

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF  
Dr. Albert L. Gihon

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[Reprint from PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF AMERICA.]





ALBERT LEARY GIHON.

**GIHON, Albert Leary**, born in Philadelphia, Pa., September 28, 1833; received degrees of A. B. (Central High School, Philadelphia) 1850; M. D. (Philadelphia) 1852; A. M. (Princeton) 1854 and (Philadelphia) 1855; professor of chemistry and toxicology in Philadelphia College of Medicine and Surgery, 1853-'54. Entered navy as assistant surgeon, May 1, 1855; first duty on board receiving-ship "Union," navy-yard, Philadelphia; attached to sloop of war "Levant," East India Station, 1855-'58; was with Commander (Admiral) A. H. Foote and Lieutenant (Commodore) W. H. Macomb in the sloop-of-war "Portsmouth's" boat, November 15, 1856, when fired upon by the Chinese while attempting to pass the Barrier Forts on the Pearl river, near Canton, and participated in the subsequent engagements, which resulted in the capture of these forts, November 16, 20, 21, and 22, 1856; attached to the brig "Dolphin," 1858-'59, during Paraguay expedition, and to sloop-of-war "Preble," 1859, on the coast of Central America and Panama. Passed assistant surgeon, May 1, 1860; United States Naval Hospital, Brooklyn, N. Y., 1860-'61; brig "Perry," 1861, on the blockade of Fernandina, Fla., and cruising off the Atlantic

coast of the Southern states when the Rebel privateer "Savannah" (Confederate letter-of-marque No. 1) was captured, May 1, 1861. Promoted to surgeon, August 1, 1861; naval rendezvous, New York; U. S. S. "St. Louis," 1862-'65, on special service upon European Station and cruising among the Atlantic islands after Confederate steamers "Alabama," "Florida," and "Georgia," and in the latter part of 1864 on blockade of coast of South Carolina; senior medical officer navy-yard, Portsmouth, N. H., 1865-'68; attached to store-ship "Idaho," 1868-'70, anchored at Nagasaki, Japan, as hospital ship for the Asiatic Station, and was on board during the memorable typhoon of September 21, 1869, when ship was wrecked by passing through centre of cyclone; for services rendered Portuguese colony at Dilly, Island of Timor, and the Portuguese men-of-war "Principe Dom Carlos" and "Sa da Bandeira," received from the king of Portugal, with the consent of congress, the decoration of Knight of the Military Order of Christ; for services to H. B. M. ships "Flint" and "Dawn," the thanks of the British government; and for similar services to the French gun-boat "Scorpion" those of the commander-in-chief of the French East India Station; special duty at Brooklyn, N. Y., 1870; subsequently attached to Marine Rendezvous, Philadelphia; and later member of the Naval Medical Board of Examiners at Philadelphia, 1870-'72, and at Washington, 1872-'73. Promoted to medical inspector, November 7, 1872; special duty at Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, 1873, and same year ordered to flag-ship "Wabash" as surgeon-of-the-fleet on the European Station; at Key West, Fla., with naval expedition of 1874; returned to European Station as surgeon-of-the-fleet on board the flag-ship "Franklin," 1874-'75; head of medical department at Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., 1875-'80; at request of chief of Bureau of Medicine and Surgery designed and superintended construction of model of hospital-ship for Centennial exhibition at Philadelphia, 1876, and at same exhibition presented "Ambulance Cot," bearing his name, which was approved by board of officers, July 5, 1877, and adopted for use in the navy; appointed "inspector of recruits and recruiting stations," November 20, 1878. Commissioned medical director, August 20, 1879, and ordered in charge of naval hospital, Norfolk, Va., 1880; member of board of inspection of the navy, 1880-'83; in charge of naval hospital, Washington, D. C., 1883-'86; of naval hospital, Mare Island, Cal., 1886-'88, and of naval hospital, Brooklyn, N. Y., 1888-'92; special duty, New York, 1892-'93, and again in charge of naval hospital, Washington, D. C., 1893-'95.

Dr. Gihon is now the senior medical director of the navy, and on May 1, 1895, will attain the rank of commodore (brigadier-general), having then been forty years in the naval service, of which an aggregate of only one year and ten months has been unemployed. He will be retired from active service on September 28, 1895, by the constitutional limitation of age, although blessed with unimpaired physical and mental vigor, which he attributes to the eleven years of his earlier life in the navy, which were passed almost continuously at sea, and which have made him an ardent advocate of the efficacy of ocean-therapy. Since 1875 his rank has exempted him from service afloat.

Since 1876 Dr. Gihon has represented the medical department of the navy in the prominent medical, sanitary, and climatological associations and international medical congresses, and has been honored by election to their highest offices. He is a member of numerous American and foreign medical, historical, and scientific societies, a fellow and ex-president of the American Academy of Medicine, and prominently identified with the American Public Health Association, of which he was president in 1883, and the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States, of which he is vice-president. From his earliest connection with the navy, Dr. Gihon has made naval hygiene his specialty, and has had the satisfaction to see his "Practical Suggestions in Naval Hygiene," first published in 1871, become accomplished facts.

He is author of numerous papers and addresses on naval hygiene, public health, sanitary reform, state medicine, higher medical education, vital statistics, medical demography and climatology; has contributed to literary magazines and other periodicals, and articles on medical and surgical subjects to professional journals and other publications, and was for six years one of the editors of the *Annual of the Universal Medical Sciences*.

Dr. Gihon is originator of the project, which he is hopeful of completing, to erect a monument in the city of Washington to Dr. Benjamin Rush, as significant of the part the profession of medicine has had in the patriotic history of our country.

Dr. Gihon was married just before the outbreak of the Civil War, on April 3, 1860, to Clara Montfort, daughter of Charles H. Campfield, Esq., of Savannah, Ga. Their married life was saddened by the death of their only daughter, Charlotte, a beautiful and accomplished young lady, on June 18, 1885. Their two sons, Albert Dakin Gihon and Clarence Montfort Gihon, have already attained high rank among the younger American artists in Paris.