The “Black” History of Chiropractic

A Concise History for the ABCA
February 13th 2014
By Winston Kyle Carhee Jr. DC
President of the
American Black Chiropractic Association
D.D. Palmer, Discoverer of Chiropractic
Harvey Lillard, of African Ancestry, owned and operated a janitorial service in the building where D.D. Palmer practiced.
Harvey Lillard’s Daughter, Valdenia Simons

she’s a link to history

By Pam Adams

Valdenia Simons is not a chiropractor and has been to see only once in her 80 years. But in this prismatic circle, she’s something of a celebrity. The reason has been interviewed for books and asked to speak at national chiropractic conventions and graduations. These spontaneous organizations and gatherings have her sitting at the podium, with the large audience held.

Airmen came to her just to shake her hand. She has been invited to speak at a conference on the history of chiropractic in June at the National College of Chiropractic, Los Angeles.

She takes all of this in stride. Her voice takes on a tone of “you-want-to-sing-along” when the black woman speaks with people who want the honor of learning a picture with her. “When you’ve been living as long as I have, that’s something,” she says.

The attention is not as much for her as it is for her father, Harvey Lillard, the first person said to have been cured by Dr. D.D. Palmer. His work is called the founder of chiropractic, D.D. Palmer. But Lillard, grandson of an English nobleman, never got any credit. Just how much credit he deserves and just what part he played in the growth of chiropractic is not clear.

As most history books tell the story, D.D. Palmer was an interesting, if somewhat eccentric, businessman, entrepreneurial, trying to make a living as a magnetic healer in Davenport, Iowa. He had been working on his theory of healing by spinal manipulation for some time before he honestly experienced Lillard, a partially deaf junior.

The small story seems to be by one of her father’s co-workers, although that Palmer’s discovery was by accident in 1895. It’s a story not easily and often. Though the memory sometimes fades when it comes to other details of her life, this story always remains the same. As do much in books and papers on the history of chiropractic.

“Chiropractic care is not a curse, because of my father, she begins. “Gradually my father was a wise man. He had a man that worked for him in front of D.D. Palmer’s office while my father was finishing the story.

“Then Mr. Palmer was in his office reading a book. The doctor stuck his fingers between the pages and waited out to listen to the end of the tale. The doctor was saddened that he had my father in the back of the book.”

Lillard had been 17 years old, since he had been unable to walk and heard a loud pop.

So Lillard discovered he could hear better — and not. Palmer, it was to his credit.

The two men made a pact, Mrs. Simons says. “I don’t know what kind of doctor he was, but he wasn’t doing too well at the time. He said to my father. Suppose I were to give you a little money, what I have left. If I become successful, we’ll share it.”

“My father told me the doctor gave him a little money one time, and a little money then was little money.”

Palmer gave his work to his son, R.J., who founded Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, the first and one of the largest chiropractic schools. David Palmer, the great-grandson of D.D. has often invited Mrs. Simons to special occasions at the school. Ironically, blacks were not admitted as students there until the 1960s.

“When I lived in that area, I was always seeing my father’s face on Palmer advertising,” Mrs. Simons says, because he hated the long and bitter conflict between R.J and B.J. Palmer.

B.D. reportedly mentally ill and suffering from typhoid fever, died in California in 1923. These attempts were made to take R.J. to trial for his father’s murder.

Before his death B.D. is supposed to have told a friend that his son tried to run over him with a car during a chiropractic convention in Davenport.

A real chiropractic college reportedly gathered false affidavits stating that B.D. died after he was struck by a car driven by his son. Grand juries refused to indict R.J. each time.

It’s not clear what kind of relationship Lillard had with the Palmer’s after the spinal adjustment. “I think he left it away from the scandal,” Mrs. Simons said.

Lillard moved to Seattle, Wash., where he worked as a salesman before he died in 1955.

“The year chiropractic came into being, Valdenia Simons came into being,” she likes to say. And she has lived to become a symbol of chiropractic history.

Valdenia Simons, 88, with an award presented to her by the National College of Chiropractic.

Photo by Art Land
The First Adjustment, D.D. Palmer and Harvey Lillard, 1895.
A portrait of the first chiropractic patient.
Please fill out and return this Questionnaire promptly. Your answers will enable us to cooperate in giving you such information as will best serve your purpose in making reply to inquiry.

DATE ____________________________ . 193

1. Name in full ____________________________

2. Age ____________________________

3. Address ____________________________

4. Previous business or mechanical experience:
   State kind of business and number of years in each, etc.
   ____________________________

5. Previous schooling:
   Common School (What grade) ____________________________
   High School (How long) ____________________________
   College (How long) ____________________________

6. Have you taken Chiropractic adjustments? ____________________________
   If so, from whom? ____________________________

7. Are any members of your family or near relatives Chiropractors? (Yes or No) ____________________________
   Name them and give Address ____________________________

8. Are you married or single? ____________________________
   How many dependent children? ____________________________

9. When could you enroll? ____________________________ . 193

10. Nationality? (Negroes not accepted) ____________________________

11. Check two booklets from the following list that you would like to have sent you:

   ☐ The Last Word. ☐ A Tour Through The P.S.C.
   ☐ B. J. Palmer, Lecturer. ☐ The Chiropractic Field.
African-American at PSC Lyceum, 1928?
Bulletin of the American University, a Correspondence College
Central Chiropractic College, 1923
Exterior, Rubel Chiropractic College
Faculty Member, Julien Dawson of Rubel College
A.A. Cole (left), John Usher (right)
Organizing members of the Interstate Chiropractic Association
B.J. Palmer, President of the PSC 1906-1961.
Clarence Reaver
The Reaver School, as featured in Ebony Magazine

SCHOOL FOR CHIROPRACTORS

While many of the patients who pay more than 500,000 dollars a year to the 30,000 chiropractors in the U.S. are Negroes, few colored men and women have been able to enter this large and lucrative medical profession. But this year 15 students, including one Western white, have graduated in the same time the nation's schools of the same name for colored people. The two men's schools, at wards preparatory schools, prepare them for the work of students in the profession.

The Reaver School of Chiropractic, the first to open its doors without a formal start, was set up a year ago at a great effort and with the help of a group of men and women who believe that a Negro should be permitted to study. Already loved by doctors in this country, the Negro student is now acknowledged to be a valuable asset in the profession.
The Reaver School of Chiropractic
Dayton, Ohio 1945-1951

Art of adjusting is demonstrated on a real volunteer by youthful Clarence E. Reaver, president and founder of the Reaver School. School's entrance (below) is meeting place for students and patients. House and grounds once constituted a private estate.
International College of Chiropractic, Dayton, OH 1948-1955
Faculty of International College, 1949
Ossie Johnson, a 1950 graduate of Missouri Chiropractic College
Walton Russ, First African-American to be licensed in Arkansas - 1954
Stanley Dale, PSC, 1956
Study group in the PSC library
Milous Reese, Alabama Chiropractor of the Year, 1979
Ad For Pennsylvania College of Straight Chiropractic, 1980s.
Bobby Westbrooks, D.C.

- Helped form the American Black Chiropractor’s Association
- Wrote the seminal article on African-Americans in Chiropractic
ABCA’s Third Annual Convention. Pasadena, Texas
ACA President Kenneth Luedte, SABCA President Gloria Niles, and ABCA Vice-President Herman Glass II, at the 1988 annual convention in Chicago.
ABCA Officers at a symposium addressing minorities in chiropractic on the Palmer campus, 1990.
Willard Smith, D.C., President of the California Chiropractic Association in 1990.
Celebrating 100 Years of Chiropractic
American Black Chiropractic Association Makes Splash in Jamaica

Jamaican Chiropractic Association Launched

The American Black Chiropractic Association (ABCA) held its 15th annual national convention Aug. 14-18 in Jamaica, that verdant isle in the West Indies that rises out of the Caribbean Sea some 90 miles of blue water south of Cuba.
President of Sherman College

July 01, 2001 through July 2005
Recruitment = Secret Weapon

Mr. Mackel Harris
ABCA Joins the Chiro Summit

www.ChiroSummit.org
New Web Site

2014 ABCA National Convention in New Orleans, LA!

www.ABCAchiro.com
Current ABCA Board
2014 Convention

ABCA
National Convention

American Black Chiropractic Association

June 26-28th 2014

Harrah's
New Orleans
Mission Statement

Integrating and improving outcomes for persons of color entering the profession of Doctor of Chiropractic.
Constitution Purpose:

- To recruit, encourage and support black persons to study chiropractic.
- To encourage camaraderie and leadership amongst black chiropractic doctors, instructors, technicians and students.
- To assist chiropractic colleges in recruiting qualified black students and faculty members.
- To teach and perform research in chiropractic.
- To facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience, and research among doctors of chiropractic.
- To help advance the science, philosophy, and art of chiropractic, and to improve the standards in chiropractic professional knowledge.
- To donate time and services to neighborhood health clinics.
- To perform community education.
- To establish the Harvey Lillard scholarship fund for members of the Student American Black Chiropractic Association.
What % of the Population

What % currently get adjusted
What % should
What % are minority
What % are minority doctors
Diversity & Growth

The Schools

&

The Profession

Needs *Minorities* to get involved
We Need “Everyone” to get involved
ARE YOU A MINORITY

Are you a minority in the field of healthcare?

Have your “Professional” Civil Rights been violated?

As societies conscious changes so do laws. Discrimination of Minorities is no-longer acceptable.
The ACA nondiscrimination provision states:
“A group health plan and a health insurance issuer offering group or individual health insurance coverage shall not discriminate with respect to participation under the plan or coverage against any health care provider who is acting within the scope of that provider’s license or certification under applicable State law.”
We have more in Common

History is written everyday. What will Chiropractic look like in the next 100 years.

“The History of Chiropractic!”
By YOU
THANK YOU

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