

## Biographical/Historical note

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Dr. Thomas Young, 1730-1783, was appointed a professor of midwifery at the University of Edinburgh from 1756 until his death in 1783. He is generally considered to be the father of the University of Edinburgh's School of Obstetrics. During his tenure, he created a Lying-In Ward at the Royal Infirmary, later the Edinburgh Maternity Hospital, to give clinical lectures. George Gillespie appears to have been a student of his lectures on midwifery in the year 1761.

Although only males were allowed to be physicians in the late 1700s, the majority of them had little training in obstetrics because "obstetrics was almost exclusively in the hands of midwives [and] it was, therefore, not considered necessary to teach medical students," (Macafee, page 32). When Dr. Thomas Young was appointed professor in 1756, he began teaching midwifery at the University of Edinburgh. Dr. Young taught midwifery lectures until his death in 1783, but "it was not until 1833, fifty years after his death, that systematic lectures in midwifery were made compulsory," (Macafee, page 32). In order to teach in a clinical setting: "by permission of the manager [of the Royal Infirmary], but at Dr. Young's expense, [a ward] was fitted up for four lying-in women, or as many more as Dr. Young could accommodate," (Macafee, page 32). According to C.H.G. Macafee, during the twenty-seven years that Young served a teacher of medical students in Edinburgh, "his teaching influenced the practice of midwifery not only in Scotland but in other countries," (page 32).

### Bibliography:

Macafee, C.H.G. "Medical Students and the Teaching of Midwifery: Opening address, Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, Winter Session, 1942." *Ulster Medical Journal*, 1943 May; 12(1): 24-40.

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## Scope and Contents note

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This collection consists of two volumes which contain what appears to be verbatim notes taken by George Gillespie from Dr. Young's Lectures on Midwifery at the University of Edinburgh in 1761. The first volume primarily focuses on the history of midwifery, basic female anatomy and common gynecological problems and disorders. Topics in the second volume include techniques for removing the placenta, laborious labors, use of the forceps, properties of different kinds of milk, and a host of possible complications. Both volumes contain an index.

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## Administrative Information

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