

Antique Medical Instruments



Trephine Instrument Set

Late 19th/early 20th century



This trephine instrument set belonged to Dr. Arthur Elting, Chief Surgeon of Albany Hospital from 1911-1937 and Professor of Surgery at Albany Medical College. A trephine is a surgical instrument that was used to cut and permanently remove a round portion of the skull. The procedure was called trephining or trepanation and dates back to prehistoric times. Trepanation is considered to be one of the earliest surgical procedures and was widely performed. Archeologists have found skulls all over the world showing holes indicative of trepanation.

Phonendoscope - Bazzi-Bianchi Bowles

Patented 1894, 1907



This device is used to strengthen auscultatory sounds. It includes two diaphragm membranes, hard rubber ear tips, and a cylindrical metal storage case. Original tubing included but has hardened and is no longer pliable. The tubing connects to the top of the unit and to the ear tips enabling the practitioner to listen for sounds of the respiratory tract, specifically low pitched sounds.

Intubation Set

Late 19th century



This intubation set was created by an American Physician, Joseph O'Dwyer in the late 19th century. It was used in cases of diphtheria to enable the patient to breathe. The medical set was manufactured by Tiemann & Co., a surgical instrument manufacturer known for their willingness to produce new medical technology.

Lithotrity Instrument Set, 1840-1860



This Lithotripsy Instrument set was made by Charriere, a French surgical instrument maker. The set is missing some pieces but it still contains the duck-billed screw and percussion stone breaker and the volant stone breaker and syringe. The instruments were used to crush bladder stones, making them small enough to pass through urination.

Spencer Lens Company Monocular Dissecting Microscope

with wooden case

c. 1903



This microscope was used to view three dimensional objects and was chiefly designed for botanical dissecting but could also be used for general dissecting purposes. The design is based on the American Microscope maker Joseph Zentmayer's botanical dissecting microscope design. It was most likely used at the College for student instruction.

Induction Coil

19th Century



One of the many interesting items found in the Archives is this early model of a Harvard inductorium, with coil in horizontal plane instead of modern vertical plane. The first induction coil was developed in 1836 by Nicholas Callan, an Irish priest and scientist. Serving multiple purposes in the late 1800s, such as powering cool cathode early x-ray tubes and early radio transmitters, induction coils were also used for medical therapy and led to a thriving business of “quack” medical devices. Still in use today, inductor coils are mainly used in the internal combustion engines of automobiles.