A

Historical Sketch

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY
PREPARED FOR THE
SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

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PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH
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The historical data in this pamphlet have been compiled from several sources, including the writings of Dean Holmes Condict Jackson, Dr. Charles Vetter, and Dr. Ellison Hillyer, but largely from a copyrighted 250-page History of New York University College of Dentistry written by Dr. Alfred J. Asgis and donated by him to the Library of that College.
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

1866–1867

New York University College of Dentistry

is the outgrowth of one of America’s pioneer dental educational institutions, founded in 1865 in New York City as the New York College of Dentistry. It is the third oldest dental school in existence in the United States, although it was the fifth one organized, since two, which had been organized previously, were subsequently discontinued, one in 1852 and the other in 1855.

Prior to 1865, immediately following the establishment of the Baltimore College in 1840, several attempts were made to establish a school in New York State. All these attempts failed. On April 13, 1852, Amos Westcott, after repeated efforts, obtained a charter for the New York College of Dental Surgery in Syracuse, New York. After functioning for fifteen weeks the school had to close its doors because of lack of funds. Another attempt by nondentists to obtain a charter for a dental school was opposed by the profession in 1860. During 1864, Dr. Eleazar Parmly and other representative members of the dental profession in the City of New York inaugurated a movement to establish a dental college. A bill was presented to the legislature at the session of 1865. The charter was granted on March 31st of that year. The first Board of Trustees and Directors, according to the Act of Incor-
The first faculty was elected at a meeting of the Board of Trustees and Directors, held on September 30, 1865. The members were: Norman W. Kingsley, M.D., D.D.S., Faneuil D. Weisse, M.D., Dr. William H. Atkinson, Dr. William H. Allen, R. King Browne, M.D., Dr. Charles Butler (Cincinnati), William H. Dwinnelle, M.D., D.D.S., and Joseph Smith Dodge, Jr., M.D., D.D.S. The faculty did not begin to function during that year but took part in the deliberations of the Board of Trustees and Directors in matters of organization of the college. Eleazar Parmly, M.D., D.D.S., was elected a trustee and director at a meeting held on January 25, 1866. At a meeting held on February 27, 1866, the following resolution was adopted: "That the members of the dental profession of the city be requested to meet, informally, with the Board of Trustees and Directors, at the house of Dr. George E. Hawes, for the purpose of taking into consideration the interests and wishes of the dental profession in connection with the college."

Representative dentists of New York City met on March 28, 1866. Following a study of various proposed
plans for the future of the college, the meeting appointed a "Committee of Conference." This committee was assigned the task of formulating a "Plan of Organization," embodying the views expressed by the profession at the March meeting, and was ordered to report at a later date. The Board of Trustees and Directors met on April 17, 1866, when they received and considered the report submitted by the "Committee of Conference." The result of these efforts was that "at the meeting on April 12, 1866, a Plan of Organization presented by Professor Faneuil D. Weisse, M.D., April 10, 1866, was adopted by the Board of Trustees and Directors."

A second faculty for 1866–1867 was elected at a meeting held on May 1, 1866. Rooms were rented during the summer of 1866, in a business building, located at the corner of Twenty-second Street and Fifth Avenue and were fitted for teaching purposes.

The first session was opened on November 5, 1866. There were thirty-one enrolled students. Professor Weisse's "Plan of Organization" was followed. The faculty members included:

- Eleazar Parmy, M.D., D.D.S., Emeritus Professor of the Institutes of Dentistry
- William H. Dwinnelle, M.D., D.D.S., Professor of Dental Science and Operative Dentistry
- Norman W. Kingsley, M.D., D.D.S., Professor of Dental Art and Mechanism
- Joseph Smith Dodge, Jr., M.D., D.D.S., Professor of Dental Pathology and Therapeutics
- Faneuil D. Weisse, M.D., Professor of Theoretical and Experimental Physiology
- Charles A. Seeley, A.M., M.D., Professor of Chemistry and Metallurgy

The demonstrators were: D. H. Goodwillie, M.D., D.D.S., Dr. R. M. Streeter, and Alexander W. Stein, M.D. A board of eighteen clinical lecturers was appointed with Dr. Frank Abbott as secretary. The first session closed on March 18, 1867, with nine graduates. These candidates were eligible to take the graduation examinations and the degree because they had fulfilled the requirements of the law, which at that time permitted the granting of degrees to men who had previously had eight years of dental practice.

In 1867 and 1868, the following professorial changes were effected:

- William H. Dwinnelle, M.D., D.D.S., Professor of Dental Histology, 1867–1868
- Edwin J. Dunning, D.D.S., Professor of Operative Dentistry, 1867–1868
On April 13, 1869, the Board of Trustees and Directors elected the officers of the Board and the faculty for 1869–1870. Dr. Stephen A. Main was elected president of the Board and Frank Abbott, M.D., F. LeRoy Satterlee, M.D., Ph.D., Faneuil D. Weisse, M.D., and Alexander W. Stein, M.D., were elected to the Board as members of the faculty. On November 10, 1869, new by-laws were adopted providing for the election of professors in perpetuity instead of for a term of one year, as under the previous by-laws adopted in 1865.

The Curriculum and Educational Objectives

The objectives of the school were given as follows in the announcement of the course for the session 1867–1868, in which it was specifically stated that:

The New York College of Dentistry has been established for the sole purpose of giving to dental students the highest order of professional education; designing not only to instruct them in practical Dentistry but also to give them a knowledge of such collateral sciences as can be made tributary to that end; so that they may be, on all subjects which are common to them, the equal of men in kindred professions.
These objectives have not changed throughout the years. The aim of the school, which has been consistently maintained, is embodied in the opening paragraph of each annual announcement as it appeared, up to the time of the merger:

The purpose of the institution is to educate men to practice dental surgery as a specialty of medicine, therefore the curriculum includes the fundamental departments of medicine with operative dental surgery and oral prosthetics. The lectures on the fundamental departments of medicine are especially directed to the needs of the dental surgeon.

The infirmary courses consisted of daily practice upon the patients in the infirmary of the college, under the direction of the superintendents and demonstrators of the respective departments. Beginning in 1891, when the College moved to its own building on Twenty-third Street, laboratories for practical work were installed. The first two to be established were for practical chemistry and normal histology. In 1894, additional laboratories for “Practical Classes” were conducted to afford first-, second-, and third-year students an opportunity to perform operations and learn the technique of “operative dental surgery and oral prosthetics.” This work in the “Practical Classes” and the laboratory facilities were improved from year to year.

With the regular session of 1890–1891 an addition to the curriculum was made, in that each professor of the faculty met all the students one hour each week for an oral examination on the current lectures of his department. “Experience has shown that these examinations make the students’ education much more thorough.”

Attention may be called to the Saturday clinic, held throughout the year, established in connection with the infirmary “for the treatment, both by Surgery and Mechanism, of all diseases and deformities of the buccal cavity, other than those pertaining to the teeth.” The clinic was conducted by Professors Weisse and Kingsley.

The college year was a five-month term, from the time of the opening of the College until 1896, at which time it was lengthened to seven and one-half months and subsequently to eight months. From 1866 to 1892 a two-year course or the degree was required. It is interesting to note the close relationship between the New York College of Dentistry and the medical college of the University of the City of New York which prevailed as far back as 1887. The catalogue of the College of Dentistry in 1887 carries the following statement:

The Trustees would inform those who may desire to obtain the degree of D.D.S., that the Medical Department of the University of the City of New York will examine for and confer the degree of M.D. (after a satisfactory examination), upon a graduate of the New York College of Dentistry—who shall have fulfilled his two regular courses of Dental College lectures at said College—and after he shall have studied medicine one year, inclusive of attendance on one regular session of lectures in the Medical Department of the University.

In 1892, the dental course was lengthened to three years. Throughout this entire period there was a constant readjustment, not only of the curriculum within the College but also of the educational requirements for entrance to it. From 1886 to 1894, students who applied for their first registration, who did not hold a diploma from a public school or credentials from a higher grade institution, were required to submit to an examination conducted by the
Dean to determine their proficiency in public-school subjects. In the spring of 1894, the Board of Trustees and Directors received from the Regents of the University of the State of New York a communication to the effect that they would not consent, from that date, to the conferring of the degree of D.D.S. upon any graduate who did not hold the academic diploma of the State of New York or credentials of a preliminary education equivalent thereto. After a conference of Professor Faneuil D. Weisse with the Regents' office, the New York College of Dentistry required of its matriculants specified preliminary educational requirements. It was decided to enter upon an annually progressive rising scale of these preliminary educational requirements. At this time the Board of Regents started the issuance of the "Dental Student's Certificate," which was to be required of each student before he could be accepted by the College. To obtain the Dental Student's Certificate the matriculants of 1894-1895 were required to have a preliminary education the equivalent of that required for a Medical Student's Certificate for that year; the matriculants for 1895-1896 were to have the equivalent of one year of high school. These predental requirements were to be gradually increased until the equivalent of three years of high school would be required for the Dental Student's Certificate.

During this formative stage the College had changed its location a number of times. The original location described above consisted of rooms at the corner of Twenty-second Street and Fifth Avenue; then quarters were rented on the corner of Twenty-third Street and Sixth Avenue; later, space was rented on the corner of Twenty-third Street and Broadway; from there the school
moved to the corner of Twenty-third Street and Second Avenue; and, in 1891, a building to be devoted entirely to the College was purchased at 205–207 East Twenty-third Street. This six-story structure is still a part of the buildings on the present site.

The first or formative period of the dental school is significant in terms of its ability to emerge from the chaotic entanglements which inevitably arise with the launching of any great venture. It had reached a position of stability by 1895, having weathered all storms under the capable guidance of both Dean Kingsley and Dean Abbott. Dean Kingsley held that office for only two years and was succeeded by Dr. Frank Abbott who served as dean from 1869 to the time of his death in 1897. It was largely due to the efforts and the skill of Dean Abbott, aided by Professor Weisse, who later succeeded him, that the school was prepared to start the second period of its development on a secure foundation.

By 1895, the College of Dentistry was well established and was prepared to continue its expansion. In this period the curriculum was modified and the technic courses were improved in accordance with the growth of the art and science of dentistry and of medicine. As the various sciences of the medical curriculum were developed, they were simultaneously introduced into the dental curriculum. The expansion of the dental course was guided by Dean Weisse and Dean Starr from 1897 to 1925.

Dean Weisse had been active from the very beginning. He was instrumental in formulating many of the original plans adopted at the time of the organization of the College. In 1897, on the death of Dr. Abbott, he succeeded as dean of the New York College of Dentistry and served continuously in this capacity until his death in 1915. He was succeeded by Dean Starr who held the office from 1916 to his death in 1924.

During this period, requirements for entrance to the dental school were further increased. By January 1, 1905, high-school graduation or its equivalent was required for the Dental Student's Certificate. Later, in 1924, the entrance requirements were again raised. At this time it was necessary to have one year of academic collegiate education following graduation from a secondary school.

As the preclinical sciences gradually developed and the clinics in the various branches of dentistry were gradually enlarged, the original building did not provide adequate quarters and in 1918, the adjoining building, 209–213 East Twenty-third Street, was added.
Throughout this period research that revealed the intimate relationship between dental disease and systemic disease made the significance of the preclinical sciences in dentistry more evident. Under the guidance of Dean Weisse and Dean Starr these departments were gradually developed to a level to serve best the needs of the dental profession in this important phase of health service.

In 1917, the dental course was lengthened from three to four years. The addition of this one year permitted further extension in the teaching of the preclinical sciences as well as in the various branches of the art and science of dentistry.

The members of the faculty of the New York College of Dentistry played a significant role in the development of the dental profession as well as of the dental college. A few of these men are particularly noteworthy in this connection because of their long tenure of office. Mention has been made of three who, in addition to their various other positions on the staff, served as deans of the New York College of Dentistry: Frank Abbott, Faneuil D. Weisse, and Alfred R. Starr. Others in this group, who served in a teaching capacity, are:

Alexander W. Stein, 1868 to 1896. He was appointed to the staff as professor of physiology and microscopic anatomy in 1868 and served continuously in this capacity until his retirement in 1896 when he was succeeded by his son John Bethune Stein.

John Bethune Stein, 1896 to 1940. He succeeded his father and became professor of physiology in 1896 and served continuously in this capacity until 1940. Upon his retirement, Dr. Stein was made professor emeritus. The continuous service over a period of seventy-two years of father and son in the department of physiology is unique in the history of education.
Francis LeRoy Satterlee, 1869 to 1916. He served as professor of physics, chemistry, and metallurgy. He was assisted by his son, Francis LeRoy Satterlee, Jr., who was director of the laboratories of practical physics. The younger Dr. Satterlee was one of the first men in this country to use the X ray in dentistry. It was as a result of his activity in this field that the New York College of Dentistry was privileged to pioneer in the field of dental radiography. He died as a result of his frequent exposure to the X ray.

J. Bond Littig, beloved by all his students, 1869 to 1907. His first connection with the college was made in 1869. In 1877 he was given the rank of professor of mechanical dentistry and he continued in that capacity until his death in 1907.

Ellison Hillyer, 1893 to 1937. Immediately following his graduation from the New York College of Dentistry, Dr. Hillyer became associated with Professor Littig and served as his assistant for thirteen years. He succeeded Professor Littig as professor of prothetic dentistry in 1907 and served continuously in that capacity until 1927 when he was made professor emeritus. Dr. Hillyer continued even after his retirement as professor of prothetic dentistry to lecture on ethics and economics until 1937.

E. Bingham Tripp, 1897 to 1940. Immediately after his graduation from the New York College of Dentistry, Dr. Tripp was appointed a member of the staff. He first served in the department of operative dentistry and subsequently was made chief of the clinics, in which capacity he served until his death in 1940.

Thomas Darlington—Following the death of Faneuil D. Weisse, in 1915, Dr. Darlington was appointed professor of anatomy, hygiene, and principles of surgery at the New York College of Dentistry. He also served as treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the College and in this capacity he rendered invaluable service in stabilizing its financial position. He retired from the faculty in 1926.

UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION

Throughout this period, at various times, efforts were made to establish an affiliation with New York University. However, despite repeated efforts, the administrators met with no success until 1925.

Finally, on June 30, 1925, after considerable effort by leading University administrators, officers, and members of the faculty of the New York College of Dentistry, the College was made a component part of the University. This was achieved largely through the efforts of Dr. George Alexander and Dr. Samuel A. Brown. Dr. Alexander was president of the Board of Trustees of the New York College of Dentistry and also president of the Council of New York University. Dr. Samuel A. Brown was dean of the University and Bellevue Hospital Medical College and at the same time a member of the Board of Trustees of the New York College of Dentistry. At the time of the merger, the New York College of Dentistry turned over to the University land, buildings, and equipment worth approximately $500,000.

The school has since enjoyed a reputation as a leader in progressive dental education, a pioneer in dental teacher training and postgraduate instruction, and a pathfinder in dental research. From 1925 onward, under the skillful administrative leadership of the late Dean Holmes C. Jackson and Dean Allen T. Newman, the dental school has
forged ahead as an institution of higher learning in the field of oral health service. In the early part of this period, 1925–1929, the policies were shaped by the officers at the head of the administration of the school; they were: Charles Vetter, D.D.S., Ph.G., acting dean from 1925 to 1926, Holmes Condict Jackson, Ph.D., dean from 1926 to his death in 1927, and Marshall S. Brown, A.M., L.H.D., dean of the faculties, who acted as dean of the dental school from 1928 to the appointment of Dean Newman in 1929.

Dean Jackson was always ready to assist those genuinely interested in scientific advancement. As a result he was deeply interested in dental problems, even before he was assigned to study and to report on the advisability of making the New York College of Dentistry a division of New York University. Dental education was a comparatively new subject to him but he studied it with his characteristic energy and clarity of vision. After a thorough survey of the school itself, he passed to a consideration of dental education in general to determine whether the school could be brought to the degree of excellence demanded by the University. His study convinced him that the union would be mutually beneficial and he accordingly recommended that it be brought about. On the basis of his report, in 1925, the dental college was made an integral part of the University.

It was but natural that his clear exposition of the status of the school, its problems and their practical solutions, should impress the University Council. In looking for one especially fitted to head the new school, the Council turned at once to Dr. Jackson and offered him the deanship. He accepted after some hesitation, for it meant giving up his very congenial work in physiology at the medical school. His decision once made, however, he entered upon his new duties with much enthusiasm and gave to the work his entire attention. Professor William J. Gies, in his report to the Carnegie Foundation, took note of this important event in the history of the school in the following complimentary terms:

Lately made an integral part of New York University, the School is now being actively reorganized (December 1925) under the leadership of a new dean, who, although not a dentist, is the university professor of physiology and the assistant dean of the Medical School. He is widely experienced in the work of health-service education, and has a long record of useful public service as a teacher of a fundamental science and as an investigator in his field. . . . The University's commendable action in selecting, for the office of Dean of the School, one whose qualifications are primarily educational is unique in the history of dental education.

Shortly thereafter (1926), the preliminary educational requirement for entrance to the dental college was increased from one year to two years of academic collegiate education.

Dean Jackson had some very definite concepts regarding the education of dental students. He began with the conviction that dentistry, while retaining its status as an independent profession, should, in fact, be considered a branch of medicine. As a corollary to this, he believed that the principles of dental education were the same as those of medical education. Thus he insisted on a sound preliminary education as an entrance requirement and on the first two years of the dental course being given over largely to a thorough grounding in the basic medical sciences.
in no major respect from that offered to medical students. The highly technical phase of dental education would then rest on a firm foundation. He believed, also, that dental students, in order that they might have a broader view of the range of their profession, should have a usable knowledge of what is known as the "principles of medicine" and of systemic diseases as a basis for a thorough comprehension of oral pathology.

The following reference (1926) by Dean Jackson to the aims of the New York College of Dentistry presented his viewpoint on dental education at the time of the union with the University and presaged his approach to the fulfillment of the objectives of dental education:

In this connection it is worthy of attention that in one of the annual announcements of the New York College of Dentistry, prior to 1908, appeared the paragraph, "The purpose of the institution is to educate men to practice dental surgery as a specialty of medicine, therefore, the curriculum includes the fundamental departments of medicine with operative dental surgery and oral prosthetics. The lectures on the fundamental departments of medicine are specially directed to the needs of the dental surgeon." With some minor modifications this might well appear in the forthcoming bulletin to be published some forty years after the above was written. Some of the older men had the vision which still is far from coming to complete fruition.

THE UNIVERSITY DENTAL CURRICULUM

The curriculum of New York University College of Dentistry was built upon a two-year predental course. The courses in the medical sciences given to the dental students corresponded in the main to those in the medical curriculum, with special emphasis laid upon the oral cavity and its relationship to the rest of the body. Anatomy and bac-
teriology were taught in the medical school, while physiology, chemistry, pharmacology, and pathology were taught in the dental school building. While the heads of the departments in the medical school possessed supervisory control over the teaching of these subjects in the dental college, the dental college had separate staffs with teachers devoted solely to teaching in the dental school.

COORDINATION OF DENTAL AND MEDICAL INSTRUCTION

The union of the College with the University offered almost unlimited opportunities for advancement along educational lines. The medical college also derived advantage through the affiliation with the teaching body of the dental college.

In the opinion of Dean Jackson:
The medical curriculum has neglected stomatology under the assumption that the mouth was the field for the dentist; and on the other hand the Dental College was not completely in the position to supply the necessary instruction in the medical sciences and in medicine and surgery. This the medical teachers can provide. This interrelation of instruction between the two schools is something to be desired by all first class dental institutions.

Courses in the principles of medicine and of surgery were instituted so that the student might familiarize himself with the fundamentals of these subjects. The great possibilities that were open to the dentist in the rapid development of local anesthesia were recognized in the laboratory course given in this subject. The plan was to institute a short course in physical diagnosis, in order that the student of oral surgery might be aware of the danger of promiscuous administration of anesthetics and be able to recognize the signs of questionable risks. The departments of prosthetic dentistry and operative dentistry were reorganized; each department was subdivided and every major division was headed by a skilled expert in that particular field.

THE PRECLINICAL SCIENCES

In reorganizing the laboratory courses in the College, Dean Jackson drew largely on his own extensive experience and made full use of the freely proffered services of his medical colleagues. The departments of anatomy, physiology, pathology, chemistry, bacteriology, and pharmacology were reorganized, each with a full-time staff of trained teachers and investigators, and with adequate laboratory space and equipment. The laboratory heads of the medical school became also heads of the dental laboratories and the courses given were carefully outlined and supervised. He introduced, in addition, courses which served to further the general professional training of the students; thus lectures on the principles of medicine and on diseases of the nose and throat were given by experienced teachers from the medical college.

THE CLINICAL DENTAL SCIENCES

In the more specialized sphere of the curriculum he made no radical changes at the outset, for this field was too new to him to allow fixed opinion. In order to inform himself he visited many of the other dental colleges and carefully studied their methods of instruction. He freely consulted dental authorities whose opinions he valued. His old-time friend and associate at Yale, Dr. Gies, who had completed his exhaustive survey of American dental colleges, was of the greatest help to him. As his knowledge began to take form, he very deliberately started to introduce improvements and innovations into the clinical curriculum. He
rearranged the existing courses, curtailing some, enlarging others, and bringing them all into a more harmonious relationship. He kept in mind constantly the plan of a well-rounded education, in which no subject should stand by itself but each should be a correlated part of the whole.

The value of hospital association for dental students was stressed. A connection was established between the college and the dental department of Bellevue Hospital. As a result, students have been receiving instruction in surgery in the dental clinic at the hospital.

Dean Jackson realized at the beginning that, while system and organization are essential for the success of any school, it is the personality and caliber of those who do the teaching that give the school its particular degree of excellence; that the student’s desire for knowledge, his ambition to be master of his subject, and his ideals of professional behavior are dependent largely on the stimulus and example offered by his teachers. Although he started his work with an admirable faculty, he began to enlarge it, always insisting that only those be added who were outstanding figures in dentistry. With these as heads of departments the success of the school would be assured.

With the untimely and regrettable passing of Dean Jackson in 1927, the school continued to carry out the program in force at the time under the able leadership of Dean Marshall S. Brown. Dean Brown served as acting dean of the dental school until such time as the Council could find some one capable of replacing Dean Jackson.

The need for a more intimate correlation between the practice of medicine and dentistry, made evident by the report of Dr. William Gies in 1921, was the basis for the program instituted by Dean Jackson, and under his leadership a great step was taken toward the fulfillment of the objectives outlined by Dr. Gies. With Dr. Jackson’s background it was natural that he should place emphasis on the development of the basic sciences in the undergraduate dental course. Accordingly, even in the short time he was dean of New York University College of Dentistry, there developed as an integral part of the dental school departments in the basic sciences that compared very favorably with similar departments in the undergraduate courses in medical schools throughout the country. The untimely death of Dean Jackson did not hamper the development of this ideal. New York University was fortunate in securing as its second dean, Dr. Allen T. Newman, who had been trained as a teacher in pharmacology and chemistry. Subsequently, he studied dentistry and was thus particularly well equipped to carry on the objectives begun by Dean Jackson and to guide the development of the departments teaching the basic sciences in a way best suited to fulfill the needs of dental education.

Dean Newman assumed his duties in 1929. He continued and developed the policies instituted by Dean Jackson. This concept for dental education has evolved into what is now called “The New York University Plan.” Dean Newman has established departments in these basic sciences that not only meet the needs of the undergraduate student but also afford graduate and postgraduate courses. The outstanding aspect of this development is the fact that the heads of the clinical departments avail themselves of the facilities offered in the study of basic sciences for the training of men for research in their respective fields. This intimate relationship between the basic sciences and the clinical departments overcomes one of the greatest handicaps to progress in dental research; namely, the separation, both academic and geographic, of these