

[Bacitracin reports, 1943-1949](#)

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS.

Bacitracin reports, 1943-1949.

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HISTORICAL NOTE: The early antibiotic Bacitracin was discovered in 1943 by Balbina Johnson, Director of the Surgical Bacteriological Laboratory at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, in a culture taken from the wound of a girl who had been in a car accident. Johnson noticed that the *Staphylococcus aureus* seen in the initial microscopic examination had disappeared overnight, killed by an unknown microbe. Working with Columbia University professor of surgery Frank L. Meleney, Johnson developed the microbe into an effective antibiotic named Bacitracin, from baci- (bacillus) and Tracey, the surname of the girl in whom the microbe was found.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: Reports from the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons dealing with the development of the antibiotic Bacitracin, July 1, 1943-January 1, 1949. Most were submitted to the U.S. Office of the Surgeon General, though some early ones were produced for the U.S. Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD). Topics covered include basic laboratory work, negotiations with pharmaceutical companies to produce Bacitracin commercially, and subsequent clinical trials in venues around the United States. There are also reports of meetings, reprints of scientific articles, and the final report of January 1, 1949. Though many reports are unsigned, others bear the signatures of Balbina Johnson and Frank L. Meleney.

LANGUAGE: English.

ACCESS: Open.

PROVENANCE: Unknown.

Subjects

Johnson, Balbina.

Meleney, Frank L. (Frank Lamont), 1889-1963.

Antibacterial agents – History.

Antibiotics – Development – United States.

Bacitracin.

Anti-Bacterial Agents – history.