

[Archives & Special Collections, Columbia University Health Sciences Library](#)

[William B. Dunning Papers](#)

DUNNING, WILLIAM B., 1874-1959.

Papers, 1881-1970 (bulk 1900-1940)

3.25 cubic feet (10 boxes)

SUMMARY: Correspondence, minutes, syllabi, lecture notes, printed material, photographs and artifacts documenting the professional career of dentist and dental educator William B. Dunning.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: William Bailey Dunning, dentist and dental educator, was born April 11, 1874 in Peekskill, New York, the son of Edwin James Dunning, Jr. He received his D.D.S. from the New York College of Dentistry (now the New York University College of Dentistry) in 1895 and entered the practice of Samuel E. Davis in New York City shortly thereafter.

Besides maintaining an active practice, Dunning had a long career as a dental educator. Though he served as adjunct professor of operative dentistry at the College of Dental and Oral Surgery of New York (CODOS) in 1907-1916, he is best known for his association with the Columbia University School of Dental and Oral Surgery (SDOS). Dunning, along with his brother, the oral surgeon Henry S. Dunning, was a member of the committee appointed by President Nicholas Murray Butler in 1916 to study the idea of founding a Columbia dental school. The committee's report, "A Dental School on University Lines" (May 1916), was largely written by Dunning, and he was instrumental in raising funds for the new school. Dunning formulated much of the new dental school's curriculum and he served on the faculty as Professor of Dentistry from 1917 until his retirement in 1946.

From 1912 to 1918, Dunning was editor of the *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies*, a research journal jointly sponsored by the state dental societies of New York and New England. He co-authored with S. E. Davenport, Jr., *A Dictionary of Dental Science and Art* (1936) and was the author of numerous articles. He was a member of the New York Academy of Dentistry (President, 1933-1935); the First District Dental Society (President, 1916-1917); the Dental Society of the State of New York; the American Dental Society; the American College of Dentists; the International Association for Dental Research, and many other professional organizations.

Dunning married Rose Morse in 1903. They had three children the oldest of whom, James Morse Dunning, served as Dean of the Harvard University School of Dental Medicine. William B. Dunning died on July 21, 1959.

ORGANIZATION: Organized in six series: I. Personal correspondence; II. Professional journalism and articles; III. Columbia University School of Dental & Oral Surgery/Dental education; IV. Professional organizations; V. Henry S. Dunning; VI. Artifacts.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: The bulk of the Dunning papers documents his professional career from about 1900 to 1940. His work as an editor of the *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies* and his involvement with the Columbia University School of Dental and Oral Surgery are particularly well-documented. Major correspondents include S.E. Davenport, Sr., S.E. Davenport, Jr., William J. Gies, Edward Kirk, and Henry S. Dunning. Personal letters are rare, with even most of the letters from his brother, Henry S. Dunning, concerned with professional matters. The papers also include many dental instruments and other artifacts, most of which appear to have belonged to Henry S. Dunning.

Series I. Personal correspondence. Letters from family members and close professional colleagues such as S. E. Davenport, Jr. and William J. Gies, though the correspondence from the latter group is more professional than personal in nature. In addition, there is a folder of notes and background material on the genealogy of the Dunning and related families.

Series II. Professional journalism and articles. Dunning's editorship (1912-1918) of the *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies* is well documented and includes correspondence with fellow editors, and with contributors, subscribers, printers and advertisers. It provides a full picture of the operations of a professional journal in the early 20th century. Correspondence relating to Dunning's co-authorship with S.E. Davenport, Jr. of *A Dictionary of Dental Science and Art* (1936) documents the long gestation of this volume (1915-1936). Records of Dunning's involvement with the *Journal of Dental Research* contain much correspondence with William J. Gies, its editor. In addition, there are many reprints and manuscripts of Dunning's own scientific articles.

Series III. Columbia University School of Dental & Oral Surgery/Dental education. The papers are rich in records documenting the founding and early years of Columbia's School of Dental and Oral Surgery (SDOS): correspondence, 1915-1940; newspaper clippings, 1916-1917; syllabi, lecture notes, examinations and other course materials; programs; and fundraising material. They reveal that Dunning and his brother, Henry S. Dunning, played prominent roles in the inception and early years of the SDOS. In addition, the series has letters and reminiscences of J. Howard Reed, founder of the College of Dental and Oral Surgery of New York (CODOS) (founded in 1892 as the New York Dental College), which merged with Columbia in 1923; CODOS printed material, including catalogues and class schedules; and a small amount of printed material from the New York College of Dentistry (now the New York University College of Dentistry). Printed material relating to SDOS is in Series VI.

Series IV. Professional organizations. Among the many organizations documented in the records, there is much on the First District Dental Society of New York, though comparatively little relating to Dunning's tenure as its President (1916-1917). Instead, much of the correspondence documents his role as contributing editor of the Society's journal (1919-1939). There are also records of Dunning's work with the Dental Society of the State of New York, 1911-1939; the New York Academy of Dentistry; the New York Odontological Society; and the Dental Health Committee of the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association.

Series V. Henry S. Dunning. Correspondence, typescript and printed articles, dental illustrations and World War I memorabilia of Henry S. Dunning (1881-1957), younger brother of William B. Dunning. Henry S. Dunning was both a dentist (New York College of Dentistry, 1904) and surgeon (Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons, 1911). He served as a maxillofacial surgeon with the U.S. Army Medical Corps during World War I and was professor of oral surgery at the Columbia University School of Dental & Oral Surgery (1923-1948).

Series VI. Artifacts. Includes photographs, many of them World War I scenes that probably came from Henry S. Dunning; a certificate of membership; a watercolor sketch by W.B. Dunning; and much printed material including dental school catalogs from both Columbia and other universities; a 1919 yearbook of the College of Dental and Oral Surgery of New York (CODOS); and dental instruments, many of which seem to have belonged to Henry S. Dunning.

PROVENANCE: Gift of James M. Dunning, 1980, 1988, 1991, with additional material from him that was held by the Office of the Dean, School of Dental and Oral Surgery, until 2001. These papers originally formed part of the “William J. Gies Collection in the History of Dentistry,” an amalgam of Dunning family papers, Gies memorabilia, SDOS records, and records relating to SDOS that had been removed from the Central Records of the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences. With the accession of the complete Central Records of the Vice President by Archives and Special Collections in 1993, it was decided to return the Vice President’s records in the Gies Collection to Central Records and reprocess the Dunning and Gies papers as separate collections.

Processed c. 1990 with generous financial support from the William J. Gies Foundation; reprocessed and finding aid rewritten by Stephen Novak, 2001.

SUBJECTS:

Davenport, S. Ellsworth (Sebert Ellsworth), 1888-

Dunning, William B. (William Bailey), 1874-

Dunning, Henry Sage.

Gies, William John, 1872-1956.

Reed, J. Howard.

Columbia University. School of Dental and Oral Surgery.

College of Dental and Oral Surgery of New York.

New York University. College of Dentistry.

Journal of the Allied Dental Societies.

Journal of Dental Research.

Dentistry – Periodicals.

Dentistry – Societies.

Dentistry – Study and teaching – United States.

Education, Dental – New York City.

Schools, Dental – New York City.

Dentists.

**Dunning, William B.
Papers, 1881-1970**

Box Folder

Series I: Personal correspondence

- 1 1 Correspondence, Miscellaneous, 1902-1940
- 2 Bailey, Adams (cousin): choosing a dental school; effect of WWI on the University of Pennsylvania dental school, etc., 1914-1923
- 3 Black, Arthur D.(son of G.V.): War Dept. Dental Education Committee; his father, etc., 1910-1918
- 4 Black, G. Vardiman: correspondence, 1910; Black biography, 1915.
- 5 Brackett, Charles A.: *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies (JADS)*, etc., 1909-1916
- 6 Davenport, S.E., Sr. (treasurer, *JADS*): Gies-Kirk controversy; *JADS* and general dental matters, etc., 1909-1919, 1924
- 7 Davenport, S.E., Jr. (editor, *JADS*): largely re the Journal, 1912-1940
- 8 Dunning, Henry Sage: founding of School of Dental & Oral Surgery; dental and family matters, 1915-1916, 1926, 1947, 1950?
- 9 Dunning, James M.: correspondence, diplomas, programs, etc., 1930-1946, 1955, 1967
- 10 Dunning Family: genealogical material, various dates
- 11 Gies, William J.: correspondence on dental research, Columbia, *JADS*, and professional matters, 1910-1944 and undated
- 12 Gies, William J.: corrected typescripts of articles [for *JADS*?], c. 1919?
- 13 Gies, William J. – Plaque, SDOS: correspondence about sculptor, program of dedication ceremony, tributes, etc. 1952
- 14 Hyatt, Thaddeus P. (Dental Director, Metropolitan Life Insurance): correspondence, reports, pamphlets, 1917-40
- 15 Hyatt, Thaddeus P. (Dental Director, Metropolitan Life Insurance): Met Life printed material; death claims by age, 1917-1921

Series II: Professional journalism and publications

- 16 *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies*: correspondence, A – J, 1911-1919
- 2 1 *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies*: correspondence, K - P, 1912-1918
- 2 *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies*: correspondence, R - Z, 1910-1918
- 3 *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies*: correspondence, general, 1908-1919
- 4 *Journal of the Allied Dental Societies*: correspondence with advertisers, subscribers and treasurer, 1911-1918

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Box Folder

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|---|---|---|
| 2 | 5 | <i>Journal of the Allied Dental Societies</i> : correspondence with publishers, printer, etc., 1909-1919 |
| | 6 | <i>Journal of the Allied Dental Societies</i> : papers re incorporation and dissolution, 1917-1919 |
| | 7 | <i>Journal of the Allied Dental Societies</i> : "Gies-Kirk controversy" regarding Gies article on saliva; includes correspondence and galleys, 1914 |
| | 8 | <i>Journal of Dental Research</i> : correspondence, 1917-1929 |
| | 9 | <i>Journal of Dental Research</i> : correspondence, 1931-1936 |
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| 3 | 1 | <i>Journal of Dental Research</i> : prospectus, printer's invoice, c. 1919 |
| | 2 | <i>Dental Cosmos</i> : correspondence with Edward C. Kirk, ed., 1905-1915 |
| | 3 | "Regional Journal:" correspondence regarding a proposed journal to be sponsored by Northeastern state dental societies, 1937-1938 |
| | 4 | Macmillan Company: Dunning's reviews of manuscripts for Macmillan, 1928-1933 |
| | 5 | Publications: typescript and printed versions of Dunning articles, c. 1900-1950s |
| | 6 | Publications: Dunning articles and fundraising pieces for the School of Dental & Oral Surgery, Columbia University, 1916, 1921 |
| | 7 | <i>A Dictionary of Dental Science and Art</i> (Dunning, co-editor): proposal, correspondence with publisher, drafts of sections, etc., 1915-1935 |
| | 8 | <i>A Dictionary of Dental Science and Art</i> : correspondence, 1935-1937 |
| | 9 | "Dentistry -Public Health, Social & Economic Relations": historical study by Dunning, n.d. |

Series III: Columbia University School of Dental & Oral Surgery/Dental education

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| | 10 | Correspondence of Dunning and others relating to founding, 1915-1916 |
| | 11 | Notes, reports, and other records on founding, 1915-1916 |
| | 12 | Correspondence, 1917-1920 |
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| 4 | 1 | Correspondence, 1921-1923, n.d. |
| | 2 | Correspondence, 1928-1940 |
| | 3 | Newspaper clippings, 1916-1917 |
| | 4 | SDOS Dinner in honor of Dunning: correspondence, invitation, etc., 1946 |
| | 5 | Periodontia course: syllabi, papers, correspondence, lab reports, etc., 1927, n.d. |

**Dunning, William B.
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Box Folder

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| 4 | 6 | Fundraising brochure, c. 1930 |
| | 7 | Teaching materials, Operative Dentistry: lectures, examinations, correspondence, 1939-1941 |
| | 8 | “Dental ethics, economics and jurisprudence:” class notes, lectures, correspondence, photos of the Class of 1943, grades, etc., 1941-1945 |
| | 9 | “Procedural, SDOS”: class schedules, faculty meeting minutes, examination questions, etc., 1915-1928 |
| | 10 | College of Dental & Oral Surgery of New York (CODOS): correspondence and reminiscences of J. Howard Reed, founder, 1886-1940 |
| | 11 | College of Dental & Oral Surgery of New York (CODOS): catalogues, schedules and other printed material, 1893-1898 |
| | | |
| 5 | 1 | College of Dental & Oral Surgery of New York (CODOS): Dunning correspondence, 1907-1915 |
| | 2 | New York College of Dentistry (New York University): commencement program, alumni material, etc., 1881, 1890s, 1963 |

Series IV: Organizations

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| 3 | American Medical Association: correspondence, pamphlets, article, 1909-1917 |
| 4 | Dental Society of the State of New York: correspondence, reports, obits, newsclippings, list of dental editors, 1911-39, (Dunning, Chair, Research Comm., 1916; Chair, Necrology Comm., 1930-31) |
| 5 | Dental Society of the State of New York: proposed school for graduate dentists, 1949 |
| 6 | 1st District Dental Society: correspondence, 1905-1939, (Dunning president, 1916-17; contributing editor, journal, 1919 to 1939; secretary pro tem., 1925) |
| 7 | 1st District Dental Society (“President’s folder”): correspondence, membership lists, 1916-1918 |
| 8 | 1st District Dental Society: minutes, regular meetings, Oct. 6, Nov. 3, 1919; Pathodontia Section, Jan. – March, 1920; Periodontia Section, March, 1920 |
| 9 | National Dental Association: correspondence, publications, minutes 1910-1919 (Dunning, Secretary, Committee on Journal, 1910) |
| 10 | New York Academy of Dentistry: agendas, memos, correspondence, articles, 1922-1934 |

**Dunning, William B.
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| 5 | 11 | New York Academy of Dentistry: meeting minutes, Feb. 20, 1945 re: relations with College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University |
| | 12 | New York Academy of Medicine: correspondence, 1944 |
| | 13 | New York Institute of Stomatology /Institute of Dental Pedagogics: correspondence, pamphlets, 1906-07 |
| 6 | 1 | New York Odontological Society: minutes, 1906-1907; correspondence, 1902-1910 (Dunning, recording secretary, 1909-1910) |
| | 2 | New York Odontological Society: minutes, 1905-1907 |
| | 3 | New York Throat, Nose and Lung Hospital: correspondence, 1907 |
| | 4 | New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, Dental Health Committee: correspondence; minutes; reports; and paper by James M. Dunning, 1940-1951 |
| | 5 | Presbyterian Hospital Dental Staff: correspondence, minutes, staff list, 1920-1932 |

Series V: Henry S. Dunning

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| 6 | Psi Omega Dental Fraternity: correspondence, by-laws, 1901-1910 |
| 7 | Correspondence: founding of and fundraising for Columbia's School of Dental & Oral Surgery, including typescript pamphlet, "lines of talk for subscribers," list of millionaires and checks received, proposed trustees, 1915-1916 |
| 8 | "Some Phases of Oral Surgery and Emergency Operating in French, English and American Hospitals:" typescript of paper given by Dunning at a meeting of the Metropolitan District of the Massachusetts Dental Society, April 7, 1919 |
| 9 | Reprints of articles on oral surgery, 1915, 1919 |
| 10 | "Illustrations Related To Dentistry:" largely reproductions, including watercolor of first dental ambulance in WW II by Melville Steinfelds, undated |
| 11 | World War I memorabilia: trench map of Belgium, troop newspapers, postcard, etc., 1917-1918 |

Series VI: Artifacts

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| 7 | 1 | Self-conscious archival materials: James M. Dunning correspondence, 1970; Henry S. Dunning obits; history of dental services at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, 1970 |
| | 2 | Certificate of membership, New York State Society of Dentistry for Children, 1942 (William Dunning) |

**Dunning, William B.
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Box Folder

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| 7 | 3 | Photographs: including WW I destruction scenes, H. S. Dunning at war and later; Psi Omega dental fraternity, 1903; Gies, William B. Dunning, and others at Gies plaque ceremony, 1952; SDOS class of 1943; William Carr, and others |
| | 4 | Printed Matter, non-Columbia: journals, announcements, programs, bulletins, etc., 1899-1987 |
| | 5 | Printed Matter, Columbia: announcements, bulletins (primarily dental), programs, 1919-1923 |

Loose in box 7:

Yearbook, College of Dental & Oral Surgery of New York (CODOS), 1919

Groundbreaking Program, Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, 1925

In the Afternoon, poems by William Dunning, 1954 (inscribed by James M. Dunning to Allan Formicola, Dean, Columbia University School of Dental & Oral Surgery)

Watercolor sketch by W. B. Dunning

Box 8

Dental mirror, c. 1860s, silver, glass and mother-of-pearl, belonging to Edwin James Dunning (1821-1901), William B. Dunning's grandfather, and a dentist in Syracuse and New York City.

Box of dental supplies: gold foil; sea grass; artificial (?) teeth; also includes small dental instruments.

Box 9

Set of teeth models, upper and lower

Telephone piece and shrapnel, mounted on wood; according to an attached note they were found by Henry S. Dunning in Dunkirk during World War II

Silver box with an engraved inscription to Henry S. Dunning from staff of Vanderbilt Clinic on the inside lid, 1925

Folding knife with ivory handle engraved "H.W.C." "1918"

Box 10

Porcelain staining kit

A large hand bell has been removed to general artifact collection