

## **Archives Prove Dental Students Actually Had Some Fun in the Past**

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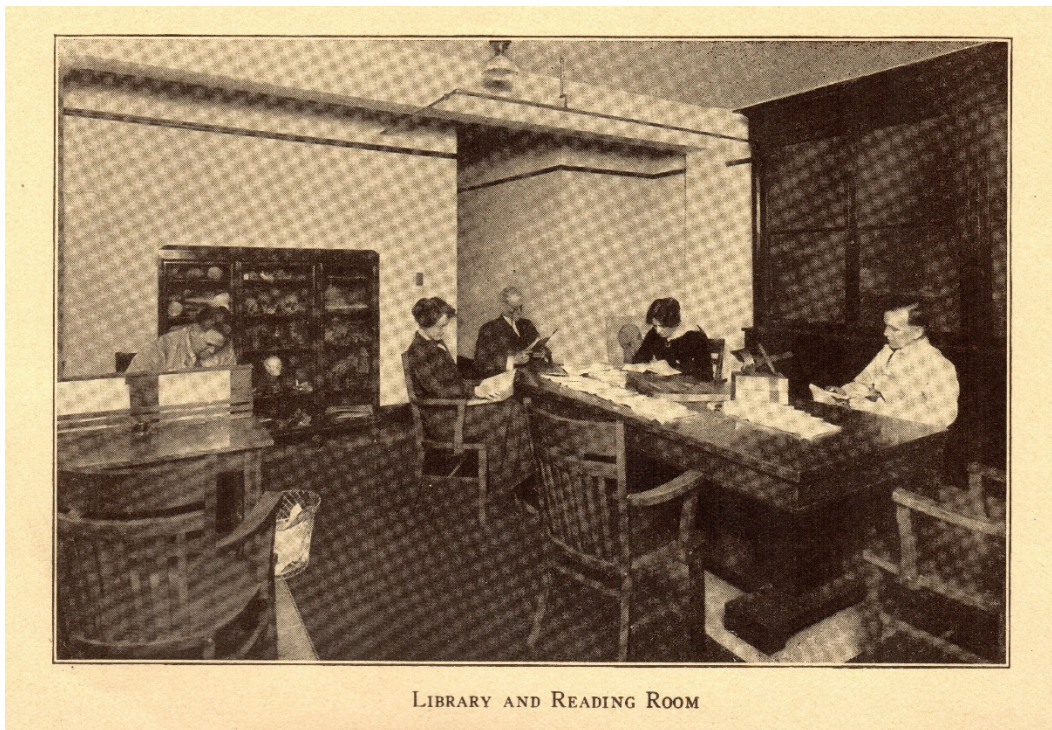
Indiana University School of Dentistry

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We all have libraries full of interesting, and in some cases weird, stuff. It also seems that the older they get the more interesting stuff we find. The IU Dentistry Library is no exception. In fact, due to its age and focus, it is chock full of strange and fascinating stuff hidden away in our archives, special collections, basements, and boxes.

The Indiana Dental College (IDC) opened in 1879. The library opened in 1881, primarily to serve IDC faculty and staff, becoming a more traditional library open to students in 1914. The IDC was purchased by Indiana University in 1925 for \$35,000. Today the library primarily serves IU School of Dentistry (IUSD) students, staff, and faculty but also support oral health professionals and researchers throughout Indiana and the world. It's one of only about five independent dentistry libraries left in North America and likely the oldest.



*The Indiana Dental College Library in 1914.*

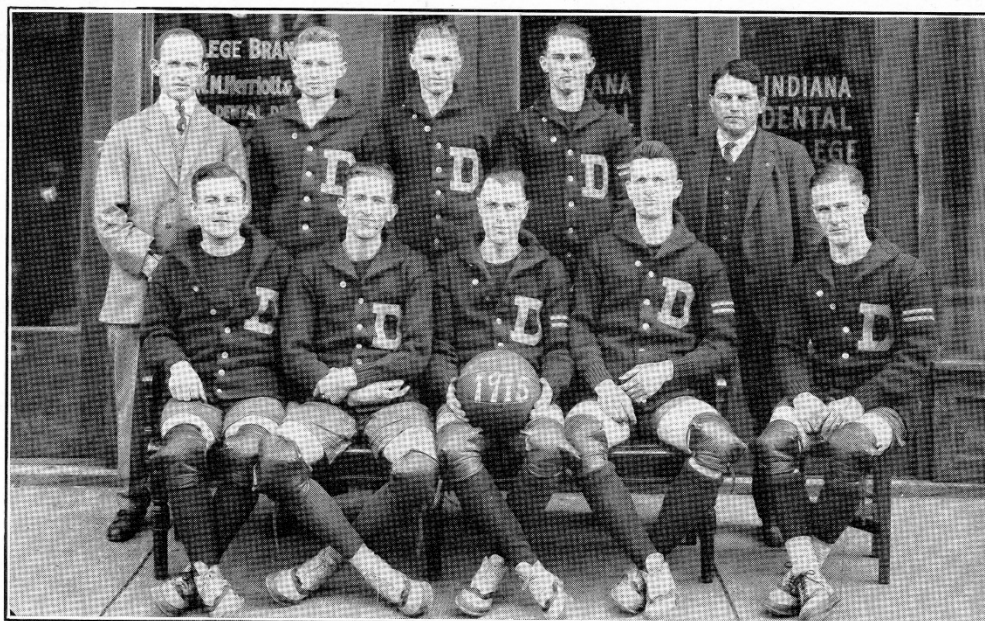
While the school has an almost 140 year history of training dentists and oral health professionals, today we're focusing on the lighter side of life as a student at the dental school. Fraternities, clubs, events, and sports play an important role in the lives of dental students and this was particularly true in the early days. Keep in mind that it wasn't until 1909 that dental school required four years of high school (or an examination to prove equivalent knowledge) so the average student was a bit younger than those of today. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the IDC had societies and clubs like the Shrine Club and

Sojourners. IUSD even had an art club that lasted from the 1960s into the 1970s that hosted several exhibitions of student work.



Today, IUSD gives a strong yearly showing in the IUPUI Regatta, but sports were a greater focus in the early days of the school. In 1910, a football team was started at the IDC, although it didn't seem to last more than a year. Other sports were part of the regular life of students. A 1918 yearbook mentions a \$2.50 fee for tennis. Not surprisingly for a school in Indiana, the most enduring sport was the official IDC basketball team. From 1914 into the 1920s, the sadly unimaginatively named "Dents" (technically the "Dentals" because apparently five letters fit somewhere while seven didn't) played teams from all over Indiana and did pretty well. It should be noted that the 1914-15 curriculum for first year dental students went from 8:30AM-9:00PM, six days a week. One can only assume that students had super-human energy.





BASKET BALL SQUAD 1914-1915

*Indiana Dental College Basketball Team, the "Dents," 1914-1915.*

The most interesting discovery from the archives was the surprising fact that every basketball game was accompanied by a twenty-two piece, all-student band, the much more imaginatively named "Tooth Pullers." One can only hope that they dressed as they did in the picture for every performance. Does a band dressed like dentists (or dentists acting like a band) give a certain psychological advantage to a team? To put things into perspective, the total student body at IDC in 1915 was around 200 (dental school was three years at that time). There were thirteen on the basketball team and twenty-two in the band, so, about seventeen percent of the students were directly involved despite being in a grueling academic program. That's some pretty impressive school spirit . . . or perhaps just a desperate need for fun.



*Indiana Dental College Student Band, the "Tooth Pullers," 1921.*