Chronology of
Joe Shelby Riley, D.C. &
RILEY’S SCHOOLS OF CHIROPRACTIC

Potential Sources:

Jackson, Robert B., DC (&Ruby) (1950, CCC/Oakland); Rt. 1, Box 411, A-5, Jones OK 73049 (405-399-3051)

Chronology

1907: DD forms the Palmer/Gregory school in Oklahoma City instead of teaching at Carver/Denny (Gielow, 1981, p. 118; Carver, unpublished, p. 54)

1907?: Palmer and Gregory break up after 3 months and one week (Gielow, 1981, p. 118); DD refers to a mere 9 weeks of association (Palmer, 1909a, p. 62):

If Dr. D.D. Palmer's connection with the Gregory School as a teacher for nine weeks is of such importance to justify the continuance of advertising Palmer-Gregory Chiropractic College, how much more is it worth to you as a student to be under the personal instruction of D.D. Palmer for nine months? During that nine weeks much of my Chiropractic teaching was sidetracked, owing to the teaching of medical ideas which were not Chiropractic.

1908?: DD asks for job at Carver/Denny, but soon returns to Portland OR where he teaches at the Gorby-Hinkley School [mentioned in Adjustor] (Gielow, 1981, p. 119)

1908 (Feb 21): DD gives lecture in Oklahoma City (Gielow, 1981, p. 120)

1908 (Mar 3): TJ Palmer loans DD $300 to move to Oklahoma City; DD sells his grocery (Gielow, 1981, p. 119)

1908 (late?): DD reacts to a comment in BJ’s The Chiropractor (Palmer, 1910, p. 420):

In The Chiropractor of May, 1908, we find the following: ‘All other schools are branches or graduates of The Palmer School.’ How about the D.D. Palmer School at Portland, Ore.?.....The original Chiropractor has been transported from his primary soil to Portland, Ore., where he will again send branches from the original stock. The students under me are receiving a Chiropractic education first handed. No others are. Is no ‘The Palmer School’ in a similar position as ‘The Palmer-Gregory School’ and ‘The Gorby and Hinkley School’, over all of which I once presided? Each school was fortunate in having The Founder as its acknowledged head for a time. The D.D. Palmer College of Chiropractic of Portland is now the Fountain Head of Chiropractic and no others are.

PHOTOGRAPH

Alva Gregory and D.D. Palmer, circa 1908, presumably in Oklahoma City (Texas Chiropractic College Archives)

1911 (Oct 1): The American Drugless Healer (1[2]: 26), published by the American Chiropractic Association (headquartered in Oklahoma City, C. Sterling Cooley DC, Vice-President) includes for the first time in its “Directory of Chiropractors”: “Chas. A. Cale, D.C., 1012 Pico St., Los Angeles, Calif.” and “A.W. Richardson, 11434 South Olive St., Los Angeles, Calif.” (no degree or title given for Richardson); also included in the directory are “A.A. Gregory, M.D., D.C. at 521.5 N. Broadway, Oklahoma City, Okla.”, Joe Shelby Riley, D.O., D.C., at 521.5 N. Broadway, Oklahoma City, LE Fuller, D.O., D.C. at 511-013 Meridian Life Bldg., Indianapolis, “G.H. Patchen, M.D., D.C. at 147 W. 23rd St., New York, N.Y.”; and “Cooley & Cooley, Enid, Okla.” (p. 27)

-“Notes and Personals” by J.S. Riley (p. 3):

Dr. J.N. Stone of San Antonio, Texas, on his return trip from the north, where he had had an extended outing, stopped a part of a day in Oklahoma City, where he visited a number of friends, and transacted some business. He also called on the editor, and left him warmest congratulations on the effort we are making to give drugless healers of every class the greatest paper they have ever had. The Doctor has recently had a friendly fight with the medical men, in which he rendered them hors de combat. He showed no pugnaciousness whatever, and very little was shown by the other side, but Stone won easily, and all parties were satisfied, and a living Chiropractic is assured in the great state of Texas.

-“Special Mention” (p. 6):

Dr. [Alva] Gregory and wife were pleasantly entertained by Dr. J.N. Stone at San Antonio, Texas, during their stop in that city while on their way home from California. Dr. Stone is doing a successful practice there that has excited the jealousy of some of the allopathic physicians, hence has had to defend himself in the courts of that state.
The only thing Dr. Stone was guilty of was restoring many patients to health that medicine and other old methods could not reach. It is the heterodox that becomes famous by their success in handling difficult cases that calls forth the wrath of the orthodox who cannot meet with success in their treatment.

1911 (Nov 1): *American Drugless Healer* [17]:

1911 (Dec 1): *American Drugless Healer* [18]:

1912: concerning Alva Gregory & Palmer-Gregory College of Chiropractic, of which Joe Shelby Riley was VP (Keating & Cleveland, accepted for publication):

Gregory offered various electronic and pneumatic percussive instruments ("concussors") for sale, and characterized Palmer as an uneducated practitioner who had no grasp of modern biology. Gregory also became an activist on behalf of mixer chiropractic. He served as editor of the widely read *American Drugless Healer*, a monthly periodical published by the Oklahoma City-based American Chiropractic Association (ACA) during 1911-1913. Among Gregory's most prominent graduates were Joe Shelby Riley, D.O., D.C., who founded schools in Boston, Detroit and Washington, D.C. (Gibbons, 1991), Albert W. Richardson, D.C., founder of several of the broad-scope California Chiropractic Colleges and a central player in the medical-chiropractic and straight-mixer feuds in California during the second decade of this century (Keating et al., 1994), and C. Sterling Cooley, D.C. of Enid, Oklahoma (Godzway, 1934), who would serve as president and board member of the broad-scope National Chiropractic Association (NCA) during the 1930s and 1940s (Keating & Rehm 1993).

Gregory effected a temporary merger of his Palmer-Gregory College with the St. Louis Chiropractic College in 1913 (see Table 2-2). The St. Louis College, founded by L. William Ray, A.M., M.D., D.C., offered an 18-month program in "progressive chiropractic" and "Rational Therapy Methods" (including "anatomy, chemistry (urinalysis, blood tests, stomach fluid tests) and bacteriology," and proposed to qualify its graduates for licensure as drugless practitioners (DPs) in several states, such as California, Illinois, Michigan and Washington (Consolidation, 1913). The school advertisement also noted that the combined St. Louis/Palmer-Gregory course of instruction:

...will enable their graduates to qualify by examination and to receive regular medical license in several different states, where the state law does not require graduation from an AMA medical college before admittance to examination.

Gregory's continuing influence derived from several sources, including his role as administrator at several schools, his extensive lecture tours throughout the United States, and from his numerous publications. His books included *Spinal Adjustment* (1910), *Spinal Treatment* (1912), *Rational Therapy* (1913) and *Spondylotherapy Simplified* (1914). His eclectic orientation to chiropractic and drugless healing struck a responsive chord among many who found favor with Gregory's motto: "...the true principle of progress in the healing art, namely, try all things with an open mind, and hold fast to that which is found to be good" (Gregory, 1912).

### Table 2-2: Advertisement from the *American Drugless Healer* (1913 [Aug]; 3[4]: 96) for the instructional program of the combined St. Louis Chiropractic College and the Palmer-Gregory College of Chiropractic

**St. Louis Chiropractic College**

Incorporated and Chartered Under the Laws of the State of Missouri

Our full two years course of graded instruction covers Anatomy, Embryology, Histology, Physiology, Pathology, Symptomatology, Diagnosis, Neurology, Nerve Palpation and Nerve Tracing. We teach the latest methods of spinal adjustment and concussion. Our course leads to the degree of DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC AND RATIONAL THERAPY.

Our course is so thorough that our graduates can pass the most critical examinations that may be given by any State Board for drugless physicians.

OUR FACULTY is composed of such leaders in the science of Chiropractic spondylotherapy as the world famous authors, Dr. Alva Emery Gregory our vice-president, and Dr. Irvin J. Eales and other regularly graduated physicians and experienced Chiropractors.

STUDENTS may begin course at any time. Patients may arrange to be treated at the College.

NIGHT CLASSES are held so that students may earn while they learn.

PARTIAL CORRESPONDENCE COURSES may be had in special cases where gentlemen or ladies cannot attend full term.

SPECIAL POST GRADUATE COURSES FOR PHYSICIANS who desire to build up a large and paying office practice and MAKE MORE MONEY than ever before and make it easier than by old worn-out methods, for if you "Know How" you will succeed by the aid of Rational Therapy Methods.

Act Today and Write to

L. WILLIAM RAY, A.M., M.D., D.C., Pres.
ALVA EMERY GREGORY, M.D., D.C., Vice-President
New Grand Central Theatre Building, Cor. Grand and Lucas Avenues, St. Louis, Missouri

1912-18: concerning the New England College of Chiropractic and the Washington School of Chiropractic, of which Joe Shelby Riley was founder & president (Keating & Cleveland, accepted for publication):

*New England College of Chiropractic & the Washington School of Chiropractic*
charged with violation of the state law that required authorization to grant degrees, when he awarded the DC to his graduates. Riley relocated to the District of Columbia, where in 1914 he established the Washington School of Chiropractic, an institution that may have lasted as late as 1926 (Ferguson & Wiese, 1988).

J.S. Riley was among those early college leaders who were enamored of academic degrees. Riley's 1919 Science & Practice of Chiropractic with Allied Sciences listed his credentials as "M.D., Ph.D., M.S., D.M.T., D.O., D.P., D.C., Ph.C." Although the American Chiropractic Association (1991, p. 17) characterizes Riley as a "prominent medical man," most accounts of this itinerant school man "deny that Riley's degrees were as questionable as colleges' curricula. His educational program involved a part-time faculty of 15, including two medical doctors, and provided the then standard three years of six months each. Instruction was provided in a variety of alternative healing methods, including spondylotrophy, instrument adjusting (concussors) and naturopathic remedies. Riley was the maximum mixer of his era, and he earned the scorn of both the straight community and of elements of broad-scope chiropractic.

Riley's peer group, as suggested by his 1911 listing in the directory of the American Drugless Healer magazine, included Charles A. Cale, D.C., N.D. and A.W. Richardson, D.C. of the Los Angeles and California Chiropractic Colleges, his mentor Alva Gregory, M.D., D.C., and George H. Patchen, M.D., D.C. of New York City. In later years he would become a "philosophical" ally of E.W. Collins' Mecca Chiropractic College in Newark, New Jersey and Benedict Lust, M.D., N.D.'s naturopathic/chiropractic institution in New York City (Briggs, 1924). Riley's 1918 text on Zone Therapy would go through at least 12 editions, which bespeaks an appeal despite the censure of the chiropractic establishment. However, Willard Carver, LL.B., D.C. had little respect for Riley's published work, suggesting that "statements in this book...were not based upon provable scientific facts," and denied the popularity of Riley's contribution (Carver, 1936, p. 60).

1912-21: according to Alloway & Rankin (1982):
Listings from the American Chiropractic Association indicated that at least seven chiropractic colleges located in the District of Columbia between 1912 and 1921: The Chiropractic Research University, Riley School of Chiropractic, National University of Therapeutics, Standard School of Chiropractic, Washington School of Chiropractic, Central Chiropractic College, and the Columbia University of Physicians.

The first college - the Washington School of Chiropractic - was founded by Albert and Janet Snape (a chiropractic couple) in 1912 and located at 1509 13th St. NW. This seemingly unsuccessful endeavor lasted one year before being sold to Joe Shelby Riley in 1914, who relocated at 1116 F St. NW. Also known as the Riley University of Spinal Therapy, it apparently did business for several years at this address (Boyd's 1921). Other chiropractic educational institutions which we have positively placed in the District include Willard Carver's Chiropractic Research University at 1349 L St. NW, the Central Chiropractic College at 1914 7th St. NW, which was an all-black institution, and the Columbia University of Physicians at 728 13th St. NW

1913 (Aug): The American Drugless Healer (3[4]: 324), published by the American Chiropractic Association:
-prints ad for A.A. Gregory's "Three Stroke Vibrator" (adjusting instrument) (p 66):
Standard Vibrator Number 1, constructed for doctors' use, where heavy and constant work is required.
It is the most durable and satisfactory machine on the market. Has three stroke handle giving straight hammer stroke, side stroke and angle motion. The stroke can be changed while machine is in use. The motor is durable and is provided with a controller of variable resistance, on pedestal. Operates on either current D.C. or A.C.
Factory Price $75.00; Our Price $65.00
Without pedestal, portable, case, $55.00

GREGORY OFFICE SUPPLY CO.
Box 3, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

-Notes "Consolidation" of Palmer-Gregory school with St. Louis Chiropractic College (pp 75-6):
The Palmer-Gregory Chiropractic College of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has moved to St. Louis, Mo., and has consolidated with the latest and best institution that is or ever has been organized for the purpose of teaching progressive Chiropractic viz., the St. Louis Chiropractic College.
The St. Louis Chiropractic College was incorporated under the laws of Missouri some months ago by L. William Ray, A.M., M.D., D.C., and three associates, and among the founders of this institution are some well qualified and able teachers.
The union of the Palmer-Gregory College with the St. Louis College brings to the assistance of the excellent faculty of the St. Louis College the personal services of Alva Emery Gregory, D.P., M.D., D.C., who is now recognized as the greatest teacher and the greatest editor and author in the Chiropractic profession.
The St. Louis will open its doors to students and begin active class work the coming fall, and the prospects are excellent for a good attendance and the class of students catered to are above the average in education and intelligence.
The College course consists of two years of not less than nine months for each year, and the time in school will be devoted, by the teachers, to instruction in the most important, latest, best and most efficient Rational Therapy Methods, so that their alumni will be far in advance of the non-progressive Chiropractors turned out from ordinary Chiropractic schools.
St. Louis is a most favorable location for a good institution, as living expenses are light, and this school has at hand ample laboratory facilities in anatomy, chemistry (urinalysis, blood tests, stomach fluid tests) and bacteriology.
The special course of instruction which will be given in the St. Louis Chiropractic College, will qualify the graduates of this institution to register by examination, in states that have provided to license other doctors other than the regular M.D.s as have Illinois, Michigan, California, Washington and other states as they fall in line.
The St. Louis Chiropractic College course of instruction will enable their graduates to qualify by examination and to receive regular medical license in several different states, where the state law does not require graduation from an AMA medical college before admittance to examination.
This college will be a great honor and boost to the profession of progressive Chiropractic, and the old schools of Chiropractic shall be a thing of the past unless they widen out, when the public become wise to progressive Chiropractic.
Write L. William Ray, M.D., D.C., Sec., address New Grand Central Theatre Bldg., Cor. Grand and Lucas Ave's, for a descriptive catalog of the 1913-14 school year.
E.B. HERRINGTON, M.D., D.C., Findlay, Ohio.

-Additionally notes (p 79):

POST GRADUATE COURSE
The St. Louis Chiropractic College offers, in its senior years course of instruction, an unusual opportunity to the Chiropractor and other drugless practitioners for the Post Graduate work. You want to become better qualified, to handle successfully all forms of acute and chronic disease.
You want to become qualified to go before the examining board of such states as Illinois, California, Washington and Michigan and secure a certificate for registration. The second year's course at the St. Louis College will qualify the present doctors of Chiropractic and other drugless practitioners to pass the examination required in these states.
This school teaches progressive Chiropractic, which is much more successful in the treatment of all forms of acute and chronic disease, especially in stubborn cases of paralysis, rheumatism, constipation, chronic asthma and other stubborn forms of chronic disease.
We would advise the readers of our Journal to correspond with L. William Ray, A.M., M.D., D.C., concerning the course of study arranged for the senior year of the St. Louis College.
In 1917: photograph of Joe Shelby Riley teaching in Washington DC (from Alloway & Ronkin, 1982):
1917: photograph of Joe Shelby Riley teaching in Washington DC (from 1917 catalogue of Washington School of Chiropractic):

Riley employs a spinal concussor; from Riley JS. Science and practice of chiropractic with allied sciences. Washington DC: the author, 1919
1918: Joe Shelby Riley publishes *Zone Therapy Simplified*, at Washington DC (Wardwell, 1992, p. 327)

1919: Joe Shelby Riley MD, MS, PhD, FAS, DMT, DP, DO, DC, PhC publishes *Science and practice of chiropractic with allied sciences*, lists himself as Dean of the Washington School of Chiropractic, notes he first studied chiropractic at the Palmer-Gregory College of Chiropractic (p. 13) [volume in Palmer/West archives; also mentioned by Wardwell, 1992, p. 327]

1920 (Dec 10): according to Wardwell (1992, p. 127), Boston Herald reported this date that Walter Crawford, a graduate of Joe Shelby Riley’s New England College of Chiropractic, was arraigned for death of 18 yr old girl under his care

1922: *Annual Catalogue* of the “Riley School of Chiropractic with Allied Sciences, Physiotherapy” at 1116 F Street N.W., Washington, D.C. (WSCC archive):
- dedicated to “John Schlick Riley, Noted Physician and Surgeon”
- photo of “15th Annual Commencement of the Riley School of Chiropractics, New Willard Hotel, December 20, 1921, Washington, D.C.” (p. 4)
- listing and photos of faculty and administration (pp. 5-7):
  *Joe Shelby Riley, LL.D., M.D., D.O., M.S., D.P., N.D., D.C., President, Professor of Principles and Practice of Chiropractic, Diagnosis and Physiology
  *Elizabeth Riley, D.C., Secretary and General Adviser
  *Lloyd Bruce Riley, D.C., N.D., Professor of Electro-therapy, Clinical Technique and Assistant Histologist
  *Albert Snape, D.C., Ph.C., Dean, Palpitation [sic], Nerve Tracing, Adjusting, Clinical Director
  *Janet Sampson Snape, R.N., D.C., Anatomy, Physiology, First Aid and Hygiene; the Nervous System
  *J. Williston Palmer, Ph.D., Ph.G., D.P., D.C., Professor of Psychology, Chemistry and Laboratory Technique
  *N.W. Shefferman, N.D., D.C., Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat
  *Raymond C. Simpson, Ph.G., M.D., D.C., Professor Gynecology, Obstetrics, and Psychiatry
  *Ralph Benolt, D.C., Laboratory
  *Horace C. Coblenz, M.D., D.C., Pathologist, Professor of Surgery, X-Ray Diagnosis, and Genito-Urinary
  *Harry Bond Bressler, N.D., D.C., Professor of Orifical Surgery and Clinical Technique
  *F. Thomas Evans, M.D., D.C., Psychology and Salesmanship
  *Benjamin Tighman Woodward, D.C., Physical Diagnosis
  *William W. Thompson, McP., D.C., Professor of Podiatrics
  *C. Richard Smith, Ph.C., General Lecturer
  *Stacy B. McGarty, Asst. Clinician

- “Outline and Schedule course of Chiropractic in the Riley School” (p. 16):

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Joe Shelby Riley and his schools

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Totals 1,025 1,070 1,070 3,175

To which must be added in the aggregate 100 hours’ research, 50 hours in Army and Medical Museum, 60 hours Round Table work.

We invite comparisons with any other schedule in the land. We fill every requirement of every State board in the country.

1924 (Aug): letter addressed to “My dear Doctor” from Dr OJ Briggs, president and chairman of the membership committee of the American Drugless Association (ADA) at 359 N Illinois St. Indianapolis, invites charter membership in ADA. brochure indicates ADA will hold annual convention on Aug 25-27, 1924 in Indianapolis, speakers will include Benedict Lust (“president of the Naturopathic Association of New York City”) FC Ellis of Chicago (Electronic Reactions), Alva E. Gregory of Oklahoma City (who “will demonstrate his cartilage growing system with his latest model traction table and deep therapy light”), Fred W. Collins of Mecca College in Newark (Iridiagnosis and osteopathic technique, course available at College of Drugless Physicians of Indianapolis), Joe Shelby Riley (Cleveland papers, CCC/KC)

1926 (Sept): Cleveland Chiropractic College Journal (undated) [1(3)] includes:
- notes “EDITOR LEARNS SPEARS SYSTEM” (p. 3):
  Purely because of the connection of Jimmy Firth with Leo Spears we thought that there might be some merit in the Spears so-called Painless System. Inasmuch as the writer is the head of the Department of Technique in this college, he believes it imperative that he become familiar with all systems, and notions of adjusting. So in accordance with that thought, we learned this method from Dr. Babcock, who is featured with Dr. Spears in the illustrations in the little book accompanying the course.
  The course usually takes two to four hours, but as the Doctor was visiting relatives in the city, he came out three different days that we might discuss the system pro con. Inasmuch as our methods were highly satisfactory and include everything of any value that the Spears System includes, we will teach the same system of adjusting that we have been teaching. Our present system of adjusting includes the Palmer Method, which the writer learned in the P.S.C., moves and methods of lesser merit from Palmer’s “Exposition of Old Moves,” Dr. Loban’s, Dr. Carver’s, Dr. Gregory’s, Dr. Riley’s and Dr. Foster’s works, together with a few points that writer has discovered in his ten years of experience.


Dear Doctor Hayes:

Replying to your of the 4th inst., would say that The Riley College of Chiropractic and the Washington School of Chiropractic were one and the same. Dr. Riley left this city some five years ago and the schools have not been in existence since. Dr. Riley’s address at present is: Dr. J.S. Riley, 359 8th Ave., N., St. Petersburg, Fla., and I would suggest writing him if you care for information as to the present status of the school elsewhere.

Wish to thank you for sending me “The Bulletin” and your kind comment on “The D.C. Chiropractor.” I also wish to state that I consider your articles very excellent, especially the one on “What’s Wrong with Chiropractic.”

If I can be of any further assistance just let me know.

Very truly yours.

1942: Joe Shelby Riley MD, DO, DC authors 12th edition of Zone Reflex, published by Mrs TS Riley at 2418 Mayfield AVE, Montrose CA; Dr Riley credits Dr William Fitzgerald of Hartford CT as discoverer of Zone Therapy, shows picture of JS Riley using concussor [file in Instrument Adjusting folder; volume in Palmer/West Archives]


Briggs OJ. Membership recruitment letter for the American Drugless Association, August, 1924 (Cleveland papers, Cleveland Chiropractic College of Kansas City)

Carver W. History of chiropractic. Oklahoma City: unpublished, mimeographed, 1936

Gibbons RW. Miscellany: Fred Collins and his New Jersey “Mecca.” Chiropractic History 1989 (June); 9(1): 41


Godzway AT. "That old medical fool!" said the Old Master with great disdain! The Chiropractic Journal (NCA) 1934 (Apr); 3(4):5, 30 [Godzway is former EL Cooley DC, ND, father of CS Cooley DC]


Keating JC, Jackson RB, Oliva M. Phillips RB. Origins of the LACC, 1901-1922. Journal of Manipulative & Physiological Therapeutics 1994 (Feb); 17(2): 93-106


Keating JC. Cleveland CS. A history of chiropractic education in North America: report to the CCE. Scottsdale AZ: Council on Chiropractic Education, accepted for publication 1/96

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Palmer DD (Ed): The Chiropractor Adjuster 1909b (Mar); Vol. 1, No. 3

Riley JS. Zone therapy simplified. Washington DC: the author, 1918


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