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Chronology of Alma C. Arnold, D.C.

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Color Code:

Red & Magenta: questionable or uncertain information
 Green: for emphasis

Chronology

1902: according to Sol Goldschmidt (1995a):

FIRST CHIROPRACTOR IN NEW YORK

Chiropractic was first introduced in New York by Dr. Alma C. Arnold of New York City in the year 1902. She enjoyed a very fine practice with many distinguished patients, including Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross. Miss Barton suffered a serious accident and her physician stated that if she did live, she would never walk again because of her spinal injuries. Dr. Arnold was consulted and subsequently restored her to complete health (*The Triangle of Health* by Alma C. Arnold, published by Alfred A. Knopf, 1918).

1902: **Alma C. Arnold** DC is first DC to practice in NYS (Moore, 1992)

PHOTOGRAPH



Alma C. Arnold, D.C.

1905-1931: **American School of Chiropractic (Benedict Lust?)** operates in NYC (Ferguson & Wiese, 1988a&b)

1907 (June): **Frederick W. Collins** graduates from **Benedict Lust** MD, ND's **American School of Naturopathy** in NYC (Kirchfeld & Boyle, 1994, p. 213):

1909 (Dec 11): letter to DD Palmer from George H. Patchen MD, DC of New York NY (*The Chiropractor Adjuster* 1910 [Feb]; 1[8]: 52)

1909 (Dec 14): letter to DD Palmer from AA Finkelstein of Perth Amboy NY (*The Chiropractor Adjuster* 1910 [Feb]; 1[8]: 40)

1909 (Dec 26): letter to DD Palmer from Gustave Noque of Syracuse NY (*The Chiropractor Adjuster* 1910 [Feb]; 1[8]: 63)

1910: D.D. Palmer's *The Chiropractic Adjuster* includes mention of **Alma C. Arnold**, graduate in the first class of **Langworthy's** American School of Chiropractic & Nature Cure in Cedar Rapids IA in 1903 and pioneer DC in Washington DC and NYC (pp. 781-2):

PAINLESS ADJUSTING

Adjusting is an art. It is the application of Chiropractic knowledge in replacing displaced vertebrae. There is a vast difference in the ease with which the vertebrae of different persons are adjusted. Some can relax during adjustment, others will brace against the adjuster. Displaced vertebrae may be ankylosed by true or false ankylosis. The ankylosed tissue may be of a bony, cartilaginous or ligamentous nature. The displacements may be recent or of long standing. They may have been slowly or suddenly drawn out of alignment either by poison or by an accident. The vertebra may have kept its normal shape or it may have become deformed. All of these conditions must be taken into consideration; also, that some patients are more sensitive than others. Some adjusters have the knack of adjusting and others have not; some have the know how, while others think that the more strength they exert the better will be the adjustment.

Dr. Alma C. **Arnold** is said to be able to adjust vertebrae without any pain whatever. One who witnessed them says: "Her adjustments would hardly waken a sleeping child." I am told that she starts at the sacrum in all cases no matter what affection or vertebra has been displaced. She separates the sacro-lumbar articulations, then replaces them. She then loosens the articulations between the 4th and 5th lumbar and resets them. She thus continues from the sacrum to the occiput. She is said, also, to adjust ribs, tarsal bones, etc., that are out of joint. It is said that Dr. **Arnold** uses a movement that is more of a pressure than that taught by me for adjusting. It is said "There is no thrust

or perceptible pressure." It is also said that when she separates and replaces the vertebrae, that the patient can hear and feel the movement of the processes as they disarticulate, this being the case along the whole of the spine with each and every vertebrae. The separating and replacing of vertebrae causes no pain whatever. She is said to be an adept at replacing the ribs and tarsal bones.

If Dr. **Arnold** has learned to handle vertebrae as readily as a Chinese laundryman does the bass on his abacus, or counting rack, it would be no more wonderful nor strange than was the moving of vertebrae by me fourteen years ago.

The above description of Dr. **Arnold's** adjusting was formulated after corresponding with several D.C.'s who saw her give adjustments. I thought then and do now know, that she was misunderstood, as evidenced by her letter which lies before me. In this she states that the above exposition of her adjustment is the most intelligent, except one; that she does make perceptible "pressure of from one pound on an infant to 125 pounds on a strong back." She further states, "My skill is shown by the fact that I give no more pressure than is needed to move the vertebrae; I give pressure rather than thrust. I know that my thrust is not entirely painless except on nearly normal spines. Old chronic luxations, I must hurt to some degree, but my work is as near 'painless' as is possible to make an adjustment of spinal luxations."

Dr. **Arnold** and I agree, in that skill in adjusting is shown by the ability of the adjuster to move vertebrae with the least force or pressure possible. She gives "pressure rather than thrust." I give thrust rather than pressure; that is, I find that the quicker the same amount of force or pressure is given, the more effectual is the result. I desire to move vertebrae with as little force as possible. In order to do so, the thrust must be made quickly, avoiding the push or shove.

I fail to see any special feature in Dr. **Arnold's** adjusting, except that she starts at the sacrum. Many Chiropractors adjust the entire spine as does Dr. **Arnold**, except that they start at the atlas and work downward instead of upward.

1913 (Jan): *International Chiropractic Journal* [2(7)] includes:

- "Clinical Department" by H.A. Hackett, D.C., Editor, mentions New York Chiropractic Institute at 142-146 East 27th Street (pp. 36-7):

L. Hibble, M.D.; Otto Scholz, Grad. Chiropractor

New York, Dec. 26th, 1912

Although hounded by the medical society like all the rest of the Chiropractors in New York city, with one exception only, we are still at it though associated with an M.D.

Dr. **Alma C. Arnold**, one of the oldest and most successful Chiropractors in the country had spent a fortune fighting to have her case come up before general sessions (jury trial; instead of special sessions with the result that, last Wednesday she pleaded guilty to escape a state prison sentence, this being her first offense too. She had to spend two days and two nights in the tombs and was put under probation for one year with a suspended sentence (the worst that can happen,) which means that she must report to the judge once every month that she is not doing any business as a Chiropractor. A second violation would mean one year in state prison.

Dueringer's case ended the same way, he also having pleaded guilty, and having spent 48 hours in the Tombs also, was fined \$250.00. He had been arrested three times. Another violation would also mean a state prison sentence. After just having equipped a big office, paying \$3,000 rent, he has quit New York and has gone to Jersey City, N.J. A fine outlook for the Chiropractors in New York. Even being associated with an M.D. does not seem to protect us, at least is the medical society making great efforts in that direction as is shown in my case by attached newspaper clippings.

After hard up hill work for two years we have now a well established practice and will from now on contribute to the Clinical sections of our Journal.

Our practice is not a mushroom growth, nor have we employed any brass band methods, but we are growing slowly but steadily.

Mrs. Paula Scholz and myself have a large number of remarkable cases to report which we will try to do...

...It may be of interest to hear that Drs. **Patchen** and Radley, regularly registered physicians, **have opened here a Chiropractic school for physicians only.**

1915 (July): *The Chiropractor* [11(7)] includes:

- "Healing" (p. 9) includes letter from Alma C. Arnold, D.C.

1917: **Craig M. Kightlinger** earns DC from **FW Collins' New Jersey College of Chiropractic/Mecca College of Chiropractic** (Rehm, 1980, pp. 298-9); Collins accused of fraud by BJ Palmer, but according to Gibbons (1989):

Collins published pages of testimonials from other practitioners, most with M.D.-D.C. designations, but occasionally from a recognized name such as **Willard Carver** ("I believe him sincere.") and **Craig Kightlinger**, dean of the **Eastern College**, who praised his adjusting. Pioneers such as **A.P. Davis, Alma Arnold, J. Shelby Riley** and **Benedict Lust**, "the father of naturopathy" were among those he listed as endorsers.

1936 (Apr): *The Chiropractic Journal* (NCA) [5(4): 32] includes a letter to the editor:

A Pioneer Speaks Out!

From **Alma C. Arnold**, D.C., Author of "The Triangle of Health", No. 9 West 67th Street, New York City.

Dear Dr. Rogers:

I read the Chiropractic Journal from cover to cover and especially interesting is "The Voice of the Profession."

Outstanding in the February number I find the opinion of Dr. Blake D. Lewis. It is constructive criticism to which I can only add a plea to find our "leader" in D.D. Palmer, the man who was fifty years ahead of his time. His book written in 1906, should be read by every chiropractor of today. In 1903 D.D. Palmer had no school but he had taught talented men like Langworthy.

I was fortunate enough to have been one of the first pupils of Dr. S.M. Langworthy's "American School of Chiropractic and Nature Cure." I can remember the names of two of my co-students: Drs. Birch and Brown whose title of Dr. preceded their D.C. ones.

We graduated in September, 1903, and I came east to start my practice in this then new science.

Dr. Langworthy's two volumes on *Modern Chiropractic*, published in 1906, are dedicated:

"To the students of the first classes of the first chartered and organized school of Chiropractic, who by their unflinching loyalty and friendship sustained and encouraged us in the enunciation of new truth and in the task which we took upon ourselves of placing Chiropractic upon a truly scientific basis, this work is humbly inscribed by their sincere friends.

(Signed) S.M. Langworthy
Oakley Smith
Minora Paxson."

I am proud of my membership in that first class. I am also proud to have brought the practice of the science east of Iowa, to Washington, D.C. in 1903. I enclose herewith a list of famous men and women patients together with excerpts of their letters to me showing the results of my school curriculum.

After a few years of practice, I had discovered a thrust that moved every vertebra more or less painlessly, certainly without shock to the patient, and I was honored by D.D. Palmer in his last book, published in 1910. On pages 767-774 and 781-782, he dissects my letter written in answer to his inquiry about my work. This eulogy of his confirms the foundation of the technique he had laid down.

Doctor Langworthy founded in 1906, the first "American Chiropractic Association", and I wonder why this great pioneer has been so utterly forgotten.

I was taught Dietetics and Hydrotherapy and am practicing both. I found that I was able to replace the M.D. in every family with which I came in contact. I did then and still teach my patients how to take care of their and their family's minor ills. This quite naturally, sends all members of a family to me for skeletal adjustments. My work is truly prophylactic. I have held my families as clients for as long as twenty-five years and they are "looked over" at intervals.

I use a flat bench and nothing but my hands. It is surprising what a large practice does to a pair of hands in diagnosis of bones and organs. Naturally, I should like X-rays of 'before' and 'after', but I hesitate to glorify 'myself' through an additional expense to my patient when I charge high fees.

I would like to bring to the consideration of Chiropractic schools, **this** suggestion: that they cure their students as well as teach them. Nothing attracts to quick success like a healthy body, good posture and consequent enthusiasm.

I thank you, Dr. Rogers and staff, for the helpful, dignified magazine you are providing for our Great Science and am,

Yours for more and better work in our fraternity.

2002 (Oct 6): e-mail from Russ Gibbons (gibbons@cookpolar.org):

Dear Abne & Joe=

My references for Alma Arnold as the first DC in New York State are three: (1) Alma herself, in a letter to the (NCA) Chiropractic Journal in April, 1936; (2) Sol Goldschmidt, in his "History of Chiropractic in New York State," published by the state association in 1975 and (3) Mickey Goldschmidt, who knew of my interest in Alma, when we placed a reproduction of her in the history display at the NY College in 1993 (?) at the AHC conference just before his death. He again cited his father.

The year would have been 1903, after Alma's graduation from Langworthy's American School. Sol could not have been the second as he graduated from Carver Institute of NY in 1922. The early numbers of "The Chiropractor" edited by DD and BJ have announcements from early PSC- DCs, a couple of whom I recall saying they were "the pioneers."

Refer to the paper on Alma in CHIROPRACTIC HISTORY for December 1995 (pp 17-27).

Good luck in your research. Russ Gibbons

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