

## THE SMITH ELY JELLIFFE PAPERS

The Oskar Diethelm Library  
DeWitt Wallace Institute for the History of Psychiatry  
Weill Cornell Medical College  
525 East 68th Street  
New York, New York 10065

Arranged and described by:  
Janice Quinter  
October 27, 1987

### **Provenance**

The entire collection consists of photocopies. Mrs. Helena Goldschmidt, daughter of Smith Ely Jelliffe, donated the photocopies of letters and biographical material pertaining to Dr. Jelliffe to the Archives of the Department of Psychiatry (now the Oskar Diethelm Library), New York Hospital-Cornell University Medical Center in the late 1970's.

The originals of this material are deposited in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Publication rights remain with the owner of the originals.

The collection is comprised of .4 cubic ft. housed in one .4 cubic ft. box.

### **Biography**

Smith Ely Jelliffe was born on October 27, 1866 in New York City. After graduating from Brooklyn Polytechnic in 1886, Jelliffe completed his medical degree at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. In 1894 he married Helena Dewey Leeming, whom he had known since childhood, and remained married to her until her death in 1916. They had three daughters and two sons.

Jelliffe exhibited a strong interest in botany in his early career and published many articles on descriptive botany or pharmacognosy of a variety of drugs of vegetable origin.

His first major professional contributions were in the field of neurology; he later emphasized psychiatry, and finally switched to psychoanalysis. Jelliffe was editor of the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, and later, in 1913, he and William Alanson White launched the first psychoanalytic journal in English, *The Psychoanalytic Review*, which served to spread psychoanalytic information in America. Jelliffe accepted Freud's ideas but applied these concepts in different, original settings. He contributed much to psychoanalytic thinking, but was also a pioneer in the application of psychoanalytic knowledge and research in somatic diseases. Sigmund Freud appreciated his work and gave him credit for it.

Jelliffe took many voyages to Europe, which were called his *Wanderjahre*, and wrote detailed letters discussing his observations. He died on September 25, 1945 in New York State.

### **Scope and Content**

The Jelliffe Papers consist of biographical information and letters written by Jelliffe to Helena Dewey Leeming during a year's journey to Europe in 1890-1891.

The biographical information (1 folder, ca. 1975) consists of genealogical information prepared by Helena Woodruff Jelliffe Goldschmidt, daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Jelliffe, on an application form submitted to the Colonial Dames of America. Biographical sketches of Dr. Jelliffe are also included in this folder.

Most of the collection is comprised of letters Jelliffe wrote to Miss Leeming (1890-1891, 1 box) prior to their marriage in 1894. Dr. Jelliffe took a year's voyage to Europe, which proved to be the first of his many *Wanderjahre*. He travelled throughout Holland, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Italy, and France, completing his trip in England. He took a wide range of postgraduate training in the great medical centers of Europe, particularly in Vienna. He showed little interest in neurology and psychiatry in these letters, though his interest in botany continued. Jelliffe wrote long detailed letters almost daily. Though they can be considered love letters, they also describe his activities, the art exhibits and opera performances he attended, his observations, and the scenery. Many of the letters are highlighted by artistic sketches of people, buildings, and sites he thought interesting. Little if any information regarding psychiatry is contained in these letters, but his early thought patterns and interests are revealed. Jelliffe numbered each sheet of his letters. They are in chronological order. This system of arrangement has been followed.

## Inventory

### Box 1

Folder 1	Biographical information	ca. 1975
2	Letters from Jelliffe to Helena Dewey Leeming	10/25/1890 - 12/31/1890
3	Letters from Jelliffe to Helena Dewey Leeming	1/3 - 3/1/1891
4	Letters from Jelliffe to Helena Dewey Leeming	3/3 - 4/11/1891
5	Letters from Jelliffe to Helena Dewey Leeming	4/18 - 6/5/1891
6	Letters from Jelliffe to Helena Dewey Leeming	6/10 - 8/9/1891
7	Letters from Jelliffe to Helena Dewey Leeming	8/14 - 9/22/1891
8	Letters from Jelliffe to Helena Dewey Leeming	9/24 - 10/25/1891