

to the growing scholarly literature on the history of women's experiences during the westward expansion.

Chiropractic in America: The History of a Medical Alternative, by J. Stuart Moore. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. xiv, 228 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, appendixes, index, \$34.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY LEE ANDERSON, A & P HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Physicians have long been the central focus of medical historians. Yet the history of American health care is far broader than the history of regular medicine and its practitioners, embracing sundry other professional groups and sectarian movements as well as a remarkably resilient tradition of self-help and self-medication. J. Stuart Moore's concise and well-balanced treatment of the history of chiropractic is an important contribution to that broader perspective, a contribution with particular resonance for Iowa readers.

According to chiropractic lore, Daniel David Palmer—a spiritual and magnetic healer from Davenport, Iowa—performed the first spinal adjustment in September 1895. After twenty years as an itinerant school teacher, farmer, and entrepreneur, D. D. Palmer had, since opening his Davenport practice in 1887, achieved a measure of prosperity and some local notoriety. His gift, if such it was, lay in joining traditions of spiritual and magnetic healing with the manipulation of bones and joints to create the system of chiropractic. Palmer saw himself not as a simple "back doctor" but as a man of science. He grounded his therapeutic claims in a recognition of a "universal intelligence" that was both the ordering principle of the universe and the source of an essential life force in each individual. For Palmer, the free flow of nervous communication through the spine was the key to harmony with the greater cosmos and, hence, to spiritual and physical well-being.

Ironically, or so Moore argues, the ubiquity of back pain was far more important to chiropractic's ultimate success than were Palmer's philosophical speculations, which his purported followers routinely ignored or altered. As a result, chiropractic was beset by schism, most importantly between "harmonists," who adhered more or less to Palmer's philosophy, and "mechanics," who did not. Indeed, chiropractic's schismatic tradition began with the bitter split between D. D. Palmer and his son Bartlett Joshua, or B. J., who seized from his erratic father both the chiropractic college in Davenport and the mantle of defender of the chiropractic faith. So deep was the rift between the two that the son defended himself in court against charges that he had contributed to his father's death in 1913.

Despite internal divisions, chiropractic prospered on the failures of scientific medicine. Chiropractic won converts among the disaffected whom medicine had failed or offended, while the medical establishment's unremitting attacks forged chiropractors of all stripes into a sister- and brotherhood of persecution. Both factors contributed to chiropractic's statutory recognition in some forty states by the end of the 1920s; Iowa's licensing law came in 1921. However, chiropractic's schismatic tendencies hindered efforts, begun in the 1930s, to impose standards on professional education. B. J. Palmer, for example, stood in stubborn defiance of the four-year curriculum until the late 1950s, and the chiropractic curriculum was not standardized until the early 1970s, by which time it included solid grounding in the basic sciences and the clinical manifestations of disease.

As even the most casual observer can attest, chiropractic has undergone a revolution in recent decades. From the 1950s medical science itself offered support, albeit grudging and in some respects qualified, for the benefits of chiropractic, especially in the treatment of back pain. Just as important, the antiestablishment tide of the late 1960s and 1970s undermined the moral authority of organized medicine and enhanced the credibility of alternative therapies. In turn, such factors enabled chiropractic to win recognition from public and private health insurance programs, perhaps the ultimate barometer of acceptance in our market-oriented health care system.

A dramatic legal victory over organized medicine effectively capped chiropractic's rise to respectability. In a suit initially filed in 1976, four chiropractors charged the American Medical Association (AMA) and several other medical organizations with conspiracy to stifle chiropractic. Much of the plaintiffs' case revolved around a plan first introduced in 1962 by Robert B. Throckmorton, then general counsel to the Iowa Medical Society, to "contain" the threat of chiropractic. After Throckmorton became counsel to the AMA in 1963, that plan was implemented nationally through a combination of propaganda and coercion. Finally, in 1987, after eleven years of depositions, motions, and arguments, a federal judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, issuing a permanent injunction against the AMA and two other defendants and ordering publication of the judgment in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Chiropractors celebrated the occasion as "the victory of the century."

At one level, the history of chiropractic is an improbable tale of the rise of a sectarian movement from obscurity to legitimacy, a tale that J. Stuart Moore delivers with eloquence and humor. But this story is also far more than that, as Moore well knows. At bottom, the history of chiropractic demonstrates that struggles for occupational jurisdiction,

in the health care professions as elsewhere, are, for the most part, matters of state and local politics, arenas in which public sentiment often outweighs the supposed mandates of reason and science and even the power of organized interest groups. Matched against chiropractic in a prolonged grassroots contest for the hearts and minds of health care consumers, organized medicine clearly was not the juggernaut medical historians have long supposed.

Rooted in Dust: Surviving Drought and Depression in Southwestern Kansas, by Pamela Riney-Kehrberg. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994. xiv, 249 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$25.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL SCHUYLER, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT KEARNEY

The Great Depression, New Deal farm policies, and especially the "Dust Bowl" experience of farmers stricken by the depression, have been the subject of numerous scholarly studies by historians such as R. Douglas Hurt, Donald Worster, Walter J. Stein, and Paul Bonnifield. Pamela Riney-Kehrberg's book covers a lot of familiar territory, but focuses on the people in sixteen Dust Bowl counties in southwestern Kansas who, in spite of drought, blowing dust, and the collapse of the farm economy, managed to stay in the region. Agriculture receives the most attention, but the author also discusses the largest Kansas communities located in the Dust Bowl—Liberal, Garden City, and Dodge City.

Southwestern Kansas experienced rapid growth and general prosperity from the turn of the twentieth century until the collapse of farm prices in 1931. Unfortunately for residents of the region, the beginning of the economic depression in agriculture coincided with the onset of a drought cycle that would afflict the Dust Bowl counties for the next eight years. As the depression deepened, many farmers and town dwellers in southwestern Kansas began to leave to search for a better life. By 1940 the Dust Bowl counties had lost from one-third to half of their populations. Riney-Kehrberg concludes, unlike many other historians who have studied Great Plains agriculture in the 1930s, that hard times, and not the rapid mechanization of agriculture, was the major reason people left the region.

The most important question the author examines is why people *stayed* in the Dust Bowl region. She concludes that no single factor can explain why some residents persisted while others failed to meet the challenge of drought and depression. She reasons, however, that large landholdings, close family ties, diversified farming practices, previous

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