

Dentist, 80, Still Going Strong

Dr. McGill Runs Own Lab

By PAT ROBERTSON
Piedmont Bureau

HICKORY GROVE — Dr. Walter Frank McGill has not learned how to slow down.

The 80-year-old dentist is still running his own dental laboratory here, which means he has logged 56 years practicing dentistry and making dentures.

He no longer does what he calls "chairwork," but he has more than made up for that with other activities.

Born Friday the 13th in November of 1885, Dr. McGill believes his life has been fruitful in spite of his birthdate and because he has kept busy.

Four years ago he was named president of the Hickory Grove Development Corp. which has been active in bringing new industry to this little western York County town.

Just last week, the doctor traveled 25 miles to Chester to attend a meeting of 5th Congressional District election officials.

He cooks the material for his dentures on a little one

burner hotplate in his laboratory and inserts the teeth and makes molds on the top of an old converted sewing machine. His workshop is filled with hundreds of teeth he uses in the dentures he makes.

A master at his profession, he has customers from both Carolinas. He's even made some partial dentures for himself.

Dr. McGill was mayor of Hickory Grove for three terms, and though he is no longer a candidate, he still is active in political affairs. He is an election official in Hickory Grove. Several years ago, the York County Democratic Club presented him with a pin certifying 50 continuous years of service.

As Dr. McGill turns the volume up on his hearing aid, he comments that he doesn't like to fool with it.

His comment on life: "My only trouble is, they work me too hard."

Dr. McGill graduated from Atlanta dental college, now Emory University in 1910

with the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery.

"I spent all my money going to school," he said, "so I came home to Hickory Grove to make some more before going out in the world."

Business for the new dentist was good. He never left his home.

He met a home town girl and married her in 1911. Their only child was born in 1912, but died a year later.

His home has for many years been the scene of bursting color with the blooming of azaleas, camellias and other flowers he and his wife have planted and tended.

In back of the McGill's spacious two-story house is a small vegetable garden which he works himself. He used a small rotary tiller this spring to break ground for the new crop. When Dr. McGill began his practice in the early part of the century, he had a foot pump drill.

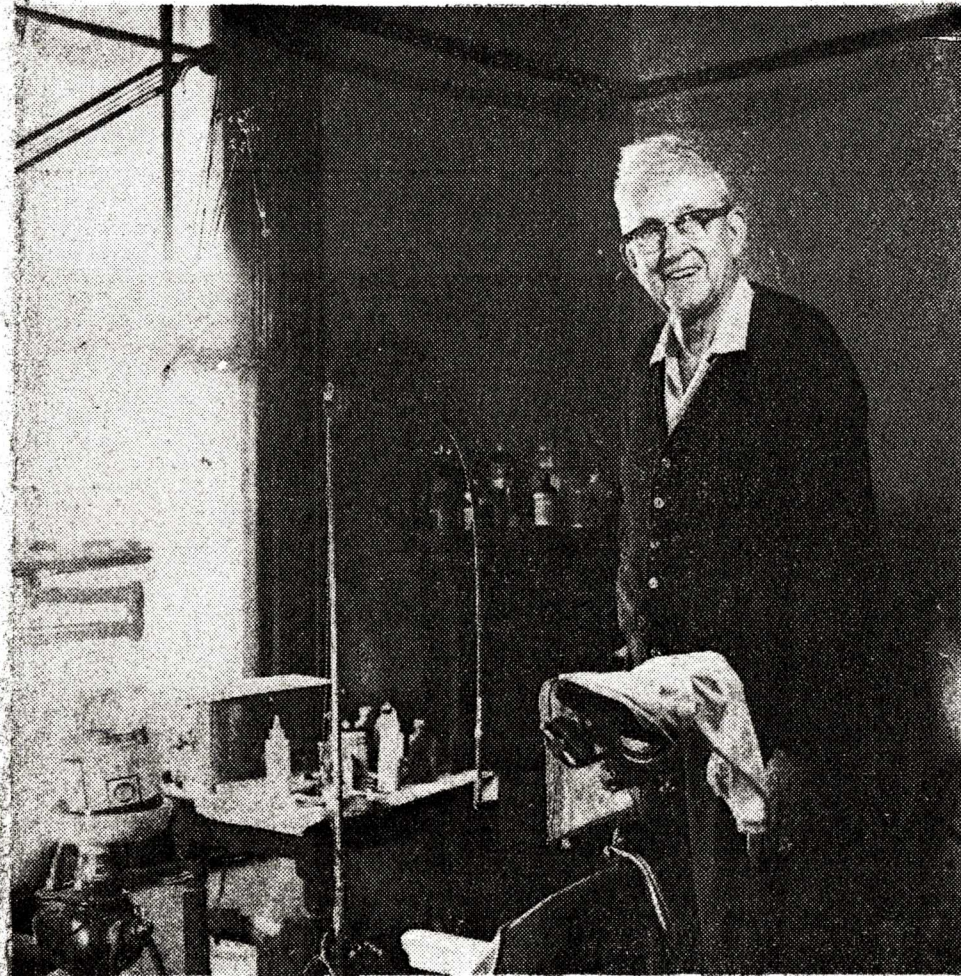
"I have pumped that thing many a day, all day long," he observed. It still stands in the corner of his laboratory, a memento of his life's work.

His "new" dental engine is an electrical apparatus about 30 years old.

He has limited his practice now to the making of dentures and orthodontic work for children's teeth. "When I first started out I tried patronizing some other laboratories for dentures, but I quit that when I found I could

make them better," he said.

When he started out, he charged 50 cents for an extraction and one dollar for a filling. In those days he used cocaine as a pain killer while working on a patient.



Keeping Busy Staying Young

He used to operate two offices, one in Sharon and the other in Hickory Grove, but neither had running water. When he moved into his home on Peachtree Street in 1920, he installed his offices upstairs and put in water.

Dr. McGill is nowhere near retiring from any activities.

Soon he will be a delegate to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church Synod at Bonclarken in Flat Rock, N. C. "I'll drive myself up, of course," he said.

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