

# Robert Bogdan Disability Collection

Ms Coll 61



Toby A. Appel

2018

Yale University  
333 Cedar St.  
New Haven, CT 06520-8014  
203-737-1192  
203-785-5636  
historical.library@yale.edu  
<http://historical.medicine.yale.edu/>

---

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview ..... 3  
Requesting Instructions ..... 3  
Administrative Information ..... 3  
    Immediate Source of Acquisition ..... 3  
    Conditions Governing Access ..... 3  
    Conditions Governing Use ..... 4  
    Preferred Citation ..... 4  
Biographical / Historical ..... 4  
Scope and Contents ..... 4  
Arrangement ..... 4  
Collection Contents ..... 5  
Selected Search Terms ..... 8

---

## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Medical Historical Library, Cushing/Whitney Medical Library  
Yale University  
333 Cedar St.  
New Haven, CT 06520-8014  
203-737-1192  
203-785-5636  
historical.library@yale.edu  
<http://historical.medicine.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** Ms Coll 61

**CREATOR:** Bogdan, Robert , collector

**TITLE:** Robert Bogdan Disability Collection

**DATES:** 1820s-1990s, 1900-1940

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 4 linear feet (15 large ring binders) ; 29.5 cm

**LANGUAGE:** Materials are almost entirely in English. Some items are in German, French, or other languages.

**SUMMARY:** The collection contains real photo postcards, commercial postcards, photographs, pamphlets and ephemera related to people with disabilities, mostly from the United States, collected by Professor Robert Bogdan, a pioneer in the teaching of disability studies.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/med.ms.0061>

---

## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/med.ms.0061>.

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

 vol. volume

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

The materials were collected by Professor Robert Bogdan. Volumes 1-14 were purchased by the Historical Library in 2018. Voulume 15 was purchased in 2022.

---

### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is available for research.

## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright has not been transferred to Yale University for unpublished materials in the collection. Copyright status for other 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

Robert Bogdan Disability Collection. Historical Library, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library, Yale University.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Robert Bogdan is Professor Emeritus of Social Science and Education at Syracuse University. He compiled an archive guided by the ideas of the field of Disability Studies, an approach that focuses on "disability" as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon. An early pioneer in that field, Bogdan has taught courses related to it since 1971. He started collecting disability ephemera in the early 1980s in order to advance his research and writing. As Bogdan began collecting he realized that although there were archives and collections related to specific aspects of disability and particular disability-related organizations, none took a broad Disability Studies approach.

---

## Scope and Contents

There are over 3,500 items in the collection, covering mainly the period from approximately 1870, when photographic images became widely available, through the 1970s, when the disability rights movement became an important force for social change. The items have been arranged by Dr. Bogdan in 14 large three-ring binders organized by topics. Their format varies but the great majority of the materials are postcards, and most of those are "real photo postcards." Real photo postcards, as opposed to commercial photo postcards, were taken by individuals and developed on postcard stock rather than on photo paper. These postcards show people with a range of disabilities participating in regular life, pictures that might be found in family albums. The people are photographed as family members, friends and loved ones, not as clinical types. Other photo formats include cartes de visite, cabinet cards, as well as larger photographs, and snapshots. These are complemented by pamphlets and other printed materials. There are over one hundred pieces related to begging, primarily ephemera used by people with disabilities to solicit money. In addition, there are hundreds of items associated with organizations, both charities assisting people with disabilities, and other institutions where people with disabilities were confined. Most of the materials are from the United States, but some are from other countries.

Volume 15, containing additions to several other volumes and materials on the theme of obesity, was added to the collection in 2022.




---

## Arrangement




The numbering and titles of the volumes and the order of the images was determined by Professor Bogdan.

---

## Collection Contents

 vol. 1	<b>Book 1: Wheelchairs</b> Binder containing primarily "real photo post cards" of individuals in a wheelchair, either alone, with their family, or in a group. Real photo postcards were created from photos taken by individuals and developed on postcard stock. They date from 1900 to about 1930. Also included toward the back are some advertisements for wheelchairs in postcard format, some cartes de visite, and some later snapshots.	ca. 1900-1960s
 vol. 2	<b>Book 2: People (General)</b> This binder contains photos of people with disabilities that might be found in family albums. Most of the items are real photo postcards.	ca. 1900-1956
 vol. 3	<b>Book 3: Veterans; Charity</b> The first part of this binder is on disabled veterans, especially from World War I, and the rehabilitation of veterans. The second part of the binder contains materials on charities for children with physical disabilities, poliomyelitis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, blindness and guide dogs, deafness, and sickle cell anemia (1 item). The volume contains real photo postcards, printed postcards, photographs, stamps issued by charities, and some pamphlets and other ephemera.	ca. 1907-1989
 vol. 4	<b>Book 4: Begging; Town Characters; Performers; Exhibits</b> The section on "Begging" has postcards or ephemera that disabled people handed out to ask for charity.  The section on "Town Characters" contains mostly printed postcards of unusual people including dwarfs and bearded hermits.  "Performances" includes images of disabled people as musical performers, artists, or athletes. There are several cards about dwarfs in performances.  "Exhibits" includes people who were exhibited at side shows or elsewhere. Some were disabled or dwarfs; others were of unusual ethnicities. Includes the Dionne quintuplets and Tom Thumb.  Binder contains real photo postcards, printed postcards, cartes de visite, and other ephemera.	1880s-1950s
 vol. 5	<b>Book 5: Merchants; Advertising; Healers; Royalty</b> "Merchants" contains (1) images of people with disabilities or dwarfs working in stores or offering products and services; and (2) merchants offering artificial limbs, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.  "Healers" includes various evangelists such as Aimee Semple McPherson and Oral Roberts, miracle cures, and medical/quack healers. Among them are John Till, "Plaster Healer," and Mahlon W. Locke and his clinic.  "Royalty" includes images of European royalty such as Princess Alexandrine of Prussia/Germany who had Down's Syndrome, Prince John Charles Francis Windsor of Kent (1905-1919) who was said to have had epilepsy, King George VI (1895-1952) who stammered, and several others.	ca. 1900-1990s

☰ vol. 6	<p>Book 6: Institutions: Insane, Feeble minded, Epileptic, Deaf, Blind</p> <p>Section 1 includes images, mostly printed postcards, of mental institutions, especially state hospitals. Section 2 has postcards of state homes for the "feeble minded." Section 3 has images of homes or hospitals for epileptics. Section 4 has postcards of schools for the blind and deaf.</p>	ca. 1900-1930.
☰ vol. 7	<p>Book 7: Institutions: Physically Disabled, Orphanages</p> <p>Section 1 contains photos and postcards of rehabilitation and hospitals for crippled children, among them Shriners Hospitals. Section 2 contains images of orphanages and of Father Flanagan's Boys Home. The collection also includes some Boys Town stamps.</p>	1900-1950s
☰ vol. 8	<p>Book 8: Institutions: County Homes, Sanatoriums, Other</p> <p>"County Homes includes homes for the elderly and other group homes and hospitals. "Sanatoriums" includes photographs and postcards of institutions to treat tuberculosis. One large section consists of photographs by Frank N. Ruslander of the J. N. Adam Memorial Hospital, Perrysbury, N.Y., some showing the hospital's preventorium -- children outdoors wearing minimal clothing as a means of preventing tuberculosis. There are also scenes from hospitals and groups of nurses. In "Other" there are postcard views of Gheel, more hospitals and patients, and missions to lepers in Madagascar and elsewhere. The volume ends with a series of larger photographs taken by Norman Burdick for the State Hospital for Criminal Insane, Dannemora, New York, ca. 1919.</p>	ca. 1900-1974
☰ vol. 9	<p>Book 9: Comic [postcards], 1st Day Covers, Other</p> <p>Comic postcards in this volume caricature people with physical disabilities or mental illness, or in some cases people pretending to have a disability in order to solicit money. The second section contains miscellaneous photographs and postcards on people with disabilities, including "invalid" radio operators, and more material on Franklin Roosevelt and polio (see Book 3). The third section contains first day covers of U.S. postage stamps related to people with disabilities or to charitable organizations aiding the disabled.</p>	ca. 1900-1997
☰ vol. 10	<p>Book 10: Cabinet Photos</p> <p>The cabinet card format was used by professional photographers for portraiture from the 1870s to the 1920s. It is larger than the similar carte de visite. These photographs are of people with a variety of physical disabilities. The last three cabinet cards in this volume -- Alfred Pilgrim, Uncle Frank Jeffrey's family, and an unnamed African American -- were purchased by the Historical Library in 2018 and added.</p>	1870s-1920s
☰ vol. 11	<p>Book 11: Larger Format Photographs</p> <p>Photographs up to 8 x 10 on previously noted topics. There are also some publicity photographs from popular motion pictures. The volume ends with twelve stereoscopic photographs.</p>	1880s-1973
☰ vol. 12	<p>Book 12: Pamphlets</p> <p>Pamphlets, mostly published by organizations helping the disabled. There are also some biographical accounts of individuals. The earliest is <i>Happy Poverty: An Authentic History of Blind Ellen</i> published in the 1820s by the American Tract Society.</p>	1820s-1997

 vol. 13	<b>Book 13: Pamphlets</b> Materials are similar to those in the previous volume. The 1863 item is a pamphlet on Tom Thumb. The ca. 1997 item is a poster on the Disability Project. Of note is a pamphlet, <i>Glimpses of the Pan-American Exposition</i> (1901) in the shape of a buffalo head.	1863-ca. 1997
 vol. 14	<b>Book 14: Snapshots</b> Informal photographs of people with disabilities and their families or institutions.	1940s-1978
 vol. 15	<b>Book 15: Additions to other books</b> Contents include: Additions to Book 1 and 2: Wheelchairs and people, 53 items Additions to Book 3: Charity, 23 items Additions to Book 4: Beggars, 44 items Additions to Book 5: Royalty, 20 items Additions to Book 6,7,8: Institutions and other, 39 items New theme: Obesity, 65 items Additions to Book 11: Large format photographs, 13 items Additons to Book 12 and 13: Pamphlets, 11 items	

---

## 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.

Portrait photographs  
Postcards

### Subjects

Amputees  
Beggars  
Blind -- Institutional care  
Blindness  
Cerebral palsy  
Charities, Medical -- United States  
Children with disabilities  
Commemorative postage stamps  
Conjoined twins  
Crutches  
Deaf -- Institutional care  
Deafness  
Disabled veterans  
Dwarfs (Persons)  
Epileptics  
Freak shows  
Guide dogs  
Intellectual disability  
Medicine -- Religious aspects  
Mental illness  
Muscular dystrophy  
Orphanages  
Orthopedic apparatus  
People with disabilities  
People with disabilities and the performing arts  
People with disabilities -- Portraits  
People with disabilities -- Services for  
People with mental disabilities -- Care  
Poliomyelitis  
Prosthesis  
Psychiatric hospitals  
Quacks and quackery  
Reconstruction (1914-1939)  
Sociology of disability  
Tuberculosis -- Hospitals  
Tuberculosis in children -- Prevention  
Wheelchairs  
World War, 1914-1918

### Genres / Formats

Cartes-de-visite (card photographs)  
Ephemera  
Pamphlets  
Photographic postcards  
Photographs