

Dynamic Chiropractic's *The Ivory Tower Review:*

# *Lincoln College: A Glimpse at the Early Years*

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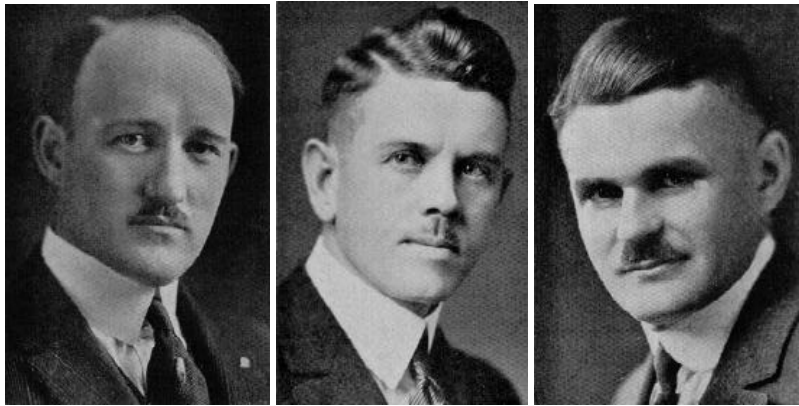
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## *Lincoln College: A Glimpse at the Early Years*

For 45 years, from 1926 to 1971, it was admired as one of the academically strongest institutions of learning in the profession. Formed in the turbulent aftermath of B.J. Palmer, D.C.'s introduction of the neurocalometer (NCM), the Lincoln Chiropractic College eventually dissolved into the National College of Chiropractic, its name retained in derivative forms, such as the National-Lincoln School of Postgraduate Education (Beideman, 1995, p. 137) and the independent Lincoln College Education & Research Fund, Inc. (contact: Edward L. Maurer, D.C., D.A.C.B.R., 2330 Gulf Road, Kalamazoo MI 49001 USA). The story of this proud institution's formation and early operations (Stowell, 1983) merits consideration.

The founding fathers of the Lincoln were well known to the profession. All were graduates of the Palmer School of Chiropractic (PSC): Harry E. Vedder, D.C. (1910); James Firth, D.C. (1912); Stephen J. Burich, D.C. (1913); and Arthur Heinrichs, D.C. (whose name



Drs. Firth, Vedder & Burich, circa 1920 at the PSC

was later changed to Hendricks) (1920). Each had earned a reputation as an outstanding instructors of the PSC, and each was considered a “core” faculty member. They often lectured at state and national conventions, and frequently contributed to the chiropractic literature. Since the PSC had produced the overwhelming majority of DCs then in practice, a majority of chiropractors had known one or more of these men as mentors before the Lincoln Chiropractic College's (LCC's) formation.

**Harry Vedder**, who had little more than a high school education when he enrolled at the Davenport mecca, became an instructor in physiology. He authored such works as *Textbook on Chiropractic Physiology*, *Textbook on Chiropractic Gynecology* and *Chiropractic Advertising*.

**Stephen J. Burich**, a graduate of Beloit College, taught chemistry in the public school system before taking up his new profession. B.J. Palmer considered him the “final authority on matters pertaining to the nervous system” (Rehm, 1980, p. 288). Burich authored *Textbook of Chiropractic Chemistry*, and with Firth and Vedder, co-authored a manual of adjustive techniques. **James Firth** was a graduate of the Arenac County Normal College, and had been employed as a grade school teacher and principal before studying at Palmer. He joined the faculty in 1911, where he taught palpation and nerve tracing, physiology and symptomatology. During his tenure at the “Fountain Head,” he authored *Textbook on Chiropractic Symptomatology* (later retitled *Chiropractic Diagnosis*). **Arthur Hendricks** was a business school graduate before his enrollment in the U.S. Navy during World War I. He earned his doctorate at the PSC in 1920, and immediately joined the faculty, where he taught anatomy, orthopedy, gynecology and diagnosis (Rehm, 1980, p. 305).

In August, 1924, B.J. Palmer formally introduced his two-pronged, spinal-heat sensing device, the NCM, by which, he claimed, subluxations could be detected more accurately than by any other means (Keating, 1991). BJ asserted that in the future, any DC practicing without an NCM and without the NCM-training offered by the PSC must be considered unethical (Keating, 1997b, p. 207), and a danger to the public. Although Palmer claimed the strong support of his entire faculty (Keating, 1997b, p. 217) for his new instrument and the terms of its lease to members of the profession (\$2,200 for a ten-year lease; mandatory minimum charge of \$10 for an NCM-reading), private correspondence (Thompson, 1931) suggests that BJ may have twisted their arms a bit in order to get their endorsements. Stowell (1983, 1990) suggests that BJ’s imposition of theory (NCM, HIO) upon his faculty, a violation of their academic freedom, may have had much to do with their departure from the PSC. Although some uncertainty about the precipitating factors exists (Keating, 1990; Quigley, 1990; Stowell, 1990), it seems clear that the birth of the Lincoln was a consequence of BJ’s actions.

In the aftermath of the NCM's introduction, the first significant loss from the Palmer faculty was E.A. Thompson, D.C., who had headed the PSC's Spinography Department for several years. Thompson relocated to Baltimore and established a practice; in later years he served on the Lincoln College's board of trustees.

Firth's departure from Davenport to establish a practice in Chicago was announced in October, 1925 ([Personals, 1925](#)); he also lectured for a few months on behalf of his former pupil, Leo Spears, D.C. of Denver. Some six months after Firth's departure from Iowa, Drs. Burich and Vedder also left the PSC ([With, 1926](#)). After briefly considering the possibility of establishing their new institution in Denver ([Cleveland, 1926](#)), the foursome of Firth, Vedder, Burich and Hendricks decided upon Indianapolis.

In August, 1926, the newly established, non-profit LCC was chartered, with Vedder serving as president of the four-man administration and faculty. Classes commenced on September 20 in rented space on the second floor of the Lumberman's Insurance Building in Indianapolis ([Lincoln, 1927, 1929](#); [Stowell, 1983](#)). The first class graduated on 16 March 1928 ([Our, 1928](#)). The initial curriculum (see [Table 1](#)) involved 2,210 hours of instruction, which was probably not different in length from that of the PSC (18 months). By 1929 an elective, four-year curriculum became available, and in 1942, when the National Chiropractic Association's (NCA's) educational standards required it ([Gibbons, 1985](#); [Nugent, 1941](#)), the four-year program became mandatory ([Stowell, 1983](#)). The new school also soon developed a post-graduate program of instruction that was well-received by the profession, both nationally and internationally ([Foreign, 1929](#); [Post, 1929](#)). Straight chiropractor Joshua N. Haldeman, D.C., a 1926 PSC alumnus, regularly attended Lincoln's summer offerings, where he earned certificates in "Physical Diagnosis, Dietetics, Transillumination, Urinalysis and the Technic of Scientific Spinal Correction" ([Keating & Haldeman, 1995](#)).



Ernest A. Thompson, D.C., circa 1919

<b>Courses</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Courses</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Anatomy	650.00	Symptomatology (including x-ray)	536.25
Physiology	97.50	Principles & practice	487.50
Pathology & bacteriology	146.25	Dietetics	75.00
Chemistry & urinalysis	71.25	Office conduct & jurisprudence	48.75
Hygiene & public health	48.75	Ethics & first aid	48.75
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,210.00</b>

From its outset, the LCC made a strong commitment to diagnostic training and the basic sciences, which was not at all surprising given the strengths of the founders. Instruction in dietetics was part of the training, but physiotherapy was not. The Lincoln College declared its stand on what BJ considered mixing, and characteristically demonstrated tolerance:

....The Lincoln College never has, does not now, nor has it any intention of teaching Physiotherapy, although we do stress Diet, and Diagnosis. We feel that we have our hands full in teaching Chiropractic. As we have repeatedly stated, we feel that the use of adjuncts by the Chiropractor is a personal matter which he should be permitted to decide in his own practice without being subject to ridicule or condemnation... ([Foreword, 1928](#))

The LCC's commitment to what its founders considered legitimate, straight chiropractic arrived just as Palmer, unsuccessful in his bid for re-election as secretary of the Universal Chiropractors' Association, established the Chiropractic Health Bureau (forerunner of today's ICA). Lincoln's founders expressed their concerns over the feuding within the profession:

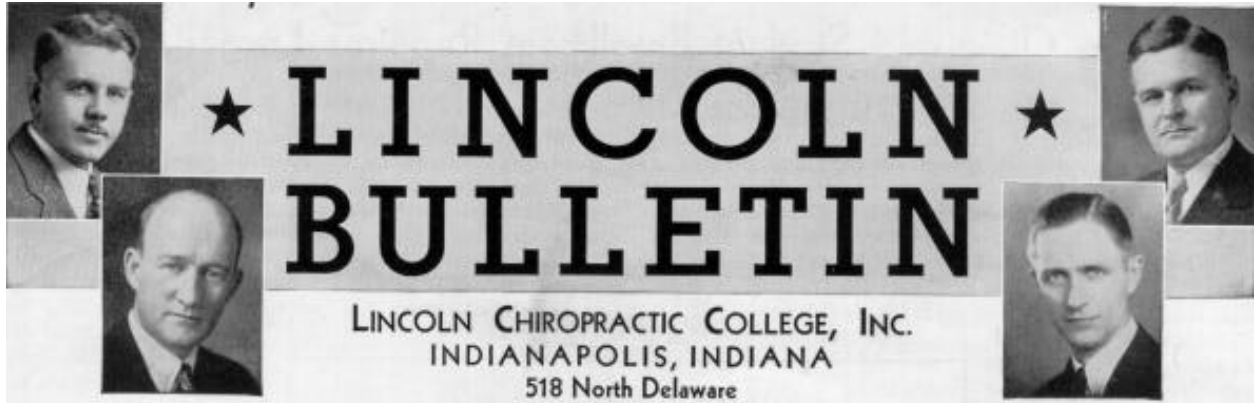
The Lincoln Chiropractic College assumes the position that the continuance of strife between the straight Chiropractor and the mixer so effectively saps our energy, depletes our resources and scatters our forces that if long continued it will lead to the obliteration of the profession as a movement ([Tolerance, 1927](#)).

Palmer graduate Carl S. Cleveland, Sr., D.C., whose own small school in Kansas City was then in its fourth year, urged Palmer to be calm over this development. He suggested that Lincoln's founders "have their followers and will run a good school, with just a little too much of a tendency towards analyzing effects rather than causes" ([Cleveland, 1926](#)). Palmer was furious ([Moore, 1995](#)), but his attitudes toward a broader scope practice for chiropractors were apparently not representative of the field. A survey conducted by Lincoln College revealed that many DCs had moved beyond the strict definitions of chiropractic that BJ preferred (see [Table 2](#)).

**Table 2:** Findings of a survey of chiropractors conducted by the Lincoln Chiropractic College ([Turner, 1931](#), pp. 208-11); schools from which chiropractic respondents graduated are not known to this writer, but presumably a substantial percentage of Palmer graduates were included

Questions	Chiropractors' responses:	Yes	No	%No	Total N
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1. Is your examination confined to the spine?	345	1538	82	1883
2. Do you question your patients about subjective symptoms (abnormal symptoms)?	1773	88	5	1861
3. Do you investigate objective symptoms (through inspection, palpation, percussion, auscultation, etc., other than the spine)?	1608	261	14	1869
4. Do you examine the heart and pulse?	1581	256	14	1838
5. Do you employ a spinal meter instrument (either resistance type or thermo-couple type)?	657	1205	65	1862
6. Do you use any of the various types of "radionics" equipment?	299	1560	84	1859
7. Do you take the blood pressure?	1449	422	22	1871
8. Do you use the clinical thermometer?	1462	411	22	1873
9. Do you employ urinalysis?	1465	419	22	1884
10. Do you advise your patients as to diet?	1656	211	11	1867
11. Do you advise as to exercise, habits, etc.?	1647	220	12	1867
12. Do you employ massage?	1004	817	45	1821
13. Do you use a vibrator?	541	1352	71	1893
14. Do you employ a heat lamp?	895	966	52	1861
15. Do you employ radionics?	302	1562	84	1864
16. Do you use "light therapy"?	685	1173	63	1858
17. Do you employ any form of "electro-therapy"?	603	1257	68	1860
18. Do you employ any form of "hydro-therapy" (baths, enemas, colonic irrigation, etc.)?	743	1124	60	1867
19. Do you practice "foot correction"?	902	954	51	1856
20. Do you give spinal adjustments to every case?	1563	330	17	1893
21. Do you favor chiropractic schools teaching diagnostic methods?	1704	179	10	1883
22. Do you favor chiropractic schools teaching "light therapy"?	975	831	46	1806
23. Do you favor chiropractic schools teaching "hydro-therapy"?	991	788	44	1779
24. Do you favor chiropractic schools teaching "electro-therapy"?	855	931	52	1786
25. Do you favor chiropractic schools teaching "radionics"?	491	1151	70	1642
26. Do you favor chiropractic schools teaching massage?	1144	661	37	1805
27. Do you favor chiropractic schools teaching "foot correction"?	1323	477	27	1800
28. Do you favor chiropractic schools teaching diet?	1667	194	10	1861



★ **LINCOLN** ★  
**BULLETIN**

LINCOLN CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE, INC.  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA  
518 North Delaware  
APRIL 1935



Our New Home

To Be Dedicated At L.C.C. Home-Coming - Aug. 12 to 15th

Lincoln College commenced publication of its own magazine in 1927, and attracted manuscripts from a number of prominent DCs, among them Stanley Hayes, D.C., editor of the *Bulletin of the West Virginia Chiropractors' Society*, John Monroe, A.M., D.C., chairman of the ACA's Bureau of Research and former PSC radiologist, E.A. Thompson, D.C. of Baltimore. By 1929 the *Lincoln Bulletin* could claim a circulation of more than 6,000 readers, or about half of all chiropractors in the United States. School spirit was also bolstered by an active athletics program.

In 1935 the LCC sought larger quarters, and purchased the facilities of the former Dental College of Indiana University. Harry Vedder was credited with this purchase. When he retired in 1940, he was succeeded in office by Dr. Firth. Despite the shortages in students caused by the wartime draft, the faculty was expanded to seven in 1943. The Universal Chiropractic College (UCC) of Pittsburgh did not fare as well, and in 1944 merged with the LCC. Lincoln College was among



Lincoln Chiropractic College purchased this campus, the former Dental College of Indiana University in Indianapolis in 1935, during the presidency of Harry E. Vedder, D.C., Ph.C.

the first schools to receive full recognition by the fledgling accreditation committee of the NCA. The merger brought UCC's dean and former director of research for the American Chiropractic Association in the late 1920s, Leo J. Steinbach, D.C., to the LCC as professor of "Universal Technique" (Stowell, 1983).

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Faculty of the Lincoln Chiropractic College, according to the school's *Catalogue, 1943-1944*

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Department</b>
James N. Firth, D.C., Ph.C., <i>President</i>	Chiropractic
Stephen J. Burich, D.C., Ph.C., <i>Vice-President &amp; Secretary</i>	Anatomy
Arthur G. Hendricks, D.C., Ph.C., <i>Treasurer</i>	Diagnosis
Lester M. King, D.C., Ph.C., <i>Dean</i>	Bacteriology, Pathology
Rudy O. Mueller, D.C., Ph.C.	Physiology
B.E. Pitzer, D.C., Ph.C.	Clinical Laboratories
W.A. Watkinson, D.C., Ph.C.	Chemistry



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Lester M. King, D.C., a 1927 graduate of the PSC, joined the faculty at LCC in March, 1928 (Rehm, 1980, p. 324; Stowell, 1983). Over the next decade his strenuous efforts to upgrade curriculum and facilities were well received, and in 1940 he was named academic dean. Among the early graduates of the LCC was Rudy O. Müller, D.C. (Class of 1937), who had earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business before enrolling at the Indianapolis school. Upon graduation he joined the faculty of his alma mater. He enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard at the outset of World War II, and served as chief pharmacist's mate. After his discharge, he joined the faculty of the newly formed Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College (CMCC), where he served as dean from 1947 until the late 1950s. Herbert J. Vear, D.C., a member of CMCC's first graduating class (in 1949) and later, president of Western States Chiropractic College (Keating, 1997a), considers Dr. Müller one of the two most important influences in his chiropractic training (the other being that of A. Earl Homewood, D.C., N.D., LL.B.). Well known for his many articles in professional journals, Müller is perhaps best remembered for his 1954 text, *Autonomics in Chiropractic: the Control of Autonomic Imbalance*.



Rudy O. Müller, D.C.



Students of the Lincoln Chiropractic College; from the *National Chiropractic Journal* 1941 (Jan); 10(1): 15 (NCA photo collection)

The LCC became a core player in the educational reform efforts initiated first the American Chiropractic Association and the International Chiropractic Congress in the 1920s and continued by the NCA in the 1930s. These efforts were accelerated in the 1940s as John J. Nugent, D.C. took over as Director of Education for the NCA (Gibbons, 1985). The leaders of the Lincoln College were participants in the 1947 formation of the NCA's Council on Education, which became today's Council on Chiropractic Education in 1971. During 1957-59, Hendricks, LCC's third president, also served as chairman of the NCA Council on Education (Keating & Cleveland, *in press*).



Joseph Janse, D.C., N.D., dean of the National College of Chiropractic (far left), consults with NCA's Washington representative, Emmett J. Murphy, D.C., and Stephen J. Burich, D.C. of the Lincoln Chiropractic College, during a meeting of the Kentucky Association of Chiropractors in Lexington, 2 October 1942 (NCA photo collection)



James Firth, D.C. (1886-1964)

World War II took a heavy toll on student enrollments at LCC as at most schools, but with the war's end and the availability of tuitions paid through the GI Bill, Lincoln's student body swelled. During 1947 additional quarters were obtained on Meridian Street in Indianapolis, but following a fire that destroyed the new building, the campus was relocated to 46th Street and Keystone Avenue (Stowell, 1983).

The Lincoln College operated for more than four decades. During that time, it earned a reputation as a leader in raising standards of instruction for chiropractors. While much of the College's saga is beyond the scope of this paper, it should be apparent that LCC's commitment to quality was always in evidence. That tradition can still be seen today in the work of another Lincoln graduate, A. Glynn Till, D.C., Head of the Department of Chiropractic at Technikon Natal in South Africa.



Commencement exercises at Lincoln Chiropractic College of Indianapolis on May 20, 1949, as depicted in the *Journal of the National Chiropractic Association* 1949 (July); 19(7): 37 (NCA photo collection)

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If your interest in chirohistory has been stimulated, then consider joining the Association for the History of Chiropractic (AHC). Founded at Spears Hospital in Denver in 1980, the AHC is a non-profit, membership organization whose goal is the discovery, dissemination and preservation of the saga of chiropractic. The AHC held its first annual Conference on Chiropractic History at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. in 1980, and has held similar conferences each year since at various chiropractic colleges. The next AHC Conference on Chiropractic History will be held during the weekend of February 21-22, 1998 at Life Chiropractic College West in San Lorenzo, California. Details about the upcoming conference can be obtained by contacting the College:

**Life Chiropractic College West**  
2005 Via Barrett, San Lorenzo CA 94580 USA  
(510) 276-9013; FAX: (510) 276-4893

The AHC publishes a scholarly journal, *Chiropractic History*, in which chiropractors and interested observers contribute their expertise to telling and interpreting the rich lore of the profession. The journal, which is indexed in the National Library of Medicine's *Bibliography of the History of Medicine*, is published twice per year. *Chiropractic History* is distributed to all

members of the AHC as a membership benefit. Membership in the AHC can be obtained by sending your name, address and check for \$50 (\$20/year for students) to the AHC's executive director:

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1000 Brady Street, Davenport IA 52803 USA