

Following D.D. Palmer to the West Coast: The Pasadena Connection, 1902

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The whereabouts of D.D. Palmer during 1902 and 1903 has been the source of speculation and conflicting reports. This paper will present some clarification and chronology of D.D.'s activities during this time frame. The historical materials used to document D.D. Palmer's presence in Pasadena during June and July of 1902 have mainly been obtained from the Palmer Archives, David D. Palmer Health Sciences Library, Davenport, Iowa. Primary sources used to document Dr. D.D. Palmer's presence in Pasadena from August-October 1902 were obtained from the 1902 Pasadena newspapers on microfilm at the Pasadena Public Library, Pasadena, California.

Practically all chiropractic historians and historical articles have recorded Dr. D. D. Palmer's departure from Davenport, Iowa in the year 1902, although some list the year of departure as 1903. These sources all list D.D. Palmer's immediate destination as Portland, Oregon, where upon his arrival he opened a chiropractic college. The college was named the Pacific College of Chiropractic or the Portland College of Chiropractic, depending upon which source is followed. This institution may have been known by both names to the chiropractic profession in the early years. The following constitutes a brief review of these sources:

Willard Carver, LL.D., LL.B., D.C. was probably the first to write on this subject in Chapter 8 of his *History of Chiropractic*, an unpublished manuscript apparently written in 1913 and found in the Logan Archives.

In September or October 1902, Dr. D.D. Palmer took a sudden notion to go to the Pacific Coast, so he packed up all of the loose furniture, bed clothing, sheets, pillow slips, etc., from his twenty-one roomed sanitarium on the fourth floor of the Ryan Block and shipped them to Portland, Oregon, leaving B.J. in his twenty-first year with an unexpired lease calling for several thousand dollars, and the bare rooms, with only the bedsteads, mattresses, and a few dressers and chairs in them. In the emergency, B.J. Palmer had no money and was left in a serious dilemma. Willard Carver's uncle, the "Uncle Nutting of Chiropractic," had been closely acquainted with the Palmers for years, and liked and took a great interest in the boy Bart, as he called him. He, therefore, came to B.J.'s rescue, helped him to refurbish the place splendidly and put him on his feet. (Carver, unpublished autobiography, 45)

Dr. Carver makes reference to the alleged Oregon move again, with mention of the Pacific College of Chiropractic in chapter 28, page 191 of his unpublished manuscript. Although Dr. Carver states on page 189 that this chapter was written in April of 1936, it is included here because of Dr. Carver's early presence in chiropractic history.

In 1902, Dr. Daniel David Palmer left Davenport and went to Portland, Oregon and joined hands with two or three medical physicians and organized what was called the "Pacific College of Chiropractic." The doctors who went in with him took his first course in Chiropractic and when they thought they knew as much about adjusting as he did, they turned him out and took over the institution, and in 1904 Dr. Palmer came back to Davenport and again entered business with his son. The Pacific College of Chiropractic continued to teach every phase of therapy and has continued to do the same thing ever since. It is now known under the name and style of "Western States College", and is particularly under the direction of a Dr. A. Budden who went to it from the National School of Chicago. (Carver, unpublished autobiography, 151)

Henry Gallagher in his *History of Chiropractic*, largely an Oklahoma version of the larger story, wrote in 1930:

In 1903 Dr. Palmer began teaching his discovery to others, and by so doing he opened a road of wide research and incessant investigation. Rapidly the crude methods of the founder gave way to more perfected ones, until today Chiropractic stands as a science with wide recognition from all sources that is unprejudiced. Fighting relentless, bitter opposition from older schools, Chiropractic has grown with amazing vigor until today the twenty-five thousand practitioners have benefited millions of people.

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In 1903 Dr. D.D. Palmer decided upon a new location for his endeavors in the teaching of Chiropractic, and moved to Portland, Oregon. He started the Portland College of Chiropractic. In this enterprise he had two medical doctors associated with him, who were instructed in Chiropractic by Dr. Palmer. At this time the course of instruction covered a period of three months. The Portland College of Chiropractic continued for about a year, when Dr. Palmer retired and returned to Davenport, Iowa, where he engaged in business with his son, Dr. B.J. Palmer. With the reorganization of the practice that had been conducted by Dr. B.J. Palmer, the financial aid necessary to place the institution on a practical working basis was furnished by Mr. L. Howard Nutting, an enthusiastic supporter of Chiropractic. With Mr. Nutting's financial assistance, Chiropractic was again in a position to carry on. (Gallagher 1930, 31)

Chittenden Turner in *The Rise of Chiropractic* a volume published in Los Angeles a year later, repeated some of these citations:

Already in 1903 the school had incurred the censure of physicians, and presently D.D. Palmer was arrested on the charge of practicing medicine without a license and was sent to jail for six months. At this time he was in debt to the extent of several thousand dollars, but owned some property in Davenport.

During his father's confinement, Dr. B.J. Palmer, who had just become of age, conducted the school under a power of attorney. When the former was released and severed connection with the school, the handful of students were left under the instruction of his son.

That year, 1903, the elder Palmer opened the Portland College of Chiropractic at Portland, Oregon. A three months' course was provided and two former doctors of medicine whom he had trained in chiropractic were employed as instructors. The venture failed and he returned to Iowa. Affairs were far from encouraging at the Palmer School. The Davenport banks would lend no money, newspapers refused to carry the advertising and chiropractic was commonly derided as charlatanry. (Turner 1931, 27)

The Dictionary of American Biography of 1934, citing the Gallagher and Turner references in D.D. Palmer's biography states that he:

Left the school in son's care he went in 1903 to Portland, Oregon, where he opened the Portland College of Chiropractic. The venture was not successful and he soon returned to Davenport. In 1906 he was arrested for practicing medicine without a license and served a sentence of six months in jail. (Malone 1934, 177)

August A. Dye in his *Evolution of Chiropractic* wrote in 1939:

As stated, the old gentleman deserted the scene of Chiropractic's birth in 1902, and went to Oregon, and other states, engaging in the practice of Chiropractic, and organizing sporadic schools composed of a very few students, rarely exceeding half a dozen in number. (Dye 1939, 17)

But in 1906, we find the founder returning to Davenport for a very brief period, and seeking a voice in the management of the institution B.J. had built up within a short two years at the Top of Brady Hill. (Dye 1939, 18)

An early Pacific Chiropractic College in Portland, Oregon is referenced in an unpublished manuscript from Western States Chiropractic College. This document, written sometime after 1949 by a Mrs. W. O. Powell, the wife of an early chiropractor, mentions the founding of this institution by Drs. Marsh in 1903.

This school (D.D. Palmer's), in Davenport, Iowa, was soon going strong, and from it sprang several small schools here and there. Among them, was the BRAINERD SCHOOL OF CHIROPRACTIC of Minnesota, which was started by a well-to-do engineer, a brother-in-law of Dr. Eva Marsh. He invited her and her husband to join his first class, which they did, and upon returning to Portland they started the Pacific Chiropractic College, located at S.W. Fifth and Hallin in the fall of 1903. (Powell, unpublished manuscript, 1)

Vern Gielow in his 1982 work *Old Dad Chiro* as cited by Russell Gibbons in his article "Tracking 'Old Dad Chiro' to the West Coast" (*Chiropractic History*, Journal of the Association for the History of Chiropractic, June 1989, page 8) states:

He opened the Pacific College of Chiropractic with the assistance of two medical doctors to whom he taught chiropractic. The partnership did not have longevity. About a year later, D.D. was 'turned out' with the partners taking the assets of the school for themselves and leaving the chiropractor with the debts.

Continuing the question of D.D.'s Portland destination, the *Chiropractic History* presents an article titled "Cover Story: Recalling D.D.'s Portland Years" which states:

D.D. Palmer was lured to the northwest and Portland, the 'City of Roses' on two occasions in the last decade of his life. The first was when he left Davenport in 1903, the year of his son's graduation, to start the Portland College of Chiropractic. The two physicians he trained in chiropractic became his partners in this short lived venture. (*Chiropractic History*, December 1988, page 5).

Chiropractic History, the Journal of the AHC of June 1989 contains an article titled "Tracking 'Old Dad Chiro' to the West Coast: Was he in Portland, Oregon in 1903?"

Western States alumnus and former professor A. Earl Homewood, in a 1973 unpublished history of the college and its predecessor institutions, lists a John and Ava Marsh as "practicing and teaching chiropractic in Portland in 1903, being graduates of a school which may have been founded by a Minnesota pioneer. (He also repeats the account of Palmer in Portland in 1903. (*Chiropractic History*, June 1989, page 9).

These sources differ as to the year of D.D.'s departure from Davenport, Iowa and to the name of the school that was founded, but all agree on the Portland destination. Other differences such as the date of the first students' education at the Palmer institution, the date of D.D.'s trial, and the time of D.D.'s return to Davenport from the Pacific Coast are apparent and substantial.

Many authors have speculated why D.D. Palmer left Davenport in June of 1902. The reason to be contemplated is that of legal persecution by the medical trust, at that time known as the "regulars" or "allopaths." By 1902 practically all states, including Iowa had passed Medical Practice Acts that defined all healing arts as the practice of medicine, and furthermore to practice their healing art, even though drugless and non-surgical, the practitioner must be examined and licensed by M.D.s of a medical examining board.

Prior to this time, many states, including Iowa, licensed osteopaths by separate osteopathic acts, but many osteopaths elected to be licensed by medical practice acts, thereby relinquishing their licensure under previous osteopathic acts. This segment of the osteopathic profession joined the medical profession in prosecuting chiropractors, as exemplified by the 1906 LaCrosse, Wisconsin prosecution of Sheregato Morikubo, D.C.

Cyrus Lerner, an investigative attorney hired by a New York Chiropractic Association spent hundreds of hours in 1951 and 1952 investigating the history of chiropractic. Lerner traveled to Davenport, Portland, and B.J. Palmer's home in Florida researching the early activities of D.D., B.J., and others. Many conferences were held with B.J., and many of these were taped. This attorney also procured court records, legislative records, and newspaper articles of this early time from many localities. Attorney Lerner wrote an unpublished manuscript of seven volumes.

On page 274 of Volume 4, attorney Lerner reported that in 1902 all drugless practitioners, including chiropractors and osteopaths had to be licensed by the Iowa Medical Practice Act. This legislation was fostered and engendered by the medical trust. (Lerner Report)

What happened between 1899 and June 1902 between D.D. and the Iowa State Board of Health is unknown, but D.D. left Davenport in June 1902, and the final outcome was recorded in the *Cosmopolitan Osteopath* of November 1903:

We have inquiries respecting a Dr. Palmer of Davenport, who has been conducting a so-called school and practice of "chiropractic." This man has through the active work of the state board of health (particularly of Dr. Matthey, a member of the board who lives in Davenport), been induced to locate in another state, so that so far as

we know no one is now attempting to violate the law by practicing chiropractic in Iowa, unless it be a man at Cedar Rapids. This chiropractic recognizes but one small though important part of osteopathy, the impingement upon nerves and circulation that comes through a derangement of the spinal vertebrae, but the instruction for the relief of even this class of maladies is brief and unscientific and so limited that its followers cannot look for permanent success. (*Cosmopolitan Osteopath* 1903)

Recent testimony in the Wilk antitrust suit in Chicago claims that the A.M.A. was opposed to chiropractic in the beginning. Most do not realize how early!

The chiropractic historians previously cited, as well as the profession in general, place D.D. Palmer in Portland, Oregon after his departure from Davenport, but we should examine Cyrus Lerner's findings. As an investigative attorney, it was usual for him to gather information, and on page 270 of Volume 4 he declares:

From the evidence I have found it appears that B.J. took over his father's practice and the Chiropractic School in May 1902. (Lerner Report)

In his historical search, he also utilized primary sources, as referenced on page 271 of Volume 4 which states:

If you will look at the *Davenport Times* for the year 1902, you will find beginning with the issue of May 31, the advertising campaign started by B.J. to keep his father's practice and school going. (Lerner Report)

B.J.'s advertisements also contained references to the fact that D.D. Palmer was living in Pasadena, California and included his address in Pasadena in 1902. (Lerner Report)

Dr. D.D. Palmer was President of the Palmer Schools, whatever their location from the Davenport school inception until the dissolution of the D.D.-B.J. Partnership in April of 1906. This was true of the Davenport Palmer School, even though D.D. was in California as Lerner lists D.D. Palmer as President and B.J. as Secretary of the Palmer Schools on page 272 of Volume 4. (Lerner Report)

B.J. Palmer was indicted by the Scott County, Iowa grand jury for practicing medicine without a license in January of 1903. Anybody that professed to heal or cure by any method was practicing medicine and had to be licensed by an examining committee of M.D.s under the Iowa State Board of Health.

Evidently, Lerner placed D.D. in Pasadena, California NOT in Portland, Oregon in 1902 and 1903. He must not have read or believed the historical accounts that placed D.D. in Portland.

The January 1905 *Chiropractor* contains an article titled, "Dr. T.H. Storey Mysteriously Disappears" written by D.D. Palmer. This article was written by D.D., and copyrighted by B.J., and sold as Palmer Advertising Tract 29 to practicing chiropractors with their names and addresses imprinted for \$3.00 for 500 and up to 100,000 for \$175.00. This was well distributed in 1904 and 1905. (Palmer 1905, 12-18)



D. D. PALMER

FOUNDER OF CHIROPRACTIC
 THE CREATOR OF CHIROPRACTIC SCIENCE
 THE ORIGINATOR OF VERTEBRAL ADJUSTING
 THE DEVELOPER OF CHIROPRACTIC PHILOSOPHY
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Thomas H. Storey was supposedly the reason D.D. Palmer went to California in 1902, although various authors have speculated other reasons for his departure from Davenport. Above: D.D.'s 1912-13 address in Los Angeles. Right: Storey's Los Angeles office card in 1906. Above right: D.D.'s wire to B.J. after his court acquittal.

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