

# FOCUS

November-December 2015

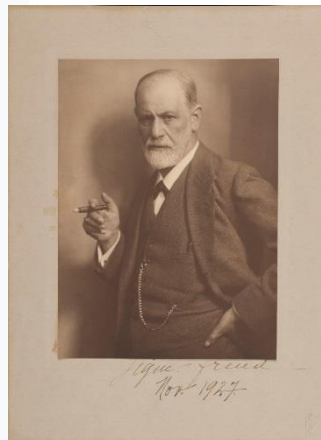
*Photograph of Sigmund Freud*

c. 1921  
Private client

The most famous photograph of Sigmund Freud depicts the psychoanalyst standing with his signature cigar in a stark, chiaroscuro contrapposto. Perhaps fittingly for Freud, the portrait was actually taken by a relative: his son-in-law, a man named Max Halberstadt. Halberstadt—who'd married Freud's daughter Sophie, the fifth of his six children—was a practicing portrait photographer in the early twentieth century.

A copy of this photograph that Freud himself signed and dated "Nov 1927" recently came to CCAHA for treatment. CCAHA Photograph Conservator Rachel Wetzel treated the photograph. When it arrived, the photograph had a small stain above the cigar. The interaction between the photograph and its mount had also been problematic. The photograph had been tacked to the mount at the top and bottom edges with adhesives that stained the photograph. The area where the photograph rested on the mount was discolored. The center of the top edge of the mount had torn, and both the photograph and the mount exhibited moderate surface grime throughout.

After testing the photographic media with deionized water, Wetzel cleaned the surface of the photograph and the mount with a soft polyurethane sponge to reduce surface grime. She applied deionized water with micro swabs to the stain just above the cigar. Using controlled moisture and heat, she locally reduced the stains on the mount. Wetzel mended the tear on the back of the mount with Japanese tissue and wheat starch paste, which she then toned with pastel pencils to blend. She applied four small Japanese paper hinges to the photograph to re-adhere it to the mount: two at the center and two at the bottom of the left and right edges. Lastly, she applied a small amount of pastel pencil to the stain on the photographic surface to minimize its appearance.



*above and below: CCAHA Photograph Conservator Rachel Wetzel removes a stain with a micro swab | left: the photograph before treatment right: the photograph after treatment*

