Guide to the Johann Friedrich Ahlfeld Collection of Drawings of Medical Deformities circa 1880

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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.AHLFELD

Title  Ahlfeld, Johann Friedrich. Collection of Drawings of Medical Deformities

Date  circa 880

Size  2.75 linear feet (6 boxes)

Repository  Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  Dr. Johann Friedrich Ahlfeld’s collection contains drawings of various medical deformities. The drawings are replications of illustrations found in two volumes containing 49 total plates.

Information on Use

Access  The collection is open for research.

Citation  When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Ahlfeld, Johann Friedrich. Collection of Drawings of Medical Deformities, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note  Johann Friedrich Ahlfeld was born on October 16, 1843 in Alseben an der Saale, Province Sachsen, Germany. He studied gynecology and obstetrics in Greifswald, Vienna, Tübingen, and Leipzig, where he was an assistant of Carl Sigmund Franz Crede (1819-1892). Ahlfeld was conferred doctor of medicine on 22 February, 1868. He became professor of midwifery in Leipzig, and then relocated to Giessen. There, he was professor of obstetrics and director of the midwifery teaching institution. Ahlfeld moved to Marburg in 1883 where he served as professor of obstetrics and director of the Royal School of Midwifery. He was named privy medical counselor in 1894 and retired from teaching in 1909.

Ahlfeld is the namesake of several medical terms: Ahlfeld’s manipulation, an external manipulation to push out the placenta which minimizes blood loss; Ahlfeld’s sign I, an irregular uterine contraction after the third month of pregnancy; and Ahlfeld’s sign II, a slight loosening of the placenta.
Ahlfeld died on May 25, 1929 in Marburg, Germany.

**Scope Note**
This collection contains drawings and photographs of various medical deformities.

Series I and II contain replications of illustrations found in two volumes containing 49 total plates. The volumes, entitled *Atlas zu Die Missbildungen des Menschen*, are held in the SCRC Rare Books collection (call # fQM691.A3). The drawings and illustrations are also associated with Ahlfeld’s book, *Die Missbildungen des Menschen* (call# ffQM691.A3). The illustrations depict abnormalities of a wide variety of body parts but most convey conjoined twins, or deformed genitalia or heads. Within the volumes, the illustrations are about four square inches in size; there are between 12 and 22 illustrations per page. The accompanying drawings are of individual illustrations from the volumes. Approximately three-quarters of the illustrations are replicated by drawings. Drawings of illustrations from the same page in the volume are grouped together. Several of the illustrations are accompanied by more than one drawing. Some of the drawings appear to be originals and others have been cut from a published piece.

Series III, Ephemera and Photographs contains illustrations that depict abnormalities, mostly those of conjoined twins, deformed genitalia, and heads. The illustrations are arranged according to the number written on each. This number may be associated with a past exhibition of Ahlfeld’s drawings and illustrations. The photographs are of women during labor, infants, and other abnormalities.

**Related Resources**
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

**Subject Headings**
- Ahlfeld, Johann Friedrich, 1843-1929
- Abnormalities, Human
- Gynecology
- Labor (Obstetrics)
- Obstetrics
- Pregnancy
- Twins
- Twins, Conjoined

**INVENTORY**

**Series I: Drawings from Atlas zu Die Missbildungen des Menschen, Volume 1**

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