes's presentation, background material, drafts, correspondence] | 1974-1975 |
| b. 5, f. 40 | Horwitz, Nathan [correspondence, published material on anti-UGDP editorial in the <i>Medical Tribune</i>] | 1978 October |
| b. 5, f. 41 | Klimt, Christian [material relating to an audit of the UGDP study on oral anti-diabetic agents] | |
| b. 5, f. 42 | Miller, Max [on diabetes mortality reports] | 1975-1976 |
| b. 5, f. 43 | "New Shots On an Old Target?" [report on UGDP controversy author unknown] English | Circa 1978-1979 |
| b. 5, f. 44 | Oral anti-hypoglycemic agents | 1974-1976 |
| b. 5, f. 45 | Public Citizen Health Research Group [presentation to Food and Drug Administration hearings on proposed labeling for diabetes drugs] | 1975 August |
| b. 5, f. 46 | "Report of the Committee for the Assessment of Biometric Aspects of Controlled Trials of Hypoglycemic Agents" [<i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i> article] English | 1975 February 10 |
| b. 5, f. 47 | "Report on Insulin Treatment: Mortality and Selected Nonfatal Events" [confidential report by UGDP investigators] English | 1977 September |
| b. 5, f. 48 | A Study of the Effects of Hypoglycemic Agents on Vascular Complications in Patients with Adult-onset Diabetes" [memo and report] | 1976 December |
| b. 5, f. 49 | "A Summary of Findings of the University Group Diabetes Program (UGDP) for Patients Treated With Insulin" [report on presentation at the Tenth Congress of the International Diabetes Foundation] English | 1979 September-October |
| b. 5, f. 50 | "The Tolbutamide Controversy and Controlled Clinical Trials" [drafts of reports memos] English | |
| b. 5, f. 51 | "Update on the UGDP" [memorandum and editorial in <i>Diabetes Care</i>] English | 1979 |
| b. 5, f. 52 | "The University Group Diabetes Program: An Overview" [report] English | Undated |

University Group Diabetes Program (UGDP) (continued)

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| b. 5, f. 53 | White, Colin [on UGDP funding] | 1978 September |
| | Other | |
| | Aminoglutethimide | |
| b. 6, f. 54 | Notes and drafts of article | 1981 June |
| b. 6, f. 55 | Research material | Circa 1981 |
| b. 6, f. 56 | Cohen, Lawrence S. [correspondence on coronary disease registry] | 1976-1977 |
| b. 6, f. 57 | Diabetic retinopathy [correspondence] | 1976 |
| b. 6, f. 58 | <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i> [correspondence on control of glucose] | 1976 |

Series IV: John Punnett Peters Files, 1937-1975

The fourth series includes Paul Lavietes's files on his mentor John Punnett Peters, and is arranged by type of material. In addition to a biography of Peters by Lavietes, a bibliography of Peters's publications, and memorial tributes to him following his death, there is correspondence with Lavietes regarding the John Punnett Peters Memorial Lectureship from 1956 to 1975. Additional information of the life and career of Peters can be found in the John Punnett Peters Papers (Manuscript Group 897).

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| b. 7, f. 1 | Bibliography [partial] | Undated |
| b. 7, f. 2 | Biography | 1956 |
| b. 7, f. 3 | Loyalty Review Board Consists of tatement and documents regarding accusations of Communist sympathies against Peters by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. | 1953 |
| b. 7, f. 4 | Poems [read on the occasion of John Punnett Peters' fiftieth birthday celebration] | 1937 December 4 |
| Reminiscences | | |
| b. 7, f. 5 | 'Endocrine Ballads' [humorous reminiscences of Peters by John Homans] English | 1938-1940 |
| b. 7, f. 6 | 'John Punnett Peters: An Appreciation'[article by Lavietes; correspondence] English | 1956 December |
| b. 7, f. 7 | Memorial service tributes | 1956 January 3 |
| John Punnett Peters Memorial Lectures | | |
| Correspondence [with Lavietes] | | |
| b. 7, f. 8 | Brotherston, John | 1973 |
| b. 7, f. 9 | Davis, James O. | 1962 |
| b. 7, f. 10 | Edelman, Isadore S. | 1964 |
| b. 7, f. 11 | Elkington, J. Russell | 1961-1964 |
| b. 7, f. 12 | Gamble, James L. | 1956 |
| b. 7, f. 13 | Geiger, H. Jack | 1970-1971 |
| b. 7, f. 14 | Hastings, A. Baird | 1957 |
| b. 7, f. 15 | John Punnett Peters Memorial Fund | 1974-1975 |
| b. 7, f. 16 | Knowles, John H. | 1969 |
| b. 7, f. 17 | Krebs, Hans, Sr. | 1966 |
| b. 7, f. 18 | Nirenberg, Marshall | 1969 |
| b. 7, f. 19 | Pauling, Linus | 1958-1961 |
| b. 7, f. 20 | Seldin, Donald | 1969-1970 |

John Punnett Peters Memorial Lectures > Correspondence [with Lavietes] (continued)

| | | |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| b. 7, f. 21 | Stetten, Dewitt, Jr. | 1961 |
| b. 7, f. 22 | Ussing, Hans H. | 1960, undated |
| b. 7, f. 23 | Welt, Louis G. | 1956, 1962-1965 |
| b. 7, f. 24 | List of lectures | Circa 1972 |

Series V: Writings, 1939-1973

Writings are arranged by type and include published lectures of Paul Lavietes and John Punnett Peters from 1939 and reprints of articles by Lavietes from 1964 and 1973.

Articles

| | | |
|--------------|--|-------------------------|
| b. 8, f. 1 | "Evaluation of a Cholesterol Kit" [reprint] English | 1964 March |
| b. 8, f. 2 | "Serum Lipids of Normal Subject with Aging" [reprint] English | 1973 |
| b. 8, f. 3-4 | "Lectures on Endocrinology" [bound typescripts] English | 1939 September 19-21 |

Series VI: Photographs

The Photographs series consists of black and white photographs of John Punnett Peters, Paul Lavietes, and the twenty-fifth reunion of the Yale School of Medicine Class of 1930, and is arranged alphabetically.

| | | |
|------------|---|---------|
| b. 9, f. 1 | Peters, John Funnett [two portraits] | Undated |
| b. 9, f. 2 | Peters, John Punnett and Paul Lavietes | 1937 |
| b. 9, f. 3 | Yale School of Medicine [Class of 1930] | 1955 |

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Bendectin (Trademark) -- Toxicology
Communism -- United States
Diabetes
Drugs -- Side effects
Drugs -- Testing
Internal medicine
Internal security -- United States -- History --
20th Century
Medicine
Medicine -- Research
Metabolism
Metabolism -- Disorders
Pharmaceutical industry -- United States
Physicians
Pregnancy -- Complications
Products liability -- Drugs -- United States
Public health -- United States
Subversive activities -- United States -- History
-- 20th Century

Occupations

Internists

Names

Lavietes, Paul Harold, 1907-1990

Corporate Bodies

United States. Congress. House. Committee on
Un-American Activities
Yale-New Haven Hospital
Yale University. School of Medicine
Yale University. Sheffield Scientific School.
Class of 1927
Yale University -- Faculty
Yale University -- Students