

# "The Lost Years"—1902-1904

ROLF E. PETERS and MARY ANN CHANCE

**ABSTRACT:** Cyrus Lerner, an investigative lawyer, produced a report on chiropractic that identified the period of 1902-1904 as "The Lost Years" of chiropractic. This paper is an attempt to fill in that period based on later published research and our own investigations.

**INDEX TERMS:** MeSH: CHIROPRACTIC; HISTORICAL ARTICLE.

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## INTRODUCTION

Clarence N. Flick, DC, of St Albans, NY established the Foundation for Health Research Inc., which was chartered in New York on 20 January 1950. The Foundation believed that 36 years of failed efforts to achieve licensure for the profession in the state of New York were due to the difficult-to-challenge perception that the chiropractic claim was without scientific basis and that it represented a potential danger to public health.

The Foundation hired Cyrus M. Lerner, a prominent investigative attorney, to explore every fact bearing on the historical basis and development of chiropractic. He had full access to the archives at the Palmer School, as well as newspaper and court records, and had several interviews with B.J. Palmer, then nearing his seventieth year. Lerner identified that there seemed to be a gap in B.J.'s memory of the first years after his graduation, when D.D. Palmer had left Davenport for California. Lerner termed this period "The Lost Years." Lerner's unpublished manuscript, *The Lerner Report*, was submitted to the Foundation in 1952 after 22 months of research.<sup>1</sup>

This paper attempts to fill in the gaps, based on the writings of other historians, as well as our own research.

## D.D. PALMER'S DEPARTURE

B.J. Palmer graduated 6 January 1902. After graduation, he practised not only in his father's school and infirmary,<sup>2</sup> but also in Lake City, Iowa; Traverse City and Manistique, Michigan; Elkins, Belington, and Kernes, West Virginia.<sup>3</sup> While practising in Manistique, B.J. received a wire from D.D. requesting him to return to Davenport at once. On arrival, B.J. found that his father had sold everything he could sell to a second-hand dealer. The rest he turned over to B.J. with instructions that when he had sold \$200 worth of stuff, to follow D.D. to California. That night, D.D. and his wife skipped town for California. This embittered the landlord, and he threatened to bring D.D. back and sue him for breaking his lease.<sup>3</sup>

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Thus the D.D. Palmer era—with D.D. as the sole authority teaching chiropractic at his school—ended when he decided to leave for California in 1902, apparently not giving any reason.

## B.J. PALMER: HOLDING THE BAG

With the disappearance of D.D. Palmer from Davenport, B.J. Palmer was left in sole charge. Prior to his graduation, B.J. had already practised in Manistique, Michigan, from 20 June 1901 to 31 September 1901.<sup>4</sup> He lodged at the home of G. Keils, on River Street.<sup>5</sup> His first patient, seen on 20 June 1901, was Dr. O.C. Bowen of Manistique, who suffered from asthma. He was last seen on 23 June, and was reported as "well." During B.J.'s three months stay, he saw 61 new patients.<sup>4</sup>

B.J. learned early that his obvious youth was a hindrance in gaining the confidence of older patients, and he decided to change his appearance by growing a beard, which in various shapes he would keep for the remainder of his life. (Figures 1-3)

In early February 1902 B.J. was practising in Lake City, Iowa, where he lodged at the Columbia Hotel. He also gave lectures at the local opera house, and was visited by his sister Mae, Mrs Niles Brownell.<sup>6</sup> From 28 February 1902 until 20 March 1902 he practised in Spring Grove, Minnesota,<sup>4</sup> and again used the local opera house to give public lectures, including one on hypnotism, given on 18 March 1902.<sup>6</sup> During April and May he was again in Lake City, prior to going to Manistique.

Of D.D.'s disappearance to California, B.J. would recall:

It was while we were practicing in Manistique, Michigan, we were making more money than father was in Davenport. We made a report to him of our income. We received a wire, "Come back at once." Being a minor, we obliged.

When we arrived, we found father had sold everything he could to a second hand dealer. What he couldn't sell, he turned over to us with instructions, "When you get \$200 together come to California where we are going."



Fig. 1. B.J. Palmer, Christmas 1900



Fig. 2. B.J. Palmer as he appeared in August 1902 in Davenport Times.

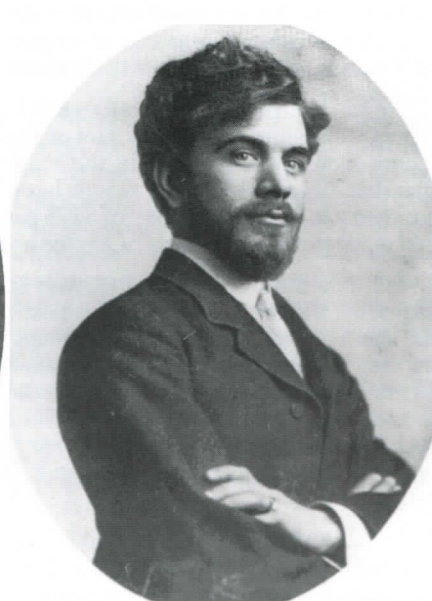


Fig. 3. B.J. Palmer in 1903.

Courtesy Palmer College Archives.

That night he and his wife skipped to California. This made our landlord bitter, and he threatened to bring him back and send him to jail for jumping a landlord's lease.<sup>3</sup>

The exact reason for D.D.'s departure has not been firmly established. Lerner, an investigative lawyer fabricates, in a theatrical fashion, a plot in which D.D. fears being sued by a student and in order not to lose his school and its belongings, transfers these to B.J., and then leaves for California, and all that in 1901. In reading Lerner's work one could be forgiven for thinking that at times he is more interested in writing a play than concentrating on facts.<sup>7</sup>

Gielow points out that the lawsuit was dropped by the student on 15 January 1901, therefore this could not be the reason for D.D.'s departure in June 1902. He rather believes that fear of medical persecution might have triggered the move.<sup>8</sup>

Zarback and Hayes advise that 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 practise their healing art, even though drugless and non-surgical, the practitioner must be examined and licensed by MDs of a medical examining board.<sup>9</sup>

Gibbons also believed that D.D. Palmer left Davenport under the threat of prosecution for the illegal practice of medicine.<sup>10</sup> By 1905 the official story line was that D.D. went to California to search for a former student, Thomas Storey, who had mysteriously disappeared from his home and practice in Duluth, Minnesota. He had apparently been traced to California, and appeared to be suffering from amnesia. D.D. located him, adjusted him, and by one adjustment returned his mental faculties to normal.<sup>11</sup>

Another reason can be found in an advertisement that B.J. placed in the *Davenport Times* on 12 July 1902:

**DR. D.D. PALMER**

and wife have removed to Pasadena, California, where they will start a branch of the  
**Chiropractic School and Infirmary**  
Located at the Corner of **Second and Brady,**  
DAVENPORT, IA.

**DR. B.J. PALMER**

IS NOW LEFT IN SOLE CHARGE, will consult with and treat all patients personally.

COURTESY AND GENTLENESS WILL BE THE MAIN FEATURES IN THE NEW MANAGEMENT.

The doctor and his assistants are thorough in their work, and as at the hands of gentlemen will get the best of treatment.

**Advancement and up-to-date business methods**

**WILL NOW BE USED ENTIRELY.**

Call up long and local distance telephone No. 8963 and consult with them regarding your disease and arrange for an examination which is free. They are open evenings until 8 p.m.

**Don't Forget that the Chiropractic School & Infirmary is now under an entirely new management.**



Whatever the reasons for D.D.'s departure, B.J., still a youthful nineteen-year-old teenager—he was born 10 September 1882<sup>12</sup>—was left holding the bag.

He had been saddled with 42 rooms that had been stripped of their furnishings, probably a lot of angry patients, some of whom would have lodged in the Palmer infirmary, and a massive financial debt: \$375 in back rent owed;<sup>13</sup> lease payments to 1 January 1904<sup>14</sup> of \$175 per month, or \$3,150,<sup>15</sup> and a general indebtedness of approximately \$8,000.<sup>16</sup>

B.J. could have left and followed D.D. to California as requested by him, but he decided to stick it out and rebuild the shattered remains of the school and infirmary. He found an angel in the person of Howard Nutting, a local businessman, who provided the financial backing to re-equip the school and infirmary. Howard Nutting had kept his eye on B.J. for some years, ever since their first meeting in 1898, which he mentioned in a talk to the Palmer student body in 1915:<sup>17</sup>

"...At that time I was occupying a desk in a large wholesale mercantile house in the city. About 2 o'clock p.m. I was attacked by a severe pain on the right side of the face, erroneously termed in those days, "toothache" (a misnomer, as you are all aware). I left my desk and informed the cashier that I must go to a dentist and would probably be absent one-half or three-quarters of an hour. I found an eminent dentist and told him to save the tooth if possible. If not, to extract it immediately. At all events to stop the pain somehow or another. He examined the tooth and replied, "there is nothing wrong with that tooth; it is sound and in a normal condition and cannot ache. There must be a process of root left next to it where a tooth had long before been drawn." Well, I told him to go after it and he did. Making an incision in the gum and fastening a forceps on the jawbone he made an ineffectual attempt to extract it. "Hangs pretty well for a process" was my remark. "Yes." Then he commenced probing until my gum looked and felt like a pounded beefsteak, but he was unable to find the process. By this time I was frantic with pain. "What are you going to do next," I asked. "This excruciating pain must cease or I will go insane." "I will see what medicine will do," he said. So he began applying medicine from each and every bottle he had in stock, yet no relief, and finally he stood before me with arms folded. "What next," I said. With downcast eyes and in a faltering voice, he remarked, "I am done. I have exhausted every remedy known to the profession." "What am I to do?" "Well, you will have to grin and bear it, I suppose. Apply a bag of hot salt or hops to your face and probably you may get relief, and when the pain ceases come back and I will try again." I just want to mention in person that this occurred some seventeen years ago. I haven't been back yet. But in my case the pain increased and I once more left my desk in search of another dentist. I went to the office of, at that time, the most renowned dentist in our city, but he was out, and I thank my stars ever since that he was out. By this time I wandered aimlessly around the street until I had arrived at the corner of Second and Brady streets, and looking up at the fourth story windows of the south Putnam building, I saw a sign, "D.D. Palmer, Chiropractor." Up to this time I had never had an

adjustment and having visited his rooms several times and seen the results attained by him on seemingly hopeless cases, I resolved to go and try this last resort. By this time it was about five o'clock in the afternoon. I went up to the office and found in charge an insignificant looking kid some sixteen years of age. "Where is Dr. Palmer," I inquired. "Why, he is out riding. You know the National Chiropractors' convention is in session here and he is showing the delegates around the Tri-Cities and the Rock Island arsenal." "How did they go," I asked. He replied, "father took them," and strange as it may seem to you, he took the entire National Chiropractic convention to see the sights with a pair of spotted ponies and a two-seated surrey. "I do not know when father will return," spoke the kid. "Can I do anything for you?" "You," I said. "Do you know anything?" "Yes," he replied, "I know some things, not much." Well, I told him my trouble. He examined the cervical, found a tender nerve and remarked, "I think I can help you." He took me into the adjusting room and put me on a plain flat rough board wash bench, on which some oil cloth had been tacked to keep the body from coming in contact with the splinters. Put a block of two by four scantling and a pine block or two with a pillow under my head and hit me a hard blow where the chicken got the axe—in the neck. I thought he had broken my neck, but he did not.

He made this remark, "I think I caught it. Go out in the reception room and rest awhile and if the pain does not cease perhaps father will be back. If not, I will try again, but I think I caught it." In less than ten minutes I was at ease and I have not been troubled since. Now this young man knew nothing of rules which are law today as the road to adjusting. He had never dreamed of the spinograph. The thought of a divided adjusting table had never occurred to him. He was entirely ignorant even of the former Palmer recoil, but he was a Chiropractor then and has been a Chiropractor ever since..."

This had apparently not been the first occurrence that D.D. had left his School and Infirmary. He had spent at least the last four months of 1899 in the East—New York State, and possibly Washington, DC—and that time again had left an unpaid debt.

Joe Schillig, a prominent Davenport—he later was D.D.'s committeeman at the dissolution of the D.D.-B.J. partnership—recalled:

"...After a while D.D. goes east and leaves B.J. to run the business. He went, and what did he leave? Did he leave a luxurious business or even a footing? He left him a load of debt—a load under which the average man would have staggered, but this boy went right along, worked and kept going until the father came back. When he came back, B.J. Palmer took him in; he stayed a few years—dissatisfied again, he went to California with all his personal effects."<sup>18</sup>

What is peculiar is that on 14 June 1902—the day D.D. decided to leave for California<sup>11</sup>—a full page advertisement with a photo of D.D. Palmer appeared in the *Davenport Times*.<sup>19</sup> The same day a short story appeared in the same paper stating that "the old doctor" was opposed to newspaper



advertising, but after the younger Dr. Palmer placed the ad, his father had to admit it got results. D.D. told the *Times* he had been in the same building for 15 years, about 1/3 of patients came from the Tri-Cities, the balance from abroad, bringing in \$25,000 annually to city revenues.<sup>201</sup>

Following D.D.'s departure, B.J. could not afford to discontinue advertising, but understandably had to keep his costs down. He devised a series of ads, called "Letters," one column wide, the length of the full page, which started on 12 July 1902, as previously shown. It tends to indicate that D.D. alienated patients, and that his business methods left something to be desired.<sup>21</sup> "Letter No. 2" appeared a few days later, 16 July 1902, and included one testimonial and a description of the infirmary, fees of \$10 for the first week of treatment, and \$5 for the following weeks; announces that furnished rooms are available for patients coming from a distance; and that meals are very homelike with the best foods; and room and board available at \$7 per week. Treatment and lodging to be prepaid weekly.<sup>22</sup>

"Letter No. 3" of 19 July 1902 includes a long testimonial on "Indigestion Cured" by Miss Grace Williams of 47 Bryan Place, Chicago.<sup>23</sup> "Letter No. 4" included the same testimonial, this time accompanied Miss Williams' portrait.<sup>24</sup> This advertising campaign of four letters over 14 days must have paid off, as the next letter, No. 5, on 2 August 1902 had a two-column width. It again contained the Williams testimonial with portrait, and for the first time showed a portrait of B.J. Palmer and an offer for free house calls for examinations in the Tri-Cities. It had the following heading:<sup>25</sup>

**LETTER NO. 5**  
**UNUSUAL!**  
**WHAT IS UNUSUAL?**  
**This is Extraordinary!**  
**What is Extraordinary?**  
**Why, This Offer!**  
**What Offer?**  
**The One That Is Good**  
**for This Next Week!**

"Letter No.6" offered free treatment for headaches during the afternoon sessions at the infirmary for the period of the next two weeks. The testimonial changed to one from Mrs. J. Shirley of Glen Ford, Michigan, with portrait.<sup>26</sup> Follow-up ads on 20 and 30 August no longer employed the "Letter" approach, but primarily used material previously published in D.D.'s *Chiropractic*. The 30 August ad also listed: **D.D. Palmer, Discoverer of the Science Called Chiropractic, 237 N. Marengo Ave., Pasadena, Cal.**<sup>27,28</sup>



Fig. 4. B.J. Palmer's first car. Courtesy Palmer College Archives.

B.J.'s practice increased to such an extent that a small piece, entitled "A Marvelous Record" with his portrait appeared in the local press which related that 584 successful treatments were given in the month of September.<sup>29</sup> By November 1902 B.J. was sufficiently financially secure that after having been taken to Buffalo, Iowa in an automobile, he negotiated buying one, and the following day pleaded guilty of owning one (Figure 4).<sup>30,31</sup>

When Stone's 1902/03 Davenport City Directory appeared in March 1903, it listed:<sup>32</sup>

**Palmer, Bartlett J.** propr Dr Palmer's Chiropractic School & Infirmary, 4<sup>th</sup> fl. S. Putnam Bldg.

indicating that B.J., after having paid D.D.'s debts, considered himself the owner of the school and infirmary.

During D.D.'s absence from teaching in Davenport and B.J.'s struggle to rescue the school and infirmary, the first competition in the "school business" appeared in the person of Solon Massey Langworthy, a Palmer graduate who had established a practice in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, after graduating in September of 1901. True to the wording on his diploma to **practice and teach** he is said to have founded, in October 1903, the American School of Chiropractic and Nature Cure at 603-605 First Avenue, Cedar Rapids.

Langworthy is credited with several firsts, among them:<sup>33</sup>

- Publication of the first chiropractic magazine, *Backbone*, October 1903.
- First use of the term *subluxation*.
- First use in chiropractic literature of the term *intervertebral foramen*.
- First publication of a textbook, *Modernized Chiropractic* in September 1906.<sup>34</sup>

But he also became known as the first mixer: *Modernized Chiropractic* presents a mixture of stretching machines, vibrators, baths, osteopathy, chiropractic and napravits.<sup>35</sup>



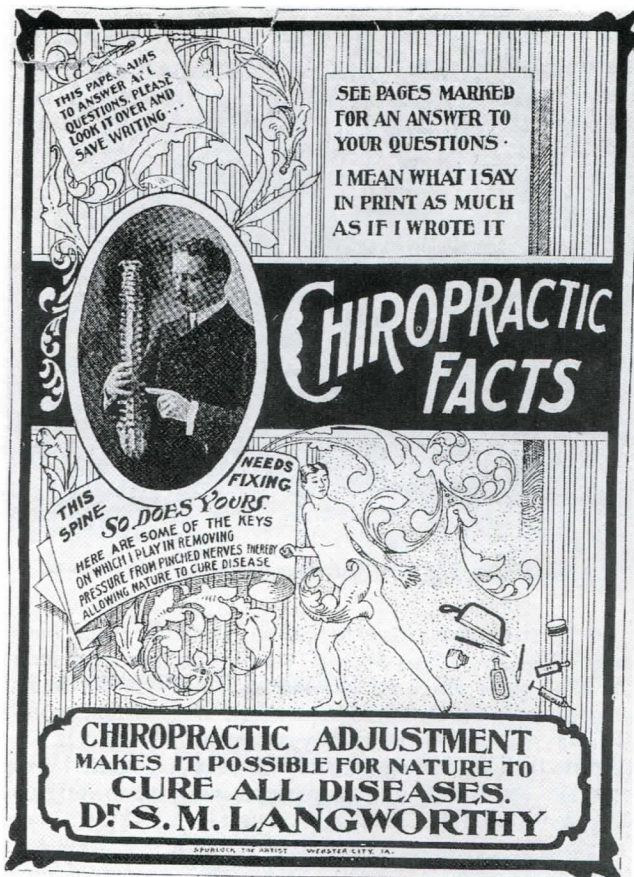


Fig. 5. Langworthy's *Chiropractic Facts*.



Fig. 6. B.J.'s *Chiropractic Proofs*.

Courtesy Palmer College Archives.

He was also the first major plagiarist of D.D. Palmer's writings. Langworthy's booklet *Chiropractic Facts* contained twelve feet in running column measurement copied from Palmer's literature, and his *School Announcement* contained names and addresses of patients cured by chiropractic, of whom three-quarters were D.D.'s patients.<sup>36</sup> When in 1905 Palmer retained the services of Chamberlin and Peterson, prosecuting attorneys, to protect his copyright, the *Backbone* seemed to fade away.<sup>37</sup>

Our research indicates that:

- The magazine *Backbone* with its first edition in October 1903 was indeed the first chiropractic magazine.
- The first published use of the term *sub-luxation* was indeed in the first issue of *Backbone*, but it was used by a Dr. Carol W. Burtch, a lecturer at Langworthy's school.<sup>38</sup> Palmer's first use in print thus far located by us of the term *subluxation* occurred late in 1903 in *Chiropractic Proofs*.<sup>39</sup>
- The first appearance in chiropractic literature of the term *intervertebral foramen* thus far discovered was in a full page advertisement in the *Davenport Times* of 12 June 1902.<sup>19</sup>

The first chiropractic textbook of Langworthy was *Modernized Chiropractic*, apparently written by Oakley Smith, a faculty member of Langworthy's school. According to Lerner<sup>34</sup> it was published in September 1906. The first advertisement for the Palmers' first book, *The Science of Chiropractic* was published in January 1906.<sup>40</sup> In July the Palmers stated that this book was being used as a textbook in their school.<sup>41</sup> By October 1906 the third printing of that volume was being shipped.<sup>42</sup> It is a moot point which book was received first by its readers.

Langworthy also published a 16-page booklet *Chiropractic Facts* sometime after March 1903.<sup>43</sup> He still used the term *luxation* in place of *subluxation*, and wrote about *spinal windows* instead of *intervertebral foramina*. The marked-up copy located in the Palmer College archives indicates that the term *intervertebral foramen* was used in an article entitled *Innate Intellect*. It had been identified as having been copied from D.D. Palmer's writings.<sup>43</sup>

A short announcement in *Chiropractic Facts* also indicates that the American School of Chiropractic and Nature Cure had a "Home Study Department," by which a student could take part of the course by mail, but must finish the clinical work at school. Thus Langworthy created the first mail-order



course. Another announcement states that a Mr. Neuwirth began to study at the school in November 1902. The diploma stated that the recipient was qualified to teach and practice Chiropractic and Nature Cure.<sup>43</sup>

Gielow<sup>8</sup> stated that on April 16, 1903, B.J. Palmer was indicted by the Grand Jury of Scott County, Iowa, on the charge of publicly professing to cure and heal without having procured and filed a certificate of the Board of Medical Examiners, based on the testimony of E.P. Adler, proprietor of the *Davenport Times*, that B.J. had advertised in the *Times* to be able to cure.<sup>44</sup>

Lerner, who claimed that B.J. was placed under arrest in January 1903,<sup>44</sup> elaborated: "He sought counsel. He entered a plea of not guilty. He was kept in custody only a few hours, then released on bail fixed at \$500. Records at the Scott County Courthouse indicate that there was no final disposition of the case. Trial was regularly delayed through continuances, and the final one was granted three years later on December 14, 1905. No further action seems to have been taken."<sup>8</sup>

B.J. was not the only one indicted at that Grand Jury sitting. Among several others was also Prof. J.F. Whitson, magnetic healer.<sup>45</sup>

One may well ask if this action by the Scott County Medical Society was brought on

- To enforce the recently tightened law,
- To continue the Palmer/Matthey feud, which started in 1899,<sup>46</sup>
- Because of professional jealousy of B.J.'s clinical successes, or
- Because of envy of B.J.'s improved financial status, evidenced by owning one of the first automobiles in Davenport.

Just how the indictment affected the Palmer Infirmary is unknown. B.J. obviously kept on practising. There is evidence that in December 1903 B.J. was called from Davenport to West Virginia to administer chiropractic care to Mr and Mrs Moats, and that two days later they came to Davenport to continue treatment.<sup>47</sup> It is considered that besides Davenport he kept visiting the other localities he had previously serviced, although we have not been able to locate any proof.

When late in 1903 B.J. published *Chiropractic Proofs*, a 24-page booklet, he had no problem in using Langworthy's quote, "I mean what I say in print as much as if I wrote it."<sup>39</sup> (Figures 5, 6) The booklet contained a series of testimonials, as expected. It also included several pages of interest to prospective students, reprints of many of D.D.'s articles, a description of the current infirmary, a listing of office hours, and one article for the special attention of ladies. This booklet indicates that the infirmary was in full operation. About the infirmary B.J. writes:

#### OUR INFIRMARY

For the benefit of non-residents who contemplate coming to me for adjustments will say that my parlors, offices, school and infirmary are the finest in the city. All the street car lines including those to Rock Island, Moline, East Moline, Watertown, Milan, run by, or make connections with cars that

pass our doors. We are on the main corner of the city within a stone throw of all the leading merchants and business houses of the city, and within easy reach of all boarding houses and hotels.

Our forty-two rooms are well furnished, having hard maple polished floors with rugs, hospital iron beds, hardwood furniture, and other hygienic conveniences. The bedrooms are kept complete in detail. Our bath rooms are the most complete of any infirmary in the city, with abundance of hot and cold water.

A full line of hospital supplies and appliances are kept in the bath rooms for patients' use. The use of these baths and appliances are free.

The corridors and rooms are lighted by electricity and heated by steam.

The infirmary reception room is resplendent with costly draperies, paintings and furnishings.

Our Infirmary and School is centrally located, being on the corner of 2nd and Brady streets within two blocks distance of C., M. & St. Paul and the C., B. & Q. depots, within four blocks of the C.R.I. & P. depot. Within two blocks of boat landing.

Carriages, cabs and express wagons meet all incoming trains and boats. Let me know in advance by letter, telephone or telegraph of exact train and time you will arrive, and you will be met by my representative at the depot.

#### MY OFFICE HOURS

My Office Hours: every day from 1 to 8 p.m.; Sunday from 8 a.m. to 12 m., unless otherwise arranged for. The Infirmary is open all day and night for the admittance of patients.

Ladies were advised by B.J. that:

#### LADIES' ATTENTION

I realize that it is some times very embarrassing for a lady to tell a physician about her troubles, for that reason I keep in constant attendance a lady nurse at the office during office hours. She assists (if desired) all ladies in getting ready for examinations, is present (if desired) during all examinations and also present (if desired) while I am giving the adjustments.

THE CAUSE OF ALL FEMALE DISEASES is in the spinal column (small of the back) and I find it is unnecessary to adjust other than the CAUSE. For the removal of the cause always allows the diseased organs to resume their natural positions and functions. HENCE I NEVER REQUIRE LOCAL EXAMINATION, AND NEVER GIVE LOCAL TREATMENT, and even so there is no line of diseases with which I have more complete success than those which afflict womankind.

In later mailings of the booklet he also suggested that the recipients should send for the School Announcement.

After the expiry of the lease on 1 January 1904, B.J. appears to have renewed the lease on a temporary basis.<sup>48</sup>



IOWA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

Return of a Marriage to Clerk of District Court.

3. Full Name of GROOM, B. J. Palmer  
 4. Place of Residence, 105 W. 2nd Davenport  
Chicago, Ill.  
 5. Occupation, Dr.  
 6. Age next Birthday, 21 years, 7. Color, W. 8. Race, Am.  
 9. Number of Groom's Marriage, First  
 10. Place of Birth, Whitewater, Ia.  
 11. Father's Name, David J. Palmer  
 12. Mother's Maiden Name, Louise McGee  
 13. Full Name of BRIDE, Mabel Heath  
 14. Maiden Name of a Widow, \_\_\_\_\_  
 15. Place of Residence, Davenport  
 16. Age next Birthday, 21 years, 17. Color, W. 18. Race, Am.  
 19. Number of Bride's Marriage, First  
 20. Place of Birth, Milan, Ill.  
 21. Father's Name, Mr. Heath  
 22. Mother's Maiden Name, Eva Little  
 23. Married at Davenport in the County of Scott,  
 and State of Iowa, the 30th day of April, 1904.  
 24. Witnesses to Marriage, Wm. Heath David B. Palmer  
N.B.—At Nos. 6 and 16 state whether 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, etc., marriage of each. At 24 give names of subscribing witnesses to the Marriage Certificate. If no subscribing witnesses, give names of two persons who witnessed the ceremony.

We hereby certify that the above is a correct return of a Marriage celebrated by me.  
 Dated at Davenport this 30th day of April, 1904.  
B. J. Palmer, Sec.  
Wm. Heath

Fig. 7. Marriage Records of B.J. Palmer and Mabel Heath. Courtesy Special Collections, Davenport Public Library.

On 30 April 1904 B.J. Palmer married Mabel Heath of Milan, Illinois, with both fathers acting as witnesses (Figure 7).

The couple honeymooned in Washington, DC and the South; they explored Mammoth cave in Kentucky. Upon return from their honeymoon they resided in the Ryan building.<sup>49</sup>

In July 1904 B.J. was practising in Elkins, Randolph County, West Virginia, where he applied for a state license to practise his profession in the Hotel Randolph, Elkins and paid a fee of \$50.<sup>50</sup>

#### D.D. PALMER: CHASING THE RAINBOW

Just as various historians could not agree on the reason why D.D. Palmer left Davenport in 1902, there was no consensus as to where he went. Turner<sup>51</sup> stated in 1931 that in 1903 D.D. Palmer opened the Portland College of Chiropractic at Portland, Oregon, and that 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.

Dye<sup>52</sup> wrote in 1939: "D.D. left Davenport to resume work in what he hoped would be more congenial climes, where he could pursue his own methods in the teaching of his

**THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH**  
INCORPORATED  
21,000 OFFICES IN AMERICA. CABLE SERVICE TO ALL

RECEIVED

201. CH. EX. S. 9 Paid  
 Pasadena, Calif., Oct. 4, -02.  
 Dr. D. J. Palmer,  
 Davenport, Iowa--  
 Chiro is not guilty of  
 practicing medicine or surgery.  
 Dr. D. D. Palmer. 4:38

Fig. 8. D.D.'s telegram to B.J. Courtesy Palmer College Archives.

discoveries. He first went to Oregon, then Oklahoma, finally to California."

While B.J. Palmer in 1902,<sup>28</sup> D.D. Palmer in 1905<sup>11</sup> and Lerner in the early 1950s identified Pasadena as D.D.'s first residence in the West, it is surprising to see that Gielow, who had access to this material in the Palmer Archives, wrote in 1981 that "D.D. packed his household items and all the bedding from the many rooms of his infirmary. He shipped all of his belongings to Portland, Oregon, where he moved with his wife."<sup>53</sup>

As published by B.J. in the *Davenport Times*, however, D.D. had located at 327 N. Marengo, Pasadena, where the *Pasadena Evening Star* published that "he has the fence and front of the house decorated with signs styling himself a 'doctor' and advertising to cure disease by removing the cause."<sup>53</sup>

It has been stated that D.D. opened a school in Pasadena.<sup>54,55</sup> It must, however, have had a short duration, because D.D. was charged on 20 September 1902 with practising without a license.<sup>56</sup> The complaint was filed by a Mrs Haynes, whose husband, a consumptive, had died under D.D.'s care. He pleaded "Not Guilty," and the case was continued to 4 October 1902, at which time it was dismissed on a technicality, as the complaint had been drawn under an old statute instead of the then current one.<sup>57</sup> It was understood that a new complaint would be filed in a few days and prosecution recommended.<sup>58</sup>

The above tends to indicate that D.D. again bent the truth when he sent a telegram to B.J. on 4 October 1902: "Chiro is not guilty of practicing medicine or surgery," as there was no verdict, and a new filing of complaint was imminent (Figure 8).

It appears that D.D. did not want to be charged again, but instead moved to Santa Barbara, where he was located at 605 State Street as shown on his letterhead dated 30 November 1902 (Figure 9).



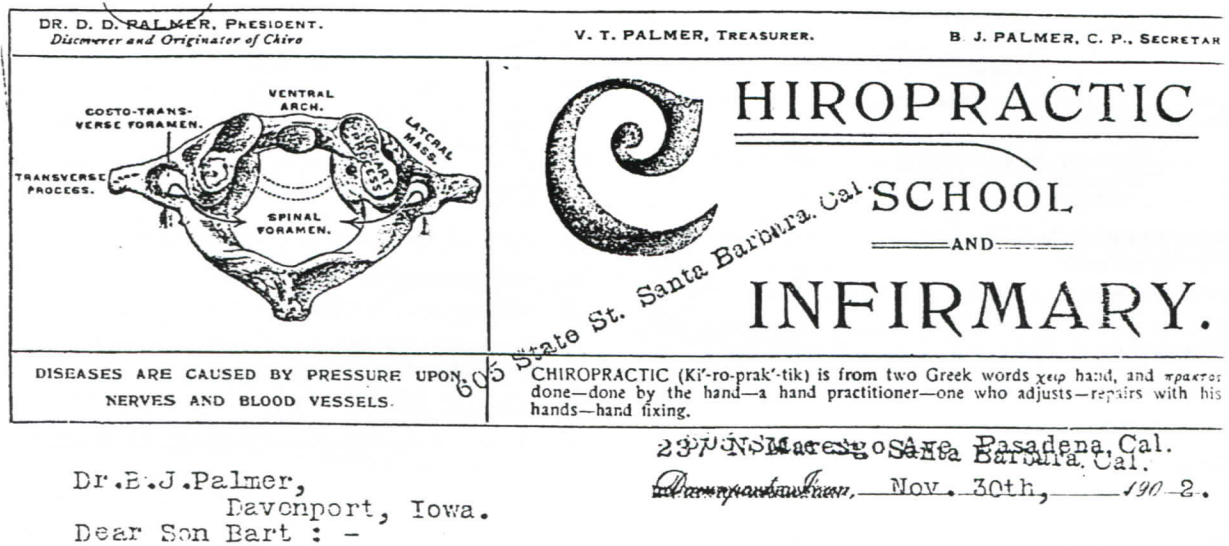


Fig. 9. D.D.'s letterhead as used in Davenport, Pasadena and Santa Barbara during 1902. Courtesy Palmer College Archives.

The letterhead also indicates that he had not changed B.J.'s postnominals since B.J. had graduated on 6 January 1902, as it still lists him as CP, Chiropractic Practitioner, a designation used by chiropractors in practice before they had completed their studies and received their degree.

The Santa Barbara location, also known as the Aiken Block, was the setting for his new school enterprise. On 1 July 1903 he was holding a "clinic" in Suite 15, with Roy Renwick as the patient. Present as **students** were H.D. Reynard, Ira H. Lucas, O.G. Smith, Minora C. Paxson, A.B. Wightman, and M.A. Collier.<sup>59</sup> Minora Paxson had been listed as graduating in 1899,<sup>60,61</sup> 1900,<sup>62</sup> as the first woman chiropractor and as a faculty member in D.D.'s Santa Barbara School.<sup>2</sup> None of these statements could be verified and are doubtful, especially in the light of D.D.'s statement that Paxson was in Santa Barbara as a student, and that he listed her as having paid her \$500 tuition on 1 June 1903, just four weeks prior to the date of the clinic.<sup>64</sup>

Minora Paxson went on to become the first chiropractor proven to have gained a license, in 1905.<sup>60</sup> An earlier license, said to have been dated 26 January 1904, and issued to B.J. Palmer<sup>62</sup> has never been located.<sup>64</sup> Paxson joined Solon Langworthy and Oakley Smith in the American School of Chiropractic at Cedar Rapids as "Professor of Gynecology and Obstetrics," and also lectured on physiology and symptomatology.<sup>65</sup>

Another member of the Santa Barbara class to make a name for himself was Harry D. Reynard. In 1904 he founded the Pacific School of Chiro-Practic in Oakland, California,<sup>66</sup> and later published the journal *Sub-luxation*.<sup>67</sup>

Again D.D. was put under pressure and left California in late 1903, as a charge of "practicing medicine without a license" was filed against him in Santa Barbara.<sup>68</sup>

One unreferenced statement<sup>55</sup> has claimed that D.D. started another school with Oakley Smith and Minora Paxson in Chicago. This school, however, also did not last long, as Smith and Paxson left Palmer to join Langworthy's school in Cedar

Rapids.<sup>55</sup> Exact dates have not yet been established, but it is certain that D.D. was in Davenport on 30 April 1904, as he was one of the witnesses to B.J. Palmer's wedding to Mabel Heath, and a partnership was established as B.J., contrary to the advice of his best friends,<sup>17,18</sup> took his father back into the school and infirmary.

The establishment of the partnership in 1904 ended the period identified by Lerner as "The Lost Years."

## CONCLUSION

It is hardly surprising that B.J., late in his seventh decade of life during Lerner's 1950 investigations, was unable to recall in detail certain events that took place half a century earlier, especially since published records subsequently uncovered by other investigators show this to have been a particularly turbulent and trying time for him. On the positive side, the results of our investigations indicate that "The Lost Years" were also a pivotal period in B.J.'s personal and professional development and for the emerging chiropractic profession.

B.J.'s maturation is well illustrated by his responses to D.D.'s instructions to return to Davenport, and to sell up and join him in California. When he received a wire from his father to return home from Manistique, Michigan, "Being a minor, we obliged." On the other hand, when he arrived in Davenport to find that his father had left for California on the proceeds of what chattels he could readily sell, he did not obey D.D.'s instructions to sell the rest and join him. Instead he responded to a higher authority—his sense of honour and his vision of what chiropractic should become—paying off his father's debts for the second time in his young life and, with the willing support of Howard Nutting, whom he had once helped, rebuilding the school and infirmary to a higher standard than ever before. Once again, he displayed filial loyalty after D.D.'s return in 1904 by establishing a partnership with him, but never again would he be left "holding the bag," instead choosing to buy him out before wanderlust again lured D.D. away from Davenport.



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