



Ruth Cleveland, DC,  
circa 1928.



Carl S. Cleveland,  
Sr., DC, 1917.



Perl Griffin, DC  
circa 1928.

CHIROPRACTIC (GENERAL)

## Matriarch of the Cleveland Clan, Part II

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*(Editor's note:* Part one of this two-part series was published in the April 8, 2002 issue. You can also access Part I at [www.chiroweb.com/archives/20/08/09.html](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/20/08/09.html).

The career of Sylva Ashland, DC, inspired her daughter, Rose Ruth, to follow in her mother's footsteps. Ruth Ashworth matriculated at the PSC, where she met and married one of the stars of the school's baseball team, Carl S. Cleveland. The couple was married in the Palmer mansion on 19 April 1917, and B.J. gave the bride away. Their only child, Carl ("Max") Jr., was born 29 March 1918 in Webster City, Iowa, where the couple had established their first practice. Several years later Ruth, Carl and Carl's brother-in-law, Palmer alumnus Perl Griffin, established the Central College of Chiropractic in Kansas City. The school was soon renamed the Cleveland Chiropractic College (Keating, Cleveland, 1996). B.J. Palmer expressed his dissatisfaction with this new competition by sending the silhouette of a hand with one finger cut off. Sylva had no official role at the Cleveland College, but she often gave guest lectures in which she discussed her clinic cases, and she was a financial contributor to the nonprofit institution.



*Ruth Cleveland, D.C.,  
circa 1928.*



*Carl S. Cleveland,  
Sr., D.C., 1917.*



*Perl Griffin, D.C.,  
circa 1928.*

Dr. Ashworth advertised as a "Palmer graduate," referred students to her alma mater, and donated considerable money; an "endowed chair" in her honor is still on campus (in storage). In the years before B.J. Palmer introduced the neurocalometer (NCM, Keating, 1991), she was a frequent correspondent with him, and they discussed a wide range of professional issues. She battled during 1919-1923 against the "mixer" chiropractors of Nebraska who sought to require a lengthier curriculum for licensure than the 18-month-maximum that B.J. and the Universal Chiropractors' Association (UCA) insisted upon (Keating, Cleveland, 1992). She was an early enthusiast for the NCM as a clinical device, but was distressed by Palmer's "milking cow speech" (Cleveland, 1991), in which the Davenport guru argued that he had been nourishing the profession for years while the "mixers" drew all the milk. She gradually lost interest in the instrument.



*The first campus of the Cleveland  
Chiropractic College of Kansas City,  
circa 1924.*



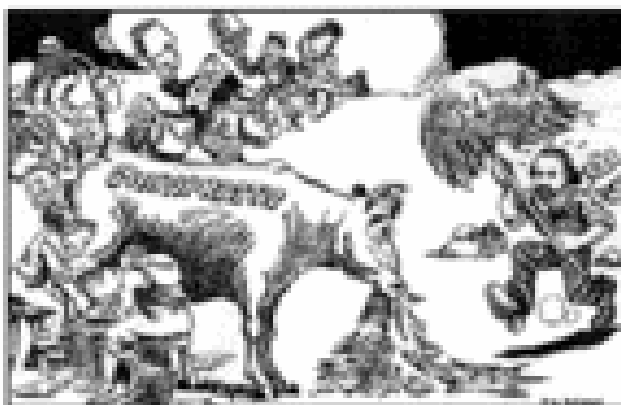
*Homecoming at Cleveland Chiropractic College of Kansas City, 21-22 July 1934. Seated third, fourth and fifth from left at head table are: James Drain, DC, president of the Texas Chiropractic College; James Slocum, DC, research director of the National Chiropractic Association; and Carl S. Cleveland Sr., DC. Seated at far right at the head table are Drs. Sylva Ashworth and Ruth Ashworth Cleveland.*

Although Sylva may have tried to help B.J. in his unsuccessful bid for re-election as secretary of the UCA in 1926, she continued with the 20-year-old protective society and was re-elected its vice president that year. When UCA president C.H. Wadsworth, DC died in office, Sylva briefly assumed this office (Lundy, 1926), the only woman ever to serve as president of a national chiropractic membership society in the United States. As president of the Nebraska BCE, Sylva was a cofounder of the International Congress of Chiropractic Examining Boards (ICCEB), forerunner of today's Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards. Organized at the prompting of Harry Gallaher, DC, secretary of the Oklahoma BCE, the ICCEB's seminal meeting convened in 1926 at Kansas City. Dr. Ashworth was one of its original officers (see table below). She continued on its governing body after the ICCEB expanded in 1928 into the International Chiropractic Congress, with divisions for school administrators, state associations and examining boards.

Table 1: *Founding Officers and Members of the Board of Directors of the International Congress of Chiropractic Examining Boards, 1926.*

Eugene Cox,DC, North Carolina, president  
 Anna Foy,DC, Kansas, first vice president  
 R.C. Ellsworth,DC, Oregon, second vice president  
 Sylva L. Ashworth,DC, Nebraska, third vice president  
 E.J. Bullock,DC, New Hampshire, fourth vice president  
 Harry Gallaher,DC, Oklahoma, secretary-treasurer  
 C. Sterling Cooley,DC, Oklahoma, member, board of directors  
 Maud Hastings,DC, Tennessee, member, board of directors  
 J. Ralph John,DC, Maryland, member, board of directors  
 Myrtle Long,DC, Iowa, member, board of directors  
 W.J. Robb,DC, Kansas, member, board of directors

Sylva maintained friendly relations with Mabel and Dave Palmer, but had clearly crossed over into the opposition camp. Grandson Carl Jr. recalled lively professional discussions during holiday gatherings of the Ashworths and Cleveland. His father had remained a strong supporter of Palmer and the Chiropractic Health Bureau (today's ICA), while Sylva became a charter member and supporter of the National Chiropractic Association (NCA). She also evolved into something other than a Palmer straight chiropractor, and dabbled in radionics (Cleveland, 1926) and the Basic technique of Hugh Logan,DC.



*In the left panel, B.J. Palmer suggests that he's been working at the feeding end of the cow (chiropractic), and wonders why he can't have a glass of milk once in a while. In the right panel, the neurocalometer forces mixers to give something back to the cow while B.J. draws a dividend. From the Fountain Head News for 8 November 1924.*

Ashworth's service as president of the UCA earned her an honored role in the Gavel Club, comprised of former executive officers of the NCA and its organizational predecessors, the UCA and the short-lived American Chiropractic Association of the 1920s (Keating, 1996). Her lengthy service as a chiropractor also qualified her for membership in the NCA's Pioneers Club. She was a regular attendee at the NCA's annual conventions. She won a "scientific award" from the NCA in 1937 for a report on tumors that had reportedly "sloughed-off" under adjustive care. She was also an active member of the NCA's National Council of Women Chiropractors, which named its first scholarship award after her (Ploudre, 1954).



*Gathering of former executives of ACA, NCA and UCA in 1937; left to right: Sylva Ashworth, DC; C. Sterling Cooley DC; Gordon Goodfellow, DC, ND; F. Lorne Wheaton, DC; Lillard Marshall, DC (seated center); Ora Brown, DC; Albert Cochrane, DC; Charles Schillig, DC; and Harry McIlroy, DC, from the cover of the Chiropractic Journal (NCA), September 1937.*



*Gathering in Lincoln, Nebraska for a Basic technique seminar, circa 1940: Dr. Ashworth is seated in front row, with the pelvis on her lap; standing behind and to her left is seminar instructor Vinton Logan, DC, son of the founder of Logan Basic College of Chiropractic in St. Louis.*



Dr. A. E. Ashworth

*Tumors appeared in the NCA's Journal and in  
Carl S. Cleveland, Sr.'s ACCA News in 1937 and 1938.*

Sylva received one of the first fellowships (her fifth) in the International College of Chiropractors, an NCA honors group established in 1938. Her membership in the Gavel Club led to her role as an incorporator of the Chiropractic Research Foundation (forerunner of today's FCER) in 1944. Although she contributed to the philanthropic organization, she was not otherwise involved with the foundation. As well, she questioned the value of spending dollars for research, and believed the foundation's efforts should instead be focused on improving basic science instruction at the chiropractic schools. Clearly, her views on chiropractic education had evolved over the years, presumably as a result of her participation in the ICCEB and its successor, the Council of State Chiropractic Examining Boards.





*The National Chiropractic Association's annual convention in Indianapolis in August 1936. The caption in the Chiropractic Journal for September 1936 read: "Twenty-two Pioneers of Chiropractic (those in practice for 25 years or more) who were honored at Get-Together Banquet." Dr. Ashworth is seated sixth from left in front row; James Firth, DC is fourth from left in second row; C. Sterling Cooley, DC, is fifth from right in second row; and James McGinnis, DC, ND, is fourth from right in the second row.*

In her later years, Dr. Ashworth became increasingly broad-scope in her lecture topics, including weight-reduction programs (which she practiced) and obstetrical issues (e.g., Rossie, 1935). She continued to practice in Lincoln until 1954, when at age 79 a stroke paralyzed her on one side.



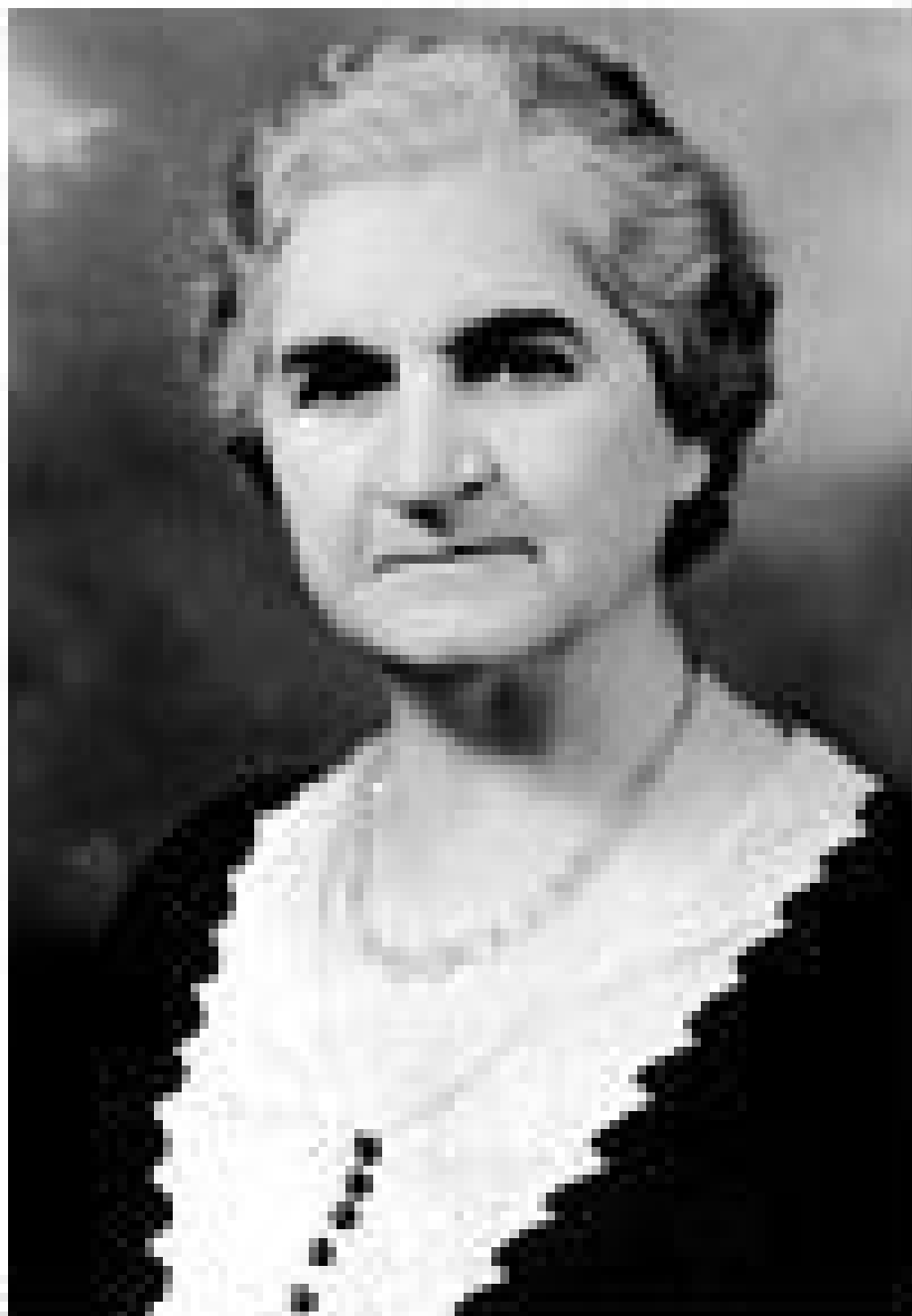
*Officers and visitors at the Nebraska Chiropractic Association's annual convention appeared in the December 1941 issue of the National Chiropractic Journal; Dr. Ashworth is in the front row, far left; third, fourth and fifth in the second row are W.H. McNichols, DC, of Omaha, Lee W. Edwards, MD, DC, of Omaha, and Arthur W. Schwietert, DC of Iowa. Joseph Janse, DC, ND of the National College and Emmett Murphy, DC, NCA's Washington representative, are at far right.*

Sylva Ashworth spent her final years in Kansas City with her daughter Ruth. She met her maker on 6 June 1958, and Dave and B.J. Palmer served as honorary pallbearers. Obituaries in Nebraska newspapers and the chiropractic press attempted to summarize her life, her devotion to the sick and underserved, and the character she brought to raising the dignity of chiropractors and of women in general. The "Grand Old Lady of Chiropractic" (Carlisle, 1941) and matriarch of the Cleveland family of chiropractors lived her life well, and left behind a legacy of service that merits recognition.



*Four generations of the Ashworth-Cleveland family were featured on the cover of the ICA's International Review of Chiropractic in 1952.*

*Left to right are: Ruth Cleveland, her son Carl Cleveland, Jr., his son, Carl Cleveland III, and the matriarch of the clan, Sylva Ashworth.*



Dr. Ashworth,  
circa 1930.

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