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[Columbia University Department of Ophthalmology Medical Illustrations](#)

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY.

Medical illustrations, 1911-1973 (bulk 1932-1969)

35 cubic feet (2732 folders in 120 flat boxes)

HISTORICAL NOTE: Although ophthalmological instruction appears to have been offered at the College of Physicians and Surgeons (P&S) on an occasional basis as early as the 1820s, the first professor of ophthalmology, Cornelius R. Agnew, was only appointed in 1867. A formal department emerged in the early twentieth century with an “Executive Officer” (chairman) first appearing in the 1915/16 P&S annual catalog.

A gift of \$5 million by philanthropist Edward S. Harkness led to the construction of a separate structure for the department which opened in January 1933. Though formally known as the Edward S. Harkness Institute of Ophthalmology, it is generally referred to as the Eye Institute.

In 1940, the Herman Knapp Memorial Hospital, founded in 1869 as the New York Ophthalmic and Aural Institute, merged with the department and its assets were used to support the Knapp Memorial Laboratory of Physiological Optics. A laboratory addition was opened in 1970.

Sources: Wheeler, Maynard C. *The Eye Institute in New York: An Intimate History* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1969); Merriam, John C. *The Collection of Medical Illustrations of the Edward S. Harkness Eye Institute of the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in the City of New York* (New York, 2001); Columbia University, *College of Physicians & Surgeons, Annual Catalogue, 1915/16.*

SCOPE AND CONTENT: Illustrations of eye diseases and conditions created by medical illustrators in the Columbia University Department of Ophthalmology, 1911-1973. A wide range of ophthalmological diseases are documented, almost all taken from patients seen in the department. Most of the illustrations are in color and appear to have been made in pen and ink on paper.

The collection holds 2732 numbered folders and four unnumbered folders; however most folders contain more than one illustration, some of which are duplicates but many of which were done over time of the same patient or are images of multiple patients with the same diagnosis. A few folders are empty.

The versos of the images usually include name of patient, date of examination, name of examining ophthalmologist, and diagnosis. Among the ophthalmologists most frequently represented in the collection are A. Gerard DeVoe, John H. Dunnington, Daniel B. Kirby, Algernon Reese, and John M. Wheeler.

The overwhelming majority of the illustrations were done by Emil G. “Gus” Bethke (1906-1995) who was employed at the Eye Institute, 1933-1973. The surnames of several other illustrators employed by the department appear on the drawings but it has not been possible to determine their full names. The exception is Marjorie Quinlan who worked for the department in the 1930s and who later married Bethke.

ARRANGEMENT: In drawing number order which is roughly chronological.

LANGUAGE: English.

ADDITIONAL FORMAT: Digitized copies have been made and can be accessed at Archives & Special Collections.

ACCESS: : Because Protected Health Information (PHI) as defined by the US Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) may be found throughout the records, access is allowed only under the terms of Archives and Special Collections’ [Access Policy to Records Containing Protected Health Information](#).

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OTHER FINDING AIDS: Archives & Special Collections holds an item listing for the collection published in 2001 as *The Collection of Medical Illustrations of the Edward S. Harkness Eye Institute of the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in the City of New York*. It was compiled and edited by John C. Merriam, Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology at Columbia.

PROVENANCE: Transfer from the Columbia University Department of Ophthalmology, 2005 (accession #2017.044).

CITE AS: Columbia University Department of Ophthalmology Medical Illustrations, 1919-1973.

Subjects

Bethke, Emil G.

Quinlan, Marjorie.

Columbia University. Department of Ophthalmology.

Eye – Diseases.

Eye – Infections.

Medical illustration.

Ophthalmology – Patients.

Ophthalmology – Practice.

Eye Diseases.

Medical records.

Pen and ink drawings.
Scientific illustrations (images)

Finding aid written by Stephen E. Novak, 2017.

**Columbia University. Department of Ophthalmology.
Medical Illustrations, 1911-1973**

Box	Drawing Nos.
1	1 - 31
2	32 - 70
3	71 - 87
4	88 - 111
5	112 - 121
6	122 - 144
7	145 - 168
8	169 - 188
9	189 - 198
10	199 - 208
11	209 - 218
12	219 - 249
13	250 - 261
14	262 - 284
15	285 - 311
16	312 - 326
17	327 - 345
18	346 - 366
19	367 - 387
20	388 - 408

Box	Drawing Nos.
21	409 - 431
22	432 - 453
23	454 - 472
24	473 - 488
25	489 - 510
26	511 - 526
27	527 - 546
28	547 - 568
29	569 - 595
30	596 - 620
31	621 - 644
32	645 - 672
33	673 - 692
34	693 - 710
35	711 - 736
36	737 - 756
37	757 - 775
38	776 - 802
39	803 - 827
40	828 - 846
41	847 - 863

Box	Drawing Nos.
42	864 – 886
43	887 – 903
44	904 – 928
45	929 – 954
46	955 – 977
47	978 – 997
48	998 – 1019
49	1021 – 1042
50	1043 – 1066
51	1067 – 1096
52	1099 – 1118
53	1119 – 1140
54	1141 – 1162
55	1163 – 1182
56	1183 – 1215
57	1216 – 1237
58	1238 – 1254
59	1255 – 1277
60	1278 – 1295
61	1296 – 1316
62	1318 – 1340

Box	Drawing Nos.
63	1341 – 1365
64	1367 – 1393
65	1394 – 1416
66	1417 – 1440
67	1441 – 1463
68	1464 – 1993
69	1493 – 1518
70	1519 – 1545
71	1546 – 1565
72	1566 – 1596
73	1597 – 1627
74	1628 – 1648
75	1649 – 1673
76	1674 – 1696
77	1697 – 1724
78	1725 – 1757
79	1758 – 1782
80	1783 – 1806
81	1807 – 1827
82	1828 – 1848
83	1849 – 1875

Box	Drawing Nos.
84	1876 – 1888 (1-4)
85	1888 (5-6) – 1896
86	1897 – 1916
87	1917 – 1930
88	1931 – 1963
89	1964 – 1985
90	1986 – 2006
91	2007 – 2021
92	2022 – 2043
93	2044 – 2070
94	2071 – 2094
95	2095 – 2115
96	2116 – 2126
97	2127 – 2151
98	2152 – 2170
99	2171 – 2193
100	2194 – 2216
101	2217 – 2233
102	2234 – 2261
103	2262 – 2288
104	2289 – 2315

Box	Drawing Nos.
105	2316 – 2341
106	2342 – 2362
107	2363 – 2394
108	2395 – 2415
109	2416 – 2447
110	2448 – 2472
111	2473 – 2495
112	2496 – 2533
113	2534 – 2573
114	2574 – 2596
115	2597 – 2625
116	2627 – 2651
117	2652 – 2679
118	2680 – 2706
119	2707 – 2720
120	2721 – 2732; and four folders of unnumbered illustrations