

∞ The Ward M. Canaday Center ∞  
for Special Collections  
The University of Toledo

Finding Aid

➤ **Max T. Schnitker Papers, 1936-1983** ◀

MSS-142

**Size:** 1 linear foot.

**Provenance:** received from John Schnitker, son of Max, in June 1999.

**Access:** open

**Collection Summary:** Local Neurosurgeon, World War II Veteran (1905-1983)  
Collection contains scrapbooks and memoirs kept by Dr. Schnitker when he worked in England from 1936-1938 as a Harvey Cushing Travelling Fellow, as well as diaries documenting his experiences in the Army. He served first in Utah from 1942-1945, then in India from 1945-1946. Also included are photographs of Dr. Schnitker and plaques that he received for his medical practice in Toledo, Ohio.

**Subjects:** [Medicine and Health](#), [War, Soldiers, and Veterans](#)

**Related Collections:** Steven Pecsénye Collection, MSS-084; Mail From Toledo Letters, MSS-047; Henry W. Nordmeyer Papers, MSS-012.

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**Completed by:** Benjamin Grillot and Laura Micham, June 1999; last updated: July 2014

### **Biographical Sketch**

In 1905, Max Theodore Schnitker and his twin brother Maurice were born in Toledo, Ohio. Their parents, Carl and Lissette Schnitker, were first generation immigrants from Germany. Max attended Waite High School and worked at Woolson Spice Company. While continuing his education at the University of Toledo he took a two year science course which sparked his interest in medicine and led him to pursue postgraduate study at the University of Michigan. Graduating from the University of Michigan in 1933, he went to Boston where he worked and studied. In 1935 he won the first Harvey Cushing Travelling Fellowship in Neurological Surgery, a prestigious award which enabled him to travel to England.

1936 found Max Schnitker living and working at a hospital in London. During his 18 months in Britain, he witnessed the coronation of George VI, an event he recorded in his memoirs and scrapbooks. He also met his future wife, Enid Clayton, while in London. She was working as a nurse at the same hospital where he was training. Their relationship was forbidden by hospital policy, but that did not deter their young love. During the Christmas of 1937, in order to cheer up the often poor patients, Max and his fellow doctors put on a skit. Max played an American farmer, and as they performed the skit in each ward, the nurses provided the doctors with a moveable cart filled with booze, so even while drunk they could continue to perform.

Max Schnitker returned to Toledo in 1938 for 9 months, setting up his medical practice before re-uniting with Enid in New York City. They immediately left for Easton, Pennsylvania where they were married in 1939. After a honeymoon in Baltimore and Washington D.C., they returned to Toledo where Max continued to practice medicine. They had two children in the next few years, Elaine, born in 1940, and Paul in 1941.

In 1942, Max enlisted in the army, and was assigned the rank of Major. He was stationed at Bushnell General Hospital in Utah where he met his future medical partners Dr. Booth and Dr. Hoppel. Enid joined him in Utah with their two children and they lived together until 1945. During this period, like the time he spent in England, Max kept a meticulous memoir of events.

In 1945 Max was ordered overseas and Enid returned home to Toledo. He spent most of his tour of duty in South East Asia, working for a period of time in several hospitals in Calcutta, India. He stayed in the Far East beyond the end of the war, serving as a Chief of Surgery in an Indian Hospital. Max Schnitker was discharged from the army in early 1946 at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Upon his discharge he returned to Toledo where he returned to his practice of medicine. In 1951, Max celebrated the birth of his third child, John Peter. He maintained the same office on the tenth floor of the Secor Hotel, from before the war until the 1980's. Throughout his career he received numerous awards, including the Gold T Award in 1961, given by The University of Toledo to distinguished alumni. In 1981 he was named to the Emeritus Staff of St. Luke's Hospital. He received special recognition for his "Pioneering efforts in the science of neurosurgery." in 1982. The following year he was recognized for 45 years of service at St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center.

**Max T. Schnitker  
Papers, 1936-1983**

In 1983, at the age of 78, Max Schnitker passed away. He is survived by his wife, Enid and his children, John and Elaine.

**Scope and Content Note**

This collection is broken down into three series, arranged roughly chronologically. The first series consists of a scrapbook and memoir kept by Max Schnitker during his time as a Harvey Cushing Travelling Fellow in England from 1936-1938.

The second series documents the time he spent in the service of the Army during World War II. It consists of two diaries he kept, similar to the one he kept in England. The first documents his experiences from 1942-1945 while in Utah, while the second covers the period from 1945-1946. Also included in this series is a photograph of Max Schnitker, taken in 1942, as well as two publications put out by the Army hospital in Utah during Christmas and Thanksgiving of 1944.

The third series consists of ephemera, primarily plaques that Max Schnitker was awarded during his medical career.

**Series List**

**S1 England**

1936-1938, .3 linear ft.

Arranged chronologically

This series contains a scrapbook, entitled "Max's Souvenirs" which has been preserved and placed into three folders. It contains newspaper clippings, mementos and other ephemera collected by Max while in England as a Harvey Cushing Travelling Fellow. Of particular interest are items relating to the coronation of George VI, an event he attended. Also contained in this series is a memoir, written by Max Schnitker during this same period. This memoir contains detailed, day to day accounts of goings on and is interspersed with photographs and other mementos.

**S2 World War II**

1942-1945, .3 linear ft.

Arranged chronologically

This series contains two memoirs kept by Dr. Schnitker during his service in the United States Army, as well as two publications put out by Bushnell General Hospital in Utah and a photograph of Dr. Schnitker dating from this period. The first memoir records his experiences at Bushnell General Hospital in Utah. It contains detailed descriptions of daily events, and like the memoir he kept while in England, it includes photographs and other keepsakes from this period. The two publications were put out by Bushnell General Hospital during 1944 at both Thanksgiving and Christmas and contain photographs and information about the hospital and men. The second memoir records Dr. Schnitker's experiences while overseas, serving in South East Asia. Of particular note in this memoir is the inclusion of a currency chain, in which Dr. Schnitker linked a piece of currency from each country he visited into a chain which documents his travels.

**S3 Ephemera**

1941-1983, .3 linear feet

Arranged Chronologically

This series consists of plaques recognizing Dr. Schnitker's accomplishments.

**Max T. Schnitker  
Papers, 1936-1983**

**Folder List**

**Box Folder Description**

**S1. England**

- |   |   |                               |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 1 | Scrapbook, 1936-1937 (1 of 3) |
|   | 2 | Scrapbook, 1936-1937 (2 of 3) |
|   | 3 | Scrapbook, 1936-1937 (3 of 3) |
|   | 4 | Memoir, 1936-1938             |

**S2. World War II**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | 5 | Photograph of Max Schnitker, 1942      |
|  | 6 | Memoir, Utah, 1942-1945                |
|  | 7 | Utah Hospital Publications, 1944       |
|  | 8 | Memoir, China, Burma, India, 1945-1946 |

**S3. Ephemera**

- |  |    |   |
|--|----|---|
|  | 9  | Certificate of Fellowship in American College of Surgeons, 1941                 |
|  | 10 | Gold T Award (plaque), 1961   |
|  | 11 | Emeritus Staff, St. Luke's Hospital (plaque), 1981                              |
|  | 12 | Special Recognition of Pioneering Efforts in Neurosurgery (plaque), 1982        |
|  | 13 | 45 Years of Service at St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center (plaque), 1983 |