

Historians in the headlines

By Norman Wahl, DDS, MS

On January 15, 1990, an unusual thing happened. Time published a two-page profile of Lady Antonia Fraser: writer, crusader, and Englishwoman of royal blood. What was so unusual? The title, in 48-point bold, read "Not Quite Your Usual Historian." A historian in the headlines? Not quite your usual headline, I'd say.

If lay historians rarely make the headlines, what chance have orthodontic historians? Lady Fraser's biography of Mary, Queen of Scots, was a best seller in eight languages. How many orthodontic biographers can make that claim?

Orthodontic historians, as a rule, have not been headline seekers. Neither have they been headline writers, that is, trained journalists. Trained historians? Other than a few non-dentists, only one — Milton B. Asbell — holds a master's in history. Dr. Asbell, Professor of Dental History at the New Jersey College of Dentistry, is now working on a book-length history of the American Association of Orthodontists, covering the past 25 years.

This is not to downplay the work of such literary titans as Bernhard W. Weinberger, who was aptly called "orthodontia's historian." But, for the most part, orthodontic historians have simply been practitioners or teachers who managed to steal a few moments from a busy schedule to pursue their second love (or was it their first?). To be sure, the most dedicated of them paid dearly in terms of lost practice income.

Purists would be quick to point out that most of these so-called historians weren't really historians. They were historiographers. The difference, they claim, is that a historiographer only writes about history, while a historian is

more of a scholar, an investigator, an interpreter. Whatever you choose to call them — and for now we'll call them historians — they've made a contribution to our knowledge of the past.

Whether it was Weinberger's two-volume tome or last month's obituary page, it's still history. Whether it was Hahn's unpublished story of the Angle Society, Edwards' chronicle of the International School, or Baker's account of early orthodontics in the Chicago area, it's all part of the treasury of knowledge available to us.

Isn't history basic to scientific thought? How does the graduate student introduce his thesis, the researcher his paper, but with a review of the literature? (Brodie's students had to go back 250 years.) In that sense, are we not all historians?

What motivates these biographers of the bygone? Is it a form of escapism? A desire to relive the past? True, many are asked to give a paper at the next meeting. Others, senior in years, feel that their reflections will be a source of amusement to younger colleagues. And a few, such as our worthy lay historians, have been hired to write. But I suspect that for most, it's done for the thrill of overturning the unturned stone.

How best to salute them? Could we momentarily coax these modest chroniclers into the spotlight — put them in the headlines for a change? If we could report their labors of love in "journalese," wouldn't we then have a perspective vastly different from that usually accorded them? What would the Art Buchwalds and the William Safires of yesteryear have said about these scholarly papers if they thought them to be front-page stuff?

INSIDE:

**1300 Banks
Closed Since
Crash**

**Sinclair Lewis
Wins Nobel Prize
in Literature**

ORTHODONTIC Times

January 26, 1931

Orthodontia's Founder Eulogized

Angle's Disciples Meet Here

New York City, January 26, 1931(AO)—The Eastern Association of Graduates of the Angle School of Orthodontia today paid tribute to their former teacher, Dr. Edward H. Angle, in a memorial meeting at the Vanderbilt Hotel. Former students and associates from around the country came to hear talks by a noted anthropologist, an artist who instructed in the Angle School, and five of Angle's disciples.

Angle, who died last August 11 in Santa Monica, Calif., at the age of 76, was eulogized as the founder of orthodontia, as well as founder of the school which bore his name. Although the Angle School (and later, Angle College) had four different locations between 1900 and 1927, Angle's reputation attracted dentists worldwide to study under the master and learn his technique of tooth-straightening.

The Association was founded in 1909 by 16 graduates of the Angle School "for the advancement of the science of Orthodontia," and is considered to represent the elite of eastern orthodontists. A sister organization, the Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontia, represents Angle graduates from the Pasadena, Calif., school. The latter



Dr. Edward H. Angle

group was reorganized recently on a national basis.

Association president Frederick S. McKay introduced seven speakers, who each explored one facet of Angle's life. Dr. Bernhard W. Weinberger, the profession's leading historian, spoke on "The Introduction of the Angle System at the Ninth International Medical Congress." According to Weinberger, the paper, given in September, 1887, at Washington, D.C., was Angle's first printed presentation and became the first edition of his textbook. Angle's paper was received with sharp criticism, which turned out to be only the first salvo in a life of controversy.

Describing these difficulties, Weinberger said that "his early struggle in behalf of what he then believed to be correct and sound, and which is today universally accepted as such, was confronted

with constant opposition and bickering. Fortunately this only served to spur him on to even higher ideals and greater perfection."

Dr. Weinberger was a member of Angle's 1909 class and has written extensively on orthodontic, as well as dental, history. He maintains a private practice here on 57th Street.

Dr. Allan G. Brodie, Class of '27 and recently-appointed chairman of the University of Illinois Department of Orthodontia, gave a paper entitled, "The Angle College of Orthodontia from the Student's Viewpoint." Holding the audience in rapt attention, Brodie described with both humor and pathos his experiences as one of the last disciples to earn the coveted Angle diploma. (The Angle College closed abruptly following Brodie's graduation.)

Brodie gave a vivid portrayal of the thorough "going over" the student received at the hands of the iron-willed Angle. Every facet, from the five-hour anatomy entrance exam to the "white glove" cleanliness which was expected at all times, was covered in detail.

"Our teachers did no lecturing," Brodie said. "They were our guides in this voyage of discovery ... we had placed in our hands ... the ability

to ferret out knowledge and turn it to advantage." He concluded by describing the school as "a shrine of idealism" to which Angle's followers returned year after year "to have their spirits revived and their ideals burnished bright."

Professor Edmund H. Wuerpel of St. Louis gave a paper entitled "My Friend, Edward Hartley Angle." Wuerpel, an artist, relates how Angle came to him in 1900 as his first class was about to start. He asked Wuerpel to tell his students how to achieve a perfect face and could not understand why Wuerpel wasn't able to provide a simple formula to this question. Nevertheless, it began a friendship which was to last the rest of their lives.

Wuerpel talked about the many facets of Angle's personality: his constant search for perfection, his humility, his zeal, his tenderness toward his wife Anna, his quick temper, his love of children, and his pride. "The trouble was that his profession was more than a religion to him; it was his religion and his god."

Other talks were given by Drs. Frank A. Gough of Brooklyn; Frederick B. Noyes, Dean of the University of Illinois College of Dentistry; Raymond C. Osburn of Ohio

See **Angle** p. 70

INSIDE:

Maris New
"Sultan of Swat"

ORTHODONTIC Times

"Elder Statesmen" Share Podium

Two orthodontic editors recall profession's past

Chicago, Oct. 24, 1961 (AO)—Members of the Chicago Association of Orthodontists, in their first program of the season yesterday were treated to a double dose of their profession's history when two editors of the *American Journal of Orthodontics* (AJO) covered different aspects in the development of dentistry's oldest specialty.

H. Carlyle Pollock, Sr., now in his 30th year as editor-in-chief, spoke on "Genesis of Specialization." He was followed by his friend and colleague, Charles R. Baker, constituent society editor, who discussed "Early Orthodontics in the Chicago Area." Both men are pioneers in their field and brought a rich storehouse of recollections going back to the beginning of the century.

Pollock, 77, told how the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) has grown in its 60 years of existence to its present membership of 3,000. In that time, the profession has shifted from its initial medical and anatomic orientation to one of esthetics. "The original leaders," Pollock said, "were men with M.D. as well as D.D.S. degrees, and they had visions that the ultimate destiny of orthodontics would include supplementary treatment for the



H. Carlyle Pollock



Dr. Charles R. Baker

rhinologist."

Three of the founders of the AJO were physicians: Martin Dewey (also D.D.S.), who was its first editor; C.V. Mosby, whose company published it; and Philip Skrainka, who was editor of the *Midwest Medical Journal*. (Pollock, the fourth founder, was not an M.D.) Angle, also an M.D., ignored Mosby's request to be first editor of the fledgling publication, according to Pollock.

Pollock concluded his remarks by drawing parallels between orthodontia and exodontia. The word "exodontia," he said, "was originated, coined, and copyrighted in the City of St. Louis... [and] represented a switch from the noun orthodontia, with the prefix exo-being substituted for ortho-." Dr. [George B.] Winter, author of the textbook entitled *Exodontia* [published in 1913], was one

of Dr. Angle's very first orthodontic students at ... Marion Sims ..."

Dr. Pollock has received many awards during his 54-year career in dentistry. He last spoke on orthodontic history at the April 30, 1953, meeting of the AAO in Dallas. In addition to his editorial duties, Pollock maintains a private orthodontic practice in Clayton, Mo.

Dr. Baker, 81, recalled in his paper some of Chicago's orthodontic pioneers of which he, of course, was one. While Angle was professor of orthodontics at Northwestern University Dental School from 1895 to 1898, there is no record that he practiced here. Therefore, the first dentist in this area to limit his practice to orthodontics was Calvin S. Case. He came to Chicago in 1890 to accept a position as professor of prosthetic dentistry and orthodon-

tics at the Chicago College of Dental Surgery (now Loyola University) and continued to teach orthodontics there until his death in 1923.

Case was responsible for many "firsts," according to Baker, some of which were: "Hawley-type" retainers of black rubber (1890), root movement (1893), intermaxillary elastics (1893), and resilient arch wires (1917).

After Case, a Dr. J.N. McDowell was next to appear in the Windy City, listed as teaching at Northwestern as early as 1896. However, around 1901 he discontinued practice and left for the west coast.

Some early Angle graduates to open offices in Chicago were Lloyd S. Lourie, Jr. (1901), James A. Burrill (1905), Frederick B. Noyes (1909), and Ralph T. Huff (1909). Baker began limiting his practice in 1909, after instructing for five years at Northwestern.

Some of the appliances popular in those days, Baker said, were the Angle Appliance (16 gauge [.051"] labial arches with threaded end sections), jackscrews, split vulcanite plates, Victor Hugo Jackson removable appliances, and headcaps and chincaps. He also said that ready-made and plain, graduated molar

See **Elder** p. 70

Angle's Disciples Meet

cont. from p. 68

State University at Columbus, and Robert H.W. Strang of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

(Source: *A Memorial Meeting to the late Edward Hartley Angle*, New York, The Eastern Association of Graduates of the Angle School of Orthodontia, 1931.)



Dr. Allan G. Brodie

Elder Statesmen

cont. from p. 69

bands were available.

In 1925 Baker was one of the 14 founders of the Chicago Association of Orthodontists. Since then the membership has multiplied tenfold.

Baker's modest demeanor belies his many accomplishments. Teach-

er, writer, historian, and practitioner, he has risen to the highest offices of all the organizations with which he was involved. He continues his private practice in Evanston.

(Sources: Baker, C.R.: Early orthodontics in the Chicago area. *Am. J. Orthod.*, 48:29-33, 1962; and Pollock, H.C., Sr.: Genesis of specialization. *Am. J. Orthod.*, 48:21-28, 1962.)

Dental Author Describes Early School for Orthodontists

St. Louis, July, 1961 (AO)—Among those who did not celebrate the 1907 opening here of the International School of Orthodontia was Edward H. Angle. Why? Because it marked not only the end of his seven-year monopoly of proprietary orthodontic teaching, but he also had to cope with the realization that the new school's founder, Benno E. Lischer, was an applicant he once turned away!

This ironic turn of events can be gleaned by carefully reading between the lines of an article recently published in *Journal of the Missouri Dental Association*. In the *Journal's* June-July issue, Ralph W. Edwards, a Kansas City oral surgeon, traces the history of the school in "A History of the International School of Orthodontia."

Noting the success of the Angle School and the increased demand for orthodontic instruction, Lischer and Clarence D. Lukens decided the time was ripe to open a second school. They selected as its location the Medical Library Building at 3523 Pine Street, less than two miles from "Angle Ter-

ritory" near Olive and Grand. It was here that Lischer, seven years earlier, had been denied admission because he refused to sign a promise to practice elsewhere after graduation.

Lischer and Lukens, along with four other faculty members, turned out eleven graduates in that June-July session of 1907. For reasons unknown, it was also the last session of the school under that administration.

In 1914, William J. Brady, a Kansas City orthodontist who had once drawn illustrations for Angle's books, sought to revive the school. Lischer kindly consented



Benno E. Lischer

to the use of the name "International" and in 1916 classes got under way in Brady's offices. Hugh Tanzey, a member of the first (1907) class, was also one of the original stockholders.

After a six-week session later that year, according to Edwards, Brady sold his interest to Tanzey, Roy J. Rinehart, and George W. Hillias, all Kansas City dentists. The school continued holding, typically, two six-week sessions annually at various locations until 1941. With more and more dental schools offering graduate orthodontic training and the advent of World War II, the International School then closed its doors for the last time.

(Source: Edwards, R.W.: A history of the International School of Orthodontia. *J. Mo. Dent. Assoc.*, 41:26-28.)



William J. Brady



Hugh G. Tanzey

INSIDE:

Kennedy, Kruschchev Meet in Vienna

Alan Shepard Rockets 115 Miles Into Space