

**Local Informal  
Network Support  
and Shared  
Expertise:**  
the 20-year  
experience of CAMA


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# 2022: CAMA's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year

*CAMA is an informal, open membership group of archivists, librarians, healthcare professionals, and others interested in Chicago area medical history*

**Activities:** local projects, curation, preparing exhibits, research & assistance to researchers, networking, sharing, presenting...

**Medical Archives and History: Local Informal Network Support and Shared Expertise of CAMA**  
 Poster presented at the 2019 Health Science Librarians of Illinois conference  
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## Medical Archives and History: Local Informal Network Support and Shared Expertise of CAMA

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### Questions and Needs

Institutional records, photographs, archives, and artifacts, especially at smaller health institutions, do not always receive formal or sustained attention and staffing. Yet the demand for expertise and services in this area often arises.

An informal network of colleagues can provide support for both novice and experienced information professionals, who are charged with organizing their institutions' archives or answering internal and external medical history questions, often in addition to other duties. CAMA is one such network.




Selected Google Groups discussion topics in a word cloud generated in WordClouds.com

### Members of the informal CAMA network include (but are not limited to) those who are affiliated with:

- American College of Surgeons
- Northwestern Memorial Hospital
- Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
- Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
- Rush University Medical Center
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology

& independent researchers, history of medicine enthusiasts, students...



Montage of CAMA events, people, artifacts, and presentation items...

### Rank priorities for the preservation of medical institutional memory (highest-1 to lowest-5), n=8

-Staffing	#1 (4)	#2 (2)	#4 (2)
-Funding	#2 (3)	#3 (3)	#1 (1) #4 (1)
-Policies & procedures for institutional records & memorabilia	#2 (3)	#3 (2)	#1 (1) #4 (1) #5 (1)
-Administrative support	#3 (3)	#4 (3)	#1 (2)
-Other support	#5 (7)	#4 (1)	

### Survey


Respondents to a small survey conducted in August 2019 show CAMA member variety (n=8) \*


-Archivist	4
-Librarian	0
-Both librarian and archivist	2
-Independent researcher	1
-Other	
Archivist & Exhibition Director	1


\*7 manage an archives or answer medical history questions as part of their responsibilities  
 \*All 8 feel CAMA is a useful network or resource


### What do you feel are misconceptions about medical institutional archives, records, photographs, etc., n=8


-No need (no interest, no future demand)	50% (4)
-Can be done by staff in other departments, units	50% (4)
-Someone else will do it	0
-Requires archival expertise	0
-Can be done by the library	0











### Medical history symposia highlight and spotlight:

- Chicago area health history
- Accomplishments
- Anniversaries
- Institutions
- Individuals
- Events
- & Research in progress

### Appeal

"One of the appeals of CAMA is that it welcomes not only archivist/librarians who work with health sciences records, but it's also a group for anyone interested in the history of Chicago medicine/nursing..."

### Expectations

"...Given the workloads and staffing resources of the archives involved, the informal nature of CAMA is appropriate. The group email list provides a place where we can reach out to a wider pool of archivists/institutions that hold similar records..."

CAMA

\*Acknowledgement: Thank you to fellow CAMA members who provided support, inspiration, and input for this poster.

**Chicago Area Medical Archivists (CAMA)**

- Founded in 2002 as an informal networking group in the greater Chicago region
- Members include librarians, archivists, historians, and independent researchers
- Sponsors an (almost) annual fall medical history symposium
- Maintains a Google Groups list; by being a CAMA list subscriber, one is a CAMA member

Information:  
<http://www.chicagarchivists.org/cama>

## Listserv (sampling)

- *Foreign researcher : Where are the Cook County Hospital archives...*
- *Genealogist from Danville Illinois: Point me toward any databases of nursing schools*
- *Physician from Arkansas: Need photos & early history of the surgical mask at Northwestern (Memorial Hospital) and other Chicago hospitals.*
- *Last week, the Rush Archives was featured on a brief segment on NBC5 on Women in Medicine for Women's History Month!*

## Symposia topics (sampling)

- *A History of Anatomy Education at Rush Medical College*
- *...A Hospital's Survival After the Chicago Fire*
- *90 Years of the American Academy of Pediatrics*
- *Water in Chicago: A Historic Look at Waterborne Illnesses*
- *From Ward to War: Northwestern During WWII*

## Elements of CAMA's successes & reasons for its longevity?

*Over the years, some ideas didn't come to fruition, but it helps to have had:*

- Common purpose; inter-connectivity among participants or their institutions
- Geographically focused scope of topical interest
- Informal structure
- Adaptability & flexibility
- An easy-to-use venue for communication
- Events, projects, initiatives, information, research & resources support
- Various roles & possibilities for participation-  
*group convener, list moderator, project initiator/coordinator, meeting site host, presenter, sharer-expertise, leads, resources...*

**CAMA is constantly transforming and evolving.  
It may be a resource & / or a model for others?**

# EXPLORE CHICAGO COLLECTIONS

The place to discover the history and culture of Chicago

[ECC | Discover the History and Culture of Chicago \(chicagocollections.org\)](https://chicagocollections.org)

*CAMA members spotlight their institutions' digitized holdings, exhibits, information sources, and more...*

## Chicago Collections Consortium LibGuide: Chicago Medical History

The screenshot shows the Chicago Medical History LibGuide page. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: Overview, Medical Schools, Nursing Schools, Cook County Hospital, Local & Military Hospitals, Notable People, Medical Associations, Departments, & Societies, Resources for Educators, and Get Help. The main content area includes the title 'Chicago Medical History', a description, a 'What You'll Find in This Guide' section, and a photograph of a physician examining a young patient in 1950. The photograph is captioned: 'CAPTION: Physician examining a young patient, circa 1950. University of Illinois at Chicago. Link: explore.chicagocollections.org/image/uic/101/8912k31/'.

This guide focuses on medical history collections in the Chicago Collections Consortium & held by CAMA members.

# CAMA

Active participants include:  
archivists, librarians, medical  
historians, independent researchers,  
medical school faculty & students...

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Northwestern Memorial Hospital
- Northwestern University Galter Health  
Sciences Library & Learning Center
- Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and  
Science
- Rush University Medical Center Archives
- University of Chicago
- University of Illinois Chicago
- Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology

...

This presentation:

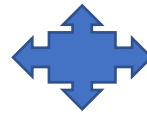
<https://doi.org/10.18131/g3-g90t-4286>

## Chicago Area Medical Archivists

Information in CAA site:

<http://www.chicagoarchivists.org/CAMA>

Listserv: [chicagomedicalarchivists@gmail.com](mailto:chicagomedicalarchivists@gmail.com)



**Fall 2022 Medical History Symposium: TBD**

### Questions?

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