

### Early chiropractic history in British Columbia

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Chiropractic history in British Columbia appears to have begun in late 1908. Dr. George Evans graduated from the Palmer School of Chiropractic on November 4th, 1908 at the approximate age of 60. He had practiced as an osteopath up to early 1908. I assume he had a shortened course at Palmer because of his earlier osteopathic education.

On April 30, 1910 Dr. Evans was convicted in the Vancouver Police Court on the charge of "practising medicine without a license". The medical council argued that Evans was practising osteopathy, even though he was now a chiropractor, and since the Medical Act regulated osteopathy, the Council was able to obtain a conviction.

Dr. Robert Irwin, I believe, was the second chiropractor to practise in British Columbia, early in 1911. He was also a Minister in the Methodist Church. When the Chiropractors' Association of British Columbia was formed in 1920 he was elected its first President.

The Chatwins, Annie and Henry, came in 1912. They were both chiropractors and they are the parents of Dr. Ralph Chatwin who later was very active in our profession, particularly in B.C.

In 1920 there were probably fewer than 20 chiropractors practising in all of British Columbia. In early 1919 there were only 5 chiropractors in Vancouver. They were Drs. Irwin, Chatwin, Shaw, John Gray & Kidd. There was, however, constant harassment by the medical establishment against our profession with the usual legal charge being "practising medicine without a license".

Dr. Walter T. Sturdy graduated from the Palmer School of Chiropractic on October 31, 1919 after three years of training and postgraduate work. Dr. Sturdy had been an insurance salesman prior to going into chiropractic. He suffered from an illness that wasn't helped by the medical profession but was by chiropractic. He started his practice in Vancouver in November 1919. There were 13 other chiropractors listed in the Vancouver telephone book at this time. (Anyone in the health field, who was not an M.D., was listed as a chiropractor, even optometrists. However 10 of the 14 positively were chiropractors).

By April 1920 Dr. Sturdy organized a meeting with this small band of chiropractors which resulted in the formation of

the Chiropractors' Association of British Columbia. The official date for its formation was April 7, 1920. The first President, as mentioned before, was Dr. Robert Irwin, the first Vice President was Dr. Henry Chatwin (Ralph's father), the first Secretary was Dr. Emerson Burrill and the first Treasurer Dr. Elmo Marshall. Dr. Sturdy became President of this Association in 1922 and continued in this office until 1933 and then from July 1934 to October 1937 for a total of 15 years.

In 1920 Dr. Sturdy was fined \$100 for "practising medicine without a license". Shortly thereafter he was charged again with no option but one month in jail. He appealed on August 23, 1922 in Vancouver Police Court and he ended up by spending 1 hour in the court room and paying a \$200 fine. Later Dr. Sturdy introduced proceedings against the Mayor and the Chief of Police for wrongfully taking fingerprints and pictures. The notice was served 2 days later and the Chief of Police called him up and asked him if he would go down and see the fingerprints and pictures destroyed. "Yes, he would". Underneath his picture was the word "Chiropractor". His crime was "being a Chiropractor".

Dr. Donald Campbell proposed at the meeting of October 24, 1922 a motion, "That notwithstanding the fact that the burden is being borne by 31 chiropractors out of 57 in the province as heretofore, there is now sufficient financial support to enable the Association to meet its immediate obligations and we continue our functions in attempting to get the Chiropractic Bill through the Legislature". His motion was carried unanimously. This motion suggests that there had been efforts by our Association, probably since 1920, to get an Act passed to govern our profession. It also suggests that the number of chiropractors in British Columbia has more than doubled in two years.

Incidentally the first edition of the Canadian Chiropractic Journal was published in February 1934 in Vancouver. Its first editor was Dr. Walter Sturdy. Dr. Gil Young was its first Managing Editor. It was published monthly for some time thereafter.

The Association, under the guiding hand of Dr. Walter Sturdy, had from time to time, approached the legislature for recognition of their profession, but owing to opposition and lobbying by the medical profession, their efforts had been blocked. Their efforts were finally rewarded when the third and final reading passing the Chiropractic Act came at 11:30am March 29, 1934. A telegram from Dr. Sturdy in Victoria, dated

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as above, to Dr. Gil Young in Vancouver, said simply, "CHIROPRACTIC BILL PASSED ELEVEN THIRTY THIS MORNING".

A Board was appointed by the provincial government to oversee the chiropractic profession and Dr. Sturdy was appointed the chairman. The other Board members were: Drs. Almond E. Harper, Thomas Mercer, Ernie W. Browse, Peter Carr, John Gray and Thomas Patterson. Their appointment was for four years.

As you can see already and it will become even more evident later that the early meaningful history of chiropractic in B.C. was essentially the same as the history of Dr. Walter Sturdy. The first Board of our Association busied itself making sure every chiropractor in B.C. toed the mark. The Board employed an inspector who toured throughout B.C., checking every town and city, to see if they had a chiropractor. If they did he checked to see if he or she was a graduate chiropractor and if he or she had paid his or her dues. If not, in either case, he called the law so that the person paid up or shipped out. Mr. Claridge, the inspector, had even been known to bundle up an American chiropractor and take him to the border and turn him over to the American Custom Officers. The Board paid him 25% of dues collected. Only 20 out of 170 chiropractors in B.C. had paid their dues when he started. But shortly most of them learned that it was less costly to pay their dues than to pay fines. He checked nearly every chiropractic office in B.C. and travelled 3,452 miles and was away for 27 days and charged the Association \$192.80.

In 1936 the Board formed an Ad Hoc Committee to draw up a Code of Ethics for our profession. Drs. John Anderson, Dangerfield, Harper and Mr. Burton made up the Committee.

In 1940 at the Annual Association meeting one of our members, Dr. Ron Rimes, suggested "That malpractice insurance should automatically go into effect when you become a member of the Association". This was almost immediately put into effect.

In early B.C. Chiropractic History there were mainly two names, one, Dr. Walter Sturdy, the other, John Burton, who though he was a lawyer by profession, probably knew as much about chiropractic as most of the chiropractors then in practice. Mr. Burton accomplished a great deal for chiropractic in B.C. and for the rest of Canada. He was the son-in-law of Dr. Sturdy. (John's wife and Walter's daughter, Florrie, is still in excellent health in Vancouver). John was appointed Solicitor to the Chiropractors' Association of B.C. on July 28, 1934 and Acting Secretary of our Association on July 17, 1935 and Permanent Secretary on October 28, 1935. He retired from these positions, Solicitor and Secretary, in 1977, after 42 years of superb service to our profession.

Walter and John became involved on a national level. In 1942 John, through the auspices of Walter Sturdy, wrote chiropractors in other provinces, suggesting the formation of a Dominion Chiropractic Association, a national organization. Fortunately, due to the foresight of many other chiropractors

in Canada, beside Dr. Sturdy, our National Association was formed on January 10, 1943. Dr. Sturdy was chosen as its first President. At that time it was known as, "The Dominion Council of Canadian Chiropractors". From this start, in large part, the Canadian Chiropractic profession, as we know it today, has developed.

Mr. John Burton was appointed the General Secretary and Solicitor for the Dominion Council from its inception until his retirement in 1975. John also provided legal advice and services to obtain chiropractic legislation in several Canadian provinces, including B.C., Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In 1966 he was elected an Honorary Member of the Saskatchewan Chiropractic Association, the first time ever for someone outside their province. He had been bestowed this same honour by the B.C. Chiropractic Association the year before. In 1971 he was honoured by the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College with a Tribute of Appreciation "in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the chiropractic profession in the establishment and development of our educational institution".

In a tribute to John on his retirement from his work with the Canadian Chiropractic Association, the CCA had this to say of him, "We the officers of the Canadian Chiropractic Association, wish to express our appreciation to John Stoneman Burton on the occasion of his retirement following many years of faithful service as General Secretary and Legal Counsel of the Association. His guidance, interest and devotion to the task for over 40 years have contributed in large measure to the progress of the chiropractic profession in Canada. The obtaining of legislative statutes to establish standards of chiropractic care, in the public interest, has been an area to which he has devoted much effort and the people of Canada have benefited from the success of his endeavors".

"In appreciation of his unique contribution and with the approval and the support of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College, we have requested the Council on Chiropractic Education and the National College of Chiropractic to approve the granting of an Honorary Doctorate in Humanities to Mr. J.S. Burton. This tribute is respectfully presented on behalf of the National Board of the Canadian Chiropractic Association, May 17th, 1975 as a sign of our deep gratitude".

Following Dr. Sturdy's election as president of the Dominion Council of Canadian chiropractors in 1943, he was able to convince the other chiropractic leaders that a Canadian chiropractic college was also needed. Fortunately for chiropractic there were some dynamic chiropractors in Toronto too who brought this need to fulfilment. Thus the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College was built and opened in September 1945. As education was a provincial matter, a new organization had to be formed and it was called the, "Canadian Association of Chiropractors". The first year Dr. Sturdy was elected First Vice President of this organization and the next year he was President. The administrative building of CMCC, the "Sturdy Building", is named after him. There is a B.C. Walter Sturdy Memorial Scholarship presented annually to an undergraduate



student who has shown the highest overall academic proficiency during his or her four years at CMCC. These are a few ways that Dr. Sturdy's name will be commemorated as a way of showing our appreciation for the many things that he has done for Chiropractic.

It is evident that Dr. Sturdy, if not the greatest pioneer leader in the Chiropractic world at any time, was at least among the top three.

Other names of note in British Columbia's early history are Drs. Ernie Prowse and Gil Young. Dr. Prowse was, it appears, the first chiropractor to be a Mayor of a fairly large city anywhere in Canada. He first started practice in Vancouver in 1913 and went to war in 1914 and didn't return to practise until 1920 in Vernon. He was first voted in as Mayor in 1932 and stayed in this position continuously for 6 years. He was Deputy Police Magistrate for 26 years. In 1949 he was named the first Good Citizen of Vernon. In 1930 he started a branch of the St. John Ambulance and was President until 1939 when he became Honorary Secretary. During the Second World War he taught hundreds in first aid work and in 1943 he was made a Serving Brother of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem by George VI and, in Vernon in 1947, he was invested with the Insignia of the Order by Governor-General Viscount Alexander.

He had been president of the Canadian Legion and received a Certificate of Merit from the Dominion Command of the Canadian Legion. He was also a president and Life Member of the Red Cross Society. He was presented with a service medal from them in 1950. Dr. Prowse had been District Deputy, Exalted Ruler and an Honorary Member of the Elks Lodge. He was elected an Honour Member of the Canadian Chiropractic Association, awarded an Honour Life Membership Certificate from the CMCC Alumni Association of B.C., elected a Life Member of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College and Honour Life Membership in the B.C. Chiropractic Association.

He held executive positions in numerous other clubs and associations.

Dr. Gilbert Henry Young was another of our members who seemed to be involved in everything. He served 21 continuous years on the Board of the B.C. Chiropractic Association and was President for 7 of these years. He was also a member of the CMCC Board of Governors for 9 years, two of which he served as Chairman of the Board. Gil also served as our Representative to the Canadian Chiropractic Association for 9 years and was President for 2 years. He was elected to Honour Membership in the CCA. CMCC presented to him an "Honour Certificate as a Pioneer Benefactor to CMCC for his leadership, administration, and assistance to our college and profession". Dr. Young was made a Fellow of the International Chiropractic College (FICC). This is for exemplary service to his profession and to his patients.

Dr. Young was an active member of the Masonic Order and the Gizeh Temple Shrine in which he was a Charter and Honorary member of the Temple Guard. He had been President of the Kiwanis Club of Vancouver and Lieutenant-Governor of Kiwanis in the Pacific North West District. He was also a Governor of the Pacific National Exhibition for many years.

Gil's wife, Iris, contributed the money that allowed CMCC to establish the GILBERT HENRY YOUNG SCHOLARSHIP AWARD. This Scholarship is in memory of Dr. Gilbert Henry Young and will serve as a reminder of this man's outstanding contribution to his profession and community. The Award will be given to the student with the highest academic standing in each of the four years.

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