

Baltimore College of Dental Surgery Letters

Dates Created: 1866 to 1914 and undated

Bulk Dates: 1866, 1872-1882

Extent: 1.7 Linear Feet or 4 clamshell boxes

Creator: Baltimore College of Dental Surgery

Subjects:

Baltimore College of Dental Surgery; Baltimore College of Dental Surgery--Letters; University of Maryland, Baltimore. School of Dentistry; Letters.; Gorgas, Ferdinand J. S. (Ferdinand James Samuel), 1835-1914; Winder, R. Bayly (Richard Bayly), 1920-1988; Foster, M. Whillden; Foster, William G.; Dentistry--History; Dentistry--Study and teaching.; Dentistry--United States--History.; Education, Dental.

Abstract:

The Baltimore College of Dental Surgery Letters contains letters relating to the administrative business of the school. The letters are dated across the leadership dates of four deans: Ferdinand J.S. Gorgas (1865-1882), Richard B. Winder (1882-1894), M. Whillden Foster (1895-1913), and William G. Foster (1914-1923). Most letters contain inquiries about admittance to the school, tuition costs, textbooks, letters of reference, and other academic affairs. Other letters regard the deans' editorship of academic dental journals and the business affairs of the school, including bills and receipts for dental supplies and utilities.

Administrative History:

The Baltimore College of Dental Surgery (BCDS) was established by Maryland State legislature on February 1, 1840. Horace H. Hayden and Chapin A. Harris, were the founders of the BCDS and served as early professors of the school along with Thomas E. Bond, and A. Willis Baxley. Hayden and Harris established the school because of concern with the lack of standardized education received by practicing dentists, believing there were many quacks operating under the title of dentist. It was common practice before the establishment of the BCDS for those wishing to join the profession to train under an established dentist. When the BCDS opened, it was the first dental school in the world and thus created the Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S) degree and professionalized dentists. Around the same time Dr. Harris established *The American Journal of Dental Science*, the first dental journal, and Dr. Hayden formed the American Dental Association, the first dental society; further professionalizing dentistry.

The BCDS opened on November 3, 1840; at that time five students enrolled: Joseph Washington Clowes, Thomas Payne, Joseph B. Savier, Robert Arthur, and R. Covington Mackall. Initially, class sessions began on the first Monday of November and ended on the last day of February; this later changed to the last Monday of November to last of March. The costs associated with lectures was \$30 for each professor per session, a \$5 matriculation fee, and a \$30 fee for the diploma. Later fees would be raised to \$100 per session and would include a \$10 dissection fee. The course of instruction in the early years included: Practical Dentistry; Dental Physiology and Pathology; Special Pathology and Therapeutics, including principles of Surgery; and Anatomy and Physiology. Later courses were added in Chemistry and

Metallurgy, Mechanical Dentistry, Materia Medica, and Microscopical and Comparative Anatomy of the Teeth.

To graduate students had to complete two courses of lectures, prepare a written thesis, and show two specimens, one in dental mechanism and one in operation. They also had to pass an examination by the faculty of the school. Students could enter as second year students if they had proof of three or more year's dental practice or attendance of one course in another dental or medical school. As laws were passed making it harder for practicing dentists without a D.D.S. to continue to thrive, more and more entered the BCDS as second-year students or asked for examination without attending courses. The charter did allow for reputable dentists to stand for examination without taking courses; they were required to write a thesis and present two specimens to demonstrate their skills. The first students to graduate from BCDS were Robert Arthur and R. Covington Mackall on March 9, 1841.

The BCDS opened the door for the establishment of other dental schools. From 1840 to 1895, four dental schools or departments opened in Baltimore alone; eventually these all merged. In 1873 the Maryland Dental College was founded, it lasted six years before merging with the BCDS. In 1882 the Dental Department at the University of Maryland was founded and in 1895 the Dental Department at the Baltimore Medical College (BMC) was founded; the BMC merged with the University of Maryland in 1913. The two large dental schools (BCDS and Dental Department in the University of Maryland) successfully competed with each other for years before merging in 1924 through Maryland state legislation. The merger occurred after expanding curriculum requirements caused the two schools to struggle to pay for dental resources and continue offering quality education. Dr. Timothy O. Heatwole served as the first dean of the new Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, Dental School, University of Maryland; today known as the University of Maryland School of Dentistry.

Timeline of Baltimore College of Dental Surgery Deans

Chapin A. Harris, 1840-1841
Thomas E. Bond, 1841-1842
Washington R. Handy, 1842-1853
Philip H. Austen, 1853-1865
Ferdinand J.S. Gorgas, 1865-1882
Richard B. Winder, 1882-1894
M. Whilldin Foster, 1895-1913
William G. Foster, 1914-1923

Biographical History:

The letters in this collection date from the leadership terms of Dean Ferdinand J.S. Gorgas, Dean Richard B. Winder, Dean M. Whilldin Foster, and Dean William G. Foster. The following are brief biographies of these deans.

Ferdinand J.S. Gorgas (1834-1914, BCDS Dean 1865-1882)

Ferdinand James Samuel Gorgas was born to John De Lancy and Mary Ann Gorgas in Winchester, VA on July 27, 1834. He graduated from the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery in 1855, Dickinson College in 1858, and the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1863. After earning his D.D.S. in 1855 he practiced dentistry in Baltimore until becoming an instructor at the BCDS in 1858. He was named chair

of Dental Surgery and Therapeutics in 1860 and became dean in 1865, a position he held until 1882 when he left to establish the Dental Department of the University of Maryland. Dr. Gorgas retired from the University in 1911 because of ill health.

Dr. Gorgas was a prolific writer and editor. He wrote and edited several influential dentistry texts as well as edited the *American Journal of Dental Science*. Dr. Gorgas became a Grand Mason in 1878. His first marriage was to Anna Elizabeth Swormstedt Gorgas, who passed away in July 1909. He also had two sons, Dr. Laurence D. Gorgas and Dr. Herbert F. Gorgas both University of Maryland, Baltimore graduates. After retirement, Dr. Gorgas was cared for by Sarah B. Schwartz, a nurse nearly three decades his junior, whom he married in 1913. He passed away on April 8, 1914.

Richard B. Winder (1828-1894, BCDS Dean 1882-1894)

Richard B. Winder was born in Drummondtown, VA in 1828. He attended the University of Virginia and graduated from Princeton College in 1850. He served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Following the war, Winder attended the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, graduating in 1869. He founded the Maryland Dental College in 1873, which merged with the BCDS in 1879 where he served as Professor of Operative Dentistry. In 1882 he was named Dean of the BCDS, a position he held until his death in July 1894.

Dr. Winder married three times: Elizabeth Curtis, Sarah "Sally" Curtis, and Catherine "Kate" Dorsey. He had two children, Richard Bayly Winder II and Mary Custis Winder Miller.

M. Whilldin Foster (1837-1914, BCDS Dean 1895-1913)

Matthew Whilldin Foster was born in Philadelphia, PA in 1837. He graduated from Washington University medical department and the College of Physicians and Surgeons both in Baltimore and attended Philadelphia Dental College. After receiving his degree he practiced Dentistry in Easton, PA then Indianapolis, IN, and moved to Baltimore when the Civil War began. Dr. Foster helped to establish the Maryland Dental College in 1873 and taught Dental Mechanism and Metallurgy in that institution until the school merged with the BCDS. He was named dean in 1895.

Dr. Foster married Anna Green Foster in 1856 and had a son, Dr. William G. Foster, and daughter, Isabel Foster. Dr. W.G. Foster succeeded Dr. M.W. Foster as dean in 1914. The elder Dr. Foster passed away due to complications suffered from a head injury in June 1914.

William G. Foster (1861-1939, BCDS Dean 1914-1923)

William G. Foster was the son of Dr. M. Whilldin Foster; he was born in New Jersey and moved to Baltimore in his youth. He attended the Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland, College Park) and graduated from the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery in 1881. He taught at the BCDS as demonstrator and then professor of mechanical dentistry before replacing his father as dean in 1914. When the school merged with the University of Maryland in 1924, Dr. Foster did not join the faculty of the new school.

Dr. Foster married Anna R. Dalton in 1925. He passed away in March 1939.

Scope and Content:

4 boxes, 178 Folders

Box 1: A – D, 43 Folders

Box 2: E – L, 53 Folders

Box 3: M – Sm, 41 Folders

Box 4: Sn – Z, 41 Folders

This collection contains four boxes of letters addressed to administration and faculty of the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery. The majority of the letters are addressed to Dr. F.J.S. Gorgas, the fifth dean of the BCDS but others are addressed to Dr. R.B. Winder, the sixth dean; Dr. M.W. Foster, the seventh dean; Dr. W.G. Foster, the eighth and final dean. The collection spans the tenure of these four deans.

Most letters are written by students or potential students asking about the logistics surrounding admittance and attendance at the BCDS; most writers requested catalogs and circulars or asked questions about the cost of tuition, room and board, or textbooks. Other potential students were practicing dentists looking for the easiest way to earn the D.D.S. degree and continue their practices as they felt new pressures and laws associated with the formalized education for dentists.

Other correspondence discussed the business of the BCDS, including bills and receipts for furniture, services, and fuel to keep the school running smoothly. These pieces provide insight into the costs and logistics of running a dental or medical school in the late 19th century. In some instances these letters include requests from the deans for loans or donations from dental companies for furniture or dental supplies, including the S.S. White Dental Manufacturing Company of Philadelphia and New York, Johnson & Lund Company of Philadelphia, and Johnston Brothers & Selby of Baltimore. The letters also discuss the firing and hiring of faculty members, invitation to speakers for special lectures and addresses, and the dealings of the BCDS alumni association.

Still other letters include information on the business of dental journals, such as the *Journal of the Dental Association*, *Journal of the American Academy of Dental Surgery*, *Dental Cosmos*, and *American Journal of Dental Science*, for which the deans served as editors. These letters included article submissions, questions about obtaining a volume, or refuting article findings.

This collection also includes a series of:

- Letters from the school's first woman graduate, Elise von Heyden, class of 1876
- Letters from deans Dr. R.B. Winder, Dr. P.H. Austen, and Dr. F.J.S. Gorgas
- Letters from faculty members including, Dr. G.H. Chewning, Dr. J.B. Hodgkin, Dr. E.L. Howard, Dr. T.S. Latimer, Dr. J.C. Uhler, Dr. B.M. Wilkerson, and Dr. J.B. Wood

Finally, the letters include requests for references, advice on procedures, advice on the dental profession generally, and recommendations and introductions for potential students and faculty. The letters combine to provide a glimpse of school life, the dental profession, and academia generally in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It shows the struggles and successes of a relatively new educational venture and school. Letters date from 1866 to 1914, with the majority dating in 1866 and between 1872 to 1882. The letters come from writers in almost all the states as well as some international countries.

A complete inventory of all 2,037 letters exists in a separate document called BCDS Letter Inventory; however some letters have been separated out into their own folders. They represent correspondents who sent five or more letters to the BCDS and are listed below:

Austen, Philip H.	Latimer, Thomas S.
Barr, John Robert	Morgan, J. Henry
Basehore, John D.	Morgan, Robert W.
Bernard, Frank P.	Morgan, William H.
Berner, S.	North, Gustavus
Bowman, Rufus C.	Perine, George H.
Brookins, Andrew B.	Phillips, John M.
Brown, Joseph C.	Rawlinson, William M.
Burkholder, Newton M.	Rentch, Joseph N.
Calvert, J. Thomas	Roberts, Norman J.
Chewning, George H. & F.B.	Sparks, Robert E.
Cockerville, Sam J.	Steel, George & Charles
Dailey, Oliver A.	Sydor, Thomas L.
Gorgas, Ferdinand J.S.	Thackston, William W.H.
Grant, Hugh M.	Uhler, John C.
Grant, James T.	Van De Water, Isaac N.
Gunning, Thomas B.	Von Heyden, Elise
Harris, Edward N.	Wayman, Edward F.
Hayes, George E.	Welch, Thomas J.
Henley, Robert Y.	Welchens, Samuel
Hodgkin, James B. (5 folders)	White [Sameul S.] Dental Manufacturing Company [Dental Cosmos; Dental Depot] (3 folders)
Howard, E. Lloyd	Wilkerson, Basil M.
Hunt, R. Finley	Winder, Richard B.
Hunter, Exum L.	Wise, William B.
Hunter, Hardy M.	Wright, Gurdon F.S.
Johnson & Lund	
Johnston Brothers & Selby	
Kimmell, Samuel (2 folders)	

Arrangement: Alphabetical by sender's last name

Access Restrictions: This collection is open for research.

Language: Materials mostly in English. Some in Polish and French.

Custodial History: The letters were stored in alphabetical bundles in moving boxes in the Historical Collections of the Health Sciences and Human Services Library along with other archival collections. The collection was reconstituted in 2018 and the alphabetical order was maintained.

Acquisition: It is unclear how or when the letters came to the Historical Collections of the Health Sciences and Human Services Library but they were probably transferred before 1998 when the current building was opened.

Sources Used:

Baltimore College of Dental Surgery Catalogs:

<https://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/138/browse?type=dateissued>

Cordell, Eugene F. (1907). *University of Maryland, 1807-1907, its history, influence, equipment and characteristics, with biographical sketches and portraits of its founders, benefactors, regents, faculty and alumni*. Retrieved from: <https://archive.org/details/universityofmary01cord/page/n11>

“Dr. Ferdinand James Samuel Gorgas.” (2011). Find A Grave. Retrieved from:

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/65645285/ferdinand-james_samuel-gorgas

“Dr. Matthew Whilldin Foster.” (1915). *Mirror*. Retrieved from:

<https://archive.org/details/mirror1915balt/page/n5>

“Dr. M.W. Foster Dead...” (1914, Jul 01). *The Sun*. Retrieved from <http://proxy-hs.researchport.umd.edu/login?>

“Dr. W.G. Foster, 78, Claimed by Death...” (1939, Mar 08). *The Sun*. Retrieved from <http://proxy-hs.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/538498812?accountid=28672>

“In Memoriam Ferdinand F.S. Grogas.” (1915). *Terra Mariae*. Retrieved from:

<https://archive.org/details/terramariae1915/page/n11>

“Noted Dentist Weds at 80...” (1913, Sep 30). *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://proxy-hs.researchport.umd.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/145272135?accountid=28672>

“Prof. R. B. Winder.” (1894). *The American Journal of Dental Science*, 28(4), 186–187. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6115032/pdf/amjdentsci81508-0042.pdf>

“University of Maryland, Baltimore. Dental School, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery.” (1981). *The Baltimore College of Dental Surgery: Heritage and History*. Retrieved from:

<https://archive.hshsl.umaryland.edu/handle/10713/27>

Processing Information: When possible original order was maintained, collection was stored in moving boxes for several years before processing. The materials were processed during the fall semester and the finding aid was written in December 2019 by Tara Wink, Historical Librarian and Archivist.