

Did D.D. Palmer "Steal" the Manipulative Techniques of A.T. Still?

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At the turn of the century the osteopathic profession bitterly denounced chiropractic as a "pure steal." In actuality, Palmer lived but a short distance from Still and several Missouri chiropractors reported seeing D.D. Palmer's name in A.T. Still's guest book in the early 1890s. The historian, Booth, named Obie Stothers as the DO who taught Palmer the "old doctor's" (Still's) osteopathic techniques.

Palmer recognized this controversy as well as the similarities between chiropractic and osteopathy. Palmer stated that he was not "the first person to replace subluxated vertebrae, for this art has been practiced for thousands of years. I do claim, however, to be the first to replace displaced vertebrae by using the spinous and transverse processes as levers." Palmer went on to devote much of his textbook, *The Chiropractor's Adjustor*, to refuting the osteopaths' claims that chiropractic was, in fact, osteopathy.

Nonetheless, the similarities remain striking. Both schools, "systems of health based on bone-setting," initially rejected integration of allopathic medicine; neither accepted the germ theory; both were against vaccination; both were against mixing "physical therapy" or "physical medicine" treatments with manipulation; and both were against expansions of their curricula to include "unnecessary" medical subjects.

Despite these claims of independence, in actuality early chiropractic and osteopathic philosophy were very similar. Both Palmer and Still originally described the body in mechanistic terms, both applied manipulation to all articulations of the bony framework and believed the manipulable lesion was a "surgical" subluxation, and both taught that man and his healing was the product of a supreme being. Given that these two professions began so similarly, why did osteopathy subsequently expand to an unlimited scope embracing allopathic drugs and surgery and chiropractic did not?

If you read this far, you should be a member of the Association for the History of Chiropractic. This is an excerpt from an article written by James W. Brantingham, D.C., that originally appeared in the 1986 edition of *Chiropractic History*. The association has devoted the last 12 years to recording the history of the chiropractic profession, but will not be able to continue its mission without continued support of that profession.

Donations to the association fell from \$7,000 in 1990 to \$1,375 in 1991. For an organization that operates on a break-even budget, this is disastrous. All of the board members, including the editor of the journal and the executive director, donate their time.

We believe that we are not only preserving chiropractic history, we are also selling a quality product. Included in the annual membership fee of \$35 is a subscription to *Chiropractic History*. This is a scholarly journal of the highest publishing standards. But don't let that scare you. The articles are readable and fascinating. And the journal looks good.

The association is made up of chiropractors and interested laypeople. Its membership cuts across political, philosophical, and geographical boundaries. The only common denominator is the desire to record accurate chiropractic history.

To become a member, send your payment of \$35 to the Association of Chiropractic History, 1000 Brady Street Davenport Iowa 52803.

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