

RCDS Presidential History: A Look Back at Dr. Charles G. Stiles, RCDS's First President

This is the illustrious 100th year anniversary of the Richmond County Dental Society (RCDS). We would like to congratulate not only the officers of the current and past boards, but all the dentists of Staten Island who have made the RCDS and the SDDS such a thriving and important dental society. Dr. Edward Jastremski is this celebration year's president. A biographical sketch of Dr. Jastremski appears in this Bulletin, but let's go back in time 100 years to see the RCDS's first president...

On February 10, 1915, according to an announcement in *The Dental Cosmos* (Vol. 57; Pg. 482, 1915), the Richmond County Dental Society was organized at a meeting held at the Hotel St. George. The Society was open to all practicing dentists for the "friendly relationship between members of the profession." They elected that day C. G. Stiles, President; J. A. Smith, Vice-President (who went on the following year to become the second president of RCDS); D. J. Machol, Secretary; L. A. Lamonte, Treasurer (who in 1918 became the fourth president of the RCDS). They scheduled monthly meetings on every second Monday of the month and had their first meeting on March 8, 1915, where every

practicing dentist of Staten Island, but one attended.

Charles Gowdy Stiles, the first president of the RCDS, was born on October 12, 1881 in Lansingburgh, which is now Troy, (annexed by Troy in 1900) N.Y. in Rensselaer County. He was married on February 20, 1911 to Florence Lucille Kennedy. They had a daughter, Julianne Lawrence Stiles (born August 9, 1913) and two sons: Robert Livingstone Stiles (born on June 5, 1916) and Charles Gowdy Stiles, Jr. (born on May 1, 1921). Charles's parents were Robert Benoni Stiles and Ida Estralla Lawrence.

Charles's father, Robert, was born in East Windsor, Conn. and graduated from Union College in Schenectady, N.Y. on July 1, 1870. He then went on to graduate from Albany Law School and was admitted to the bar in 1871. Charles was introduced to politics by his father, Robert, who was elected in March 1876 to serve as magistrate of the town of Lansingburgh, N.Y. Robert was also corporation counsel for the Village of Lansingburgh starting in 1881, the year his son, Charles, was born.

Dr. Charles Stiles was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution through his mother's great-great-grandfather, Samuel

Gowdy. Dr. Stiles' son, Charles Jr., enlisted in the marines at age 20 in March of 1942. He was a captain in the Marines Second Battalion Fourth Marines and Sixth Marine Division. Charles Jr. was part of the first American combat troop to enter Mainland Japan, landing on Futtsu Cape. He was wounded in action in January of 1945 and finished his tour with the marines in 1947.

Dr. Charles G. Stiles received his Ph.B. (Bachelor of Philosophy) degree from Union College in 1904, where his father attended and, later, his sons. Charles also had an early interest in music; he was in the Musical Association and was assistant manager and then manager for the class of 1904 at Union College. As per the Union College website, the college "is a private, non-denominational liberal arts college located in Schenectady, New York, United States. Founded in 1795, it was the first institution of higher learning chartered by the New York State Board of Regents." The oldest college in New York is actually Columbia College, which was founded by a royal charter as King's College in 1754. Charles was in the fraternity Psi Upsilon and Delta Sigma Delta.

It is interesting that fraternities at American colleges and universities began at Union College with the organization of Kappa Alpha in 1825, Sigma Phi in 1827 and Delta Phi in 1872. There are three other remaining national fraternities that were established at Union college in the next 20 years, Psi Upsilon (where Charles was a member) (1833), Chi Psi (1841), and Theta Delta Chi (1847). Today Union College is known as being the "Mother of Fraternities." As far as dental fraternities go, on November 15, 1882 the first dental fraternity in

the world was founded in Ann Arbor, Michigan. After being asked to join Nu Sigma Nu (a medical fraternity), Lou Mitchell and Chas Howard, two dental students from the University of Michigan's dental school, decided that dentists should have their own fraternity. They took the initials D.D.S., changed their order to D.S.D. and then replaced the English words with Greek, which is how they created their new name, Delta Sigma Delta, another fraternity to which Dr. Stiles belonged.

On Wednesday, June 17, 1908, at the 152nd commencement of the University of Pennsylvania (University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine was founded in 1878 though it originated as the Philadelphia College of Dental Surgery, which was founded in 1852), Dr. C.G. Stiles received his D.D.S. degree. In 1911, in the *Journal called Oral Hygiene* a journal for dentists (Vol. I, Number XI), Charles wrote a timely piece on how to help manage children and alleviate their fear of dentists.

Dr. and Mrs. Stiles donated a number of items to the Staten Island Historical Society. In their collection are two hand fans (one is from Machinery Hall, World's Fair, Chicago) and a blue velvet jacket that Dr. Stiles wore as a young boy! There are also about a hundred other family items such as an eagle pin with flag, beaded purse, leather cigar case and trundle bed. Currently, only the trundle bed can be viewed on the first floor of the Basket Maker's house in Historic Richmond Town. The fans can be viewed on their online database. It is pretty amazing that this year the Staten Island Historical Society has a special online gallery featuring Dr. Meryl Efron who was the first

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Current photo of the St. George Theatre, Staten Island, where Dr. Charles Stiles' office was located (photo courtesy of the St. George Theatre, with thanks to manager of marketing, Vincent Innocente)

Dr. Charles Stiles, First President of the RCDS

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Darby Dental Society
The Dental Surgery Sailor's Snug Harbor Hospital and home for children of destitute seamen(1910-1914)
Psi Upsilon (NYC) (second chapter was formed at NYU)
Phoenix Lodge no. 58
Livingston tennis and cricket clubs
Free and accepted Masons of Troy
Tyrian Chapter no. 219
Columbian Council no. 1 of NYC
Empire Commandery no. 66 of Knights Templar Staten Island, the local Masonic club
The Staten Island Club
The Staten Island Kiwanis club
The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Charles Stiles was very active in his community. He volunteered for and held memberships in many organizations, including those listed in the above chart.

female president of the Richmond County Dental Society in 1992. Dr. Efron served on the Staten Island Historical Society's board of directors and was first vice president and chair of its governance and collections committees. I would like to thank Sarah Clark who is Curator for the Staten Island Historical Society for her information on the Stiles collection; she has also invited our members to take a group-sponsored visit with a

behind-the-scenes tour and presentation on selected dental related objects.

After finishing dental school, in 1909, Charles moved to 443 Bard Avenue, West New Brighton in Staten Island. Six years later Charles would assume the role of the first president of the RCDS. Shortly after moving to Staten Island he opened a dental office at 1593 Richmond Terrace West New Brighton, then moved to 36 Richmond Terrace and finally

transferred his office to Hyatt Street at the newly built St. George theatre. Charles died at 73 years of age in June 1965 in Staten Island.

by **STUART L. SEGELNICK, D.D.S.**

Alliance to RCDS

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original scripts for this puppet show. We progressed from this play to short films, which were purchased from the ADA.

I quickly became involved in this program and more. Our Auxiliary did more than just visit schools a few times a month. As time went on and the use of gloves in the dental office became common, we created a program for students in the upper elementary school grades to teach them about sterilization and how germs are passed on. We had a toothbrush trade-in event at the Staten Island Mall during February's Dental Health Month. We sponsored a program which provided monetary awards to the top students in the dental assisting program at Staten Island Hospital & the College of Staten Island. The Auxiliary also provided small scholarships to dental students to help defray the cost of their books and gave scholarships to the dental hygiene program at NYC Technical College.

The Auxiliary had monthly meetings and an annual installation dinner. We also organized social events with our spouses, held fundraisers and wrote an award winning newsletter three or four times a year. We held huge garage sales in the driveway and garage at Alice Goren's house. We had a dinner with an enormous quantity of raffle baskets, all donations from local vendors. I remember going around with Judy Gamm, Florence Einhorn or Rosalyn Birnbaum collecting gifts. We were raising money for our programs and having a good time in the process.

We were a member of the National Auxiliary (affiliated with the ADA) as well. Susan Gott represented us on the national level to the Alliance of the American Dental Association many times. In subsequent

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The Peninsula Dental Society - 2015

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March 27, 2015	Solving Difficult Esthetic Challenges with Practical Chairside Techniques: Veneers, Crowns and Post Issues	Dr. Bruce Crispin
April 24, 2015	Techniques to Minimize Endodontic Misadventures: Updating Your Instrumentation and Techniques	Dr. John West
May 15, 2015	Adhesive Dentistry Update: Maximizing Success by Selecting the Right Materials and Techniques	Dr. Marc Geissberger

All seminars will be held at The Sands of Atlantic Beach from 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM.
For further information and registration please call (516) 569-1111