

Who Needs History?

Joseph Keating Jr., PhD

Traditional wisdom holds that the adolescent's search for identity involves comparison between the self and the child's peer group. As we grow older, however, our sense of self increasingly seems to derive from our accumulation of life experiences, so that for the mature adult, identity is a product, in part, of what we have lived through. I think the same processes may be operative in groups, even professions such as chiropractic. In the early stages we emphasize who we are in relation/comparison to other health-care provider groups (e.g., medicine). Presumably, as we mature, our professional self-concept might be expected to derive from our knowledge of where we've been, what we've lived through, that is a longitudinal rather than or in addition to a merely cross-sectional understanding of self.

Certainly, for much of the chiropractic century we have attempted to define ourselves in terms of our peers (i.e., rival profession, particularly medicine). Indeed, our first legal victory in court, when Shegatoro Morikubo, D.C. was acquitted of unlicensed practice in LaCrosse, Wisconsin in 1907 (Rehm, 1986), emphasized our distinctiveness. Counsel for the defense won the case by demonstrating to the satisfaction of the jury that chiropractic was not osteopathy, that chiropractic had a "separate and distinct" philosophy (i.e., theory) and practice. Since then much of our rhetoric in courtrooms, legislative halls and in print has emphasized that chiropractic is not medicine." (Of course, chiropractic is simultaneously like and unlike medicine; were this duality not the case, then medicine would not provide an appropriate comparison.)

Like the aging adult, however, there ought to be other bases for understanding the chiropractic profession. Our trials and travails, victories and defeats, loves and hates over nearly a century surely provide at least an important supplementary base from which to construct a professional self-concept. Yet, few chiropractors seem to know much about the saga of chiropractic. Sure, everyone knows of D.D Palmer, Harvey Lillard, Samuel Weed, and B.J. Palmer (love him or hate him). Many schools supplement this bare bones outline of chiropractic history with tales of their college's memorable leaders, and a few of our lingering charismatic founders and developers let on that B.J.'s innate resides at their institution. Many in the profession have some dim recollection that many DCs went to jail for their beliefs, but few can provide the details. Who remembers the sacrifices and commitment of men like Albert Cochrane, D.C.; Frank B. Margetts, LL.B., D.C., H.C.; C. Haring, D.C., M.D.; Charles E. Schilling, D.C., or Tom Morris, LL.B? How many recall that the chiropractic profession pioneered in the development of continuing education as a condition for relicensure? Who knows why the International Chiropractic Congress expelled the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners? Why did B.J. label John J Nugent, D.C. the "Anti-christ of Chiropractic"?

Why did D.D. Palmer write this?

"Nerves are never pinched or impinged upon in the foramina. foramina are never narrowed. We do not adjust the vertebra. The vertebra itself, so far as a chiropractor knows, is never displaced, dislocated or subluxated.

"Any extreme movement of the articular surfaces enlarges the foramen or foramina, causes the nerves and blood vessels to become stretched, irritated, increasing its carrying power.

"Nerves are never shut off by the closure of the foramina. There are no damns or obstructions that restrict. Impulses are never interrupted." (Palmer p. 94, 1914)

Or, how about the following? Is this a discussion of the recent Wilk et al. victory?

"The Supreme Court of the United States again demonstrated its independence and proved its devotion to democratic ideals when it upheld the conviction of the American Medical Association, and the District of Columbia Medical Society, and ruled that they were guilty of conspiracy to restrain trade in their fight against a Cooperative Health Association."

Actually, the above is part of an editorial by Loran M. Rogerd, D.C., in the National Chiropractic Journal during world War II (Roger, 1943). What did we learn? For that matter, what did the AMA learn from its legal defeat nearly 50 years ago?

All right, enough of the teasers. Chiropractic has a rich and varied (some might say checkered) past. Although a few of us may be afraid of the skeletons in the closet, there is much to be proud of and much to learn from. Besides, what profession is better suited to deal with skeletons?

The Chiropractic Centennial in 1995 ought to be more than an occasion for a party and ought to be more than an opportunity for a national publicity campaign. As we approach the 100-year mark, the profession should take stock of itself, not only in terms of how we compare with other disciplines, but in terms of where we've been. Chiropractic should take the opportunity to study its history seriously. Here are a few of the resources available for just such purpose:

Resources:

Wardell WI: Chiropractic: History and Evolution of a New Profession, 1992, Mosby, St. Louis. Just recently released, this is the first serious scholarly history of the profession. It's excellent!

Palmer College of Chiropractic, Library Archives, (1000 Brady St., Davenport IA 52803; Tel: 319-326-9600). The Palmer College Archives is the most thorough paper historical collection in chiropractic. Contact Glenda Wiese, M.A., archivist, at the David D. Palmer Health Sciences Library.

American Medical Association Historical Health Fraud & Alternative Medicine Collection (AMA Division of Library & Information Management, 515 North State Street, Chicago, IL 60610 (Tel: 312-464-5000). The AMA's chiropractic collection includes 8.0 cubic feet (26 boxes) spanning the period 1908-1983; see the Guide to the American Medical Association Historical Health Fraud & Alternative Medicine Collection, published by AMA for details. Use of the collection is free.

Association for the History of Chiropractic (AHC) (Alana Callender, M.S., executive director, 1000 Brady Street, Davenport, IA 52803; tel: 319-326-9190). Student membership in the AHC is available for \$20/year (regular membership is \$50/year). Membership automatically includes a subscription to the AHC's Journal, Chiropractic History, which is now published twice annually. The AHC will hold its 13th annual convention at Western States Chiropractic College in Portland, Oregon, September 1993. Prizes of \$250, \$150, and \$100 will be awarded for the best historical papers submitted by students.

Logan College Archives (1851 Schoettler Rd., Chesterfield, MO 63017; tel: 314-947-8755). The Logan College Archives contains, without a doubt, the largest collection of chiropractic historical artifacts anywhere. Contact Vi Nickson, D.C., curator. Send money! This is a poverty-stricken operation and needs the support of the profession.

National Institute of Chiropractic Research (NICR) (P.O. Box 80317, Phoenix, AZ 85060-0317: Tel:602-224-0296). NICR's Fund for the History of Chiropractic makes grants for chiropractic historical research and preservation projects. Contact Paul J. Osterbauer, D.C., research administrator. Your contribution to this fund helps chiropractic historians and archivists.

Stockton Foundation for Chiropractic Research/Archives, 2027 Grand Canal Blvd., Stockton, CA 95207 (209-957-9601). Maintained by Paul Smallie, D.C. This collection includes most of the surviving correspondence and papers of T.F. Ratledge, D.C., founder of the Cleveland Chiropractic College of L.A. and a driving force in the 1922 initiative enactment of licensing for chiropractors in California. This collection is a true treasure chest of chiropractic history.

Life Chiropractic College/B.J. Palmer Museum (1269 Barclay Circle, Marietta GA 30062). The B.J. Palmer Museum is a restoration of Dr. Palmer's winter home in Sarasota, Florida, just down the road from Ringling Brothers Circus' winter camp. This will delight those interested in the life and times of B.J. Palmer.

Other Archival Sources: For further information concerning chiropractic archival collections, see Wiese G, Irvine K, Thomas M. A survey of chiropractic college archives in the United States and Canada. *Chiropractic History*, 10(1):12-7, June 1990.

The basic tools are here. Are we mature enough to take stock of ourselves.

References

1. Palmer DD: *The Chiropractor*. Beacon Light Publishing Company, Los Angeles, 1914.
2. Rehm WS: Legally defensible: chiropractic in the courtroom and after, 1907. *Chiropractic History*, 6:50-5, 1986.
3. Rogers L: Editorial. *National Chiropractic Journal*, 12(2):6, Feb. 1943.

Joseph C. Keating Jr., Ph.D.
Portland, Oregon

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