

**INSIDE:**

**Alaska Admitted  
As 49th State**

**Pan Am Inaugurates  
1st Jet Service  
to Europe**

# ORTHODONTIC Times

**The Angle Orthodontist  
takes a final look at  
the orthodontists who  
have made headlines.  
By Norman Wahl, DDS,  
MS.**

**Editorial**

## "JOURNODONTISTS"

New York City, August 30, 1958 (AO)—How many of us really like what we do? Putting it another way, how many of us are doing what we like? I'm sure that most orthodontists would answer yes to both questions.

But judging from the output of certain historians, I wonder whether these authors are not so much journalistic orthodontists as they are orthodontic journalists. They look like orthodontists, they talk like orthodontists, and they bend like orthodontists; but are they not really writers in orthodontists' clothing? Perhaps they are trying to tell us, "Orthodontics made me rich, but orthodontic history gave me riches."

Take B.W. Weinberger of this city. A marvelous orthodontist. A marvelous writer. A prolific writer. American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Librarian Charles R. Baker (another writer and historian, by the way) summed it up best: "I am amazed, astonished, and even flabbergasted to know how much this man has contributed to the orthodontic literature. It hardly seems possible that a single person could do so much in a lifetime."

Weinberger has just had published what must be his 250th paper,



**B.W. Weinberger**

namely, "Rodrigues Ottolengui," in this month's issue of the *American Journal of Orthodontics*. What is "Rodrigues Ottolengui" about? It's about a dental journalist, of course. Ottolengui was one of dentistry's earliest writers and editors. He was also a noted author of detective yarns! Ellery Queen described him as "one of the most neglected authors in the entire history of the detective story."

While not limiting his practice, Ottolengui studied under Norman W. Kingsley and became a successful orthodontist. He was the first AAO president (1906) who was not an Angle graduate. As editor of *Items of Interest* starting in 1896, he inaugurated the first department devoted to orthodontics to appear in a dental publication.

Ottolengui got his literary bent from his parents

(his father was a newspaperman and his mother was an author), and his dental leanings from his grandfather, Benjamin A. Rodriguez, one of the most prominent orthodontists and surgeons of his time. Just ask Milton R. Asbell, who ten years ago wrote for the *Alpha Omegan*: "Vignettes in Dental History — Benjamin Adolph Rodriguez (1815-1871)." Asbell was later to become an orthodontist, but by 1948 he had written over 20 articles on dental history.

It was inevitable that the paths of these two writers should cross. In 1946, as a recently-discharged army dental officer with a fascination for his profession's history, Asbell sought out Weinberger at a meeting. Perhaps Weinberger was flattered by the younger man's admiration. Possibly he saw Asbell as one who might carry on with his work in dental history — not a very popular pastime. Whatever the reason, for the next eight years a steady stream of correspondence flowed between Camden, New Jersey, and New York City.

The subject was always dental history, the relationship was always that of preceptor-preceptee, and the tone was always formal. It was always

"Dear Dr. Weinberger" and "Dear Asbell." Occasionally Asbell would be invited to visit Weinberger in New York. Asbell recalls the latter's office. "The orthodontic area was modest and not unlike other offices, but his private office was just like you'd see in photographs of great writers. His shelves were packed with all kinds of books. His desk was piled high with papers and correspondence. You could tell how deeply interested he was in his work."

"He was always soft-spoken. He spoke only about the subject at hand, and rarely smiled. He was very serious, very intent on what he was doing. A real gentleman, dignified, a great nineteenth-century person."

Surely, Dr. Weinberger is more than just a writer "at heart." He is a writer who has chosen orthodontics as an outlet for his inquisitive and creative mind.

Whatever century you choose to put them in, we are grateful that these devoted historians took time from their busy lives to make our lives more pleasurable through reading. Had they gone into other professions, they would still have become the scribes of their fields. But then, we'd have had to call them "journographers" or "journiologists" instead of "journodontists."

I'm glad we got them.

## A Selected Bibliography of Orthodontic Histories

### Legend:

D A dentist (non-orthodontist)

N A non-dentist

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Please note: This bibliography replaces the one published in error in the last installment of "Historians in the Headlines." *The Angle Orthodontist* regrets the error.

This concludes the series.

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