

A Brief History of Chiropractic's Discovery

Chiropractic's founder, Daniel David Palmer, provided this information on pages 17-19 of his book *The Chiropractor's Adjuster* (also called *The Text-Book of the Science, Art and Philosophy of Chiropractic*). The book was published in 1910 by the Portland Printing House Company of Portland, Oregon, and reprinted in 1966 by his grandson, David D. Palmer, 1966.

A Brief History of the Author and Chiropractic

As told by Daniel David Palmer

I was born on March 7, 1845, a few miles east of Toronto, Canada. My ancestors were Scotch and Irish on my maternal and English and German on my paternal side.

When my grandparents settled near the now beautiful city of Toronto, there was but one log house, the beginning of that great city. That region was then known as "away out west."

I came within one of never having a mamma. My mother was one of a pair of twins one of which died. The one which lived only weighed one and a half pounds.

When a baby I was cradled in a piece of hemlock bark. My mother was as full of superstition as an egg is full of meat, but my father was disposed to reason on the subjects pertaining to life.

I was a magnetic healer for nine years previous to discovering the principles which comprise the method known as Chiropractic. During this period much of that which was necessary to complete the science was worked out. I had discovered that many diseases were associated with derangements of the stomach, kidneys and other organs.

In the dim ages of the past when man lived in rude huts and rocky eaves, even up to the present time, he resorted to charms, necromancy and witchcraft for the relief of mental and physical suffering. His whole object was to find an antidote, a specific for each and every ailment which could and would drive out the intruder, as though the disorder was a creature of intelligence. In his desire to free himself from affliction and prolong his existence, he has searched the heavens above, he has gone into the deep blue sea, the bowels of the earth and every portion thereof. He has tried animal and mineral poisons, penetrated the dark forest with superstitious rite and with incantations, has gathered herbs, barks and roots for medicinal use. In his frenzy for relief, trusting that he might find a panacea, or at least a specific, he has slaughtered man, beast and bird, making use of their various parts alive and dead. He has made powders, ointments, pills, elixirs, decoctions, tinctures and lotions of all known vegetables and crawling creatures which could be found, giving therefor his reasons according to his knowledge.

One question was always uppermost in my mind in my search for the cause of disease. I desired to know why one person was ailing and his associate, eating at the same table, working in the same shop, at the same bench, was not. Why? What difference was there in the two persons that caused one to have pneumonia, catarrh, typhoid or rheumatism, while his partner, similarly situated, escaped? Why? This question had worried thousands for centuries and was answered in September, 1895.

Harvey Lillard, a janitor, in the Ryan Block, where I had my office, had been so deaf for 17 years that he could not hear the racket of a wagon on the street or the ticking of a watch. I made inquiry as to the cause of his deafness and was informed that when he was exerting himself in a cramped, stooping

position, he felt something give way in his back and immediately became deaf. An examination showed a vertebra racked from its normal position. I reasoned that if that vertebra was replaced, the man's hearing should be restored. With this object in view, a half-hour's talk persuaded Mr. Lillard to allow me to replace it. I racked it into position by using the spinous process as a lever and soon the man could hear as before. There was nothing "accidental" about this, as it was accomplished with an object in view, and the result expected was obtained. There was nothing "crude" about this adjustment; it was specific, so much so that no Chiropractor has equaled it.

If no other discovery had been made, this, of itself, should have been hailed with delight. It was the key which has ultimately unlocked the secrets of functional metabolism; it is the entering wedge destined to split the therapeutical log of superstition wide open, revealing its irrational and ignorant construction.

Shortly after this relief from deafness, I had a case of heart trouble which was not improving. I examined the spine and found a displaced vertebra pressing against the nerves which innervate the heart. I adjusted the vertebra and gave immediate relief -- nothing "accidental" or "crude" about this. Then I began to reason if two diseases, so dissimilar as deafness and heart trouble, came from impingement, a pressure on nerves, were not other disease due to a similar cause? Thus the science (knowledge) and art (adjusting) of Chiropractic were formed at that time. I then began a systematic investigation for the cause of all diseases and have been amply rewarded.

I founded Chiropractic on Osteology, Neurology and Functions, bones, nerves and the manifestations of impulses. I originated the art of adjusting vertebrae and the knowledge of every principle which is included in the construction of the science of Chiropractic.

The amount of nerve tension determines health or disease. In health there is normal tension, known as tone, the normal activity, strength and excitability of the various organs and functions as observed in a state of health. The kind of disease depends upon what nerves are too tense or too slack.

Functions performed in a normal manner and amount result in health. Diseases are conditions resulting from either an excess or deficiency of functioning.

The dualistic system -- spirit and body -- united by intellectual life -- the soul -- is the basis of this science of biology, and nerve tension is the basis of functional activity in health and disease.

Spirit soul and body compose the being, the source of mentality. Innate and Educated, two mentalities, look after the welfare of the body physically and its surrounding environments.

Chiropractors correct abnormalities of the intellect as well as those of the body.

These discoveries and their development into a well-defined science are worth more to the student, practitioner and those desiring health, than all the therapeutical methods combined.

I am the originator, the Fountain Head of the essential principle that disease is the result of too much or not enough functioning. I created the art of adjusting vertebrae, using the spinous and transverse processes as levers, and named the mental act of accumulating knowledge, the cumulative function, corresponding to the physical vegetative function -- growth of intellectual and physical -- together, with the science, art and philosophy -- Chiropractic. It is now being followed, more or less, by 2,000 Chiropractors, and its use is being attempted by several other methods. It was I who combined the science and art and developed the principles thereof. I have answered the time-worn question -- what is life?