

Incidentals, Dec. 1983

Dr. Corydon Palmer ...

Several members have expressed interest in the history of Corydon Palmer Dental Society, and especially in the life of Dr. Corydon Palmer.

What follows below is a brief synopsis of the life of Dr. Palmer and his influence on modern dentistry.

Corydon Spencer Palmer was born in Vernon on January 12, 1820. He moved to Warren in 1836 to work as a silversmith apprentice. During his apprenticeship, he studied dentistry by observing and talking with other dentists. He opened his dental office in 1839 in Warren at the age of 19.

Dr. Palmer strongly opposed the unnecessary extraction of teeth and gained world acclaim for both his restorative dentistry and his invention of dental instruments.

Dr. Palmer became a member of the American Dental Association and the Ohio Dental Association. He left Warren in 1843 to join Dr. John Burdell in practice in New York. He later became a consultant in the manufacture of steel dental instruments. His inventions include the first set of tools for the manipulation of cohesive gold foil for filling teeth, a style of gold foil pluggers and special clamps used in applying the rubber dam. He also invented the use of tin foil for inexpensive fillings.

Dr. Palmer later returned to Warren, and patients traveled great distances to see him. His most prominent patients were the Vanderbilts. He was considered the leading dental instrument maker in the world and one of the most skilled dentists in the United States.

Dr. Palmer gave up his practice in 1914 and returned to New York to live with his son. He died in 1917 at the age of 97 and is buried in Warren in the Oakwood Cemetery. His original home at 40 Washington, N.E., was built about 1850 and has been moved to 976 Belvedere, S.E.

The Corydon Palmer Dental Society was formed in 1913 as a tribute to Dr. Palmer. Its purpose was to provide dental inspectors to provide dental care for the schools and the poor and to keep abreast of the latest advances in dentistry.

Dr. David Liddle has been instrumental in keeping both the Corydon Palmer Dental Society and organized dentistry informed of the accomplishments of Dr. Palmer. He also corresponded with Dr. Palmer's great-granddaughter, Mrs. Mary Jane Boltizar of Flushing, New York, who donated three cases of Dr. Palmer's original instruments to the Corydon Palmer Dental Society.

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