



“WITHOUT DRUGS OR KNIVES”

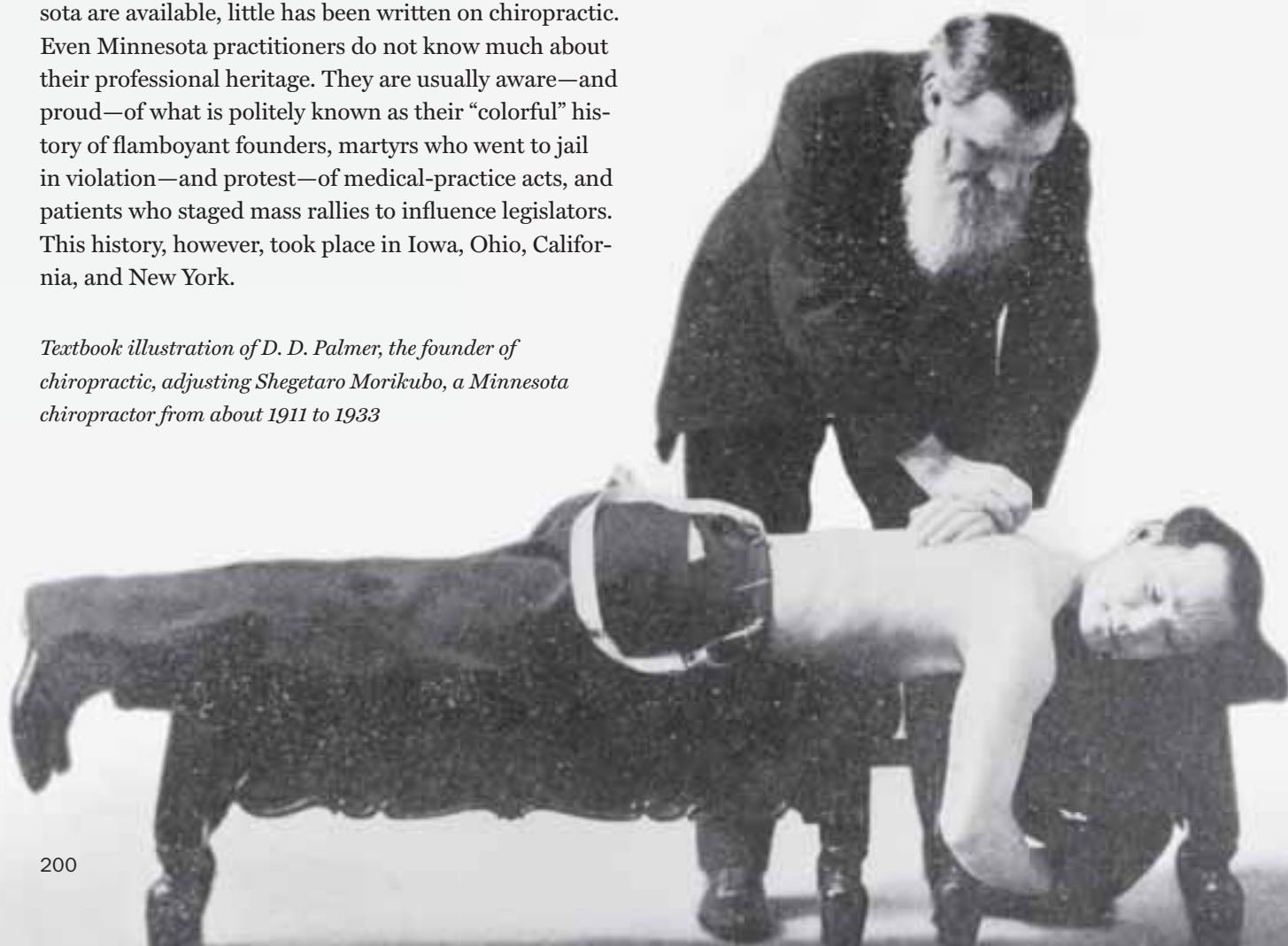
The Early Years of Chiropractic

SUSAN SMITH-CUNNIEN

Chiropractic, a new healing method in an era characterized by numerous treatment alternatives, was “discovered” by an Iowa healer in 1895. Chiropractors arrived in Minnesota a few years later, setting up practices and schools in large cities and small towns throughout the state. While several good histories of medicine in Minnesota are available, little has been written on chiropractic. Even Minnesota practitioners do not know much about their professional heritage. They are usually aware—and proud—of what is politely known as their “colorful” history of flamboyant founders, martyrs who went to jail in violation—and protest—of medical-practice acts, and patients who staged mass rallies to influence legislators. This history, however, took place in Iowa, Ohio, California, and New York.

What happened in Minnesota? In many ways, simply a story of healers trying to alleviate suffering, second-generation immigrants seeking better lives for their families, and professional leaders pushing for higher educational standards and ethical responsibility. It is

Textbook illustration of D. D. Palmer, the founder of chiropractic, adjusting Shegetaro Morikubo, a Minnesota chiropractor from about 1911 to 1933



the story of a profession that grew quickly in its first decades as it struggled for legal recognition and then suffered enormous setbacks with legislative changes and two world wars, only to thrive again with the return of the G.I.s and prosperity after World War II. While other healing arts disappeared or were absorbed into regular medicine by the mid-twentieth century, chiropractic survived as an independent profession. The struggles and successes of Minnesota practitioners mirror those of chiropractors across the country.

A SICK PERSON SEEKING A CURE AT THE TURN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY FACED AN AMAZINGLY VARIED SET OF OPTIONS. What was then called allopathic or regular medicine was not yet established as the primary treatment of choice; indeed, many adults remembered the days when regular medicine offered painful bloodletting, emetics, purgatives, blistering, and surgery without many options for anesthesia and with frequent infections.

While allopathic medicine was advancing rapidly in some areas, antibiotics and other effective treatments were decades from discovery. Medical doctors provided little help for the everyday aches and pains that plagued hard-working physical laborers, the idle wealthy, and everyone in between. A look at any city newspaper from this era will illustrate the many different healers offering to cure illnesses of every type, including some we no longer recognize. The treatments available for all these nervous troubles, blood weaknesses, backaches, and male and female problems included a huge selection of patent medicines for self-care, healers providing water cures, vapor cures, magnetic therapy, electro-magnetic therapy, suggestive therapeutics, massage, osteopathy, and homeopathy, as well as regular medicine. A peek at the directories of Minnesota's largest cities reveals listings for all of these healers; indeed, under "Physicians," practitioners were often designated "R" for regular (M.D.s), "H" for homeopathic, "E" for eclectic, or "N" for naturopathic or neuropathic.¹

Chiropractic entered this varied medical arena in 1895. "Discovered" in Davenport, Iowa, by magnetic healer Daniel David Palmer, chiropractic spread quickly

throughout the midwestern states and to the east and west coasts. What were these healers offering? Spinal manipulation, for the most part. D. D. Palmer theorized

MARVELOUS CURES
IN ST. PAUL
BY THESE TWO DOCTORS,
Have Startled the Medical Profession
THERE IS NO BETTER PROOF THAN
WHAT THE PEOPLE SAY.

Dr. F. E. Elvidge.
Total Paralysis Cured.

Dr. M. H. Elvidge.
Remarkable Case of Central Debility Conquered.

WALTER ANDERSON.
At St. Paul, Minn., Aug 1, 1904
 I have been suffering from a severe case of neuralgia for several years, and have tried every remedy known to me, but without success. I was advised to see Dr. Elvidge, and after a few treatments I was completely cured. I feel as well as ever, and am able to do my usual work.

Colera, Deafness and Female Troubles Disappear.

MRS. ANNA PETERSON.
At St. Paul, Minn., Sept 1, 1904
 I have been suffering from colera, deafness, and female troubles for several years, and have tried every remedy known to me, but without success. I was advised to see Dr. Elvidge, and after a few treatments I was completely cured. I feel as well as ever, and am able to do my usual work.

LEONARD ALLEN CURED.

H. A. STONE.
At St. Paul, Minn., Aug 1, 1904
 I have been suffering from a severe case of neuralgia for several years, and have tried every remedy known to me, but without success. I was advised to see Dr. Elvidge, and after a few treatments I was completely cured. I feel as well as ever, and am able to do my usual work.

THIS SPINE NEEDS FIXING, SO DOES YOURS.

YOUR SPINE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE CROOKED; IT DOES NOT HAVE TO HURT TO BE THE CAUSE OF DISEASE. THE PRESSURE OF ONE JOINT OF THE SPINE ON A NERVE WILL CAUSE DISEASE AT THE END OF THAT NERVE.

THIS IS NOTHING LIKE OSTEOPATHY.

DRS. ELVIDGE

TREATMENT OF THE SPINE REMOVES THE CAUSE OF DISEASE
 Chiropractic Institute and College, Second Floor, **St. Paul, Minn.**
 WE CURE AND TEACH OTHERS TO CURE.

Dr. Smith-Cunnien teaches sociology and criminal justice at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul.

Testimonial ad, St. Paul Dispatch, September 27, 1904

that misaligned vertebrae impinged on the spinal nerves, causing illness. Once the spine was adjusted, the innate energy of the body could flow unimpeded through the nerves and allow the body to heal itself.²

D. D. Palmer and his son B. J. insisted that chiropractic healing be limited to manipulating the spine by hand. Some practitioners, however, saw this as only one of a wide number of useful treatments; others preferred to employ a few adjunct therapies (such as heat or electrical stimulation) before or after performing chiropractic adjustments. This might seem like a minor difference, but the clash between the so-called “straight” and “mixer” chiropractors turned out to be one of the defining characteristics of the profession in its early years.

Situated so close to Iowa, the “Fountain Head” of chiropractic, Minnesota soon saw its first practitioners. Advertising “Chiropractic Cure,” Julia C. Bowman opened an office in 1899 at 503½ Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis. Bowman was one of the original seven graduates of the Palmer Chiropractic School and Cure in Davenport, the nation’s first such school. Also practicing and teaching in Minneapolis in 1899 was Uriah D. Thomas, who claimed chiropractic as well as medical and neuropathic degrees. (He was not a Palmer graduate.) Thomas had been practicing in Minneapolis as an eclectic and magnetic physician since 1893. In 1899 he also became vice-president of the National School of Neuropathy and Psycho-Magnetic Healing near Nicollet Avenue and East Seventeenth Street, a school that taught the fundamentals of “chiropractic” along with osteopathy, massage, Swedish movement therapy, hypnotism, hydrotherapy, hygiene, and the psychic and mental sciences. By the following year, Thomas had started his own school, the Hygeia Institute of Psycho-Therapeutics, nearby on East Fourteenth Street, where he continued to teach chiropractic along with other therapies.³

The number of chiropractors slowly increased during the first years of the century, bolstered both by Minnesotans who sought out chiropractic training and by chiropractors who moved to the state. About half of these first practitioners were women, and many had some



*Julia C. Bowman,
one of Minnesota’s first
chiropractors*

previous health-related experience. Emma Brodie, for example, who began her St. Paul practice in 1905, had been a midwife for many years, as had Minneapolitans Selma C. Doeltz and Minnie Oas, both 1905 Palmer graduates. George S. Churchill was a druggist before starting his Minneapolis practice in 1905. Minerva N. Towne was a magnetic healer in Minneapolis before becoming a chiropractor in 1906. Other new chiropractors had previously worked with physical needs in other ways. Nicholas H. Gilsdorf and Carl G. Klose, for example, were barbers before they started their own chiropractic school in St. Paul in 1905, and Sarah L. Rose had worked at baths in Minneapolis before practicing chiropractic in 1906. Still others had previously held jobs as diverse as clerks, printers, and chefs.⁴

Like other healers—and the state’s population—most chiropractors were located in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth. However, shortly after the turn of the century, chiropractors set up shop in many smaller communities throughout the state: D. Mahoney in Owatonna, the Welches in Little Falls, Edward W. Lynch in Brainerd, and Foster and Weimer in Winona. There is no way to know how many chiropractors were active in Minnesota in the early 1900s, as there was no united professional association and chiropractic was not yet regulated by the state. A tally of directory listings shows at least 58 chiropractors in 1905; a published notice indicates (improbably) as many as 250. A 1918 “Official Roster of All Minnesota Members of the Profession” lists 186 chiropractors in more than 80 cities and towns.⁵



Teachers (seated, from left) B. J. Palmer and D. D. Palmer and early graduates of their school, including Minnesota doctors (standing, from left) Minnie Oas (third), Garfield B. Danelz (sixth), and Selma C. Doeltz (seventh).

IN THE EARLY 1900s, CHIROPRACTORS—LIKE OTHER HEALERS—TOOK ADVANTAGE OF POPULAR FEARS ABOUT SUBMITTING TO SURGERY AND USING MEDICATIONS. In such a new field, they depended upon advertisements to build a clientele, and their advertisements frequently touted the advantages of their method. In 1904, for example, Drs. F. E. and M. H. Elvidge of the Chiropractic Institute and College at Sixth and Cedar Streets in St. Paul offered, “For two days we will treat the sick and diseased FREE! If you suffer from any chronic disease that medicine has failed to relieve come and see us. No nauseous drugs or gleaming knives. We work entirely on the backbone, and make miraculous cures, some instantaneously.” A similarly straightforward ad by P. V. Offermann in St. Paul’s New York Life building read: “Sick folks come to me; I cure asthma; I use no drugs; I use no knife.”⁶

Since most people were not familiar with chiropractic, many early advertisements provided explanations of “this new science.” Promises of free consultations or “no cure, no pay” policies were commonplace. For example, Dr. A. V. Cedarholm, practicing in the First National Bank Block in Fergus Falls in 1904, advertised that he “locates the cause of the disease and removes the same allowing nature to restore the broken down tissues. Consultation free. Money refunded if no cure.”⁷

In the first decade of the century there were frequent bold claims that chiropractic could cure all manner of illnesses, from appendicitis to hearing disorders. Early in his career, Dr. William H. Konkler of Duluth claimed to cure “chronic cases of long standing; such as Rheumatism, Sciatica, Lumbago, Weak and Aching Backs, Paralysis, Constipation, Kidney Diseases, Nervous Debility, Spinal Meningitis, Asthma, Insomnia, Appendicitis, Goiter, Stomach and Liver Troubles.”⁸

Some practitioners even sought out patients who seemed incurable. Dr. Mahoney, who had offices over the Blettner and Lerach Grocery on North Cedar St. in Owatonna, wrote in 1904: “I wish to appeal to those who have tried all methods of treatment and feel so discouraged as to consider themselves incurable. Cures of the so-called incurable cases often follow scientific Chiropractic adjustment therefore you should try it.” That same year, Dr. Offermann in St. Paul advertised: “I make it possible for nature to cure all diseases without drugs or knife. This means your disease. When others fail come to me. . . . don’t give up. I will guarantee a cure. . . . Remember that curing disease after all others have failed is my specialty.” But not all practitioners were so bold. Dr. Alexander Gra-



Here are some of the keys on which I play in removing pressure from pinched nerves, thereby allowing nature to cure disease.

Don't Drug Yourself To Death

I make it possible for nature to cure all diseases, without drugs or knife. This means your disease. When others fail come to me. I do not ask you to come to me first, if you believe others can cure you. Should they fail, don't give up. I will guarantee a cure. It is better to come late than not at all. Remember that curing disease after all others have failed is my specialty. Consultation free. Call or write for booklet.

Office hours, 10 a. m. to 12 m., 1:30 to 5:30 p. m.

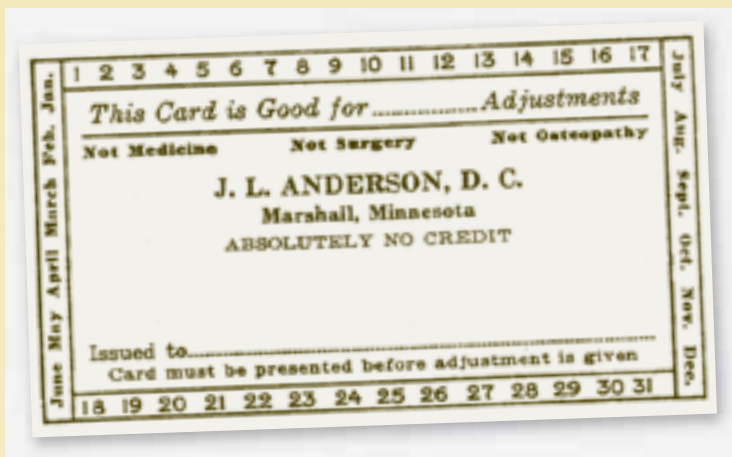
DR. P. V. OFFERMANN, C. D.;
216-17-18 New York Life Bldg., St. Paul.

“It is better to come late than not at all”;
St. Paul Dispatch, August 27, 1904

ham of Duluth, for example, advertised that he did not accept patients with incurable diseases.⁹

Claims of curing with a single treatment became increasingly rare in the decades that followed, when care was much more likely to be ongoing. By the 1920s the

profession had adopted a preventative stance, encouraging patients to visit regularly in order to keep their spine in alignment and thus avoid developing health problems. Some practitioners adopted a punch-ticket system; patients paid in advance for a certain number of adjustments. Others offered package deals: a flat fee that would cover a number of adjustments or, less common, a given period. Over time, these arrangements were frowned upon as unprofessional, and by the 1940s they were rare.



Prepaid punch ticket from a Marshall practice

MANY CHIROPRACTORS BEGAN TO TEACH OTHERS SHORTLY AFTER LEARNING THE PRACTICE THEMSELVES, OFTENTIMES TAKING A FEW STUDENTS INTO THEIR OFFICE. The Welches in Little Falls, for example, were reportedly offering a two-to-four week course for \$500 in 1904. Almost all of the practitioners who advertised in Minneapolis and St. Paul in 1904 and 1905 would teach patients as well as treat them. “I will take a few students at \$100,” said A. McCarthey. “If interested in learning this beneficial and profitable profession, call or write Dr. H. H. Poole,” declared another. An advertisement for the Northwestern Institute of Chiropractic Science and Healing likewise enticed prospective students: “We prepare you for a profession which is up-to-date, prosperous, and successful.” This style of teaching seems to have been so common that a chiropractic newsletter published in Ashby, Minnesota, advertised: “When your students are done with their course they want diplomas.”¹⁰

And this was a big complaint of the Palmers, who accused Minnesota of being home to too many improperly trained chiropractors. For example, B. J. Palmer wrote of meeting with 26 chiropractors in St. Paul in 1905. While the training of all but one could be traced back to the

Palmer school, “They had received instruction anywhere from third handed to the twelfth.”¹¹

Many of the very early chiropractors appear to have practiced for only a short time. John I. Silbert of St. Paul, for example, was born in Germany in 1854 and worked as a cook and chef before embarking on a chiropractic career in 1905. By the following year, he had returned to cooking.¹² It is not known why Silbert—like many others at this time—abandoned chiropractic, although it is likely that he could not develop a patient base. One can surmise that the training methods produced doctors with a variety of skill levels, and this relatively young, unfamiliar healing practice could not support the rapid growth of enthusiastic new practitioners.

Still, some early chiropractors did develop successful, long-lasting practices. Daniel W. Riesland of Duluth learned chiropractic in 1901 from a new graduate of the Palmer school and practiced until he was debilitated by a stroke several years before his death in 1931. William Konkler, who opened his office in Duluth in 1904, practiced for 60 years. Shegetaro Morikubo began in Wisconsin in 1907 and then worked in Minnesota for more than 20 years until his death in 1933. A long-term career was much more the norm for chiropractors who started during the 1910s. Emory A. Martner, for example, graduated in 1915 from a Minneapolis chiropractic school. Best known for his long tenure as secretary of the Minnesota Board of Chiropractic Examiners, he also maintained a practice in Minneapolis until his death in 1961.¹³

WHILE CHIROPRACTIC HEALING WAS BECOMING ESTABLISHED, REGULAR PHYSICIANS NATIONWIDE ARGUED THAT IT HAD NO SCIENTIFIC BASIS. They also complained about the inadequate qualifications of its practitioners. In Minnesota, however, there was little active opposition in the early 1900s. While the state’s regular physicians tended to see chiropractic as a medical fraud, they generally did not participate in legislative or public activities against it. Some doctors feared that opposing other healers might invite criticism for acting in their own self-interest; others believed activism of any type was undignified. Still others firmly believed that all erroneous healing arts would inevitably fall by the wayside. As one St. Paul physician opined, it was no longer necessary to worry about alternatives because “We live in the full sunlight of proven truth.” When H. M. Bracken, secretary of the State Board of Health, received a complaint

LEARN CHIROPRACTIC

**Dr. Riesland's Grand Offer for
the Benefit of Suffering
Humanity !**

Dr. D. W. Riesland, the oldest and most reliable Chiropractor in the State, who has recently returned from a trip to the Senate and House of Representatives, where he demonstrated to the members the marvelous results of his science, makes the following grand offer:

From now until the first of June I will teach Chiropractic to any conscientious man or woman for one-half the fee charged by any competent and qualified Chiropractic the world over.

Dr. Riesland was selected by the International Association of Chiropractors as the only one capable of demonstrating this marvelous science to the members of both houses of the legislature.

He is the dean of the profession in Minnesota, and without question is better qualified to teach chiropractic thoroughly than any other chiropractor in the state.

From now until June 1, he will teach chiropractic at half the regular rate charged everywhere. It is the chance of a lifetime.

If interested, call or write the doctor at his offices—

707-S-9-10 PALLADIO BUILDING, DULUTH, MINNESOTA.



Duluth chiropractor Daniel W. Riesland, whose "remarkable cures of chronic diseases have astonished, not alone the layman, but the entire medical world"; Duluth Evening Herald, April 25, 1908. ABOVE: Duluth Evening Herald, May 13, 1905

regarding chiropractors in Little Falls in 1904, he replied that the board did not police this type of fraud. If people were foolish enough to spend their money on such practitioners, that was their problem. Some observers noted that it would be difficult to get a jury of Minnesotans to believe that spinal manipulation—so similar to Swedish massage—was the practice of medicine. A systematic search of records in several Minnesota counties turned up no cases of chiropractors being prosecuted for practicing medicine without a license in these early years.¹⁴

IN 1905, HOWEVER, MINNESOTA BECAME THE FIRST STATE TO TRY TO REGULATE CHIROPRACTIC. Laws pertaining to the practice of medicine—specifying who could heal the sick in exchange for payment—had been in place since territorial days. The State Board of Medical Examiners, created in 1883, was authorized to determine who could practice

and use the title "M.D." In 1901 Minnesota passed the country's first law regulating the practice of optometry. Osteopathy, a healing art introduced in 1875, secured its own licensing law and board of examiners in 1903.¹⁵

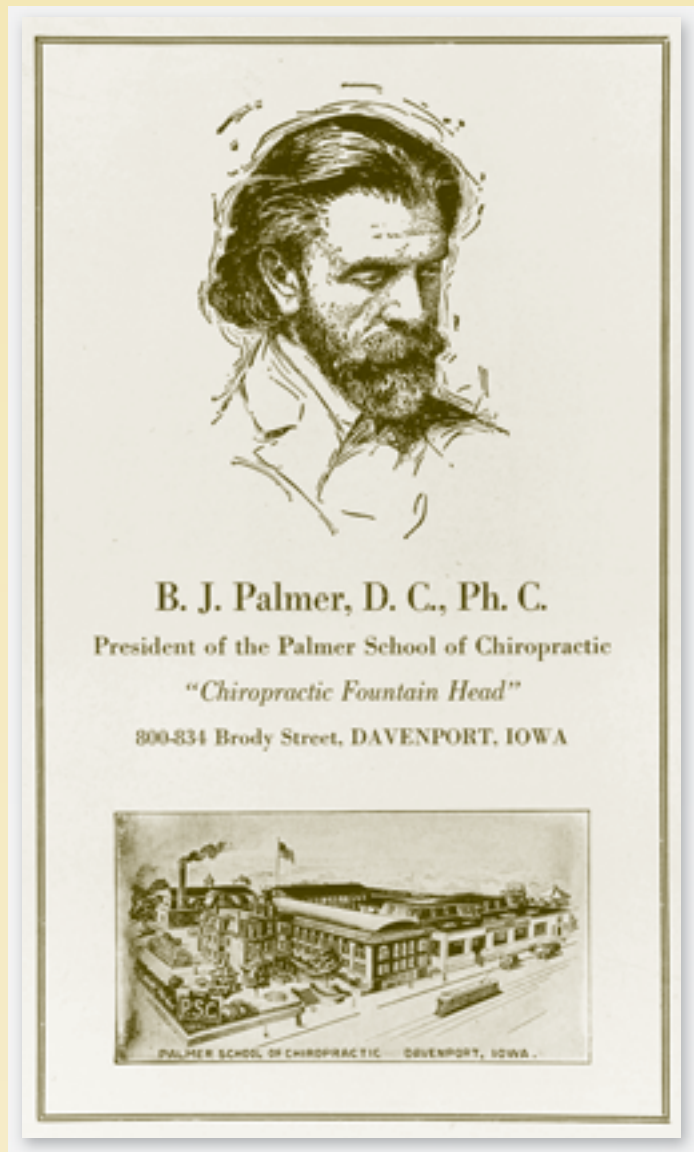
Minnesota chiropractors sought a regulatory law for two reasons. First, legal recognition would protect them from being accused of practicing medicine, a charge they vehemently denied on the grounds that chiropractic was in no way a form of "medicine." Second, such a law would specify the requirements to practice in Minnesota; a Board of Chiropractic Examiners would be authorized to ensure that those professing to be chiropractors were indeed capable practitioners.¹⁶

Typically, when legislation affecting a profession is pending, professional associations will attempt to influence its direction. As in many states, Minnesota had at least two chiropractic associations through the 1930s. The groups changed often depending on whether members supported or opposed the Palmers. While there is little information on these early associations, it is likely that their members were active in the 1905 legislative efforts.

Not all chiropractors were sure that legal regulation was a good route to pursue, however. The Palmers opposed the Minnesota legislation, arguing that if chiropractors limited themselves to noninvasive manipulation of the spine by hand—"straight" chiropractic—they could not be held in violation of medical-practice laws. But they also opposed the bill's requirement that licensed chiropractors complete "four full courses of five months each in personal attendance, at a school or college of chiropractic." This stipulation would prevent graduates of the Palmer school, which offered a much shorter course, from being licensed in Minnesota.¹⁷

At first, it seemed as if the bill would sail through the legislature. Indeed, there was little opposition in either the House or the Senate, but Governor John A. Johnson vetoed the legislation on April 11.¹⁸

A great deal of behind-the-scenes activity led to this veto. The Palmers accused Duluth chiropractor Daniel Riesland, a primary supporter of the legislation, of various ruses meant to undercut their opposition. D. D. Palmer apparently wrote to each legislator on March 7, 1905, encouraging all to oppose the bill for a variety of reasons, including his belief that the proposed board of examiners would abuse its regulatory power. When the bill passed less than two weeks later, Palmer nemesis Solon Langworthy, another Iowa chiropractor, sarcastically opined that this showed "just how much influence this long, windy epistle had." Both Palmers then visited Governor Johnson



Ad. for the Palmer school in the 1918 annual-meeting program of the Associations of Minnesota Chiropractors

in late March and reiterated their opposition. When the governor vetoed the bill, Langworthy and the Palmers attributed the blame—or credit—to this meeting.¹⁹

One must wonder whether this were so. Explaining his veto, Johnson seemed as critical of D. D. Palmer's lack of formal medical education as he was of Minnesota chiropractors' training. His denigration of the previous occupations of the chiropractors who would serve on the board echoed medical doctors' critiques. His statement on safeguarding the health of the public mirrored comments by many in the medical profession.²⁰ These factors, coupled with his suggestion that all practitioners go before the State Board of Medical Examiners, suggest that Johnson was influenced more by medical practitioners than by the Palmers.

Efforts to secure legislation did not stop after this setback. At least one licensing bill was offered at each legislative session until a chiropractic bill finally passed in 1919. Sometime during that session, Minnesota's two chiropractic professional associations joined forces, forming the Association of Minnesota Chiropractors, presumably to help secure the law. The alliance may have helped; Governor J. A. A. Burnquist signed the bill into law on March 13, 1919. Four other states also passed chiropractic legislation in 1919, making for a total of 14 states with such laws.²¹

MINNESOTA'S NEW LAW DEFINED CHIROPRACTIC AS "THE SCIENCE OF ADJUSTING ANY ABNORMAL ARTICULATIONS OF THE HUMAN BODY, especially those of the spinal column, for the purpose of giving freedom of action to impinged nerves that may cause pain or deranged function." It created a board of five chiropractic examiners to license practitioners and oversee the profession. No two examiners could be graduates of the same school, in order to ensure balance between pro- and anti-Palmer factions.²²

The law granted a license to all chiropractors who had been practicing in Minnesota for the previous six months, provided they could supply documentation of their training and practice. All others would need a high-school diploma or equivalent and a three-year resident course in chiropractic (eight months per course) from a board-approved "resident instruction" school that taught anatomy, physiology, symptomatology, pathology, hygiene, dietetics, gynecology, diagnosis, urinalysis, chiropractic orthopedy, intellectual adaptation, and science and art of chiropractic. Candidates for licensure were required to take a written examination and perform a practical demonstration.

Anyone violating the new law would be guilty of a misdemeanor. The board of examiners was authorized to revoke a license if it had been secured by fraud or if the chiropractor was practicing under a false or assumed name, had been convicted of a crime of moral turpitude, or was guilty of "habitual intemperance" in the use of alcohol or drugs.

The 1919 law accelerated some educational changes already in process. Chiropractic schools had already replaced, for the most part, the method of training with a practitioner for a few weeks (common until about 1905) or months (from roughly 1905 to 1915). These institutions were quite small and typically short-lived. From

roughly 1900 to 1910 Minnesota was home to at least ten chiropractic or “drugless-practice” schools that taught chiropractic. Based on number of graduates and longevity, the two major schools in the 1910s were the St. Paul College of Chiropractic and the Minnesota Chiropractic College in Minneapolis. Others in the 1910s and 1920s included the Hewitt Academy of Healing Science in St. Paul and the Midwest College of Chiropractic, the Lincoln College of Chiropractic (with which the Ortho-Chiropractic College had merged), and the Carroll School of Chiropractic, all in Minneapolis.²³

All of these institutions were proprietary schools: privately held, for-profit operations. Regular medicine, through the efforts of the American Medical Association,

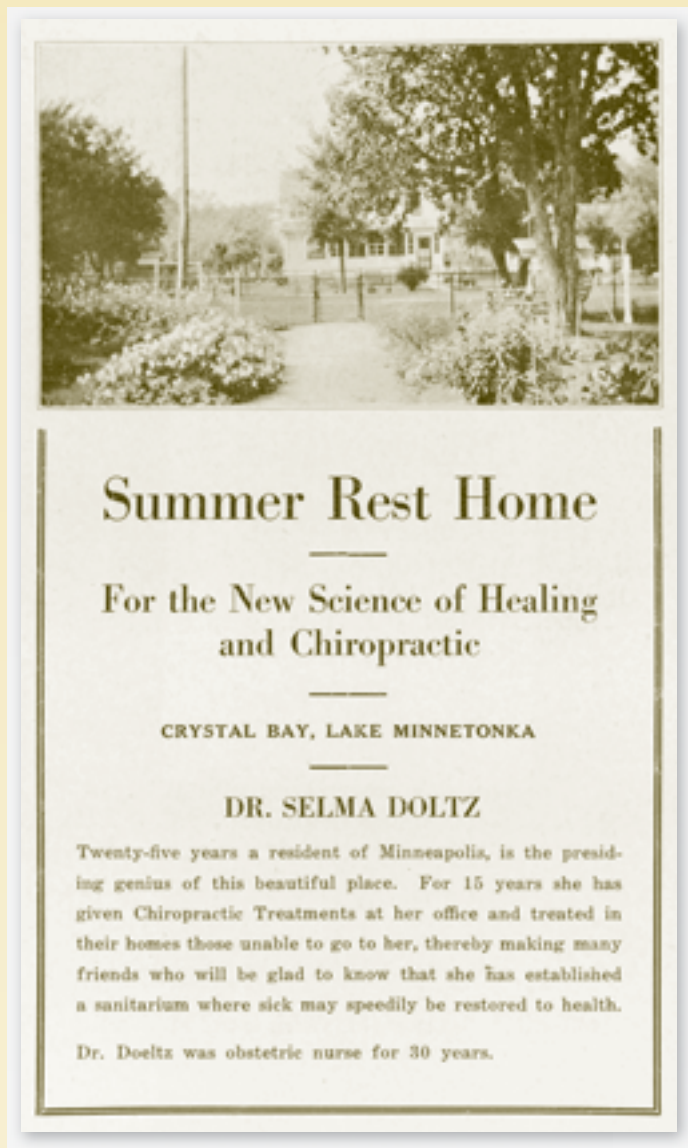
had outlawed this type of school in 1910. While the federal government and private foundations provided financial support for reform in medical education, chiropractic did not receive such aid. Its schools, which did not generally draw students from wealthy families, remained privately owned for decades to come. Needing to keep costs to a minimum, many schools seemed constantly to be in a precarious financial position.²⁴

The law’s requirement of a three-year course of study represented an increase in the standard training at many chiropractic schools, including most in Minnesota. (In contrast, the medical department of the state university—now the University of Minnesota medical school—had since 1900 required four years of eight-month sessions.) At this point, chiropractic curriculum was not standardized in either content or length. Schools like Universal Chiropractic College in Pittsburgh adopted a four-year course of eight months as early as 1922. The Palmer School of Chiropractic—still the largest in the country, with enrollments of more than 2,000 students in the early 1920s—however, awarded a degree after eight months. Even after Palmer changed to an 18-month course in 1921, its graduates still needed an additional six months of school to practice in Minnesota. While the Board of Chiropractic Examiners was a neutral entity, its members were continually at odds with Palmer and his graduates until the Iowa school adopted a four-year curriculum in 1949.²⁵

And the battle was sometimes intense. From the beginning, the Board of Chiropractic Examiners promoted increased educational standards. In March 1923 it mandated that schools require a certain total of class hours so that institutions could not offer “shortened” (30-minute) hours unless they required more classes. In 1927 the board supported a legislative amendment to raise the educational standard to four years in hopes of “placing the profession on a higher plane.”²⁶

Meanwhile, chiropractors who opposed the educational standard protested the 1919 law by practicing without a license, many of them apparently encouraged and financially supported by B. J. Palmer. These healers were often prosecuted. In 1923, for example, board secretary Wade H. Vreeland filed complaints against three such St. Paul chiropractors—Louis P. Branca, Howard W. Smart, and Bernard F. Lee. All were convicted; both Branca and Lee refused to pay the fine and instead served time in the Ramsey County workhouse.²⁷

The passage of the law did not end the legislative battles, either. Efforts to rescind or amend it were in full swing by the next session, some proposals originating



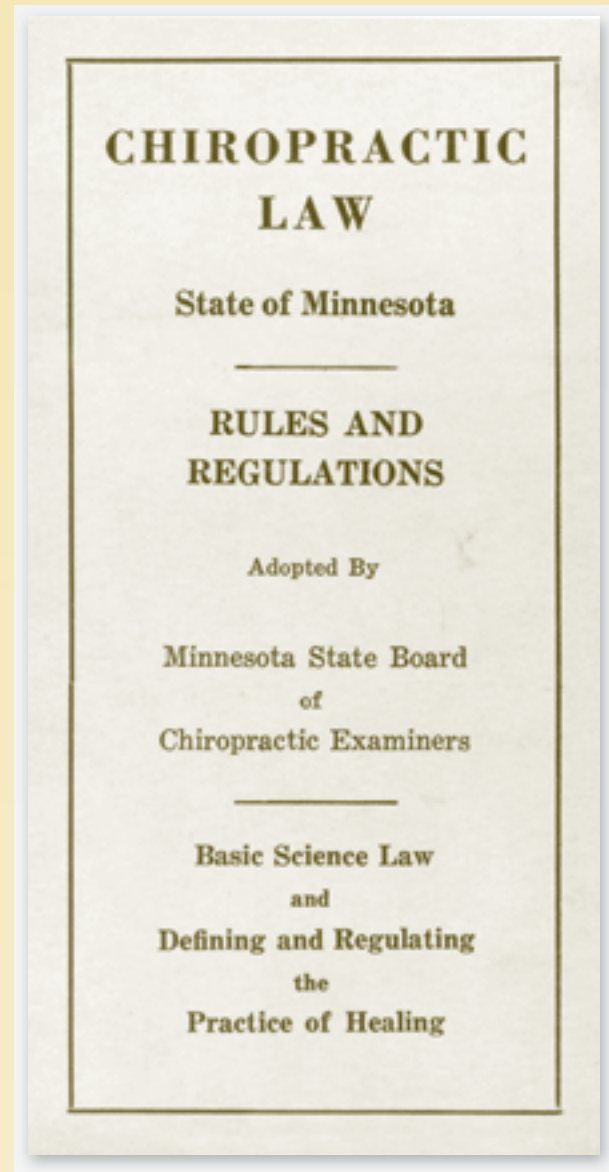
Sanitarium, 1918, established by one of Minnesota’s earliest chiropractors to extend her services beyond office and home-based treatment

with the medical profession and some spearheaded by chiropractors themselves (including Palmer allies who wished to reduce the educational requirements). The 1919 law remained unamended until 1927, however, when several minor wording changes were implemented along with two more significant alterations that went into effect in 1931: granting chiropractors the right to sign health and death certificates, and increasing educational requirements for licensure to four years.²⁸ Far more troubling to the profession, however, was another bill that passed the state legislature in 1927.

ACTIVE MEDICAL OPPOSITION TO CHIROPRACTIC IN MINNESOTA HAD INCREASED AFTER 1919, culminating in the passage of a 1927 state law that required all healers to secure a certificate in the basic sciences from the Board of Medical Examiners before they could be licensed. The law grandfathered in all existing licensed practitioners but specified that after October 1, 1927, all physicians, osteopaths, and chiropractors seeking licensure would be required to pass examinations in anatomy, physiology, pathology, bacteriology, hygiene, and, after 1931, chemistry. The legislation exempted nurses, midwives, dentists, chiropodists, Christian Scientists, and some others but specified that other systems of healing “hereafter established” would be subject to the regulation.²⁹

Physicians had first introduced basic sciences legislation in Minnesota in 1923. (An editorial that year in a state medical journal argued that the growth of chiropractic should convince medical practitioners to be active at the legislature.) The American Medical Association promoted this legislation, and eventually 23 states and the District of Columbia adopted such laws, starting with Wisconsin and Connecticut in 1925. While physicians argued that all healers needed to know the basic sciences, chiropractors and others contended that most of the subjects were not relevant to their work. Since chiropractic schools did not teach many of the required sciences, it is not surprising that most chiropractors in those first years had difficulty passing all of the examinations.³⁰

The effect was devastating. Records show a slow but persistent decline in the number of licensed chiropractors in each of the years following passage of the basic sciences law. In 1928 there were 493 registered chiropractors; by 1940 there were only 382. Between those years only 29 new chiropractic licenses were granted. The average number of licenses issued to chiropractors



between 1922 and 1927 was about 38 per year; from 1927 to 1941 this dropped to 4 per year.³¹ The small number of new licensees could not possibly balance the losses due to death, retirement, revocation, and nonrenewal, and the number of chiropractors in the state continued to shrink until after World War II.

Ultimately, the basic sciences exam was an important impetus to raising the standard of chiropractic education. Higher standards, in turn, may well have contributed to the long-term success of the profession. Furthermore, requiring chiropractors to pass the same exams as physicians may have increased their status and acceptance. Nevertheless, the years immediately following passage of the basic sciences law were difficult for the chiropractic profession. The Great Depression no doubt contributed to the decline, but many of the profession's problems began before the stock market crash. By 1929 the Min-

nesota Chiropractic College in Minneapolis was the only remaining chiropractic school in the state.³²

Likewise, the statewide professional association or associations—years of mergers, splits, and renamings make it difficult to tell—began to struggle financially during the 1930s. Apparently there was an effort to have the Minnesota American Chiropractic Association (M.A.C.A) placed in receivership for unpaid debts. The 1932 *Directory of Minnesota Chiropractors* lists only 84 members (with the admonishment “pay your dues now and be listed”) at a time when the state had 443 licensed practitioners.³³

But chiropractic survived these difficulties. As one optimist at the time wrote: “True it is that depression has made practices and incomes smaller, but Chiropractic, based on unassailable principles, and rendering an ever better service to humanity has not lost its value.” While many chiropractors and chiropractic institutions struggled financially, those who were firmly established were able to continue. Robert Ramsay, who ran the Minnesota Chiropractic College and operated his own hospital, for instance, continued to train new chiropractors, searching for ways to ensure that students would get the education needed to pass the basic sciences exam.³⁴



Robert Ramsay, lecturing on lumbo-sacroiliac strain, 1938

WORLD WAR II PROVED TO BE AN IMPORTANT TURNING POINT FOR THE PROFESSION IN MINNESOTA. Chiropractors were not usually deemed “essential” personnel by selective service boards, and many were drafted, often leaving a community without chiropractic care. Those in the military sometimes served in a health-related capacity but did not formally provide chiropractic care. Practitioners who remained stateside experienced some minor victories, such as being declared eligible for tires, but the minor setbacks of previous years continued, as well. Chiropractors were not considered qualified to be first-aid trainers and had to complete the same schooling required of any citizen who wished to serve in this capacity. Chiropractors had to fight to use x-ray equipment, which was at first available

only to medical practitioners. Injured servicemen could not receive government-funded chiropractic care.³⁵

But Minnesota chiropractors experienced many successes after World War II. The G.I. Bill was a tremendous boon, both to returning soldiers who wished to further their education and to the state’s only remaining chiropractic school, the Northwestern College of Chiropractic (today, part of the Northwestern Health Sciences University in Bloomington). Northwestern was incorporated in 1941, but the military draft soon reduced its student body to 8 pupils. John B. Wolfe, one of the school’s founders and long-time president, was himself called up from the reserves. While the school experienced ups and downs over the next two decades, the tuition paid by the returning soldiers was no doubt vital to its success.³⁶

With changes in the curriculum and the increasing numbers of students who enrolled in chiropractic school with college degrees (or at least two years of college science courses), the basic sciences exam was no longer an obstacle. Yet chiropractors continued to struggle with the medical establishment. In Minnesota, as across the nation, they were banned from hospitals, even when their patients, hospitalized for other ailments, wanted to continue chiropractic care. Nor could chiropractors order x-ray services to be provided by hospital staff to these patients. Since the American Medical Association (AMA) accredited hospitals, the medical profession closely controlled access to them. Accreditation was given only to those facilities that followed AMA rules, which limited access to physicians in good standing with the local and state medical societies—themselves affiliated with the AMA.³⁷ For years, chiropractors did not attempt to use these facilities, but by the 1930s they began to challenge the rules.

One of the best documented cases in Minnesota involved Rice Memorial Hospital in Willmar. This hospital, which still operates today, was built with the generous bequest of Cushman A. Rice, who died in 1932. Rice’s will specified, “This hospital shall be open to all persons of all creeds or sects, colors and conditions and that all Doctors licensed to practice by the state of Minnesota are to be allowed to practice in said Hospital.” However, in June 1946 chiropractor Herman Ahrenholz’s request to use the x-ray facilities for a patient was denied. Ahrenholz brought the matter to the Board of Chiropractic Examiners and the Minnesota Chiropractic Association (MCA), and the MCA decided to pursue it.³⁸

In March 1947 Ahrenholz and A. J. Schneider, an osteopath, filed a complaint on behalf of themselves and all chiropractic and osteopathic practitioners, and the sword

of justice began to hack its way through this thorny case. It finally came to trial on December 8, 1948, in what the local newspaper described as a “bitterly fought legal battle.” B. J. Branton, a Willmar physician and surgeon and past president of the Minnesota Medical Association, testified about AMA requirements for accreditation. Glen Taylor of Minneapolis, executive secretary of the Minnesota Hospital Association, said that if anyone other than a physician or surgeon were allowed to practice in a hospital it would “endanger the proper care of the patients.” Plaintiff attorney Robert Merriam is said to have replied, “Then it comes down to the proposition that who can practice in a given hospital is dependent upon the goodwill and approval of the AMA”—which was exactly the case. On May 18, 1949, Judge Harold Baker dismissed the case of the osteopathic plaintiff but ruled in favor of Ahrenholz, enjoining the hospital from barring him and all chiropractors “solely on the ground that . . . said chiropractors are chiropractors.”³⁹

The hospital board, however, continued to refuse Ahr-

enholz and others access. In 1951 the court reiterated its judgment, but Ahrenholz never gained use of the hospital facilities. He had retired before chiropractors were finally given staff privileges for a Minnesota hospital in 1992.⁴⁰

TODAY THERE ARE ABOUT 2,300 LICENSED CHIROPRACTORS IN MINNESOTA.⁴¹ The higher educational standards, continued support of chiropractic patients, and increased institutional support from private insurers and governmental sources seem to guarantee a bright future for the profession in Minnesota and elsewhere. One hundred years ago—even 50 years ago—such a future was doubtful. New practitioners today may struggle as they begin their careers, as do doctors in most fields. But the persistent efforts of many individual chiropractors and Minnesota’s chiropractic organizations—along with social changes in the medical arena that once again favor a wide variety of healing options—have ensured the continuation of chiropractic. □

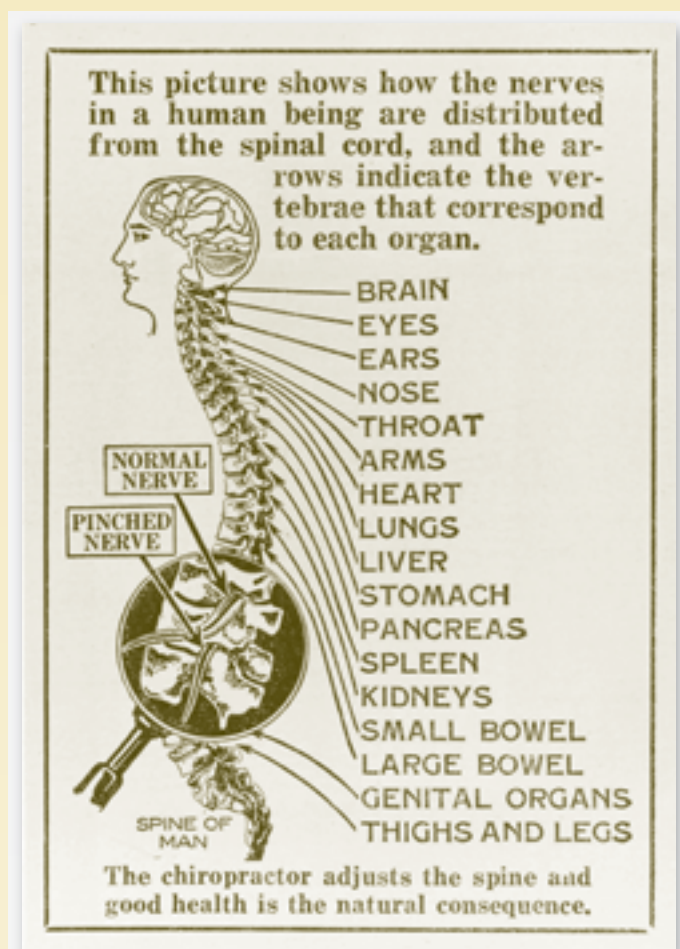


Illustration accompanying a testimonial (“I can honestly say my pains and trouble have vanished”); The Chiropractic Educator, 1956.

Notes

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1. See, for example *Minneapolis City Directory* from 1900 through the 1910s.

2. D. D. Palmer, *The Chiropractor's Adjuster: The Science, Art and Philosophy of Chiropractic* (1910; reprint, D. D. Palmer [grandson], 1966).

3. On Bowman, see D. D. Palmer, *The Science of Chiropractic: Its Principles and Adjustments* (Davenport: Palmer School, 1906), 60–61; *Minneapolis City Directory, 1899*, 221, 1510. On Thomas, see National School of Neuropathy, advertisements, *Minneapolis City Directory, 1899*, 931, 1259, 1500, 1511; *1900*, 227, 1352, and throughout; for his titles, see *Minneapolis City Directory, 1893–98*.

Privately owned, for-profit healing institutes were common at this time. Primarily clinics, many also functioned as schools and often lasted only a year or two. Among those in Minneapolis were Northwestern Medical and Surgical Institute, Fidelity Rupture Cure, State Electro-Medical Institute, Gates Institute of Magnetic Healing, Strasser Institute of Magnetic Healing, Northern Institute of Osteopathy, and Murray Cure Institute.

4. Brodie is listed as a midwife in the *St. Paul City Directory* from 1898 (p. 1567) until she is appears as a chiropractor in 1905 (p. 1862). In Minneapolis, Doeltz is a midwife in the *City Directory* from 1896 (p. 342) until 1905, when she appears as a chiropractor (p. 2059); Oas is a midwife in 1898 (p. 1448) and does not appear again until she is listed as a chiropractor in 1908 (p. 1848). On Churchill, see *Minneapolis City Directory, 1903*, 379, *1905*, 2059. Towne appears as a dressmaker in United States, *Census, 1900, Population*, Minneapolis, enumeration district 48, sheet 4, line 30, microfilm, Minnesota Historical Society Library (MHS), St. Paul, but she was listed as a magnetic healer in the *Minneapolis City Directory, 1896*, 1272, *1897*, 1367, and *1898*, 1442. There is no listing in 1900. On Gilsdorf as a barber, see *St. Paul City Directory, 1900*, 641, and the years following until he appears as a chiropractor in 1905 (p. 1862). For Rose, see *Minneapolis City*

Directory, 1903, 1398, *1908*, 1848.

5. Little is known about most of these early practitioners—sometimes not even their complete name. *Owatonna Evening Journal*, Sept. 8, 1904, p. 3; Anton J. Klimek to H. M. Bracken, State Board of Health, Oct. 18, 1904, Health Dept., Correspondence and Miscellaneous Records, box 24 (“State Boards of Minnesota, 1909–1915”), Minnesota State Archives, MHS; *Brainerd Tribune*, May 7, 1904, p. 8; *Winona Daily Republican-Herald*, May 11, 1905, p. 3.

Fifty-eight is a conservative number based on listings in the 1905 city directories of Minneapolis (10), St. Paul (12), and Duluth (5), plus 4 additional chiropractors noted in other 1905 publications and the 27 who signed a call for an organizational meeting in Minnesota; see “State Association,” *Chiropractic World* (Ashby, MN), June 15, 1905, p. 1–2, copy in the Palmer College of Chiropractic Archives, Davenport, which also reported that notices of the meeting “have been sent to about 250 chiropractors.” See also *Official State Program of the Associations of Minnesota Chiropractors*, Minneapolis, Mar. 9, 1918, pamphlet collection, MHS.

6. *St. Paul Dispatch*, June 23, p. 5, Sept. 22, p. 3, Sept. 23, p. 11—all 1904.

7. *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*, Sept. 6, 1904, p. 2.

8. *Duluth Daily Star*, Mar. 14, 1908, p. 4. The fact that Konkler later served on the Minnesota Board of Chiropractic Examiners for more than 35 years, ensuring that chiropractors did not make excessive claims, illustrates the changes that took place during his lifetime.

9. *Owatonna Evening Journal*, Sept. 5, 1904, p. 3; *St. Paul Dispatch*, Aug. 27, 1904, p. 5; *Duluth Evening Herald*, Apr. 25, 1908, p. 5.

10. Klimek to Bracken, Oct. 18, 1904; *Minneapolis Journal*, Nov. 15, 1904, p. 13; *St. Paul Dispatch*, Sept. 21, 1904, p. 15, Oct. 21, 1904, p. 14; *Chiropractic World*, June 15, 1905, p. 8.

11. “St. Paul Notes,” *The Chiropractor* (Davenport), Jan. 1905, p. 7.

12. U.S., *Census, 1900, Population*, St. Paul, enumeration district 87, sheet 3, line 3. Silbert appears in the 1902, 1903, and 1904 *St. Paul City Directory* as a cook, steward, and chef, respectively. In 1905 he is a chiropractor, but subsequent directories and his death certificate (State of Minnesota, Aitkin Co., certificate 1912-MN-000015) list his occupation as chef.

13. Riesland's teacher was Thomas H. Storey; see Brian A. Smith, “Thomas Henry Storey, D.O., D.C. 1843 to 1923,” *Chiropractic History* 19 (1999): 63–84. On Riesland: State of Minnesota, St. Louis Co., death certificate 1931-MN-26313; *Duluth Herald*,

July 15, 1931, p. 1. On Morikubo: State of Minnesota, Hennepin Co., death certificate 1933-MN-18828. On Martner: Theodore Christianson, *Minnesota: The Land of Sky-Tinted Waters* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1935), 3:253–54; *Minneapolis Star*, Apr. 8, 1961, p. 14A.

14. Charles Lyman Greene, “The Art and Science of Medicine,” *Northwestern Lancet*, Aug. 1, 1904, p. 285; H. M. Bracken to Anton J. Klimek, Oct. 24, 1904, copy, Health Dept., Reports and Miscellaneous Records, State Archives; Mae Parsons, “Minnesota,” *The Chiropractor*, Nov. 1915, p. 41–45.

No cases were found in the following records in the Minnesota State Archives: Steele Co. District Court, minutes, 1900–19; Hubbard Co. District Court, indictment records, 1901–19; Douglas Co. District Court, indictment records, 1900–19; Wadena Co. District Court, justice court convictions, 1903–19; St. Louis Co. District Court, criminal calendars, 1904 and 1909–23, secret indictments, 1911–18, and justice of the peace convictions, 1903–19; Otter Tail Co. District Court, justice court convictions, 1903–64, district court minutes, vol. G, Nov. 1915–19, registers of justice court convictions, criminal convictions, 1901–12, and criminal court records—minutes, vol. 2 and 3; and St. Paul Municipal Court, criminal register, Dec. 1899–Sept. 1904, and Criminal Dockets, 1875–1972.

15. *Territorial Laws of Minnesota, 1851*, ch. 21, sec. 5, 6; State of Minnesota, *General Laws, 1883*, ch. 125, p. 167; Wilber M. Brucker, *The Story of Optometry* (Minneapolis: Journal of the American Optometric Assn., 1939), 35; Edmund C. Goblirsch, *The History of Osteopathy in Minnesota* (Minnesota Osteopathic Medical Society, 1982), 3.

16. Here and below, Russell W. Gibbons, “Minnesota, 1905: Who Killed the First Chiropractic Legislation?” *Chiropractic History* 13 (1993): 27, citing the Founders Scrapbook, 1904, Palmer College Archives; *The Chiropractor*, Apr. 1905, p. 7; *Chiropractic World*, June 15, 1905, p. 1–2.

17. Thirty-Fourth Session (1905), H.F. No. 132, sec. 4, p. 157, House Bills (printed), State Archives.

18. *Journal of the House*, Jan. 31, 1905, p. 129; *Journal of the Senate*, Jan. 31, 1905, p. 122; Gibbons, “Minnesota, 1905,” 27–32.

19. *The Chiropractor*, Apr. 1905, p. 6–13, June 1905, p. 5; Gibbons, “Minnesota, 1905,” 27–32. Langworthy had started a competing school in Cedar Rapids that offered a broader curriculum and longer course of study than the Palmers; see Russell W. Gibbons, “Solon Massey Langworthy: Keeper of the Flame During the ‘Lost Years’ of Chiropractic,” *Chiropractic History* 1 (1981): 15–21.

20. Susan L. Smith-Cunnien, *A Profession of One's Own: Organized Medicine's Opposition to Chiropractic* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 36–40. Neither state archives nor state medical journals document any activities of the medical societies or Board of Medical Examiners in regard to the 1905 bill.

21. *Journal of the House*, Mar. 13, 1919, p. 831; Walter I. Wardwell, *Chiropractic: History and Evolution of a New Profession* (St. Louis: Mosby-Year Book, 1992), 110–11.

22. Here and two paragraphs below, State of Minnesota, *Laws, 1919*, 57–61. The resident instruction requirement excluded correspondence courses. The stipulation that two eight-month courses could not be taken in one year disqualified graduates of schools that allowed overlapping courses and thus compacted the required three years into one.

23. Schools appear in city directories; some also filed articles of incorporation: Minnesota College of Non-Medicinal Therapy, Inc. (later Minnesota School of Chiropractic) and St. Paul College, both vol. V-3, p. 443; Hewitt Academy, vol. Y-3, p. 102; Lincoln College, vol. R-4, p. 304—all Secretary of State, Corporation Division, Record of Incorporation, State Archives. Conclusions regarding major schools are drawn from city directories and the minutes of the Minnesota Board of Chiropractic Examiners (MBCE), MBCE Archives, Minneapolis.

24. See, for example, MBCE, Minutes, Mar. 2, 1927, Sept. 5, 1934, MBCE Archives; “Report of Inspections of Schools of Chiropractic and Naturopathy in the United States,” *Minnesota Medicine* 11 (Mar. 1928): 176–80.

25. T. J. Reid, “Medical Legislation,” *Northwestern Lancet*, Jan. 1, 1900, p. 26; Wardell, *Chiropractic*, 133. The Palmer school reportedly had 1,882 students in 1919; Chittenden Turner, *The Rise of Chiropractic* (Los Angeles: Powell Publishing Co., 1931), 35, and graduated more than 1,000 in 1921 alone; Wardwell, *Chiropractic*, 69.

26. MBCE, Minutes, Mar. 10, 1923, Mar. 8, 1927, MBCE Archives.

27. “A.C.A. Leading Fight Against Unlicensed Chiro’s” and Melvin Gates, “Hired Martyrs,” *Chiropractic Association Journal* (St. Paul), Dec. 1, 1923, p. 1–2, Feb. 1, 1924, p. 3–4; *State of Minnesota v.: L. P. Branca*, case no. 10188, *Howard W. Smart*, case no. 10191, and *Bernard F. Lee*, case no. 10238, Ramsey Co. District Court, Criminal Register of Actions (case number is page number), State Archives. Additional details in Ramsey Co. District Court, criminal case files, 1923, State Archives.

28. *House Journal*, Apr. 18, 1927, p. 1407.

29. *Journal of the Senate*, Apr. 12, 1927, p. 997.

30. “Legislative Activities,” *Minnesota Medicine* 6 (Mar. 1923): 189–91; N. Gevitz, “A Coarse Sieve: Basic Sciences Boards and

Medical Licensure in the United States,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 43 (Jan. 1988): 36–63.

31. *Statistics, Year 1941*, 1, 15, Minnesota State Board of Medical Examiners, Subject Files: Statistical Reports, 1928–41, State Archives. Although authorized only to regulate medical practitioners, the board kept careful records of chiropractors and osteopaths.

32. According to “Medical News,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, May 12, 1928, p. 1577, “The number of chiropractic schools in the state has decreased from three to one since the [basic sciences] law was enacted.” The St. Paul College of Chiropractic lost its board approval in 1927; MBCE, Minutes, Mar. 2, 1927.

33. “Should the Two Local Associations Amalgamate?” *Journal of the American Chiropractic Association, Minnesota District*, Oct. 1927, p. 2; William F. Wittig, “Answer,” *Minnesota Chiropractor*, Mar. 1928, p. 2. Minnesota American Chiropractic Association Certificate of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation, July 2, 1930, changes filed Mar. 21, 1941, Minnesota Secretary of State; *Minnesota Chiropractic College Bulletin*, May 20, 1932, p. 3, Aug. 20, 1932, p. 2. A full listing of registered chiropractors is not available for 1932, but using the supplemental record for that year to adjust the 1931 total of 450 brings the count to 443; see “Registered Chiropractors—1931,” p. 222–32, “Revised and Supplemental List—Jan. 1, 1932 to June 6, 1932,” p. 33–36, and *List of Persons Lawfully Authorized to Practice Healing in the State of Minnesota*, Directories of Licensed Practitioners, 1928–73—all Health Dept., State Archives.

34. *Minnesota Chiropractic College Bulletin*, May 20, 1932, p. 3. Ramsay Hospital was about a ten-bed facility, according to William F. Hynan (personal communication, Nov. 2001), tiny by today’s standards but not unusual for private hospitals of its day. The exact dates for this hospital are not known, but ads for it appeared regularly between 1921 and 1935; see, for example, *Minneapolis City Directory*, 1921, 1749, *Journal of the American Chiropractic Association, Minnesota District*, Oct. 1927, p. 3, and *M.A.C.A. Bulletin*, Feb./Mar. 1932, p. 8.

35. On “non-essential,” Minnesota Chiropractic Assn. (MCA) President George Kelley and Secretary-Treasurer Frank F. Robbins to “all chiropractors instate,” Aug. 7, 1943, Record Book 1, p. 162; on tires, MCA Board of Directors, Meeting Minutes, Apr. 26, 1942, p. 139; on first aid, Ora A. Kelley, American Red Cross, Midwestern Branch, to Rev. B. G. Witt, Chairman, Martin Co. Chapter, Jan. 17, 1942, Record Book 1, p. 137; on x-rays, R. K. Meyers, X-Ray Section, War Production Board, Washington, D.C., to Frank F. Robbins, June 2, 1942, Robbins to Thomas R. Aasum, May 31, 1942, and Robbins, telegram (undated copy) to Milton H. Luce, War Production

Board, Record Book 1, p. 141—all sources in MCA Archives, St. Paul.

36. David G. Hinz, “Diversified Chiropractic: Northwestern College and John B. Wolfe, 1941–1984,” *Chiropractic History* 7 (July 1987): 36.

37. Oliver Garceau, *The Political Life of the American Medical Association* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941).

38. Last Will and Testament of Cushman Albert Rice, p. 3, defendants’ exhibit in *H. Ahrenholz and A. J. Schneider . . . v. City of Willmar*, case no. 12179, Kandiyohi Co. District Court, civil case files, State Archives; MBCE, Minutes, Sept. 5, 1946, p. 4; “State Officers and Directors Meeting,” *Gopher State Chiropractic Journal*, Dec. 1946, p. 3; MCA Board of Directors, Meeting Minutes, Dec. 1, 1946, Sept. 14, 1947, n. p.

39. *Willmar Weekly Tribune*, Dec. 13, 1948, p. 2; *Ahrenholz and Schneider v. City of Willmar*.

40. MCA Board of Directors, Meeting Minutes, Jan. 21, 1950, n. p; Herman Ahrenholz to the author, Jan. 23, 2003.

41. “Statistics of Minnesota Licensed Chiropractors as of November 1, 2004,” *MBCE Newsletter* (Fall/Winter 2004), www.mn-chiroboard.state.mn.us/newsletters.htm

The photos on p. 200, 202, and 204 are courtesy the Palmer College of Chiropractic Archives, Davenport. All others are in MHS collections, including p. 206 and 207 from the 1918 official program of the Associations of Minnesota Chiropractors, and p. 210, all in the pamphlet file.



DULUTH NEWS TRIBUNE, JAN. 1, 1905



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