

Edwin Tyler Darby dental records and lecture notes

Ms. Coll. 1141

Finding aid prepared by Rive Cadwallader.

Last updated on November 23, 2015.

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

2015 November 9

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Darby, Edwin Tyler, 1845-1929
Title	Edwin Tyler Darby dental records and lecture notes
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1141
Date	1869-1887, undated
Extent	0.4 linear feet (3 volumes)
Language	English
Abstract	Dr. Edwin Tyler Darby (1845-1929) was a prominent Philadelphia dentist and professor at the University of Pennsylvania Dental School. This collection contains two books of dental records kept by Dr. Edwin Tyler Darby from 1869 to 1887 as well as a bound set of Dr. Darby's notes for lectures delivered at the Dental School of the University of Pennsylvania (undated).

Cite as:

Edwin Tyler Darby dental records and lecture notes, 1869-1887, undated, Ms. Coll. 1141, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Dr. Edwin Tyler Darby (1845-1929) was a prominent Philadelphia dentist and professor at the University of Pennsylvania Dental School who contributed prolifically to the literature of his field. Darby began his dental training at age sixteen, and enrolled in the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery two years later. Darby practiced dental medicine in Philadelphia for several years before the demands of his growing practice began to take a toll on his health. In a yearlong leave, Darby travelled throughout Europe, Palestine and Egypt, where he took a special interest in uncovering mummy tombs in the hopes of finding evidence of ancient dental treatments. Darby returned to Philadelphia and to his practice for several years before being elected a professor at the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery. In 1878, Darby, along with his colleague Dr. Charles J. Essig, was instrumental in the establishment of School of Dental Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Darby served as a professor of Operative Dentistry and Dental Histology at that institution for many years, and witnessed the merge of the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery with the School of Dental Medicine in 1909. Darby married Carolyn B. Thomas in 1866 and passed away from pneumonia in 1929.

Sources: Ancestry.com. U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

Penn Dental Medicine, "History." Retrieved from http://www.dental.upenn.edu/about_us/history Thorpe, Burton Lee. History of Dental Surgery: Biographies of pioneer American dentists and their successors. Volume 3 of History of Dental Surgery: Contributions by various authors, edited by Charles Rudolph Edward Koch. National art publishing Company, 1910.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains two books of dental records kept by Dr. Edwin Tyler Darby from 1869 to 1887 as well as a bound set of Dr. Darby's notes for lectures delivered at the Dental School of the University of Pennsylvania. Only one of the lectures in this volume is dated (December 11, 1908), however, according to an inscription on its first page, the entire set of notes was gifted by Darby to Dr. William D. Tracy in 1921. These lecture notes touch on a variety of topics relevant to the practice of dentistry and range from the technical (formulae for pastes and fillings) to professional ("Avoid gossip of any kind," "Attend society meetings.") to historical (ancient treatments of dental caries) to the purely instructional (comprehensive explanations of cavity nomenclature, analyses of various dental tools and detailed descriptions of each tooth). A letter (October 31, 1951) from orthodontist Dr. Bernhard Weinberger to Margaret Palmer, a librarian at Penn's dental school, prefaces this collection of notes and provides Dr. Weinberger's rationale for donating them to his alma mater.

The dental records that comprise the other part of this collection fill two large volumes. Uniform in size and design, each volume features a cover page followed by 680 pages for notes on dental visits (with room for two patients' records on each page). These books were custom printed for Darby by the Philadelphia company of John Alexander and published by S. S. White. Each page has a dental chart of the human mouth with a key of symbols designating teeth that were extracted, separated, filled, missing, on plate, on pivot, with the nerve removed, the nerve cavity and crown filled or superficial decay removed. Additionally, a section for notes includes spaces for the patient's name, the dental office to which he or she was referred, the dates of visits to Dr. Darby, procedures completed on each date, the cost of the procedure and means of payment. Dr. Darby does not seem to have made use of the symbols representing various tooth conditions, but instead annotated the relevant teeth with numbers which correspond to the patient's notes. The procedure most frequently noted in these ledger books is the

application of a gold filling, and most of Darby's dental work cost patients between five and two hundred forty dollars, usually paid in cash. Both volumes feature an alphabetized index of patients' names at the beginning, which lists the page on which their file can be found. Volume one has new entries dated from September 1869 to September 1876, though later additions to patients' files extend as far as January 1881. Volume two has new entries from September 1876 to December 1885 with the last addition to an already established file dated October 1887.

Administrative Information

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Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Custodial History note

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

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- University of Pennsylvania. School of Dental Medicine.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Lecture notes
- Ledgers (account books)

SUBJECT(S)

- Dental instruments and apparatus
- Dentistry--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--History
- Dentistry--Study and teaching

Collection Inventory

	Volume
Dental ledger, 1869-1881.	1
Dental ledger, 1876-1887.	2
Lectures on dental medicine, undated.	3