

**Louis I. Grossman papers relating to the Philadelphia
Root Canal Study Club and the American Association
of Endodontists**

Ms. Coll. 1177

Finding aid prepared by Kelin Baldrige.

Last updated on March 04, 2016.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2016 February 19

Table of Contents

Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	4
Administrative Information.....	5
Controlled Access Headings.....	5
Collection Inventory.....	7
I. Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club.....	7
II. American Association of Endodontists.....	7

Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Grossman, Louis Irwin
Title	Louis I. Grossman papers relating to the Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club and the American Association of Endodontists
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1177
Date [inclusive]	1939-1981
Extent	0.2 linear feet (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	The father of modern endodontics, an authority on root canal therapy, and a long time professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Louis I. Grossman (1907-1988) was influential in the founding of both the Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club in 1939 and the American Association of Endodontists in 1943. The collection includes correspondence and material documenting the formation of both organizations.

Cite as:

Louis I. Grossman papers relating to the Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club and the American Association of Endodontists, 1939-1981, Ms. Coll. 1177, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

The father of modern endodontics and authority on root canal therapy, Louis I. Grossman, was born in 1901 in the Ukraine and immigrated with his family to Philadelphia. He graduated from South Philadelphia High School in 1919 and earned his doctorate in dental surgery from the University of Pennsylvania 1923. He then continued his education in Germany, earning his doctorate in medical dentistry at the University of Rostock in 1928.

In 1926, Grossman joined the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania School of Dentistry, serving as the head of Endodontics Department for many years before becoming professor of emeritus of oral medicine in 1968. He lectured from 1968 until 1987, one year before his death in 1988. One of the many accomplishments for which Grossman is credited is his promotion of root canal therapy, a treatment which resulted in fewer teeth being extracted.

In 1939, Grossman founded the Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club with the intent of gathering a group of like-minded dentists to study and discuss problems concerned with the practice of root canal therapy, and to disseminate information by lectures and clinics in order to promote more adequate root canal therapy among members of the dental profession. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, root canal therapy was considered taboo by many; but with the Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club, "a group of dentists made the effort to break away from the focal infection theory, which virtually banned root canal treatment," (Grossman, page 41). The club consisted of an elected chairman to preside over meetings; a research committee composed of three elected members to promote and to assist in planning original studies of members; a secretary; and members who were considered to be ethical American Dental Association dentists with an interest in root canal therapy. In the early days of the organization, the group met on the third Wednesday of the month in the Hotel Rittenhouse. Grossman served as the secretary of the club and the members were dentists who practiced in and around the city of Philadelphia. Meetings appear to have held regularly during 1939, less so during 1940, and only irregularly after Pearl Harbor. The Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club may have been the genesis for creating a national association of dentists interested in root canal therapy. With several other influential dentists in 1943, Grossman began organizing the American Root Therapy Association. At the Chicago Dental Society meeting, nineteen dentists from across the country met and the American Association of Endodontists (AAE) was officially formed.

Grossman died in 1988. He was survived by his wife, Emma May MacIntyre, whom he married in 1928 and their two children.

Works cited:

Grossman, Louis I. " History of the Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club: 1939," *Journal of Endodontics*, Special Issue, January 1981, Volume 8, pages 41-42.

Pace, Eric, Louis Grossman, 86, Professor and Expert On Dental Therapy, *New York Times*, March 26, 1988 (accessed March 3, 2016)

Scope and Contents

This collection is divided into material relating to the Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club and the American Association of Endodontists. The Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club material includes correspondence regarding the founding of the group, the proposal for the group, letters of acceptance, minutes, and a resolution commending the editor of the *Journal of the American Dental Association* for an editorial regarding pulpless teeth. The minutes include the names of the members who read papers, the topics of the papers, and the members present at each meeting.

The American Association of Endodontists material includes letters to and from Dr. Louis I. Grossman and various dentists across the country relating to the formation of this national organization. The organization appears to have become a reality in 1943 first as the American Root Therapy Association and, soon after, as the American Association of Endodontists. The process of organizing this group seems to have been fraught with misunderstandings relating to its establishment. Almost all the letters relating to the formation of the organization (found in box 1, folder 1) date from January 1943 to February 1944. There is one letter from 1949 and two from 1981. This series also includes the constitution, notes relating to the organization meeting in Chicago, a program for the first annual meeting of the American Association of Endodontists, a few report templates and form letters, and a membership list from 1949.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2016 February 19

Finding aid prepared by Kelin Baldrige.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Source of Acquisition

Transferred from the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, 2015.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- American Association of Endodontists.
- Philadelphia Root Canal Study Club.
- University of Pennsylvania. School of Dental Medicine.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Constitutions
- Correspondence
- Membership lists
- Minutes (administrative records)

SUBJECT(S)

- Dentistry--History
- Dentistry--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--History
- Dentistry--Study and teaching
- Endodontists
- Root canal therapy

Collection Inventory

I. PHILADELPHIA ROOT CANAL STUDY CLUB, 1939-1941.

	Box	Folder
Correspondence relating to the formation and early programs of the club, 1939-1941.	1	1
Proposal, circa 1939.	1	8
Letters of acceptance, 1939.	1	2
Minutes, 1939 March 24-1941 April 16.	1	4
Resolution, 1940.	1	7

II. AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ENDODONTISTS, 1943-1981.

	Box	Folder
Correspondence relating to the formation of the American Association of Endodontists and later meetings, 1943-1944, 1949, 1981.	1	1
Constitution, notes from organizational meeting in Chicago, and program of the first annual meeting, 1943-1947.	1	5
Report templates and form letters, 1945-1949.	1	6

Membership list, 1949.

1

3