

Sixty-year history of The Angle Orthodontist

Excerpted from a presentation made by Dr. Robert McGonagle at a meeting of the Edward H. Angle Society.

By Robert McGonagle, DDS

On November 17, 1930, 22 orthodontists gathered at the Lake Shore Athletic Club in Chicago to usher in a new era in orthodontics. Their reason for meeting was to find some way of carrying forward the orthodontic ideas and ideals of their teacher and mentor, Dr. Edward H. Angle. Although various orthodontic groups and societies had existed previously, these specialists felt a new order was needed. The society they created had a central organization with four components (later expanded to five), its own scientific publication, and was called — as it still is today — The Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontists.

The Angle Society did not spring to life in a blinding flash of lightning and clap of thunder on that November day. The Angle Society can actually trace its roots back to the turn of the century when 11 graduates of Dr. Angle's private school in St. Louis organized The Society of Orthodontists, the first orthodontic specialty group. Two years later, they added "American" to their name; today, the American Association of Orthodontists operates out of St. Louis.

In 1907, Dr. Angle moved his school from St. Louis to New York; the following year he moved again, this time to New London, Connecticut. In 1909, 16 graduates from Angle's East Coast schools created the Eastern Association of Graduates of the Angle School of Orthodontia, a group which persisted for 30 years.

In 1913, Dr. Angle was invited to give a clinic for orthodontists on the Pacific Coast. This was

the first meeting of orthodontists west of the Mississippi. It was so successful that following the two-day course, the attendees created their own society, christening it the Pacific Coast Society of Graduates of the Angle School. They eventually tightened their membership requirements, changed their name, and still exist today as the Pacific Coast Society of Orthodontists, a component of the American Association of Orthodontists.

In 1916, Dr. Angle made his final move, from the rugged East Coast to the more moderate climate of southern California. It was not his intention to teach again, but rather to devote himself to the completion of his revised text, "Malocclusions of the Teeth", and the development of more sophisticated mechanics for the regulation of the teeth.

His plans were changed by the arrival of a young man by the name of James Angle (no relation). James had just completed Dr. Dewey's course in New York and somehow inspired Dr. Angle to start a new school. The Pasadena school was small — three students the first year — and classes were held in Dr. and Mrs. Angles' home. Early graduates joined together to build a proper classroom on the Angles' property, and Dr. Angle continued to teach there until 1925, when, on the advice of his physician, he closed the school.

Like other Angle alumni, graduates of the Pasadena school eventually banded together and formed a society, naming it the Edward H. Angle

Society of Orthodontia. Its charter membership included 11 graduates from Pasadena, plus several members from the St. Louis and New London classes. The Society had no officers or by-laws; Dr. Angle was king and didn't welcome much in the way of opposition. But he was, most agreed, a benevolent dictator. The group met regularly, growing to 46 members. When Dr. Angle died in 1930, the Society per se ceased to exist. However, a completely new show was about to burst on the scene.

On November 17, 1930, 22 members of the former Edward H. Angle Society of Orthodontia met at the Lake Shore Athletic Club in Chicago. This was the beginning of the Angle Society as we know it today. Among its 46 charter members were Dr. and Mrs. Angle, 23 graduates of the Pasadena school and 21 graduates of other Angle schools. Mrs. Anna Angle was editor-in-chief of the new society's publication and Dr. Frank Gough was the business manager. Dr. Charles Tweed gave the first official presentation, "History and Revision of the Arizona Law", which included an orthodontic specialty provision. Dr. A.G. Brodie presented the first scientific paper, "The New Mechanism". (Sixty years later, the Edgewise appliance Dr. Brodie discussed remains, with some modifications, the most commonly used appliance in orthodontic treatment.)

Any discussion of the Angle Society would be incomplete without mention of the society's journal. *The Angle Orthodontist* was created as an ongoing memorial to Dr. Angle at the 1930 meeting. Financially, it has always been supported completely by the society, with no need to seek advertising revenue, meaning the magazine has enjoyed 60 years of intellectual freedom and independence which benefit all members. Over the years, giants such as Robert Strang, Harold Noyes, Wendel Wylie, Arthur Lewis, Morse Newcomb, Ray Thurow, and now, David Turpin, have given generously of their time and intelligence as editors. Great credit is also due to Frank Gough, Si Kloehn and, more recently, Si's son, John Kloehn, who give us as well-managed, financially secure publication as any organization could want.

As members of The Angle Society, we share a rich history. If we are to carry on the ideals of Dr. Angle, we must remain a working group, dedicated to providing excellent clinical orthodontic treatment and willing to offer more than we receive. In the years I have been a member, I have always felt that no other gathering of orthodontists had as much to offer in the way of thoughtful, innovative, stimulating papers, and high calibre membership. I am optimistic about our future, and quite proud of our past.