

CHARLES O. CURTMAN COLLECTION

Collection summary

Volume: .5 linear feet
Inclusive dates: 1865-1897
Collection code: FC093

Historical Note

Curtman (1829-1896) was born Karl Otto Curtman in Giessen, Germany and was a medical graduate of the university in his native city, where he was a student of Justus von Liebig. After working in Antwerp, Belgium as an industrial chemist, he emigrated to the United States and settled in New Orleans in 1850. When the Civil War began he was commissioned as a medical officer in a Confederate cavalry unit, but soon thereafter was assigned to direct the manufacture of medicines and explosives at army laboratories. After the war he practiced medicine in Memphis and from there was recruited to join the faculty of Missouri Medical College in St. Louis. He was Professor of Chemistry at the College from 1868 until 1874 and again from 1883 until his death. He also taught at the St. Louis College of Pharmacy (the two colleges maintained an informal affiliation) and was on the staff of the Mallinckrodt Chemical Works in the city. Too early to be considered a "biochemist," he was nonetheless a significant local pioneer in investigating and teaching laboratory science to medical and pharmacy students. He was the author of three laboratory manuals and numerous journal reviews of current scientific developments. At the very end of his life, he was among the first in St. Louis to investigate applications for the newly discovered principles of x-ray technology.

Provenance

The collection was assembled from documents drawn from collections of the St. Louis Metropolitan Medical Society Library that were given to the Becker Medical Library in 1990 (Accession 90-061).

Access and Use

The collection is open and accessible for research. The Library holds copyright.

Scope and Content

Collection includes Curtman's valedictory address to the 1869 class of the Missouri Medical College, a scrapbook of obituaries and biographical articles about Curtman, and an 1865 United States internal revenue license issued to Curtman to practice as a physician in Memphis.

Related materials in the Library Archives

See also FP005 (Vertical file "C"): Biographical information on W. J. G. Curtman (1802-1871), father of Charles Otto Curtman. Three German language articles (two in partial English translations by the donor), 1876, 1918, 1992, and a genealogical chart of the Curtman family. An oil portrait, two original print photographs and two reproduced engravings modeled on photographs ascribed to Curtman's daughter, Charlotte Curtman, are in the visual collections.

Related materials elsewhere

To locate publications by Curtman and his associates, visit or search the online catalogs of book collections of the Becker Library and of the St. Louis College of Pharmacy (O.J. Cloughly Alumni Library).

Container List

BOX 1

United States internal revenue license to practice as a physician, Memphis, September 7, 1865. 1:1.

Valedictory address to the graduating class of the Missouri Medical College delivered at Polytechnic Hall Saint Louis, Mo. March 2nd 1869 by Charles O. Curtman MD, Professor of Chemistry and Pharmacy. 1:2.

Autograph ms., 55 leaves in notebook with additional endpapers, the last of which bears the stamp, "Henry Milton Whelpley, Treasurer, American Pharmaceutical Association, 2342 Albion Place, St. Louis, Mo."

Photocopy of the valedictory address, 1:3.

Untitled scrapbook of obituaries and biographical articles about Curtman, 1897, 1:4.

Fifty-seven unnumbered leaves. The book was almost certainly compiled by or at the request of Henry M. Whelpley, whose signature appears on the second flyleaf. Whelpley himself wrote the first of the articles entered in the book, taken from the trade magazine that he edited, Meyer Brothers Druggist 17 (1896): 254-55, followed by tributes to Curtman by other authors that he published. The scrapbook also contains numerous short pieces from other sources. Inscribed on the inside of the front cover, "Presented to the Historical Section of the A. Ph. A. by Mrs H. M. Whelpley." How and when the St. Louis Medical Society came into possession of the item is not known. Embossed in gold letters on the outside of the front cover, "Charles O. Curtman, 1829-96."