Gonstead Chiropractic Technique

Class Introduction
- Syllabus
- Class Web Page

Thuli Boards

Who was Dr. Gonstead?
- In the early 1960’s word was spreading throughout the world that there was a healer in a small farming community in Wisconsin to whom people of all ages, and walks of life, were flocking. Who was this man and what was his method?

Dr. Clarence Selmer Gonstead
- Born 24 July 1898
- Willow Lake, South Dakota
- Raised on farm - started the day milking 12 cows and tending to his father’s Clydesdale horses
- 5 children in the family
- Worked as engineering foreman for JI Case Co.

Why Chiropractic?
- At 19 (1917), bedridden with Rheumatoid arthritis
- No help from conventional solutions
- Dr. Olson
  - stayed with him, adjusting him every 4 to 6 hours
- Gonstead could crawl around on the floor, eventually could walk
- This was the turning point for him

Elvira Meister
- C.S. Gonstead’s wife
- Married Valentine’s day 1924
- He called her “Vi”
- Very dedicated to Chiropractic and to her husband

As a Chiropractor
- Graduated 1923 From Palmer Chiropractic College
- Class of 800 members
- Two brothers became Chiropractors as well

First Clinic
- Worked for Dr. Olson who was recuperating from an illness
- Opened his first office on the upper level of the bank building of Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin
  - MD tripping over Gonstead’s patients lined up on two stories of stairs
- First of it’s kind in Wisconsin
  - most Chiropractors in the ’20’s had home offices and lived above the clinic.
One of the first Chiro’s in Wisconsin to have X-ray and to use a fluoroscope

**Style of Practice**
- Mrs. Gonstead said: “I can remember him sitting up long hours even when he got through at the office he’d sit there and study those x-rays… and he’d try to work it out, and he [did] work it out”
- Cared for all ages until all hours of the night, seven days a week

**Gonstead’s advertising style**
- He was proud of the fact that he never spent a postage stamp to advertise
- One patient tells the other about health care
  - “you got this problem, why don’t you go over and try it”

**First Gonstead Clinic**
- 1939 the practice outgrew the bank building, and Gonstead built a free-standing clinic
- Four adjusting rooms, two on each side of a hallway
- one consultation room

**Hours**
- “We were the only ones open late at night. You’d come into Mt. Horeb and the only one’s that were lit up was Gonstead” - Vi
- Patient’s didn’t mind waiting for as long as three and four hours to see him
  - Sometimes they would go home for dinner and come back
- Many times the milkman would be starting his rounds when Gonstead would finish at 4 am
  - It was often said that Gonstead didn’t go to bed on the same day he woke up, and he changed his shoes twice a day.

**House Calls**
- For the bedridden
- He said “don’t wait up, I’ll just knock on the door or window when I arrive”
- Elvira drove the car after hours to let him catch up on sleep
- Dr. Gonstead sometimes cat napped during 7 seconds that hi-lo raised and lowered

**Polio Epidemic**
- Elvira shoveled snow to get as close to the farm houses as possible
- Gonstead caught up on sleep in the car
- Gonstead would wade into the house and sometimes stay all night to break a fever, ease the pain and end suffering

**Gonstead’s View of the Spine**
- Intricate engineering wonder
- Traveled to Lincoln Chiropractic College in private plane
  - dissected, studied stained, photographed and reconstructed cadaver spines

**Gonstead System**
- Technical procedure that gives rise to a specific, definite approach to every segment of the spinal column

**Thousands of Clinical cases**
- scrutinized many cases to find out what worked
  - often relied “on outcome studies”

**Gonstead System**
• Full Spine
  – Seen as one highly integrated system
  – one area effects the others
  – “Changes in one area of the spine, whether functional or organic, can and do produce biomechanical and
    neurophysiological changes in other areas of the spine”
  – Felt for this reason that it was necessary to examine the whole spine and not just the place that hurts

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• Gonstead stated in the 1940’s,
  “Therein lies the uniqueness of my work - The Gonstead Technique has a specific
  application on the affected segment or segments only.”
• His approach is often summarized by the phrase he coined, “Find the subluxation, accept
  it where you find it, correct it and leave it alone”.
• "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

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Methods of locating subluxation
• 1) Observation
• 2) Instrumentation
• 3) Static (Digital) Palpation
• 4) Motion Palpation
• 5) X-ray and adjusting by hand only

• Remember “Oh, I See My X-Ray”

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The system
• Cervical adjusting seated
  – allows proper line of correction
• first knee chest table used for entire spine
• Worked with company to make more sensitive instrument to detect temperature differentials
  – nerv o scope
• Pioneered full spine x-ray and perfected use of AP and Lateral 14X36 films, intensifying screens and
  the first exclusively chiropractic x-ray unit in the profession

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Chiropractor’s Chiropractor
• 1946
  – Tom Askland and Chris Oldenberg urged Gonstead to give seminar
  – Information presented by Gonstead was new to many doctors.
    • Had only been taught to find the most misaligned using an x-ray and correct it.
    • Had been taught that the pelvis didn’t move
      – 1959 Gonstead taught that it could.
  – First seminar director (Dr. Ted Markham) actually began by trying to disprove Gonstead’s theories.
    • Found Gonstead to be accurate

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1964
• Built the current clinic
  – 19,000 Square feet
  – Seating for 106 patients in waiting area
    • frequently full
  – Main floor is out-patient facility
    • adjusting rooms
    • waiting area
    • X-ray
    • Lab
    • Reception
  – Lower floor - seminar facilities
26 Lodging was a problem
   • Built the Karakahl Inn
   • At one time built an airport for his planes and patients

27 The Cox Brothers
   • Dr. Alex joined the staff in 1962
   • Dr. Doug in 1964
   • Clinic, Karakahl Inn and Gonstead Seminar was sold to Dr’s Alex and Doug Cox in 1974
   • Seminar sold to Dr. John Cox
   • Clinic purchased eventually by the Gonstead Foundation to “perpetuate Dr. Gonstead’s clinic as a Chiropractic institution”