

Adolph Graf zur Lippe Bisterfeld-Weissenfeld (May 11, 1812 - January 23, 1888: 75 years of age)

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Summary: This brief professional biography of Adolph Lippe details his education and rise in the field of homeopathic medicine, as well as his many significant contributions to homeopathy. His close relationships with many renowned homeopaths of his day are also discussed.

Keywords: Adolph Lippe, a brief biography.

Adolph Lippe was among the first group of pioneers to establish homeopathy in the United States. Not by coincidence, he is considered to have been one of America's finest classical homeopaths.(1)

Lippe was born on the family estate of 'See' (near Goerlitz, Prussia) to Count Ludwig and Countess Augusta zur Lippe. After secondary school he began studies in jurisprudence at the University in Berlin. But his interest was really in the medical field; so after a year of law he switched to medicine. Little else is known about his life in Germany, but by 1839 (some references say 1838 or even 1837) Lippe immigrated to the United States and almost immediately enrolled in the North American Academy der Homœopathische Heilkunst (North American Academy of the Homœopathic Healing Art) located in Allentown, Pennsylvania. (2) After two years of rigorous study and passing a final examination given by Drs. John Romig, William Wesselhoeft, Eberhard Freytag, and Henry Detwiler, Lippe received his diploma on August 27, 1841. The great Constantine Hering, father of American homeopathy and president of that Academy, was the first to congratulate and welcome Lippe into the homeopathic fold.

In 1842, Lippe initially set up his practice in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, with Charles Haeseler, an 1843 graduate of the Allentown Academy. Shortly after he moved to Reading, Pennsylvania, where he stayed until 1844 before moving to Carlisle, another small Pennsylvania town sixty miles to the southwest. This area, the Cumberland Valley, was especially

susceptible to epidemic diseases and Lippe helped relieve the suffering there. (3)

Six years later, in 1850, he relocated to Philadelphia with two of his colleagues, Henry Duffield (1801-1865; graduated in 1852 from the Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania) and Thomas Collins Stevenson (?-12.19.1879; graduated in 1851 from the Homœopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania). This move established him in his final environment and it was during this part of his life that he came into full maturation as a homeopath: he taught, mentored and wrote countless articles and two important books. (4) Lippe helped to establish four important journals, *Homœopathic News* (1854-6), *Hahnemannian Monthly* (1865-8), *Organon* (1878-81) and *The Homœopathic Physician* (1881) as well as three organizations, the American Institute of Homœopathy (AIH, 1844), the International Hahnemannian Association (IHA, 1880) and the Lippe Society of Philadelphia (1880).(5) Additionally, he was active

in translation work, translating French, German and Italian homeopathic literature into the English language, and in provings, e.g., *Bromium*, *Calcarea phosphorica*, *Fluoricum acidum*, etc.

Lippe taught for six years at the Homeopathic College of Pennsylvania, 1864-1869. In 1867, the college became a corporation and Lippe, as its major stockholder, assumed the helm. In charge, one of his first acts was to eliminate the Department of Pathology as he felt that field to be unnecessary. Dr. C.G. Raue was in charge of that department and



a close friend of Constantine Hering. This so upset Raue and Hering that Hering withdrew his support for Lippe and founded another college, the Hahnemann Medical College. Thus, for three years there existed two homeopathic medical colleges in Philadelphia.

This schism ended in 1869 when H.N. Guernsey, MD, bought Lippe's stock and transferred ownership of it to Hering. With Lippe powerless, the two schools merged, retaining the name which Hering gave it. The Lippe-Hering friendship soured, yet the two healed those wounds during the 1876 World Congress of Homœopathy. Lippe generously sponsored a banquet during that Congress. (6)

"Lippe continued to write and work in Philadelphia, but was no longer connected with the school. The most stalwart of the Hahnemannian homœopaths flocked around him. He formed the 'Lippe Club' with E.J. Lee and Walter James, and they met regularly to discuss homœopathy. The minutes of these meetings are in the Hahnemann Collection at the Allegheny University of Health Sciences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania."—Julian Winston, *The Faces of Homœopathy* (1999, p. 56).

Lippe, having rooted himself so deeply in his adopted country, resisted any temptation to permanently return to the continent. Yet, in 1860, Lippe traveled to Germany. While attending the meeting of the *Versammlung der Homœopathischen Aerzte Rheinlands und Westphalens* (Association of Homœopathic Physicians of Rhineland and Westphalia) he met Boenninghausen (1785-1864) and spent two weeks in his company:

"...Lippe shared his discovery that it was necessary to change to ever higher potencies when repeating the same remedy, a finding which Boenninghausen confirmed."—Gypser, p. 25.

Also, during this trip he met with other homeopaths, e.g., Veit Meyer (1815-1872) and C. Haubold (1796-1862) (7).

In December of 1884 he lost his only daughter and two weeks later, on January 1, 1885, his eldest son, Constantine (8). It is suggested that Lippe never recovered from this double blow, his vitality gradually declining. In early January 1888, due to the severe weather, he contracted a cold which developed into a severe pneumonia from which he never recovered:

"From the first initial chill to within a few moments of death, Dr. Lippe retained consciousness and never seemed to have any hope of recovery. He said just a few hours before he died, 'The medicines do no good. They only palliate.' And so it seemed. During the last two days, Dr. Lippe, though so ill, was all the time throwing out hints for the treatment of his case. For instance, he would say this symptom indicates, *Nux mosch* or this one *Natrum mur*; and so he would go through a list of remedies, pointing out with such rare skill their characteristics. But all without avail. Taken sick at 3 a.m., Saturday morning, he died Monday, January 23rd, at 9:45 a.m."— p. 39, (Julian Winston, *The Faces of Homœopathy*, 1999; this piece was quoted from Lippe's

obituary which appeared in the 1888 issue of *The Homœopathic Physician*). It was not long after Lippe's passing that Kent moved to Philadelphia to assume his practice.

Gypser ended his 1992 piece with this anecdote by Anshutz (*Homœopathic Recorder*, #26, p. 314, 1911). Please allow me to repeat it here:

"A patient came to him who, for six months, had been under the care of a 'regular' for 'torpid liver.' In two weeks he was well. One day the 'regular' met Lippe and asked him how he was able to cure a 'torpid liver' in so short a time. The reply was something like this - with strong German accent and a tapping of the forehead: 'Torpid liver! The torpidity was here,' tapping the forehead, 'in you.'"— p. 29

NOTES

1) Other noted first pioneers include, H.B. Gram, MD (who introduced homeopathy into the Western Hemisphere in 1825, when he settled in New York City), John Gray, MD, Federal Vanderburgh, MD, C.J. Hempel, MD, William and Robert Wesselhoft, MDs, H. Detwiller, MD, C. Hering, MD, Charles Neidhard, MD, J.H. Pulte, MD, C.G. Raue, MD, H.C. Allen, MD, C. Dunham, MD, E. Bayard, MD, E.C. Stanton, C.S. Lozier, MD, J. Kitchen, MD, P.P. Wells, MD, Jacob Jeanes, MD, S. Swan, MD, W. Williamson, MD, T. Skinner, MD, B. Fincke, MD, A.E. Small, MD, H.N. Guernsey, MD, F.E. Boericke, MD, F. Humphreys, MD, T.S. Verdi, MD, etc.

Notables of the group which followed a bit later include, E.M. Hale, MD, T.F. Allen, MD, R. Ludlam, MD, C.F. Millsbaugh, MD, W.T. Helmuth, MD, J.T. Kent, MD, W.H. King, MD, T.L. Bradford, MD, T.C. Duncan, MD, R.R. Gregg, MD, W.A. Yingling, MD, E.B. Nash, MD, S.A. Jones, MD, E.E. Case, MD, S.M. Close, MD, E.P. Anshutz, M.D., A.L. Monroe, S. Lilienthal, MD, W. Boericke, MD, W.A. Dewey, MD, J.W. Ward, MD, S. Talcott, MD, M.F. Taft, and F.E. Gladwin, MD, etc.

2) This institution, simply referred to as the Allentown Academy, was founded on April 10, 1835, by doctors Hering, Romig, Wesselhoft and Detwiller. It was the first homeopathic school in the world: "A stock company was formed, and a number of subscribers raised enough money to buy a tract of land in Allentown. On May 27, [1835] the cornerstone was laid. ...All the courses were taught in German, the language of the homœopathic literature of the time. Students who were not fluent in German were taught the language."— Julian Winston, *The Faces of Homœopathy* (1999, p. 36).

The school's endowment fund was mismanaged and, during the financial crisis of 1837, that money was lost. The school continued until 1842. It is felt that it might have gained strength and continued had the courses been offered in the English language. It lasted but six years, yet trained a core group of doctors who went on to form the foundation of American homeopathy. Associated with the school was The Academical Bookstore which published Hahnemann's *The Organon Of Homœopathic Medicine* (1836) and G.H.G. Jahr's *Manual of Homœopathic Medicine* (1836).

3) Gypser offers several of Lippe's cases. I have chosen the follow-

ing one which holds several teachings and demonstrates Lippe's command of the *materia medica*:

"[a sixteen year-old female patient with a sprained ankle] had already received Bry. XM which ameliorated the swelling and the pain, but still did not enable her to stand on her left foot: ...and other new symptoms developed themselves. The breathing became rapid; great oppression of the chest, with constantly recurring desire to take a long breath; she felt as if the air she inhaled did not reach the pit of her stomach, and still she could force the air so far down she had to yawn and try to take a deep inspiration.

"The first impression in such a case would naturally be enough to find a remedy for the chest symptoms, remove them first, and later attend to the ankle, or to find a remedy for each of these ailments, and give the two corresponding remedies in alternation. If ever a case presented itself in which alternation seemed excusable, here was the case; but Homœopathy does not admit of such irrational practice, and we were therefore compelled to find the remedy if it was to be found. Who seeks will find! We found under *Prunus spinosa* all the symptoms, and even under the very first proving of it published in the *Archive of the Homœopathic Healing Art*, Vol. XIV, part 3, a proving by Dr. Wilhelm Wahle. Symptom 146: Heaviness, and oppressed in the chest. S. 148: Anxious, short breathing. S. 149: Sensation of heaviness and anxiety in the lower parts of the chest compels him to breathe frequently and deep. S. 155: The breath appears to be checked in the pit of the stomach. S. 225: On the external side of the left foot joint sensation as if sprained. S. 226: Sensation as if sprained in the left foot joint. Here were found all the symptoms of the case, and on the eighth day after the injury had happened she received one dose of *Prunus spinosa* 200, at 11 a.m. The following night she could sleep but very little; the difficulty of breathing increased and compelled her to sit up all night. And here again arose a great question. Was her disease worse or was this great aggravation attributable to the seemingly small and very insignificant dose of the remedy? Her left ankle was also more painful and much more swollen after this sleepless night. This often-recurring, difficult to know whether the disease is worse and the administration of another remedy advisable, or whether the medicine caused this increase of suffering is only a real difficulty if we are uncertain about the undoubted correctness of our prescription. As in this case, only the previously existing symptoms had become worse, and as these symptoms unmistakably indicated *Prunus spinosa*, and as we were sure of having made a very careful selection of the remedy, there was nothing else to do but to wait. The next night was much better; she had slept in her bed. The respiratory difficulties gradually subsided, and later the foot and ankle improved slowly."— Gypser, pp. 27,8.

- 4) Lippe wrote two books which were translated into the English language: *Textbook of Materia Medica* (1866. A.J. Tafel, 714 pp. "Lippe is considered by many to be one of the finest Hahnemannian homœopaths ever, and his symptomatology in this book is very reliable. This book formed the base for Hering's Condensed *Materia Medica*, which started as an interleaved copy

of Lippe's work, with Hering's additions." – J. Winston, *The Heritage of the Homœopathic Literature*, p. 28) and *Key to the Materia Medica or Comparative Pharmacodynamics* (1854, 142 pp. Lippe said this was a work in progress. "The author presents a series of characteristic symptoms of remedies-starting with the polychrests-in the left column, and remedies that have similar symptoms or bear comparing are listed opposite each symptom in the right column."— *ibid*, p. 27).

- 5) Lippe and H. C. Allen, MD, spearheaded the founding of the International Hahnemannian Association (IHA) in 1880. This organization... "was formed as a reaction against the increasing lack of homœopathic teaching in the schools which were then in operation and against the poor quality of homœopathy being practiced."— Julian Winston, *The Faces of Homœopathy* (1999, p. 77). The IHA ceased operation in 1959 when it merged with the AIH.
- 6) "Lippe and Hering often talked shop with each other. When Hering was suffering from hemorrhoids, Lippe cured him with Causticum. On the other hand, when Lippe suffered from typhoid fever in 1863 and was near death, Hering cured him with *Silicea*."— Gypser, p. 25.
- 7) Veit Meyer (2.17.1815, Dresden – 4.22.1872, Leipzig) was a homeopathic physician who received his medical degree in 1842 from the University of Leipzig. It was during his medical studies that he became aware of homeopathy. For eighteen years he published the *Allgemeine Homiopathische Zeitung* (AHZ, loosely translated as General Homeopathic Journal) with Friedrich Jacob Rummel (1793 to 1854). Before this, he published (from 1850 to 1854) the *Homiopathische Vierteljahrschrift* (Quarterly Newsletter on Homeopathy) with Clotar Mueller (1818-1877). Meyer and Clotar were physicians at the Polyclinic in Leipzig from 1854 until 1872. He married E. Elb, the sister of homeopath Joseph Elb (1815-1875; he received his medical degree in 1838 from the University of Leipzig).

Meyer wrote several works including the important historical reference, *Homœopathischer Fuhrer fur Deutschland und das Ausland* (1856; Homeopathic Guide for Germany and Abroad).

Carl Haubold (4.17.1796 – 7.8.1862) was a German homeopathic physician and contemporary of Hahnemann. He graduated with his medical degree in 1821 from the University of Leipzig and became a well-known and respected practitioner. He served as a liason between Hahnemann and those who were known as 'half-homeopaths' when he helped create the Association of Medical Homeopaths (Leipzig). This organization helped to mend the harsh words and feelings which had developed between homeopaths and those who still had their doubts.

- 8) Constantine J. Lippe (7.1.1840 – 1.1.1885) was the son of Adolph Lippe. He wrote *Lippe's Repertory to the More Characteristic Symptoms* (1879) which he dedicated to Constantine Hering: "Ill health prevented Lippe from editing a 2nd edition. He gave his work to E.J. Lee of Philadelphia, who further refined it and published the Mind section in 1889 [*Repertory of the Characteristic Symptoms of the Homœopathic Materia Medica*]. "Constantine Lippe died in 1888 (sic; 1885 is correct. He died of pneumonia.) as a result of wounds suffered during the Civil War." – Julian Winston, *The Heritage of Homœopathic Literature*, p. 62.

Constantine was born in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, studied at Jefferson Medical College (Philadelphia), and later graduated in 1868 from the Cleveland Homeopathic Medical College. At the time of his death he had revised two-thirds of the above-mentioned book, but it was never finished. Like his father, he was a master of the materia medica.

References

- "Adolph Graf zur Lippe Bisterfeld-Weissenfeld," *Classical Homœopathic Quarterly*, 5:1, pp. 2235, 1992. An appendix in this detailed piece, while not complete, catalogues a vast number of Lippe's articles.
- The Faces of Homœopathy: An Illustrated History of the First 200 Years (J. Winston, 1999).
- Biographical Cyclopedia of Homœopathic Physicians and Surgeons (Egbert Cleave, 1873).

About the Author: Jay Yasgur is a pharmacist, author and member of the HPCUS (Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia Convention of the United States). He is the author of "A Dictionary of Homeopathic Medical Terminology," 3rd Ed. He republished and edited two homeopathic classics: "Some Clinical Experiences of E. E. Case, M.D.," and "Homœopathic Materia Medica for Nurses," 2nd Ed. Along with Mr. C. Ellithorp, they produced 'The Dunham Lectures of J.T. Kent'. Mr. Yasgur also completed a three year project, "Cumulative Index to the Homœopathic Physician." Jay has worked for Weleda Inc. and Humphreys Pharmaceutical. Aside from writing, Mr. Yasgur works part time in retail pharmacy where he blends homeopathy into his pharmacy practice. He lives in Tempe, AZ.

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