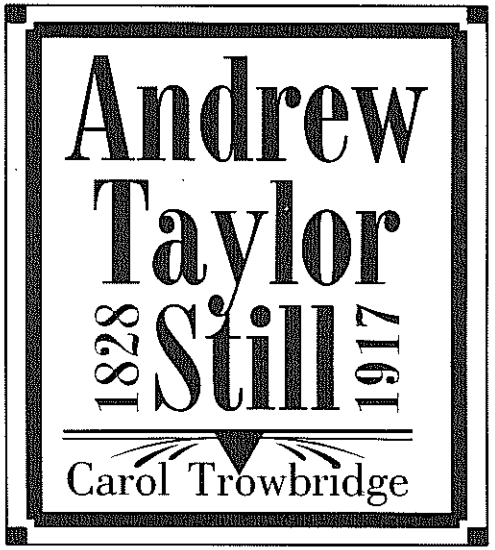
Andrew Taylor Still:
1828-1917



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For my husband, Bob

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Acknowledgments

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Two Still family members, Mary Jane Denslow and Elizabeth Laughlin, supplied information upon request; more importantly, they conveyed a sense of the atmosphere–perhaps now gone–that pervaded the profession as it struggled to gain recognition and preserve the founder's philosophy. Mary Jane is the granddaughter of Andrew Taylor Still and was the driving force behind the formation of the Still National Osteopathic Museum, as well as a major contributor to its archives. Her late husband, J. Stedman Denslow, D.O., was active in osteopathic research. His work and his connections with leaders in the basic science fields were instrumental in securing the first government research funds for osteopathic colleges. Elizabeth Laughlin, whose late husband George Andrew was a grandson of the founder and a highly respected osteopathic physician, shared the Still manuscripts in her possession. Without the full cooperation of Mary Jane and Elizabeth this book could not have been written. Elizabeth's extensive genealogical library and personal files on the Still family, along with the written recollections of Andrew Taylor Still's sisters, Mary Still Adams and Marovia Still Clark, and Mary Elivra's niece, Ione Hulett, D.O., inspired me to take a more comprehensive approach to the intellectual world of the nineteeth century that helped to shape Still's thinking.

No one has published a detailed biography of Andrew Taylor Still. His autobiography contains a general outline of his life and others have recorded intimate recollections of his behavior and character, but there are many gaps. Indeed, Still himself–although seeming eccentric and egotistical–dwelled more upon the actual philosophy rather than its origins or his personal travails.

In a book that touches on so many fields of history, I am grateful to innumerable historians who have published their research. I sincerely appreciate the critiques of experts in their fields: Dr. David March, who read the

manuscript at various stages and gently steered me toward historical precision. and Dr. Connie Holt Jones for her editorial suggestions, as well as readers who commented on early versions of the manuscript. Most of all, I thank Dr. Robert Schnucker, who saw promise in my early manuscript and gave guidance with his penetrating questions.

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Carol Trowbridge

Visalia, California
September, 1990

Preface

WHEN, IN 1976, OUR FAMILY MOVED TO KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI, the birthplace of osteopathic medicine, I knew nothing of Andrew Taylor Still and his philosophy, nor about the osteopathic profession. I had known several D.O.s earlier and was impressed by their desire to enter a profession whose credibility in medical circles, until recently, had been questioned. Through my exposure to osteopathic medicine, my acquaintance with many dedicated practicing D.O.s, and my work in the Still National Osteopathic Museum, I became increasingly puzzled about osteopathy's dubious standing because the philosophy seemed so reasonable. While attempting to understand osteopathy, I became fascinated with the life of its founder, his family, his philosophy and its origins, and nineteenth-century America in general.

At 10:00 A.M. on June 22, 1874, an American physician, Andrew Taylor Still, experienced a life-changing revelation, one he believed could revolutionize nineteenth-century medicine. Ten years earlier, Still had lost three of his children to cerebrospinal meningitis, and with them all confidence and hope in the medical therapy of his day. Emotionally wrought by grief and intellectually disgusted with traditional medicine, Still became obsessed with finding the cause and the cure for disease. In that hope he was not alone.

Those were times of medical uncertainty. From the 1850s until the 1880s, the foundation of the system called heroic medicine was crumbling. Traditional drugs and techniques used by physicians since the 1770s were questioned: excessive bleeding, purging with massive doses of emetics and cathartics, use of stand-by drugs such as calomel or mercurous chloride. Many physicians turned to administering the addictive drugs of opium, cocaine, and alcohol rather than continue with bleeding and purging. The safest therapy in those days seemed to be to do nothing. As the medical profession wallowed in a sea of therapeutic nihilism, a growing number of physicians urged a return to a more conservative therapy that relied on the powers of nature. Many were searching for a blueprint to bring order to the medical chaos and to once and for all establish medicine as a scientific discipline. Still's blueprint, founded firmly upon principles of the grand scientific theory of his day–evolution–came in that June flash of inspiration.

Years of thought, study, and experimentation followed before Still opened the American School of Osteopathy in the fall of 1892 in Kirksville, Missouri, a small obscure town far removed from the centers of traditional medicine. But distance from traditional medicine was exactly what Still had in mind. His graduates, at first called Diplomates of Osteopathy, and later Doctors of Osteopathy (D.O.s), were to become the vanguard of a

drugless revolution in medical philosophy and therapy. As the vanguard of that revolution, they, like other medical pioneers who met with bitter opposition, struggled for nearly a century against almost incredible obstacles.

Based upon biological principles and intimately tied to the structure of the human organism, Still's philosophy of osteopathy was holistic and naturalistic, emphasizing health rather than disease. He believed that the body was perfect. From this belief came four basic encompassing and interrelating principles: (1) the human body functions as a total biologic unit, (2) the body possesses self-healing and self-regulatory mechanisms, (3) structure and function are interrelated, and (4) abnormal pressure in one part of the body produces abnormal pressures and strains upon other parts of the body. Disregarding drugs, Still used a manipulative therapy designed to release the healing powers of nature. This drugless revolution was effectively silenced on the political front, and osteopathy's contribution to American medicine has been virtually ignored so that neither Andrew Taylor Still nor osteopathy have yet to be accorded their proper places in the formal annals of American medical tradition.

Today the osteopathic profession is thriving with fifteen medical schools mostly state supported. There are about thirty thousand American physicians who enjoy full practice rights in medicine and surgery in all states and territories, and who take the same national board examinations for licensure as M.D.s,[1] but this status has been attained relatively recently. Struggling to be accepted while retaining its uniqueness, the profession's story is dramatic. As the twentieth century draws to a close, some observers (who question the D.O.'s desire to remain independent), believe the profession is experiencing a serious identity crisis. For all practical purposes they have become medical doctors.

Manipulative therapy, once an indispensable part of the osteopaths' practice, has been widely abandoned. Bending to overwhelming political and socio-economic pressures to conform, and philosophically battered by ever-increasing discoveries of "miracle drugs," the D.O.s surrendered their uniqueness long ago. My initial effort to mesh the story of Andrew Taylor Still with that of the osteopathic profession proved to be like mixing oil and water, for the D.O.s' recent success can be attributed to their acceptance of practices that its founder abhorred: drugs and conformance to medical curricula.

Since the beginning, the battle to be recognized as "real" doctors has dominated the profession, overshadowing the story of its founder and the

[1] *American Osteopathic Association Yearbook and Directory of Osteopathic Physicians* (Chicago: American Osteopathic Association, 1990), 501. The figures include all American D.O.'s in addition to those serving in the military, the U. S. Public Health Service, in Canada, and in other foreign countries.

origins of his philosophy. Most references to Still within the profession point to his eccentricity, to a man on the path of some gems of truth, but certainly a radical. Outside the profession his image fares much worse. A recent reviewer of medical history characterized his ideas as "crazy." Others more kindly view him as an eccentric quack isolated from the mainstream of medical thought. Mostly, Still is ignored.

From 1874 until 1892, ostracized by his family and others, Still wandered the northeast Missouri countryside lecturing about his new science to anyone who would listen. Dressed all in black, his trouser legs carelessly tucked into his knee high boots, and with a bag containing a complete set of human bones flung over his shoulder, Still was indeed the picture of eccentricity. Later his stubborn reluctance to include traditional medicine in the curriculum of his school would just compound this persistent image. A lack of historical perspective does make Still appear strange and is an injustice to an insightful man whose ideas were at once a product of his time and, in their practical applications, ahead of his time. Indeed, Still was on the cutting edge of nineteenth-century scientific thought and philosophy. The drugless approach was radical (and one supposes it always will be), but within the context of nineteenth-century medicine, "crazy" Still appears to have been one of the thoroughly sane physicians around. Even today, when many millions of dollars continue to finance drug research, the future of medicine may lie in the very area Still emphasized, the immune system of the body.

A statement by Ronald G. Walters in *The Anti-Slavery Appeal* encouraged future historians to discern what made reformers American rather than what made them eccentric. That idea focused my research, taking me far beyond what I originally intended to do, and led to a greater understanding of Still and osteopathy.

The story of this man and of his medical movement is virtually unknown to the majority of Americans, yet both are uniquely American. Still experienced the great Westward movement, the second Industrial Revolution, and the Scientific Awakening. He participated in the border warfare of Bleeding Kansas and subsequently served in the Civil War. More important to the story of osteopathy, he was born the son of Abram Still, a frontier Methodist circuit rider, so that the Methodist doctrine of perfectionism permeates his philosophy, just as it permeated in some form or fashion most of nineteenth-century American thought and activity.

Perfectionism, popularized by the English founder of Methodism, John Wesley, meant a state of holiness in which one devoted a heart and a life to God. Wesley believed that ultimate perfection was possible only after death, but he taught that since one's salvation was not predestined, the process of becoming perfected could begin in this life. By simply declaring one's faith and taking responsibility for one's own actions, a Methodist

could, step by step, move closer to perfection.[2] This theme of Methodism which focused attention on improvement of the individual soul infiltrated secular nineteenth-century American institutions. Some philosophers expanded the concept of perfectionism to what was perceived as the next logical step and asked: if God is perfect, how can anything He made, including humankind, be imperfect?[3] This was Still's position, but it was a stance that ignored the need for–and the essence of–Wesley's doctrine of perfectionism: the theological concept of original sin. Because of his move away from the Methodist evangelism of his childhood, Still, like many others of his era who accepted the theory of evolution, was to experience serious emotional trauma.

Still's world was never the same after he found himself more attuned to the thinking of transcendentalists, Universalists, spiritualists, mesmerists, and phrenologists–all of whom spearheaded movements based on a human-centered world operating under natural laws. Their ideas vibrated throughout nineteenth-century American thought and paved the way for the acceptance of the theory of evolution.[4] Although osteopathy was born on the frontier, Still drew from the swift-flowing intellectual ideas of the nineteenth century, formulating his science from phrenology, mesmerism or magnetic healing, bonesetting, spiritualism, perfectionism, mechanics, and evolutionary concepts. As Still's story can be best understood by placing him in the world of his times, the first part of this book is about the Still family environment. The second part picks up Still's personal story, to show as closely as possible the choices open to him during those times.

[2]Leo George Cox, *John Wesley's Concept of Perfectionism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1968), 72-75.

[3]See Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Wang and Hill, 1978), 145-46.

[4]These movements and their connection with the theory of evolution have not been adequately explored by historians. Martin Gardner, "Bumps on the Head," *New York Review of Books* 35 no. 8 (March 17, 1988): 8-10, reviewed *Pseudo-Science and Society in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Arthur Wrobel, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987). In his review, Gardner questions the contributors' sympathetic leanings toward the pseudo-sciences and the men who championed them. He also decried the omission from the book of the "crazy doctrines of Andrew Still" and Palmer's chiropractic. At the same time and in the same breath, the reviewer wished that the contributors had addressed the "ignorant attacks on evolution," clearly indicating that he and many others are unaware of the intimate relationship between the so-called pseudosciences, the origins of osteopathy, chiropractic, and evolutionary philosophy. "Bumps on the Head," *New York Review of Books* 34 no. 8 (March 17, 1988): 8-10.

Part One: A Family Journey

ABRAM STILL

Early Methodist circuit riders were characterized as "sons of thunder" for their fire and brimstone preaching, their frightening descriptions of hell, and their colorful interpretations of the Day of Judgment. Because of Abram, Andrew Taylor Still's environment was emotionally charged with evangelism that instilled in him, perhaps more than others, the visions and responsibilities of reform. (Photo courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

1

Sons of Thunder

I resolved that I would take up the subject and ascertain by investigation . . . whether it could be proven as stated by the gray-headed sages of the pulpit, that the works of God would prove His perfection.

A. T. Still[1]

WHEN ABRAM AND MARTHA STILL DIED, a segment of American history died with them. Abram and Martha were the parents of Andrew Taylor Still. Abram was one of those "sages of the pulpit," an old-time Methodist preacher; Martha was a pioneer woman who went with her husband to every outpost despite the danger, the remoteness, or her own reluctance. Although Andrew would later turn away from organized religion, from Methodism he inherited an aversion to alcohol and slavery, an interest in education, and a Wesleyan approach to medicine that emphasized health rather than disease. Andrew lived in an environment emotionally charged with evangelism and he–perhaps more than others– was instilled with the visions and responsibilities of reform.

A colleague described Abram's sermons as "plain, pointed and practical."[2] No higher compliment could be paid to a frontier Methodist minister, for the Methodists of that day did not consider "plain" in any sense to mean dull: they practiced a zealous style of religion and devotion to soul-saving that–on the surface at least–would be barely recognizable to the denomination today. Methodist preachers of Abram's day dressed in somber black; their steely eyes were uncompromising in the face of any evil, and they posed a formidable presence in their lawless surroundings on the American frontier. Abram and his fellow preachers were characterized as "sons of thunder"[3] for their fire-and-brimstone preaching, their frightening descriptions of hell, and their colorful interpretations of the Day of Judgment. Imaginary thunder and lightening crashed violently about their outdoor camp meeting pulpits when they battled the Devil and the forces of evil in a forested setting, eerily lighted by flickering pine knot torches. Their self-taught vocabulary conjured up such hair-raising images that many children would

[1]A. T. Still, *Autobiography* (Kirksville, Mo.: By the Author, 1897), 319.

[2]Joseph Dennison, "Memoirs, Rev. A. Still," *Annual Minutes of the Kansas Conference, M. E. Church, 1868*, 28-29.

[3]William Brownlow Posey, *The Development of Methodism in the Old Southwest, 1783-1824* (Philadelphia: Methodist Book Concern, 1933), 23.

never again experience a storm without the Day of Judgment flashing through their minds.[4] Although their sermons vibrated with the wrath of God, Methodism's underlying theme was one of hope, love, and brotherhood. By the time Abram began his itinerant ministry, Methodism, with its democratic doctrine, organizational structure, and masterful use of the camp meeting, was the largest Protestant denomination in America.

Abram was probably converted to Christianity during one of the early nineteenth-century camp meetings when he lived in Tennessee. There, as in Kentucky and throughout the mountains of Appalachia, camp-meeting fervor was most intense. According to a family legend among the surviving scraps of Still family history, Abram's father Boaz was a Scotch-Irish frontiersman who married Mary Lyda, of Dutch descent. Boaz was a slaveholder who liked whiskey, race horses, and wagering on fighting cocks;[5] his sinful activities surely made him a prime target for frontier Methodist preachers. One can only imagine the conversations between Mary Lyda and Boaz about the morality of his hobbies. Although nothing more is known of Boaz and Mary or their religious feelings, two of their fifteen children, Abram and Elijah, became Methodist circuit riders.

In 1818 Abram was assigned to the Tazewell Circuit in southwestern Virginia, part of a region called the Holston. Surrounded by lofty mountains, Holston cut across state lines at various places to include portions of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. The boundaries of Tazewell County stretched to encompass nearly three thousand square miles from mountaintop to mountaintop, through narrow gaps and valleys, and across crystal clear rivers roaring in their inevitable rush to the Ohio River. Mineral springs spurted from the depths of the earth and the entire county was blanketed in a virtual garden of medicinal plants.[6]

Before the county was organized in 1800, even voting was a veritable endurance test, for many of the settlers had to cross four large mountains and forge unpredictable streams to get to the nearest polls.[7] Voting was easier when Abram began his ministry in Tazewell, but traveling the winding mountainous trails in weather that could change without warning was a daily peril. Fickle winds blew through the valleys; in the higher elevations the winters were particularly severe. After snowstorms, when the mountains were shrouded in a silent white haze, the picturesque circuit rider and his horse emerged on the horizon as a ghostly silhouette. Weather

[4]*General History of Macon County* (Chicago: Henry Taylor and Co., 1910), 154.

[5]Letter from Othor McClean of Paso Robles, California to Mary Jane Laughlin Denslow, February 27, 1978. Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville, Missouri.

[6]Lewis Preston Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1769-1800,* (1929; rpt. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1970), 2:434-49.

[7]W. C. Pendleton, *Pendleton's History of Tazewell County and Southwest Virginia,* 2 vols. (Richmond, Va.: W. C. Hill Printing Co, 1922), 1:520.

was no deterrent to the circuit rider; a common adage was "there is nothing out today but crows and Methodist preachers."[8] It mattered little to these Methodists that they were called "deluded fanatics" by most of the pious settlers (who happened to be Presbyterian) or the rest (who were godless).[9] Poor sinners were stalked relentlessly.

The circuit riders' lonely ride to isolated settlements took them through forests abounding with wild animals. When a Tazewell resident died in 1850, it was reported that he had killed more than twelve hundred bears during his lifetime. Abram Still, on his less worldly hunt, carried weapons of a different sort: Bibles, books, hymnals, and John Milton's works which circuit riders frequently used as a handy reference for vivid descriptions of hell-fire.[10]

In Tazewell Abram met his future wife, Martha Poage Moore. The Moores were Methodists and undoubtedly their isolated cabin in Abb's Valley was a haven for preachers assigned to the remote and rugged Tazewell Circuit. Early settlers, like Martha's grandfather, Captain James Moore III, were of hardy Scotch-Irish and German stock. Jeffersonian Democrats at first, they came to embrace Jacksonian Democracy so strongly that the older men continued to vote for Andrew Jackson long after his name had disappeared from the presidential ballot.[11] Because Tazewell County was located on the old Indian road from the Ohio River to the Western settlements, the settlers' family tales were steeped in tragic legends of bloody Indian massacres, tortures, and captivities.[12] Independent Scotch-Irish frontiersmen established the advance outposts in the American wilderness. Between 1730 and 1770, a half-million Scotch-Irish emigrated from Ulster. Most settled first in Pennsylvania and then migrated into the Appalachian Mountains to act as a buffer of defense against the Indians, with little help from the government. Before 1794 these pioneers were in constant conflict, particularly with the Shawnees, whose former home and hunting grounds the settlers had recently come to occupy. Advertisements in early frontier newspapers that sought information about relatives and

[8]Posey, *Development of Methodism,* 36.

[9]For one pioneer circuit rider's description, see D. R. McAnnaly, *Life and Times of Reverend S. Patton, D.C., and Annals of the Holston Conference* (St. Louis: Methodist Book Concern, 1859), 33.

[10]Ellis Merton Coulter, *William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 9.

[11]Pendleton, *History of Tazewell County,* 1:520.

[12]See Summers, *Annals,* and James Moore Brown and Robert Bell Woodroth, *The Captives of Abb's Valley,* (Staunton, Va.: McClure Co., 1942), for accounts of this story.

MARTHA POAGE MOORE
(Photo courtesy Kansas State Historical Society)

friends who had been carried off during Indian raids attest to their dangerous situation.[13]

Around 1772 Captain Moore brought his family to Abb's Valley. He was joined by the families of his brother-in-law Robert Poage and Absalom Looney, for whom the valley came to be named.[14] A local legend called "The Captives of Abb's Valley" recounts a tragedy during the early life of Martha's father. Young Martha must have heard her father's story many times, perhaps begging him to relate every detail just as her own children would come to beg when a quirk of fate landed the Stills among the Shawnees in Kansas Territory, so many miles from the Appalachian mountains.

THE CAPTIVES OF ABB'S VALLEY

Captain Moore found the valley to be relatively free from Indian raids until 1774, when Indians killed his neighbor John King, King's wife, and six of their children, and took captive John Evans and a child. As Indian raids and massacres began in earnest, some settlers erected blockhouses and fortresses for protection; others, including Moore's nearby neighbors, Looney and Poage, fled to safer areas with their families. By 1782 only the Moores and a few others remained in Abb's Valley.[15] Because of Moore's ambitious plans to purchase the entire valley, he refused to be frightened away by Indians. During the seasons in which Indian raids were most likely to occur, he took precautions to protect his family by hiring laborers who carried rifles.[16] Even though the raids, massacres, and abductions continued Moore's good luck held out for eight years. Then, in September 1784, Chief Black Wolf swooped into the valley with his Shawnee band on a horse raid and captured the Moores' son, fourteen-year-old James.

Young James, barefoot and dressed only in summer clothes, had to trudge under captivity over the rugged terrain between Abb's Valley and the Shawnee towns located on the Scioto River near Chillicothe, Ohio. James attempted to leave a trail along the forested ridges by breaking

[13]Theodore Roosevelt, *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, 20 vols. (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1889; rpt. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), vol. 9, *The Winning of the West II*, 355.

[14]Though the region has been referred to as App's Valley, Abb's Valley is used more frequently.

[15]William Henry Foote, *Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1850), 508.

[16]Brown and Woodworth, *The Captives of Abb's Valley* 20. Reverend Brown was Mary Moore's son. His original book, *The Captives of Abb's Valley: A Legend of Frontier Life* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sunday School Work, 1854) together with Woodworth's genealogical information about the descendants of the captives are combined in: Rev. James Moore Brown, DD (A Son of Mary Moore), *The Captives of Abb's Valley: A Legend of Frontier Life* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sunday School Work, 1854), from which the following paragraphs are excerpted.

branches and kicking up leaves, but Chief Black Wolf threatened him with a tomahawk and carefully covered the party's tracks. Sensing that a courageous spirit would increase his chance of survival, James hid his fear until one evening, while Black Wolf was apparently asleep, he knelt to pray, putting his fate in God's hands and weeping for the first time since his capture. Black Wolf saw James' tears and warned him not to cry again, but thereafter the Indians showed a measure of respect for this captive who made no attempt to escape. Crossing the Ohio River on a raft, the party took the trail to the Shawnee village where James would learn to speak fluent Shawnee during his years of captivity. Eventually James was sold for fifty dollars in goods to a kind French trader who took him to Canada near Detroit, treating him like a son.

Although Captain Moore considered searching for James, the family would have been left unprotected for many months and even then the outcome would have been doubtful. When they finally received word that James had been purchased by the Frenchman, their minds were somewhat relieved, and they fully expected to see him again but that was not to happen.

Throughout the evening of July 13, 1786, the Moores' horses whinnied and their dogs barked nervously, but the family dismissed the commotion as only wild animals coming near the cabin. The next morning they scurried about doing their usual chores: two men were harvesting wheat in a nearby field, Captain Moore was feeding salt to his horses, William and Rebecca were fetching the morning's water, and their brother Alexander was playing in the yard. In the cabin were Mrs. Moore, baby Margaret, son John, daughter Jane, and a visiting neighbor, Martha Evans from Walker's Creek; a servant, John Simpson, was lying sick in the upstairs loft. Just as daughter Mary was making her way to the fence to call breakfast, Black Wolf and his Shawnee band came whooping down the ridge toward the cabin.

As the men in the field ran into the woods, Captain Moore raced for the cabin with his children. In the confusion, Mrs. Moore and Martha Evans hastily barred the door, leaving the children and her husband outside. Captain Moore was shot seven times and scalped; William, Rebecca, and Alexander were also killed in the yard. Only Mary managed to slip inside before the door was closed. As the Shawnees began hacking at the thick barred cabin door with their tomahawks, a wounded John Simpson lay dying upstairs while Martha Evans hid under a plank in the cabin floor. Mrs. Moore knelt in prayer with her children as the Indians battered at the barricaded door; then she rose, lifted the bars, and placed the family at the mercy of their captors. The family watched while the Indians ate their own breakfast and then killed most of the livestock and looted and burned the cabin.

JAMES MOORE'S JOURNEY - A PRAYER FOR HELP

READING THE BIBLE

For a while Mary lived with the family of a Shawnee chief. The chief did not understand English but was amused by the sound of the language. He often asked Mary to read aloud from the New Testament that she had grabbed hastily when she was taken captive.

Then, with their captives in tow, the Shawnees set out for the towns. Martha Evans fled from her hiding place beneath the floor and hid under a rock shelving not far from the cabin. As the Indians passed by, Martha thought they had seen her and she surrendered. The Indians led their captives along the same route through the wilderness James had been led through two years earlier. Each night the captives were securely tied and closely guarded; only four of them survived. John, who had been ill, was unable to keep up with the pace of the journey. On the second day he was taken from the group, killed, and scalped. An Indian hung John's scalp from his belt and told Mrs. Moore of her child's fate. On the third day, baby Margaret was flung against a tree and left as a meal for wild animals.

As the story was later written, the four surviving captives were split up when they arrived in Ohio after twenty days of travel. Mrs. Moore and her daughter Jane were tortured and burned at the stake in one village, but Martha Evans and Mary had been hidden by some Shawnee women in another village until the danger was past. Some of the captives taken during this period returned to their homes in Tazewell County. Some suffered the fate of Mrs. Moore and Jane. Martha Evans and Mary survived, but the next few years were difficult for them. For a time, Mary lived with the family of a chief, who was kind to her. Although he did not understand English, the sound of the language seemingly amused him and he often asked Mary to read to him from the New Testament she had hastily grabbed as she was taken from her burning home. But other Indians claimed ownership of Mary and sometimes quarreled with the chief. Eventually Mary and Martha were taken to Detroit and sold; now the three captives–Mary, Martha, and James–were living near each other.

Their return to Tazewell County was a result of the persistent effort of Martha's brother, Thomas Evans, who searched for her for two years, returning home only for money, food, and clothing. When he finally found all three captives, James was first inclined to stay in Canada after learning the fate of his family. Nevertheless, he did return to Virginia with Thomas, Martha, and his sister Mary. James subsequently married Barbara Taylor of Rockbridge County, Virginia, and built a cabin in Abb's Valley on the site of the family tragedy. In 1794 the United Indian Tribes were defeated by General Anthony Wayne at Fallen Timbers in Ohio, and the Indian attacks on Tazewell County ceased. Although retribution for the Indians was just beginning, the nightmare was over for the settlers of Tazewell.

James and Barbara Moore's daughter, Martha (Patsey) Poage Moore, married Abram Still in 1822 in Tazewell County.[17] Abram was to preach

[17]John Newton Harmon, Sr., *Annals of Tazewell County, Virginia,* 2 vols. (Richmond: W. C. Hill Printing Co., N.D.), 1:69.

for fifteen years within the boundaries of Holston during what turned out to be a most volatile period in the history of American Methodism.

SLAVERY AND METHODISM

Abram, like most early Holston Methodist circuit riders, had strong antislavery feelings. Wesley's rules emphasized the brotherhood of man, and preachers urged their members to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick. Moreover, drinking liquor, charging excessive interest, playing cards, dancing, wearing jewelery, and owning and dealing in slaves was discouraged. During those early years the Methodist Church made noble attempts to eliminate slavery from the ranks of its clergy and membership, but the church leaders found their plans thwarted as the divisive issue became entrenched as a southern institution. Increasingly, southern preachers found that stands on slavery were easier taken than enforced. Those who preached an antislavery message often discovered themselves unpopular enough that it became difficult to obtain food or shelter.[18]

In 1804 the General Conference suspended the entire section of its *Discipline* that regulated slavery for the South, thereby avoiding the issue on the national level for a time. Twelve years later, as Methodism celebrated its phenomenal growth, the General Conference committee on slavery seemed to put the problem to rest by reporting: "Under present existing circumstances in relation to slavery, little can be done to abolish the practice so contrary to the principles of moral justice."[19] The conference adopted the committee's report, but the growing schism dividing the church could not so easily be set aside.

THE "VEXED QUESTION"

Until 1824 Holston was a part of the Tennessee Conference and at their annual meetings slavery was referred to as the "vexed question." Between 1814 and 1820 membership growth stalled as the conference struggled to keep up with Western migration and to stop the internal migration that had begun over the issue of slavery. Regulations were made at the annual conferences, only to be rescinded at subsequent meetings. Many antislavery preachers emigrated to the Northwest at this time, leaving behind what seemed to be the impossible task of eradicating slavery.[20]

Few records from Abram's early career remain about his position on the slavery issue at that time. Later his children were to describe him as a staunch abolitionist, a fact that would have put him in the middle of the

[18]R. N. Price, *Holston Methodism,* 5 vols. (South Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, N.D.), 2:312.

[19]Cited by Donald G. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism, A Chapter in American Morality* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), 53.

[20]Price, *Holston Methodism,* 2:209.

heated Holston debates. Abram was one of nineteen men admitted into the Tennessee Conference in 1818, and in that year the conference was unusually quiet on the issue of slavery, preferring to interpret the rule as pertaining not to slaveholding, but to slave trading. When, however, the antislavery faction in the Tennessee Conference gained the majority by five votes the next year, debate gave way to action. Abram began his assignment in the Tazewell Circuit in the midst of raging controversy. One slave owner was not admitted as a preacher, and other members who were slaveholders were being expelled. Under the leadership of the Holston preacher James Axley, slaveholding members were even denied the right to lead prayer services.[21] Proslavery preachers in the conference instigated a movement to neutralize these antislavery activities, eventually persuading the Church to remove the power to enforce antislavery regulations from the local conferences.[22] With the "vexed question" taken out of its jurisdiction, the Tennessee Conference grew. Over the next two years, Methodist membership in Holston increased by 60 percent.[23] After one year's service in the Tazewell Circuit, Abram's annual appointments expanded to include Little River, Clinch, and Holston circuit. He was ordained a deacon in 1821. When their first child, Edward Cox, was born in Tazewell County in 1824,[24] Abram followed the pattern of most circuit riders, "locating" soon after marriage.[25] During 1824 Abram and fellow preachers in western Virginia and eastern Tennessee formed the Holston Conference. As a result, Abram was not "located" for long but he did not lose his ties with the conference. He was ordained presiding elder by Bishop Joshua Soule in 1825, and the family settled in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains near the county seat of Jonesville in Lee County, Virginia. The Stills bought five hundred acres for two hundred dollars,[26] and for ten years Abram farmed,

[21]Ibid.

[22]Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism,* 46.

[23]Price, *Holston Methodism,* 2:289.

[24]See ibid., 1:81. Perhaps Abram's first son was named after the famous Holston exhorter, Edward Cox. Cox was notorious for loading his wagon with young people from his neighborhood and carting them off to the camp meetings, returning with many Methodist converts. Some parents of the new converts were not happy with Cox's tactics.

[25]The itinerant ministry was so crucial to the growth of early Methodism that locating in one place–usually caused by marriage–was strongly discouraged. So threatening was marriage that after 1836 a preacher could not marry without penalty of some sort. Even when married, a preacher's first consideration was to be the church and not his wife. Ministers who stopped traveling were expected to cease ministerial functions except in the place where they "located." Until 1835, preachers who located lost affiliation with Conference organizations; they could attend meetings as spectators but could not vote on Conference matters. See Ferguson, *Organizing to Beat the Devil,* 100-3, and Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier: The Methodists,* 469, 640.

[26]Anne Wynn Lanningham, compiler, *Early Settlers of Lee County, Virginia and Adjacent Counties,* 2 vols. (Greensboro, N.C.: Media, Inc., 1977), 1:321.

THE STILL FAMILY CABIN, LEE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

To have been born in a log cabin became an honored American tradition symbolizing the innate intelligence of the common man and his ability to improve himself. The Still family cabin was discovered in Lee County, Virginia and moved to Kirksville by Andrew Taylor Still's son-in-law, George M. Laughlin.

preached, and followed the Wesleyan tradition of practicing medicine to supplement his income.

John Wesley's lifelong interest in medicine was to leave its mark upon nineteenth-century medical practice. His attempt to return religion to its original true state carried over into his practice of medicine; his effort to make religion more accessible to the common man was paralleled by an interest in the ministry of healing. Wesleyan medical philosophy was closely tied to the concept of original sin. Prior to Adam's sinful fall in the garden, there had been no illness, injury, disease or death. Because of the fall, salvation from these three evils became urgent, and for Wesley salvation meant the restoration of the original harmonious order of soul and body.[27]

Wesley's own chronic bouts with illness and his distress over the widespread illness and suffering among the poor led him to study medicine, eventually incorporating it into his ministry. First he edited the books of physicians whose theories of medicine mirrored those of his own; he then wrote *Primitive Physick: An Easy and Natural Way of Curing Most Diseases* (1747). This book of remedies in plain English went through twenty-three editions during Wesley's lifetime and many more after his death. Frontier circuit riders undoubtedly packed Wesley's *Primitive Physick* along with other books in their saddlebags. There was nothing new in the book; it quoted well-known physicians of Wesley's day, such as Thomas Sydenham and George Cheyne, and recommended therapies commonly used by apothocaries. *Primitive Physick* made medical knowledge available to the common person, but the medical profession, believing it threatened physicians' authority, condemned both Wesley and his book.

Wesley advocated replacing harsh therapies that used preparations of opium, steel, bark, and quicksilver, preferring instead the use of simple and inexpensive medicines. He shifted the attention of the average person–and of medicine–from disease to health by advocating physical exercise and cleanliness, with rest and temperance in food and drink. He maintained that the practice of medicine represented simple experimentation whereby effective remedies were passed down through the generations. On the other hand, the medical profession, as it evolved, had cluttered the efficacious remedies with technical terms, replacing the simple remedies with compound chemical drugs–making it difficult for average people to manage their own health.[28] Eighteenth-century medicine was hardly a scientific discipline, and once one eliminated its technical terminology and the less accessible

[27]E. Brooks Holifield, *Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition, Journey Toward Wholeness* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1986), 14.

[28]Ibid., 32-33.

mineral therapies, the practice of medicine, far from being a scholarly endeavor, was indeed simple–simple enough for a dedicated circuit rider.

Although some basic science research–particularly William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood–had provided the foundation for nineteenth-century medicine, the ordinary physician could practice with little need for detailed knowledge of the human organism. Through the centuries, disease had been looked upon as an imbalance of the system caused by fevers, obstructions in its secretions or blood, or overstimulation or understimulation of the humours. Symptoms represented deviations from an individual's natural state, and therapy was directed at restoring the overall natural balance.[29] Various methods of accomplishing this were tried throughout the eighteenth century, but the process was further simplified by the American physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Rush.

HEROIC MEDICINE

Benjamin Rush argued that fever alone–by producing tension in the blood vessels–caused disease. He concluded that the surest cure would be to relieve that tension through the ancient techniques of bleeding and purging the stomach and bowels. Rush's system was called heroic medicine, and it certainly required courage to endure the therapy, for patients were bled unconscious and purged with calomel (mercurous chloride) until they showed signs of mercurial poisoning or began to salivate.[30] From the University of Pennsylvania where Rush taught from 1768 until his death in 1813, Rush's influence went throughout the country, spread by his own prolific writing and by former students who subsequently taught heroic therapies at other schools of medicine. From 1780 until 1850, this system dominated American medical thought and practice.

When Abram Still began to practice medicine, Rush's heroic therapy was in its heyday but it was not at all popular with every physician or with every patient. Calomel, in particular, was ridiculed in popular songs and poems. A touring group in the 1840s, the Singing Hutchisons, found the song "Anti-Calomel" to be their most requested number.

> And when I must resign my breath
> Pray let me die a natural death,

[29]John Harley Warner, *The Therapeutic Perspective: Medical Practice, Knowledge, and Identity in America, 1820-1885* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 85-86. See also, Richard Shryock, *Medicine in America: Historical Essays* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 317-18.

[30]Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 42.

> And bid the world a long farewell
> Without one dose of Cal-O-Mell.[31]

An unknown poet wrote:

> Physicians hear a friendly voice
> Receive my counsel, take advice,
> Be not offended, tho' I tell,
> The dire effects of Calomel.[32]

The dire effects of calomel included the symptoms of mercury poisoning: an ash gray appearance of the tongue and pharynx, excessive salivation, ulcerated lips, cheeks and tongues, gastric pain often accompanied by bloody diarrhea, and the loss of teeth.[33] At age fourteen, Andrew Taylor Still was "salivated," or dosed with calomel. He later said, "It loosened my teeth. Today I am using part of a set of store teeth because I lived in a day and generation when people had no more intelligence than to make cinnabar of my jawbone."[34]

AMERICAN RELIANCE ON NATURAL METHODS

A stubborn grass-roots resistance developed against heroic therapies and disrespect for the regular physicians and their formal training became widespread. Ever since the first colonial settlements, people without medical training had been treating diseases, illness, and accidents in the home. The heroic treatments were not only overly harsh, but did not seem to have any therapeutic advantage over popular medicines made of plants and roots, or old family folk remedies, or the botanic preparations of local Indian doctors. In addition to Wesley's *Physick,* do-it-yourself home medical manuals were plentiful on the American frontier, providing simple guides to medicine for isolated pioneers. Remedies could be collected right outside their back doors, and the average person was not forced to rely on the scarce frontier physician, pay his fee, or take his calomel.

Because botanical practitioners needed no formal education–just a knowledge of local plants and herbs–ordinary people generally approved of complete freedom for all therapists to practice. Wesley was quoted by one botanic practitioner who was complaining about the tendency to make

[31]Stewart H. Holbrook, *Dreamers of the American Dream* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), 38.

[32]Guenter B. Risse, M.D., "Calomel and Nineteenth-Century Medical Sects," *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 48 (January 1973): 63.

[33]Ibid., 58.

[34]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 298.

what was once a simple and natural practice of medicine into a science "out of reach from the ordinary man."[35]

Out of the variety of popular manuals and botanic healers, Samuel Thomson led the way by claiming in 1813 that he had received a "call from Providence" and a "degree from the God of nature,"[36] When he patented his system of botanical medicine, Thomson became the first organized threat to the practice of regular physicians. He outlined a "course" in *New Guide to Health* (1822) to displace the formal training that Thomsonians despised. In an environment free from regulation, the botanic practitioners flourished throughout the frontier, but because of the endless variations possible in botanical medicine and the lack of educational standards, many followers strayed from Thomson's system. One straggler was Dr. Wooster Beach who, after attending a course in medicine, combined what he considered the best from regular medicine, Indian doctors, female practitioners, and botanic practitioners into the system he called eclecticism.[37] In 1827 he established Beach's Reformed Medical Academy of New York, but he failed to acquire a charter and so moved west to Ohio in 1829. By the time of Thomson's death in 1843, botanic practice was fragmented. This state of affairs opened the door for another alternative healing philosophy: homeopathy.

Homeopathic medicine was originated by the German physician, Samuel Frederick Hahnemann, and appeared in America in 1824. Hahnemann taught (in contrast to Rush's system) that the most effective drugs were those that induced symptoms similar to those of the disease, and the smaller the dose the better. Homeopathic doses, given with water or sugar pills, were diluted to as much as a decillionth part.[38] Because of their conservative drug therapy, homeopathic physicians became popular with Americans, particularly the intellectuals and reformers. Homeopaths' organization and the wide acceptance of their therapy by Americans eventually pressured

[35]J. W. Cooper, *The Experienced Botanist or Indian Physician, Being a New System of Practice Founded on Botany* (Lancaster, Penna.: John Bear, Printer, 1840), viii.

[36]Madge E. Pickard and R. Carlyle Buley, *The Midwest Pioneer, His Ills, Cures and Doctors* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1946), 249.

[37]Ibid.

[38]In America, a decillion is 10^{33}, or 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

the medical profession to phase out the tortuous bleeding and purging methods.[39]

Although Abram's library contained botanic manuals,[40] Andrew Taylor Still's initial disgust for drugs was provoked by his own father's use of the remedies of bleeding, purging, and blistering. It seems ironic that the heroic measures which were the order of the day had been encouraged by the Methodist Church itself when Dr. Henry Wilkens, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and a strong advocate of bleeding, promoted Rush's system in his revisions of the American edition of Wesley's *Physick,* which Methodist leaders had commissioned for the conditions found in the American environment. Wilkens placed heroic therapies and Wesley's *Physick*–as incompatible as they were–together in a book called the *Family Advisor* (1793).[41] Thus many of Rush's ideas and his students fanned across America, spreading heroic medicine. Some students served as preceptors and offered local courses in heroic medicine. Whether Abram attended one of these courses or merely learned the techniques from others or studied the *Family Advisor,* is not known.[42] He did develop his life-long interest in education while teaching in the Holston Conference.

THE HOLSTON CONFERENCE SEMINARY

After settling in Lee County, Abram concentrated his energies on local preaching and organizing camp meetings. At the Jonesville Campground where temporary brush arbors had sheltered the congregations for seventeen years, Abram served on the committee to erect a permanent church building

[39]Joseph Kett, *Formation of the American Medical Profession* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), 161. See also Harris L. Coulter, *Divided Legacy: A History of the Schism in Medical Thought,* 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Wehawken Book Co., 1977). Coulter's volumes represent a monumental effort to trace historically the philosophical viewpoints of empirical medicine (vitalistic, receptive to influences and stimuli from experience and surroundings, describing disease by symptoms) and rationalism (mechanistic, a more reductionist philosophy emphasizing structured experience and structured knowledge). Coulter reasons that efforts to combine the best of both empiricism and rationalism have inevitably failed because of the basic and conflicting philosophies of the two.

[40]Abram Still's medical library contained several botanic books, including Cooper's *The Experienced Botanist or Indian Physician,* and the most popular healing manual, Dr. John C. Gunn's *Domestic Medicine or the Poor Man's Friend, in the House of Affliction, Pain, and Sickness* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1830). Over 100,000 copies had been sold by 1839 By 1885, 213 editions had been printed. See Pickard and Buley, *Midwest Pioneer, 93.*

[41]Holifield, *Health and Medicine,* 49.

[42]There are varying reports that Abram attended a medical school, including one found in the Baker University archives stating that Abram graduated from Rush Medical College at Nashville. While there were no medical schools in nearby Nashville or Knoxville, several Nashville physicians, including Felix Robertson and Boyd McNairy, had studied in Philadelphia with Dr. Benjamin Rush. Carol Kaplan to Carol Trowbridge December 1, 1986, Public Library of Nashville and Davidson County. also, Todd Clung to Carol Trowbridge, October, 1986, Knoxville Public Library.

in 1827.[43] Erection of this structure signaled a more settled frontier[44] and indicated that the era of camp meetings was nearly over in Lee County.

In 1826 James Moore Still was born to Abram and Martha; on August 6, 1828, a third son, Andrew Taylor, was born. The Still boys attended school that was held in a log cabin and taught by a brutal master, Professor Vandeburgh. Later, in his autobiography, Andrew called him Professor "Spank-him-berg," saying that the tyrant spared not the rod but used it so frequently that the "ABCs were only sandwiched in between."[45]

Fortunately, the boys were soon rescued from what Andrew described as this "place of torture" by the Methodists' decision to open their own formal school in Holston. The Conference purchased land for the school in 1830 in the eastern Tennessee town of New Market and erected a brick building called Holston Seminary. Abram was one of a committee of five appointed to "take into consideration all business appertaining to the Holston Seminary." In 1834 the committee proposed to convert the Seminary into a manual labor school where students paid in part for their education with field labor.[46] The Conference adopted this committee's report and approved a search for suitable agricultural land near the school. That year, when the Stills moved into the lovely valley to be closer to the seminary, New Market had 250 residents, several mills and stores, one newspaper, and–to the chagrin of the Methodist preachers–more than one tavern.[47] There Edward, James, and Andrew enrolled in the Holston Seminary, where, Andrew later recalled, the treatment was more humane.[48]

Unfortunately, the committee's plan to convert the seminary into a manual labor school was soon foiled. The preacher, Creed Fulton, who had been appointed sole agent for the seminary in 1834, opposed the plan to locate the manual labor school at New Market. Fulton then canvassed the area for funds to finance a separate manual labor school. He attracted $1,100 in cash and subscriptions totaling $10,000 from large landowners

[43]James W. Orr, "A Short History of the Jonesville Campground," (no publisher, May 1931).

[44]Charles W. Johnson, *Frontier Camp Meetings: Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955), 246.

[45]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 15-16.

[46]Price, *Holston Methodism*, 3:10, 281. American reformers were then promoting manual labor schools not only because physical exercise promoted good habits of mind and health but also for the democratic effect as a class leveler. See *History of American Methodism*, 3 vols. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 1:668.

[47]Eastin Morris, *Tennessee Gazeteer*, reprint of 1834 edition (Nashville: The Gazeteer Press, Williams Printing Co., 1971), 224.

[48]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 16.

in Alabama.[49] He then claimed that sufficient land could not be purchased near New Market and convinced the trustees to relocate the school. After Fulton had erected buildings on a farm in Virginia, the trustees discovered that at least two wealthy Methodists near New Market had offered to sell fertile land to the seminary for less than Fulton had paid for the Virginia farm. They complained to the 1836 Conference, but to no avail. The Holston Seminary was to remain a Conference school in gradual decline, whereas the manual labor school in Virginia was to become Emory and Henry College.[50]

CONDITIONS IN THE HOLSTON CONFERENCE

Poor salaries so threatened the Holston itinerant ministry system that class leaders were urged to take up weekly collections for the preachers. As veteran circuit riders aged and their families grew, the numbers of located preachers steadily increased, becoming a burden and a problem for the church. In the New Market circuit, one of Holston's largest, the availability of good farm land and the presence of the Holston Seminary had resulted in an abundance of located preachers, at a ratio of sixteen located preachers to one traveling preacher in this circuit, compared to the Conference ratio of four to one.[51] Moreover, the slavery question continued to plague the Conference as the Northern abolition crusade picked up steam and began to move through the South.

Worldwide antislavery sentiments were growing. Argentina, Central America, and Mexico had already freed their slaves. Slave insurrections in the West Indies convinced the British government to abolish slavery, and in 1833 Parliament purchased and freed all slaves in the British dominion at a cost of twenty million pounds, the French following suit in 1848.[52] The year after British emancipation, the first national Methodist Antislavery Society was organized in New York City. LaRoy Sunderland, Orange Scott, and George Storrs–all Methodists–preached the abolitionist message with as much fervor as they had used in their religious revivals and called relentlessly upon the church and local congregations to repent of the sins of slavery.[53] By 1835 abolitionists controlled the New England and New Hampshire Conferences and established their own college, Oberlin. These abolitionist Conferences sent petitions to Congress calling for an end to

[49]Price, *Holston Methodism*, 3:60. Perhaps because of eastern Tennessee's blatant antislavery sentiments, southern subscribers were not pleased with the location of the seminary at New Market.

[50]Ibid., 3:60-66.

[51]Ibid., 3:294.

[52]Samuel Eliot Morrison, *Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 508.

[53]Ibid.

slavery and particularly the crowded slave auctions held in the District of Columbia.

In 1835 Holston Conference heard more resolutions on the "vexed question." The Conference members were "ever convinced of the evils of slavery," but they were obliged speak on the radical activities of the abolitionists, condemning the "practice of sending secret agents and incendiary productions through the country influencing the minds of the peaceable citizens of the South."[54] At this time many of the southern states, including Tennessee, passed comprehensive laws forbidding the distribution of abolitionist literature.[55] Abram may have been involved in this distribution, for Andrew was to say that his father took a "bold stand for abolition," refuting the southern claim that the Bible justified slavery as a "divine right."[56] Moreover, eastern Tennessee had long been a hotbed of antislavery activity, that state having more antislavery societies in 1827 than any other except North Carolina. After 1834 however, an increasing demand for slave labor in Tennessee neutralized antislavery efforts.[57] By 1837 there were no active antislavery societies in Tennessee.[58]

The previous year the General Conference had heard from southern clergymen and from Orange Scott and the abolitionist element. A Virginian, the Reverend William A. Smith, led a movement to secede from the denomination if the delegates did not vote to modify the rule against slavery. A motion to rescind the section that forbade the buying and selling of slaves was narrowly defeated. The Reverend Smith commented that he "would never be satisfied unless we would agree to expunge everything from the *Discipline* on the subject of slavery."[59] For the moment, the abolitionist movement was stopped in Holston, but other issues signaled a general unrest throughout the Conference. Ministers faced an increasing financial burden since the Conference could not adequately care for them and their families. People were troubled as traditional religious practices were changed: permanent church buildings were being erected on the pew system; instrumental music, previously discouraged, was now allowed during

[54]Price, *Holston Methodism*, 3:286.

[55]W. Sherman Savage, *Controversy Over the Distribution of Abolition Literature* (Association for the Study of Negro Life and Literature, 1938; rpt. New York: Negro University Press, 1968), 58.

[56]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 57.

[57]*Tennessee*, Federal Writers' Project (Tennessee Department of Conservation, 1939; rpt. New York: Viking, 1973), 105.

[58]Chase C. Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 70.

[59]Peter Cartwright, *The Backwoods Preacher: Autobiography*, ed. W. P. Strickland (Cincinnati: Cranston and Curts; New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1856), 361-62.

the services, and church members and their ministers had to be admonished against fashionable attire.[60]

Abram may have become disillusioned by the failure of the Holston Seminary, or disgusted with the growing sentiment in favor of slavery; he may have desired a return to old-time religion, or strapped financially by his growing family. In any case, he–like many other Holston preachers–found the Missouri Conference, established in cheap western lands and a less competitive environment, more appealing. He applied for transfer to the Missouri Conference, and in 1837 his family, which now included six children, started out for Macon County, Missouri, with two wagons, seven horses, and a cash reserve of $1,050.[61]

[60]Price, *Holston Methodism*, 3:301-2.

[61]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 54.

2

A Howling Wilderness

My frontier experience was valuable to me in more ways that I can ever tell. Before I had even studied anatomy books, I had almost perfected the knowledge from the great book of nature.

A. T. Still[1]

MISSOURI METHODISM was expanding into what Mary Still would later call a "vast howling wilderness."[2] Missouri Conference Methodists were not faced with the same kinds of concerns as the more settled Tennessee Methodists. For Abram Still, Missouri offered the veteran circuit rider an opportunity to improve his financial status while exchanging old problems in the Tennessee Conference for those found in his new environment.[3] Abram did not, however, escape that old "vexed question." The issue of slavery was evident in Missouri, too,[4] where there were severe laws prohibiting the "publication, circulation or promulgation of abolition doctrines." A first offense was punishable by a fine not to exceed two thousand dollars and imprisonment in a state penitentiary not to exceed two years; the second offense could bring imprisonment for twenty years; a third offense, life imprisonment.[5]

Young enough at age thirty-nine, Abram must have been eager to resume the responsibilities of a circuit and participate in the opening of another untamed frontier to Methodism. Martha, however, did not share her husband's excitement at moving to that unknown territory. Their three older boys were now strong enough to help with the chores while Abram traveled a six-week circuit, returning home briefly only two or three times a month.[6] But Martha's hands were full with Barbara Jane at seven years,

[1]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 45.

[2]Mary Still Adams, *In God We Trust* (Los Angeles: Buckingham Bros., 1893), 6.

[3]See W. S. Woodard, *Annals of Missouri Methodism* (Columbia, Mo.: E. W. Stephens, 1893), xliii. In 1837, 56 traveling preachers and 163 local preachers were available in the Missouri Conference to serve 8,746 members.

[4]Jacob Lanius, *The Journal of Jacob Lanius: An Itinerant Preacher of the Methodist Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1831 A.D. to 1854 A.D.,* ed. Elmer T. Clark, 1919; transcribed and re-edited by Theodore H. Wolff, 1963; introduction, ed. and pub. by Given A. Brewer, transcribed by Diane R. Drake (Marion, Mass.: G. A. Brewer, 1980), 130.

[5]Savage, *Abolition Literature,* 59.

[6]J. E. Godbey, *Pioneer Methodism in Missouri* (Kirkwood, Mo.: William P. Mason, 1929), 48-49.

MARY STILL ADAMS
(Courtesy Baker University, Baldwin City, Kansas)

Thomas at four, and John Wesley at one. Three more children were born in Missouri: Mary Margretta, Marovia, and Cassandra.

The church gave Abram a stipend of $700 to sustain the family on its seven-week trip from Holston, Tennessee to Macon County, Missouri, and to provide for them until they were settled. Martha also had with her a small bag containing $350. Though Abram refused to travel on the Sabbath, the Stills made good time on their journey until they reached the bottomlands along the Ohio River opposite Cairo, Illinois, where their wagons became mired in the deep mud. The river was seven miles away, but the Stills could hear the ear-piercing sound of a steamboat whistle–so loud, Andrew recalled, that they "could hear it roar just as plain as if you could hear a rooster crow if he were on top of your head." At their first chance to see a steamboat, their spirits perked up and they whipped the teams to hurry to a landing. There they saw the steamboat, "big as life, full of people, cattle, horses, sheep, merchandise, and movers." For a long time they stood on the bank just watching . Then the steamboat belched thick black smoke, steamed effortlessly up the river, around the bend, and out of sight. After having seen this magnificent demonstration, it must have been a disappointment to have to board a horse-powered ferryboat for the half-hour ride across the Ohio River into Illinois. The pilot's shouts to his horses, "Water up, Water down," lacked the romance of the steamboat's ear-splitting whistle.[7]

The Stills traveled northward in Illinois until they neared Saint Louis. There they loaded the wagons onto a steam-powered ferryboat to cross the Mississippi River into Missouri. At Saint Charles, Abram searched out the local Methodist minister, with whom the family stayed for a few days–enough time for the minister to persuade Abram to lend him the church's seven hundred dollar stipend. The minister promised to repay Abram, with interest, in six months. But eight years would pass before the money was repaid, and then without interest. There was still Martha's little bag, however, to hold the family on the last leg of its journey.

CIRCUIT RIDING IN MISSOURI

The 1836-37 Missouri General Assembly had only recently organized Macon County, a sparsely populated tract of land beginning sixty miles north of the Missouri River and stretching to the Iowa line, large enough to be referred to as the "state" of Macon.[8] By the time Abram's family arrived there in May of 1837, the competition for a county seat had just ended, with Box Ankle (soon renamed Bloomington) winning over Moccasinville and Winchester. Stakes marking the site had been driven in only

[7]See A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 54.

[8]*General History of Macon County, Missouri* (Chicago: H. Taylor & Co., 1910), 7.

one hour before the Stills arrived.[9] Abram bought a farm near Bloomington and a few years later erected a large log home. He was the first Methodist minister and he wrote the first prescription for medicine in northeast Missouri.

Abram divided his time between his family and his large circuit. During the spring plantings he stayed at home to help the boys get the crops started; then, mounting his horse, he began his itinerant ministry, leaving Martha and the children to manage as best they could. Martha and Abram, both deeply religious, had developed a strong bond, but their approaches to the same God were different. Martha was passive, with a solid belief in the Bible passage, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." Abram was aggressive, leaving nothing to chance. For him prayer was a battle to be waged and won through the courage of a warrior, rather than through meekness.[10]

When it came time for Abram to travel, the whole family would help him prepare for his journey: one would pack food in his saddlebags, while another helped him into his heavy bearskin coat. One snowy day the family followed him to the gate where Andrew held his father's large bay horse, Prince. As Abram and Prince disappeared into the snowstorm, the family hurried away from the bitter east wind into the warmth of the cabin, where the boys piled more wood onto the fire, and all gathered around Martha who, having a premonition of some danger, was visibly upset. She went to her room, and through the door the children could hear her asking God to keep watch over Abram. Returning to them, she seemed more confident at having laid her worries in God's hand. Martha's fears were not unwarranted, for it so happened that Abram did need protection that evening. The melting snows had made the Fabius River impassable so that he and Prince made camp for the night in a north Missouri forest abounding in wild animals. Tying his horse to an overhanging limb and gathering firewood, Abram prepared for the worst by starting a half a dozen blazing bonfires. Sure enough, the wolves and panthers crept near and "screamed and yelped until Prince neighed and trembled with fear."[11]

Abram knelt to pray. When he arose, the evangelist in him took command of the situation, and as he later told his family, he sang at the top of his lungs the hymn:

> On Jordan's stormy banks I stand
> and cast a wishful eye,

[9]Ruth Warner Towne, "Abram Still: Missionary to the West," *Toward the Setting Sun: The Historical Journal of the United Methodist Church*, The Missouri Area, No. 2 (November 1983): 30.

[10]Adams, *In God We Trust*, 6.

[11]Ibid., 7-9.

To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

I'm bound for the promised land
I'm bound for the promised land.
Oh, who will come and go with me?
I'm bound for the promised land.

By the time he had sung all the verses, he recalled, his "horse had become perfectly quiet and the wild beasts had gone to their dens." By then it was past midnight; Abram could finally eat his dinner of cold boiled ham and biscuits, which he shared with his companion, Prince. Then, with his head propped upon his saddlebag, he slept. By dawn the flooding river had receded so that he could ford it and arrive at his preaching place in time for a breakfast of chicken and biscuits.[12]

FRONTIER LIFE

When Abram came back home from his trips, family life returned to normal. Abram and Martha were good parents. A colleague, the Reverend William Goode, characterized Abram as patient and mild, combining "practical good sense and untiring perseverance."[13] According to Mary, her father never struck his children, although Martha sometimes resorted to the rod.[14] Andrew thought his mother was the perfect wife for a pioneer preacher, a "natural mechanic, [who] made cloth, clothing and pies to perfection."[15] In the winter evenings when the family gathered around the fire after tea, Mary recalled, Abram and Martha took their places,

> one to the left and the other to the right of these blazing sticks. Father sits with his arms folded, drinking in the joys of this hour, while mother, with knitting in hand, stitch by stitch is building a sock from a ball of yarn; and meanwhile with her foot rocks the cradle which contains Cassie, the babe.[16]

Mary observed her siblings in turn:

> The overgrown young man seated by the stand near the window with book in hand, is a medical student, and is studying Dr. Gunn's work. This is brother Edward; the one sitting next to him reading aloud from Milton's *Paradise Lost,* is brother James; the half-grown chap

[12]Ibid.

[13]Reverend William H. Goode, *Outposts of Zion* (Cincinnati: Poe and Hitchcock, 1893), 253.

[14]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 210.

[15]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 27.

[16]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 12.

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> who every now and then tickles James' ear with a feather while he reads is the third son, full of fun and play. We call him for short, Drew.[17]

Drew was nine years old when the family had moved to Missouri. Between the chores and his sporadic schooling, he occupied himself with all the amusements of other pioneer boys, riding horses, mules, and calves, sometimes pretending that he was a preacher like his father, but his favorite pastime was hunting. Even as a boy, Drew was a good judge of dogs, with three of his own–a water spaniel, a foxhound, and a bulldog for the bears and panthers. He was proud of his flintlock gun, but it was only upon receiving his first caplock gun that he considered himself a man. He later recalled,

> my frontier experience was valuable to me in more ways than I can ever tell. Before I had ever studied anatomy books, I had almost perfected the knowledge from the great book of nature. The skinning of squirrels brought me in contact with muscles, nerves, and veins. The bones, this great foundation of the wonderful house we live in, was always a study to me long before I learned the hard names given to them by the scientific world.[18]

In the family's pioneer circumstances, problems were solved through creativity or by accident. In this atmosphere ten-year-old Drew made what he would later consider his first discovery of osteopathy. He fashioned a swing out of a plow line, but his head ached so much that swinging was uncomfortable. Much later he wrote,

> So I let the rope down to about eight to ten inches off the ground, threw the end of a blanket on it, and I lay down on the ground and used the rope for a swinging pillow. So thus I lay stretched on my back, with my neck across the rope. Soon I became easy and went to sleep, got up in a little while with my headache all gone.[19]

Although he continued to use this headache remedy for years, the significance of the treatment did not strike him until some twenty years later.

For frontier children, new clothes were a rarity and a source of pride. So, when John received a "new suit" of blue jeans and Mary a new pair of white slippers, they were eager to show them to the neighbor children. Because the trail to the neighbors' house took them through a heavily wooded pasture where wild hogs sometimes rooted, they took the safer path near the pasture fence so they could make a quick escape in case wild

[17]Ibid. Gunn's book, *Domestic Medicine or the Poor Man's Friend, in the House of Affliction, Pain, and Sickness,* is available in paperback from the University of Tennessee Press.

[18]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 45.

[19]Ibid.

hogs appeared. Half-way to the neighbors', they heard a noise between them and the fence. They peered into the brush, wrote Mary, to see "twenty or more hogs making for us as fast as they could," so they quickly climbed an oak tree. "Nor were we a moment too soon," she recalled, "for we had no more than reached a place of safety until the two old devil holders were cronching at the bushes beneath us, while their mouths were white with froth." When one of Mary's new slippers dropped to the ground, she watched as the "old creatures" tore it to shreds before her eyes. Finally rescued by a neighbor whose dogs chased away the hogs, John and Mary made their way home.[20]

Mary wrote about this frightening episode in a homemade book that she had painstakingly sewn together, using precious scraps of paper. This was the story, fully illustrated with headless stick pigs, found by her inquisitive brother Drew. Adventurous and also a tease, he had no mercy for the sensitive author, laughing and showing it to the rest of the family.[21] Mary never forgave Drew for this humiliating moment, and Drew never forgot the humor of those stick pigs. Years later, he asked his visitors to sign his guest book by closing their eyes and drawing pigs.

OLD-TIME RELIGION

The Still children could have their fun, but they were also expected to get their religion. Andrew joined the church sometime during the 1840s. The children heard sermons full of hope, optimism, and responsibility, the preachers urging their congregations to "Be ye therefore perfect even as your father in heaven is perfect," assuring them the "the works of God would prove his perfection."[22] The doctrine of perfectionism gave a vision of an ideal society attainable now, so many Americans felt compelled to work actively for various reforms. The concept of perfectionism spawned many causes in the nineteenth century, all borrowing the language and the organizational techniques of the revivalists,[23] and the Still children were involved in their share of those causes.

Another evangelical doctrine, that of the Millennium, or the end of the world, created an urgency for immediate reforms. The atmosphere at the camp meetings vibrated with sermons personifying the Devil or the Prince of Darkness in vivid emotional and poetic language. One evangelist proclaimed to his congregation, "O Lord, the devil as a roaring lion, is in the neighborhood, in our houses, in the church, in our hearts, and if thou

[20]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 280-81.

[21]Ibid., 281.

[22]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 319.

[23]Ronald G. Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionism after 1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 38.

come not to our help, we shall all be devoured."[24] In colorful interpretations of that last fierce battle between the forces of darkness and light in which God would emerge triumphant, congregations were exhorted to watch for the positive signs of the approaching Judgment Day: Christian moral action of good men could actually bring the Kingdom of God about more quickly.[25]

All the talk of Judgment Day created suspense and some fear among the Still children. Andrew later recalled, "I was told of the signs and half signs that were to come before the 'end cometh' until my young mind was nearly distracted." Nevertheless, more material topics also caught his attention. Some of the neighbors had recently purchased new labor-saving devices: a cook-stove and a sewing machine. Drew was fascinated with these inventions. One day, instead of going right to his chores, he concocted a story to tell his father so that he might investigate these new machines, determined, as he recalled, "to let evil prevail that good might come."[26]

Other Still children took the Judgment Day more seriously. Drew's sister Barbara, very concerned about the imminent end of the world, preached to her sister Mary about their future. She asked, "Mary, did you know that this world was going to be all on fire one of these days?" Mary answered, "No, of course I don't know of any such thing." Barbara explained to her that everyone who is not a Christian will be burned, asking Mary to pray that "when this fire begins to burn, God won't let it come near us." "But," inquired Mary, "where will we stand if the ground is burning?" Barbara assured her that God would take care of them and began to sing all eighteen verses of the hymn, "We Will Shout Glory When This World Is All On Fire."[27]

Mary and John had yet to publicly profess their faith in Christ, and Abram considered the children to be in an "unsaved condition." To remedy this situation, he decided to hold a camp meeting. Because the population was so scarce, Martha worried that they could not gather a large enough crowd for the meeting. Abram, however, believing that God would take care of that part, only had to plan and organize the event. The family cleared a place for the tents in a grove near the house. Abram publicized the place and time of the meeting, killed a beef to feed the campers, and furnished firewood, water, and pasture for their horses. All the campers had to do was come, and they did.[28]

[24]See Johnson, *Frontier Camp Meeting,* 171-72.

[25]Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), 25-26.

[26]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 22, 23.

[27]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 13-14.

[28]Ibid., 14-15.

Naturally, John and Mary, the subjects of all this activity, were more than a little nervous. Mary later recalled that when the meeting began, she and her brother tried to hide; but Abram saw to it that they were there, sitting like dutiful children at his side listening to the preaching of the Word by old Father Lorenzo Waugh and others, all seeming to preach about sins known only by their father.[29] The evangelists, masters at evoking personal fright, made vivid and unforgettable descriptions of an eternity spent in hell. One northeast Missouri preacher suggested: "If you should be lost and condemned eternally, and the devil were to give you the job of draining the Chariton River by taking out of it one drop of water a year, when you got the river dry you would be at the sunrise of your visit in hell!"[30] Children were particularly susceptible to these tactics. When the Reverend Benjamin Lakin stated at an early camp meeting, "I feel an impression that there are some men or young women here . . . who will be tramping in hell before this time next year!" children in the audience turned deathly pale.[31] John and Mary Still must have experienced a similar sinking feeling.

Thus the Still children were profoundly influenced by the revival atmosphere and the practical, democratic Methodist doctrines. Andrew said that he knew the Bible better than most ministers. Although he gave his mother credit for providing him with a superior vocabulary,[32] it is evident from his later writings that the evangelistic language he heard as a child had been adequately absorbed. Many years later, Andrew Taylor Still was to ground his own reform movement firmly in perfectionism.

Abram was transferred north from Macon County to Knox County to travel the circuit of Goshen in 1839. In 1840 he bought eighty acres in Schuyler County on which to move his family. He also traveled the circuits of Waterloo in 1841 and Edina in 1842. By 1845 a few months after the family had returned to Bloomington, the strife over slavery had become a crisis.

THE SCHISM OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

By 1840 the abolitionist movement had split the Methodists into three groups: The Southerners, the abolitionists, and the conservatives,[33] the latter attempting to postpone the debates on slavery. In the 1844 General Conference rumors spread among the delegates voting for new bishops that Bishop James Andrew had become a slave owner, his second wife

[29]Ibid., 15.

[30]*General History of Macon County,* 154.

[31]See Johnson, *Frontier Camp Meeting,* 172.

[32]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 545-55.

[33]Mathew, *Slavery and Methodism,* 192-93.

inheriting her father's slaves. After heated debates and even though Bishop Andrew renounced his legal rights to the slaves, the Conference decided by a vote of 110 to 69 to ask the bishop to resign. The southern delegates, however, rather than compromise their position, persuaded him not to resign. Eventually, the southerners seceded. Separation of the Methodist Church into North and South was the final order of business for the General Conference, creating a schism that would last nearly a hundred years. Every Conference was to choose its affiliation with either the Methodist Episcopal Church or the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, so that church property could be divided as equally as possible. When the Missouri Conference met in Columbia the following year, its preachers answered the roll call with their names and their affiliation, North or South, 86 voting to go with the South, leaving only 14 with the parent church.[34]

For Abram the moral choice was easy: he cast his lot with the North. The strength of his convictions was to be tested by a bitter conflict in Missouri.[35] In those years, the remnant of the parent body of the Methodist Church in Missouri was left unorganized, leaving preachers without appointments and "sadly maligned and persecuted," according to Abram's colleague, Lorenzo Waugh.[36] The Reverend Goode said that Abram "stood almost alone, laboring zealously as the opportunity allowed."[37] Eventually, Abram was told by the proslavery ministers that he must "join them or leave Missouri."[38] While this was taking place, Andrew had been sent to LaPlata, Missouri, twenty miles north of Bloomington, to attend school. When the Mexican-American War broke out, Andrew desperately wanted to enlist for service but Abram refused to give his consent.[39]

Bloomington was a prosperous trade center, and the majority of its citizens were of Southern sympathy. Some slave labor was used in the fields and in the local tobacco factories in Bloomington, Callao, and Macon.[40] Because England had prohibited the cultivation of tobacco until 1866, there was a strong European demand for Missouri-grown tobacco. Even though it was a troublesome crop in constant need of worming and weeding, for the Missouri farmer a field of planted tobacco was as good as cash. As many Missouri farmers became dependent on the tobacco market and the use of

[34]Francis Hauser Winter, "The Division in Missouri Methodism," *Missouri Historical Review* 37 (October 1942): 17.

[35]William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1933), 260.

[36]Lorenzo Waugh, *Autobiograpy*, 5th ed. (San Francisco: Methodist Book Concern, 1896), 166.

[37]Goode, *Outposts of Zion*, 253.

[38]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 57.

[39]Ibid., 48.

[40]*General History of Macon County*, 248.

slaves, Abram's abolitionist sermons were not messages they wanted to hear.

What was left of the Missouri Methodist Conference was reorganized in a joint session held with the Illinois Conference in 1848. Abram's leadership role gained him an appointment to Bishop Morris's cabinet. In that position, Abram could help his colleague Lorenzo Waugh, whom the Bishop, trying to placate Missouri proslavery ministers, had reassigned to the Illinois Conference. Abram enlisted Waugh's influence for the "cause" in Missouri, telling him: "You ask your location, and go with me back to our work, and I will see that you are provided with work til the next Conference, then you can come in all right again." Abram was true to his word for at the next conference, Waugh was reinstated.[41]

In January 1849, Andrew Still and Mary Margaret Vaughan were married in her home by their old family friend, Lorenzo Waugh. Andrew and Mary moved to their new home on eighty acres, only a mile from his parents' home. That first summer, Andrew recalled, "I was young and stout, worked early and late." He planted sixty acres of corn, and by the morning of July Fourth, "it was a beauty, all in silk and tassel." However, that afternoon a storm showered his field with three inches of hail, completely destroying the crop and devastating Andrew. That fall and winter he taught school for fifteen dollars a month,[42] and in December, their first child, Marusha, was born.

METHODIST INDIAN MISSIONS

From 1848 until 1851, Abram served as presiding elder in the northwestern districts of Platte and Grand River, which included portions of western Missouri and the Indian Territory in what was to become eastern Kansas. There he became interested in establishing an Indian Mission. At the annual conference held in St. Louis in 1851, Abram appealed for support for the project[43] and the Conference named him superintendent of the mission.

During the long journey home, Abram must have rehearsed the announcement of his appointment many times, but in the end there was no diplomatic way to break the news to his wife. He blurted out, "How would you like to go to Kansas as missionary among the Shawnee Indians?" "Shawnee Indians!" cried Martha, "The same tribe which took my father prisoner and then destroyed my grandparents?" Abram said, "So they did, over seventy-five years ago, and now wife, we are chosen by the Conference to go, and in return tell them about Jesus."[44]

[41]Waugh, *Autobiography*, 60.

[42]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 60.

[43]Towne, "Abram Still," 35.

[44]Adams, *In God We Trust*, 17.

As her daughter Mary later chronicled the event, Martha left the room in tears to pray. When she returned, somewhat subdued, Abram told her that he would be leaving soon, and that she and the boys should sell the surplus stock and prepare for his return in the spring when they would leave to board and teach the "half-civilized Indian children."[45] Abram left for Kansas in September 1851. It is doubtful whether the former captive, James Moore, ever knew of his daughter's destination, for in that same month he died.

The wounds opened by the split in the Methodist Church were just as torn and ragged in Indian Territory as in Missouri. The Tallequah Indian Conference, organized in 1844 on the eve of the schism, was taken into the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, under the leadership of the Reverend Thomas Johnson. At that time, nearly all of the 2,992 Indian Methodists, including the main body of the Shawnee tribe, fell into the hands of the southern Church, leaving the Methodist Episcopal Church with a small faithful band numbering only 20.[46] This paltry number provided a nucleus from which it hoped to rebuild. Abram accepted the challenge and assigned as missionaries for the Indian district Thomas B. Markham, a former Indian Mission teacher, and a "native assistant," Paschal Fish.[47]

Among the Kansas Wyandot Indian Methodists, there was a dissenting group whose members had yet to decide their denominational allegiance. They drew a visit in October 1848 from Bishop Andrew, whose slaveholding had precipitated the schism. When he and his party attended church at the Wyandot mission, they were shocked to find the "quasi northern district" represented by Abram Still, who, one reported, "sorter preached."[48] Though the Wyandot church was afterward divided, bitter feelings between the northern and southern Wyandot Methodists did not subside. An angry mob stoned the church building of a northern missionary who had come from Ohio in 1848 to serve the northern Wyandots. Subsequently he was expelled in 1850 by the Indian agent.[49]

Thomas Markham, Abram's appointee, reported in 1851 a total of ninety church members and twenty-five probationers. Markham ran a small Sunday school in his home, but he lamented that there was "no day school in all the country."[50] That is, there was no day school for northern Methodists

[45]Ibid., 18.

[46]Goode, *Outposts of Zion*, 295.

[47]Wade Crawford Barclay, *The Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, 1957), Vol. 3, *Widening Horizons, 1845-95*, 345-46.

[48]J. J. Lutz, "Methodist Missions among the Indians in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Collections* 9 (1905-6): 217.

[49]Barclay, *Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3:344.

[50]Ibid.

because the Methodist Episcopal Church, South controlled all Indian education in the Kansas Territory.

This monopoly dated from 1830, when the Methodists, financed by the Missouri Conference, sent Thomas Johnson to the Shawnee Mission and his brother William to the Kaw Mission. By 1832 the Missouri Conference had established nine Indian missions west of the Mississippi River.[51] Lorenzo Waugh served at the Shawnee Mission in 1837 and his experience there may have interested Abram in the Indian Mission work.[52]

THE SHAWNEE INDIAN MANUAL LABOR SCHOOL

The early schools associated with the Indian missions were small and not particularly effective. The expense of operating them proved to be more than the Missouri Conference could manage, so a plan was developed to establish one large central school and appeal to the government for operating funds. In 1838 Thomas Johnson and the Reverend Samuel Luckey took their proposal to Washington, D.C. returning with an agreement funneling such generous sums into their school[53] that the Methodists quickly dominated all Indian education. Under the terms of the government agreement, the Shawnee mission school originally located on the bluffs of the Kansas River was to be relocated on Indian lands. Choice acreage was chosen on the California road, three miles southwest of Westport.

Thomas Johnson began work on the property in 1839, fencing 400 acres, planting 12 in apple trees, 176 in corn, and 85 in oats. Two large brick buildings were erected; later blacksmith shops, wagon shops, barns, granaries, tool houses, a brickyard, a sawmill, and a steam flour mill were added. By 1840 the mission, with help from the government, boarded, lodged, and clothed 100 pupils of both sexes, offering courses in mechanics for the boys and domestic training for the girls.[54]

Thomas Johnson was described by an early abolitionist traveler to the territory as "vulgar, illiterate, and coarse."[55] Although he and Abram were poles apart in their practices, their wives had something in common. Sarah Johnson's family, too, had been killed by Shawnees, and she had settled at the mission soon after her marriage. In defiance of the Missouri Compromise, which prohibited slavery north of the 36°30′ line, Johnson was a slaveholder and used slave labor at the mission. Subsequently, the Shawnee Manual Labor School became a bastion of the proslavery forces and twice the capital

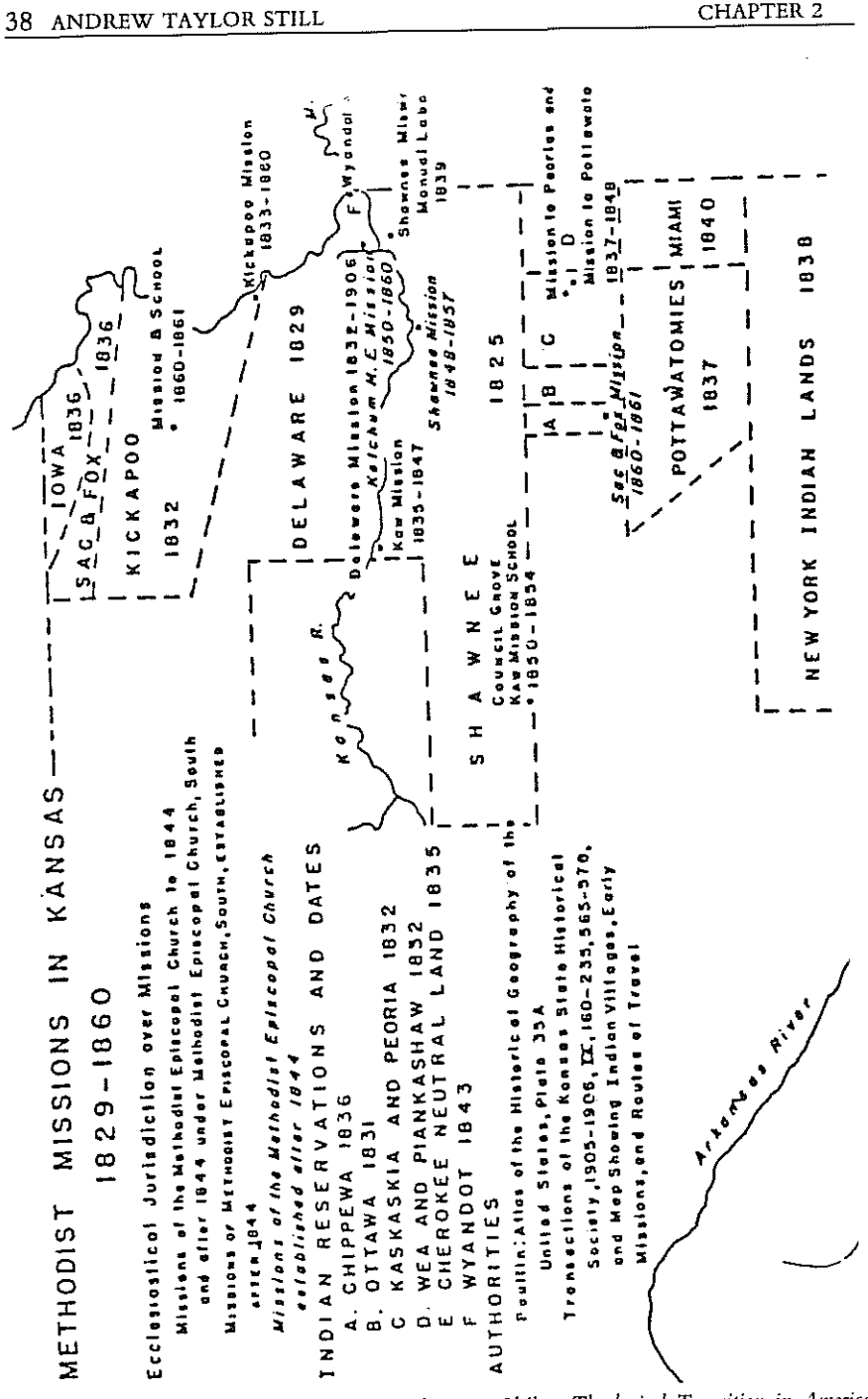
[51]*History of American Methodism*, 1:594.

[52]Waugh, *Autobiography*, 117.

[53]Martha B. Caldwell, compiler, *Annals of the Shawnee Methodist Mission and Indian Manual Labor School* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1977), 23-24.

[54]Ibid., 30.

[55]William Phillips, *The Conquest of Kansas by Missouri and Her Allies* (Cambridge: Phillips, Samson & Co, 1856), 17.



(Map reproduced by permission from Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism: 1790-1935*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1965)

of territorial Kansas. Indeed, Johnson was not illiterate, although his Western manners may have appeared vulgar and crude to Easterners; his agile political maneuvering provided more of a challenge to Abram and the Methodist Church than either had anticipated.

THE FISH TRIBE

Abram chose a one hundred acre site for his school at the junction of the Wakarusa and Kansas rivers, where during the winter he built a two-story log building a half mile from the river and fenced in a field east of the house. A government agent making an examination of Johnson's school at the time Abram was developing his Wakarusa property reported that government benefits for the Indians were enriching the managers of the mission, maintaining that, "superintendents never failed to make a fortune within four or five years." Nevertheless, government funding continued to support the Shawnee Manual Labor School. The agent, also noting that slavery was a growing problem among the Indians located around the Missouri border, suggested that "misguided missionaries" were fostering unrest.[56]

When Abram arrived home from Kansas in March 1852, his saddlebags stuffed with beaded purses and moccasins made by members of the Fish Tribe, John and James hurried to spread the news to their married siblings. Soon the family surrounded Abram to listen attentively to his stories.[57] Though it had not been a good winter for the Shawnees–an epidemic of "black tongue" had decimated hundreds–they had been friendly. Abram hired one of them, Cephas, to help erect the mission house. Abram struggled for months with sign language, making halting attempts at the Shawnee language in an effort to communicate with Cephas, for whom pretending not to speak English was a great joke. When the secret was finally out, Abram learned just how educated many of the Shawnees were. Cephas, for example, was a good reader with excellent penmanship, and Abram told his children that they were no competition for him in arithmetic.[58]

Martha was still reluctant to find this new assignment full of adventure, but Abram's descriptions of the members of the Fish tribe must have eased her mind. The acculturation of this tribe was well advanced through their education from the Quakers in the Friend's Mission in Ohio, and the chief who had brought them to Kansas was a white man, William Jackson, a Shawnee captive from childhood who had been renamed Paschal Fish.

[56]See Caldwell, *Annals of the Shawnee Methodist Mission*, 71.

[57]Adams, *In God We Trust*, 20.

[58]Marovia Still Clark, "Reminiscences of Rovia Still Clark," (Kirksville, Mo.: Still National Osteopathic Museum, 1919), 1-2.

Shawnee possession of their Ohio lands had been steadily eroded by successive government treaties, and the Fish tribe moved around 1828 to southeast Missouri near Cape Girardeau, then on to what would later be called the Kansas Territory. There the Shawnees accepted 1.6 million acres on the eastern fringe of the Great American Plains, a region that had been thus far avoided by timber-conscious pioneers. As it turned out, the Shawnee Reserve was one of the most fertile tracts of land in Kansas.

The Indian agent, George Vashon, had written to the Missouri Conference that though most Indians "felt little desire for schools and still less for preaching," the Fish tribe was different, embracing Christianity and appreciating the benefits of education.[59] The senior Paschal Fish had requested a mission school in 1830, where he served as the Shawnee mission's interpreter until his death in 1834. At that time, his son, Paschal, Jr., became chief, resumed his father's job as interpreter, preached, and served as a blacksmith for the government.

When the Methodist schism occurred, Paschal, Jr. took his orders from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, serving as missionary to the Kickapoo Indians. His abhorrence of slavery eventually caused him to return to the parent church.[60] He was to become the Still family's truest friend, and although Martha did not realize it at the time, the Shawnee Indians would be the least of her worries.

[59]See Lutz, *Methodist Missions,* 166-67.

[60]Sara T.L. Robinson, *Kansas: Its Interior and Exterior Life,* 4th ed. (Boston: Nichols, Crosby, & Co., 1856), 77.

3

A Kansas Melodrama

My science or discovery was born in Kansas under many trying circumstances.

A. T. Still[1]

The confident individualism of those who achieve through endurance is a striking trait of the people of Kansas. There, indeed, the trait has in it an element of exaggeration, arising from the fact that whatever has been achieved in Kansas has been achieved with great difficulty.

Carl Becker[2]

THE STILLS LOADED THREE WAGONS, gathered the chickens and twenty head of cattle, and began their journey to Indian Country in mid-March 1852, leaving Andrew, Edward, and Barbara Jane in Missouri. Andrew and his wife, Mary, were to follow in 1853; Barbara Jane and her husband, F.P. Vaughan, in 1855.

Andrew would be age twenty-five by the time he arrived at his father's post at the Wakarusa Shawnee Mission; twenty-one years later he would leave Kansas profoundly changed–ridiculed and ostracized by all of his immediate family except his wife, his mother, and his brother Edward who had remained in Missouri. In Kansas his philosophy took its shape and substance, "gradually," he later said, "approaching a science by study, research and observation."[3]

THE WAKARUSA MISSION

Heavy rain, thunder, and lightning crashed all about Abram and Mary's little caravan the first evening of their journey, forcing them to take shelter at a nearby farm house. The journey was resumed only when the creeks subsided. The Stills witnessed a memorable scene at the Fishing River in Clay County, where over a hundred wagons were assembled, bound for California. Relatives and friends hovered around adventurous travelers to say what they believed would be their last good-byes, for such a leave-taking in those days, Marovia Still commented, was "next to seeing them lowered into the grave."[4]

[1]A. T. Still, *Autobiography* (Kirksville, Mo.: By the Author, 1897), 319.

[2]Carl Becker, *Everyman His Own Historian* (New York: F.S. Crofts and Co., 1935; reprinted Chicago: Quandrangle Press, 1966), 6.

[3]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 95.

[4]Clark, "Reminiscences," 3-4.

In the evenings the family gathered around the campfire to sing Martha's favorite hymn, "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," always following with prayer. Mary recalled, "It was Mother's way of placing all them into the strong arms of omnipotence before we became neighbors to the descendents of the captors and murderers of her grandparents."[5] Reaching the Missouri River, the Stills camped for dinner. The next day began sultry and humid, and they loaded their wagons onto a ferryboat in a driving rain. Their favorite calf, named Tom Benton, was afraid of bridges and refused to get on the boat, and instead chose to swim the breadth of the swift, swirling river. The family believed that Tom Benton would be lost and must have wondered about their own safety during the ride for the horses lurched so badly that they were afraid the boat would overturn. Both the boat and Tom Benton arrived safely, and the Stills made their way up the hill to Kansas City. Marovia, then ten, was to remember the town–as did most early emigrants to Kansas–as a "God-forsaken place," where only a few stores dotted the landscape. They traveled a few more miles to Westport where that evening the ground was so wet, they did not pitch their tents but slept in the wagons. The next morning they crossed the Missouri border into Indian territory. Although the Wakarusa mission was only forty miles west of the Missouri River, it was an all-day journey along the rutted trail winding west through the luxuriant prairie grass that was already a foot tall when the Stills arrived on April 1, 1852. In a few short months the grass would grow to heights that hid man and beast.[6]

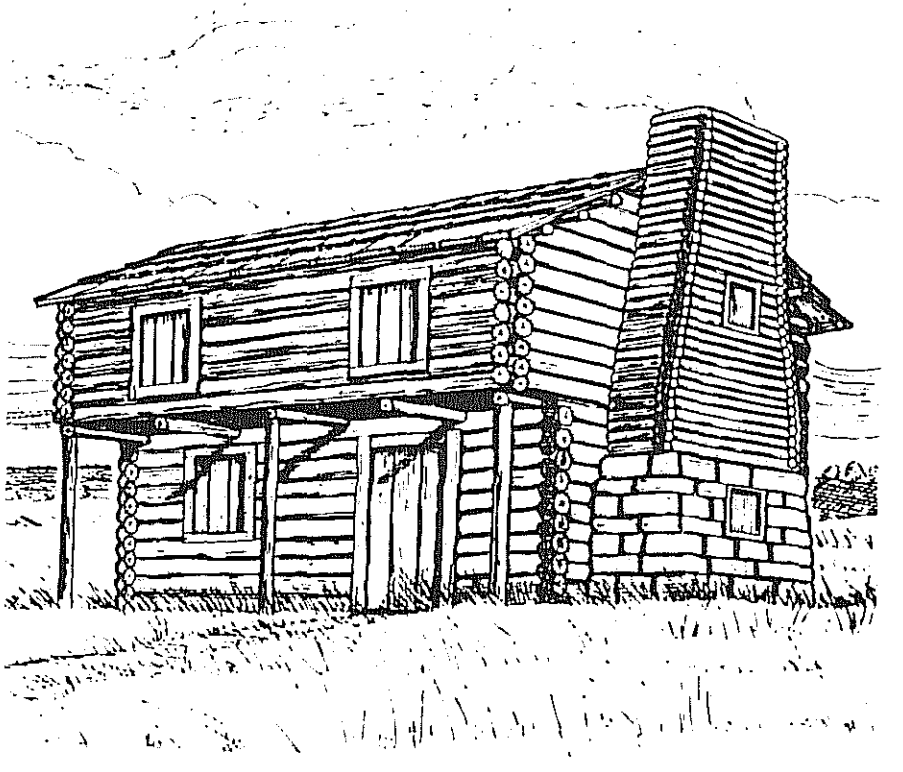
If the children had expected to see villages of tepees and Indians with feathers and war bonnets, they were disappointed, although to Martha it must have been a relief to see that the Shawnees lived in hand-hewn log cabins topped with thatched roofs. The Indians kept cattle, hogs, oxen, and horses; they planted their fields with corn and vegetables, some even owning plows. Bright, colorful shawls around their shoulders and turbans on their heads[7] made splashes of color in the otherwise monotonous scenery of sky and prairie.

Arriving at the mission, the Stills were greeted by Paschal Fish and his brother Charles. Their new home was a simple structure of four rooms, two upstairs and two downstairs. It sat stark and defiant amidst a sea of blue-stem prairie grass, the only trees being in the field east of the house

[5]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 32.

[6]Clark, "Reminiscences," 5.

[7]See Alfred Theodore Andreas, *History of the State of Kansas, Containing a Full Account of Its Growth from an Uninhabited Territory to a Wealthy and Important State,* 2 vols. (Atchinson, Kan.: Atchinson County Historical Society, 1976; reproduction of the 1883 edition published by A. T. Andreas, Chicago), 1:65, who quotes the Quaker, Henry Harvey, the Shawnee's friend and teacher.



THE WAKARUSA MISSION
(Pen and ink drawing by Bob May. Reproduced courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum)

that Abram had fenced the previous winter. For six months a German emigrant, William Greiffenstein, was the only other white person the Stills saw. Every Saturday evening "Dutch Billy" closed his store on Bluejacket Ford to spend the weekend with the Stills.[8]

Loneliness was the first obstacle for Martha to overcome: some days she visited the nearby graves of several missionaries with the children; other days she found the new environment unbearable. Marovia recalled seeing her mother walk to a small knoll about a hundred yards from the house, where she just stared, often with tears in her eyes, in the direction of her old home in Missouri.[9] Though the Indians proved to be little trouble, the family had a few frightening confrontations when the Indians were inebriated with white man's whiskey. Once, when the lonely children urged their mother to tell the story of the Captives of Abb's Valley, she reluctantly repeated the story of her family's tragedy. When she finished, Mary pleaded, "Let's ask God to come and be with us today–it is so lonely." Mary recalled that they knelt in prayer; just when they arose, a war whoop set their "nerves all a-quivering." Through the window they saw Old Big Knife, the meanest savage in the tribe, coming toward the door with a pail of whiskey in one hand and a knife in the other. The Indian children had told the Stills that Old Big Knife had killed at least six or seven Indians. Now he was threatening to kill Martha's family. Martha and the children managed to fight him off momentarily and take his weapon. Just as he was running to the barn for something to beat down the mission door, a party of trappers arrived and drove him away.[10]

Abram's biggest challenge continued to be the environment. Once, while traveling over sparsely inhabited plains after a particularly hard rainstorm, Abram and his mule came to a swollen stream where he could spy a tree branch overhanging the creek within eight feet of the opposite bank. In spite of a chilling wind, Abram stripped to his pants and shirt, packed the rest of his clothes on the mule, and forced the animal into the raging creek. When the mule had made it to the other side to graze contentedly upon the dead prairie grass, Abram scrambled up the tree, across the limb, and dropped with a thud to safety. His drop, however, frightened the mule which began running across the plains with Abram's warm clothes jostling in the saddlebags. Abram knelt, and in shivering prayers called on the Lord to stop the mule. Finally it did stop so that soon the two were on their way again.[11]

[8]Clark, "Reminiscences," 5.

[9]Ibid., 19-20.

[10]Adams, *In God We Trust*, 35-38.

[11]John Speer, "Patriotism in the Methodist Church," *Kansas Historical Society Transactions* 7 (1900-1): 496-97.

Kept busy ministering to the minds, bodies, and spirits of the Indians, Abram had no time to be lonely. The Wyandot and Delaware Indians with northern sympathies joined the Shawnees at the two meetings Abram held every Sunday. There, Abram's off-the-cuff sermons lost their spontaneity and color, if not their original intent, as they were relayed through several interpreters.[12] As he had done in Missouri, Abram held camp meetings on the plains, but these revivals took on a bizarre atmosphere as the Indians sang the songs of Zion in their native tongues. Camp-meetings did give the Stills opportunity to meet other widely scattered missionary families. Within a few months, having learned the rudiments of the Shawnee language, the Stills made Indian friends, the best of them including Paschal, Charles, and Charles's wife, who became Mary's special friend.[13] Paschal's home was only a few hundred yards from the mission, and he visited the Stills nearly every day. When after a long day Abram retreated to his smokehouse to read and rest, Paschal frequently kept him company.[14] Though Paschal was well educated, for some puzzling reason he always signed his documents with an "X,"[15]–perhaps his sense of humor at work, for Paschal enjoyed jokes, particularly on himself.[16]

Andrew, his wife Mary, and their two children Marusha and Abraham Price, moved to the Wakarusa Mission in May 1853. Mary taught at the mission school where approximately thirty Indian children were enrolled. Andrew turned ninety acres of land with a team of oxen during the summer, tediously breaking the prairie sod. Through the fall Andrew helped his father doctor the Indians for erysipelas, fever, flux, pneumonia, and cholera. Although he used the traditional medicines in his father's bag, Andrew paid close attention to the Indians' own medical treatments and later said that he found them no more ridiculous than the treatments of doctors of medicine.[17]

So far, other pioneers had avoided these treeless plains, which had been described as vast and worthless. After passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the government moved the eastern tribes into what was later known as the Great American Desert for nearly a decade, and now the Indians were congregated on this land promised to them for an eternity. However, with the invention of the McCormick reaper and the Marsh

[12]Adams, *In God We Trust*, 39. Interpreters were crucial to the missionaries, for even the slightest inflection in their voices could change the preacher's intent. See Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier: The Methodists* (New York: Cooper Square Publishing Co., 1964), 540.

[13]Adams, *In God We Trust*, 3.

[14]Clark, "Reminiscences," 9.

[15]Lutz, *Methodist Missions*, 186.

[16]Clark, "Reminiscences," 9.

[17]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 61.

harvester, the American farmer discovered that the prairies could be farmed. The rising price of wheat from $.93 a bushel in 1851 to $2.50 during 1855 provided the incentive for farmers to open the prairie.[18] In addition, schemes were being developed to build a transcontinental railroad through Indian territory to the Pacific Ocean, following one of the major trails to the West.

Under the terms of the Kansas-Nebraska bill introduced into Congress in 1853, Kansas and Nebraska settlers were to decide, by the doctrine of popular sovereignty, whether the states would be free or slave. During heated congressional debates, northern senator Salmon Chase had charged the bill was a southern plot to extend slavery, first to Kansas and then to all the West. Indeed, Missourians were poised on the border of the territory, determined to see that when Kansas did achieve statehood it would join the ranks of the slave states.

PRELUDE TO VIOLENCE

Immediately, the Reverend Thomas Johnson and Missouri Senator David Atchison began to lay the groundwork for the takeover of Kansas by Missourians. Johnson was elected as territorial delegate to Congress. Since there were few settlers at the time, the legality of Johnson's election was questionable. Johnson traveled to Washington, D.C. in December 1853, only to be denied a seat in Congress because Kansas had not been officially declared a territory.[19] Returning home in March, he began negotiations for the purchase of Indian lands. En route to Washington on April 15, he and a delegation of Indians boarded the riverboat *Polar Star* to steam down the Missouri river. This historic event was witnessed by Abram and Martha, who were in Kansas City for supplies. The Indian delegation included their friends, Paschal and Charles Fish, and their neighbors, the Bluejacket brothers, Charles and Henry.[20]

The treaty signed with the Shawnees was devastating to the Still's Wakarusa mission and other missions holding antislavery sentiments, for they were not recognized in the treaty. Johnson's Shawnee Mission Manual Labor School fared well; in fact, Johnson himself was accused of becoming rich overnight.[21] The Shawnees ceded to the government all their lands except for two hundred thousand acres from which each Shawnee Indian was granted two hundred acres. The government was to grant Johnson's mission ten thousand dollars in ten annual payments for which the mission was to educate, board, and clothe a specified number of Indian children

[18]Morrison, *Oxford History of American People,* 586.

[19]Daniel Webster Wilder, *Annals of Kansas,* (New York: Arno Press,1975), 30, 41.

[20]Clark, "Reminiscences," 22.

[21]Caldwell, *Annals of the Shawnee,* 80-81.

for ten years. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South was given three sections of land, one section later deeded to the Reverend Johnson.[22] Abram, on the other hand, was forced to break up his mission, but unlike Johnson, he was left with "nothing except eight hundred dollars which an Indian brother" (probably Paschal Fish) had given him for the property: "property," a newspaper correspondent observed, "which he could have taken free."[23]

In the North there was growing indignation over the signing of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. On May 10, the day of signing of the Shawnee treaty, Horace Greeley said, "We are in the midst of a Revolution."[24] By the time President Pierce signed the Bill into law on May 30, 1854, treaties with the majority of Indian tribes had been signed. During the debates over the bill, Senator William H. Seward declared:

> Come on, then, gentlemen of the slave states; since there is no escaping your challenge, I accept it on behalf of the cause of freedom. We will engage in competition for the virgin soil of Kansas and God give the victory to the side that is stronger in numbers as in the right.[25]

Missourians, pouring across the border to stake claims on choice land, established the proslavery towns of Atchison and Leavenworth.[26] In a few short years Kansas became as explosive as a powder keg, with the issue of slavery in constant debate and the sky darkened by the smoke of burning homes and fields. Six territorial governors and four acting governors would attempt to bring order to the land, some fleeing their impossible duty in the darkness of night. Four constitutions were drawn up before one was accepted by Congress.[27] As Kansas settlers formed military companies and barricaded and fortified their towns, the nation was offered a preview of

[22]Lutz, *Methodist Missions,* 190.

[23]Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West* (Topeka: Robert [Bob] Sanders Publishing, 1972), 989, quoting a Kansas newspaper correspondent for *The Milwaukee Daily Sentiniel,* November 6, 1854. During the peak years of emigration to Kansas, Paschal's double log home, "The Fish House," served as a popular tavern and hotel. Many Lawrence residents, including Charles Robinson and his wife, Sarah, took time during these tense times to enjoy the good food (cooked by Paschal) and the company at the Fish House. Under the terms of the Shawnee treaty, the Wakarusa Mission land and property was returned to Paschal. In 1857 Paschal signed a contract selling 774½ acres of his land to German settlers from Chicago, who subsequently founded the town of Eudora, named after Paschal's daughter. Marovia recalled that Paschal later moved to the territory of Oklahoma and died there February 15, 1894 at the age of 91. Apparently, Paschal, then blind, wandered away from home during a blizzard and froze to death.

[24]Quoted by Wilder, *Annals of Kansas,* 43.

[25]Samuel A. Johnson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1954), 7.

[26]Andreas, *History of State of Kansas,* 1:85.

[27]Ibid., 1:168-69. The four constitutions were: Topeka Constitution, 1855; Lecompton Constitution, 1857; Leavenworth Constitution, 1858; Wyandotte Constitution, 1859.

the Civil War to come. Even those Americans who were not radical abolitionists became incensed over the blatant attempt to extend slavery throughout the territory, which now became known as Bleeding Kansas. So the Stills found themselves in the midst of a national melodrama.

THE MASSACHUSETTS EMIGRANT AID SOCIETY

On May 29, 1854, in a series of editorials published in his *New York Tribune,* Horace Greeley began to promote "A Plan of Freedom," the brainchild of New England speculator Eli Thayer. Though Thayer claimed the idea had come to him as a sudden flash of inspiration, the idea had been suggested nearly ten years before in Edwin Hale's pamphlet, "How To Conquer Texas Before Texas Conquers the United States" (1845). Thayer's plan was designed to encourage northerners to settle in Kansas Territory, where they would vote slavery out of their constitution. Earlier, Hale had lacked the organizational skills necessary to accomplish large-scale emigration; but Thayer uniquely combined elements of commercial enterprise and moral crusade that together promised to prevent the extension of slavery. His company, first called the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society and later the New England Emigrant Aid Society, offered mutual support for northern emigrants unaccustomed to the hardships of pioneer life by securing reduced transportation rates, organizing the emigrants into travel parties, and extending credit. With the capital raised in the East, Thayer's plan included hotels, churches, and schools, so that an investor in the company could realize his profit through the sale of property and town lots. Thayer was able to enlist the support of philanthropist Amos Lawrence, who found the commercial aspect of the Emigrant Aid Society distasteful, but who nevertheless agreed to back the company.[28]

Swayed by Lawrence's influence, Thayer's organizational abilities, and Greeley's persuasive editorials, many New Englanders embraced the plan. Missourians who felt that Kansas was theirs panicked as rumors spread of a massive northern migration into Kansas sponsored by the New England Emigrant Aid Society. Missouri Senator David Atchison led Missourians along their western border to form secret protection societies, called Blue Lodges and Sons of the South, that pledged to fight to the death to keep Northerners out of Kansas. Ten days after the Kansas-Nebraska Act became official, a Parkville, Missouri meeting framed this resolution:

> Resolved, We recognize the institution of slavery as already existing in the Territory and recommend slaveholders to introduce their property as fast as possible.[29]

[28]Johnson, *Battle Cry,* 10, 14-15.

[29]George W. Brown, M.D., *Reminiscences of Gov. R. J. Walker* (Rockford, Ill.: By the author, 1902; reprinted Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 9.

They also warned, "We afford protection to no abolitionist settler in Kansas Territory."[30] Speaking in Weston, Missouri, Atchison said, "If we cannot do this [take Kansas] it is an omen that the institution of slavery is to fail in this and other states."[31]

As the Emigrant Aid Society's exploratory party, led by Dr. Charles Robinson and Charles H. Branscomb, left for Kansas to "choose a suitable location for a free-state town," Missourians swarmed across the border to stake claims. June traffic was so heavy that a steamboat made weekly trips up the Kansas River. The party chose a site, later to be named Lawrence, located only a few miles west of the Wakarusa Mission, and on their return trip bought the Gillis Hotel in Kansas City.

In this same month the Methodist Church, again determined to be in the forefront of the opening of the new frontier, sent the Reverend William H. Goode to the territory commissioned to assess the need and location for Methodist preachers. On July 9, the Reverend Goode, Abram Still, and a Quaker missionary, Friend Mendenhall, traveled through fifteen miles of prairie grass to a place called Hickory Point, stopping at a primitive cabin belonging to Lucius Kibbee, an emigrant from Park County, Indiana. Here the Reverend Goode preached the first sermon to white settlers, and Abram Still appointed Kibbee as leader of the Hickory Point Methodist Society.[32]

LAWRENCE, KANSAS

Until August 1854, the Stills and other antislavery families represented a weak minority of only fifty free-state families compared to hundreds of proslavery Missourians emigrating to Kansas during that summer,[33] but the Emigrant Aid Society planned to turn the tide. The Stills must have discussed the proposed town site of Lawrence at length, for after Marovia and Cassie begged repeatedly, Abram promised to take the girls to the future site of Lawrence. One day Abram, Martha, and the girls climbed into the wagon and headed for the site, passing through the Kansas River bottoms, "so rank with sunflowers" that the girls were able to pull them from the wagon as they went along. Finally, Abram pulled up to a stake topped with a white rag waving in the wind and announced, much to the disappointment of Cassie, "This is the city of Lawrence."[34]

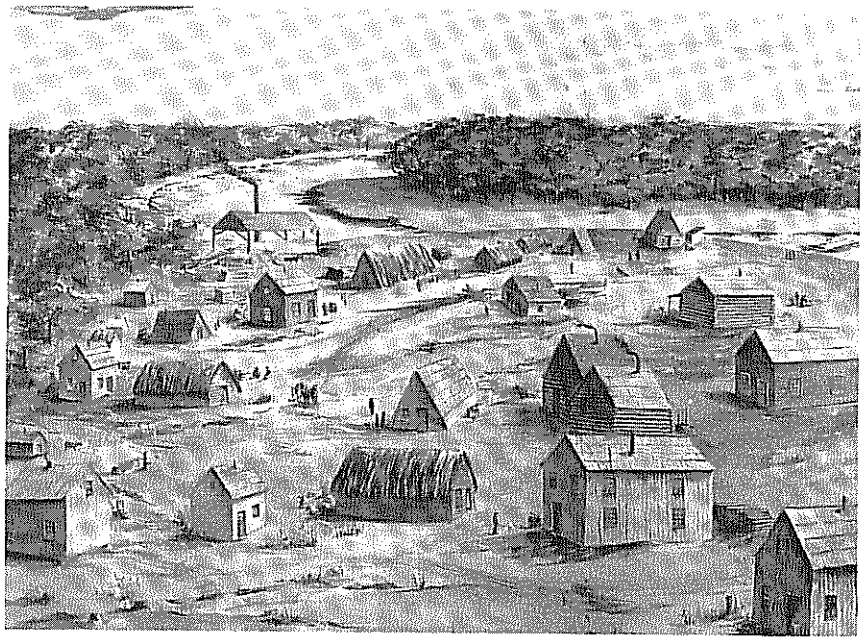
[30]Ibid.

[31]Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown, 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years Later* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1943), 97.

[32]Osmon Grant Markham, "Annals of Baker," *Baker University News Bulletin* (March 1967): 5.

[33]Andreas, *History of State of Kansas,* 1:85.

[34]Clark "Reminiscences," 45.



LAWRENCE, KANSAS, 1854-55

On the morning of July 4, 1855, Lawrence, with its sod houses and hay tents, came alive with color and pageantry, hosting a huge Independence Day celebration ushered in by the firing of guns. (Original art by Lauretta L. Fox Fisk. Reproduced courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka)

In July a Missouri newspaper, the *Platte Argus,* offered a two hundred dollar reward for the arrest and delivery of Eli Thayer to the proslavery men,[35] while in the same month cheering crowds lined the tracks in Boston as the first party of New Englanders left for Kansas Territory.[36] The free-state men reached Lawrence August 1, 1854. By fall, with the arrival of more Easterners, the population of Lawrence numbered in the hundreds. During these months, the Stills were hardly lonely. Their home was only two miles off the trail winding into the territory toward Lawrence, and it became a haven to many an emigrant stranded during the fury of a Kansas snowstorm.[37] The family entertained many settlers, including men who would become leaders of the free-state movement: Dr. Charles Robinson; T. Dwight Thatcher; G.W. Brown, editor of the Kansas free-state newspaper, *The Herald of Freedom;* and S.C. Pomeroy.[38] The emigrants brought news from the North. Although the main topics were slavery and Kansas, conversations covered a wide range of subjects, from temperance, to the right of a man to wear a beard, to the latest rage sweeping the North–rapping or spiritualism.[39]

Prairie conditions demanded that settlers find new ways to adapt to the environment different from those used by pioneers on a forested frontier. The emigrant aid pamphlets advertising Kansas forgot to mention the lack of rain and trees, the constant winds, and the bitter winters that would be realities for early Kansas settlers. The pioneers discovered that it was easy to get lost in Kansas, for traveling in the sea of waving, rattlesnake-infested prairie grass bore a striking resemblance to navigation on the high seas. There were no north and south roads in Kansas in those early years–only the rutted winding trails that led westward: the Santa Fe, the California, and the Oregon.

The Kansas settlers who joined parties organized by the various emigrant aid societies differed socially and intellectually from most pioneers who opened frontiers. These Yankees were readers, writers, and reformers who discovered that their city-learned professions were not an immediate asset on the Kansas prairie.[40] Most were well educated and many had attended

[35]Wilder, *Annals of Kansas,* 48.

[36]Richard Cordley, *A History of Lawrence, Kansas from the First Settlement to the Close of the Rebellion* (Lawrence: E. F. Caldwell, Lawrence Journal Press, 1895), 4-5.

[37]S. E. Martin, "Account of Experiences in the Early Settlement of Kansas," Address delivered to the Old Settlers Association, Lawrence (n.d.): original copy in the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. Martin recalled the time he stopped at the Wakarusa Mission during a blizzard. He was treated well by Abram Still and his family, and thereafter Martin made the Wakarusa Mission a regular stopping place on his way to and from Kansas City.

[38]Clark, "Reminiscences," 46.

[39]Wilder, *Annals of Kansas,* 47.

[40]Samuel Johnson, *Battle Cry,* 76.

college. These New England emigrants set the early social atmosphere in Kansas with an intellectual overtone. Later, more typical settlers–like the Stills–who were steeped in the knowledge of a backwoods existence comprised the majority of the Kansas population. The majority of early emigrants were Methodists,[41] but by the close of 1854 three other religious groups were active in the town of Lawrence: Congregationalists, United Brethren, and Swedenborgians.[42] These New England emigrants opened schools and libraries, they printed newspapers, and–unlike traditional frontier settlers who made their homes in the secluded wilderness–they clustered in the towns they developed. Although they saw an opportunity to better their economic condition, many migrated to Kansas for the "cause."[43]

The Stills were in daily contact with these Yankees as their neighbors became allies in the border warfare that ensued. In addition, many of these new settlers were their patients, as Andrew, James, Thomas, and Abram were kept busy providing medical care for the hundreds who migrated to the territory. They doctored with the same therapies used since the 1770s, which many physicians and their patients had increasingly found woefully inadequate. During the 1850s entire families were lost in epidemics of smallpox, measles, cholera, and typhoid fever.

Even if the settlers escaped or survived these diseases, they suffered from the old malady of malaria (known as "the ague"); its symptoms of chills, fever, headaches, and sweats occurred so regularly that the ague, instead of being thought of as a diseased condition, became a normal part of the settlers' existence.[44] Ague was thought to be caused by gases released in the newly turned sod or by the dew. Physicians could do little to hasten the recovery of malaria patients, partly because of their insistence upon using calomel and blood-letting, and because–as the doctors lamented–of their patients' ignorant attempts to use quinine to cure themselves.[45] Alcohol-laden ague killers were plentiful on the frontier. Some settlers undoubtedly found the anti-fever pills–containing quinine and manufactured by the Missouri physician, John Sappington–quite effective. Sappington's popular

[41]Sara T. L. Robinson, *Kansas: Its Interior and Exterior Life,* 4th ed. (Boston: Nichols, Crosby and Co., 1856), 86.

[42]Andreas, *History of State of Kansas,* 1:317.

[43]Johnson, *Battle cry,* 76-77.

[44]Everett Newfon Dick, *The Sod-House Frontier: A Social History of the Northern Plains from the Creation of Kansas and Nebraska to the Admission of the Dakotas* (Lincoln, Neb.: Johnsen Publishing Co., 1954), 438.

[45]Cf. Richard Shryock, *Medicine in America: Historical Essays,* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 98; Shryock discusses the general distrust of physicans that was then prevalent.

distribution and easy-to-follow directions angered many physicians, whose patients no longer needed their services.[46]

Indeed all diseases proved to be stubbornly resistant to the contents of the physician's bag.[47] When an epidemic of cholera struck Fort Riley, Kansas in 1855, the attending physician desperately "burned barrels of pine outside the hospital windows because he didn't know what else to do."[48] The Kansas climate was praised in eastern newspapers, but there was sickness everywhere. Even the emigrants reaching Kansas City found many other travelers sick or dying.[49]

Andrew Taylor Still had practiced medicine with his father since 1849, receiving his training–like most American physicians–in an apprenticeship system. For a period of approximately two years, the student doctor mixed medicines, observed patients, and learned the therapy. This practical experience was supplemented by reading the medical books in the physician's library. Good observation skills, an avocation of natural history, and especially a knowledge of the patient's home environment as well as the local climate were important elements in a nineteenth-century physician's informal education.[50] Some American physicians attended medical colleges where a degree could be obtained by attending courses lasting only three to six months each year. A few schools supplied several human skeletons for demonstration purposes, but in others, a bag of bones seemed adequate to serve the purpose.[51] Actually, the average physician had no practical or economic need to attend medical schools up to now. The apprenticeship system and the physician's self-study provided all that was needed to practice medicine in the mid-nineteenth century. No formal training was required for a person to hang out a physician's shingle, for no medical

[46]Dr. Ione M. Hulett, "The Hulett-Turner Clan," (Unpublished manuscript, Columbus, Ohio: March 1956; held in Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville, Mo.), 44. The active ingredient in Dr. Sappington's anti-fever pills was quinine. He advocated giving quinine at the onset of malaria and opposed purging. He manufactured his pills at Arrowrock, Missouri, and sold them throughout the Mississippi Valley. Sappington published a book, *The Theory and Treatment of Fevers,* in 1844. See Thomas B. Mall, "John Sappington," *Missouri Historical Review* 24 (January 1930), 177-99; and Ronald Lanser, "The Pioneer Physician in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 49 (October 1949), 31-47.

[47]Dick, *Sod-House Frontier,* 436.

[48]Robert F. Karolevitz, *Doctors of the Old West: A Pictorial History of Medicine on the Frontier* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1967), 71.

[49]See Julia Lovejoy's Diary, (in microfilm collection at Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka) for vivid accounts of sickness and disease among emigrants arriving in Kansas City. The Lovejoys left their home in Labanon, New Hampshire on March 6, 1855 and arrived in Kansas City on March 28.

[50]Warner, *Therapeutic Perspective,* 85.

[51]Karolevitz, *Doctors of the Old West,* 58

licensing laws existed until the 1870s and 1880s.[52] Through the 1850s, especially in the South and West portions of America, heroic therapies continued to be used.[53] As early as the 1830s, however, a minority of medical practitioners had begun to question the effectiveness of heroic therapies.

Other medical sects–branded "irregular" practitioners by the regulars–flourished in an unregulated American environment. The philosophies and therapies of these "irregular" practitioners relied more on the powers of nature. Eclectic physicians offered a combination of botanic, Indian, and conservative medicine and midwifery, while the homeopaths–with their infinitesimal doses of medicine–were gaining popularity.[54] America buzzed with creative alternatives to traditional medicine: vegetarians, hydrotherapists who promoted water cures, itinerant mesmerists, phrenologists, and bone-setters all roamed the countryside. Many reformers, leaving nothing to chance, used combinations of all of them. Some people, vowing never to take drugs again, became vegetarians and used only the water cure when they were ill.

One eastern vegetarian emigrant aid company made plans to settle on the banks of the Neosho River in Kansas Territory. Vegetarians who purchased shares in the company were initially promised a common shelter until homes could be built. Then later, the company ambitiously planned to add mills, a hydropathic institute, an agricultural college, a scientific school, a museum, mechanics institutes, and public schools. Many vegetarians arriving in 1856 found settlers living tents or primitive shacks, and the settlement decimated by an epidemic of typhoid fever. Those who were able were packing and leaving.[55]

Abram and his sons were overwhelmed by all the sickness around them. Once, after preaching to soldiers at Fort Scott, Abram wandered on to the site of Vegetarian City, and the scene he witnessed forever haunted him. There were no signs of life except one man carrying a pail of water from the river. When the man told him that everyone was sick, Abram went to get his medical bag. He administered medicine to those who would take it, but most of them–many raving with delirium in the final stages of typhoid–refused to compromise their vows to never again take drugs.[56]

[52]Martin Kaufman, *American Medical Education: The Formative Years, 1765-1910* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), 201-3.

[53]Warner, *Therapeutic Perspective,* 32.

[54]See Coulter, *Divided Legacy,* chap. 3, *passim.*

[55]For accounts of the sickness among the emigrants as well as details on the Vegetarian City, see Miriam Davis Colt, *Went to Kansas, being a thrilling account of an ill-fated expedition to that fairy land, and its sad results; together with a sketch of the life of the author* (Watertown, N.Y.: L. Ingalls and Co., 1862; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966).

[56]Clark, "Reminiscences," 59.

The popular revolt against heroic medicine was driving an increasing number into the arms of the "irregular" practitioners. From 1830 until near the end of the century, heroic therapies came under such increasing criticism from within and without the medical profession that physicians began to doubt the effectiveness of all the drugs in their medical bags. Characterizing the frustration of medical teachers during the latter half of the nineteenth century, one Kansas physician told a student, "There are two things that trouble me. One is that I am sure that half of what I taught you is wrong. This troubles me, but the other troubles me more. That is, I am not sure what half it was."[57] It was during this time of medical uncertainty that Andrew Taylor Still, too, began to question traditional medicine. Furthermore, his exposure to the Yankee medical reformers and their experimentation with alternative forms of healing came to have a profound effect upon the young doctor. Even though physicians were plentiful during the early period of Kansas emigration, one pioneer physician recalled, "their ranks were soon thinned because of the guerrilla warfare."[58]

THE KANSAS BALLOT BOX

Until November 29, 1854, Kansas was quiet. Although many settlers were arriving in the territory, the emigrant aid societies had brought fewer than 800 settlers in spite of the intense antislavery atmosphere in the East.[59] But the arrival of each emigrant aid company stirred suspicions and increased tensions among many Missourians.

Arriving in October, the first territorial governor, Andrew H. Reeder, set November 29 for the election of a territorial delegate to Congress. As the battle for Kansas was to be waged at the ballot box, the Missourians decided to leave nothing to chance. On that day, pouring across the border, armed and well supplied with whiskey, they harassed the antislavery men and took control of the voting precincts to to be built. elect the proslavery candidate, J. W. Whitfield.[60]

This election did bring about the first casualty of the Kansas conflict when Abram's Methodist leader from Hickory Point, Lucius Kibbee, killed Henry Davis, a proslavery man, in self-defense. Arriving at the Wakarusa mission two days after the shooting to ask Abram for protection, Kibbee was taken to a ravine two miles from the mission, staying there several

[57]Larry Jochims, "Medicine in Kansas: 1850-1900," *Minnesota Medicine* 36 (April 1953): 332.

[58]Dr. Williamson, "The Days of Danger: The Early History of Medicine in Kansas," *The Commonwealth,* Topeka-Leavenworth, Feb. 9, 1884, pp. 39, 45.

[59]Kenneth S. Davis, *Kansas: A Bicentennial History* (New York: Norton, 1976), 42-43.

[60]Villard, *John Brown,* 95.

days until deciding to return to Indiana. Thomas Still escorted him as far as Cedar Creek.[61]

Immediately after the election, the proslavery Leavenworth newspaper, the *Kansas Herald,* announced: "Kansas is Saved,"[62] but it was not to be that easy. On December 23, the free-state men held their first meeting and began to prepare for the next and most important election of the territorial legislature on March 30, 1855. On that day, buoyed by the success of their last victory, the Missourians arrived in wagons on which they displayed the emblems of their secret lodges.[63] They stuffed ballot boxes, terrorized the settlers, and threw out unsympathetic judges.

Governor Reeder, outraged by the blatant disregard for the democratic process, began to act. Speaking at a public rally in Pennsylvania, he stated, "Kansas has been invaded by a regular, organized army, armed to the teeth, who took possession of the ballot boxes, and made a Legislature to suit the purposes of the Pro-Slavery party." That summer Reeder moved his office from Johnson's Shawnee Mission, unseated seven legislators on technical flaws, and declared the proslavery legislature illegal. By August, Governor Reeder was removed from his post.[64]

Organizing their own military companies, free-state men sent an urgent request to the East for two hundred Sharp's rifles and two field guns.[65] Meeting on July 2, the proslavery legislature created a militia, removed free-state men who had won the election fairly or had been appointed by Governor Reeder to replace the seven he had removed, and formulated laws for the territorial government, including a stringent slave code making it a crime to even voice the opinion that slavery was illegal in Kansas.[66] The new governor, Wilson Shannon, arrived in the fall and promised to uphold and enforce the laws enacted by the proslavery legislature.

THE WAKARUSA MISSION IS CLOSED

In October 1854 the Reverend Goode was assigned to the Kansas-Nebraska District. He planned to use the Still's home, the Wakarusa Mission, as his base, but en route to the territory learned that 1172 acres, including the mission, had been claimed by Paschal Fish under the terms of the Shawnee treaty. A disappointed Goode made arrangements to stay with the Wyandot Tribe until other accommodations could be found.[67]

[61]Clark, "Reminiscences," 22-23.

[62]Davis, *Kansas, A Bicentennial History,* 95.

[63]Villard, *John Brown,* 98.

[64]Wilder, *Annals of Kansas,* 63.

[65]Johnson, *Battle Cry,* 124.

[66]Robinson, *Kansas: Interior and Exterior Life,* 82.

[67]Goode, *Outposts of Zion,* 286.

The Stills, in anticipation of their move from the mission, staked claims along the Kansas River bottoms approximately two miles from the mission, where Abram erected a cabin. Two of his sons had staked claims in the same area but had not yet begun to build.[68] It was relatively easy to stake a claim in territorial Kansas, but it proved to be more difficult to keep it. Abram found a man claiming to be a Baptist clergyman staggering on the prairie, delirious with fever, and nursed him back to health. When this Brother Clark was well enough to ride, Abram took him on a tour of the countryside, including the Still's claim on the Kansas River. After the tour, Clark immediately left the mission, and the next time the Stills visited their claims, they found him comfortably settled in Abram's cabin.[69]

This enraged the Still brothers who, with the help of two young Missouri men, picked up Clark and headed for the river. Clark threatened to shoot the Stills when his sons and sons-in-law returned, so Abram begged his boys to release him. Later that evening, as the family discussed the problem, Abram agreed with the boys that it was a "lowdown trick," but he said, "I would rather never have a foot of land than to get it that way. There is too much vacant land to fight over it." The next day the Stills staked claims on Blue Mound, five miles southeast of Lawrence, to begin anew.[70]

Abram moved his family to their cabin on the banks of Coal Creek in the spring of 1855, and James staked a claim on the south edge of the mound. First John Wesley was sent to McKendree College at Lebanon, Illinois; then that fall, Mary, holding tightly to the leather bag containing $130 in gold pieces earned that year teaching at the mission school, boarded the *Polar Star* to attend Miss Celestia Cranson's School for Young Ladies, located near McKendree College. Even though Mary had spent the last three years "banished from society" in Kansas and did not feel socially refined, she was accepted into the Methodist community in Lebanon, where she made many good friends, some of whom she would meet again in Kansas.[71]

In June 1855, Andrew Still and J.B. Abbott, a New England emigrant, together with several other men laid off the 320-acre town site of Palmyra. Andrew and the other Still children had become deeply embroiled in the increasing tension over slavery. When their sister Barbara Jane and her husband, F. P. Vaughan, joined the family on March 26, 1855, they had made their way along a trail crowded with Missourians. Vaughan later testified before a congressional committee appointed to investigate the

[68]Clark, "Reminiscences," 17.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Ibid., 18.

[71]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 41.

volatile Kansas affairs, that illegal voters had come from as far away as Macon County.[72]

Over the summer and fall, free-state men organized their own government and made preparations to hold a separate constitutional convention. So now there were two governments in Kansas: one illegal, but recognized by the southern dominated government administration, and one more representative but considered to be extra-legal. Two armed camps stood ready and eager to settle the future of Kansas by battle rather than at the ballot box. Willing or not, it was time for every Kansas settler to choose a side.

FREE STATE MEN PREPARE FOR WAR

On July 4, 1855, bustling with pageantry and colors amid its sod houses and hay tents, Lawrence hosted a huge Independence Day celebration that was ushered in by gunfire. Easterners, Missourians, and Indians wearing their distinctive clothes gathered for a day of festivities and food. The Stills and other residents of Blue Mound and the settlement of Wakarusa joined in a long procession winding through the prairie to the free-state town. Men and women on horseback were in the lead, followed by large double wagons decorated with garlands of flowers and draped with flags. That evening, nearly a hundred people gathered for refreshments in the town's sod hotel where Marovia, age twelve, first tasted ice cream. It was quite a social occasion for the settlers, but all the talk was of war. As military companies paraded before the guests, inflammatory speeches urged them to do their duty.[73] For now, their duty was just to be vigilant.

Wherever the free-state settlers gathered to boost their morale, they formed military companies and neighborhood societies. The Stills were among eighty members of a military company formed in June 1855 and led by H.F. Saunders and Major James Burnett Abbott, the thirty-seven-year-old Connecticut settler who had emigrated to Kansas in the third party of New Englanders. A fearless leader of the free-state cause, it was said of Abbott that "when a dangerous duty confronted him, he was iron, ice, and fire."[74] Sent back East to obtain arms and ammunition, Abbott was successful. On his return trip by steamer from St. Louis to Kansas, he traveled under the alias of J. Burnett, and while under the close scrutiny of proslavery men, managed to send his cache of 117 Sharp's rifles and ammunition and a 12-pound howitzer on a different steamer. When he

[72]See *Report of the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas*, 34th Congress, Report No. 200 (Washington, D.C.: Cornelius Wendall Printer, 1856), 130.

[73]Robinson, *Kansas: Interior and Exterior Life*, 69-71.

[74]L. F. Green, "J. B. Abbott," *Kansas Historical Collections* 6 (1897-1900): 230-31.

was safely in Kansas, Abbott distributed the weapons to his men and the surplus to Captain Sam Walker's free-state company.[75]

In the neighborhoods surrounding Lawrence, secret societies were formed. There was one at Hickory Point, possibly the group Marovia called the "poker moonshine party," meeting weekly to share news and make defense plans. All the men, including five Still men Abram, Andrew, Thomas, John, and James, carried cards on which they had written their names backwards so that they could be identified in case they were killed.[76]

By the fall of 1855 the rabid abolitionist, John Brown, came to Kansas with a wagon-load of broadswords, rifles, and ammunition, and with his intentions reflected in his declaration: "I have come not to make Kansas free, but to get a shot at the South."[77] James Lane, a congressman from Indiana, had arrived earlier. Brown and Lane were to lead the free-state men in the guerrilla warfare that followed. Even though the proslavery element had the upper hand, the Emigrant Aid Society was funneling Sharp's rifles, capable of firing ten rounds a minute, into the territory in long crates labeled Books. Nerves were taut and only a spark was needed to ignite the gunfire.

THE WAKARUSA WAR

A November 21, 1855 incident sparked rage on both sides that culminated in what became known as the Wakarusa War. It began when proslavery Franklin Coleman shot and killed an unarmed free stater, Charles Dow, in a dispute over a land claim. Two free-state men burned Coleman's cabin as he fled the area under the protection of the proslavery government. The incident would probably have passed had it not been for the Douglas County acting sheriff, Sam Jones.

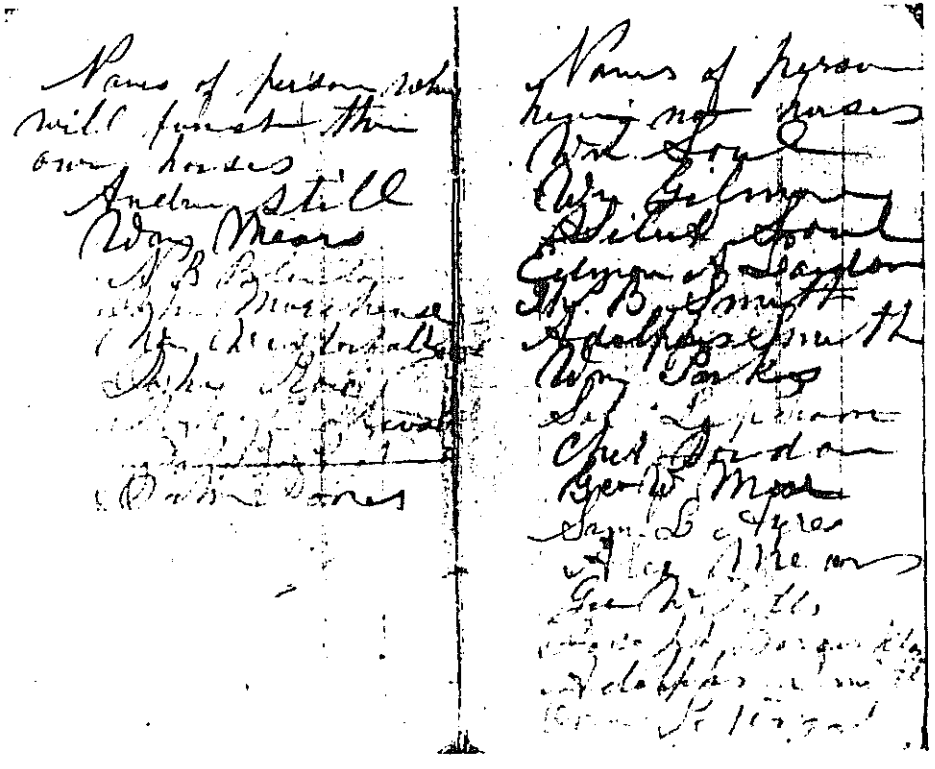
Shortly after the shooting, Jacob Branson had found Dow's body in the road and took it back to the cabin. Sheriff Jones, alleging that Branson had threatened the life of Harrison Buckley, another proslavery man, gathered a posse of about twenty men to arrest Branson. The free-state men, believing that Branson would probably be hanged, met at Major Abbott's cabin at Blanton's Bridge, a few miles west of Blue Mound, to plan a rescue. Even as they discussed the situation, Sheriff Jones and his posse were spotted approaching the bridge with Branson as their prisoner.

Quickly gathering squirrel rifles, stones, and pistols, the rescuers lined the road. After a bitter exchange of words and accidental firing of Major Abbott's touchy revolver, Sheriff Jones released his prisoner to them, but

[75]J. B. Abbott, "Reminiscences," J. B. Abbott Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

[76]Clark, "Reminiscences," 25.

[77]Eli Thayer, *A History of the Kansas Crusade* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1889; reprinted New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 195.



TWO PAGES FROM J. B. ABBOTT'S NOTEBOOK

After the Dow-Coleman incident, Abbott began his own investigation that culminated in the rescue of Jacob Branson who had been arrested by the proslavery sheriff, Sam Jones. Although this page seems to indicate Abbott's intentions to rescue Branson, that cannot be verified. In any event, Andrew Taylor Still was involved enough in free-state activities to be a prime suspect in the rescue and the subject of an arrest warrant. (Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka)

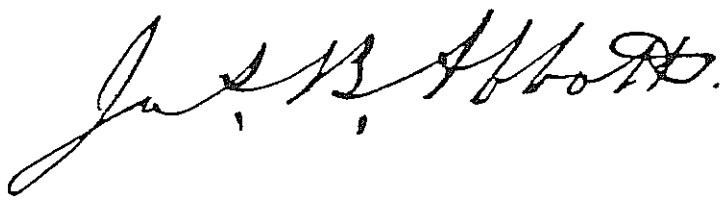
not without a final warning. One in Abbott's group remembered Jones saying, "in three days' time the Kansas militia of three thousand men would wipe that d—d abolition town of Lawrence out and corral all the abolitionists and make pets of them."[78] The posse and the free-state group were nearly equal in size, but when Jones reported to Governor Shannon that the incident was an insurrection and demanded three thousand militia to help him recapture Branson and arrest the rescuers, the governor agreed. When the Missourians and the proslavery militia amassed along the Wakarusa River, the town of Lawrence appealed for help from all Kansas free-state companies. Marovia was to later recall: "About two o'clock in the night, one of our neighbor boys came and called us up and said for us to get out and hurry to Mr. Henry Landon's as there was a big company of Missourians coming and they were killing men, women and children, and burning houses." Abram was away preaching; Andrew and his family, together with Martha, Cassie, and Marovia, walked over a mile in the moonlit evening to Landon's small A-frame home, taking turns carrying the children, afraid every step they would meet border ruffians. Arriving safely, they found all the neighbors congregated in the small cabin, with standing room only. The Stills stayed until dawn, when the Hickory Point Company, on their way to defend Lawrence, arrived and with them was Thomas Still.[79]

Later that morning the Hickory Point company accompanied the Stills to their home. Martha went to the smokehouse to get meat for their breakfast, when a small group of armed border ruffians came galloping up. One asked, "Hello old woman, is your husband there?" She replied, "No, he isn't at home." "Are your sons there?" She said, "Yes." They told her to tell them to come out. Martha stepped in the house and said, "There are a half a dozen border ruffians out here that wants to see you." As the Still brothers and twenty-five moonshiners "poured out of the house with their Sharp's rifles glistening in the sun," the ruffians retreated a few hundred yards, shouting from their refuge that they had "drawn a bead" on Andrew Still, Major Abbott, and Captain Saunders for their part in the rescue of Branson. Outnumbered, the ruffians rode away, inviting the company to come to Franklin that evening where they would fight it out. Incredibly, the company did indeed go to Franklin, but not without reinforcements, namely James Lane and his men. According to Marovia, Lane was so feared by the ruffians that the free-staters won the skirmish with little effort.[80]

[78]J. R. Kennedy, "The Douglas County Rescue, 125 Years Ago, Account of The Branson Rescue," reprinted in *The Douglas County Historical Society Newsletter* 10 (October, 1981): no p. no.

[79]Clark, "Reminiscences," 25-26.

[80]Ibid., 26.



Hiding along the banks of the Kansas River to escape arrest warrants, Andrew and his friend Abbott engaged in a conversation which would change Andrew's life.[81] Educated in the New York Academies of Pottsdam and Governeur, Abbott experienced a variety of occupations. After moving to Kansas, he had settled near Lawrence and built Blanton's Bridge. He was a respected naturalist and art collector, inventor and avid reader,[82] and when he spoke, the twenty-seven year old Andrew listened and learned. Their conversation ranged over a wide variety of subjects, eventually landing on the topic of medicine. Andrew was astonished by Abbott's prediction that "something would come forward that would take the place of allopathy, eclecticism, and homeopathy."[83] Several years would elapse before Andrew began his own investigations, but he never failed to give Abbott credit for stimulating his thoughts along this line. In later accounts of Branson's rescue at Blanton's Bridge, Andrew's name was not remembered,[84] but obviously Andrew was involved enough in free-state activities to be considered a prime suspect. Kansas editor John Speer, another free-state leader, declared in his biography of James Lane that Andrew Still was an intimate friend of Lane, and that young Still was identified with all the movements of the times in connection with Lane, John Brown, and others in the antislavery cause.[85]

Determined to destroy Lawrence, Sheriff Jones's fifteen hundred pro-slavery men surrounded the town on a bitterly cold December 2, 1855, to

[81]A.T. Still, "Dr. Still's Talk," *Journal of Osteopathy* 3 (March 1897): 2.

[82]L.F. Green, "J.B. Abbott," *Kansas Historical Collections* 6 (1897-1900): 230-31.

[83]A.T. Still, "Recollections of Baldwin, Kansas," *Journal of Osteopathy* 3 (March 1897): 2.

[84]See J. R. Kennedy, "Douglas County Rescue." Kennedy took part in the rescue. He remembered that the following men participated in the event: Major Abbott, Captain Phillip Hutchinison, Paul Jones, Phillip Hupp, Miner B. Hupp, Collins, Holloway, Edmond Curless, Lafayette Curless, Isaac Shappet, John Smith, William Hughes, Elmore Allen, S.N. Wood, and (?) Smith. A local Douglas County historian, Anne E. Hemphill, wrote that several of the men had claims in the area south of the Wakarusa River. Still may have been visiting someone in the neighborhood. Hemphill has the impression that some of the party may have come from as far away as Hickory Point, located nearly as far south as present-day Baldwin City.

Abbott recalled that the day after Dow's murder, he and sixty to seventy men went to Hickory Point to investigate the incident. Several others joined them at a meeting held at Coleman's cabin. Abbott took testimonies from those who witnessed the Dow-Coleman episode, and some of these testimonies are located in a notebook at the Kansas State Historical Society. Along with the testimonies is a page listing the "names of person who will furnish their own horses," and Andrew Still's name heads the list. However, it is impossible to ascertain whether these were men who could supply their own horses for the Branson rescue or for other free-state activities.

[85]See John Speer, *The Life of James H. Lane: The Liberator of Kansas, with Corroborative Incidents of Pioneer History*, 2d ed. (Garden City, Kan.: By the author, 1897), 337-38. See also Adams, *In God We Trust*, 57-59. In 1858 Lane was shot by Gaius Jenkins over a land dispute. Still assisted Dr. Alonzo Fuller in an operation to remove the bullet from Lane's thigh.

confront an equal number of free-state men poised for battle. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Governor Shannon appealed for federal troops only to be refused by the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis. On December 7, Shannon entered the besieged town to negotiate with the free-state leaders and insist that they give up their arms, but they refused. The next day Shannon, Lane, and Robinson signed a treaty in which the free-state side pledged to help arrest the Branson rescuers; Shannon in turn promised that any person arrested in Lawrence or its vicinity would be given due process of law to be tried only before a United States District Judge in Kansas. On the next day Shannon ordered the militia to disband. For now, the Wakarusa War was over–but the danger was not.

BLEEDING KANSAS

During the cold and bitter winter of 1855-56, snow covered the prairies and ice was eighteen inches thick in the ravines and creeks.[86] Cabins offered some–but not much–protection from the elements. Those who built their homes out of the native cottonwood discovered that as the green boards shrank, roofs leaked, and such large cracks developed between the chinks in the walls that snow and ice accumulated in the cabins.[87] Abbott wrote that the emigrant houses were so poor that "many a . . . fellow has frozen his heels or hands." Issues other than the cold weather occupied settlers' minds,[88] and there were few complaints as the people of Lawrence continued to fortify their city with earthwork trenches and circular forts. Upon inspecting the amatuer fortifications, Eastern reporter G. Douglas Brewerton suggested that artillery fire could take the town in two hours. Staying the winter in Lawrence, Brewerton wrote that their entertainment consisted of "talking politics, getting up meetings, passing resolutions, listening to speeches . . . playing soldier, digging trenches, building mud forts, and dancing 'til the grey dawn." The women in Lawrence, he said, were avid politicians "even more belligerent in their Wakarusa War notions than their Free State 'lords and masters.'"[89]

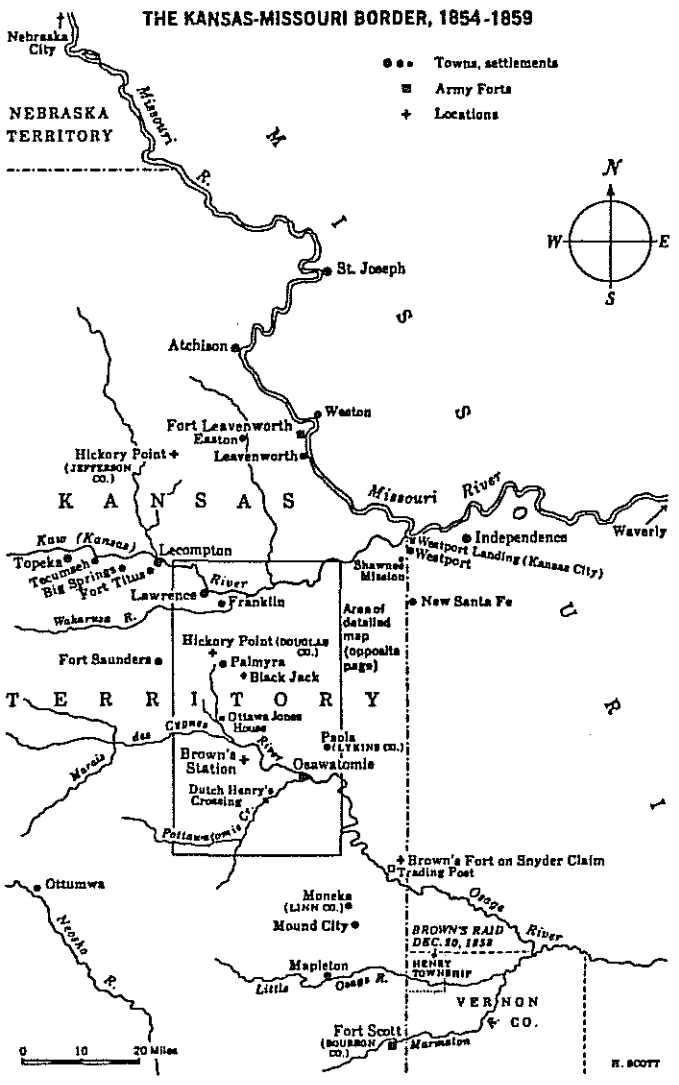
On January 24, 1856, as President Pierce addressed Congress on the Kansas situation, he blamed both the former governors and the Emigrant Aid Society for the troubles, calling the Free State government revolutionary and rebellious. In Kansas, while John Brown continued to make frequent

[86]Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 112.

[87]Dick, *Sod-House Frontier*, 59.

[88]Letter from J. B. Abbott, Lawrence, to "My Dear Mother," February 17, 1856. Typed transcription, J. B. Abbott Papers. Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

[89]G. Douglas Brewerton, *The War in Kansas* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856; reprinted Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 126, 363.



BLEEDING KANSAS – SITES OF ACTION

In June 1855, Andrew Still, together with a New England emigrant named J. B. Abbott and several other men, laid off the 320-acre townsite of Palmyra. Because of its strategic location on the Santa Fe Trail, Palmyra was in the middle of border warfare activity.
Reprinted by permission from *To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown*, by Stephen B. Oates, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2d ed., 1984. Copyright 1970, 1984 by Stephen B. Oates.

trips to Missouri for arms and provisions,[90] free-state men went to bed at night with guns and ammunition by their sides.[91]

As the winter wore on, Abbott spent most of his time making preparations. He and his men sometimes rode all night to prevent attack at some weak point.[92] Meanwhile, Colonel Jefferson Buford of Alabama, using incentives similar to those of the northern emigrant aid societies, planned to settle Kansas with Southerners. The state of Alabama appropriated $25,000 for Buford's cause, and Buford himself pledged half of his fortune.[93] Led by Buford, two to three hundred men left for the territory in early spring.

The President's declaration of January that branded the free-staters as revolutionaries did not stop them from continuing to develop their state government, and about ten days later, in early February, the year-long construction of the Free State Hotel in Lawrence was completed. On February 23, Sheriff Jones, still smarting from the humiliation of the Branson incident, arrived in Lawrence to serve warrants for the arrest of the rescuers. When he was shot and wounded that evening, the proslavery men became more determined than ever to punish Lawrence. Buford's Alabama force arrived at Westport in late April, destitute. Though the men scattered about looking for desirable claims, Buford kept in touch with them.[94]

THE SACKING OF LAWRENCE

By May of 1856, Robinson and G.W. Brown, the editor of *The Herald of Freedom,* were arrested along with other leaders on charges of treason. Governor Shannon then ordered the militia and all able-bodied citizens to gather at the proslavery capital of Lecompton to enforce law and order in the insurrectionist town of Lawrence. Colonel Buford and his men answered the call. They enrolled in the territorial militia, and although Buford's original plan called for settling the Kansas issue legally through the ballot box, many of his men became caught up in the excitement and joined with Georgians and Missourians to plunder and harass the free-state settlers.[95]

[90]Villard, *John Brown,* 128-29.

[91]J. B. Abbott, "Letter to Mother," p. 2.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Johnson, *Battle Cry,* 208.

[94]Wilder, *Annals of Kansas,* 118. See also Walter L. Fleming, "The Buford Expedition to Kansas," *American Historical Review* 6 (October 1900), 38-48; William E. Parrish, *David Rice Atchison of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1961), 190-91, 199-200.

[95]Letter from Edward Bridgeman, Osawatomie, to S. E. Bridgeman, dated May 25, 1856. Edward Bridgeman Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison. In all fairness, it should be said that there was harassment and plundering on both sides. Between November 1, 1855 and December 1,1856, approximately two hundred people lost their lives. The property loss amounted to at least two million dollars, the majority of which was sustained by the free-state settlers. See Villard, *John Brown,* 265. This story is told from the free-state angle, for that is what the Still family experienced. In addition, the free-state side is better known; more free-state settlers, in contrast to the proslavery settlers, documented their stories in diaries, letters, and books.

On May 21, Sheriff Jones led a large force into Lawrence, destroyed the Free State Hotel, two printing presses, and sacked the town, burning Robinson's home on their way out. Upon hearing the news, the scattered free-state forces hurried to Lawrence.

Just as the forces were converging on Lawrence, Mary returned home from her school in Illinois on a steamer, and as the steamer neared Kansas City, the passengers became acutely aware of the dangerous situation. Because Buford's "Toughs" were said to be marauding the streets of the town, Mary recalled, "thirsting for the blood of abolitionists," the steamer's free-state captain did not stop at the wharf but made straight for Leavenworth, where Mary and the other passengers took a frightening stagecoach journey to Lawrence, keeping a constant watch for bushwackers. When they arrived in smoldering Lawrence, its citizens were in deep despair.[96]

Incensed at the sacking of Lawrence, John Brown went on his own rampage: Brown, his four sons, and three other men massacred five proslavery men near Brown's home on Pottawatomie Creek, senselessly hacking several of the bodies to pieces with their sabers, and then went into hiding near Palmyra.[97] The proslavery militia under the leadership of Captain Henry Pate, threatened to destroy Brown's Osawatomie Camp, and they ransacked and plundered nearly every house in the vicinity.[98] Mary reached her home only to find the contents destroyed by the bushwackers, but her parents had been spared from harm, having spent the night at Andrew's cabin.[99]

When Lawrence was sacked, Major Abbot was in the field. In a letter to eastern friends, he described the desperate situation:

> With a large Ter[ritory]– sparsely populated, with people unaclimated, *[sic]* living many of them in cabins which our eastern friends would not think fit to stable their horses in, living on the coarsest fair, *[sic]* and not half enough of that, poorly clad, contending with all the difficulties of a pioneers life, with communication from friends cut off. At the time in the year too, when one or two mo[n]th[s] to the farmer are worth all the rest . . . under such circumstances to be compeled to take their gunes, *[sic]* . . . and make forced marches of

[96]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 44-45.

[97]J. B. Abbott, "Reminiscences." J. B. Abbott Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kan.

[98]Letter from Edward Bridgeman, Osawatomie, to S. E. Bridgeman, dated May 27, 1856. Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison.

[99]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 44-45.

> perhaps forty and a hundred miles to defend some settlement against (frank peircess) law & order– pro Slavery– murderers and banditts, who have been well paid fed and clad and stationed along the border of Mo, by the great political rullers of these *glorious free United States*. . . .
>
> There was so much sickness in consequence of camping out nights, sleeping on grass in the ravines and timber without coats or blankets, sometimes not more than one meal . . . a day for four or five days . . . at one time more than half of my company were sick.[100]

Abbott complained that although they had heard much about money coming from the North, little of it had reached the settlers who thus had come to believe that their only hope was the election of the Republican candidate for President, General John C. Fremont.[101]

LIVING ON EXCITEMENT

"We seemed to live on excitement in those days," Marovia recalled. In the summer of 1856, all work in the fields was stopped because of the danger. Many nights that summer neighbors gathered at Abram's large but unfinished cabin. The Stills covered a small porch on the northeast corner of the house where the women took turns watching for marauders, sleeping on the floor around a fire kept intentionally small for fear it would attract attention. The men slept in nearby brush, anxiously clutching their Sharp's rifles. The "poker moonshine party" appointed Andrew's brother Thomas, who lived on the south end of Blue Mound, as sentinel. If the Missourians should march again on Lawrence, Thomas was to signal with a fire at night or a flag by day. The first open confrontation between free-state forces and proslavery militia occurred in early June when John Brown's forces attacked Captain Pate's camp at Black Jack, about four miles south of Palmyra. The Still brothers, John and Thomas, able to hear the gunfire but thinking that it was coming from Hickory Point, hurried there and so missed the battle.[102]

From then on the aggressive free-state forces attacked the proslavery supply base at Franklin, then followed with other successful raids. On June 25, 1856, the United States House of Representatives passed a bill for the admission of Kansas under the free-state Topeka Constitution by a vote of

[100]Letter from J. B. Abbott, Coal Creek, to Asa Rogers and Company, dated September 7, 1856. J. B. Abbot Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

[101]Ibid.

[102]Clark, "Reminiscences," 23-24, 27-30, 40. The battle of Black Jack resulted in numerous injuries. It was given national attention which stirred the passions of both the North and South. Although both sides were plagued by desertions, Pate and his remaining force of twenty-eight surrendered to Brown.

99-97. The Senate countered with a different version providing for a census of all white males over twenty-one, and the two houses locked in disagreement.[103] Meanwhile, many Kansas farms were abandoned and fields were deserted; civil war raged on; raids, robberies, and murders became common.

PALMYRA

Somehow time was found to open schools, print newspapers, build mills, and engage in the mania of all frontiers: town building. By May 1855 the *Kansas Herald* reported, "New towns are being laid off, each one claiming some advantages over its predecessor either in natural location, timber, adjacent country, proximity to certain parts, mineral resources, best location for the capital . . . very few advantages claimed are possessed." Emigrants nearing Kansas were bombarded with impressive town lithographs showing parks with fountains, bandstands, trees, and buildings. So many, like the vegetarian city, proved to be only "paper cities."[104]

The land laws of 1844 provided for the reservation of town sites of 320 acres without being subject to entry at the land office. Many speculators who had incorporated towns proceeded to expand their sites by encouraging settlers to preempt the adjacent quarter sections. When the acreage was divided into building lots, owners were given the privilege of buying plots at a minimum price.[105] Many legitimate towns developed all across Kansas in shares consisting of twelve lots, which sold quickly at ten to fifteen dollars a share.[106]

The town of Palmyra, started in June 1855 by Andrew Still, Abbott, Saunders, and others, was no "paper city," but had distinct possibilities. Located on the Santa Fe trail, twelve miles east of Lawrence, it offered ample timber, good limestone, and–more importantly–the first fresh water stop on the Santa Fe trail west of Independence. Palmyra soon became a major repair and trading center,[107] and because of its geographic location, was in the middle of the border war activity.

Lt. James McIntosh of the United States 1st Cavalry reported on June 13 from Palmyra: "A great many robberies are being committed on the various roads."[108] When calling on his patients, Andrew usually took the roads that he knew were safe. One time when he was surprised by a

[103]Villard, *John Brown*, 226-27.

[104]Quoted in Dick, *Sod-House Frontier*, 40-41.

[105]Ibid.

[106]Charles C. Howes, *This Place Called Kansas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 48-49.

[107]Andreas, *History of State of Kansas*, 1:85.

[108]Villard, *John Brown*, 214.

company of approximately fifty proslavery men, he decided to be firm, saying, "What in the d--l are you fellows up to?" The Captain demanded, "Where in the h--l are you going?" Andrew told him, and in a mischievous moment offered to drill his men and "show them how Jim Lane and John Brown did it." The Captain agreed to the demonstration, and "I drew them in a line, put them through all the cavalry movements, tangled them up, straightened them out, and told the Captain he must drill better, so they could get out of tight places when they met us." He turned the company back to their Captain, who told his troops, "Attention, company; this is Dr. Still, the d--dest abolitionist out of h--l, who is not afraid of h-l or high water. When you are sick go for him; he saved my wife's life in cholera. In politics he is our enemy, in sickness he has proven to be our friend." The Captain invited Andrew to his home for dinner and offered to accompany him to see his patient. From that time on, Andrew recalled, he "met, passed and repassed the Captain's men without fear or molestation."[109]

When the Free-State legislature gathered in Topeka, Colonel Edwin V. Sumner and five companies of his regiment and artillery, with gunners holding lighted matches, met them. Governor Shannon had ordered Sumner to disperse the extra-legal legislature. Though Sumner found the job extremely distasteful, he believed it was necessary if peace was to be restored to Kansas.[110]

The Missouri River was blockaded by then. Emigrants, weapons, and supplies now traveled the more difficult overland route through Iowa and Nebraska, following a vague trail marked by stones, called "Lane's Chimneys." Reinforced by the arrival of three hundred emigrants calling themselves Lane's Army, who crossed into Kansas at Nebraska City on July 9, 1856,[111] the free-state men continued the offensive. Mary recalled that when a contingent of Georgian forces camped on Washington Creek at Fort Saunders on August 15, the local home guards decided to attack early the next morning. Because John Still was sick, his parents pleaded with him to stay in bed, but at dawn he and Thomas joined the free-state forces (numbering nearly four hundred) in a surprise attack. Already seated for breakfast, the startled Georgians fled, leaving everything except their horses. The boys ate the Georgians' meal and took-in addition to the much needed booty

[109]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 69-71.

[110]Villard, *John Brown*, 217-19. Governor Shannon ordered Colonel Sumner to have two companies at Topeka on July 4. He stated that the Free-State legislature was an "illegal body; threatening the peace of the whole country and therefore *should be dispersed.*" Although Sumner was sympathetic to the plight of the free-state cause, he did concur with Shannon that the act was necessary. However, about a month later, the secretary of war, Jefferson Davis, needed a scapegoat and dismissed Sumner for his action.

[111]Ibid., 225.

With many of the leading free-state leaders imprisoned and John Brown following a course of his own,[113] Lane took command. Lane was described by one participant in free-state activities as a "self-imposed dictator" whose plans were "reckless and at times atrocious,[114] but he was the free-state settlers' only immediate hope. Outnumbered by the proslavery militia, the free-state forces not only accepted Lane's leadership, as Marovia recalled, but would have given their lives for him. Before one battle, Lane told his troops, "Now boys, I want you to show yourselves men, for you are fighting in a good cause–to make Kansas a free state and to save our homes. Now fight to the bitter [end], for even if you get killed you will go right straight to heaven."[115] Whether they believed this or not, the free-state men followed wherever Lane led them.

The free-state forces successfully attacked Fort Titus on August 18, 1856, the day that President Pierce removed Governor Shannon, who fled in disguise to Leavenworth to catch a steamer down the Missouri River. In late August, when the Missouri militia mustered support troops in Kansas, even the free-state settlers conceded that their situation was hopeless. The acting governor, Lieutenant Governor Daniel Woodsen, hoped to crush the free-state forces before the new governor, John Geary, arrived. By August 25, Atchison's proslavery forces, numbering 1,150, gathered along the Missouri-Kansas border to destroy Brown's Osawatomie camp, then in turn Hickory Point, Topeka, and finally the Lawrence stronghold.[116]

THE BATTLE OF OSAWATOMIE

Lane sent John Brown's son Frederick, John Still, and three others to Brown's Osawatomie camp to request that they and other leading free-state men come immediately to Lawrence to help repel Atchison's forces.[117] The boys delivered the message, staying overnight in a deserted cabin. The next morning, while Fred went to ready the horses for the return trip, John remained in the cabin to prepare breakfast. Marovia recalled, "Soon after Fred went out, John heard gunfire. He looked out and saw Fred fall . . . mortally wounded." John ran to him, raised his head up to hold him a few moments as Fred passed away. As John gently laid him down, he saw

[112]Clark, "Reminiscences," 43. Marovia may have been confused when she wrote this account. She located Fort Titus on Washington Creek instead of on the Kansas River, so this may have been the Battle of Fort Saunders.

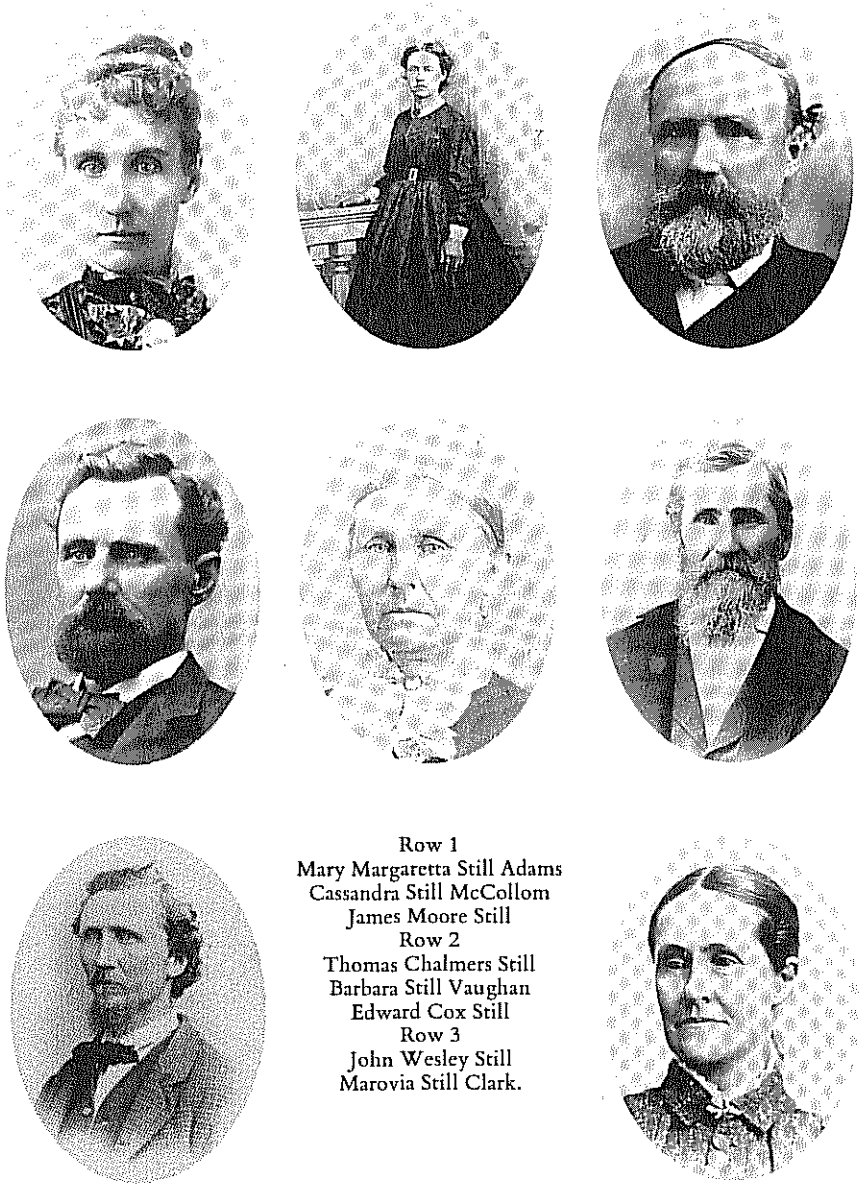
[113]Brown, *Reminiscences of Gov. Walker*, 150-51

[114]Ibid., quoting J. K. Goodin, 111.

[115]Clark, "Reminiscences," 44.

[116]Villard, *John Brown*, 240-41.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF A. T. STILL



Row 1
Mary Margaretta Still Adams
Cassandra Still McCollom
James Moore Still
Row 2
Thomas Chalmers Still
Barbara Still Vaughan
Edward Cox Still
Row 3
John Wesley Still
Marovia Still Clark.

(Photos courtesy Joint Collection Western Historical Manuscripts, Kansas City, and Baker University Archives)

a large company entering the town of Osawatomie. Bullets began whizzing around John's head, so he jumped on his horse and fled.[118] Brown quickly gathered a small band of settlers to defend the town, but they were forced to retreat and Osawatomie was destroyed.

Early in September Governor Woodsen pressed on, ordering United States Dragoons to Lawrence and Topeka to disarm and arrest all insurrectionists, to level all fortifications and to intercept any armed persons arriving by Lane's Trail. Recognizing Woodsen's threat, cheering broke out at the arrival of John Brown in Lawrence, which interrupted Lane in a council of war.[119]

ATCHISON'S GRAND ARMY

Finally, on September 9, Governor Geary arrived in the territory. His first act was to order the disbandment of all armed forces, including the proslavery militia.[120] Geary also released the free-state prisoners, but his peace attempts were soon thwarted when Atchison arrived at the proslavery stronghold of Franklin on September 15 with 2,700 well-armed, uniformed men.[121]

On Sunday morning John Still climbed the mound to watch for proslavery forces. Peering through the captured telescope, what he saw nearly paralyzed him with fear. Atchison's army could be seen four miles from Blue Mound, heading for Lawrence. When he ran to get his signal flag, it and the rope were gone. Abram raced on horseback to spread the alarm to Lawrence. A messenger arrived on the mound with the news that Lawrence awaited the signal of the flag. Mary, sick in bed, quickly arose and uncorded her bed, telling the messenger to take the rope and the sheet and fly the flag.[122] While Lane was recruiting in the northeast, Major Abbott and Captain Joseph Cracklin were in command of Lawrence. When Abbott saw the sheet flying from Blue Mound, he prepared for the invasion, asking Brown to give the men last-minute combat instructions.[123] Standing on a dry goods box on main street, Brown addressed the men: "Gentlemen, it is said there are 2,500 Missourians down at Franklin, and that they will be here in two hours. . . . This is probably the last opportunity you will have of seeing a fight, so . . . you had better do your best." With only 375 men in the town force, Brown gave them a strategy. He said, "If they

[118]Clark, "Reminiscences," 42-43.

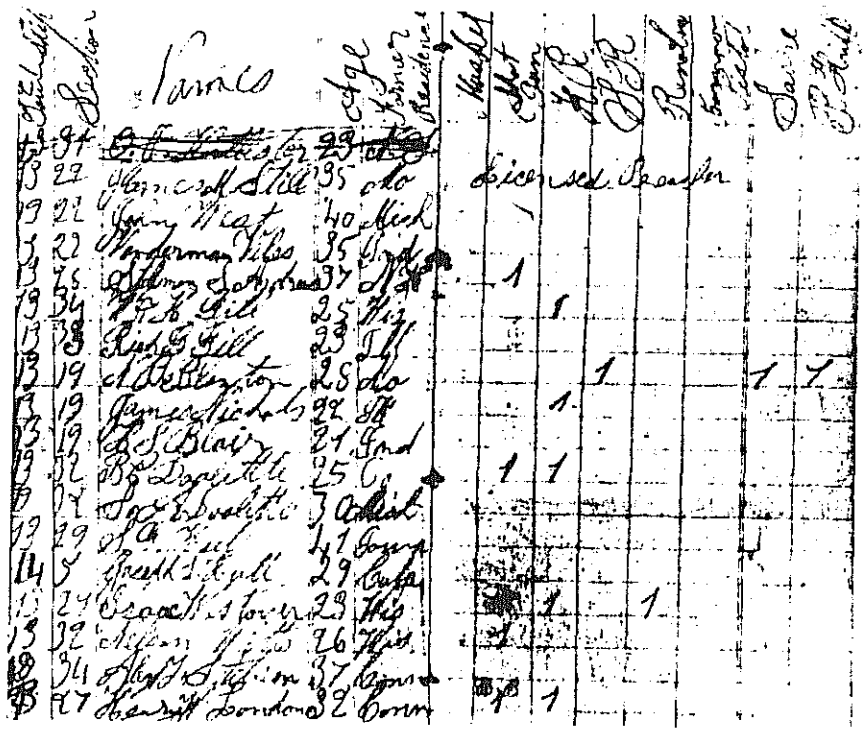
[119]Villard, *John Brown,* 250-51, 253.

[120]Johnson, *Battle Cry,* 237.

[121]Villard, *John Brown,* 255-57.

[122]Adams, *In God We Trust,* 130.

[123]J. B. Abbott, "Interview in The Historical Society Rooms," (July 5, 1895): 1. J. B. Abbott Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kan.



J. B. ABBOTT'S NOTEBOOK

An inventory of free-state forces and their weapons. Even though James Still was listed, he did not carry a weapon because he was a licensed preacher. (Courtesy Kansas Historical Society, Topeka)

should come up and attack us, don't yell and make a great noise, but remain perfectly silent and still. Wait 'til they get within twenty-five yards of you, get a good object, be sure you see the hindsight of your gun, then fire." He told them to shoot low, to aim at their legs instead of their heads.[124] The Stills' cabin was once again crowded with neighbors who stayed up all night making cartridges for the Sharp's rifles.[125] In the middle of the battle fervor, Geary, determined to win this first test as Governor, rode into Lawrence with Federal troops and persuaded Atchison's forces to disband.

THE FREE-STATE LEGISLATURE 1857

Abandoned by Washington and left powerless because of his tendency to side more with the free-state cause than the proslavery legislature, Governor Geary resigned the following March 4, 1857. The new President, James Buchanan, appointed Robert Walker as governor. Although there was no organized violence during that spring and summer, Lane continued to prepare for the worst. The free-state men argued long over whether to participate in the elections called by the various governors, and until now, most saw no reason to vote in elections conducted unfairly. Nearly all the new emigrants streaming into the territory during the summer of 1857 came from free states.[126] When Governor Walker promised fair elections, the free-staters decided to participate in the October 6, 1857 election, sweeping all but two precincts near the Missouri border in which nearly all ballots were declared invalid by Governor Walker. One of the free-staters who won a seat in the legislature was Andrew Taylor Still.

Governor Walker called a special session of the legislature on December 7 at Lecompton. Since there were still two constitutions in the territory, the free-state men decided to lobby for their constitution.[127] Andrew Still recalled, "The free-state men agreed to meet at Lawrence and Topeka, and march to Lecompton in a body." Still's group entered Lecompton earlier than those from Topeka. They hitched their horses and scattered around

[124]Villard, *John Brown,* 258.

[125]Clark, "Reminiscences," 31. Marovia's account of this event mentioned that the ruffian force number 2,800, which would have dated it in September, 1856. But see Mrs. Duncan C. Allison, "An Incident," paper dated October 1855, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wis. Allison's recollection of the 1855 Wakarusa War states that Lawrence had received Sharp's rifles from the East, but the ammunition for the rifles had only reached the outskirts of the town. This would be near or at Blue Mound. Mrs. Allison tells of the daring ride of two Lawrence ladies who drove their wagon through the proslavery guards to a cabin where neighbors had gathered to make cartridges. Except for the daring ride, this account matches Marovia's, and either Marovia or Mrs.Allison confused their dates, or it is entirely possible that cartridges were hastily made during both the 1855 and 1856 events.

[126]Johnson, *Battle Cry,* 241.

[127]Wilder, *Annals of Kansas,* 200.

town. As Still's men neared the capitol, several proslavery men who accosted them asked them why they had come to Lecompton. Still answered, "I was sent by Jim Lane." When asked what they were going to do, Still replied, "Whatever Jim Lane wants done." This response so inflamed the men that a friend tried to draw Andrew away. Andrew opened his overcoat to show two Colt revolvers in the inside pockets, assuring the friend that he could take care of himself. Andrew returned to the proslavery group and continued to agitate them with such comments as, "We propose to break every link in the proslavery chain, and do all Jim Lane requires to make Kansas free from master and slave. . . ." As they became more boisterous, Andrew looked one in the face and said, "The angels are coming. The Lord is on our side, and His angels will soon be with us; you will hear the music from on high." Consequently, they concluded that Still was crazy, but Andrew knew that within two minutes Lane and 1,200 free-state men would be coming over the hill, led by the Lawrence brass band. He continued to poke at them, "I can almost smell the breath of angels. I hear the rustling of their wings." Just then the sound of fifes and bass drums "rose on the air." A proslavery man said, "What in the h--l is that?" As Lane's column came over the hill, Andrew needled further, "That is the music of the Lord's Cavalry coming to help us knock the shackles from every slave." The proslavery men fled from sight.[128]

That evening, the heavily armed free-state men attended a legislative session to sit quietly in the rear. Andrew recalled that when a proslavery man began calling them "sons of feminine dogs, prefixed by an abundance of brimstone adjectives," one of the free-staters jumped up and demanded an apology. Andrew looked around "surprised to find, in addition to my own revolvers, five hundred more covering every drop of proslavery blood in the house. . . ." As the proslavery men hastily dragged the offender out, the meeting continued on a quieter note.[129]

Finally, on August 2, 1858, free-state men voted on the proslavery Lecompton Constitution and soundly defeated it by a vote of 11,300 to 1,788. John Brown returned to Kansas in June; on December 20, he performed his last act of defiance from that territory by leading his men into Missouri, liberating fourteen slaves, escaping to Kansas with them, and then leaving the territory for good. After some recurring violence in southeastern Kansas had subsided, peace finally came to Kansas territory.

BAKER UNIVERSITY

Although Governor Geary had ordered Atchison's "Grand Army" to disband two years earlier, in 1856 the territory was far from peaceful. In

[128]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 72-78.

[129]Ibid., 77-78.

spite of the unsettling conditions in Kansas and having to be surrounded by armed guards–Methodist meetings were considered to be abolitionist meetings and were often threatened[130]–Methodist ministers met on the outskirts of Lawrence on October 23, 1856, in a cloth tent sewn together by several of the women. They organized the Kansas-Nebraska Annual Conference with Abram Still as one of the thirteen charter members. With great optimism, these ministers talked at length about their desire to establish a college somewhere in the territory and then formed an educational committee.[131] Abram, the only preacher with a horse and buggy, voluteered to take presiding Bishop Osman C. Baker to the next conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. During the long journey, Abram and the Bishop discussed the proposed college thoroughly. On March 17,1857, an educational convention of traveling and local preachers met at James Still's home at Blue Mound. Abram offered to donate property on Blue Mound for the university. Since the location of a college was so desirable, other communities vied for the privilege. Meeting the following morning at the Barricklow cabin (formerly the Lucius Kibbee cabin) at Hickory Point, the committee heard proposals from Palmyra, Centropolis, Lawrence, Prairie City, and Topeka, as well as Blue Mound. After much discussion and prayer, the convention accepted Palmyra's offer of eight hundred acres of land and their promise to buy twenty thousand dollars worth of university stock. Abram was disappointed, but the college connection still remained in the family as Andrew was a member of the successful Palmyra Town Company. Upon Abram's motion, the committee unanimously voted to name the college for Bishop Baker.[132] The location of Baker University at Palmyra was, at that time, a wise economic decision, for the busy Santa Fe trail wound south of Palmyra through the tracts of land offered to the convention. At next annual meeting, the Conference formed the Kansas Educational Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church (KEAME) to oversee the financial arrangements for the college. Securing a charter, the KEAME set the shares at one hundred dollars each, prohibiting "forever the use of the said property or any part thereof from being used as a place of making or vending intoxicating liquors."[133]

The claims south of Palmyra belonging to John, Thomas, and Andrew Still were the tracts of land transferred for the site of Baker University. When Abram's Blue Mound proposal failed, he too took up a claim near his sons' through which tracts the United States mail route passed. However,

[130]Speer, "Patriotism in the Methodist Church," 498.

[131]Virginia Gatch Markham, *John Baldwin and His Son Milton Come to Kansas* (Lawrence: Lawrence Printing Service, 1982), 11.

[132]O. Markham, "Annals of Baker," 5.

[133]V. Markham, *John Baldwin*, 6-7.

under a law passed on March 3, 1855, a mail contractor was allowed to hold preemptive claims to his stations when the land came on the market, so Jacob Hall preempted the Still tracts of land, which the Stills transferred to Hall in June. On August 25, 1858, Hall sold the land for three thousand dollars to the Baker University agent, the Reverend William Butt.[134]

Because the Palmyra Town Company had mortgaged the section for the purchase money of three thousand dollars, KEAME's financial problems continued, for as the town lots that surrounded the university site were sold, the town of Palmyra declined, so that when the mortgage was due, the company was unable to pay. Apparently a verbal agreement between the KEAME and the company promised that all businesses were to be located in Palmyra, and no town would be developed on the tracts given for educational purposes. However, water proved to be more accessible near the university, and lots were sold, and businesses soon followed.[135] The situation could have caused hard feelings, but the two groups cooperated, and by 1863, Palmyra and the town–soon to be renamed Baldwin City–merged. Some talked about moving the school to another location,[136] but the first president of Baker University, Dr. Werter Davis, managed to find benefactors to finance the mortgage.

After Andrew, Thomas, and two Barricklow brothers purchased a forty-horsepower steam sawmill, Andrew attended a course in operation of milling machinery and for the next five years divided his time working in the mill, serving as legislator, and doctoring the sick. When financial difficulties stopped construction on the Baker University building in 1857, determined Methodists, including the Stills, volunteered their time and labor to build a temporary structure at the edge of the campus.[137] Abram and Martha were present at the cornerstone laying ceremony in the early summer of 1858, beaming as the copper box filled with newspapers, items of local interest, and prayers was sealed at the base of the building.[138]

BALDWIN CITY

Desperately searching for financial support, the KEAME promised to name the town after the man who donated the most money. Bishop Baker interested John Baldwin, a wealthy Methodist from Berea, Ohio, in the prospects in Kansas. Though Baldwin made his fortune in mills, woolen

[134]Ibid., 281-86.

[135]See V. Markam, *John Baldwin,* 6-7.

[136]James Shaw, *Early Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Kansas* (Haskell Printing Co., 1886), 54.

[137]Amelia Betts, "The Old Castle Boasts a Rich History," *Baldwin City Centennial Edition* (October 1970): n.p.

[138]Mary Still Adams, "Baker University: It's Origin," handwritten document, pp. 2-3. Baker University Archives, Baldwin City, Kansas.

factories, and grindstones, his main interest was religious education. In the late 1820s he and his wife started a self-help school, The Lyceum Village, in Berea. When the school failed in 1842, Baldwin became destitute. He later discovered limestone on his property and began to make whetstones and grindstones, inventing a process to manufacture the grindstones by machines.[139]

Baldwin corresponded with the KEAME in late 1857 about the availability of water, stone, timber, roads, and coal. Visiting the area in April, 1858, he decided to build a saw and grist mill near the University, promising to pay the KEAME ten thousand dollars to name the town for him. The jubilant members of the KEAME promptly named the town Baldwin City. While working on the mills, Baldwin boarded with Mary and John Still. The KEAME offered Baldwin's son, Milton, then principal of Berea's Union School, the position of department head of the preparatory department of Baker University. He arrived in town in the fall, just as the finishing touches were being made on the Baker schoolhouse. Nine days later, Milton died suddenly of typhoid fever. This so devastated his father that he lost all interest in his unfinished investments in Baldwin City, leaving the responsibility of managing the mills to the preachers.[140]

Baker University opened its doors to twenty students in November, 1858.[141] The building, visible for miles around on the treeless prairie, was a constant source of irritation to less fortunate towns nearby.[142] Mary Still, a member of the first faculty of Baker, also helped her brother, John Wesley, with the publication of *The Kansas Messager,* Baldwin City's first newspaper, dedicated to "News, Education, and Religion." Its motto, Knowledge is Power, reflected its expectations of being the first on all literary and scientific subjects, but it also felt a duty to confront "in the plainest, most pointed, and proper manner, the much too common and increasing vices of the day such as profanity, desecration of the Sabbath, and intemperance."[143] John Still continued to correspond with Baldwin, writing optimistic letters about the mill and the growth of the town, but nothing could rekindle Baldwin's interest. A drought beginning in June 1859 sent the mills through a succession of managers and then into in dire straits. John Baldwin, like many people who tried their luck in Kansas, was to look upon this enterprise as "his Kansas failure."[144]

[139]V. Markham, *John Baldwin,* 17.

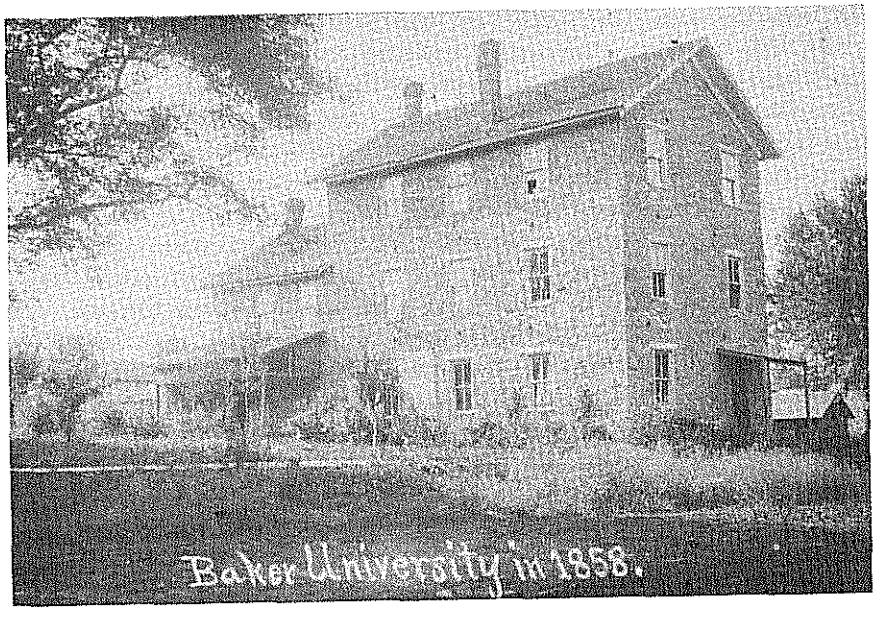
[140]Ibid., 23-27; 84-86, 89.

[141]O. Markham, "Annals of Baker," 5.

[142]Quoted by Amelia Betts, "Old Castle Boasts Rich History," n.p.

[143]The first issue of *The Kansas Messager,* published January 1, 1859, is at Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

[144]V. Markham, *John Baldwin,* 108, 139.

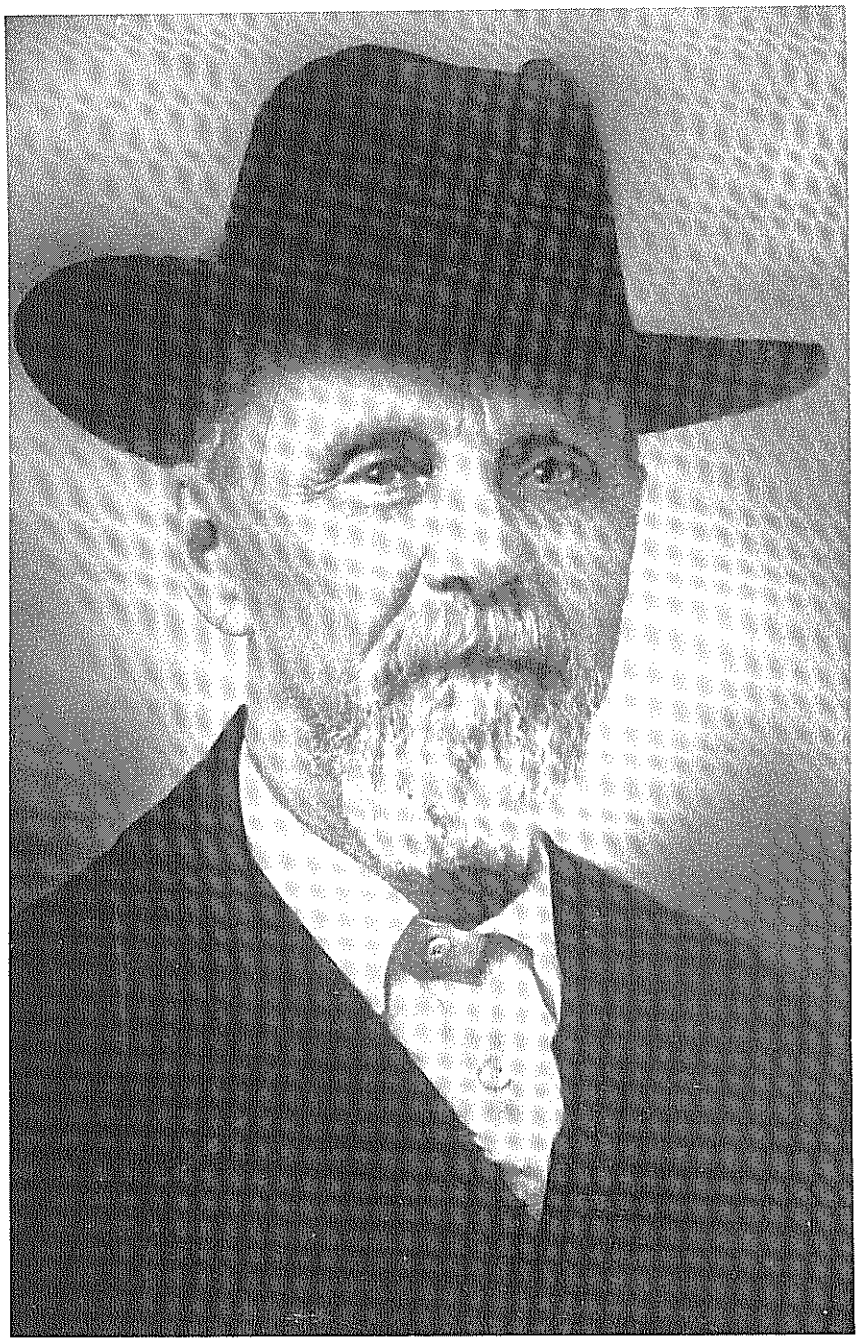


BAKER UNIVERSITY IN 1858

Local communities vied for the location of the Methodist college, but it was Andrew Still's Palmyra Town Company offer that succeeded. Because of the Methodist's strong temperance feelings, the use of the property for the manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquors was prohibited. To this day, the terms of that charter remain in force in Baldwin City, Kansas.

For six years, Andrew Taylor Still and his family participated in the most exciting moments in Kansas history. The reform atmosphere of the territory and Still's close association with the intellectual Eastern emigrants like J. B. Abbott proved crucial to his subsequent move away from his evangelical background and vital to the development of osteopathy. Moreover, a series of personal tragedies would propel Still toward a radical departure from traditional medicine and into the new direction first inspired by his friend Abbott in 1855. Andrew and Mary had lost their infant son, George W. in that year. Four years later, another baby, Lorenzo Waugh, died four days after birth, followed a month later by the death of Still's wife of ten years, Mary Vaughan. Andrew said his wife was "beautiful, kind, active, and abounded in love and good sense."[145] She left behind three children, Marusha, 10, Abraham Price, 9, and Susan, 6. Like others , Andrew would later reflect upon his Kansas experience and describe the circumstances as "trying." The circumstances were indeed trying, but the ideas he came to embrace as a result of them would liberate him.

[145]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 59.



Part Two: The Journey of Andrew Taylor Still

4

A New Beginning

It is a fearful gift, this of moral prescience, the ability to look straight into and through all traditions, usages, beliefs, conventionalities, garnitures, and ask: What is this for? What does it signify? If it were swept away what would really be lost to mankind?

Horace Greeley[1]

NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA nurtured radicals and reformers. Andrew Taylor Still, like many others, found support and answers, not within the evangelical Protestantism of their childhood, but in secular groups oriented toward a popular philosophy of natural laws and in an obsession with science and technology. The years between 1859 and 1874 were pivotal for the young doctor who, with his first wife dead, the Civil War brewing, and his own dissatisfaction with medicine intensifying, drifted in new medical and intellectual directions. A most important decision he made in 1860 was to marry again–and to marry a Yankee school teacher, Mary Elvira Turner, who had come to Kansas Territory two years earlier to visit her sister and brother-in-law, Louise and Orson Hulett.

The Huletts and Orson's brother John had left their Ohio home in 1856 in the midst of feverish western land speculation, wintering in Bonaparte, Iowa, where their first child, Charles McLeod Turner, was born. In the spring of 1857, they loaded their wagons and entered Kansas along with thousands of other emigrants.[2]

Near Edgerton, in Johnson County, Kansas, the Huletts staked a claim on excellent prairie farm land approximately twelve miles from Baldwin City. There they pitched a tent, put in their first crop with a hand planter, built fences and grass-topped shelters for the stock, and cut wood for the winter's fuel. Louise hauled most of the water from the creek nearly three-fourths of a mile away, took care of the chickens, and endured the stares of Indians, who curiously poked their heads through the flaps of the tent.

By fall a house was finished except for the roof, when a Kansas blizzard caught them unprepared. Quickly they hung Louise's new rag carpet around the only covered corner of the one room, and she and the baby huddled together while the men worked through the blinding snowstorm.

[1]Horace Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life,* (New York: J. B. Ford and Co., 1868), 501.

[2]Hulett, *Hulett-Turner Clan,* 16.

Louise may have found herself wondering how she had come to this predicament in this godforsaken cabin. Before meeting Orson, she had lived in Newfield, New York, where she had fallen in love with a young man by the name of Noble. However, because her physician father, Charles McLeod Turner, believed that the man had tuberculosis, he refused to allow Louise to marry Noble, and the lovers parted. Noble joined a wagon train for California. Louise was so heartbroken that her father urged her to visit relatives in Cleveland, Ohio. Louise and Noble corresponded for a short while until his early death. Meanwhile, securing a teaching job in the Cleveland public schools, Louise spent her spare time traveling the Ohio countryside with a cousin to visit relatives. She went to Franklin Mills, a former home of John Brown, where she met and eventually married Orson Hulett, a man whose heart was set upon moving west.[3]

Louise had left Mary Elvira, a younger sister with whom she was close, back in Newfield. After their mother, Phylancia Williams Turner, died in childbirth in 1836 when Elvira was only two years old, Dr. Turner married Marcia Ann Hulett, and four more children were born. Louise and Mary Elvira worshiped their father, a public-minded man who was well-read on all subjects, and a former member of the New York State Legislature. Although the Turners were devout Methodists, the doctor temporarily had lost faith after the death of one of his children, but in later years he returned to the church.[4]

Unfortunately, Marcia Ann was jealous of her husband's affection for Phylancia's daughters and made their childhood unhappy. Although it is not clear whether the girls received their education in nearby Ithaca or in Poughkeepsie, it is known that their father believed that girls should have the same opportunities in life as boys, and the sisters took advantage of that support. For Elvira's graduation present, her father paid her expenses to visit Louise in Kansas during the summer of 1858. When by late summer it appeared that Mary Elvira wished to remain in Kansas, their father wrote from his new location in Towanda, Pennsylvania, "If Elvira gets homesick at any time she had better come home. If however, she desires to stay, I consent, thereto." Dr. Turner assured her that she could live with him as long as she wished. Elvira, however, was settled in Kansas and began teaching school in McCamish, once a proslavery town.[5]

Because of her experience in her father's drugstore, neighbors frequently called on Elvira for medical advice. While spending the night with a lady friend in 1859, Elvira was asked to look at their two little girls who were

[3]Ibid., 7, 14-17.

[4]Charles McLeod Turner, M.D. Obituary, 1875. Unidentified newspaper clipping in personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville, Missouri.

[5]Hulett, *Hulett-Turner Clan,* 14, 19.

ill.[6] She thought the girls might have scarlet fever, and she advised the parents to call for a physician. When they asked her for a recommendation, she suggested Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, although she had only heard of him. Dr. Still was sent for, and while Elvira and her friend waited for him, they discussed Dr. Still at some length with the idea of looking over the young widower. The next morning the doctor arrived, nearly frozen from the ride and so stern that Elvira said to her friend, "If you want to set your cap for him, go ahead. He does not suit me!" However, on November 25, 1860, dressed in a navy blue iridescent dress, the Yankee school teacher, Mary Elvira Turner, did marry Dr. Andrew Taylor Still. The Hulett children now had to call her Aunt Mary instead of Aunt Elvira, for Andrew knew an Elvira he did not like. Andrew promised Louise that he would always keep help for Mary because she was too frail to stand hard work.[7]

In spite of Mary's vow never to marry a doctor, a preacher, or a widower, with Andrew Still she got a combination of all three and more.[8] The young physician was considered a "catch," despite the three children coming with the marriage. The similarities between Mary Elvira's father and this pillar of the Baldwin Community and former free-state activist were striking: both were physicians and legislators, both possessed inquiring minds and were avid readers with a wide range of interests. The Still family's contribution toward the founding of Baker University undoubtedly impressed the devout Methodist sisters.

The Turners and the Stills were westward-moving pioneers. Mary Elvira's father did not get as far west as the rest of the Turner clan, for when Charles was twelve years old, he was literally dropped off in Newfield, New York to live and study medicine with his uncle, Dr. David McAlester. The rest of the family headed west to Ohio to join Charles' father, Abraham, who had taken up a soldier's claim south of Cleveland in 1817, only to discover that the soldier had died.[9]

Perhaps only a Yankee girl from western New York could have understood or loyally supported Andrew Taylor Still, for Newfield was located within the boundaries of the most stimulating spiritual districts in America, called by some the "psychic highway" or by others the "Burned Over District." Between 1800 and 1850, the residents of this ten-county region of western New York embraced wave after wave of religious crusades,

[6]See ibid., 19.

[7]Charles E. Still, "Some of the Happenings Responsible for the School." Unpublished, undated paper in collection of A. T. Still Memorial Library, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, Kirksville, Mo., p. 4.

[8]Mary Jane Laughlin Denslow, "Reminiscences of Early Events in Osteopathic History." Unpublished, undated paper in collection of Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville, Mo.

[9]Hulett, *Hulett-Turner Clan,* 9-10.

MARY ELVIRA TURNER STILL

Mary once remarked that she would never marry a doctor, a preacher or a widower, but with Andrew she got a combination of all three–and more. (Photo courtesy Mary Jane Laughlin Denslow, Kirksville)

endorsing numerous secular "isms" that were spawned in the search for perfectionism and millennial happiness. Here was found the origin of many American movements: antislavery, anti-Masonry, Swedenborgianism, mesmerism, phrenology, and Spiritualism. It was in the Burned-Over District where Joseph Smith first saw his visions and published the Book of Mormon in Palmyra, New York in 1830, and where William Miller, founder of an adventist sect, had his roots.[10]

Newfield was located only a few miles from Ithaca, the center of Methodist abolitionism. Throughout the area, the energy of the residents during the religious revivals of the 1830s was channeled into mesmerism, phrenology in the 1840s, and spiritualism in the 1850s. By 1859, New York State had seventy-one mediums, three clustered around Ithaca.[11]

Revivals, camp meetings, and conventions–as as well as numerous periodicals published by every religious and reform group campaigning for their cause–kept the population well-informed and stimulated. The literacy rate and school attendance, women included, as well as books sold per capita, were consistently higher in this region than the rest of the state.[12] Yankee girls from western New York were almost a different breed: independent, vocal about their beliefs, active in reform groups, and well-educated. They lived in a world of intellectual excitement–continuous experimentation with ideas, both spiritual and secular–so that when Mary Elvira married Andrew Taylor Still, she brought that world with her and she did not forsake it.

Because a drought had plagued the settlers since 1858, eastern relief programs sent supplies to Kansas settlers in 1861. Louise was too proud to accept help; however, when she did write to her father asking for clothing, her step-mother sent a package containing scraps of silk and calico, a book, and some cups for the children–all she could spare at that time. By spring, as conditions worsened, Louise wrote again, her father replying that he was "alarmed with the idea that perhaps you were in that state of suffering you describe as existing all around you." He presumed all was well with his daughter because she had not written otherwise. Turner had little money, his health was failing, but rather than have them suffer, he would try to do something. He ended his letter, "I am glad to hear that Elvira is happy. Tell her to write and give her partner my respects."[13]

On January 29, 1861, after seven long years, Kansas finally achieved statehood, the issue of slavery now escalated to the national level as civil

[10]Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religions in Western New York, 1800-1850* (New York: Harper and Row, 1950), 3, 80-81, 180.

[11]Ibid., 349-50.

[12]Ibid., 94-97, 100, 10209, 350.

[13]Hulett, *Hulett-Turner Clan, 19-20.*

war became imminent. After South Carolina seceded from the Union in December of 1860, seven southern states followed in January and February to join the Confederate States of America, formally organized on February 8, 1861. With the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States on March 4, both North and South began to prepare for war. At 4:30 A.M. on April 12, South Carolina fired the first shot at Fort Sumter; three days later, President Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand volunteers.

Marovia recalled that everyone was caught up in war excitement: drums beating in every direction, men and boys enlisting in the frenzy of the moment, and groups gathering to sing the "Star Spangled Banner." All Abram Still's boys enlisted except for Thomas who, with two small children and his wife ill with tuberculosis, volunteered to look after his brothers' families while they were away.[14]

Andrew enlisted at Leavenworth, Kansas, on September 6, 1861. The Kansans were attached for a while to the Cass County Missouri Home Guards; then Still's regiment was placed in the brigade of his old friend, James Lane. Six days later, Mary gave birth to their first child, Dudley Turner, who died only a few weeks later. On the day Colonel James A. Mulligan surrendered to the Confederate general Sterling Price at Lexington, Missouri, Still's regiment left Kansas City and trailed Price's victorious army into southwest Missouri. He later recalled, "Each night we camped on the same ground on which Price had camped the night previous. . . ." Although no battles were fought, the Kansans took great delight in tearing down Price's Confederate flags and replacing them with the Stars and Stripes.[15]

En route to Springfield they were joined by many more troops, led by General John Fremont. The men began to hear rumors that General Fremont was to be relieved of his command. As they arrived in Springfield, General David Hunter did take command of Fremont's army, then divided them so that Still's regiment wintered in Harrisonville, Missouri. On April 1, 1862, his unit, the Third Battalion of the 9th Kansas, disbanded.[16]

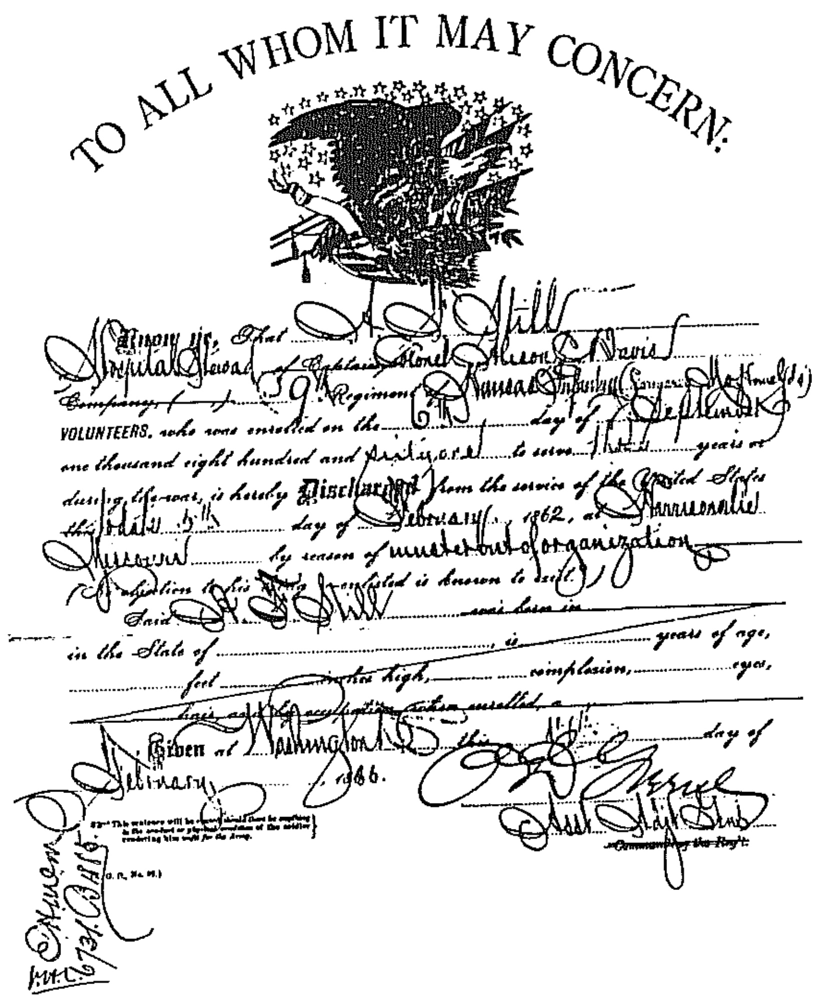
If Andrew had begun to question the existing medical theories and practices in 1855, both his experiences during the last ten years and his duties as hospital steward and surgeon[17] during the Civil War had done nothing to quiet his questions.

[14]Clark, "Reminiscences," 61.

[15]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 82.

[16]Ibid., 83.

[17]See A. T. Still Pension File, Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville, Mo. (hereafter SNOM). On December 17, 1877 Still stated: "I was a surgeon but the adjunct placed me on the roll as a Hospital Steward and was paid as such. The whole regiment will testify to the truthfulness of the statement I did the duty of a surgeon."



CERTIFICATE FROM KANSAS STATE MILITIA

Andrew Taylor Still's experiences with the medical horrors of the Civil War only reinforced his doubts about the effectiveness of medicine. He later remarked, "I began to see during the Civil War, in that part of the states of Missouri and Kansas where the doctors were shut out, the children did not die." (Photo courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

CIVIL WAR MEDICINE

During the Civil War, the soldier's biggest enemy was not battle injuries, but disease and infection. Casualty figures from the Kansas regiments reflected the national medical crisis: 1,000 Kansan men died in battle and from battle-related injuries; 2,106 men died from disease.[18] In the Union force 286 surgeons died during the war (all M.D.'s were called surgeons); 231 of those died from disease.[19] Though poor sanitation undoubtedly contributed to the spread of disease, the continued practice of heroic medicine, and particularly the use of the drug calomel, did little to strengthen the constitution of the sick soldier. When Dr. William Alex Hammond succeeded Dr. Clement Finley as Surgeon General in the Union army, he attempted to ban calomel and tartar emetic, another drug derived from mercury, from the list of approved medical supplies–and that began what was called the Calomel War.[20] Hammond's order caused an uproar in the medical profession. Outraged by the threat of having to remove from their medical bags one of the most standard drugs, which Hammond had described as toxic and useless, regular physicians perceived that the calomel ban reinforced the claims of their competitors: the homeopaths, the eclectics, and the drugless magnetic healers. Hammond lost this "war"; he was court-martialed and found guilty of ungentlemanly conduct.[21]

Hammond's order reflected an undercurrent of medical thought inherited from the Paris Clinical School and promoted in America by the physician, Henry Jacob Bigelow. As early as 1835, Bigelow had urged a return to the healing powers of nature; in an essay titled "Self-Limited Diseases," in which he claimed that regardless of the therapy, many diseases run their natural course and the patient recovers. Nevertheless, trust in nature was a minority opinion in the 1830s, and even by the 1860s, an idea not fully accepted in medical circles. When physician Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-94) took up the banner of nature in an address to the Massachusetts Medical Society in 1860–although he did not himself advocate the elimination

[18]Andreas, *History of State of Kansas*, 1:209.

[19]See Martin Kaufman, *Homeopathy in America: The Rise and Fall of a Medical Heresy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 68-69. In spite of the shortage of physicians, only regular medical doctors were allowed to serve in the Union Medical Corps. Homeopathic physicians were not admitted because the Army Medical Board feared that "all schools of quack doctors" would also demand to be admitted. George Worthing Adams, *Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War* (New York: Henry Schuman, Inc., 1952), 174-76, states that some 5,500 "contract" physicians were employed. Some medical school graduates complained that "irregulars"–homeopathic and botanic practicioners were hired as "contract" physicians. See also Otto Eisenschiml, "Medicine in the War," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 1 (May 1962): esp. p. 4; Karolevitz, *Doctors of the Old West, 36.*

[20]John S. Haller, *American Medicine in Transition, 1840-1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 86-87.

[21]Adams, *Doctors in Blue*, 39-41.

of all drug therapy–members of the society became incensed enough to vote to absolve themselves from any responsibility for his remarks.[22]

Civil War medicine provided ample ammunition for physicians like Hammond, Bigelow, and Holmes to attack the current medical thought. In addition to calomel, physicians used a number of stimulating drugs to counter the effects of what they considered to be enfeebling types of diseases. Whiskey and brandy, the only ingredients in 61.8 percent of prescriptions, topped that list. Iron compounds and quinine were also commonly prescribed.[23] However, physicians proved virtually helpless as dysentery, malaria, measles, typhoid fever, smallpox, tuberculosis, and pneumonia swept through the camps. Scenes in the hospitals were equally grim as thousands died from gangrene, tetanus, and blood poisoning. Although major hemorrhage occurred in three out of five cases, amputation of severely wounded limbs was routine. Only maggots used for infections, chloroform and ether for anesthesia, and opiates for the relief of pain seemed to have any effectiveness.[24]

Although Andrew had been placed on the roll as a hospital steward, he stated that all the men in his regiment would testify that he did the duty of a surgeon.[25] He described the surgeon's medical bag: "It contained calomel, quinine, whiskey, opium, rags, and a knife. If a patient had one foot in the grave and a half a pint of whiskey in a bottle, the doctor would work as hard to get the whiskey out of the bottle as to keep the foot from the grave."[26]

During and after the Civil War, as the hypodermic injection of morphine became popular, American opium imports grew at a staggering pace so that addiction to opium, to morphine, and to cocaine became a major social problem throughout America. It is no wonder that after returning from the Civil War, Andrew complained, "my sleep was well nigh ruined; by day and night I saw legions of men and women stagger to and fro, all over

[22]Gert Breiger, "Therapeutic Conflicts and the American Profession in the 1860's," *Bulletin History of Medicine* 41 (1967): 215-22. See also Warner, *Therapeutic Perspectives*, 27. Both Bigelow and Holmes had studies in the Paris clinics during the early 1830s.

[23]Warner, *Therapeutic Perspectives*, 98-99.

[24]Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Learning to Heal: The Development of American Medical Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 9-10.

[25]See A. T. Still Pension File, SNOM. Still enlisted September 6, 1861, with the Cass County Home Guards. This group was attached to the 9th Kansas Cavalry, Company F under James H. Lane's Brigade and disbanded April 1, 1862. Still returned to Kansas where he organized and held the rank of Captain in Company D, 18th Kansas Militia and Still was transferred to the 21st Kansas Militia in April, 1863, holding the rank of major, third in command, until after the Price Raid in October 1864. Although Still's Civil War stories seem to be later embellished, they probably do contain grains of truth.

[26]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 224.

the land, crying for freedom from habits of drugs and drinks."[27] Another observation of Still's, however, came to take on an important personal significance. He said, "I began to see during the civil war, in that part of the states of Missouri and Kansas where the doctors were shut out, the children did not die."[28]

Although only two major Civil War battles were fought on the western frontier, the increased bushwacking along the Kansas-Missouri border constituted a virtual reign of terror in Kansas. Still returned to Palmyra where he organized a company of Kansas volunteers, his duty to patrol the Santa Fe Trail east and west across Douglas County. When later that same year the 18th Kansas Militia was formed, Still served as major. Eventually, the Kansas battalions were consolidated and Still, retaining the rank of major, was transferred to the 21st Kansas Militia.[29]

Across the border their old Missouri enemies were organized under William Quantrill, a former Lawrence resident wanted in Kansas for grand larceny. During the Civil War, Quantrill repeatedly raided the Kansas border towns, while Lane answered with raids on proslavery settlements. Finally on August 20, 1863, nearly 450 men, attracted by Quantrill's promises of money and revenge, entered Kansas, some carrying lists of prospective victims and all aware their targets were the centers of abolition: Lawrence, Baldwin City, Prairie City, and Black Jack. When the raiders surprised the city of Lawrence at dawn, Quantrill was able to eat a leisurely breakfast in the lobby of the hotel while his men burned and looted homes and killed 150 unarmed Lawrence citizens. After three hours of terror, Quantrill toured the burning city in a buggy.[30] When Federal troops arrived in Lawrence at 9:00 A.M., it was too late, for Quantrill and his men were on their way to the next stop, Baldwin City, burning homes along the way. Hearing reports of the direction of Quantrill's march, Andrew immediately climbed to the top of the barn, from which vantage point he could see blazing houses in the nearby settlement of Brooklin. He grabbed his gun, mounted his horse, and hurried to the home of Dr. Leander Jones Dallas, where some two hundred men had gathered to protect Baldwin City and Black Jack. Meanwhile, Mary and young Abe hastily hid their valuables in the cornfield for safekeeping. Abe was so excited that he hid a not-so-valuable household item–the floor mop.[31] When federal troops

[27]Ibid., 91-92.

[28]A. T. Still, *Journal of Osteopathy* 3 (July 1896): 2.

[29]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 84.

[30]Albert Castel, "The Bloodiest Man in American History," *American Heritage Magazine* 2 (October 1960): 98.

[31]Hulett, *Hulett-Turner Clan*, 21-22.

joined the forces at Dr. Dallas's, Quantrill was forced to bypass his intended victims and to escape into Missouri.

In February 1864, three Still children, Abe, Susan, and an infant daughter, Marcia Ione, died during an epidemic of cerebrospinal meningitis, only fifteen-year-old Marusha surviving. Andrew was devastated, later writing that his heart was "torn and lacerated with grief."[32] Although, he said, the doctors "administered their most trustworthy remedies," the children had grown weaker. Andrew could only blame the gross ignorance of the medical profession for the deaths of his children. In his anguish he asked, "In sickness has not God left man in a world of guessing?" He answered that question himself, for surely God was not "a guessing God, but a God of truth."[33] The south window of the Still cabin, where the children had eagerly awaited the return of their father, was boarded up, the family moving to a house in Baldwin City.[34] Andrew was so upset, so utterly convinced of the inefficiency of all known drugs, that at first, he even refused to treat his neighbors' children.[35] Eventually he did give in to calls for help, but from then on he was determined to find better methods of healing. His investigations, however, were delayed by the continuing war.

By October, 1864–when military activity in the West increased as Confederate General Sterling Price, in an effort to divert Union troops from the East, marched across Missouri–the Kansas militia was called out, depleting the territory of nearly all men from the ages of sixteen to sixty. A small contingent remained to defend Lawrence as its citizens prepared for yet more destruction. The militia marched on to Kansas City, led by the Lawrence brass band.[36] Answering the call, Andrew, with the Kansas forces, was placed under the command of Major-General Samuel Curtis.

Price was pursued by Union troops from all directions. Curtis's forces, refusing to march any farther into Missouri, waited for Price at the Big Blue River, six miles southeast of Kansas City. When thirty thousand Union and Confederate troops congregated at dawn on October 23 near Westport, the battle began. Andrew Still remembered that the 21st Kansas Militia "nobly held its ground while we were bathed in fire, smoke, and blood."[37] Because of the long march and the weight of the ammunition and weapons, Still suffered a ruptured hernia and also complained of heart

[32]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 97.

[33]ibid., 98-99.

[34]H. C. Wallace, D.O., "A. T. Still in Baldwin, Kansas," *Journal of American Osteopathic Association* 33 (January 1934): 216.

[35]A. T. Still, *Osteopathy: Research and Practice* (Kirksville: By the Author, 1910), 341.

[36]Cordley, *History of Lawrence, 261.*

[37]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 85-86.

trouble.[38] As musket balls whizzed over their heads, some of the men panicked, praying instead of fighting. Still, feeling the situation called for more action, leaped from his mule and, planting his foot close behind some of the soldiers, broke the spell.[39]

Price's forces withdrew three days later, with the Union forces under Curtis following him for ninety miles into Kansas. On October 27, 1864, when Still received orders to disband the 21st Militia, he kept the news to himself in order to have a little fun. Ordering the men into line, he told them that there was a very long march ahead of them, and when the final destination was reached, there was to be a desperate battle. He asked for volunteers to step six paces to the front, adding that anyone who felt too sick would not be forced to go. After a third of the men stepped out, Still read the command to disband, telling those who had not volunteered to go to the hospital. To the rest he said, "Boys, we will go home!" Within ten minutes there was not a sick man in the regiment.[40] For the first time in ten years, now free to lead a normal life, Andrew returned home consumed with grief. His thoughts were dominated by a battle raging within.

THE STUDY OF MAN

As if the death of his children was not enough of a burden, in 1867, Andrew's father became seriously ill. On the Sunday after a camp meeting, Abram had preached at a funeral and became so sick that he could not continue. For several days as the family gathered around Abram, he tried to convert his neighbors from his deathbed, sending for people who had not yielded to his revival sermons and when they came, urged them to commit their lives to the Savior.[41] At least one man, a Mr. Minx, was converted in this way. Andrew, sitting at his father's bedside, much later recalled the deathbed scene. Abram asked his son whether he had any chance of recovery. When Andrew told him the truth, "None at all," Abram replied, "Well I have lived my life for this day." The thirty-nine year old Andrew took this opportunity to ask his father seriously, "Father, . . . what do you know of tomorrow after the body is dead?" His father said, "Andrew, my son, I hope and feel that I am in the hands of a merciful God, but I know nothing beyond. It is all a leap in the dark." The next day, the old Methodist warrior, Abram Still, died of pneumonia. Having heard variations of this idea, "It is all a leap in the dark," many times from

[38]A. T. Still Pension File, SNOM.

[39]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 86.

[40]Ibid., 89-90.

[41]Adams, *In God We Trust*, 192-93.

the lips of dying Civil War soldiers, Andrew was to continue to be haunted by his father's cryptic phrase.[42]

In his grief Andrew had decided that "instead of asking God to bless the means [medicine] being used, it were far better to search for the right means. . . ."[43] Later he said that when he attended the Kansas City School of Physicians and Surgeons immediately after the Civil War, he had become disgusted with the teachings and did not return for his diploma.[44] Indeed, other than being a formal diploma to hang on an office wall, a degree from one of the medical schools during the 1860s meant little. There were minimal entrance requirements for these mostly commercial enterprises operated by physicians, usually only the ability to pay the fee. The student was required to attend a two-year course of lectures running from November until February, the second year offering the same material as the first, with no clinical training, and because many of the students were illiterate, only brief oral examinations being required for graduation.[45] Kansas did not have a medical school until 1889. As early as 1859 Baker University had attempted to establish a branch medical school in Leavenworth, but the plan never materialized.[46]

Throughout America, however, there were other avenues for education, not only more practical, but more intellectually and spiritually stimulating. Because of his exposure to the New England reformers, particularly J.B. Abbott, Still had been introduced into a new world and onto a path leading him directly to the principles of evolution.

Since the 1850s, itinerant lecturers, well-supplied with easy-to-read and affordable literature, roamed the countryside demonstrating a science of natural law called phrenology. To illustrate human and animal progression, phrenologists arranged rows of grinning skulls and plaster casts of brains. Adorning the stages of country school houses and lecture halls with obstetrical plates, life-sized anatomical drawings, wired skeletons, and sometimes bizarre medical specimens floating in bottles of formaldehyde, they vividly portrayed

[42]A. T. Still Manuscript, "Body and Soul of Man," (ca. 1902) in personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville, Mo. Many of Still's manuscripts were published in the *Journal of Osteopathy*. Some manuscripts in Elizabeth Laughlin's collection are in Still's handwriting, others are typewritten, but show marks of editing. Wherever possible, the originals have been used rather than the edited versions, not because they differ so much in content, but because they are characteristic of Still's distinctive style.

[43]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 287.

[44]George M. Laughlin, "Asks if A. T. Still Was Ever A Doctor," *Osteopathic Physician* 15 (January 1909): 8. Though neither the existence of the Kansas City school at that time nor Still's attendance has been verified, in view of the family's respect for formal education it is possible that Still did attend some school. His brother James received a medical degree from Rush Medical College in 1864.

[45]Ludmerer, *Learning to Heal*, 11-14. See also Kaufman, *American Medical Education . . . 1765-1910*, 39-40, and Warner, *Therapeutic Perspectives*, 172.

[46]O. Markham, "Annals of Baker," 15.

what had come to be called the science of the mind. Audiences heard the phrenologists preach that their bodies were a part of the universe, governed by universal laws, and the phrenologists promised them that by following those laws, through knowledge and management, the health and minds of their audience could be improved.[47]

As an added attraction, the phrenologists offered character analyses by reading the bumps on people's skulls; through paintings or actual plaster casts of the skulls of the famous and infamous, phrenologists claimed to reveal the reasons for their successes or failures. After giving the audiences practical psychological advice for everyday living–how to choose a marriage partner, how to realize their potential, how to control their vices or strengthen their good qualities–they supplied them with charts for graphing their improvement on a daily basis. It became the vogue to be phrenologized, so that untold thousands of Americans, including Bernard Baruch and Clara Barton, pursued their careers only after the bumps on their heads were analyzed by a phrenologist. Phrenology was also popular in Great Britain, where even Queen Victoria and Prince Albert engaged the leader of the phrenological movement, the Scotsman George Combe, to read the heads of their children.[48]

Although phrenological reading of the bumps on the head was later to be relegated to the realm of a pseudo-science, phrenology's other naturalistic ideas were absorbed into the mainstream of science and culture,[49] affecting philosophy, religion, and reforms in education, criminology, literature, and medicine. Intellectuals influenced by phrenological concepts included: the French physicians Broussais, Bouillard, Andral; the physical anthropologist, Paul Broca; the philosophers Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer; the writers Balzac, Edgar Allan Poe, Charlotte Bronte, Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and George Eliot; the educator Horace Mann; the evolutionary biologist Alfred Russel Wallace; and the economist John Stuart Mill.[50] Just as significantly, phrenology was a precursor to the theory of evolution. In his introductory historical sketch in *The Origin of Species,* Charles Darwin acknowledges those who influenced him or pioneered the concept of evolution, and he gives several paragraphs of acknowledgment to *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation,* published anonymously in 1844 by the phrenological author and amateur scientist, Robert Chambers. The

[47]Roger Cooter, *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science: Phrenology and the Organization of Consent in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 197.

[48]John D. Davies, *Phrenology, Fad and Science, a 19th Century Crusade* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955; reprinted Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1971), 32-39.

[49]Ibid., 172.

[50]Owsei Temkin, "Gall and the Phrenological Movement," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 21 (May-June 1947): 275-76. Also see Cooter, *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science*, 7.

book had been condemned by critics as immoral, godless, and inaccurate, but a fascinated English public read it with a passion. Going through four editions in seven months, *Vestiges* drew attention to what was called–before Herbert Spencer coined the word 'evolution'–'the development idea.'[51] Despite the controversy, scientists, including Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace studied the book in great detail.[52]

Originated by the Austrian physician, Franz Joseph Gall, phrenology was popularized by his student and colleague, Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, the Scotsman George Combe, and Combe's physician brother, Andrew. Gall earned his medical degree in Vienna in 1785, and soon thereafter began what is considered to be the first scientific approach to the brain through the concept of cerebral localization, meaning that various parts of the brain have relatively distinct mental, behavioral, and/or physiological functions. Theories of cerebral localization dated back to the ancient Greeks, but in Gall's time such theories needed a scientific basis. To his theory of the brain's activity, Gall added elements of the popular vogue of his day, physiognomy, or the art of judging character and disposition from the features of the face or the form of the body.[53]

As a boy, Gall had observed that his fellow students who had good memories also had prominent eyeballs; subsequently, while practicing medicine in Vienna during the 1790s, Gall approached the subject seriously, eventually focusing his attention upon the external formation of the skull, looking for signs on the head that might reveal the powers of conception, memory, imagination, and judgment, as well as talents such as drawing, mechanics, poetry, mathematics, or music. As physiognomy failed to reveal all the answers, Gall turned to research of the brain, gradually concluding that particular parts of the brain functioned as organs for separate mental faculties, that the size of these distinct parts indicated their strength, and finally (his most memorable theory) that the strengths and weaknesses of the mental faculties can be diagnosed by the configuration of the skull as well as the shape of the body.[54]

Throughout the centuries, the mind had been considered as a gift of God. Separate from the brain and the environment, this feature distinguished

[51]Loren Eisley, *Darwin's Century: Evolution and the Men who Discovered It* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), 132-38. Chambers promoted the concept that organization occurs through sudden leaps, and that the effects produced by the conditions of the environment are gradual.

[52]Ibid., 132-39. For American response to *Vestiges,* see Thomas Glick, ed., *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 169, where Glick states that "even more important in conditioning Americans toward *Origins* was the furor over *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.*

[53]Temkin, "Gall and Phrenological Movement," 313-14.

[54]Ibid.

man from other animals.[55] Attempting to locate the functions of the brain, Gall sliced his dissections horizontally instead of using the standard vertical incision, thus revealing previously hidden fibrous nerves connected to various convolutions of the brain. Gall claimed that within these convolutions lay the seats of all instincts, talents, passions, intellect, and character.[56] Nowhere in the brain, however, did Gall find a convergence of all fibers to suggest what had been the object of speculation by philosopher-psychologists: the seat of the soul.[57]

He divided the brain into thirty-seven different faculties or organs, both good and bad, including Combativeness, Friendship, Self-Esteem, Secretiveness, and Hope. Although Gall's methods would not be considered scientific by today's standards, his contribution is significant in that he took ideas of the functions of the brain out of the realm of philosophical speculation. Although scientists would not accept the details of this science which Gall called "cranioscopy," they could be enough convinced that the brain could be observed scientifically to undertake future experimental research on the brain and the nervous system.[58]

Moreover, Gall's concepts were pre-evolutionary. Maintaining that there was a master plan for man and animals, both obeying the same universal biological laws, Gall spoke of self-regulating, "predestined mechanisms" created by God to insure harmony between their needs and their abilities.[59] Through comparative anatomy, Gall analyzed the brains of men and animals, claiming that the two shared many of the fundamental faculties, thereby placing man firmly in nature, as an object for biological study.[60]

When in 1802 Gall's ideas were considered heretical by the Church, the Austrian government was pressured to ban his further lecturing. Gall and a recent convert, former theological student Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, left Austria to tour Germany and the Low Countries, where their ideas

[55]Robert M. Young, *Mind, Brain and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century, Cerebral Localization from Gall to Ferrier* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 3.

[56]Temkin, "Gall and Phrenological Movement," 279.

[57]Edwin G. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology,* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950), 51.

[58]Ackerknecht, *Short History of Medicine,* 153-54.

[59]Temkin, "Gall and Phrenological Movement," 313-14. Also Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science,* 257, commenting on the decline of phrenology's popularity, quotes J. M. Robertson, the historian of free thought, Member of Parliament, and vice president of the British Phrenological Society, who had ". . . no hesitation in saying that the process was practically an economic one, that is to say, phrenology was gradually cold-shouldered by the scientific classes, especially the medical, when it was found that it did not 'pay,' and that to profess it was to be clerically ostracized . . . in France, as in Britain, the main cause of the decline of phrenology was clearly the religio-economic pressure"; i.e. religious criticism that phrenology led to materialism.

[60]Young, *Mind, Brain, and Adaptation,* 4.

were well-received in medical circles.[61] By then internationally famous, Gall and Spurzheim settled in Paris in 1807, where, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, open scientific inquiry was encouraged. Gall's method of comparative anatomy received a warmer welcome in Paris, where naturalists Georges Cuvier and Jean Baptiste Lamarck were making major contributions in that field. Gall and Spurzheim collaborated on *Anatomie et physiologic du systeme nerveus,* and published it in four volumes between 1810 and 1819. The highly acclaimed first volume, which dealt primarily with the spinal cord, cerebellum, and the five senses, was hardly radical; the later volumes elaborated on Gall's more controversial theories of craniology.[62] Whatever the final consensus about Gall's "craniology," the fact remains that his concepts stimulated research which later led to important scientific progress. Although Gall had concerned himself only with the question of what the functions of the brain are,[63] later French scientists were to pick up where he left off, leading the search for *how* the brain functions. Prominent French clinicians, Broussais, Bouillard, and Andral, for example, had definite leanings toward phrenology.[64] Later, Paul Broca and others continued to conduct experiments directly related to Gall's theories.

While the second of the four volumes was being prepared, Spurzheim left for England to spread the doctrine. He began to publish articles on the science, which he renamed phrenology. During one of Spurzheim's lectures, a Scottish barrister, George Combe, was converted to phrenology. Thereafter, phrenology and its concepts, known mainly in scientific circles, became an instrument of reform, a science of hope, and a popular philosophy and psychology appealing not only to intellectuals, but to the average person as well.

Gall's concept that man's basic nature is inborn is inherently fatalistic. He did believe the brain could be strengthened by use and weakened by disuse, and held that phrenologic education could be a positive factor in molding people's behavior.[65] Nevertheless, except for his interest in criminology, Gall was not particularly concerned with the practical implications of his concepts; moreover, he denied that humanity was progressing toward perfection,[66] a premise on which Spurzheim parted company with his mentor. When Spurzheim, and later George Combe, incorporated the

[61]Davies, *Phrenology, Fad and Science,* 7.

[62]Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology,* 53.

[63]Young, *Mind, Brain, and Adaptation,* 4.

[64]Temkin, "Gall and Phrenological Movement," 275; also, Erwin H. Ackernknecht, "Broussais, or a Forgotten Medical Revolution," *Bulletin of History of Medicine* 27 no. 4 (1953): 329.

[65]Ibid., 287-88.

[66]Ibid., 303.

doctrine of perfectionism into phrenology, new vistas were opened. Spurzheim and Combe realized that the practical implications of Gall's theories promised to explain human nature thereby offering solutions to crime, insanity, and personality problems. Moreover, because they realized the potentiality to manipulate and control human behavior, Spurzheim and Combe argued that this knowledge should be used to benefit the common person's mental and physical health and for reforming certain institutions of society out of harmony with organic laws.[67] Gall died in 1828, and in that year George Combe published *Essay on the Constitution of Man and its Relations to External Objects,* outlining the naturalistic philosophy of phrenology, with its chief message that human beings are objects of science and that humankind can be improved by spreading scientific knowledge.[68] Combe wrote:

> . . . the Creator has bestowed on him bones, muscles, and nerves, constructed on the most perfect principles, which enable him to preserve his equilibrium, and adapt his movements to gravitation. . . .[69]

Continuing this theme, Combe stated that man is subject to three organic laws:

> The first law that must be obeyed is to render an organized being perfect in its kind, is, that the germ, from which it springs, shall be complete in all its parts, and sound in its whole constitution. The second law is that he must be supplied with food, light, air, and every physical element requisite for its support . . . and of the kind best suited to its particular constitution. The third law . . . that man shall duly exercise his organs a prerequisite of health.[70]

By 1838, with seventy thousand copies of the *Constitution of Man* sold, phrenology became a popular psychology, and with the writings of George Combe's brother, Andrew, an Edinburgh physician, it also became a popular health movement. Andrew Combe's, *The Principles of Physiology Applied to the Preservation of Health and to the Improvement of Physical and Mental Education* (1841), followed the tradition of John Wesley by disseminating current medical knowledge to the common man. He cites the research on the nervous system by Bell, Mayo, and Magendie, promoting the practical applications in physical education, exercise, education, ventilation, cleanliness, proper clothing, stable temperatures in schools, and he warned that brain

[67]Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science,* 6.

[68]Temkin, "Gall and Phrenological Movement," 310.

[69]George Combe, *The Constitution of Man, Considered in Relation to External Objects,* 17th American ed., rev. and enlarged (Boston: Benjamin B. Mussey, 1848), 45.

[70]Ibid., 46.

injury could result from overstudying.[71] Through the efforts of Spurzheim and the Combe brothers, phrenological publications and societies sprang up all over Great Britain, even spreading to the United States through American physicians who attended phrenological lectures while in Europe acquiring additional medical education.

Spurzheim visited America in 1832 where he died. George Combe came to America and after an immensely successful tour in 1838, phrenology's popularity surged as societies were formed, and amateur scientists collected skulls for their own studies. Nevertheless, until the appearance of the commercial enterprise of Fowler and Wells, this new science was a pursuit only for intellectuals. Orson Squire Fowler, his brother, Lorenzo, and a brother-in-law, Samuel R. Wells, trained lecturers and established a publishing house that became the largest mail order house in New York City. By the 1850s Fowler and Wells's educated itinerant phrenologists fanned over the countryside, reading heads for a price, promising self-knowledge and self-control, and promoting all the reforms advocated by Combe's phrenology. Urging an end to corporal punishment in schools, regular gymnastic classes, and a progressive education that denounced learning by memorization, phrenologists also emphasized the significance of the mother's role in early childhood development. Believing that the areas of the brain which controlled moral behavior were improvable, they pushed for the reform of criminals rather than punishment. Since the brain was an organ of the mind, insanity was caused by disease in one or more of the faculties. Thus, they proposed institutions free of chains for the insane where the mentally diseased would be given a chance to develop to their full potential.[72]

Phrenology has been described by Roger Cooter as a "Methodist science," for in many ways the clientele and the ideas of the two movements overlapped. The Methodist belief in the possibility of a move toward perfection on this earth became in phrenology the belief in the improvement of mental faculties. The outward signs of salvation and phrenologic improvement were the same–good works and improved behavior were to be rewarded by an accumulation of wealth. "Increasingly," Cooter remarks, "phrenology, like Methodism, became the religion of finding social security in oneself."[73]

[71]See Andrew Combe, M.D., *The Principles of Physiology Applied to the Preservation of Health and to the Improvement of Physical and Mental Education* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan, Stewart, and Co., 1848).

[72]See Davies, *Phrenology, Fad and Science,* 30, 32-35, 91-97. George E. Combe, Scottish lawyer, was born in 1788. As a child he suffered from illness and was overwhelmed by the Calvinist strict doctrine of predestination. In 1815 he converted to phrenology. See Temkin, "Gall and Phrenological Movement," 309.

[73]Cooter, *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science,* 194-95.

When, on the other hand, no church was necessary, scientific materialism became a growing threat to Church authority.[74]

Itinerant phrenologists undoubtedly made their appearance in local Kansas schoolhouses and lecture halls during the early days of settlement. In addition, since many mechanic's institutes in England offered phrenology as a standard subject in their curriculums until the 1850s, it is likely that American mechanic's institutes followed that pattern. During the winter of 1856, a mechanic's institute was among the first businesses to be established in Lawrence.[75] The New Englanders coming to Kansas brought more in their baggage of ideas than abolitionism. John Brown, Jr., who operated an underground railroad near Palmyra during the spring of 1856, was a practicing phrenologist, trained by the firm of Fowler and Wells before coming to Kansas.[76] Major Abbott had been phrenologized by a Frederick Bly. That and Abbott's hobby of collecting specimens of nature suggests more than a passing acquaintance with phrenology.[77] It is interesting to note that the Vegetarian City Abram Still had visited had been vigorously promoted by the firm of Fowler and Wells.[78]

Still said that he first began to think about new methods of healing after his 1855 conversation with Abbott, but by the time Still began to study the subject seriously, the phrenologic movement was partially diluted and somewhat overshadowed by the appearance of another Austrian idea, mesmerism, popularly known as magnetic healing. Mesmerism originated with the Austrian physician, Franz Anton Mesmer, while he was investigating the healing properties of the magnet in 1772. His ideas operated on the assumption that there was an invisible fluid flowing through the body, called animal magnetism, which when equally balanced in the body meant health, but when maldistributed, meant disease as vital organs were deprived of the fluid. Attempting to restore the equilibrium of the fluid through "mesmeric passes" or by rubbing and, if necessary, with will power and concentration supplanting a patient's deficiency of animal magnetism with that of his own; Mesmer's techniques closely resembled the art of exorcism, yet he claimed no supernatural aid.[79] After some apparent cures, Mesmer

[74]See Paul A. Carter, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), 4-5, 14.

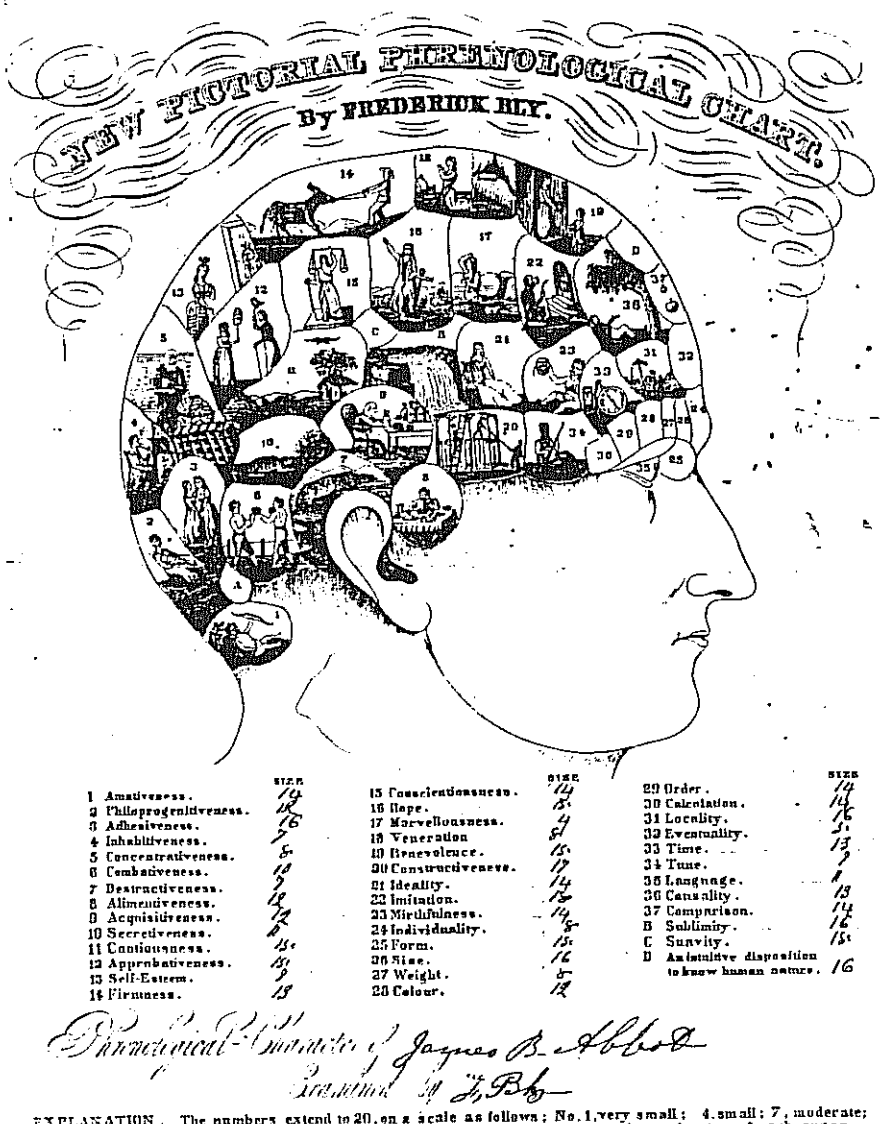
[75]Dick, *Sod House Frontier,* 67.

[76]Otto J. Scott, *The Secret Six: John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement* (New York: Times Books, 1979), 21.

[77]See Abbott's phrenological chart. Abbot papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

[78]Madeleine B. Stern, *Heads and Headlines: The Phrenological Fowlers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 173.

[79]Robert C. Fuller, *Mesmerism and the American Cure of Souls* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 2-4.



J. B. ABBOTT'S PHRENOLOGICAL CHART
(Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka)

became quite popular. Then he was officially discredited by several government commissions and he moved to France, where, like Gall and Spurzheim who were to follow later, he found the scientific climate more favorable. Although many French scientists scoffed at his theory, Mesmer nevertheless attracted many devoted followers[80] who continued to teach and expand upon his ideas after his death. One in particular, the Marquis de Puységur, specializing on Mesmer's techniques of will power and concentration–later known as hypnotism–found that when "magnetizing" or "mesmerizing" some of his patients, the mysterious talents of clairvoyance, telepathy, and precognition surfaced.[81]

When mesmerism was introduced into American society in 1836 by the French lecturer Charles Poyen, American intellectuals were electrified. The entire faculty of Rhode Island's Brown University agreed that mesmerism was a more important science than phrenology. When Poyen returned to Europe in 1839, his place on the lecture circuit was taken by a phrenologist and former student of Spurzheim, Robert Collyer, who began to combine phrenology and mesmerism, as did the hundreds of magnetizers who followed him. Thereafter, the philosophy of phrenology, the concepts of mesmerism, and the elements of electricity were combined so that magnetic healers spoke of Beauty, Harmony, and Order and inserted the power of suggestion into their therapy, stimulating the development of hypnosis, and incorporating the latest discoveries in electricity into their philosophy. The magnetic healer John Dods called mesmerism the philosophy of electrical psychology, claimed that "God is electrically and magnetically connected with His universe," theorized that the only cause for disease was an imbalance in the electricity of the human body, and that the mind, in the mesmeric state, had the power to deliver electricity to magnetize and heal itself.[82] Earlier, during the mid-1700s, John Wesley, who believed that scientific medicine could use natural forces to effect a cure, had been wildly enthusiastic about the healing properties of electricity and claimed it was the closest thing to a panacea.[83]

Inevitably, many in the phrenologic movement welcomed mesmerism as a logical extension of their philosophy. Although the themes of self-control and perfectionism offered some hope for this life, other questions were begging to be answered. Perfection for what? Is there a life after death? Is there a soul, and where, if not in the brain, was it located? Many were searching and spiritually hungering for scientific evidence to support the

[80]Madge E. Pickard and R. Carlyle Boley, *Midwest Pioneer: His Ills, Cures and Doctors* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1946), 226.

[81]Fuller, *Mesmerism*, 10.

[82]Ibid., 87-89.

[83]Holifield, *Health and Medicine in the Methodist Tradition*, 31.

existence of the human soul. As European laboratory research on the brain and the spinal cord continued throughout the nineteenth century, some even seriously argued for the existence of a "spinal soul."[84] Perhaps the mind, in the mesmeric state, could reveal what laboratory research had yet to discover: the seat of the soul.

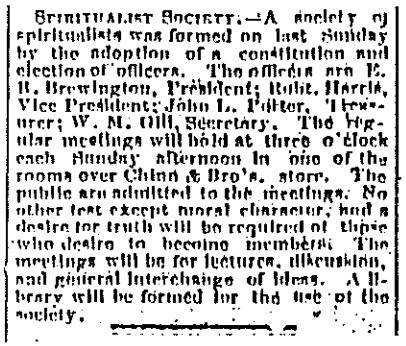
SPIRITUALISM

By the middle of the nineteenth century, scientific materialism, phrenology and mesmerism (promoted as sciences), and the search for the soul melded with the more spiritual pursuits of Swedenborgianism and transcendentalism into a popular American movement called Spiritualism, where many found the soul they had been searching for. From the basic tenets of the soul's after-life existence and the possibility of communication with spirits, intellectual followers developed Spiritualism into an eclectic quasi-religion, which many saw as a threat to organized Christianity. The spiritualist philosophy borrowed from transcendentalism a reverence for nature, the divinity of the human being, and the intuitive powers of the mind to grasp truths unaided by outside sources. From the Swedish scientist and mystic, Emmanuel Swedenborg, spiritualists blatantly plagiarized a version of an after-life in which there was neither suffering in Hell, nor judgment in Heaven, but instead a period of growth and development in a journey through the hierarchical spheres of the spirit world.[85] The mesmeric trance, and the naturalistic, evolutionary, and reform-oriented philosophy and rhetoric of phrenology merged into the guise of Spiritualism which Andrew Taylor Still would embrace.

Within a period of five years, Still had suffered a series of severe emotional blows, losing his wife, three children, and his father. He began to question not only medical science, but also the traditional concept of God, so that sometime around 1867 he turned his mind to Spiritualism. Just when this happened is not known, but he probably followed the pattern of most converts who, in their grief over the loss of loved ones, attended seances in a desperate effort to reestablish communication. Whatever his reasons, for turning to the spiritualist philosophy, it was to hold a prominent and lasting place in his thinking.

[84]Francis Schiller, "Spinal Irritation and Osteopathy," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 45 (1971): 251.

[85]Robert Laurence Moore, *In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 9-10. See also: "Robert S. Ellwood, Jr.," "American Theosophicap Synthesis," in *The Occult in America: New Historical Perspectives*, ed. Howard Kerr and Charles Crow, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 126.



SPIRITUALIST SOCIETY.—A society of spiritualists was formed on last Sunday by the adoption of a constitution and election of officers. The officers are E. B. Brewington, President; Robt. Harris, Vice President; John L. Potter, Treasurer; W. M. Gill, Secretary. The regular meetings will hold at three o'clock each Sunday afternoon in one of the rooms over China & Bro's. store. The public are admitted to the meetings. No other test except moral character, and a desire for truth will be required of those who desire to become members. The meetings will be for lectures, discussion, and general interchange of ideas. A library will be formed for the use of the society.

THE ROCHESTER RAPPINGS

American Spiritualism dated from 1848 with the phenomena known as the Rochester Rappings. In a small cottage in Hydesville, New York, only fifty miles from Mary Elvira's home in Newfield, unexplained rappings had plagued the Fox family for over a month. Finally, the Fox sisters, Katie and Margaretta, ages 12 and 15, claimed that a spirit was attempting to communicate with them. They devised a code of knocks, and the spirit, answering in yes or no raps, revealed that he was a peddler who had been murdered and buried in the cellar of the Fox home by a former resident.[86]

Represented by a booking agent, in November 1849, the sisters began holding seances for audiences who crowded into the most expensive hall in Rochester. Thrust into the limelight by favorable reviews in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune,* they became the toasts of the spiritualist movement. Within a year, hundreds of trance-ready mediums made seance sessions available to anyone who wished to communicate with the spirit world. Universalist and Swedenborgian preachers, already steeped in trance technique and a belief in spirit communication, immediately embraced Spiritualism and were joined by many reformers and scientists who shared at least a desire to investigate the claims.[87]

To many, the religion and philosophy of Spiritualism was an attractive attempt to forge new bonds between religion, the soul, and science, becoming enormously popular from 1848 through the late 1870s. Although the number of spiritualists was estimated at under one million, interest was so high that Protestant churches urged their congregations to ignore the temptation to attend seances. One alarmed member of the Catholic Church hysterically estimated the number of spiritualists at 11 million. The Catholic Church eventually banned its members' participation in spiritualist activities. Some feared Spiritualism might become the dominant American religion. Many of America's leading intellectuals flirted with or were inclined toward Spiritualism, including Harriet Beecher Stowe, Horace Greeley, William

[86]Cross, *Burned-Over District,* 345.

[87]Moore, *In Search of White Crows,* 26-29.

Lloyd Garrison, James Fenimore Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant.[88] When Spiritualism spread to Europe during the 1850s, among those attracted to the movement were Alfred Russel Wallace (the co-discoverer with Darwin of natural selection), Augustus De Morgan, (co-founder of symbolic logic and modern algebra), and Sir William Crookes, (the pioneer experimental physicist).[89]

Prominent citizens attended seances, apparently an observable and verifiable phenomena, where mediums developed techniques of communication a step above the primitive telegraphic rappings. Some chose to communicate in writing, others used body levitation to get their subject's attention, and some seance rooms swayed with the music of spirit concerts given for those with a more musical inclination.[90] Spiritualists claimed that seances scientifically demonstrated the continuity of life after the change called death.[91] Although much of Spiritualism's popularity was due to the sensation caused by the seances, some found equally attractive the ideological side, which encouraged the search of truth for truth's sake. Urging its followers to comprehend and obey Universal Law so that they could be in tune with the Infinite, Spiritualism, much like Methodism, taught the development of the spiritual side of man through inspiration, concentration, good works, and a pure, unselfish life.

The spiritualist philosophy favored beliefs in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, immortality of the soul, spiritual intercourse, the ministry of angels, eternal progression, and happiness for all; it rejected the traditional Christian beliefs of the Trinity, the divine inspiration of the Bible, the atonement, baptism, Sabbath observance, resurrection of the dead, and–as if this were not enough–the concepts of heaven and hell.[92] The clergy of organized religions represented a constant danger to those who professed a belief in Spiritualism, making spiritualists the victims of pulpit lectures, throwing them out of their churches, or at the very least, considering them to be in danger of losing their souls.[93]

[88]Ibid., 3-4, 14, 27-29. See also: Howard Kerr, *Mediums, and Spirit Rappers, and Roaring Radicals: Spiritualism in American Literature, 1850-1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 3-10.

[89]Carter, *Spiritual Crisis,* 99-100.

[90]Ernest Isaacs, "The Fox Sisters and American Spiritualism," in Kerr and Crow, eds., *The Occult in America, 76-106.*

[91]Paul McArthur, *Textbook Ritual, Valuable Data, and Selected Poems for Public Workers in the Organized Movement of Spiritualism* (N.p.: Progressive Spiritualist Association of Missouri, May 3, 1908), 6. Copy in collection of Missouri Historical Society, Columbia, Mo.

[92]Eugene Crowell, M.D., "The Religion of Spiritualism," (Boston: Colby-Rich Publishers, 1878), 7-8.

[93]See John Bakewell, *The Christian Duty in Regard to Spiritualism, A Sermon,* (Topeka: Commonwealth Steam Book Presses, 1875), 12. A copy is in the collection of University of Kansas Archives, Lawrence, Kan. Also see Jon Butler, "The Dark Ages of American Occultism, 1760-1848," in Kerr and Crow, eds., *The Occult in America,* 172.

Spiritualist groups and circles were organized all over America, their formal constitutions reflecting a broad and independent philosophy which promoted "the universal law, the all pervading spirit, omnipotent, immutable, and initiate which we call God, ruling the processes of all existing things to exist themselves for good."[94] As New England emigrants arrived in Kansas during the mid-1850s, Spiritualism was at the height of its popularity in the East. Adherents of Swedenborg's theories were active in Lawrence, Kansas, as early as 1858.[95] In 1877, thirteen Wisconsin emigrants organized a spiritualist society in Ottawa County, Kansas; in a few years the membership totaled ninety-two.[96] Though Kansas spiritualists had organized into a state association by the early 1870s, the national spiritualist movement had split between the conservatives and the radicals who, led by Victoria Woodhull, had created embarrassing scandals by their advocacy of free love. The state spiritualist convention held in Leavenworth, Kansas, on October 10, 1873, passed resolutions which reflected the concerns of spiritualists under fire, proclaiming spiritualists everywhere should protect each other in the "exercise of just rights." They opposed the "Union of Church and State as proposed by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Evangelical Alliance by the introduction of God and the Bible into the constitution of the United States." On the other hand, the Kansans, wishing to disassociate themselves from the radical spiritualists, made it a point to endorse monogamy heartily.[97]

At times Still left little messages in his books, as if he knew that someday someone might read them after he was gone. In one book, *Religious Denominations of the World* (1872), he wrote on the pages explaining the religion of Spiritualism: "My good wife is an honest Methodist woman, and has torn out pages [5]47, [5]48, [5]49, [5]50, as she was satisfied they were a bill of slanderous lies."[98] These missing pages, including a segment on Spiritualism's involvement with free love, provide a new insight into the character of this woman who patiently stood by her husband. Although Mary Elvira may not have accepted Spiritualism as her religion, she was

[94]James C. Malin, *A Concern for Humanity: Notes on Reform 1872-1912* (Ann Arbor: By the Author, 1964), 6, quoting from the constitution of the Spiritualist Association of Linn County, Kansas, 1868.

[95]Ibid., 64.

[96]"Ottawa Co. Historical Society March Meeting," *Minneapolis Messenger,* March 4, 1966.

[97]Malin, *Notes on Reform,* 62.

[98]See Vincent Milner, *Religious Denominations of the World* (Galesburg, Ill.: Bradley, Garretson and Co., 1872), 546-51. Dr. Still's copy is in the Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville. His note is on p. 546, preceding the missing pages.

willing to share with her husband the heat and ostracism associated with those who dared to practice Spiritualism openly.

During the 1870s and 1880s, some of the most respected and influential Kansans–former free-state leaders and colleagues of Andrew Taylor Still–were openly defending Spiritualism. Charles Robinson, the former free-state leader and governor of Kansas, chaired a joint camp meeting of Liberals and Spiritualists in Lawrence in 1879. In 1883, Samuel N. Wood, a leader in the Branson rescue, lectured on Spiritualism, saying:

> I find many who imagine that Spiritualism is contrary to Christianity, but the more its philosophy and phenomena are understood, the more perfectly we find it in harmony with the teachings of Jesus. We read of the marvelous results that followed the preaching of the Gospel in the days of the apostles and wonder why such results do not follow the preaching of the Gospel now. John Wesley said it was "because the churches were deader than the other sinners. A better reason perhaps would be, that a gospel is preached today with no spirit, or Spiritualism in it.[99]

Wood chose examples from the Bible–Abraham, Moses and the appearance of Samuel to the woman of Endor–to prove that spirit communication was indeed deeply embedded in Christian tradition. To a question about why these gifts of communication had ceased, Wood's reply quoted Wesley as saying that not only were "faith and holiness . . . lost, but that dry and formal orthodox men began . . . to ridicule whatsoever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposture." To a prominent minister who declared that he wished to be spoken to directly without the intervention of a medium, Wood retorted that if everyone insisted upon this form of communication, then "we will be compelled to reject the Bible as inspiration, as it all came through mediumship."[100]

Still's brother-in-law, Orson Hulett, was a Universalist–a movement that believed in free inquiry, practical reforms, a perfected society. Universalist members and clergy were early advocates of Spiritualism. Although Orson's aunt and uncle left the church during the 1850s to become spiritualists,[101] there is no proof that Orson was a spiritualist. However, he and Still must have talked over the movement at some length, for after Orson's death, when the Hulett children inquired about their father's religion, only "Uncle Doctor" could tell them that Orson was a Universalist.[102]

[99]S. N. Wood, "Modern Spiritualism," *The Commonwealth,* (Topeka), Sunday Morning, April 22, 1883.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Hulett, *Hulett-Turner Clan,* 7.

[102]Ibid., 78.

Still could also have also become interested in Spiritualism during the Civil War since the Army Military Board, which heard petitions from a number of medical sects who wished to serve in the Medical Corps, groaned about one spiritualist petitioner in particular who suggested that since there were so many spiritualists in the army, there ought to be a medical corps of "mediums."[103]

Nevertheless, the one man whose influence might most have propelled Still toward his investigation into Spiritualism was his close friend, Major J.B. Abbott. After Abbott died in 1897, his wife became closely associated with a female medium in Kansas City, who, she claimed, enabled her to communicate with the Major through a trumpet. Mrs. Abbott caused a stir among relatives and friends, for in her will she left her possessions to the medium.[104] In a biographical sketch of Major Abbott, L. F. Green stopped short of characterizing Abbott as a spiritualist, but the implication is clear: "Major Abbott never seemed absolutely certain just how the world was to be saved. He was not self-asserting in his views of the great question of man's existence here and hereafter. He was always unloading the useless lumber of ritual and creed when it no longer served the present. He would follow the truth as he saw it." Because Abbott did not attend any one particular church, his religion was described as "The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man"–the telltale creed of all spiritualists.[105]

It is little wonder that Still left his medical diploma behind to seek a more valuable education in the fermenting world of the Kansas frontier, where spiritualist meetings featured lectures on such alternatives to healing as homeopathy, hydropathy, hygiene, and mesmerism, while spiritualist books provided literature on all forms of free thought, palmistry, religion, physiology, and medicine.[106]

In this practical world, mesmerists were experimenting with hypnosis, and were applying the principles of magnetism and electricity to healing. A synthetic effort to combine magnetic healing and phrenology was led by an American eclectic physician, Joseph Rodes Buchanan, who carried

[103]Kaufman, *Homeopathy in America,* 69.

[104]J. B. Abbott Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka. See the typed transcription relating the last few years of Mrs. Abbot's life, her deteriorating relationship with her family and her Kansas friends, her subsequent death, and the controversy surrounding her last will and testament.

[105]L. F. Green, "James B. Abbott," *Kansas State Historical Transactions* 6 (1897-1900): 230-31.

[106]Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science,* 266. For one in search of better healing methods, neither were current medical journals of any help. Physicians were still helpless to treat the disease that had taken the lives of Still's three children. Not only was diagnosis a problem, but the therapies of bleeding, blistering, and purging were still being used in addition to whiskey, iron, and strychnine. For a horrifying case report, see "An Unusual Case: Five in the Same Family with Cerebro-spinal Meningitis," *Medical Record* 9 (1874): 60-61.

Gall's theory of brain specialization and localization of functions to the physical organs. According to Buchanan's science, called "Neurology" or "Sarcognomy," every organ of the body is directed by a separate region of the brain by means of "nervaura," or invisible electrical emanations. Moreover, every passion or emotion and every function performed in the body has a legitimate origin in some part of the nervous system.[107]

Furthermore, Buchanan advocated that each vital function is expressed on the surface so that there is an external place where it may be reached.[108] In a similar vein, Still later wrote, "The Great Creator equipped man with the native forces sufficient to run the machinery of human life safely and smoothly to a ripe old age, and he has wisely placed the means for applying and controlling them within easy reach."[109] To reach that vital function, Buchanan used a variety of therapies, including hypnosis applied to the appropriate region of the skull[110] and manipulation to conduct the nervous or cerebral fluid radiating from the brain to the organs of the body.

Phrenomagnetists kneaded and rubbed the abdomen in order to reestablish normal action. Still, however, later admonished his students to keep their hands off the abdominal organs claiming that more harm than good was done by pulling, pushing, and kneading, instead advising them to adjust the spine and the ribs.[111] However, the phrenologists and Still emphasized the importance of the blood which "carries all the material with which to build up and repair every part, and hurries off all the waste material, which it expels through the lungs and skin." As phrenologists spoke of the body as an "organism in perfect correspondence with the function, an embodiment how complicated, yet how perfect,"[112] Still later used the phrase "complicated perfection." Claiming many therapeutic effects–lengthening or shortening of vision, restoration of partial vision to the blind, cure of deafness and toothaches, the phrenomagnetists' ideas were constantly reinforced by the lastest discoveries like that in 1870 which experimentally demonstrated the electrical excitability of the brain.[113] Phrenology remained a favorite

[107]Davis, *Phrenology*, 132; Kett, *Formation of American Medical Profession*, 147.

[108]Ibid.

[109]A. T. Still, "Osteopathy and Medicine Contrasted," *Journal of Osteopathy* 2 (September 1895): 4.

[110]Davis, *Phrenology*, 132.

[111]A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy* (Kirksville, Mo.: By the Author, 1902), 146-47.

[112]O. S. and L. N. Fowler, *New Illustrated, Self Instructor in Phrenology and Physiology* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1867), 9-10. See also George Combe, Robert Cox, et al., *Moral and Intellectual Science Applied to the Elevation of Society* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1848); A. Boardman, *A Defence of Phrenology* (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1850).

[113]Young, *Mind, Brain and Adaptation*, 150.

subject at the spiritual lyceums,[114] its pre-evolutionary ideas and psychology of the mind still hauntingly attractive to those moving away from formal religion.

The *American Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated* promoted the perfectionist philosophy in terms which those familiar with Still's later writings will recognize. The tone of the the journal's philosophy was:

> God is the real Architect. He designed, planned, and furnished the materials, the wood, water, stone, lime, iron, and plants . . . which enter into each structure. . . . When He designed man, what a wonderful self-perpetuating work it was intended to be! What a framework! Look at its outlines! It is perfection.[115]

As phrenologists spoke of structure and function, the body was compared with a machine, so that it was not only natural but economically attractive for Mechanic's Institutes to offer the increasingly popular science and self-help psychology of phrenology to their students.[116]

Andrew Still, in company with most Americans of the late nineteenth century, was fascinated with technology. Lyceum speakers and a growing number of journals and books popularized scientific topics. Still later was to say that he had studied machines since 1855 and attended an interesting course of instruction in the practical operation of milling machinery,[117] spending two years under the tutelage of Boston-educated Professor Sole. Andrew's inquisitive mind led him into the creative aspect of machines, so he attempted some inventions of his own. While in the process of trying to improve the mowing machine, he was visited by a representative of the Wood Mowing Machine Company. Evidently, the representative was greatly impressed with Still's device–designed to catch and bundle the falling grain–for that next year the company introduced this device on their new model. Still did not have a patent, and said, "Wood had the benefit of my idea in dollars and cents, and I had the experience."[118]

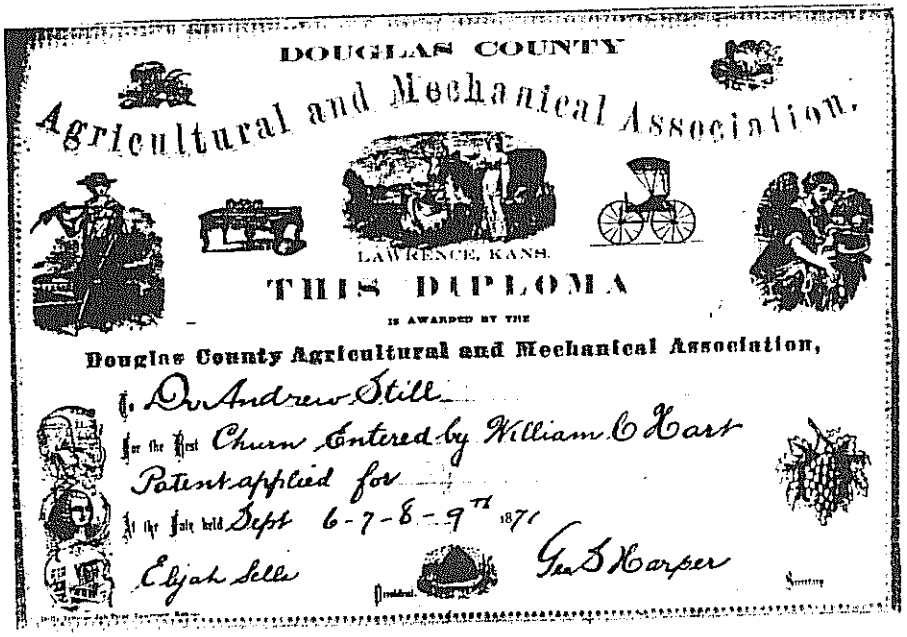
[114]Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science*, 266-67.

[115]See especially *American Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated* 49 (August 1874): 129.

[116]Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science*, 146-47.

[117]A. T. Still, "Some of the Circumstances and Personal Experiments Which Led to Treating Bodily Ills Without Drugs," (original manuscript, n.d.), Still National Ostepathic Museum, Kirksville.

[118]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 103-4. Still must have been referring to a self-binder which was used in the late 1870s. This self-binder was more efficient than the self-rake reaper. When sufficient grain for a sheaf had accumulated, a wire was drawn about the bundle, a knife cut the wire, and a mechanical foot kicked it to the ground. See Dick, *Sod House Frontier, 290.*


DOUGLAS COUNTY
Agricultural and Mechanical Association.
LAWRENCE, KANS.
THIS DIPLOMA
IS AWARDED BY THE
Douglas County Agricultural and Mechanical Association,
to Dr Andrew Still
for the best Churn Entered by William C Hart
Patent applied for
at the Fair held Sept 6-7-8-9th 1871
Elijah Sells
Geo S Harper

STILL'S AWARD FOR THE BEST BUTTER CHURN
(Courtesy Mary Jane Laughlin Denslow, Kirksville)

Still bought a farm and some livestock, including a number of dairy cattle which produced such large amounts of milk that he spent hours churning the milk into butter. While experimenting with ways to improve the arduous process, however, Still learned about the chemistry of milk, cream, casein, margarine, and butyric acid; with the use of drive wheels, pinions, and rods he devised a better way of breaking the casein shell. In 1871, Still received a certificate at the Douglas County Fair for the best butter churn. This recognition encouraged him to spend the next three years, until the summer of 1874, marketing his invention.[120]

During that year, however, something else was happening to Still. His mind was whirling as fast as his butter churn: the ideas of phrenology, mechanics, Spiritualism, mesmerism, and perfectionism were leading him in a new direction. From his knowledge of machines, it was but a short leap to its application to the human body. He wrote, "This year I began an extended study of the drive wheels, pinions, cups, arms, and shafts of human life with the forces, supplies, framework and attachment by ligaments and muscle, the nerve and blood supply, the 'how' and 'where' the motor nerves receive their power and motion, their source of supply, their work done in health, in the parts obstructed, parts and principles through which they passed to perform their duties of life." He said, "All this study of human mechanics awoke with new vigor within me."[120] Still felt irresistibly headed down some road; what road it was, he did not know.

He made frequent raids on Indian graves, where, by pulling a few rocks away, he could study the nerves and veins without cutting. Taking skeletons home for future reference, he performed "a thousand experiments" with the bones. For a year he practiced until he knew by heart the location of every bone in the human body.[121] The walls of his Baldwin home were covered with anatomical charts and diagrams. He later wrote, "I began to look at man. What did I find? I found myself in the presence of an engine–the greatest engine that man could conceive of." In the operation of the saw he discovered that when he squeezed it, the harmonious hum of the saw faded into a warbling sound. He found the same action in man, concluding that disease was merely an effect: ". . . that same machine has a wobbly saw; it has left the line; it is not tracking on the course of life as by nature given, and things are not harmonious."[122]

He read every available book on anatomy. His father had accumulated a medical library, and perhaps he borrowed books from Major Abbott's excellent library as well. Still eagerly sought the opinions of Dr. J. G.

[119]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 104-6.

[120]A. T. Still, "Circumstances and Personal Experiences," [unnumbered] p. 4.

[121]Ibid., 1.

[122]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 324-25.

Schnebly, a professor of language and literature at Baker University and later the mayor of Baldwin City, plus his neighbor, Dr. Dallas, and Abbott.[124] An important clue to the origins of the science of osteopathy Still was to formulate was his recollection of a meeting in Baldwin City with a Scottish physician, John M. Neal, an outspoken critic of current medical therapy, who told him that "drugs were bait for fools."[125] When Neal returned to Europe, he sent the works of the European biologists back to Still.[126] Just who these biologists were, Still did not say, but the biology that dominated scientific thought during the latter half of the nineteenth century and beyond was based on the theory of evolution. Still was to later say that Herbert Spencer was his favorite philosopher, and Alfred Russel Wallace, his favorite biologist,[127] both of whom were leaders of the evolutionary movement.

Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was published in the same year Still's first wife died. His studies interrupted by the Civil War, Still hinted that the practical ramifications of evolutionary ideas did not occur to him immediately. He wrote, "I found a leaf forty years ago in Kansas, and tried to read it, but could not. The handwriting was plain and the language good, but I was suffering from the mumps of ignorance. . . . I was not trained to reason beyond the ropes of stale custom"[127] In a later statement in *The Philosophy of Osteopathy,* he indicates that it may have been as early as 1863:

> For all my life previous to the day I spoke out with my conclusions of the wisdom of nature as a very wise and careful mechanic, I had been told that "God" was wise to a finish–from my birth until I was thirty-five years old–when I saw that all work done by that law of power and wisdom was absolutely perfect in all its requirements. In vegetable life no power of human can detect a flaw or even suggest an additional leaf, limb, or fruit.[128]

Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and the more controversial *The Descent of Man* (1871), created an immediate furor. Both of his books were the culmination of a broader trend toward naturalistic approaches to life, which had been circulating for centuries, most recently in the areas of geology, natural history, and theories of population, psychology, theology,

[123]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy* (Kirksville, Mo.: By the Author, 1899), 14.

[124]A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy,* 10.

[125]Wilborn J. Deason, D.O., "Dr. Still–Noncomformist, How the Old Doctor Reached his Conclusions on Osteopathy," *Osteopathic Profession* 1 (August 1934): 24. Deason refers to Dr. Neal as "John M. Neil."

[126]Ibid., 22-25, 44-46.

[127]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 191-92.

[128]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy,* 93-94.

mesmerism, and phrenology. Spurzheim and Combe's phrenology seemed to be the popular manifestation of all these movements, crossing the boundaries of individual disciplines, offering a holistic picture of life, the universe, and humankind's place in it.

Although Darwin's concept of natural selection is very important, it was the English philosopher, Herbert Spencer (also influenced by phrenologic concepts), in his synthetic attempt to integrate evolutionary thinking into all knowledge, who was to have the most impact upon American thought. Virtually ignored today, Spencer and his philosophy were the rage from 1870 until 1890, when Still was developing osteopathy. Financed largely by Americans, Spencer's books, *Principles of Psychology, First Principles, Principles of Biology, Principles of Sociology, Facts and Comments, Principles of Ethics,* and *Synthetic Philosophy,* were often first available to the public in chapter installments in E.L. Youmans' *Popular Science Monthly* magazine. Spencer's explanation of evolution was exactly what many Americans were hungering for. *First Principles* (1862) had been discovered by the late 1870s by many Americans who seized upon it as their "bible" of evolution, and in many instances, as with Still, evolution became their new religion.[129]

Coining the term 'evolution,' Spencer popularized the concepts of cause and effect, structure and function, and the holistic workings of the organism or the interrelatedness of the parts. To bring all knowledge within the framework of evolution, he incorporated perfectionism and progress, making the Darwinian concept of evolution more palatable. To facilitate that process, Spencer invented the term the 'Unknowable,'[130] claiming that the ultimate realities of science and religion could not be known. Still often used this term when he referred to God or Nature as the Unknowable, the Invisible, the ever-living Genius of the Universe.[131] Like many Americans who accepted Spencer's reconciliation of science and religion, Still, freeing himself from his evangelistic background, religiously embraced the new science. Even more popular in America than Darwin, Still, as many Americans, first tasted evolutionary philosophy in Spencer's *First Principles.*

[129]See Robert M. Young, *Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 69-69; Edwin S. Corwin, "The Impact of the Idea of Evolution on the American Political and Constitutional Tradition," in Stow Persons, ed., *Evolutionary Thought in America* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1956); Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944; reprinted New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1955) 34.

[130]David Wiltshire, *The Social and Political Thought of Herbert Spencer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 208-9.

[131]A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy,* 256-58.

FIRST PRINCIPLES

Herbert Spencer defined evolution as:

> An integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from a relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a relative, definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.[132]

Going from that complex definition, Spencer described in simple terms the constant state of tension in which the universe was evolving from the simple to the complex, using analogies everyone could understand like the evolution of the bow-string to the harp or the egg to the chick. To explain the holistic concepts of the evolutionary process he drew from his experience, as civil engineer and amateur inventor, mechanical examples, especially the interrelatedness of structure and function, the specialization of functions, cause and effect, and the mutual dependence of the parts. As inventor and machinist, Andrew Taylor Still was particularly attuned to Spencer's mechanical examples, to the ideas Spencer drew from phrenology, and Spencer's use of the latest scientific discoveries, such as those of Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell in the field of electromagnetism, as well as the most recent physiological research.

Spencer saw evolution as a natural law applied on every scale, all progressing toward perfection. His philosophy so pervaded late nineteenth-century American evolutionary thought that it comes as no surprise that Still's most treasured volume, like many other Americans, was *First Principles.*[133] In 1874, at a time when theologians were still reeling in confusion or disgust over the implications of Darwin's *The Descent of Man,* and *Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871), Still experienced a life-changing revelation. His frequent descriptions in his writings to the intensity of that moment closely match those of others first exposed to Spencerian evolution. An examination of several of these reactions to Spencer, particularly to his *First Principles,* illuminates Still's revelation, for, as Roger Cooter has observed, "not since George Combe's *Constitution of Man,* did men feel the need to feel 'so drunken with comprehension.'"[134] Theodore Dreiser said that it "quite blew me, intellectually, to bits."[135] Jack London, who had picked up a copy of Spencer's *First Principles* in an Oakland public library, in his

[132]Herbert Spencer, *First Principles,* 6th ed. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), 358-59.

[133]Deason, "Dr. Still–Nonconformist," 22.

[134]Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science,* 175.

[135]Malcolm Cowley, "Naturalism in American Literature," in Persons, ed., *Evolutionary Thought in America,* 33

semi-autobiographical novel *Martin Eden,* described Martin's profound reaction upon reading the book:

> He got into bed and opened *First Principles.* Morning found him still reading. It was impossible for him to sleep. Nor did he write that day. He lay on the bed till his body grew tired, when he tried the hard floor, reading on his back, the book held in the air above him, or changing from side to side . . . Here was the man, Spencer, organizing all knowledge for him, reducing everything to unity, elaborating ultimate realities, and presenting to his startled gaze a universe so concrete of realization that it was like the model of a ship such as sailors make and put into glass bottles . . . All the hidden things were laying their secrets bare. He was drunken with comprehension. . . .
>
> There was no caprice, no chaos. All was law. . . . What, in a way, most profoundly impressed Martin, was the correlation of knowledge –of all knowledge. All things were related to all other things from the farthermost star in the waste of space to the myriad of atoms in the grain of sand under one's foot.[136]

Many others wrote of Spencer's impact upon their thinking, including the author Hamlin Garland, the attorney Clarence Darrow, and Andrew Carnegie who said:

> I remember that light came as in a flood and all was clear. Not only had I got rid of theology and the supernatural, but I had found the truth of evolution. . . . Man was not created with an instinct for his own degradation, but from the lower he had risen to the higher forms. Nor is there any conceivable end to his march to perfection.[137]

As early as 1875, and throughout the late 1870s, the pioneer of the American school of functional or pragmatic psychology, William James, used Spencer's *Principles of Psychology* and *First Principles* as textbooks.[138] The architect Frank Lloyd Wright, a student of Louis Sullivan, said that Sullivan "venerated none except Adler [his partner], Herbert Spencer, Richard Wagner, Walt Whitman, John Edelman [also a partner], and himself."[139] For Still, and countless others, it was Spencer's philosophy–practical, functional, and understandable–that made it possible for them to incorporate the concepts of evolution into fields other than biology.

[136]Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Darwin in America: The Intellectual Response, 1865-1912* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1976), 16, 175.

[137]Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought,* 45.

[138]Edwin G. Boring, "The Influence of Evolutionary Theory on American Psychological Thought," in Persons, ed., *Evolutionary Thought in America,* 275.

[139]Cowley, "Naturalism in American Literature," 392, note.

Traditionally, little attention had been given to the importance of the structure of the human body in either health or disease. The concept of evolution, however, was intimately tied to the structure of an organism, and Still was irresistibly drawn to the study of human anatomy, particularly the bones. He knew as much about anatomy as other physicians of the day; as he progressed in his study, he surpassed most with his knowledge of the subject. Evolution was the wave of the future, and for Still it was obvious that this was the scientific blueprint medicine he was looking for, the only problem being, again, the soul. Perhaps Still, like others, turned to Spiritualism not only in a desperate attempt to reestablish communication with those he had lost, but also for intellectual solace in the face of what seemed to be a materialistic theory of evolution. It was a void felt by many, one that Spiritualism hoped to fill. Addressing the American Association of Spiritualist in 1873, Victoria Woodhull told her audience: "Led by heartless science, the world was fast declining into the blank of Atheism, but the dawning of the light of Spiritualism had driven doubt back. . . ."[140] Still found his personal comfort in the arms of Spiritualism, and the foundations of osteopathy were placed firmly on the principles of evolution, particularly those derived from the synthetic philosophy of Herbert Spencer.

As Still studied the human body as machine, he became convinced that the evangelistic teaching that God's works are perfect clashed with medicine's use of quinine and whiskey to assist nature's machine. He began to wonder how a preacher "could blend with the foolish teaching of medicine." He tried to explain to people that the brain acted like a common battery, but he was told that these secrets belonged to God. His father had been a good physician who used pills, purges, plasters, and all the drugs he had been taught were essential for the curing of diseases. Family and friends urged Still to practice medicine as he had been taught and forget his nonsense. Still reacted belligerently in the face of what he considered to be hypocritical preachers who taught temperance but drank wine at weddings, who taught that God's works were perfection but took drugs laced with calomel or alcohol. He was outspoken in his disbelief in a personal God and his distaste for all church organizations. A story in his autobiography alludes to serious confrontations with the clergy over the issue of a personal God, as well his dabbling in Spiritualism and evolutionary theories. He told a preacher that when he was "through the study of the anatomy of man, and the laws that govern animal life, he would try a few thousand years in the juvenile class of the school of the infinite." When the preacher denounced him as sacrilegious, Still answered that the "divine" law was good enough for him.[141]

[140]Carter, *Spiritual Crisis*, 99.

[141]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 203, 205, 208-9, 308-9, 392.

Still's use of the word "divine" to describe what many preachers in 1874 considered to be an atheistic idea[142] was worrisome, and his spiritualist tendencies just compounded his problems. He told his brother James, "Angels returned as of old." His brother replied, "None but the wicked return. "Why," Still asked, "when God is no respecter of persons, should only the wicked return?" Just then, Still said, there "came a shock as if I were going into a paralysis. Whether it was an angel or a devil, I know not. The language came to me as an impression, 'Will you carry our flag if we place it in your hand?'" Still continued, "then I took an obligation–Dr. A.T. Still–to stand by that flag as long as life lasted."[143]

As if he were not acting strangely enough, Still asked to present his new ideas at Baker University, but his request was rejected. Still turned to his brother to intercede on his behalf; but James, tired and embarrassed by Still's recent behavior and ideas, reminded him of the patients who had left him while he pursued his bizarre line of thought. James advised him to take care of his family first. When Andrew told him that God "blessed no such things as quinine, morphine, opium, whiskey, or fly-blisters," James said, "You are talking wild! I advise you to quit that right now. There is great danger of your being lost."[144] Still felt that he was being accused of a crime; the crime being that he declared God was wisdom and His works a success. Some people asked Still if he was afraid of losing his soul by running after this new idea, this strange teaching, this strange philosophy. Still replied, "I have no fear that following a law made by God will lead me from Him."[145]

Until 1875, Still's occupation had been recorded in the Kansas census as a physician; in that year, however, he was listed as a machinist. Perhaps at this time even Still was unsure of what he was. With a wife and four children to support, he seemed to be doing a poor job of it. Dudley, who was born just after Still had enlisted in the Civil War, had died only a few weeks later, but nine-year-old Charles Edward, seven-year-old twins, Herman Taylor and Harry Mix, and Fred, born in January 1874, added to Still's responsibilities.

[142]See Robert E. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism: 1790-1935* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965), 51. Chiles states that Methodism's reaction to evolutionary ideas varied from outraged rejection to cautious acceptance. Only after 1877 did the Methodist attitude toward evolution gradually move from opposition to skepticism and friendly support. Initially, Methodist theologians criticized Herbert Spencer's materialism. See *History of American Methodism*, 2:595. See also Hunter Dickenson Farish, *The Circuit Rider Dismounts* (Richmond, Va.: Deitz Press, 1938), 100-3, 296-97 for discussions concerning the Methodist response to science and evolution.

[143]A. T. Still "Body and Soul of Man," (original manuscript, n.d.) in personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville, Mo.

[144]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 419.

[145]A. T. Still, "Dr. Still's Lecture," *Journal of Osteopathy* 2 (May 1895): 304, 309.

In a musty basement laced with cobwebs, unbeknownst to college officials, Still gave his first lecture on his healing theories at Baker University to the one soul who would listen to him, John Wesley Reynolds, with a "slouch hat and . . . of uncouth appearance." Meanwhile, Still's situation in Baldwin City grew worse. While Mary and two of the boys sat in church, the presiding elder and former president of Baker University publicly denounced Still and his theories, describing him as an "apostate of the first water," who must either "change or land in hell."[146]

Still's questioning of medical tradition was sparked in April 1855 by a conversation with J.B. Abbott; Still's subsequent abandonment of drugs, his involvement in magnetic healing, phrenology, and Spiritualism, and especially his exposure to the European evolutionary biologists, had led him to the point of local ostracism. Abbott may have been right when he predicted that the present system of drug therapy would some day be replaced by another method of curing the sick, but in 1874 Still's ideas were very much suspect.

Still began to worry day and night, seeing visions he had never seen before. On June 22, 1874, at 10:00 A.M. he was shot, as he described it, "not in the heart, but in the dome of reason." Feeling certain that he had found the key to health and disease, knowing now that the word "God," meant perfection when previously he thought that "He was imperfection, all but a little, and that the imperfection could be filled out by drugs," and Still divorced himself from traditional medicine.[147]

Although it is not absolutely certain that Still's revelation of June 22, 1874, came as a result of reading *First Principles,* his recollections of that moment are strikingly similar to others discussed earlier:

> Twenty-two years ago today noon I was shot–not in the heart, but in the dome of reason. That dome was in a very poor condition to be penetrated by an arrow charged with the *principles of philosophy.* Since that eventful day, I have sacredly remembered and kept it. . . . Part of the time I withdrew from the presence of man to meditate upon that event, upon that day, wherein I saw by the force of reason that the word God signified perfection in all things and in all places.[148]

Again, Still wrote:

[146]A. T. Still, "Recollections of Baldwin, Kansas," *Journal of Osteopathy* 1 (January 1895): 4, 19. See also C. E. Still, D.O., "Pioneer History of Osteopathy," Speech made to the Freshman Class at Kirksville College of Osteopathy and Surgery (KCOS), *Journal of Osteopathy* (February 1929): 78. The dictionary definition of apostasy is renunciation of a religious faith, or revolt or defection.

[147]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 199, 318-19, 336.

[148]Ibid., 318, emphasis added; from Still's recollection of his June 22, 1895 address in Memorial Hall.

> Twenty-four years ago, the 22nd day of next June, at ten o'clock, I saw a small light in the horizon of truth. It was put in my hand, as I understood it, by the God of nature. That light bore on its face the inscription: "This is My medical library, surgery, and obstetrics. This is my book with all directions, instructions, doses, sizes, and quantities to be used in all cases of sickness, and birth, the beginning of man; in childhood, youth, and declining days."[149]

The year of Still's revelation, a professor of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary wrote that Darwinism was nothing less than atheism.[150] On the other hand, the theological evolutionists and other thinkers found in Spencer's philosophy that the world merely took on a new and awesome meaning, as Allan Nevins wrote, "whose beginnings were incomprehensible and whose ends were unimaginable."[151]

Another passage in Still's autobiography reveals his initial awe when he encountered the theory of evolution:

> Through all the darksome night I lay enchained by slumber's thrall, but with the first faint flushing of the dewy morn I arose and wandered forth. All nature seemed to wait in hushed expectancy. With the iron hand of will I barred the gate of memory, shut out the past with all its old ideas. My soul took on a receptive attitude, my ear was tuned to Nature's rhythmic harmony. Afar o'er billows of the briny deep I saw faint shafts of light arise, enriching with rosy tint the pallor of the dawn. I saw the red disc of the sun peep forth, then spring – full orbed and fiery – from night's embrace, and kiss the world to waking beauty. My spirit was o'erwhelmed with the unmeasurable magnitude of the Deific plan on which the universe is constructed.
>
> All this I saw, and more. I saw great stellar worlds give birth to other worlds. I saw those worlds live, grow, and die, and the offsprings thereof repeat in accordance with nature's law the same process of exhibition and retirement – just as the children of men pass through the various phases of physical life . . .
>
> With reverential eyes I saw this part of a whole [the universe], whose beginning and end we know not! –this branch of the universal life that throbs and pulses through every vein of nature and guides each atom on its way throughout the countless ages of eternity. This life

[149]Ibid., 413; Still's recollection of his address on his sixty-ninth birthday.

[150]Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Darwin in America: The Intellectual Response 1865-1912* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1976), 26-27.

[151]Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878,* vol. 8 of A History of American Life (New York: Macmillan, 1927). See 231-32, 285-89 for the influence of Spencer's philosophy in America.

is law, and Osteopathy its latest clause that teaches us its magnitude, and doth direct and guide creation's crowning work the – living man – unto his perfect, right, unchanging health.[152]

During the afternoon of August 6, 1874, the Kansas sky grew hazy, minutes later becoming so dark that the chickens went to their roosts, as swarms of whirring grasshoppers landed everywhere, devouring crops, clothes, and even plow handles. Kansans again faced starvation. Supplies from eastern Christian Aid societies arrived in Baldwin City to be distributed to the needy, deliberately bypassing, however, those who professed themselves to be spiritualists or liberalists. Andrew Taylor Still, J.G. Schnebly, the mayor of Baldwin City, and two other men, co-signed a letter written by Henry J. Durgin to the spiritualist magazine *The Banner of Light* on December 27, 1874, requesting that money, clothing, and food be sent directly to Durgin for distribution to the spiritualist and liberalist families who were in need.[153]

The grasshopper invasion was the last blow for many Kansans who packed their belongings and with signs tacked on their wagons reading "In God We Trusted, In Kansas We Busted" gave up on Kansas. Earlier, in 1863, Thomas, John, and Cassandra Still had joined a wagon train for California, and after the 1874 grasshopper devastation, Mary Still Adams and her husband followed.[154] When Andrew Still traveled to Missouri to visit his brother Edward in Macon County and described the destitution wrought by the grasshoppers, the residents of Macon and Adair counties sent a wagon full of corn, bacon, clothing, and shoes to Kansas. As Still related the story of his personal troubles in Kansas, Edward assured him that he would be welcome in Macon. The invitation was accepted, and Still left Kansas after twenty-two trying years. Although many years of study, experimentation, and ostracism lay ahead of Still, it was a new beginning.

[152]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 378-82.

[153]*The Banner of Light* (January 9, 1875): 8.

[154]See p. 72 for photographs of A. T. Still's siblings.

5

A New Science

I do not claim to be the author of this science of Osteopathy. No human hand framed its laws; I ask no greater honor than to have discovered it.

A. T. Still [1]

MARY AND THE CHILDREN remained in Kansas, and whenever possible, Still sent money, though not nearly enough to support his family. To make up the deficit, Mary sold magazine subscriptions, once winning a prize of fifty dollars of which she kept half and sent the rest to her husband.[2] Still did not tell his wife of the letter from brother James to Edward questioning Andrew's sanity. Edward's profoundly different perspective hinged on Andrew's having helped his brother conquer a morphine habit of seventy-five bottles a year.[3] Edward replied to James, "I think it would be well if some more of the Stills went crazy."[4]

THE SEARCH

Though believing that the basic principles supporting the theory of evolution promised to unlock the mysteries of health and disease, Still was now using experimental methods, searching since leaving Kansas for "living truths" on which to "anchor his boat." Having borrowed Spencer's term, the "Unknowable," Still wrote in his *Autobiography* that not only did "every stroke of God come to me as the Unknowable–death and electricity," for example, but also that his own knowledge about health and illnesses was limited.

Wanting to be one of the "knowables," Still submerged himself in study and experimentation on himself and his patients. Once while suffering with a case of flux – a frequent nineteenth-century malady characterized by high fever, headache, and dysentery mixed with blood – Still discovered that his abdomen was cold and his back hurt so much he was miserable. When he laid the small of his back across a log lying in the yard, making a few twisting motions to restore misplaced bones to their normal position,

[1]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 371.

[2]A. N. Simpson, D.O., "Dr. Charlie Still's Tribute to His Father," *Journal of Osteopathy* 27 (October 1928): 544.

[3]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 112.

[4]Blanche Still Laughlin, "Anecdotes and Incidents in the Life of Dr. Still," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 20 (February 1921): 319.

the pain left, his abdomen warmed, and his fever disappeared.[5] On the streets of Macon, observing a child suffering from the same condition, Still offered his services and the mother accepted. Placing his hand on the small of the boy's back, he found that as in his own case it was hot and the stomach was cold. Thinking there was a strain or partial dislocation of the bones of the spine or the ribs, Still began at the base of the brain, finding rigid and loose places in the muscles and ligaments all along the spine. Using a manipulative technique obviously derived from magnetic healing, he treated the child by applying pressure to move some of the hot to the cold places, and adjusting the bones to free the nerve and blood supply to the bowels. Reporting her child's condition to Still the next day, the mother told him the child was well. Still cured many cases of flux throughout the fall, all without the use of drugs,[6] but he did not yet understand just how it worked.

Back in Kansas, when tinkering with his inventions, the idea of cause and effect had profoundly influenced Still's concept of disease. He described himself as a discoverer who began to "reason from the great principle of cause and effect . . . . He thinks and dreams of cause and effect. His mind seems to forget all the words of his mother tongue except cause and effect. He talks and preaches cause and effect in so many places that his associates begin to think he is failing mentally and will soon be a subject for the asylum."[7]

As Still began to look at fevers and diseases as primarily effects, the cause being a partial or complete failure of the nerves to properly conduct the fluids of life,[8] he paid more attention to the signals, the "effects," revealed in the diseased body. Searching for abnormal conditions within the structure of bones and in the muscles of the neck which produced irritations causing contraction of the muscles and obstruction to the blood and lymph vessels; hunting for the cause or causes that produced symptoms found in diseases such as whooping cough–sensitive muscles, "sore and rigid, drawing the clavicles and sternum back onto the respiratory nerves"–, the mechanical causes of illness became obvious to him. Still's experiments demonstrated to him that the course of a disease was shortened by adjusting the patient's structure.[9]

[5]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 295-96.

[6]A. T. Still, "Some of the Circumstances and Personal Experiments Which Led to the Treating of Bodily Ills without Drugs" (original manuscript, undated), unpaginated. The manuscript was presented in 1931 by Blanche Still Laughlin to Quintus L. Drennan, past president of the Missouri Osteopathic Association, and is now in the Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville.

[7]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy,* 117-18.

[8]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 108.

[9]A. T. Still, *Osteopathy: Research and Practice,* 429, 479.

In cholera patients he noticed that the entire chest, both back and front, was very cold. In other cases he felt for areas of heat and muscle contractions, concluding that "the spasmodic contraction in these cases [tetanus] is from magnetic actions of the muscles." He used manipulation to "overcome the magnetic force that is holding the muscles together,"[10] thereby freeing the healthy flow of blood and allowing the nerves to operate normally.

Even though Still continued to treat his patients successfully with manipulation and adjustment of the vertebrae, when his reputation reached the community through the Methodist grapevine, he found himself no more welcome in Macon County, Missouri, than in Baldwin City, Kansas. As prayers were sent up that he was possessed by the devil, and the preacher gathered Edward's family to tell them that Still was a hopeless sinner, Andrew knew it was time to move again.[11]

KIRKSVILLE

Still started north and thirty miles later arrived in the town of Kirksville on December 1, 1874. Judging from newspaper reports, Kirksville was a rough town where wild dogs, pigs, and horses roamed the streets at will, and fights were so numerous that a Kirksville newspaper headline in 1875 read: "Kirksville Runs with Blood."[12] Although a temperance organization was active in the town and the sale of liquor illegal, alcohol nevertheless flowed freely. Physicians' advertisements appeared on the front pages of local newspapers, and there seemed to be a brisk business for all.

A small group of citizens, however, concerned themselves with more ethereal matters. A spiritualist circle had been organized in Adair County in the fall of 1874 by a Mrs. Mott, William M. Gill, the former editor and owner of the Kirksville newspaper *The Dollar Journal,* and several others. They claimed that spirits, including those of Joseph T. Dennis, Ira Thomas, Colonel McCullough, a Confederate soldier killed in 1862, and a man named Ivie, who was killed by a mule, manifested themselves and sometimes conversed with the group.[13] Still undoubtedly received a cordial welcome in this circle, which met each Sunday at 3:00 P.M. with plans to form a library, secure lecturers and mediums, and generally to promote benevolence and morality. The officers were E. G. Brewington, Judge John L. Porter, William Gill, and Porter's brother-in-law, Robert Harris.[14] Still's

[10]Ibid., 505.

[11]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 122-23.

[12]"Great Excitement Near Gospel Ridge, Kirksville Runs With Blood," *The Tattler* 1 (May 29, 1875): 2.

[13]*History of Adair, Putnam and Schuyler Counties, Missouri* (Chicago: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1888), 409.

[14]"Spiritualists Organization," *The Tattler,* Kirksville, Mo. Vol. 1 (June 27, 1875): 2.

first patient in Kirksville was Harris's wife, whose profuse vomiting and spells of unconsciousness had baffled the local medical doctors. Still eventually cured her of this incapacitating illness.[15] Nevertheless, many who agreed that Still was doing wonders, also suspected that his powers were derived from the devil.[16]

The philosopher-doctor Andrew Still attracted attention wherever he went, dressed in black, carrying a sack containing a complete set of human bones, which from time to time he would set on a stump or a log and proceed to piece together. On the subject of anatomy Still was perceived as being "not exactly right." His grey eyes sparkled with the intensity of one searching, still not satisfied but immensely enjoying the search. Though he talked and lectured to anyone who would listen, he seemed otherwise strangely introspective. Many, fearing that he could read their minds, stayed their distance.[17] His eccentric behavior and appearance quickly made him the target of public derision. On February 6, 1875, the Kirksville newspaper, *The Tattler,* commented on the new arrival. Although no name was mentioned, Still was obviously the subject of the article, bearing the headline "A Town for Humbugs,"

> Of all the places on earth or in the air, above or below, where mortal man ever could or ever will live, Kirksville is certainly the grandest for patronizing first-class, downright, shameless humbugs. Let a quack doctor come into town and only put out a few bill posters, and all the old tried physicians are thrown aside, and he has his pockets filled, while they are left in a worse condition than before. Ghost, and witch stories are preferred to reason, science, Bible, or anything else common sense might dictate. Now we don't believe in spirits, except in case of snake bite or in time of measles, and then a quart is amply sufficient for the entire case. But let a traveling imposter come, in the form of a lecturer, and all our own true and tried ministers, who have labored faithfully for us so long, are cast aside and we cannot do too much for the new humbug.[18]

Still had found "three or four thinking people"[19] who not only listened to him, but more importantly, encouraged him to pursue his line of thought

[15]Emmons Rutledge Booth, *History of Osteopathy and Twentieth-Century Medicine* (Cincinnati: Caxton Press, 1905): 27. Judge John L. Porter was appointed probate judge and served for several years. Though Porter read law, he never practiced as a lawyer. The title of "Judge," however, was used during the 1870s as an honorary title, for Porter was at that time a businessman.

[16]"Another Milestone Passed," *Journal of Osteopathy* 16 (December 1909): 886.

[17]Edwin C. Pickler, D.O., "Early Impressions of Dr. Still," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 20 (January 1921): 244-45.

[18]"A Town for Humbugs," *The Tattler* 1 (February 6, 1875): 2.

[19]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 124.

and study. In March 1875, Still opened an office on the south side of the square, advertising himself as a magnetic healer. His professional card appeared in the *North Missouri Register:*

> The attention of the readers of the Register is called to the card of Dr. Still, magnetic healer, who has quietly opened up an office for the healing of disease and from the success attending his profession thus far at this place he with others now associated with him expect to build an Infirmary which will be noted for its good works in the healing of the afflicted. They now occupy the two rear rooms over Chinn's store and expect to occupy the whole of the upper story thereof.[20]

Still's "associates" were Judge William Linder and Jess Conner, a relative of Still's first wife, Mary Vaughan. When the plan for the infirmary fell through, Linder soon left for the West.[21] While Still was getting established, Julia Ivie gave him free room and board in her hotel for a month, and Charlie Chinn donated the office space. Others who helped him were F. A. Grove, a medical doctor, and Robert Harris, a spiritualist, mechanic, former government gunsmith, and gold prospector, to whom Still was especially drawn.[22]

For many hours, all the time Still could spare, he and Harris philosophized about the wonderful machine called man. When Still asked his friend why people were so slow to accept a truth, Harris said, "Man naturally fears that which he does not understand." He boosted Still's morale by pointing out that "only a few men allow themselves to think out of popular ruts." They both concluded that perhaps some men "could not think till they evolute some."[23] Though comforted and encouraged by his few friends in Kirksville, Still sent for his wife and children who arrived in May 1875. Even with their support there was a period of time when Still was despondent enough to contemplate suicide. Like many others who had come to accept the truths of evolution, Still's choice had not been easy, resulting not only in ostracism but also recurring self-doubts.[24] Still recalled asking himself, "If a man can choose the road he has to travel during life, why does he

[20]*North Missouri Register* 5 (March 18, 1875): 2-3.

[21]E. R. Booth, *History of Osteopathy and Twentieth Century Medical Practice* (Cincinnati: Caxton Press, 1905), 28.

[22]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 126.

[23]Ibid., 127.

[24]Ibid., 136-37. See also Moore, *Post-Darwinian Controversies,* 111. Moore uses Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance or human response to opinion-making in a crisis situation to explain the trauma that many evolutionists experienced. Still fit into this pattern perfectly Many who were faced with the decision of choosing between two compelling yet conflicting ideas suffered from frustration and anxiety until, at least in their own minds, the issue was resolved. According to Festinger the phases of that trauma are: (1) a state of tension;

A. T. STILL, ca. 1875
(Photo courtesy Mary Jane Laughlin Denslow, Kirksville)

get into so many that he regrets having taken?" He said that he looked for friends in vain. He prayed, trusted, and cried, but "no bread or pillows of rest come." In despair, Still felt that "death was the only friend left."[25]

Mary stood steadfastly beside him saying, "I will stand by you, we'll be cussed together; maybe we can get it done cheaper." However, it took his son Charlie to bring him out of his critical depression. The ten-year-old child had found a job. As the excited boy related to his father how he had "hunted and hunted all alone until he found work," Still was touched. The few pennies Charlie would bring back to the family would help, of course, but this gesture of respect and the confidence the boy had in his father meant more to Still, giving him renewed hope in an hour that he needed it most. It was at this time that he learned the most valuable lesson of his life: that "one's brain is his only reliance," echoing Fowler and Well's phrenological motto, "Self-Made or Never Made." Mary gave birth to a daughter, Blanche, in 1876, and in September of that same year, Still, perhaps weakened by the stress of the past few years, fell ill with typhoid fever. Once again the family's very survival was precarious.[26]

A GOVERNMENT PENSION

Several attempts had been made to obtain a government pension for Andrew's Civil War service and for his injury, a ruptured hernia, received during the Battle of Westport, but because the Kansas Militia had not been officially sworn into the federal forces, pension requests had been denied. Earlier, Still's friend, Senator James H. Lane, had championed Kansans' claims in Washington until his death in 1866. No further effort was made on Still's behalf until 1878, when his brothers, Edward and James, testified that until the Price Raid, Still had been in sound physical health.[27]

Then four years later, without her husband's knowledge, Mary began her own campaign. She wrote a blistering letter to William Dudley, the Commissioner of Pensions:

> Sir. I wish to write you a few words of inquiry in relation to my husband's "pension matters," which I hope you will look into and give me your opinion. I know your time is almost wholly taken up,

(2) the person commits to one of the alternatives; (3) there follows a dissonance or a continuation of the tension because of the choice made; (4) next is dissonance reduction, where there is pressure to harmonize one's thinking. This resolution took time.

See also Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion: The Irony of it All, 1893-1919*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986-), 35. Marty writes that the theory of evolution sparked widespread trauma among thoughtful people. "To move from a static world-view" to one "of continuing creation . . . would not occur without a great shaking."

[25]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 135-36.

[26]Ibid., 113, 137-38. See also Davies, *Phrenology, Fad and Science*, 166.

[27]A. T. Still Pension File, SNOM, Kirksville.

but I trust you will not throw my letter aside without giving it your attention. I have been told that you are the right man in the right place, and this has emboldened me to write to you. About four years ago my husband applied for a pension for injuries received at the battle which took place at or near Westport, Mo. during the "Price Raid" – he was at that time Maj[or] in the 21st Kansas State Militia Vol[unteers]. They were called out by the Governor of the state. After reaching the Mo. line they were placed under the command of Maj[or] General Curtis. He called for vol. [volunteers] to go over the line into Mo., and while under him – over the line – out of his own state – fighting the battles of the Union by order of a U.S. Maj[or] Gen[eral] – he received injuries that has incapacitated him from manual labor ever since – and some of the time any kind of business. Now what I wish to know is this. Is he not entitled to a pension? We furnished good proof all through and after a year or two's time he received word that his case was laid aside or barred on account of his not being sworn into the U.S. service. About nine years ago he applied to congress to get the pay received. They put him on a bill with forty other soldiers. The act passed the committee favorable and was placed on the calendar for further action, since which time we have heard nothing from it. Now I wish to get your opinion of this matter and perhaps I had better give you a short history of the case. My husband was born in Va. but came in early life to Ks. His father was a Methodist preacher – and although born in a slave state was in those early times called an Abolitionist. When the church divided on account of slavery he remained with the old church, on account of which he was persecuted to such an extent that he removed with his family to Kansas, he was being sent as a missionary to the Shawnee Indians (this was before the "treaty"). When the "border troubles" broke out they being "free state men" suffered every persecution and indignity that could be "heaped" upon them. Their property was destroyed by fire, their lives threatened, and is it a wonder that when the "war of the rebellion" broke out they were ready heart and soul to enter into it. My husband was sworn into the U.S. Service in the summer of 1861 at Fort Leavenworth for 3 years or during the war. The battalion which he joined was attached to Col. Nugent's Mo. Cass County home guards. He was appointed "Assistant Surgeon." After about two months the orders came from St. Louis to disband the "home guards" an officer came up from St. Louis for that purpose but he was too much under the influence of liquor that he was unable to attend to his business right, and not near all the men were payed off, my husband being one of the number. After a year or two he had papers made out to get his pay. They were first burnt up at Lawrence at the time of "Quantrill's raid." Afterwards were taken to Washington by James H. Lane, U.S. Senator from Kansas, but after his death they could not be found. At the same time I was Matron of the Hospital but never received a cent, so you see "Uncle Sam" owes us quite a little sum for this service. . . .

He [Still] spent all his time and money and when the war closed he was a poorer man by far than when it commenced besides receiving injuries that has made almost a cripple of him ever since. . . . I have written you a more lengthy statement than I intended but I hope you will have patience to read it and give me your opinion and if there is anything for us, it is no more than right that we should have it. . . . Misfortune of every kind has overtaken us. We have lost several thousand dollars by fire, and long continued sickness had brought us down, so that we have nothing left. We have a large family to bring up and educate with nothing left to do it with and for this reason I have written to you this long letter. My husband is not at home, and he knows nothing of my writing this, but I could not refrain from doing so–please answer at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully
Mrs. M. E. Still[28]

Mary's impassioned appeal could not gain a settlement. Still, not totally incapacitated, was already back on the road, traveling to the Missouri towns of Clinton, Holden, Harrisonville, Rich Hill, Palmyra, and Hannibal. Leaving town with barely enough money to live on, Still lectured on his favorite subject, "Man's Lost Center," in country schoolhouses, on street corners, and in hotel lobbies, treating patients without charge in order to illustrate the points of his lecture.[29] The boys began to travel with him, they often walked all night to get home because no one would invite them into their homes.[30] His brothers and sisters in Kansas continued to shun him until one of his sisters became seriously ill and they sent for Still. He went to Kansas and treated his sister; by morning of the next day she was better. When it came time to go home, even though Still had only $1.90 to his name none of the family would extend him a loan. He concocted some hair oil and sold it from door to door until he earned enough money to travel. One of Still's nephews offered to help him if only Still would give up, move back to Kansas, and lead a normal life.[31]

[28]Mary Elvira Still, Kirksville, Mo., to William Dudley, The Commissioner of Pensions, April 16?, 1882. SNOM, Kirksville.

[29]Russell McCaughan, "Reminiscences of Dr. Charlie," *American Osteopathic Historical Society Bulletin* 4 (December 1961): 7.

[30]Simpson, "Dr. Charlie Still's Tribute to His Father," 544.

[31]Ibid., 545. Also, Charles E. Still, D.O., "Pioneer History of Osteopathy." Speech made to the freshman class at Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine, Novembe 1, 1928. Copy in A. T. Manuscript in A. T. Still Memorial Library, KCOM, Kirksville.

This suggestion was not in the least attractive to Still; rather than giving up, with each year he had become more convinced that he was right. He later wrote, "From the day I landed in Kirksville, osteopathy made some progress in getting the attention of the very few, my object was to teach or at least draw the listening attention to the truth that the human body was so formed and supplied with the machinery or organs of life, that disease could be produced by strains, falls, shocks, and [other] changes as to suspend the circulation of the blood of the living brain or any other organ, enough to produce a variation from health."[32]

Evolutionary biology, relying as it did on anatomy and physiology to explain how species vary and change, supported Still's stance. Darwin had written: "Can it be doubted . . . that any minute variation in structure, habits, or instincts adapting that individual better to the new conditions, would tell upon its vigour and health?"[33] Spencer's mechanical examples also supported Still. Emphasizing that changes in structure could not occur without changes of function, Spencer wrote: "To some extent, the parts of every body are changed in their arrangement by any incident mechanical force." Providing the rationale for Still's therapy was Spencer's theme that "respiration, circulation, absorption, secretion, are bound up together. Muscular contraction involves chemical change, change of temperature, and change in excretions," and that "organic matter is so constituted, that small incident actions are capable of initiating great reactions, setting up extensive structural modifications, and liberating large quantities of power . . . "[34]

Still's later writings reflect an obsession not only with anatomy but also with the same subjects that had been the focus of experimental laboratory science: the brain, the spinal cord, and the nervous system. This emphasis–and indeed modern scientific medicine–originated in the Paris Clinical School during the early 1800s with the theories of the French physician François Victor Broussais, who had been influenced by phrenological principles. With Broussais, the inventor of "physiological medicine," began today's orientation toward lesions and localism in medicine instead of symptoms and generalized illnesses. According to Broussais, life was due to external or internal stimuli or irritation. When organs were overstimulated or understimulated by either food, drugs, environment, or even psychological influences, disease resulted. Autopsy invariably showed a local irritation,

[32]A. T. Still, Original Manuscript, untitled, undated; in personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville, Mo.

[33]See H. Lewis McKinney, *Lamarck to Darwin: Contributions to Evolutionary Biology, 1809-1859* (Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado Press, 1971), 85, extracts from Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, "On the Tendency of Species to Form Varieties; and on the Perpetuation of Varieties and Species by Natural Means of Selection," *Journal of the Proceedings of the Linnean Society, Zoology* 3 (1859): 46-62.

[34]Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Biology* 2 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1894), 1:25, 67, 89. Spencer first published this work in 1855.

or an anatomical lesion, to indicate an irregularity of function. Broussais' highly popular theory–called physiological because disease was considered as a change of function and not merely as an invasion by a foreign element–gained him an international following. Broussais placed more emphasis on overstimulation than understimulation, eventually settling on gastro-enteritis as the most likely cause of death. Radical for the time, his therapy called for the elimination of nearly all drugs because they tended to irritate the stomach; instead he relied on the depletive therapies of leeches and strict diet.[35]

Nineteenth-century scientists, several influenced also by phrenologic concepts, conducted experiments in the field of what is now called neurophysiology. The electrical excitability of the brain, sensory motor physiology, the spinal cord, cerebral localization, and muscular motions were studied and quantified in a laboratory setting. Moreover, through the synthetic philosophy of Herbert Spencer, the study of the brain and its functions had become by the 1880s an experimental science based on evolution.[36]

Still's later writings reflect a familiarity with these scientific studies; indeed, throughout the nineteenth century all medical literature abounded with articles devoted to the nervous system.[37] With cumulative scientific knowledge about the functioning of the human organism, the physiological medical trend–diagnostic, statistical, and therapeutically conservative–was heralded by many American physicians as the "New Rationalism." However, physiological medicine was better at disproving existing therapeutics rather than discovering new ones. By the 1870s and 1880s, American physicians, traditionally men of action, found themselves in the midst of a therapeutic wasteland, their standard drugs, especially calomel, and their techniques of bleeding and purging proven ineffective by laboratory science. The New Rationalism had taken away their therapy and given nothing in return.[38]

As the practice of medicine at the Paris Clinical Schools stressed a combination of physical examination, diagnosis, and autopsy, American medicine began to reflect this influence.[39] By prescribing fewer drugs but monitoring their patients' progress with newly developed instruments

[35]Erwin H. Ackerknecht, "Broussais, or a Forgotten Medical Revolution," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 27 no. 4 (1953): 320-43.

[36]Young, *Mind, Brain, and Adaptation*, 7.

[37]See Francis Schiller, "Spinal Irritation and Osteopathy." See also Elizabeth Lomax, "Manipulative Therapy: A Historical Perspective from Ancient Times to the Modern Era," in Murray Goldstein, ed., *The Research Status of Spinal Manipulative Therapy: A Workshop Held at the National Insitutes of Health, February 2-4, 1975* (Bethesda: National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke, 1975).

[38]Warner, *Therapeutic Perspectives*, 236-37. In experiments on dogs in 1867, British investigators had proved that calomel (mercurous chloride) was ineffective for stimulating the flow of bile; in fact, large doses actually reduced the flow. Idem, 224.

[39]Ackerknecht, *Short History of Medicine*, 150.

designed to measure blood pressure, pulse rate, temperature, and urine analysis, doctors intended to not necessarily fight disease, but bring the body back into the range of physiological norms.[40] No longer was treatment prescribed for an individual in a particular environment. Universal norms established by laboratory science became the standard by which health and disease were judged. Localism of disease enhanced the role of surgery and contributed to the development of medical specialities. Though many practitioners remained highly skeptical of experimental science, many more looked to it as a new system in which medicine would become more of a science and less of an art.[41]

Still, having already dispensed with the use of drugs, was in an enviable position. His philosophy was based on evolutionary principles and current research on the nerves, spinal cord, and brain. Regardless of whether he could prove the curing powers of his manipulative technique, he at least provided a scientific rationale for it. For the past nine years, Still had been experimenting with phrenomagnetic ideas,[42] but by 1883, he began to incorporate the ancient art of bonesetting into his practice. With this combination of manual treatments, Still believed he now had what everyone else was groping for: a specific treatment designed to influence physiological functioning, a system based upon scientific principles and universal laws, and an individualized treatment not dependent upon dangerous or ineffective drugs.

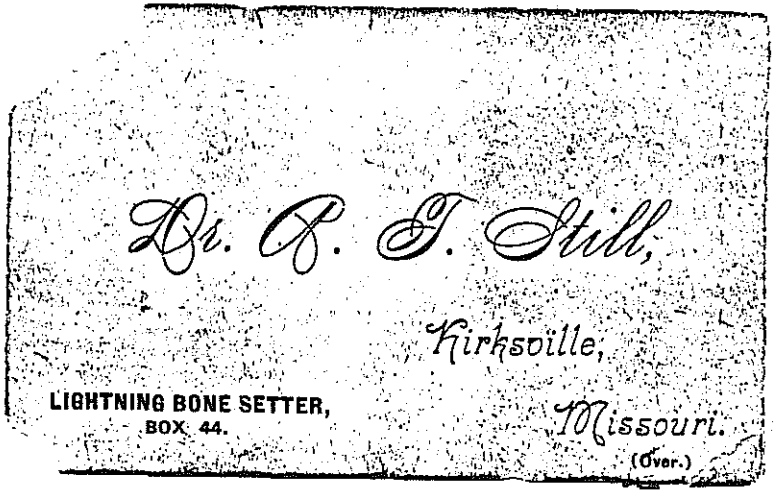
From that year until around 1890, Still advertised himself as the "Lightning Bone Setter," roaming the countryside with his sons, each toting a sack of bones which served as educational visual aids. He initially treated most patients for nothing, until gradually he developed a following. The source of Still's knowledge of bonesetting is obscure. Though itinerant bonesetters were common in America's rural countryside, the ancient art had yet to be institutionalized. Bonesetting knowledge was passed down

[40]Warner, *Therapeutic Perspectives,* 158-59.

[41]Ackerknecht, *Short History of Medicine,* 152-53; Shryock, *Medicine in America: Historical Essays,* 169.

[42]So was the famous French clinician Jean Martin Charcot (1825-1893) who in the 1880s was at the height of his career. Charcot became famous in the fields of cerebral localization, spinal cord disorders, hysteria, and hypnotism. Charcot often quoted Darwin in his lectures which drew large numbers of students from Europe and America. Charcot, like the phrenomagnetists, also related nerves to visceral disturbances, and by pressing nerves at strategic points was able to stop, for example, ovarian contracture or general bodily seizures. Charcot's conservative treatment, like Buchanan's, relied on such therapies as massage, kneading, diet, electric current, and magnets. For detailed descriptions of Charcot's powers of observation, methods, and lectures, see Christopher G. Goetz, M.D., trans., *Charcot, the Clinician: The Tuesday Lessons; Excerpts from Nine Case Presentations Delivered at Salpetriere Hospital in 1887-88* (New York: Raven Press, 1987). Also George Sigerson, ed., 2d ser. trans., *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System, J. M. Charcot* (New York: Hafner, 1962; facsimile of London, 1881 ed.). See also Kett, *Formation of American Medical Profession,* Pickard and Boley, *Midwest Pioneer;* and Davies, *Phrenology, Fad and Science.*

through generations of families, the most famous being the Taylors of England and in America the Sweets of Rhode Island. Their art and clinical success even aroused the interest of some regular physicians. Dr. Wharton Hood, an English physician, upon serving as assistant to a bonesetter became convinced that some of their methods should be incorporated into traditional medical practice. In 1871, Hood reported his experiences in a series of articles in the *Lancet,* and in *On Bonesetting, so called, and its Relation to the Treatment of Joints Crippled by Injury.* Whatever the source of Still's knowledge, his popularity as a healer surged as hundreds of patients now awaited Still's arrival in various towns and the practices of the local physicians began to suffer.



One day, en route from the Hannibal depot to the hotel, the Stills saw a badly crippled elderly black man. Charlie recalled, "My father asked him his trouble, and after getting a reply, he had him stand up against a dry goods box at the side of the street." All the Stills set down their baggage of bones. Still "took hold of the leg and after apparently winding it around a few times, he told the man to walk, and he did without as much as a limp much to the amazement of the by standers, who had collected."[43]

For antics like this Still was arrested in Hannibal, Missouri, for practicing medicine without a license. He refused the services of a lawyer, preferring to plead his own case. His registration as a regular physician in Adair and Macon Counties gave him some legitimacy despite his different approach. Moreover, the theories behind his science were firmly grounded in current research and evolutionary concepts and were nearly impervious to scientific

[43]Charles E. Still, D.O., "Reminiscences," *Journal of Osteopathy* (September 1901): 310.

criticism. Even his manipulative technique, if not better, was no worse than drug therapy of regular physicians. As Still elaborated on his system in the Hannibal courtroom, he captured a new supporter and a patient–the prosecuting attorney, who subsequently dismissed the case.[44]

In an allegorical story Still gave ample credit to his wife, Mary, for her many years of encouragement in his search:

> Over a quarter of a century, my wife, Mary E. Still, has given her counsel, advice, consent, and encouraged me to go on and unfold the truths, laws, and principles of life; to open and proclaim them to the world by demonstration, which is the only method by which truth can be established.
>
> And at the conclusion of each voyage, whether it was long or short, I brought home such specimens as I could pick up as an explorer, spread them on the table for her consideration and the amusement of the children. She received all truths, and separated them from the doubtful, labeled, numbered, and filed away each block and piece that fit in the great building of man's life.
>
> I took voyage after voyage, each time bringing larger and better cargoes. All such collections as I thought to be fine gems I told her to cut, set, wear, and test their brilliancy, label and price according to their merits. As she was a mental lapidist, I told her so to cut each stone with shape that its inner beauties might be transposed and exhibited upon the surfaces of all facets, that the beholder might see the fine colors that were capable of being produced by nature's unerring paintbrush . . .[45]

Finally settling on a method of treatment, Still substituted for the invisible fluid of the magnetic healer and the "nervaura" of phrenomagnetism, the free flow of blood, and the impulses of the nerves.[46] An unobstructed flow of healthy blood was the perfect germicide. Displacements of bones, nerves, and even muscle contractions could interfere with the normal flow of the blood and affect the entire physiological operation of the body. The phrenomagnetic concept that there is a definite relationship between every organ of the body and the central nervous system remained a fundamental

[44]Blanche Still Laughlin, "Anecdotes and Incidents in the Life of Dr. Still," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 20 (February 1921): 318.

[45]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 451-53.

[46]Norman Gevitz, *The D.O.'s: Osteopathic Medicine in America* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1982), 12-15.

part of his thinking,[47] and Still chose to find that relationship naturally through manipulation rather than through electricity, drugs, or hypnotism.

Still may have watched a bonesetter at work[48] or taught himself the art through constant handling of the bones: fitting them together, figuring out the normal range of motion, and visualizing the normal structure so that he could diagnose by sight or by touch an abnormality varying even one-hundredth of an inch from the normal. It seemed logical to Still that if he could remove obstacles through manipulation the body would have a better chance to resist disease. He reasoned that if the body possessed natural drugs and the ability to heal itself, then serums, vaccines, and artificial drugs were actually harmful to the normal operation of the system. Still's mechanical approach, which envisioned the entire body as a system of intimately related and coordinated parts, and his trust in the healing powers of nature was making more and more sense to more and more people.

NAMING THE SCIENCE

Still's theories had emerged from the medical ideas of his time, not apart from them.[49] A synthesis of magnetic healing and bonesetting was undoubtedly unique.[50] The approach was much more than this. Still had built his system by founding it on evolutionary principles. Still, denying that he was a hypnotist or a mesmerist, said, "Some people think osteopathy is a system of massage, others that it is a 'faith cure.' I have no 'faith' myself, I only want the truth to stand on. Another class think it is a kind of magnetic pow-wow. It is none of these, but is based upon a scientific

[47]See "Osteopathy and Medicine Contrasted," *Journal of Osteopathy* 2 (September 1895): 4. Echoing both the homeopath William Wesselhoeft and the phrenomagnetist Joseph Buchanan, Still wrote, "The Great Creator equipped man with native forces sufficient to run the machinery of human life safely and smoothly to a ripe old age . . . [he has] wisely placed the means of applying and controlling them within easy reach."

[48]See Gevitz, *The D.O.'s,* 15-16.

[49]See Lomax, "Manipulative Therapy"

[50]See Gevitz, *The D.O.'s,* 17. See also Robert W. Delp, "Andrew Jackson Davis and Spiritualism," in Arthur Wrobel, ed., *Pseudo-Science and Society in Nineteenth Century America* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky), 1987; The magnetic healers were fragmented. Davis, the leader of Spiritualism and magnetic healing, left the spiritualist movement in 1878, founding the First Harmonial Association of New York. The association endowed a chair in an eclectic school of medicine, which Davis himself attended and received degrees in medicine and anthropology. In his thesis, "The Reality of Imaginary Disease," he claimed that "every cutaneous disease, every tumor, every disorganization in the substance or appendages or organs is in effect disturbed and diseased psychical or spiritual force," thus illustrating his emphasis on the powers of the mind. Moreover, Mary Baker Eddy spun off the mental side of magnetic healing to repackage it as Christian Science. See also Haller, *American Medicine,* 14. Warren Felt Evans combined ideas of Mesmer, Comte, Spencer, Swedenborg, and Saint Paul into his science of phrenopathy.

principle."[51] That "scientific principle," Still believed, would initiate an intellectual revolution where," in every district school and college, theological not excepted," the study of anatomy would be revitalized.[52] Neither perfectionism, a blend of bonesetting and magnetic healing, nor the current theories of his day on the spinal cord and nervous system qualified as that scientific principle. The only revolutionary scientific principle, the "grand theory," was that of evolution. His incorporating the concepts of evolution into a single system of healing was the foundation of the new science, for which he now searched for an adequate name. As the theory of evolution and bonesetting techniques originated in the discipline of anatomy, it was fitting that Still was partial to a name suggesting the bony structure of man.

A Baker University professor, Dr. Sweet, came to Kirksville in 1885 for treatments from Still. Then leaning toward a combination of the Greek *osteon*, meaning bone, and the *pathine*, meaning suffering, Still asked Sweet's opinion of his newly chosen name. Immediately after returning to Baldwin City, Sweet wrote, "This is the best name you could give it. It covers the ground much better than the words allopathy, homeopathy, and eclecticism."[53]

As Still grew successful enough to attract business schemes, he hired Rufus Thayer from Kansas, but their relationship was short-lived and Thayer left owing Still eight hundred dollars. Later, Still wisely declined a proposal to patent his system.[54] Still's patient load soon became exhausting. His sons Charlie and Herman had been learning at his side and could have helped, but they entered the United States Army in 1888. When three

[51]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 341, 356. See also A. T. Still, original manuscript in collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville, "Introductory: Historical." Still alludes to the broader nature of the origins of osteopathy. "Who has been throwing the bomb shells at demonstrated truths that have been striking the camps and forts of old traditions and theories? Who or what has started such commotion among the doctors of medicine, clergymen, the men os science and philosophy, justices and down into the ranks of those in the more humble pursuits of life?"

[52]A. T. Still, "Some of the Circumstances," 5.

[53]Letter from Charles E. Still, D. O., Kirksville, to Ray G. Hulburt, D.O., January 21, 1941. SNOM, Kirksville. Charles Still stated that he did not know the exact date that his father coined the word osteopathy. However, in 1885, a professor, Dr. Charles Sweet of Baldwin City, Kansas, came to Kirksville to be treated by Dr. Still. Although investigation into the records of Baker University reveal that there was not a professor Charles Sweet at Baker University at that time, there was a William Henry Sweet who served as president of Baker between the years 1879 and 1886. This Professor Sweet also taught Mental and Moral Science. His son, William Warren Sweet, became a respected scholar of United States Church History. From personal letter of Dr. Harold Kolling, Archivist of Baker Archives to Carol Trowbridge, October 1, 1987. Later Still wrote that osteopathy did not mean "bone diesease," but rather "bone usage." See A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 221.

[54]Charles E. Still, D.O., Kirksville, to Ray G. Hulburt, D.O., January 21, 1941. SNOM, Kirksville.

patients, Marcus L. Ward, J. O. Hatten, and a Mr. Wilderson, asked to study with him, Still agreed to give them a year's instruction for five hundred dollars."[55] Happy with the progress of his students at the end of the year, Still grew more confident that his science and technique could be taught. In 1891, Charlie and Herman returned to Kirksville to assist their father in that endeavor.

THE FIRST SCHOOL

In December 1891, when Still sent Charlie to Judge Andrew Ellison to obtain a charter for Still's proposed American School of Osteopathy (ASO), Ellison adamantly declared that Still's gift was personal. He told Charlie, "Don't fool yourselves. Your father is a gifted man, but when he dies, this system will die with him."[56] Undeterred, Still sent Charlie to hire William Porter to prepare the application upon which a charter was issued on May 10, 1892. The shareholders of the ASO were A.T. Still, Mary Elvira Still, one of his patients and student Marcus L. Ward, Elias Falor, and three of Still's sons, Harry, Herman, and Charles. The stated purpose of the school was: "To improve our systems of surgery, midwifery, and the treatment of general diseases in which the adjustment of the bones is the leading feature of this school of Pathology. Also to instruct and qualify students so that they may lawfully practice the Science of Osteopathy as taught and practiced by A.T. Still, the discoverer of this philosophy."[57] Two years later, in response to charges that the science of osteopathy was secret and that the education offered was insufficient, the charter was revised to read: "to improve our present systems of surgery, obstetrics, and treatment of disease generally, to place the same on a more rational and scientific basis, to impart information to the medical profession and to grant and confer such honors and degrees as are usually granted and conferred by reputable medical colleges."[58]

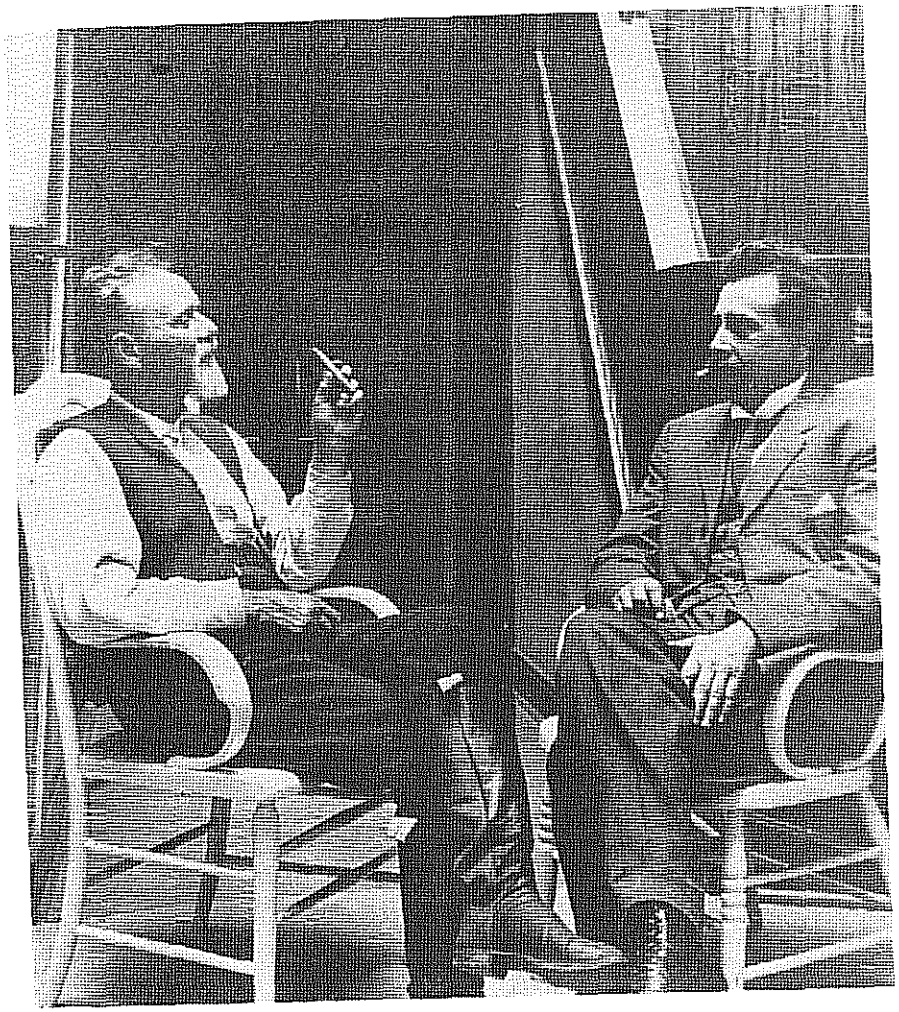
At the end of eighteen years of lonely searching, Still was thrust into the limelight of publicity. His days of itinerant doctoring were over, and at age sixty-four he was about to embark upon his most important project,

[55]Charles E. Still, D.O., "Some of the Happenings Responsible for the School," 6-7.

[56]Ibid.

[57]American School of Osteopathy, Original Charter May 10, 1892, SNOM, Kirksville. Instead of being incorporated as an educatinal institutin, the ASO was organized under the laws governing manufacturing and business corporations. Still strongly disapproved of this charter. The mistake was corrected in the revised charter of 1894. See William Horace Ivie, D.O., M.D., "Notes on Members of the First Graduation Class, *Bulletin of the American Historical Society* (July 1961): 4-5, 8.

[58]American School of Osteopathy, Revised Charter, October 30, 1894. SNOM, Kirksville. The ASO was now duly chartered under the laws governing benevolent, religious, scientific, fraternal, beneficial, educatinal, and miscellaneous associations. The course was lengthened to two years in 1896; to three years in 1905; and to four years in 1916.



A. T. STILL AND DR. WILLIAM SMITH
(Photo courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

the development of The American School of Osteopathy. That summer, as patients poured into the little town in covered wagons, passenger trains, on foot, or on horseback, Still's office was filled to capacity. Wasps casually flew in and out of the broken windows, optimistically building their nests in the dark corners of the shabby, uncarpeted waiting room.[59] As he treated patients and worked on his plans for the new school, Still realized he needed the assistance of an educator. Still asked W. D. Dobson, the president of the State Normal School in Kirksville, to organize and operate the ASO, even offering him one-half of all the proceeds, but Dobson declined.[60] Even though patients raved about Still and his treatments, some local physicians feared their practices were being ruined, and they referred to him as an old quack. They complained bitterly about Still to a medical instrument salesman, Dr. William Smith, an 1889 graduate of the University of Edinburgh who also held certificates from Edinburgh's Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.[61]

Intrigued by the discrepancies in the gossip about Still, Smith went to Still's office and found it packed with patients who told him that he must wait his turn. He left a message asking that Still meet him later at the Pool Hotel.[62] Keeping the appointment, Still subsequently proceeded to spellbind the Scottish doctor with his theories and philosophy. Playing the dumb frontier doctor, Still began to ask Smith some innocent but trapping questions. While eyeing a nearby electrical pole, he told Smith that he was trying to study what use those two wires were in electricity. Smith patiently explained the practical dynamics of electricity and how the fluids, acids, and all the ingredients necessary to generate electricity were found in the batteries.[63]

Now Still abruptly changed the subject: "How many kinds of nerves are in man?" Smith replied, "Two, the motor and the sensory." "Where is man's powers of action, and where is the power generated?" Smith said, "The brain. . . ." After more questions about the heart as the engine of life and the forces that run it, Still zeroed in on the Scotsman who, to build his courage before confronting the "humbug," had consumed several beers in a local doctor's office. "What effect would a cake of soap have on an electric battery if placed within the fluids," asked Still. Smith answered, "It would play h--l with it." "What effect would two quarts

[59]Wm. Smith, M.D., D.O., "Four Years Ago, Dr. Wm. Smith Gives an Account of His First Visit to Dr. Still," *Journal of Osteopathy* 3 (September 1896): 6.

[60]Booth, *History of Osteopathy*, 73.

[61]See Mark Laughlin, "William Smith, Apostle of Osteopathy," *Osteopathic Annals* 14 (September-October 1987): 40-44. Smith's certificates are located in SNOM, Kirksville.

[62]Wm. "Bill" Smith, "Reviews Pioneer Days," *Osteopathic Physician* 3 (January 1903): 1.

[63]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 148.

of beer have on the sensory and motor nerves of a man if you poured it into his stomach or electric jar?" Smith hesitated, then sheepishly replied, "It would make a d--d fool of him."[64] Talking on into the night about the nerves, blood vessels, muscles, and about fever, Smith was sold on Still and osteopathy. If he was at all skeptical, Smith's subsequent interviews with scores of Still's patients seemed to verify Still's emphatic statement, "But it is so! There are no ifs and ands about it. I do what I tell you and the people get well."[65]

After this fortuitous meeting, Smith agreed to teach anatomy in the ASO in return for room and board and the opportunity to learn osteopathy. Since anatomy was the center of his philosophy and was to be the center of his formal curriculum, Smith's medical credentials could help launch the ASO on a sound scientific basis.

THE FIRST CLASS

The first school building was erected and on November 1, 1892, ten or eleven students were enrolled in the school, five of whom were Dr. Still's children, Harry, Charlie, Herman, Fred, and Blanche. During the next few months, others who had personally experienced the success of osteopathic treatment joined the class.[66] At a time when medical schools were wrestling with the issue of whether to admit women into their programs, Still immediately welcomed them. There were five women in the first class of osteopathy, including Still's daughter Blanche. Nettie Hubbard Bolles has the honor of being designated the first woman graduate of osteopathy. Nettie and her family had been neighbors of the Stills while they lived in Kansas. During the border warfare, bushwackers had looted the Hubbard home and had shot Nettie's father, leaving him for dead. The family called for Dr. Still, who removed the bullet and nursed Mr. Bolles back to health. When her mother became paralyzed some years later, Nettie brought her to Kirksville where she received daily treatments from Still. After watching her mother's improvement and that of others, Nettie asked

[64]Ibid., 150.

[65]Smith, "Pioneer Days," 1.

[66]When some of Dr. Still's Minnesota patients requested that osteopaths set up a practice in Minneapolis, Charlie Still volunteered to go there. Later, moving to Red Wing, Minnesota, at the request of another patient, the Minnesota senator Peter Nelson, Charlie, his brother Harry, and an osteopathic student, C. W. Hartupee, opened an office. One month later, a black diphtheria epidemic thrust the Stills and osteopathy into the limelight. Throughout that winter the three doctors treated the sick with much success, but by orders of the State Board of Health, Charlie and Harry were arrested and placed in the county jail. Fortunately, an angry crowd of local residents gathered outside the jail demanding that the doctors be released. From then on, two large Swedes, fathers of children whom Dr. Charlie and Dr. Harry had cured, served as bodyguards while the doctors continued to make house calls.

to study this new science with Dr. Still, who assured her that a woman could learn to do anything that a man could do.[67]

The first class of osteopathy was admittedly an experiment and a disaster. Still discovered that what he had learned during a lifetime of study could not be easily transmitted to his students in the course of four months.[68] For the eight o'clock anatomy class, unable to secure cadavers for visual aids, Smith made do with a mannequin and a skeleton named Columbus.[69] At nine o'clock the students were admitted into the operating rooms. At the close of the term, Still was horrified to find that his school had produced nothing but "bunglers and imitators," not one, in his opinion, proficient enough to practice osteopathy. Although Still did issue certificates to the members of the first class, he urged them to repeat the course, believing that they had not been exposed to enough anatomy. He recalled that "only the brainy members" returned.[70]

William Smith received the first osteopathic diploma and left Kirksville and Still in 1893, but his affiliation with the ASO had not ended.[71] Meanwhile, Still attempted to shape the returning members of the first class into osteopaths with a mostly hands-on approach. When Jenette Hubbard Bolles, who had already earned two bachelor's degrees, was entrusted with the job of teaching anatomy, Still handed her *Gray's Anatomy* and *Potter's Quiz Compend* and told her to do her best.[72] With this inauspicious beginning for the American School of Osteopathy–despite the flow of patients flocking to the small town–few of the citizens of Kirksville dreamed that the fledgling school run by the eccentric Dr. Still would ever have much impact upon their community.

When Still and Marcus L. Ward, one of his first students and subsequently a vice president of the ASO, disagreed seriously in 1893, Ward bitterly aired his dispute with Still on the pages of a Kirksville newspaper, the *Weekly Graphic,* in an attempt to discredit Still. After receiving his certificate from the first session, Ward had not retaken the class; instead, he set up practice in Kansas City. He accused Still of demanding from him and the others who had not returned for a second session 20 percent of all their

[67]Jenette Hubbard Bolles, "Dr. Still's Regard for Woman's Ability," *Journal of American Osteopathic Association* 17 (January 1918): 250.

[68]See Minutes of the Board of Directors of The American School of Osteopathy (November 1, 1892): 2. SNOM, Kirksville.

[69]Smith's efforts to acquire bodies, legally or otherwise, are legendary. See "Gallery of Osteopathic Pioneers, Dr. Clarence Rider," *Osteopathic Physician* 8 (November 1905): 13.

[70]A. T. Still, "Experiences along the Road," *Journal of Osteopathy* 2 (September 1895): 2.

[71]Smith returned to the ASO in 1896 and 1907. Three years later he went home to Scotland to practice, where he died of pneumonia in 1912.

[72]A. T. Still, "Historical Advice to Present, Past and Future Graduating Classes," *Journal of Osteopathy* 5 (July 1898): 73.

ORIGINAL CLASS IN OSTEOPATHY, 1892-93
(Photo courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

income.[73] Still was unhappy with the graduates and may have felt that such a threat might prevent them from practicing what he considered an incomplete system, and hoped to convince them to return to the ASO to complete their education. Still did not reply personally to Ward's charges, but a supporter of his, J. B. Dodge, accused Ward of having poor grades in anatomy–40 percent below the rest of the class–and of refusing to take a technical examination.[74] By fall the public argument died down and Ward was back in business in Kirksville, advertising not as a practicing osteopath, but as the proprietor of medicated baths.

Now that the years of poverty seemed to be behind the Stills, Mary was treated to a month's visit to the Chicago World's Fair. Still's siblings began to take notice of their eccentric brother's success. James, on his way back from the same event in Chicago, stopped in Kirksville to check on Drew and his new science of osteopathy.

When graduation exercises for the first class were held in the Smith Opera House on the evening of March 4, 1894, Kirksville's prominent citizens joined in the rounds of applause following Dr. Still's speech. However, a small cloud hung over the gala festivities because the then current Missouri law recognized only the graduates of traditional medical, eclectic, and homeopathic schools, excluding the osteopaths. Under the school's charter, the M.D. degree could have been conferred but Still instead chose the Diplomate of Osteopathy (D.O.) degree.[75] Speakers at the ceremony urged the audience to work to erase the current law from the statutes. Following an interlude of music, Dr. and Mrs. Still, the graduates, and fifty invited guests departed to the Pool Hotel for an elegant dinner punctuated with impromtu toasts.[76] Amid all the excitement that spring, Dr. and Mrs. Still experienced yet another tragic family accident when their youngest son, Fred, was injured–crushed between a horse and a wall. Of all their children, Fred was the studious one who aspired to develop his father's philosophy further. However, Fred never recovered from the accident and died in June.

During that summer, when the towns of Moberly, Hannibal, and Sedalia, Missouri tried to woo Still and his school away from Kirksville, a meeting was held in the Kirksville mayor's office on the evening of May

[73]"M. L. Ward's Reply to Dr. Still," *Weekly Graphic* 14 (June 30, 1893): 2.

[74]J. B. Dodge, "Reply of an Observer to Dr.(?) M. L. Ward's Attack on Dr. Still," *Weekly Graphic* 14 (July 28, 1893): 2.

[75]One early osteopath suggested that Still made this decision in order to avoid conflict until osteopathy had become "too great to remain obscure" and "too great to be either crushed or absorbed," but there can be no doubt that Still himself believed that the osteopathic philosophy was distinctive enough to warrant an independent school. See C.M.T. Hulett, "Where Shall We Stand?" *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 2 (April 1903): 278.

[76]"Graduating Exercises of the First Class of Osteopathy," *Journal of Osteopathy* 1 (June 1894): 1.

28, 1894. The citizens present unanimously adopted a resolution promising substantial aid in the erection of an infirmary for the ASO. Expressing their appreciation of Still's "great ability as the founder and the exponent of the School of Osteopathy" they were "proud of him as a fellow townsman" and had the "utmost confidence in his skill as a healer, . . . as is evidenced by hundreds of his patients who come halt and lame and depart in a few weeks with light hearts and straightened limbs."[77] Still remained in Kirksville, but he kept his school independent. He decided to use the twelve hundred dollars raised for an infirmary for the erection of a new hotel near the Wabash Depot. Ground was broken for the infirmary in August 1894. By fall there were few vacant homes in Kirksville and nearly 150 men and 75 teams were employed for street grading near the infirmary.[78]

COMPETITORS APPEAR

Local physicians began adding a little osteopathy to their own practices or inventing new sciences to pick up the slack in their dying practices. Marcus L. Ward, who had been in the first graduating class of the ASO but who ended up giving medicated baths, began to study homeopathy with a local homeopathic physician, Dr. A. T. Noe. In 1894 Ward opened his own infirmary, announcing a rival system called "Boneopathy." Within a few months Dr. Noe, too, advertised a new system, "Neuro Osteopathis," the science of bones and the electrical forces of man–the nervous system. Noe admitted that "Neuro Osteopathis" was an outgrowth of osteopathy, but claimed that in spite of its marvelous cures, Still's system had fallen short in its failure to classify diseases.[79] Trying to belittle osteopathy, Noe charged that only a few years earlier Still had claimed that he received osteopathy through the Kirksville medium, Mrs. Allred, who, after going into a trance, spoke in an Indian language. Noe continued: "But now I am told by some of his friends that he denies all this." Disclaiming any theft from the Still system, Noe implied Still had derived his techniques from Wharton Hood's book on bonesetting.[80] Virtually ignored in Kirksville, Noe's operators located in Slater, Missouri.

Looming on the horizon was a more serious threat to Still's school: Daniel David Palmer, a magnetic healer from Davenport, Iowa, who came

[77]"An Enthusiastic Meeting of Our Citizens at the City Hall Monday Night," *Journal of Osteopathy* 1 (May 1894): 1; "The A. T.STill Infirmary and School Building in the Course of Erection," *Journal of Osteopathy* 1 (September 1894): 2.

[78]*Weekly Graphic* 15 (October 26, 1894): 3.

[79]"New Discovery by Dr. A. T. Noe, 'Neuro Osteopathis,'" *Weekly Graphic* 15 (November 30, 1894): 2.

[80]"Neuro Osteopathis," reprinted from the *Slater [Mo.] Index*, in *Weekly Graphic* 15 (December 28, 1894): 2.

to Kirksville in 1893 ostensibly as a patient.[81] After receiving treatments, Palmer returned home and two years later announced his discovery of chiropractic, a method of manipulative healing similar to Still's osteopathic technique. From the time Palmer founded the first chiropractic school in 1898, the osteopaths faced stiff competition, for the public was unable to discern that their techniques were different.[82]

At the dedication of the A.T. Still Infirmary on the evening of January 10, 1895, a large crowd gathered in the three-story building, designed by Still's brother Thomas. Glowing with electricity, the interior, although designed for practical function, was decorated with elegance. The first floor was divided into seven operating rooms. The second floor housed the secretary's office and the ladies' waiting room. An elaborate electric bell system connected every room in the building. For the lecture room, or Memorial Hall, no expense had been spared. The walls were delicately painted in gold and white. Kirksville residents, students, and patients sat in comfort in two hundred veneered opera chairs under eighty-five incandescent lights. A rosewood piano, a silk American flag, and a large oil painting of a buck standing at the water's edge adorned the rostrum. The audience was entertained by Kirksville's best female soloists, and heard numerous speeches by townsmen and an address by Dr. Still.[83]

When the second class began in the fall of 1894 with thirty students, Still had improved the curriculum and raised his standards. No students were allowed to give treatments until they had achieved at least a grade of 90 percent in an expanded course of anatomy, the entire course now lengthened to eighteen months. When the anatomy instructor, Nettie Bolles, left for Denver, Colorado, Still hired his nephew, Summerfield Still, to teach the course. Before commencing his duties, however, Summerfield and three of Still's children were sent to Chicago to attend a dissection class taught by Professor W. T. Eckley, "so," Still said, "they could tell a head from a liver."[84]

[81]Arthur Grant Hildreth, D.O., *The Lengthening Shadow of Dr. A. T. Still*, 3d ed. (Kirksville: Osteopathic Enterprises, 1988; reprint of 1938 edition), 44-45.

[82]See Gevitz, *The D.O.'s*, 59 for an explanation about the difference between osteopathic and chiropractic treatments See also, James W. Brantingham, D.C., "Still and Palmer: The Impact of the First Osteopahy and the First Chiropractor," *Chiropractic History* 6 (1986): 19-22.

[83]See "Dedicated and Honor to Osteopathy," *Journal of Osteopathy* 1 (January 1894): 2.

[84]A. T. Still, "Historical Advice to the Present, Past and Graduating Classes," *Journal of Osteopathy* 5 (July 1898): 73. Dr. W. T. Eckley held the positions of professor of anatomy at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at the University of Illinois, Northwestern Dental School, and at the Chicago clinical School. Eckley published *Practical Anatomy, a dissecting guide to Morris' Human Anatomy* in 1893. Perhaps Still was referring to Eckley when he said that he studied with the greatest dissectionists in America. Jenette H. Bolles and her hsuband, N.A., founded the Colorado College of Osteopathy in Denver in 1897.

DR. A. T. STILL'S INFIRMARY

By 1897 ten different railroad companies advertised in the *Journal of Osteopathy*. The Wabash railroad ran four passenger trains daily through Kirksville. After making the rounds of medical physicians and using pills, plasters, and tonics, patients often came to Kirksville as a last resort. Still reminded his students that the purpose of the infirmary was to overcome the effects of medicine. (Photo courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum)

Still's brother-in-law, F.P. Vaughan, observed that Still was personally besieged by "all kinds of beggars and deadheads from Kansas."[85] Thirty thousand osteopathic treatments were given at the infirmary during the year of 1895, and most of the patients insisted that they be personally treated by Dr. Still . The *Weekly Graphic* reported that four millionaires and their families were taking treatments at the ASO. Being wealthy, however, actually made it more difficult to see Dr. Still, who habitually made his rich patients wait while he treated the poorer patients. If he did not like a patient's attitude, he stubbornly failed to keep his appointment, especially when he was engrossed in personal study. Those charged with running the school found themselves constantly apologizing for Dr. Still's behavior. Once when Harry locked his father in his office so that he would keep an appointment with a wealthy patient, Still escaped through a window to be found in a nearby field peaceably reading *Gray's Anatomy*.[86]

When only a treatment by Dr. Still himself would please one young man from a prominent West Virginia family who came to Kirksville during the 1890s, he waited a while for this privilege, finally accosting the doctor on the porch of his home. He introduced himself, saying as he pronounced the family name, "of whom you have doubtless heard." Still invited him to sit down on a chair and asked what seemed to be his problem. The young man explained, "Well, some have said I have indications of water on the brain, but . . . ." Still ran his hands across his head and said, "Huh, I don't see any evidence of brain whatsoever," and strolled back into the house.[87]

Although the first class had provided Still with some able assistants in whom he could be confident in their ability to treat, only when Henry E. Patterson, a local insurance man, joined the ASO as business manager around 1894 did the clinical chaos subside and the organization begin to take shape. Under Patterson's guidance, the infirmary ran like clockwork and rules resembling the old Methodist camp meeting regulations were distributed to patients and strictly enforced.[88] While under Still's treatment, patients were not allowed to imbibe alcoholic beverages or use drugs. In

[85]Letter from F. P. Vaughan, Macon, Missouri, to Kate Vaughan (Barnett), October 15, 1894. Barbara Barnett Shelly Papers. Kansas City, Missouri, Joint Collection of University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collections. Still's sister, Barbara Jane, was Kate Vaughan's mother and Barbara Barnette was Shelley's grandmother.

[86]Ethel Louise Burner, D.O., "Memorial to the Old Doctor," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 19 (August 1920): 469.

[87]As a Willard, D.O., "The Old Doctor," *Applied Academy of Osteopathy Yearbook* 10 (1954): 20.

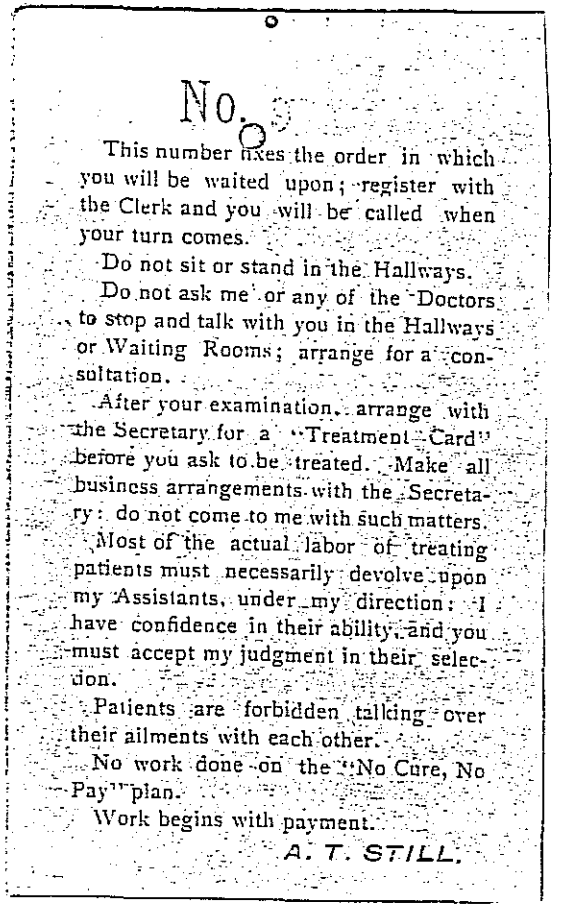
[88]The early camp meetings were emotional occasions where a phenomenon referred to as the jerks afflicted many converts. Considered by some as a visit by the devil, but by the majority as a visit by the spirit of God, the jerks caused some to shake uncontrollably; others

the clinic, strict regimentation prevented confusion, protected Still from the hoards of sufferers, and established a system of payment–organization that Still, the dreamer, could never have accomplished. Each patient was handed a card which read:

> This number fixes the order in which you will be waited upon. Register with the clerk, and you will be called when your turn comes.
>
> Do not sit or stand in the hallways.
>
> Do not ask me or any of the Doctors to stop and talk with you in the hallways or waiting rooms; arrange for a consultation.
>
> After your examination, arrange with the Secretary for a treatment card before you ask to be treated.
>
> Make all business arrangements with the Secretary; do not come to me with such matters.
>
> Most of the actual labor of treating patients must necessarily devolve upon my assistants, under my direction; I have confidence in their ability, and you must accept my judgement in their selection.
>
> Patients are forbidden talking over their ailments with each other.
>
> No work done on the "No Cure, No Pay" plan.
>
> Work begins with payment.

Fortunately for Still, he had capable assistants because his free-wheeling style would have been stifled by the daily management chores of operating a college. Indeed, had the administration of the school been left to Still, his generosity would have shortly driven the college to financial ruin. In answer to the frequent comment that if he should die now, his children

fainted, or in severe cases were rendered unconscious for days, seemingly dead. As these camp meeting socials also attracted local rowdies, it was necessary to keep a vigilant watch for the inevitable whiskey barrels hidden in the bushes. The Methodists were organizers who found that the unpredictability of the early services made them uneasy. To keep order, rules like the following were established: (1) "the intermediate time between preaching is occupied in prayer meetings, singing, and exhortation," (2) "persons are prohibited from waling to and fro, talking, smoking, or otherwise disturbing the solemnity of the meeting," (3) "all are required except on the last night of the meeting to be in their tents at ten o'clock p.m., and to arise at five a.m.," (4) "at six o'clock the attendants are required to take breakfast before which a family prayer is attended in each tent occupied," (5) "a watch is generally appointed to superintend the encampment at night, to keep order." See Johnson, *Frontier Camp Meetings*, 91-98.



No. 5

This number fixes the order in which you will be waited upon; register with the Clerk and you will be called when your turn comes.

Do not sit or stand in the Hallways.

Do not ask me or any of the Doctors to stop and talk with you in the Hallways or Waiting Rooms; arrange for a consultation.

After your examination, arrange with the Secretary for a "Treatment Card" before you ask to be treated. Make all business arrangements with the Secretary: do not come to me with such matters.

Most of the actual labor of treating patients must necessarily devolve upon my Assistants, under my direction: I have confidence in their ability, and you must accept my judgment in their selection.

Patients are forbidden talking over their ailments with each other.

No work done on the "No Cure, No Pay" plan.

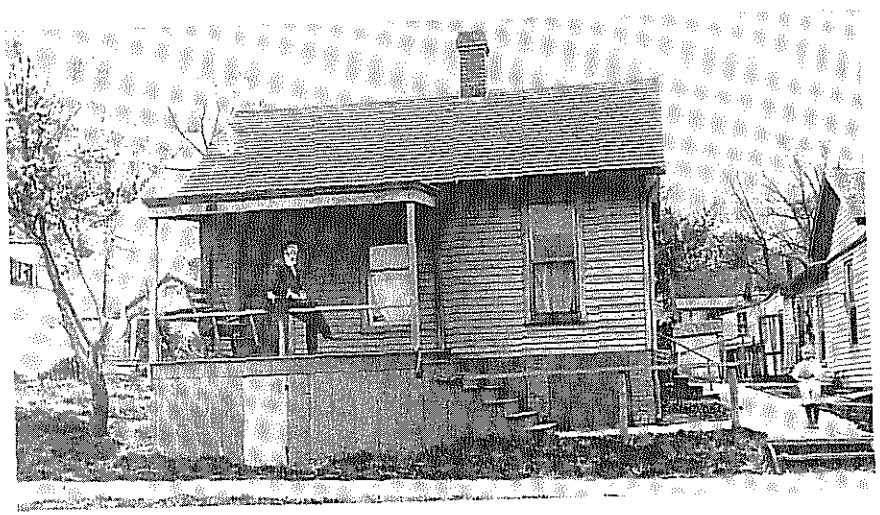
Work begins with payment.

A. T. STILL.

INFIRMARY RULE CARD

The large numbers of patients who sought treatment at the infirmary, particularly those wanting personal attention from Dr. Still, created havoc. Finally, these cards, resembling rules of the old Methodist campgrounds, were handed to each patient upon arrival. (Reproduced courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

would have much to be proud of, Still remarked, "If I die now, put an extra shovel of dirt of on my grave for the things I have failed to accomplish, but if I die in eighteen months from now, cast off the added amount for the new discoveries I hope to make in this science by that time."[89] What followed for the Stills during the next few years was not merely financial security, but a satisfying intellectual reward for the devotion of many years of thought to a single purpose. The American School of Osteopathy became a mecca for Still's followers, but even at this crucial time when he was developing osteopathy, Still found his control over the pure, drugless theories of his science was gradually slipping away.



A. T. STILL ON THE PORCH OF THE FIRST SCHOOL

Still disdained the eastern colleges' monopoly of influence upon American education. In one of his tongue-in-cheek prayers Still wrote, "Oh, Lord, keep our school free from the torments of Eastern fossils. The wise men of the East have long since emigrated to the West and received mental freedom." (Reproduced courtesy Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville)

[89]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 273.

6

The Old Doctor

Give me the life of a philosopher. He is honest, he is dwelling with the God of intelligence; and conventionality, confound it, is hypocrisy.

A. T. Still [1]

ANDREW TAYLOR STILL WAS SIXTY-FOUR YEARS OLD when he established the American School of Osteopathy, and he seemed to have boundless energy. He was a familiar sight to early risers as he meandered through the streets of Kirksville, Missouri, carrying his ever-present six-foot walking stick,[2] his trouser legs carelessly tucked into his boots. At last freed from financial and social worries, Still was generally accepted and protected, even revered by some in his little band who affectionately referred to him as the Old Doctor.

AN AMERICAN SCHOOL, AN AMERICAN SCIENCE

An unabashed American patriot, Still displayed the American flag in a prominent place, even before the desks, the chairs, and the skeleton named Columbus. The flag and *Gray's Anatomy* had taken their places in the first school. Still had been urged to give the school his name, but he wanted it to belong to his country and so named it The American School of Osteopathy. While he lived, the American flag served as a backdrop for every school activity.[3] Still had in mind an American school of medicine in which his science would be taught in plain English uncluttered with terminology derived from foreign languages. As George Combe earlier had led a popular democratic campaign against the intellectual elites,[4] Still continued that rhetoric. He disdained the eastern colleges' monopoly of influence upon American education, saying, "We have no further use for the East." In one of his favorite tongue-in-cheek prayers, he wrote: "Oh Lord, keep our school free from the torments of Eastern fossils. The wise men of the East have long since emigrated to the West and received mental freedom," adding, "truth belongs to no one section of the world. It is the

[1]A. T. Still , *Autobiography*, 45.

[2]B. P. Gentry, "Dr. Still as a Neighbor," Supplement to the Proceedings of the Annual Convention, *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 8 (September 1908): 17.

[3]Jenette Hubbard Bolles, "Dr. Still's Regard for Woman's Ability," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 17 (January 1918): 251.

[4]Cooter, *Cultural Meaning of Popular Science*, 263.

inner spiritual flame that burns at the center of every life and is always ready to show its existence if not buried too deeply under the discarded rubbish of the preceding generations." For Still, the learning of useless knowledge was a waste of precious time. He wrote, "O Lord, we ask for quick help. Since life is so short and man's days are few and full of sorrow, we ask that we get more brevity in our school books . . . and we ask thee to either add twenty years more to our days on earth or teach brevity to the professors in all institutions from which we are supposed to receive practical and useful education."[5]

Early advocates of evolution were required to lay aside old theories and blaze new trails, even to the point of adopting a blatant contempt for authority. As Still had discovered, this approach took intellectual and personal courage. The whole evolution movement took on a revolutionary atmosphere of progress, truth, and liberty. Echoing the movement's spirit, Still wrote that the foundation stone in his school stood for "liberty of thought."[6] He spoke frequently about carrying the "flag of progress," and the necessity to "avoid the dust of habit." None championed this attitude more than Herbert Spencer.[7] Except for the evolutionary concepts, Still found no other blueprints to follow; the past was past and since Still considered medicine one giant failure, old medical theories were of no use to him. But because he greatly admired science he hoped optimistically to place his school on a more scientific basis.

Because in its purest form osteopathy represented a schism from medicine, Still promoted his science as not merely a reform but a revolution, declaring, "I sincerely believe no one will ever think I could have been so dumb as to start another drug school under a different name. . . ." Neither did he propose that his school turn out "just another doctor" or "teach a lot of parrots," for, he said, "the field is already overcrowded with those who for hundreds of years have treated the patients by rule instead of reason."[8] If the truths of the osteopathic philosophy were to be discovered in greater detail, then Still's students must be searchers and questioners, not mere "gramaphones [*sic*] with legs."[9] Reminding his students that the purpose of his school as stated in the charter was to "improve on the old theories

[5]A. T. Still, (Original manuscript, undated); see also Still's manuscript, "A Plea for Americans to use the American Language More and Dead Languages Less," both in the personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville.

[6]A. T. Still, "Body and Soul of Man," 6. Manuscript, undated. Personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville.

[7]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 244. See also, Hugh Elliott, *Herbert Spencer* (1917; reprinted Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), 308-10.

[8]"H. H. Gravett Papers," *Bulletin of the American Osteopathic Historical Association* 10 (1954): 43.

[9]A. T. Still, Manuscript, "Our American Language," undated. Personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville.

for man's good," Still urged them to reflect upon this phrase every night before they went to bed.[10]

Knowing the Old Doctor's viewpoints on education, professors found it difficult to lecture to their classes while the Old Doctor lay quietly on a bench in the back of the classroom as he often did, listening closely to what was taught. Memorizing was abhored and note taking taboo, at least while he was around. The dearth of osteopathic teachers and the lack of osteopathic textbooks worried the Old Doctor. Since only a limited number of osteopathic graduates wished to teach or were capable of teaching, the school was forced to use some medical doctors and recruited science teachers from the State Normal School located only a few blocks away from the ASO. But Dr. Still kept a close eye on them.

On one occasion the class had almost forgotten Still was in the back of the room. When the professor commented that tonsils should be surgically removed because they were of no use, the Old Doctor immediately sprang to his feet to correct the professor. "Tonsils were placed in the throat for a purpose, and God did not intend for them to be removed."[11]

If taken to its ultimate conclusion, evolution seemed to cancel the doctrine of perfectionism. Though evolutionary principles did not have the same impact on medicine as on Still's osteopathy, some aspects of evolution were creeping into the fields of surgery, medical education, genetics, and sanitation. Perfectionism of the body had recently received a jolt at the hands of some anatomists who delighted in finding evidences of evolution in what they called vestigial organs.[12] Since such organs as the tonsils and appendix appeared to serve no vital function, they were viewed as holdovers from our evolutionary past, and, it became acceptable and profitable to remove them surgically. Following a theme as old as Aristotle, Still believed that nature made nothing in vain and thus vehemently disagreed with these procedures.

Moreover, evolution had encouraged the study of abnormal conditions and rare diseases,[13] a trend going against Still's naturalistic beliefs. Speaking of obstetrics or midwifery, Still told his students, "I think it is very wrong to teach, talk and spend so much time with pictures, cuts . . . and hold up constantly to the view of the student, births coming from the worst imaginable deformities and call that a knowledge of midwifery." In obstetrics, as in all conditions, Still urged the students to study the normal; he assured

[10]A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy*, 280.

[11]Letter from Mrs. J. J. Alexander to Lewis Chapman, February 19, 1972. The letter contains anecdotes of Dr. Still related to her by her father, William S. Aydelotte, who was a 1909 graduate of the ASO. SNOM.

[12]Robert E. D. Clark, ed. *Darwin: Before and After* (London: Paternoster Press, 1948), 122.

[13]Ibid.

them that the normal would guide them through all the variations.[14] Still was convinced that perfectionism, coupled with the natural laws of evolution offered the most hope for the future. He tried to keep his professors focused, often demanding, "What's all that stuff got to do with Osteopathy?"[15]

The contemporary medical approaches of monitoring a patient's vital signs with instruments and laboratory tests aroused Still's temper. As disease was a mere effect, resulting from inflammation from such mechanical causes as strains and jars, it was unnecessary to perform chemical analysis of the blood or to conduct other tests. Why waste time, Still asked, by "analyzing the steam or the tar and the worn out grease that comes out of axles or off the piston rods,"[16] when it was only necessary to find out what was the matter with the engine, remove the cause, and let nature do the rest. By removing obstructions, freeing the nerves and other fluids, by stimulating the nerves and the circulation of what he considered to be the perfect germicide, the blood, Still felt that he could restore nutrition to starved organs, vessels, and limbs, thus controlling life's currents and reviving suspended forces.[17] He particularly discouraged the use of thermometers and forceps. Early Kansas doctors had rarely used the cumbersome thermometer, and those who did were considered "sissies," thinking it presumptuous when anyone could detect a fever just by touching the patient's forehead.[18] Still called thermometers "pigtails," and none of the students carried them–in sight.[19]

Once a student assigned to assist the staff doctor in charge of obstetrical cases had to take a difficult case. After laboring unsuccessfully with the mother all night under the watchful eyes of his fellow students, he called his superior, Dr. Charlie Still, who then called William Smith, who promptly delivered the baby with forceps. The student finished caring for the mother, then returned to school. Nearing the building, he saw the Old Doctor sitting on the steps motioning him over. His heart dropped, for the student knew how much Still hated forceps and suddenly realized Still had already heard about the delivery. So he had. Still said to him, "I understand you used tongs on a baby this morning." The student had to answer yes, but tried to shift the blame to the doctors while at the same

[14]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy,* 248.

[15]Asa Willard, D.O., "The Old Doctor," *Academy of Applied Osteopathy Yearbook* 10 (1954): 23.

[16]A. T. Still, *Osteopathy: Research and Practice,* 346.

[17]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 275.

[18]Thomas N. Bonner, *The Kansas Doctor* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1959), 21.

[19]W. J. Connor, D.O., "Reminiscences of Dr. A. T. Still," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 25 (December 1925): 275.

time explaining that it was a case of inertia and there was nothing else to do. The Old Doctor exploded, telling the student that inertia was all in his head, and if he ever used forceps again he would no longer be needed at the ASO. The student asked Still what he should have done. The Old Doctor said, "Call me. I can deliver them without forceps." Pressing for more information, the student asked, "How should I have proceeded?" Still answered, "Turn on the ovarian artery!" Although then not able to assimilate his advice, the student was to later recall that it changed all his thinking about the mechanics of labor.[20]

OSTEOPATHY AND EVOLUTION

Osteopathy as the practical application of evolutionary theory to health and disease was not simply an offshoot of the theory that organisms undergo change and modification, nor of the more popular concept that man originated from a lower form. Still's theories were derived from the evolutionary principles that natural laws operate in the environment to cause and allow the evolutionary process to occur. These laws were thought to regulate use and disuse, the interrelatedness of structure and function, the self-regulating mechanism of the organism, and the appearance of abnormal pressure in one part created abnormal pressures in other parts. Evolution claimed:

1. There is variation among species.
2. Because of overproduction of the species, more individuals are born than survive.
3. There is a struggle for existence in which individuals must compete with one another in order to survive.
4. The organism is self-regulating and self-propagating.

The study of the process of evolution lies within the realm of science–anatomy, chemistry, physiology, and physics, with Spencer integrating mechanics, magnetism, and electricity to illustrate structure and function and mutual dependence of the parts.

Osteopathy, like evolution, becomes difficult to define because each term represents a collection of concepts that are holistically dependent on one another.[21] Still based osteopathy on the following principles used by evolutionary scientists, especially in the mechanical evolutionary philosophy of Herbert Spencer, to explain how species change and vary:

[20]Ibid.

[21]See Wiltshire, *Thought of Spencer,* 192-93, who discusses a number of reasons that makes it difficult to define evolution.

1. The body functions as a total unit.
2. The body possesses self-healing and self-regulatory mechanisms.
3. Structure and function are interrelated.
4. Abnormal pressure in one part of the body produces abnormal pressures and strains upon other parts of the body.

In the same way that evolution was a naturalistic approach to life, so was osteopathy a drugless, holistic, and naturalistic approach to health and disease. Still envisioned every plant and animal, including man, as a perfect biological, self-regulating mechanism, perfectly adapted for a particular function in a particular environment that was created to function perfectly without the use of internal drugs. He encouraged his students to look for health, as, he said, "anyone can find disease."[22]

Initially withholding judgment on the theory of evolution, traditional medicine had found little immediate or practical application for it in medical practice or drug therapy.[23] The voices of the few physicians who saw the benefits of evolutionary principles were muffled in the light of a new excitement in European laboratories–the discovery of germs – which seemed to offer more therapeutic promise than any holistic concepts of evolution. Parting with advocates of the germ theory, Still declared a healthy body was the best resistance to disease. Though Still neither quarreled with the existence of germs nor questioned the claim that disease began in the cell, he joined others of his time who asked why germs cause disease in some people and not in others. For Still, the answer was obvious: "There was some failure of the blood, Nature's reliable germicide, to reach and repair and hold healthy possession of that part of the body in which the germ has been found. . . . Nature's chemistry can produce and apply the

[22]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy*, 28.

[23]Haller, *American Medicine*, 288. Modern biological sciences are founded on evolutionary concepts. Spencer applied evolutionary principles to an understanding of the brain and stimulated neurological thinking throughout the Western world. Spencer's impact on the growth of neurophysiology in Russia the USSR came via Sechenov and Pisarev who influenced Pavlov. See H. W. Magoun, "Evolutionary Concepts of Brain Function following Darwin and Spencer," in *Evolution After Darwin*, ed. Sol Tax, Vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 204; Johns Hughlings Jackson is known for his studies of aphasia and of convulsions following cortex lesions (Jacksonian epilepsy); his studies played an important part in establishing the notion of "levels of integration" in the central nervous system, an idea that influenced by evolutionary theories in general biology. See Ackerknecht, *Short History of Medicine*, 203. Jackson was also under the influence of the ideas of Herbert Spencer. See Robert M. Young, *Mind, Brain and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century*, 150-51. The Russian zoologist and bacteriologist Ilya Metchnikoff said that the idea of evolution stimulated the discovery of phagocytosis. Metchnikoff and Paul Erlich shard the Nobel Prize in 1908; see G. F. Gause, "Darwinism, Microbiology, and Cancer," in Tax, ed., *Evolution After Darwin*, 3:615.

substance that will destroy any germ."[24] Subsequently, only a perfect structure could resist disease. Penetrating deeper than the cell to the constant circulation and uninterrupted molecular motion of life, claiming that osteopathic manipulation encouraged the perpetual integration and renewal of substances in the living body, Still believed he came closer to restoring normal function than artificial drugs.[25]

MATTER, MOTION, AND FORCE

Although osteopathic manipulation was derived from magnetic healing and bonesetting, the philosophy behind the science for Still's mechanical approach came mainly from Spencer. Spencer explained the process of change in the terms of matter, motion, and force. Still, preferring the term 'mind' rather than 'force,' wrote, "God manifests Himself in matter, motion, and mind. Study well his manifestations."[26] Believing the mind, or the brain, to be the dominant force of the body, the place where all force centers, where all nerves are connected to a common battery,[27] Still made 'force' integral to his philosophy. Spencer used physiological explanations to describe evolutionary pressures on societies; Still used social allegories to explain the workings of the human organism, comparing in one place the interdependence of all parts and organs of the body to a great labor union:

> They labor and do faithful and good work until one member of the union is mistreated. . . . The head, neck, chest, abdomen, limbs, and all organs belong to the brotherhood of labor, and they are commissioned to show perfect work and good health.
>
> The operator who explores for the true cause of so many deadly effects on the system should keep in mind, that any organ when injured by atmospheric changes, wounds, bruises, mental shocks, etc. very often produces such changes as result in death. Local shocks affect the whole system, the nerve and blood supply to every part of the body. They disable or confuse the secretory and excretory systems, and the fluids retained become deadly poisons . . . or the shock shows its effects on the brain, heart, stomach, bowels . . . or any other organ, and then we have a strike on until the nerves of the injured organ . . . are free from all oppression and have a chance to repair the damage.[28]

[24]A. T. Still, *Osteopathy: Research and Practice*, 419. Until the end of the nineteenth century, American physicians remained skeptical of experimental research. It was this attitude that caused many eminent physicians to question the germ theory of disease. See Ludmerer, *Learning to Heal*, 23.

[25]*Catalogue of American School of Osteopathy* (1897-98): 25-26.

[26]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 226.

[27]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy*, 47.

[28]A. T. Still, *Osteopathy: Research and Practice*, 16-17.

According to Spencer "a biologic individual is any concrete whole having a structure, which enables it, when placed in appropriate conditions, to continuously adjust its internal relations to external relations, so as to maintain the equilibrium of its functions." From this definition of life, Spencer said, "Coordination is the specific characteristic of vitality–an arrest of coordination is death, and imperfect coordination is disease." It is probable that at least some early osteopaths were aware of the intimate relationship between Still's theories and Spencer's.[29] One early osteopath, G.D. Hulett, mentions Herbert Spencer's definition of life as "illuminating." But only Carl McConnell, an early osteopath who knew Still and studied under him, ventured to define osteopathy as "applied evolution."[30]

For Still, to base a system of healing on these theories was possible–even necessary. When he wrote, "All the processes of earthly-life must be kept in perpetual motion to cultivate and be kept in healthy condition,"[31] he echoed Spencer, who said:

> Every living body exhibits, in a four-fold form, the process we are tracing out–exhibits it from moment to moment in the balancing of mechanical forces; from hour to hour in the balancing of functions; from year to year in the changes of state that compensate changes of conditions; and finally in the arrest of vital movements at death. Viewed in their aggregate, and as forming a series, the organic functions constitute a dependent moving equilibrium . . . All the functional movements thus maintained are rhythmical. "[32]

[29]Spencer, *Principles of Biology,* 61, 207. See also G. D. Hulett, D.O., *A Textbook of Principles of Osteopathy,* 3d ed. (Kirksville, Mo.: By the Author), 23. Hulett was Mary Elvira Still's nephew. He mentions Herbert Spencer and his definition of life: "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations" as illuminating. McConnell also mentions Spencer's above definition of life. He wrote, "The best we can do is to keep the mechanism intact anatomically, physiologically, and environmentally so that the life-giving protecting forces may continue to act. . . . We call it scientific because it is true, and it is true because it succeeds." See Carl McConnell, "Osteopathy in the Light of Evolution," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 12 (April 1913): 499-505, 524-32. Though scientists have always attempted to define life, and medical therapies have been developed to reflect those definitions, modern biology is silent on the subject. Believing that biologists are hampered by specialization, leaving no one who feels capable to speak on the problem of life, some are promoting a "new biology" based on the definition of life as the ability of the organism for self-motivation or self-directed activity. These scientists advocate a renewed emphasis on cooperation among organisms, purposefulness, efficiency, and harmony with the environment. See Robert Augros and George Stanciu, *The New Biology: Discovering the Wisdom in Nature* (Boston: New Science Library, 1988), 32, 228, 231. Still wrote in *Philosophy of Osteopathy,* 196, "As motion is the first and only evidence of life by this thought we are conducted to the machinery through which life works to accomplish these results." See also, Thomas Steele Hall, *Ideas of Life and Matter,* 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1969).

[30]McConnell, "Osteopathy in Light of Evolution," 503.

[31]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy,* 180.

[32]Spencer, *First Principles,* 450.

Still proposed to procrastinate death through victory of life over material causes. Knowing that his osteopaths could achieve the necessary adjustment to life's processes, he often spoke of them as "Architects of the Universe" or as engineers spending their lives battling forces.[33]

Osteopathic manipulations were based upon the lever technique, and Spencer had referred to the limbs as "compound levers acting in essentially the same way as levers of iron."[34] Spencer frequently extended electrical and magnetic comparisons to the physiology of the human organism, comparing the contraction of a muscle to a galvanic current which, when flowing through a series of soft iron magnets, shortens itself through the attraction of each magnet for its neighbors. Spencer suggested that a change in a body's internal structure, as by mechanical strain, "alters its magnetic condition," adding that in a collision of bodies, "at least five kinds of forces have been produced," including sound, increased currents, visible condensation caused by disarrangement of the particles of light or spark from the portion struck off, and heat.[35]

When speaking of the evolution of thought and emotion, Spencer emphasized the quantity and condition of the blood supply to the brain: "The arterial currents must be duly aerated to produce the normal amount of cerebration."[36] In a similar vein, Still, remarking on the importance of treating the head, said that a free circulation is vital, that "good hearing, healthy action of the brain with its magnetic and electric forces to the vital parts which sustain life, memory and reason, depend directly and wholly upon unlimited freedom of the circulatory system of nerves, blood and cerebral fluid."[37]

From the holistic approach, to mechanics of physiology, to electricity and magnetism, Still's philosophy was permeated with innuendos to Spencerian philosophy, emphasizing Spencer's themes of natural causation or cause and effect, mutual interdependence of the parts, structure and function, and the effects of use and disuse, the concept of matter, motion, and force, as well as the term 'Unknowable,' in reference to God.

Some, like Still, did not dwell upon the origins of their thought but simply tried to incorporate and use the principles behind the theory of evolution. Still never described osteopathy as "evolutionary healing," but neither did Louis Henry Sullivan nor Frank Lloyd Wright use the term "evolutionary architecture," nor William James "evolutionary psychology,"

[33]A. T. Still, "Body and Soul of Man," 8.

[34]Spencer, *First Principles,* 57-58.

[35]Ibid., 178, 391.

[36]Ibid., 192.

[37]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy,* 43-44.

nor Frederick Jackson Turner, "evolutionary history,"[38] or Jack London, "evolutionary literature," but all based their thinking upon evolution, particularly the writings of Herbert Spencer. Thus Still must be recognized, as others have been in their fields, for first applying the concepts of evolution to a new approach to healing.

THE OSTEOPATHIC APPROACH

Though Still used the bones as levers to relieve pressure on nerves, veins, and arteries, the science of osteopathy was not limited to the mere adjustment of bones; and although the techniques appeared to be simple and easily learned, a great deal of knowledge was needed to practice the science as Still envisioned it:

> Osteopathy is a knowledge of anatomy applied to healing diseases. It is the surgical adjustment of all parts of the body by the anatomist who knows all bones of the human body, their forms, places and how they are held together, where each joint is, where the muscles are attached and how they act when in their normal places; how a normal limb looks, how it feels to his hand, and how an abnormal limb, hand, foot, spine or neck feels to his fingers in which the sense of touch is developed to a very high degree. . . . If he is wise in Anatomy and Physiology, he (the osteopath) will at a glance detect any abnormality in form, and can easily prove the cause of any failure in perfect functioning. . . . He knows how to adjust every bone and muscle in his patient's body, beginning with the heart, will go to work and force the blood to all feeble points, carry off the wastes and repair the wound found, thus establishing the normal functioning which is the all of health.[39]

The "art" of osteopathy can be found in Still's individualized patient-oriented approach. Using techniques nearly impossible to copy, Still could never bring himself to formulate a "manual" of osteopathic technique,

[38]Frederick Jackson Turner was Mary Elvira's second cousin. Her father's cousin, A. J. Turner, became a prominent newspaper editor in Portage, Wisconsin. A. J.'s son, Frederick Jackson, so inspired by his life in pioneer Portage, made the Western frontier his life-long study. His concepts of the frontier, also inspired by evolutionary theories, and his sectional interpretations of America history revolutionized the study of history. In 1893, Turner read his landmark paper, "The Significance of the American Frontier in American History," at the Chicago World's Fair. Although Mary Elvira attended the fair, she was unaware that she and Frederick Jackson Turner were related until after she returned home. See Mary Elvira Still, Kirksville, Missouri, to A. J. Turner, Portage, Wisconsin, November 23, 1893, in the collection of Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison. See also Edward J. Pfeifer, "United States," and William Coleman, "Science and Symbol in the Turner Hypothesis," in *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism*, ed. Thomas F. Glick (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). Turner's theory of American development is characteristic of Neo-Lamarckian concepts.

[39]A. T. Still, Manuscript, undated. In personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville.

insisting each case was unique.[40] This individualized approach meant an overall guiding philosophy was highly important, so Still sought to make the osteopath a self-generating philosopher. "Then," he said, "I will not have the worry of writing details of how to treat any organ of the human body, because he [the osteopath] is qualified to the degree of knowing what has produced variations of all kinds in form and motion. I want to establish in his mind the compass and searchlight by which to travel from the effect to the cause of all abnormality of the body."[41]

Though professors used traditional science textbooks such as *Gray's Anatomy,* Still's idea of osteopathic education resembled more of an approach rather than detailed information, making osteopathy extremely difficult for others to teach. The osteopaths and the M.D.'s studied the same anatomy, the same nervous system, muscles, ligaments, organs, and lymphatic system; they faced the same diseases and conditions. Whereas the regular physician looked outside the body for cures, the osteopath looked within the body for the cures, making Still's manipulative therapy, rather than internal drugs, an integral part of osteopathic practice. Still was certain he did not have all the answers, but he was convinced that his approach was the right approach, and it was in this that osteopathy's uniqueness was found.

In his addresses to students, though sometimes confusing them with parables, they vividly remembered his constant emphasis on the importance of anatomy. In explaining the osteopathic philosophy to the students, he seemed to make the bones come to life, saying to one of his classes, "Do not put your hands on a patient until you first know the anatomy under your fingers, the physiological changes that are taking place, something of the pathology that may be there and more than all that, a living soul is within."[42] Suggesting to students that osteopathy was yet in its infancy, Still even challenged them by saying that he just had the squirrel by the tail, it was up to them to pull it out of the tree.

Osteopathic students came from diverse age groups and backgrounds. Criteria for admission were less of matters of education or gender, but more of moral fiber, certain skills like a tactile sensitivity with fingers, and an open inquisitive mind unencumbered by what Still considered the cobwebs of medical tradition. Moreover, physical endurance was required for the hard work of manipulation. Finally, Still's commitment to temperance required the student to be free from addiction to drugs and alcohol.[43] After

[40]Carl P. McConnell, "Dr. Still's Discussions," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 16 (July 1917): 1273-74

[41]A. T. Still, *Osteopathy: Research and Practice,* 38.

[42]Cyrus J. Gaddis, D.O., *Friendly Chats on Health and Living* (Chicago: American Osteopathic Association, 1929), 127.

[43]*Journal of Osteopathy* 1 (December 1894): 5.

some bad experiences, Still tried to discourage M.D.'s from studying osteopathy because he had found it was too difficult for them to change their approach to the human body.

Usually the Old Doctor was very patient with his students, bringing them along gently, but occasionally their lack of perception or aversion to study flustered him. In keeping with the concept that an abnormal structure produces abnormal pressures and strains upon other parts of the body, Still taught that the effects of pressure sometimes manifested themselves far from the source of trouble. Nevertheless, one student assigned to a patient suffering from inflammatory rheumatism, forgetting Still's instruction, began at the patient's knees which were so tender they could not even be treated. The student reported this to Still, who patiently turned to the blackboard, drew some knees and wrote beneath, "Mud Puddle." Then turning to the student, Still said, "Suppose I know where to go in the spine and open up a faucet that will send to the knees a supply of fresh clean water? Suppose I know where to go and open another faucet that will let the fresh supply through and carry the impurities back to the eliminating organs? What will happen to the Mud Puddle?"

"It will clear up," said the student.

Still replied, "So will the patient's knees."

Illuminated but yet frustrated, the student asked, "Dr. Still, how will I do that?"

His patience gone, Still said, "You damn fool, what have you been doing with your time while you have been in school? You handle that case or I will turn it over to someone more competent."[44]

After their treatments, many patients remained in Kirksville to study Still's science, not just as a profession but with a passion bordering on a religion, for they had been cured by osteopathy where medicine had failed. Many were ridiculed for their zeal. Florence MacGeorge, a New Zealander, who came to the ASO as a patient during the late 1890s, traveled the world in search of a cure for failing eyesight accompanied by excruciating pain. Specialist after specialist prescribed stronger and stronger glasses, telling her to limit the use of her eyes from ten to thirty minutes a day. A world-renowned oculist who had served as Queen Victoria's physician, took away her glasses and prescribed "burning drops" to put into her eyes every day, a painful therapy which she faithfully followed. Eventually, she was told that nothing else could be done. As her eyesight grew worse, she was advised to drink bottle after bottle of iron to strengthen her constitution.

[44]"Gravett Papers," *Bulletin of the American Osteopathic Historical Association* 10 (1954): 39-40.

She lost weight, suffered from insomnia and eventually, after having a nervous breakdown, began to contemplate the use of addictive drugs.[45]

While traveling across the United States, where she heard of osteopathy, Florence became determined to try it though well-meaning friends attempted to discourage her. Soon she was on the doorsteps of Still's infirmary. Later, recalling her first visit to the treatment rooms, she wrote:

> Instead of having glaring lights focused on my eyes till I was nearly blinded or bella donna drops put in to enlarge the pupils, I was merely asked to sit on a stool and then to lay on a treating table so that the neck and upper spine might be examined by the sensitive touch of an expert osteopathist. Within five minutes the exact cause of the trouble, what could be accomplished by osteopathic treatment to relieve the condition . . . [and] what was beyond any help was indicated.
>
> I had consulted world renowned oculists at home and in Europe, not one had given any one thing definite to go upon in answer to these burning questions. Here it was diagnosed that I must have had a severe fall, wrenching the upper part of the neck when I was very young as the atlas or first cervical vertebra was twisted in a pronounced way, carrying its neighboring vertebra–the axis along with it–that certain fibres of the nervous system, in making their exit above, between and below these vertebrae, were thereby impinged upon causing pain–moreover arterial branches ascending which nourished the optic nerve and spinal cord itself from the same cause were being strangled partially resulting in the latter being starved for want of proper nourishment.[46]

Florence immediately remembered a childhood fall, when her sister had attempted to carry her down the stairs. Her sister had suffered a cut in the fall, but Florence was thought to be uninjured. Her osteopathic treatment consisted of manipulation to restore the strained atlas and axis back to their normal positions. This relieved the pain of nerve impingement as well as the pressure upon the arteries, thus supplying free circulation to the optic nerve and spinal cord. The prognosis was not totally optimistic, but Florence was assured that she would not lose her remaining vision and,

[45]Florence MacGeorge, D.O., Manuscript, undated, untitled. SNOM. Dr. MacGeorge was born in Tasmania. She graduated from the ASO in 1900. Fluent in French, German, and Italian, MacGeorge lectured throughout the world on the benefits of osteopathy. She was also deeply involved in "The Cause of Promoting Eugenics," serving as the New Zealand agent for that organization. The board of directors included the founder and English scientist, Sir Francis Galton, and Charles Darwin's son Leonard, who served as president of the London Eugenics Education Society. The MacGeorge materials were inherited by Mrs. Val McFadden's mother. Mrs. McFadden sent them to New Zealand osteopath Robert Bowden, D.O., who then forwarded them to the Still National Osteopathic Museum.

[46]Ibid.

more importantly, would be free from pain. There was even a slight hope that her vision might be fully restored.[47]

It was suggested that Florence try osteopathic treatments for a month on the condition that she promise to continue the treatments if her eyesight showed improvement. As Florence continued treatments and her vision did improve and her headaches diminished, she, like many other patients, became deeply interested in osteopathy as a science of natural law and she enrolled in the ASO to graduate in 1900.[48]

The early D.O.'s battled disease with only their hands, except in cases where surgery was indicated, Called bonesetters or drugless surgeons, osteopaths found many of their successes in the cure of chronic cases involving structural problems, where even dislocations could be crippling and for which the medical profession had little treatment. But the osteopaths, believing their healing powers of manipulation went far beyond ridding the body of the harmful effects of medicine or the mere adjustment of dislocations, attributed their success to the perfect adjustment of all parts of the body, which cleansed the blood, rejuvenated the glandular system, and prepared the body to resist disease. Indeed, at this time, manipulation was perhaps as good as or better than traditional medical therapies.

Even in 1903, the president of the American Medical Association, Dr. Frank Billings, admitted that "physicians had no specific remedies for most infectious diseases and that, with the exception of quinine for malaria and mercury for syphilis, drugs were valueless as cures."[49] Despite the modification of heroic medicine, the drugging of Americans continued unabated, with calomel still in use–although less frequently than before–and the use of addictive drugs increasing at such a frightening rate that America's opium imports climbed three times as fast as the population between 1860 and 1910. Americans were consuming twenty times as much opium as Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary by 1910.[50]

The pioneer osteopaths basked in euphoria, believing that because they had found the secret of health medical science would eventually accept the osteopathic philosophy and techniques. By necessity, the early osteopaths were evangelical. In fact, Still perpetuated a crusading atmosphere, exhorting his students to "stand by the 'old flag' of Osteopathy, on whose fluttering folds are emblazoned in letters of glittering gold: one science, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism."[51] Before they could practice, however, laws

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

[49]James G. Burrow, *Organized Medicine in the Progressive Era: The Move Toward Monopoly* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 8.

[50]Rothstein, *American Physicians,* 193.

[51]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 368.

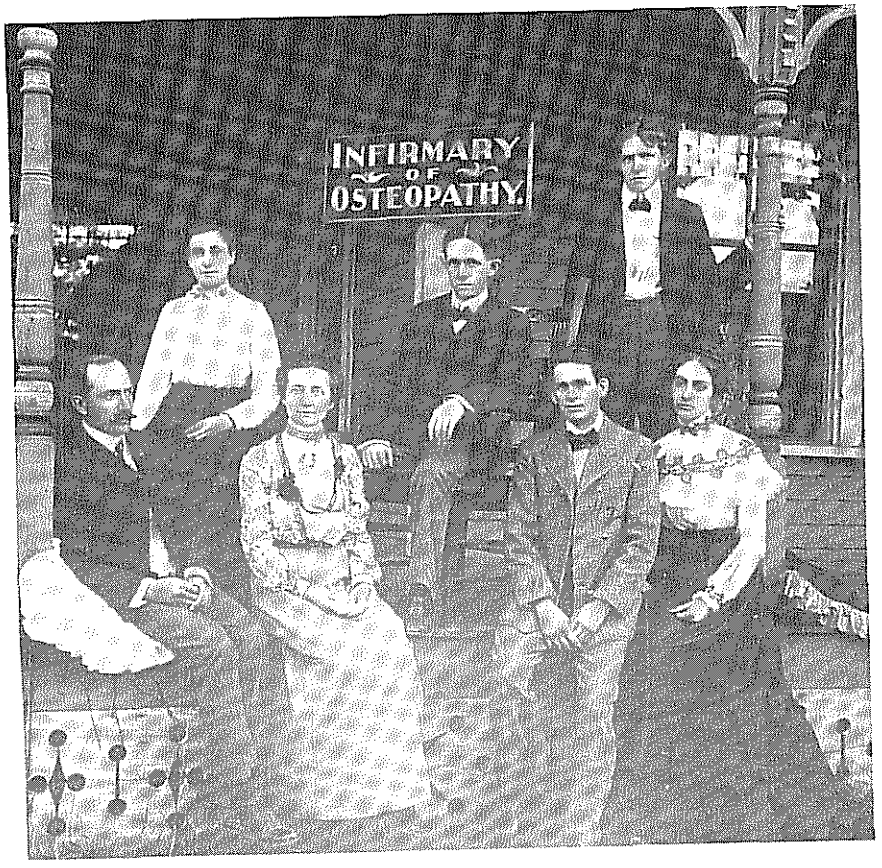
to regulate and legalize osteopathy had to be secured, for in states where osteopathic laws had not been passed, D.O.'s daily faced the prospect of arrest for practicing without a license. Many kept their overnight bags packed and a train schedule within close reach.[52] They, like their founder, seemed to thrive on adversity, a condition generations of osteopaths were to become accustomed to, for Still had no intention of conforming to medical tradition or curricula. Ironically enough, the groundwork for both their future problems and their very survival was laid during those early years.

Although the first osteopathic bill was introduced in Still's home state of Missouri, Dr. George J. Helmer spearheaded the first osteopathic legislation in the state of Vermont in 1896. Following was North Dakota, where a patient, Helen De Lenderecie of Fargo, managed to secure the second osteopathic law. On Still's own turf in Missouri, however, the D.O.'s had problems. Dr. Arthur Hildreth had been sent to the state capitol at Jefferson City in January 1895 to lobby for the osteopathic bill. He was accompanied by two of Kirksville's best lawyers, F.M. Harrington and Henry F. Millan, who introduced him to leaders of the House and Senate, then returned to Kirksville, leaving Hildreth behind, somewhat intimidated. Hildreth's undertaking was to teach the legislators about osteopathy, a duty he combined with gratis osteopathic treatments. This strategy gained a number of legislative friends. The bill passed the House by a good majority and the Senate by every vote except those of three regular physician-legislators. When the bill reached Governor William Joel Stone's desk, Hildreth returned to Kirksville, confident of its passage. However, after the bill had stayed on the governor's desk for ten days, it was vetoed on the eve of the adjournment of the legislature. The Missouri osteopaths would have to wait two more years, until the legislature reconvened, for the bill to be reconsidered. Hildreth was crushed. As soon as he heard the news of the veto, Hildreth watched for Still through the window of his house. When he saw the Old Doctor coming down the street, he put on his coat and hat and walked out to meet him. Still greeted Hildreth with a smile and said, "Arthur, you need not worry about that veto–that was a poor bill. Next time we will get a better one."[53]

On January 1, 1897, Hildreth resumed his lobbying efforts. During the previous session Hildreth had avoided the regular physician legislative members. He now called upon them and asked for their advice. When one legislator, Dr. Alonzo Tubbs from Osage County, told him that the previous bill would have given osteopaths the exclusive right to set broken bones, Hildreth included a phrase to indicate that the law would not interfere

[52]Frank C. Farmer, D.O., "A Reminiscence," *Journal of Osteopathy* 45 (April 1938): 18.

[53]Hildreth, *Lengthening Shadows,* 77-78, 80.



THE WEST INFIRMARY OF OSTEOPATHY, IOWA
(Photo courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

with the practice of any licensed physician or any system. Furthermore, the ASO had expanded its curriculum in order to negate the criticism that osteopathic practitioners were insufficiently educated.[54] Except for the votes of five representatives and the same three physician-senators, the bill passed both houses by sizable majorities. The new governor, Lon V. Stephens, already sympathetic to osteopathy because he and his wife had received treatments at the ASO, signed the osteopathic bill on March 4, 1897.[55] Still was notified of the passage of the bill by telegram. Meanwhile, Hildreth and Henry Patterson, secretary of the ASO, returned to Kirksville on the evening train where a cornet band and booming cannons heralded their arrival. Students hoisted the men on their shoulders and carried them to carriages for an impromtu procession. The next day the entire town gathered for a formal celebration.

Led by Hildreth, the osteopaths' early political strategy followed Still's wish to be totally independent from the medical profession, yet equal. In state after state, D.O.'s acquired passage of laws, and in many cases independent boards with the power to license their own graduates. Nevertheless, many states severely limited their right to use drugs or practice surgery or obstetrics. Just as the earlier homeopathic physicians had offered intense economic competition to medical doctors, osteopaths now threatened the already meager income of medical doctors. In 1902 the majority of physicians in the United States made less than $1,500 a year, rural physicians faring even worse.[56] The American School of Osteopathy claimed that even the average woman osteopath earned $400 to $500 a month, implying a good operator could make as much as $1,200 a month.[57] These figures may have been exaggerated and although Still cautioned the students not to go into the profession for money, in those early years the market demand for osteopathic treatment was strong.

Medical physicians faced competition within their own ranks because the many for-profit medical institutions organized before and after the Civil War produced graduates, creating an oversupply of physicians. In the face of the American Medical Association (AMA) as a powerful political force bent on monopoly,[58] Still kept repeating to his profession that not only did they have the constitutional right to exist, but in a therapeutic struggle for "survival of the fittest," osteopathy would emerge the victor.[59]

[54]Gevitz, *The D.O. s,* 28.

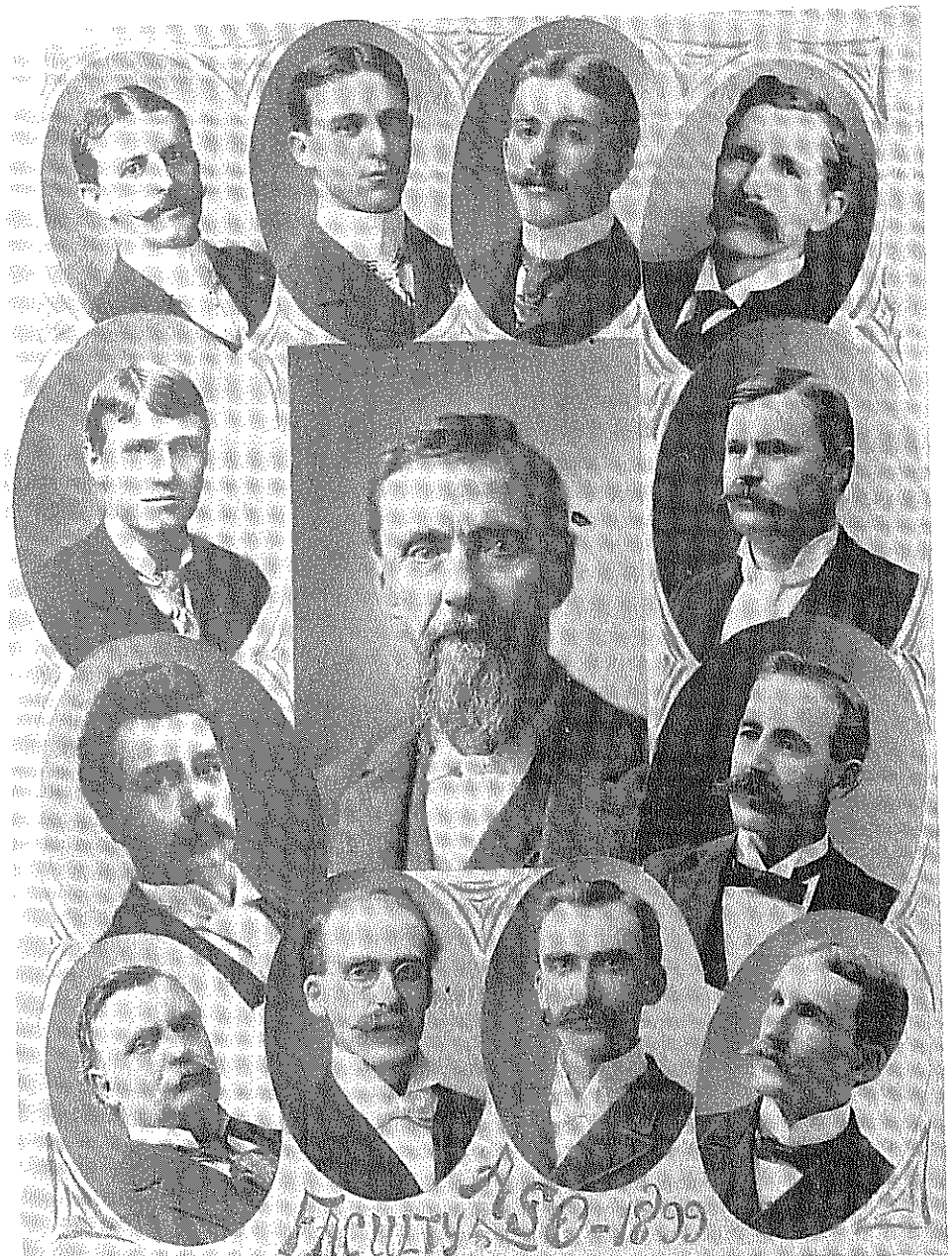
[55]Hildreth, *Lengthening Shadow,* 97.

[56]Burrow, *Organized Medicine,* 15; and idem, *The A.M.A., Voice of American Medicine* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963).

[57]Blanche Still, "Woman's Department," *Journal of Osteopathy* 5 (June 1898): 13.

[58]For the AMA story, see Burrow, *Organized Medicine in the Progressive Era: The Move Toward Monopoly*

[59]Joseph Sullivan, D.O., "What to Do? What to Do?" Manuscript, and//ed. SNOM.



ASO FACULTY, 1899
(Photo courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

However, the osteopaths were not to have the privilege of pursuing this test.

Following the lead of a second generation evolutionist, Lester Ward, father of the "New Sociology," the medical profession had begun to forge new bonds with the government. By the late nineteenth century the AMA was urging physicians and medical societies to become more involved in governmental issues affecting the profession: poor laws, coeducation, control of quarantines, compulsory vaccination, sanitation, prostitution, and the licensing of doctors, druggists, dentists, and barbers.[60] The political and economic movement to isolate practitioners of alternative methods of healing had begun. Although the AMA continued to be a formidable external opponent, Still's version of osteopathy was threatened from within almost from the beginning so that he found it increasingly difficult to keep osteopathy pure. The profession divided into separate camps–Conservatives hewing to Still's drugless line and Liberals, insisting upon mixing osteopathy and drugs[61]–a trend that gathered momentum in the twentieth century.

Marcus L. Ward, Still's former colleague, first practiced a blend of mechanical manipulation, medicine, and surgery. After leaving Still, Ward attended the medical college at the University of Cincinnati, graduating in 1897. The following year, just across town from the ASO, Ward established a rival school, The Great Columbian School of Osteopathy, Medicine, and Surgery, which offered an osteopathic course of twenty months–four terms of five months each and/or a medical course of two terms of six months each–culminating in an osteopathic degree, a medical degree, or a combination degree. When the Columbian school failed, all its students transferred to the ASO in 1900 to complete the requirements for the osteopathic degree. Although Ward's experiment was unsuccessful, forces within the profession were already mobilizing to broaden osteopathic practice.

THE LITTLEJOHNS

A similar movement to broaden osteopathy was occurring right under Still's nose at the ASO. William Smith led the Littlejohn brothers to osteopathy. Originally from Scotland, the Littlejohns had arrived in the States during the 1890s. J. Martin Littlejohn was a graduate of the University of Glasgow, James Littlejohn was a surgeon and medical doctor, and David

[60]Haller, *American Medicine,* 308. See also Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Lester Ward and the Welfare State* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril, 1967).

[61]Harry L. Chiles, "The Development of Organized Osteopathy," *Journal of Osteopathy* 45 (June 1938): 12-16.

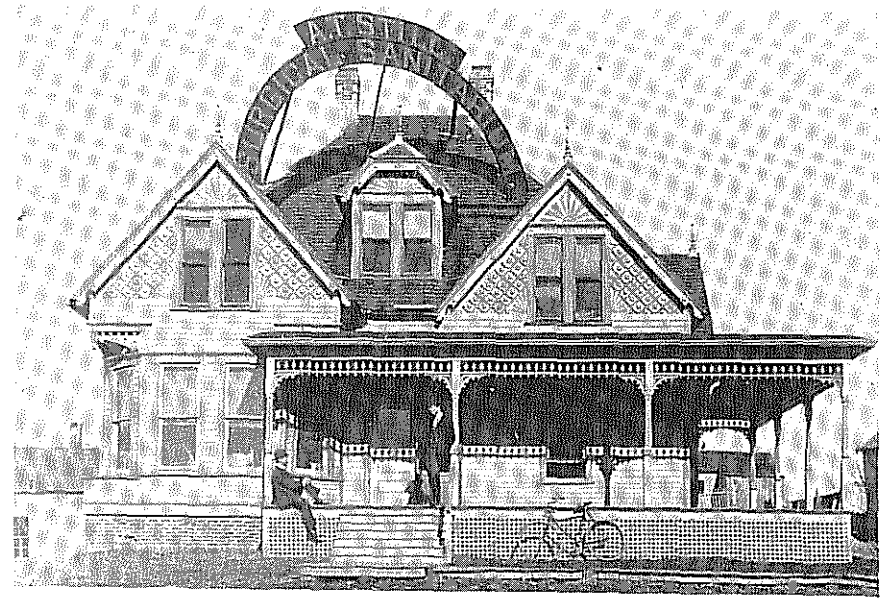
Littlejohn held a degree in science.[62] Although suffering from throat and neck problems, J. Martin continued his education in America, receiving the doctoral degree from Columbia University in New York in 1894 and accepting an appointment as president of Amity College in Iowa. When his health continued to deteriorate, he traveled to Kirksville for osteopathic treatments in 1897. Here, Littlejohn was restored to health. Recruited to lecture at the ASO on his favorite subject, physiology, Littlejohn subsequently resigned his Amity post in 1898 to accept the position as Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Physiology at the ASO, enrolling in osteopathic classes. James and David followed their brother to Kirksville, where they also taught while studying osteopathy.[63]

William Smith had returned to the ASO in 1896, and under his and and the Littlejohns' influence the character of the ASO began to change, leading to an inevitable clash with Still. J. Martin preferred a broader based osteopathy, founded on physiology rather than anatomy. Though he was attracted to the naturalistic principles behind Still's science, believing in the drugless approach, Littlejohn strongly advocated that everything in medical science–except materia medica–must be included in the osteopathic curriculum and practice.[64]

[62]Theodore Berchtold, *To Teach, To Heal, To Serve! A History of the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, 1900-1975* (Chicago: Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, 1975), 5-15. J. Martin Littlejohn (1865-1947) attended Glasgow University where he studied theology. Although he was not graduated, he was ordained in 1886 and taught during that year. In 1889 he returned to the University where he received the Master of Arts degree in 1889 in classical languages. He received the Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1890 and for the next two years studied law, being graduated in 1892 as the top student in Legal Science, LL.B. Somewhere along the way he received a University degree from the department of medicine, where he probably attained his familiarity with anatomy and physiology. After arriving n America, Littlejohn attended Columbia University in New York in 1892, completing the Ph.D. in 1894. In that year he was elected president of Amity College, College Springs, Iowa, a coeducational liberal arts college. After leaving the ASO, Littlejohn and his brothers founded the Littlejohn College of Osteopathy in Chicago. There J. Martin attended the medical colleges of Dunham and Hering and received the M.D. degree. He returned to England in 1913 and founded the British School of Osteopathy.

[63]Ibid. James Buchanan Littlejohn (1869-1947) received the M.D. and Ch.M. degrees from the University of Glasgow. For three years he held the position of Surgeon under the Government Board of England. When J. Martin returned to England, James took over the administration of the Chicago College, and was active in the affairs of the osteopathic profession. Perhaps after his experience with the ASO, James attended Kent College of Law, earning the LL.B. David Littlejohn (1876-1955) attended the College of Science in Kensington, London, 1891-1892. He then attended the University of Glasgow from 1893 until 1896 during which time he taught chemistry at the Western Medical School of Glasgow. In 1896, he too sailed for America. David received the Ph.D. at Amity College, Iowa, and then the M.D. at Central Michigan College in Saint Joseph, Michigan. During his stint at the ASO, David married William Smith's sister. He initially went to Chicago with his brothers, but his interest in public health and sanitation lured him in other directions.

[64]J. Martin Littlejohn, "The Prophylactic and Curative Value of the Science of Osteopathy," address presented to the Royal Society of Literature, London, reprinted in *Journal of Osteopathy* 6 (February 1900): 365-84.



A. T. STILL SURGICAL SANITARIUM, 1898.
(Photo courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

As Smith and the Littlejohns began to move the ASO in this direction, the school purchased one of the first X-ray machines west of the Mississippi, to become operational by November 1898. For many years, immersed in extensive study of normal and abnormal positions of the human anatomy, Still had formed in his mind a perpetual image of every articulation in the framework of the human body.[65] Before William Roentgen's discovery of the X-ray machine, visualization, good observation skills, a delicate sense of touch–and that perpetual image–were the only tools Still had to assist him in detecting the abnormal from the normal. He also claimed to see an aura around all of his patients–vibrations emanating from the body–giving him additional clues about his patients' conditions.[66] Lacking Still's alleged extrasensory powers, the professors and the students hoped the X-ray machine could substitute for Still's talents of visualization. The Old Doctor, skeptical of the new instrument, stated to some students, "The x-ray by tremendously increasing the vibrations enables us to see under the surface what our eyes will not discover. Why can't we train our minds to do that?"[67]

When the ASO opened a surgical sanitarium in 1898, the teaching of surgery in osteopathic colleges became a controversial issue. The Littlejohn-Smith influence irritated Still enough to write a terse note to Harry Bunting in 1899 concerning the improved status of the *Journal of Osteopathy,* but when he stated, "*my school* was chartered to teach osteopathy only,"[68] he alluded to serious disagreements within the ASO. One early osteopath recalled that on several occasions Still closed the school to argue with the staff over the compatibility of medical diagnosis and osteopathy.[69] One student remembered a time Still stormed into a classroom and furiously wrote on the blackboard "No Physiology!"[70] Still's mecca was becoming a nightmare.

Arthur Hildreth, Still's confidant and chief promoter of pure osteopathy, returned from Saint Louis to put the school back in order and ostensibly to purge medical theories from the ASO's curriculum. The Littlejohns and Hildreth had evidently clashed before over the issue of a broadened osteopathy, for at the beginning of the fall 1899 term, the board of trustees had

[65]A. T. Still, *Osteopathy: Research and Practice,* 41.

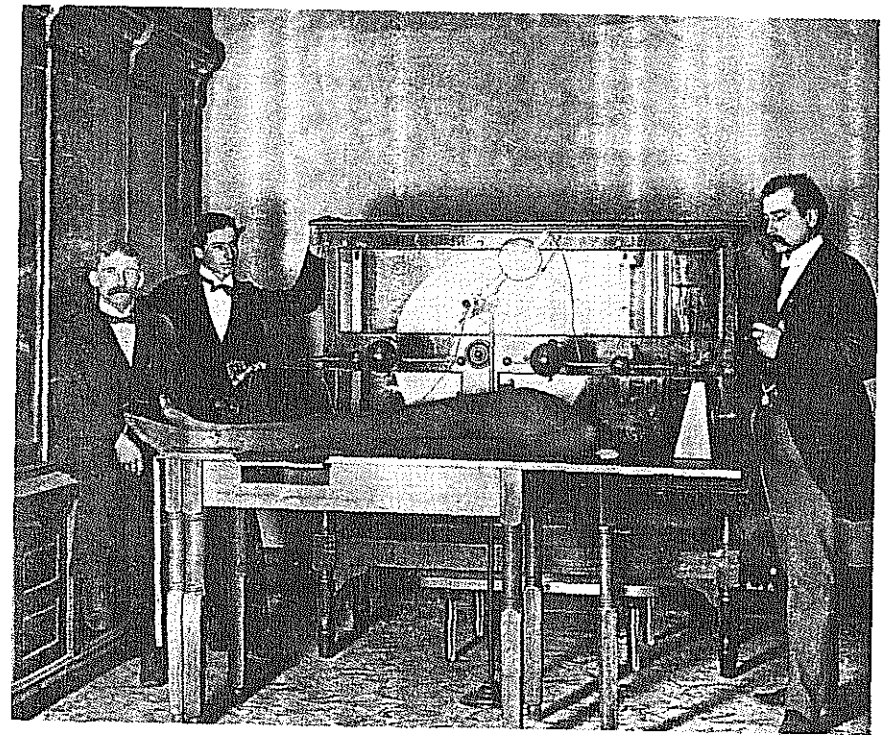
[66]Ellen Barrett Ligon, D.O., "Some Things Dr. Still Told Me," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 23 (July 1924): 814.

[67]Harry Chiles, D.O., "Kirksville, the ASO, and the Old Doctor, 45 Years Ago," *Journal of Osteopathy* 49 (September 1942): 14-17.

[68]Letter from A. T. Still to Harry Bunting, D.O., February 14, 1899. SNOM.

[69]Joseph H. Sullivan, "Victoria Episode," October 7, 1926, Dixon, Illinois. Manuscript. SNOM.

[70]E. R. Booth, *History of Osteopathy and Twentieth Century Medicine* (Cincinnati: Caxton Press, 1905), 493.



STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT X-RAY DIAGNOSIS
(Journal of Osteopathy 1897)

promised the brothers that Hildreth would not be associated in any way with the faculty. Nevertheless, Hildreth not only returned to the faculty but was installed as dean of the college over J. Martin Littlejohn, and William Smith was dismissed. There were too many bosses to suit him, Still explained to a patient with whom he was very close.[71] During the winter of 1899, a series of angry letters from the Littlejohns to the ASO trustees culminated in the resignation of all three brothers in June 1900 and a subsequent lawsuit that dragged on until 1902.

Refusing to issue osteopathic degrees allegedly earned by the Littlejohns during their tenure at the school, the ASO trustees were perhaps provoked and Still was outraged by J. Martin's demand for a combination degree of "Doctor of Medicine, Osteopathic." The day following that application for graduation with the June 1899 class, Littlejohn explained in a letter the reason for his request: "I should like to receive the Degree of M.D. (Osteopathic School) because I believe that it is the right one by the intent and expression of Dr. Charlie and as a matter of policy for the recognition of osteopathy as an independent school of healing."[72] The Littlejohns immediately chartered their own college, The American School of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery, in Chicago in 1900.[73] By June 30, 1900, when the ASO trustees had taken no action concerning James Littlejohn's diploma, James wrote to Charlie Still that he was considering the possibility of granting a degree to himself.[74]

Now in charge, Hildreth discontinued the surgical sanitorium and dedicated himself to filling all the teaching positions with osteopaths only.[75] Nationally, however, the trend toward a broader osteopathy continued. Moreover, political forces interfered with Still's wish to keep the ASO's curriculum practical, not technical, offering an education that was drugless yet still geared for general practice. The ASO was no longer the only school and Still's voice was not the only voice the D.O.'s were listening to. In 1897 the osteopaths organized the profession as the American Associa-

[71]A. T. Still to Mrs. Orschel, August 19, 1899. A. T. Still Memorial Library, Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (KCOM).

[72]J. Martin Littlejohn to the Board of Trustees of the American School of Osteopathy, June 6, 1899. SNOM.

[73]In 1904 the American School of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery required a three-year course and offered a fourth year, after which the student could be awarded the M.D. degree. Only two classes, however, were granted the M.D. In 1909 the name was changed to the Littlejohn College and the curriculum included not only osteopathy and surgical medicine, but also anesthetics, antiseptics, and osteopathic materia medica. Today that college is known as the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine.

[74]J. B. Littlejohn to Charles Still, June 30, 1900, SNOM.

[75]A. G. Hildreth to Leslie D. Smith, D.O., Eugene, Oregon, May 29, 1900. ASO correspondence collection, SNOM.

tion for the Advancement of Osteopathy (AAAO).[76] Later they followed J. Martin Littlejohn's lead. Desiring the best of both worlds, the profession, claiming a legal right to practice surgery and obstetrics and to use antiseptics and anesthesia as well as osteopathic treatments, addressed the problem of osteopathic recognition. The second president of the AAAO, Schuyler C. Mathews, wrote in 1899: The osteopathic curriculum must be made "equal in every respect to the curriculum of the foremost schools of other systems. Major surgery, Obstetrics, and the use of any and all agencies must be taught. . . ." He desired to see the graduates become family doctors, "prepared to take care of the family in any and all emergencies."[77]

Between 1896 and 1899 thirteen legitimate osteopathic colleges were established. As in the medical profession, however, a few diploma mills went into business to take advantage of lax standards. The AAAO undertook the task of policing itself, beginning with charges against a Kansas City school, The National School of Osteopathy, established in 1895 by Elmer Barber. Although they failed in their effort to close the school, a subcommittee of the AAAO, the Associated Colleges of Osteopathy (ACO) organized in 1898, began to set standards for all osteopathic schools. With the establishment of these standards, Still lost control of osteopathic education. He had opposed the committee, and in 1902 the ASO withdrew from that organization on the grounds that too little osteopathy and too much medicine was being taught in the osteopathic colleges.[78] The ASO did not send a representative to the AOC until 1920.

By 1906, many D.O.'s talked of Still as if he were already dead. The principles of his philosophy were never questioned, but they were definitely open to various interpretations as pressures to expand the osteopathic curriculum to include drug therapy continued. Some colleges were teaching it on the side or in courses called Comparative Therapeutics, whereas others followed the ASO, which by 1911 had incorporated the study of vaccines, serum therapy, and antitoxins into the bacteriology course.[79]

For a while at least, with Hildreth's help, Still was able to re-create his own utopia in Kirksville, an island on which he was insulated from the problems faced by the profession. Throughout late 1890 rumors circulated that the ASO might move to a larger city where clinical and research

[76]The AAAO was changed four years later to the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).

[77]"President Mathew's Circular Letter," *The Popular Osteopath* 1 (July 1899): 161.

[78]"The Associated Colleges a Part of AOA," *Osteopathic Physician* 2 (October 1902): 1.

[79]Gevitz, *The D.O.'s*, 69-71. By 1915, despite a plea from Still, the AOA no longer challenged the teaching of materia medica in osteopathic colleges.

ASO CONVENTION OF 1897
(Courtesy Still Natioal Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

material was more accessible. It was said that even though Charlie Still favored the move, his father put an end to such an idea.[80]

Except for those held in Kirksville, Still attended only the AOA convention held in Saint Louis in conjunction with the World's Fair in 1904, and the 1905 Denver meeting, where Carl McConnell demonstrated the first research on osteopathic lesions. The osteopaths taught that structural abnormalities, called osteopathic lesions (referring to all structural changes), manifested themselves in the bones, cartilage, ligaments, muscles, or other tissues. Displaced ribs or vertebrae, contracted muscles or any anatomical disorder caused tenderness of the connective tissue; muscular changes including rigidity, contraction or contracture; ropiness; and pain, either radiating or referred.[81]

As Still aged, he was no longer involved in the daily operation of the school. However, true to the Methodist aversion to trifling pleasure, he was always gainfully employed. He experimented with the effects of light upon the growth of corn. He invented a modern antipollution device that allowed for smokeless combustion in coal-burning furnaces. He kept his own dissection room and was always studying or thinking about the human anatomy or related topics of natural history. Still loved to ramble in the woods near the infirmary, where he collected rocks, hunted for specimens, studied the plants, and just generally enjoyed being in tune with nature.

Having been exposed to his broad interests, some of his patients returned to their homes and sent him specimens of natural history, some of them quite rare. Throughout the halls of the infirmary Still displayed his treasured gifts. There was an enormous moose head from Cook's Inlet, Alaska with a seventy-inch wide antler of forty points. Its horns alone weighed ninety-six pounds, and the moose was believed to be the largest specimen in the United States. The infirmary was a veritable museum, a taxidermist's delight with deer and elk heads, a burro, a mountain goat, bears, eagles, an alligator, turtles, crabs, birds, and, of course, the animal that played the important allegorical role in Still's autobiography as the messenger of reason, the ram.

During the late 1890s and early 1900s, Still spoke once a week to patients and students in Memorial Hall. Here he was humorous, informative, and persuasive. For these occasions, the man who normally paid little attention to his appearance put on his Prince Albert coat, buttoned up his

[80]"The A.S.O. Moves on St. Louis," *Osteopathic Physician* 3 (March 1903): 1.

[81]See Carl McConnell, D.O., *The Practice of Osteopathy: designed for the use of Practitioners and Students of Osteopathy* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1899), 15-16. See also Barbara Peterson, ed., *Irvin M. Korr, Collected Papers* (Newark, Ohio: American Academy of Osteopathy, 1979). Kerr's most in-depth description of osteopathic lesions are in two articles: "The Neural Basis of the Osteopathic Lesion," pp. 120-27, and "The Emerging Concept of the Osteopathic Lesion," 128-38.

vest, attached his gold watch chain–and then ruined the image by topping off the distinguished wardrobe with an old felt homberg on his head. As he entered the hall, walking up the aisle with the aid of a rough walking stick, he received a standing ovation which he did not even acknowledge. Once on stage, he proceeded to his talk, peering through wire-rimmed glasses, personalizing his lectures by directing his remarks to various individuals or sections of the audience. Sometimes he walked around while speaking; other times, for emphasis, he stood perfectly quiet. During his speech, in contrast to the preachers of his youth, Still never shouted.[82] Nevertheless, he preached a sermon. No longer limited to the pitiful bag of bones which in his earlier days he had used for visual aids, he now had the benefit of electricity. Wen he wished to illustrate how the body reacted when pulls, strains, or falls contracted the nerves and vertebrae and pinched the nerves coming from the spinal cord, he signaled for the lights to be turned off. As the audience watched, one row of ceiling lights died out. Still began to describe a fictitious patient, saying:

> The wires to that man's stomach are out of commission and he begins to have trouble with his digestion. Now what are we going to do about it? Are we going to pour hydrochloric acid and pepsin into that man's stomach or give him a lot of calomel and purgatives? Well, what are we going to do about those lights? Are we going to take the globes down and tinker with them? Are we going to wash and polish them to make them glow again? No I'll tell you what we are going to do. John [the janitor], turn on number three again. (John does) That's what we are going to do. We are going back to that place in the man's back where the juice was turned off so the wires can carry energy once more.[83]

He delighted in taking an active part in the lectures. Once, to illustrate a point, he said to the audience, " . . . and when I lay down and die, I know that my boys and girls will carry on my work." With that said, he suddenly fell down on the rostrum. Because the Old Doctor was nearing age seventy-five, no one was sure if he had actually collapsed–including his son Harry, who started toward the stage. As Harry neared the nostrum, Still said in a loud whisper, "You fool, go back, you have spoiled my point."[84]

Increasingly within the profession Still's points were being ignored. When it became apparent to Still and to his supporters that his original

[82]E. S. Detwiler, D.O., "Dr. Andrew Taylor Still. . . Readings and Impersonations," *American Osteopathic Historical Society Bulletin* (July 1961): 2-3, 6.

[83]Clarence V. Kerr, D.O., cited in Booth, *History of Osteopathy*, 484.

[84]Blanche Still Laughlin, "Anecdotes and Incidents in the Life of Dr. Still," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 20 (February 1921): 318.

philosophy and technique must be recorded, Still devoted the last years of his life to writing. Though he contributed regularly to the official magazine of the ASO, the *Journal of Osteopathy*, writing on topics of immediate concern to his graduates, such as medical legislation, the *Journal* was also a place where he let his imagination roam, indulging in the subjects of temperance and philosophy, and writing poems. He soon began work on a book, retreating to the farmhouse of some friends, Mr. and Mrs. Sol Morris. In 1897 Still published his autobiography. In view of the pressing need for osteopathic textbooks, this project might have seemed an egotistical exercise, but there was much demand for the story of Still's life and discovery of osteopathy. In reality, few people could have handled the increasing notoriety with such composure as the Old Doctor. Still's brother-in-law, F. P. Vaughan, wrote to his daughter, Kate, that Still was being touted as the "greatest wonder of the age. . . . One woman asked him if he was not the Christ, and he told her he was only one of his monkies [*sic*]."[85]

Unfortunately, the details of Still's life are scantily presented in the autobiography. Though his reminiscences about the most traumatic period of his life–the Kansas years–are particularly vague, the character and upbringing of this man shine clear. In the many pages devoted to the evolutionary philosophy, his descriptions and allegorical comparisons seem strange and eccentric to one unfamiliar with the persuasive evangelistic preaching at the nineteenth-century camp meetings. The rhetorical influence upon Still is vividly portrayed in his book. As the Prince of Darkness (the Devil) was personified in evangelists' sermons, so Still personified disease. The Joshua of Osteopathy was sent to battle Mumps, Diphtheria, Pneumonia, and Scarlet Fever.[86] Just as frontier Methodist preachers had excited their congregations into action with militant images of waging war against the Devil and sin–to charge at the sound of the bugle–the Old Doctor commanded his generals to draw their sabers and fix their bayonets against the ravages of disease.[87] Surviving copies of the original edition of the autobiography are worn and tattered from frequent readings by the Old Doctor's followers, perhaps an indication that it took more than one reading to understand the points he was trying to make.

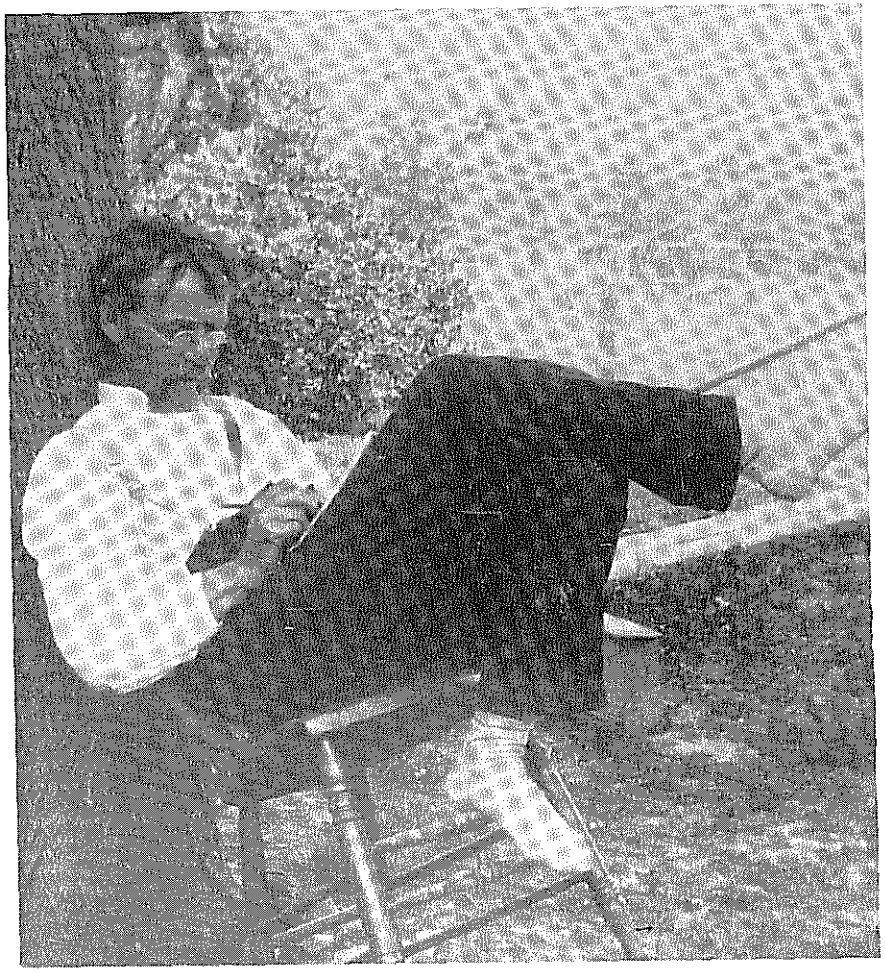
AN EVOLUTIONIST

At first glance, Andrew Still's philosophy of osteopathy appears to be an eclectic assortment of philosophies encompassing the concepts of reason,

[85]F. P. Vaughan, Macon, Missouri, to Kate Vaughan [Barnett], October 15, 1894. Barbara Barnett Shelley Papers, Western Historical Manuscripts Joint Collection, University of Missouri and Missouri State Historical Society, Kansas City, Missouri.

[86]A. T. Still, *Autobiography*, 157-64.

[87]Ibid., 190.



DR. STILL AT THE SOL MORRIS FARM, MILLARD, MISSOURI

Still retired to the serenity of the Sol Morris Farm to write his autobiography. (Courtesy Still National Osteopathic Museum, Kirksville)

design, harmony found in eighteenth-century philosophy, a love of nature, a belief in intuitive intelligence, and an adoration of the common man found in the philosophies of nineteenth-century America. Woven throughout Still's writings are also spiritualism, perfectionism, and a belief in progress. The same eclecticism holds true for Still's therapeutic ideas, which incorporate a broad knowledge of nineteenth-century medical science with electricity, magnetism, and techniques derived from the ancient art of bonesetting. Nevertheless, the thread holding all these ideas together was evolution which had created an intellectual revolution in every discipline. For Still, medicine was not immune to its implications. He referred to evolution sometimes as the physical laws of life or as Nature's laws but most often as "the plan and specification by which man is designed by God or the Grand Architect."[88] Still believed that he had placed his medical approach on solid scientific principles. Throughout his writings a familiarity and an obsession with evolutionary science becomes evident. He wrote: "We see evidences all along of prehistoric man's life. . . . We see close to his bony remains the stone axe and the flint dart. . . ."[89] He wrote of "Darwin's protoplasm" and the struggle with nature,[90] seeing survival of the fittest as the "law of extinction" whereby an organism out of harmony with its natural environment could not survive.[91]

Still's writings reflect the two dominant theories of evolution of his day: natural selection and the Lamarckian concept of acquired characteristics. Still, the thoroughgoing evolutionist, wrote, "In early life I began the study of anatomy, believing it to be the 'alpha and omega,' the beginning and the end, of all forms and the laws that give forms by selection."[92] He frequently referred to the Darwinian concept of natural selection with the words "nature selects."

Another of Still's definitions of life is also illuminating:

> Life is a substance which fills all of the space of the whole universe. One of its attributes is action under all proper conditions. It gives form and motion to both physical and intellectual. One of its powers is to select the kind of matter that will make flesh to suit any fiber or muscle in man, beasts, bird, reptile, or that will make mineral, vegetable, all gases, fluids and the forces of Nature.[93]

[88]A. T. Still, "Some of the Circumstances," 5.

[89]A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles,* 264.

[90]A. T. Still, *The Philosophy of Osteopathy* (Kirksville: By the Author, 1899), 114-15, 228.

[91]A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles,* 28. See also Spencer, *Principles of Biology,* 73, for a similar comparison.

[92]A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles,* 27.

[93]A. T. Still, *Osteopathy: Research and Practice,* 511.

The evolutionist, Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverer with Darwin of the concept of natural selection, defined life in similar terms:

> Life is that power which, primarily from air and water and the substances dissolved therein, builds up organized and highly complex structures possessing definite forms and functions: these are are preserved in a continuous state of decay and repair by internal circulation of fluids and gases; they reproduce their like, go through various phases of youth, maturity and age, die, and quickly decompose into their constituent elements. They thus form continuous series of similar individuals; and so long as external conditions render their existence possible, seem to possess a potential immortality.[94]

"Man is a compound of the highest substance [whose] attributes are life, motion, wisdom, and endless duration" is the way Still wrote it.[95] Wallace had parted with Darwin, believing that natural selection alone could not explain the many human characteristics, particularly the brain's broad capacities. Wallace preferred to believe that man's spiritual nature was added not by natural selection but by "spiritual influx."[96] Still the spiritualist preferred Wallace as his favorite biologist,[97]

Other themes in Still's writings bear a remarkable resemblance to the evolutionary thought of his day. Darwin marveled at the complexity of an organic being when he wrote, "An organic being is a microcosm – a little universe, formed of a host of self-propagating organisms, inconceivably minute and numerous as the stars in heaven."[98] Similarly, Still wrote, "I find in man a miniature universe. I find matter, motion and mind."[99]

Other quotes, however, link Still firmly to Herbert Spencer, who followed Samuel Taylor Coleridge's definition of life as "a tendency towards individuation." Still remarked, "If life is an individualized personage, as we might express that mysterious something, it must have definite arrangements by which it can be united and act with matter."[100]

Spencer's Lamarckian bias is also evident throughout Still's writings. Until the early 1900s, Lamarckian evolution reigned over the concept of

[94]Alfred Russel Wallace, *The World of Life* (New York: Moffat, Uard and Co., 1911), 4.

[95]A. T. Still, Manuscript, undated. Personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville, Missouri.

[96]Moore, *Post-Darwinian Controversies,* 266-67.

[97]Deason, "Dr. Still–Nonconformist," *Osteopathic Profession* 1 (August 1934): 240.

[98]Charles Darwin, *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication,* 2 vols. (New York: Appleton, 1896; reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1972), 2:399.

[99]A. T. Still, *Autobiography,* 406.

[100]See William Henry Hudson, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer,* 2d ed. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1897), 83. See also A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles,* 249.

natural selection as the most probable cause for variety and change in an organism.[101] The theory of acquired traits developed by the French naturalist Jean Baptist Lamarck seemed to allow humans more control over their destiny, reinforcing the theory of progress. Offspring could immediately inherit newly developed muscles, increased intellect, and even the less desirable characteristics such as an acquired illness. Even Darwin and Wallace believed with Spencer that the two concepts operated in the environment, although Darwin gave more emphasis to natural selection. Some American biologists in their own Neo-Lamarckian school emphasized the importance of environmental forces rather than natural selection.[102] In contrast to pure natural selection, whereby only survivors pass on changes to their offspring, Lamarck argued that organic changes, through use and disuse of organs and structures, are passed on to the organism's offspring.

Still reflected this influence. In his *Philosophy of Osteopathy,* in a chapter titled "Has Man Degenerated," he claimed that wars have eliminated the young and most fit, leaving only the old and less fit to propagate, thereby weakening the whole race.[103] In another essay he wrote, "A mental revolution is wanted, a better race is needed. . . . A child is surely what it is made by prenatal causes. Get something in the mother's head besides idle gossip, then when the child's brain is forming from her blood you may hope for a bright child, youth and man."[104] It was obvious to Still that "we must arrange our bodies in such true lines that ample Nature can select and associate."[105]

Certain others who tried to write osteopathic textbooks, according to Still, digressed from the purer version of osteopathy, adding nothing to the unfolding of Nature's truths and laws. The first book on osteopathic technique, by Elmer Barber, *Osteopathy Complete* (1898), was an illustrated do-it-yourself treatment guide. A less controversial osteopathic physician, Carl P. McConnell, published *The Practice of Osteopathy* in 1899. Still was not at all pleased with McConnell's book and complained that most of it was taken from "old medical authors," declaring it a "total failure to an osteopath."[106]

McConnell's book nevertheless may have inspired the Old Doctor to pursue his own ambition to write a book "as large as *Gray's Anatomy*" to

[101]Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion* Vol. 1, *The Irony of It All, 1893-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 33-34.

[102]Haller, *American Medicine,* 293-94.

[103]A. T. Still, *Philosophy of Osteopathy,* 203-22.

[104]A. T. Still, Manuscript "The Gossiping Girl," (ca. 1898). Personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville.

[105]A. T. Still, *Philosophy and Mechanical Principles,* 53.

[106]A. T. Still, Kirksville, to Mrs. H. Orschel, Livingston, Montana, January 2, 1900. Mrs. M. E.Still scrapbook, A. T. Still Memorial Library, KCOM.

be titled *Treatment by A. T. Still,* complete with color plates of anatomical cuts to show the cause of disease.[107] His ambitious plan was never entirely realized, but before his death he managed to publish more practical books about the specific practice of osteopathy: *Osteopathy: Research and Practice* (1910), *The Philosophy of Osteopathy* (1899), and *The Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy* (copyright 1892, published 1902, then mysteriously withdrawn from publication without explanation).[108]

NATIONAL ATTENTION

Still's philosophy and particularly his drugless therapy had attracted the attention of many local newspaper reporters as well as influential editors of national publications. By the early 1900s a major scandal was hovering over the highly profitable and unregulated business of patent medicines and nostrums, which though available for centuries, were not nearly as available or nearly as dangerous as at the turn of the century. Medicine shows hawked their products throughout the United States, and what one could not obtain at a show was easily ordered through the Sears and Roebuck catalogue, which in 1906 advertised medicines containing large proportions of alcohol, morphine, and digitalis. Because the patent medicine companies could legally sell any product without listing the ingredients, the public was ignorant of–but becoming addicted to–their contents. Despite a growing national uproar and protests from the American Medical Association, medical physicians prescribed the heavily advertised nostrums. Some concerned Americans, reacting against the patent medicines, turned to osteopathy, among them Edward Bok, editor of *Ladies Home Journal.* Unafraid of controversy, Bok championed many causes in his magazine; one of his most successful crusades was against the patent medicine industry.

In 1892, the same year Still founded the ASO, the *Ladies Home Journal* had refused to accept advertising from any patent medicine company; the *Journal* also took part in the crusade that culminated in the passage of the Federal Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906. In that year the total volume of patent medicine sales amounted to $80 million.[109] Bok declared that the "leaders of the [medical] profession were chief offenders," accusing them of prescribing nostrums when they had no knowledge of the ingredients or their therapeutic effect. Among Bok's circle of friends, fourteen families had turned to drugless methods of treatment. When Bok asked them why, they answered that they "cannot take chances with prescriptions."[110] On

[107]Ibid., A. T. Still to Mrs. Orschel, December 14, 1899.

[108]Harold Goodman, 1986 news release concerning the history of Dr. Still's book *The Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy.* (Kirksville: Osteopathic Enterprise, 1986).

[109]Stewart H. Holbrook, *The Golden Age of Quackery* (New York: McMillan, 1959), 4.

[110]"Editor Bok Says Patients in Philadelphia Flock to Osteopaths," *Osteopathic Physician* 12 (December 1907): 5.

August 5, 1907, Bok wrote to Still requesting an article about how he came to originate osteopathy. Bok suggested that Still write for the average reader and limit his explanation to approximately 2,500 words. Still complied with his request.[111] Bok's interest in osteopathy may have stimulated the interest of Theodore Roosevelt, or it may have been the other way around since Roosevelt was at that time a member of the editorial board of *Ladies Home Journal.* In either case, Roosevelt was a staunch supporter of osteopathy; he and his family were patients of the osteopathic physician Charles Green. It was because of Roosevelt's interest that Elbert Hubbard, the popular writer, philanthropist, and editor of the *The Fra* magazine, visited Kirksville in 1909.[112] Hubbard's article in *The Fra* and his booklet, *A Little Journey to the Home of Andrew Taylor Still,* reflected osteopathy's growing public support and gave a much-needed boost to D.O. morale.

Even before osteopathy caught the attention of national magazines, fellow Missourian Mark Twain–a free-thinking spirit in his own right–testified on behalf of the osteopaths in the New York State Legislature in 1901. Twain's aversion to the medical profession had begun in 1896, when his daughter Susy died of spinal meningitis. More outspoken than Still (who lost three children to that disease), Twain declared that the physicians had assassinated Susy.[113] When another daughter, Jean, developed epilepsy during the late 1890s, the Twains sought treatment for her at Jonas Henrik Kellgren's Swedish Institute in Sanna, Sweden. As the whole family received Kellgren's drugless treatments, Twain became enthusiastic about Kellgren's system and more disgusted with traditional medicine. Intrigued by the similarity of Kellgren's theories to osteopathy, Twain began to search for a good osteopath who could provide treatments for Jean so they could return to America. It seems that Twain had even persuaded the young man in charge of Kellgren's Institute to come to America to attend Still's American School of Osteopathy. When two letters of inquiry to the ASO had not been properly answered, Twain himself wrote directly to Still.

> Dear Sir:
>
> By argument of two experiences of mine I suspect that your secretary is afflicted with the several infirmities usual to his guild: indifference, unfaithfulness, incapacity, discourtesy, & chronic fatigue. To one letter, which was written to you by my desire he returned an answer whose curtness, vapidity & inadequacy would have discredited

[111]Edward Bok to A. T. Still, August 5, 1907, SNOM. For Still's article see "How I Came to Originate Osteopathy," *Ladies Home Journal* 25 (January 1908): 25, 48.

[112]Charles E. Still, "Lectures to the Freshman Class," Kirksville. A. T. Still Memorial Library, KCOM. During the D.O.'s' struggle to gain acceptance in the armed forces medical corp during WWI, Roosevelt wrote a letter supporting their efforts. Theodore Roosevelt to Charles Gren, D.O., December 12, 1917. SNOM.

[113]Hamlin Lewis Hill, *God's Fool* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 6.

the house cat. To another which was signed by my wife (Mrs. Olivia L. Clemens), he has furnished no answer at all. As you distinctly invite correspondence upon business, this was quite an indefensible offence, as you will yourself admit. As you do not give notice that applicants for information must forward stamps, I take it that his dereliction was not based upon economy–except perhaps of labor and courtesy.

It is not supposable that he kept my wife's letter, or that he keeps anything that intrudes upon him, but the Sabbath; and I don't believe he would keep that if it weren't a day of rest. Wherefore I will repeat the questions that were asked in the letter, & will also try to see that *my* letter reaches *your* hands:

1. When does your school year begin?
2. What are the tuition–expenses?
3. What is about the usual cost of living in the town for a young man? The young man is a Swede; is of fine character & capacities; has studied & worked four years with Kellgren and (*under* Kellgren) is now head of the establishment. While the principles underlying your system & Kellgren's are the same, there are differences in the application of them: Wherefore this gentleman wishes to take your course & acquire your diploma as his purpose is to practice in America.

Very truly *yours*,

Mark Twain

If a speedy reply to this can be had I shall like it, as the young man cannot throw up this important position without having a little time in which to make plans.[114]

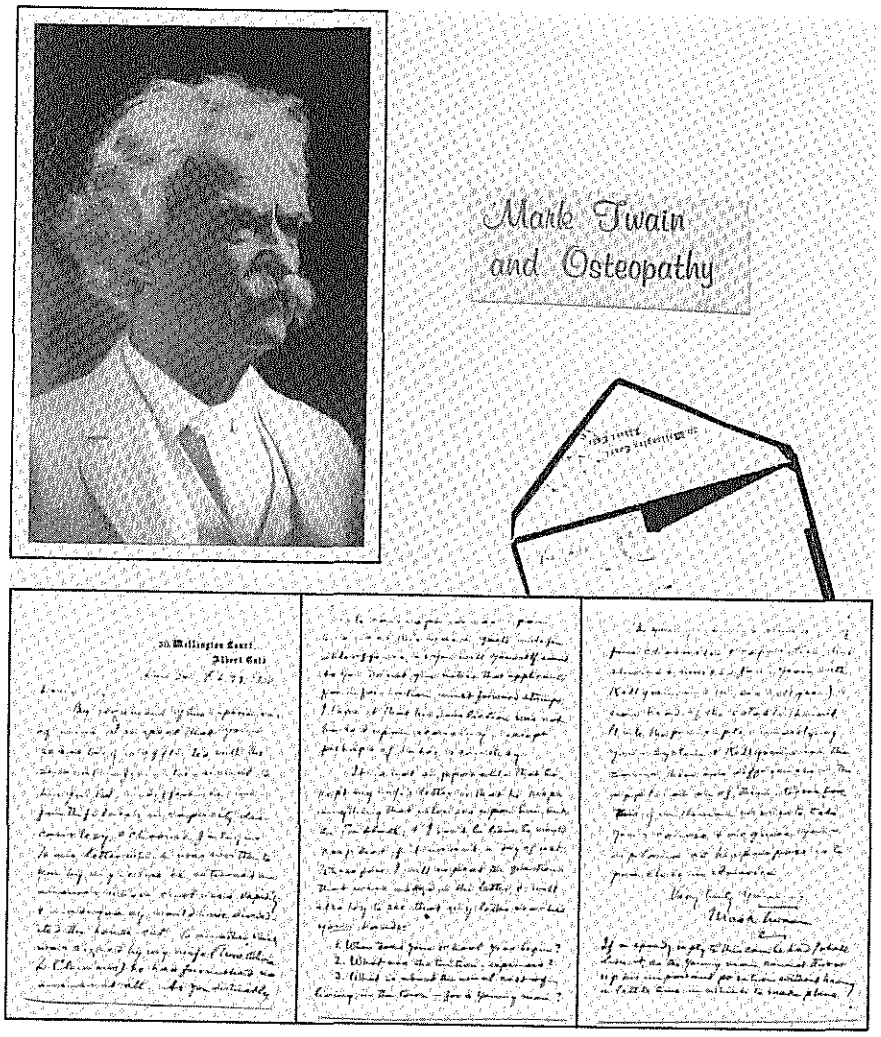
The plan to bring the young Swede to Kirksville never materialized. Twain, however, continued his own search for an American osteopath, and his enthusiasm for the profession did not wane. He wrote,

> Ten years hence no sane man will call a doctor except when the knife must be used. . . . The educated physician will himself be an osteopath. . . . I want osteopathy to prosper; it is common sense, and scientific and cures a wider range of ailments than the doctor's methods can reach.[115]

Dr. Charlie Still recalled that when Twain asked his father for a recommendation of a good osteopath, Still suggested a New York D.O.,

[114]Mark Twain to A. T. Still, February 23, 1900. SNOM. (Emphasis in original letter.)

[115]Albert Bigelow Paine, *Mark Twain, A Biography: The Personal and Literary Life of Samuel Langhorne Clemens,* 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1912), 2:1087-88.



George Helmer.[116] In August 1900, Twain was making plans to sail for America in October, where, he wrote, "we can have an osteopath of good repute to continue the work of putting this family in proper condition."[117] Twain was enamored with osteopathy but less enamored with the medical profession's reaction to the new science. He wrote, "To ask a doctor's opinion of osteopathy is equivalent to going to Satan for information about Christianity."[118] Twain fully intended to write more upon the subject, until the Boer War in South Africa and the Boxer insurrection in China edged out the topic of medicine from his immediate interests.

Nevertheless, in January 1900, he summarized his feelings about traditional medicine in a letter to the Reverend J. H. Twitchell of Hartford:

> . . . for ages the race has respected (and almost venerated) the physician's grotesque system–the emptying of miscellaneous and harmful drugs into a person's stomach to remove ailments which in many cases the drugs could not reach at all; in many cases could reach and help, but only at cost of damage to some other part of the man; and in the remainder of the cases the drug either retarded the cure, or the disease was cured by nature in spite of the nostrums.
>
> The doctor's insane system has not only been permitted to continue its follies for ages, but has been protected by the State and made a close monopoly–an infamous thing, a crime against a free-man's proper right to choose his own assassin or his own method of defending his body against disease and death.
>
> And yet at the same time, with curious and senile inconsistency, the State has allowed the man to choose his own assassin–in one detail–the patent-medicine detail–making itself the protector of that perilous business . . .[119]

Apparently, Jean did improve enough under Dr. Helmer's treatments that the family was able to move to a summer cottage at Saranac Lake, New York. The bitter New York legislative battle over osteopathic recognition subsequently provided Twain with a public forum for his outspoken opinions of medicine.

As Twain sat quietly in the packed chambers, the medical doctors believed that Twain might refuse to testify after hearing their side of the case. The physicians claimed that the D.O.'s were quacks who claimed fake cures. A newspaper reporter observed that one doctor flung a vertebra

[116]Charles E. Still, "Lectures to the Freshman Class, 1942," A. T. Still Memorial Library, KCOM.

[117]Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Letters,* arranged with comments by Albert Bigelow Paine, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Bros, 1917), 2:699

[118]Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Notebook,* prepared for publication with comments by Albert Bigelow Paine, 2d ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1935), 344.

[119]Twain, *Letters,* 2:690-91.

on the table and challenged the D.O.'s to manipulate the vertebra so that it would stay in place for even a minute. Refusing the bait, the D.O.'s did respond by saying that they would do so if the medical doctor would give a purgative to the vertebra and make its bowels move. Finally taking the stand amidst loud cheers from D.O.'s in the audience, Twain proceeded to rip the preceding testimony apart in his characteristic style. The central point in his defense of the osteopaths was eloquently stated: "There is one point, though, that is running in my mind. It is that human nature ever delights in liberty. Liberty and philosophy combined are good, but liberty is better . . . I claim that I should have the right to do as I like with my own body. If I choose to experiment with it, it is my own affair. I alone will be damaged." Twain ended his speech by urging the medical doctors and the osteopaths to compromise and to "dwell together in harmony."[120]

In the midst of this struggle for acceptance, Still was not intimidated by anyone, least of all the clergy. Years earlier, Still had remarked, "Some of you thought me a Christian Scientist–but if you were a cow and kicked me you would find the Christian element wanting."[121] However, since Mary Elvira remained loyal to the Methodist Church, ministers frequently called at the Still home. Still's conversations with the preachers were usually short, candid, sometimes verging on rudeness. He told one, "Well, my wife is a great sinner. I didn't have much trouble with the Lord myself. I'm the best friend the Lord has in these parts."[122] Another time, when a preacher interrupted him as he was signing diplomas, Still asked how much cubic air space a room should have for one person. When the preacher failed to answer, the Old Doctor recited the exact figure and said that his room did not quite have the required amount. The preacher took the hint

[120]"Mark Twain Speaks for the Osteopaths," Special to *The Post Express,* Albany, New York; reprinted in *Journal of Osteopathy* 8 (April 1901): 114-16. Although Charles Still stated in his "Lectures" that his father treated Mark Twain in 1882, Twain's correspondence to Twitchell in 1900 does not seem to support that statement, for Twain seemed pleasantly surprised that there was such a drugless therapy similar to Kellgren's called osteopathy and equally surprised at the legal progress the profession had made in the the United States. Nor did Twain acknowledge ever being treated by or knowing Dr. Still. Of course, that was written eighteen years later than the treatment would have taken place. Since Kellgren had been well established in 1874, the year Still began his studies, Twain even suggested, tongue-in-cheek, that Kellgren transmitted his discovery to Still via mental telegraphy. By 1903, Twain was not quite as enthusiastic as in the past about osteopathy as a panacea. He took a more eclectic approach to medicine, writing: "My notion is that no art of healing is best for *all* ills. I should distribute the ailments around: surgery cases to the surgeons, lupus to the actinic-ray specialists; nervous protraction to the Christian Scientist; most ills to the allopath and homeopath; (in my own particular case) rheumatism, gout, and bronchial attacks to the osteopathist." See Twain, *Letters,* 2:689, 733-34.

[121]A. T. Still, "Recollections of Baldwin, Kansas," *Journal of Osteopathy* 1 (January 1895): 6.

[122]A. T. Still, Anecdote related by Blanche Still Laughlin. Manuscript, undated. Personal collection of Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville, Missouri.

and left.[123] Still, who had undoubtedly read Professor Thomas Henry Huxley's calculation that 800 cubic feet of air space per person was ideal, used this information uniquely to his advantage.

When Mary Elvira died in 1910, Still held up remarkably well. Arthur Hildreth had asked what he and the family could do to help him and Still had replied, referring to his own religious beliefs, that Mary Elvira has lived a good and useful life and the time had come for her to pass on into greater usefulness, fulfilling life's divine plan. He was quoted as remarking that ". . . the time for 'Mother' to go had come, to fulfill another epoch of her life."[124]

THE FINAL YEARS

Until his health began to fail around 1906, Still continued to invent and to write on a variety of subjects, the philosopher, the questioner, the brooder, the reformer always present. His well-known opinion that the world was too slow in recognizing women's full merit encouraged women to study osteopathy. Husbands and wives studied together at a time when equal opportunity for women was not an accepted idea, even by some of the husbands. Still loved to tease them about their wives' equality. The morning after Hugh and Sarah Russell were graduated from the ASO, Hugh stepped out of his house but stopped abruptly and angrily read these words written on his steps in chalk: "Dr. Sarah E. Russell and her assistant. Office hours all day." Hugh looked around the corner of the house to find Still with an impish grin, thoroughly enjoying his practical joke.[125]

In 1914, when the chairman of the Missouri equal suffrage movement announced that the twenty-five thousand names necessary for submission of a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote had been obtained, the Old Doctor's signature was the last on the list and underneath his name was written, "I want you to have justice."[126]

Still frequently wrote about the spiritualist philosophy without using the word "spiritualism." Realizing the disrepute the spiritualist movement had fallen into, it is probable that those trying to initiate legislation favorable

[123]This story is from recollections about A. T. Still by close friends at his death in an item headlined "Dr. A. T. Still, Founder of Osteopathy, Dies Early Today," *Kirksville Daily Express* 17 (December 12, 1917): 1.

[124]This story is from recollections about A. T. Still by close friends at his death in an item headlined "Despite Cold Weather, Immense Crowd Follows Body of Dr. A. T. Still to Cemetery Today," *Kirksville Daily Express* 17 (December 14, 19197): 1. See also A. T. Still, "Body and Soul of Man." This manuscript, believed to be unpublished, reveals Still's spiritualistic philosophy; he did not evade the issue, writing: "The dead can come and talk to me of the life beyond." Still also echoed the spiritualist theme that Jesus Christ's mission on earth was that of a medium.

[125]Hugh L. Russell, D.O., "Dr. Still's Humanity," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 17 (January 1918): 248.

[126]*Kirksville Daily Express,* (June 22, 1914): 1.

DR. STILL ESCORTED TO HIS 85TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION BY HARRY STILL (LEFT) AND ARTHUR GRANT HILDRETH (RIGHT)

(Photo courtesy Harry Still, D.O.)

to the osteopaths had encouraged Still to remain quiet on the subject. Nevertheless, as he told one early osteopath, he did believe in Spiritualism, "in the unlimited possibilities for the development of our spiritual and mental organizations just as I do the physical," adding, "you do not need a medium to get into communication with the Infinite. You have this Infinity in yourself . . . recognize [it] and cultivate it."[127]

Still attributed his success to a persistent loyalty to his convictions, remembering the pitiful failures of his former friends and companions in religious thought who had renounced their beliefs for the sake of money or social acceptance.[128] When Still attended the Mississippi Valley Spiritualist Association meeting in Clinton, Iowa, in 1903, his experiences were reported in the *Bulletin of the Axis and Atlas Clubs.* Still said, "I have listened to the theologian. He theorizes and stops. I have listened to the materialist. He philosophizes and fails. I have beheld the phenomena given through the spiritualist medium. His exhibits have been solace and comfort to my soul." When the spiritualists discovered that Still was the founder of osteopathy, they asked him to lecture on the science, but characteristically Still did not stop there: he demonstrated the truths by setting several dislocated hips and shoulders, curing a case of asthma, and removing a goiter, all the while refusing to accept any fees.[129]

In 1914, Still suffered a stroke from which he never fully regained his speech. When he died in December 12, 1917, his body was laid in state shrouded in an American flag. Those osteopaths unable to attend the funeral service in Kirksville held their own memorial services. Dr. Joseph Sullivan, the osteopathic physician to many Chicago entertainers, chaired the service in Chicago where the celebrated attorney and advocate of liberal causes, Clarence Darrow, delivered the layman's tribute. Cards of sympathy poured in from all over the country, including one from Baker University officials. In Kirksville, students and D.O.'s filed through the Still home to say their last good-byes. The funeral procession was Kirksville's largest. The service was simple, including two old Methodist hymns, the only songs Still once declared had real music in them: "Oh, Happy Day" and his mother's favorite hymn, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing."[130]

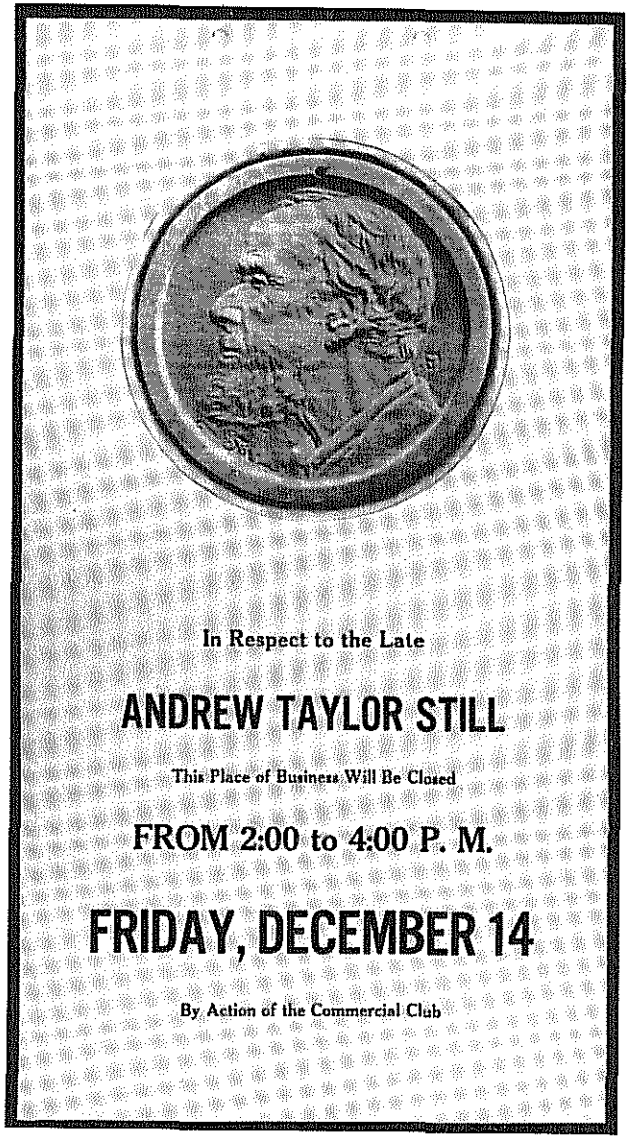
On January 14, 1918, when the ASO board of trustees met, they relieved Still's son Charlie of his duties as vice-president and managing

[127]Edwin C. Pickler, "Early Impressions of Dr. Still," *Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* 20 (January 1921): 244.

[128]Booth, *History of Osteopathy,* 16.

[129a]"Dr. A. T. Still's Visit to the Spiritualists' Meeting at Clinton, Iowa," *Bulletin of the Axis and Atlas Clubs* 4 (September 1903): 3-7.

[130]See *Chicago Tribune* 17 (January 1918); *Chicago Journal* 15 (January 1918); *Chicago Examiner* 11 (January 1919). See also newspaper clippings at A. T. Still Memorial Library, KCOM.



director. Clearly, one era in osteopathic history was over. Cracks had developed early in the foundation laid by Dr. Still. Even he could not block the inevitable liberal path of osteopathy. Furthermore, the 1910 Flexner Report, in what turned out to be an exposé of existing medical education, complicated the D.O.'s survival. Abraham Flexner's survey of all medical schools in Canada and the United States, including the homeopathic, eclectic, and osteopathic schools, appeared to seal the fate of all but a few chosen institutions. For the first time in history, the American medical profession gained firm control of medical education and, with the assistance of Rockefeller philanthropy, the economic strings that funded it. The Flexner Report as well as the D.O.'s failure to achieve recognition as physicians during World War I had forced the osteopaths into a corner so that political recognition of osteopathic practitioners, rather than further development of their philosophy and technique, became the thrust of the profession's energy and drained their meager financial resources.

Still's frustration is revealed in this note found on the back of one of his manuscripts.

> They quoted me as the founder and discoverer of the greatest science ever given to man. But when it came time to saying what was for the best interests of the school and of its future, then they had no use for my knowledge or advice. They wandered after stranger Gods. My heart was saddened. As a hen gathers her kind under her wing, I would have gathered you my children, but ye would not. . . .[131]

It was reported that Still's last message to the profession was "Keep it pure, boys, keep it pure." Little did Andrew Taylor Still realize just how difficult it would be them to follow that admonition. But that is another story.

[131]A handwritten undated, unpaginated manuscript found on the back of another manuscript, "How to be a Great Thinker."

Appendix
Andrew Taylor Still Family Album

ANDREW TAYLOR STILL

b. August 6, 1828, Jonesville, Virginia;
d. December 12, 1917, Kirksville, Missouri

m. Mary Margaret Vaughan, January 1849
m. Mary Elvira Turner, November 25, 1860

Children born to Andrew Taylor Still and Mary Margaret Vaughan Still:

Marusha Hale Still – b. December 8, 1849; d. July 1924.
Abraham Price Still – b. November 12, 1852; d. February 8, 1864.
George W. Still – b. March 9, 1855; d. March 10, 1855.
Susan B. Still – b. April 11, 1856; d. February 7, 1864.
Lorenzo Waugh Still – b. July 29, 1859; d. August 4, 1859.

Children born to Andrew Taylor Still and Mary Elvira Turner Still:

Dudley Turner Still – b. September 12, 1861; d. November 2, 1861.
Marcia Ione Still – b. January 13, 1863; d. February 23, 1864.
Charles Edward Still – b. January 7, 1865; d. July 6, 1955.
Herman Taylor Still – b. May 25, 1867; d. October 15, 1941.
Harry Mix Tavin Still – b. May 15, 1867; d July 28, 1942.
Fred Still – b. January 15, 1874; d. June 6, 1894.
Martha Helen Blanche Still – b. January 5, 1876; d. October 19, 1959.

MARY MARGARET VAUGHN STILL

b. [unknown]; d. September 29, 1859

m. Andrew Taylor Still, January 1849

Very little is known about Mary Margaret. She was of Welsh descent. Her parents were Frederick Philemon Vaughan and Catherine Conner. The family migrated from Kentucky to Missouri. Andrew Taylor Still's sister, Barbara Jane, married Mary Margaret's brother, Frederick Philemon, Jr.

Mary Margaret and Andrew Taylor Still were the parents of five children (who are listed under Andrew Taylor Still's name above).

MARY ELVIRA TURNER STILL

b. September 24, 1834, Newfield, New York;
d. May 28, 1910, Kirksville, Missouri

m. Andrew Taylor Still, November 25, 1860.

Mary Elvira or "Mother Still," as she was called by osteopathic students, patients, and graduates, possessed a low melodic voice and was said to be exceptionally adept in business matters, a quality that proved to be vitally necessary for the survival of her family. Many wonder how she endured the years of financial and social hardships, for marriage to the dreamer, Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, was not easy. When notoriety surrounded Dr. Still in the late 1890s, Mary Elvira remained in the background, revealing to interviewers only the barest biographical essentials.

Mary Elvira and Andrew Taylor Still were the parents of seven children (who are listed under Andrew Taylor Still's name above).

MARUSHA HALE STILL

b. December 8, 1849; d. July 1924

m. John William Cowgill, December 6, 1870

Of the five children born to Andrew Taylor Still and his first wife, Mary Margaret Vaughan, Marusha is the only one who survived. Marusha was twenty-one years old and a student at Baker University when she married John W. Cowgill, the son of a wealthy medical doctor.

John's Cowgill's mother was a sister of Robert Louis Stevenson, the author of *Treasure Island*. After the Civil War, the Cowgill's emigrated to Kansas from Indiana where John's father invested his life savings of $40,000 in cattle and a large acreage near Baldwin City, Kansas. Dr. Cowgill bought the cattle when prices were high, and when they were ready for the market, cattle prices had plummeted. Nearly losing his entire investment, Dr. Cowgill left the Baldwin area. John and Marusha stayed on the Cowgill homesite to rebuild the farm, where they remained all their lives. John had three brothers: Henry, who ran a drugstore in Burlington, Kansas, and supplemented his income with a bit of bootlegging;[1] Ben, who owned a hardware store in Baldwin; and Jim, who kept house for the family. A sister, Martha, taught school in Lawrence, Kansas.

According to their son, Alfred T. Cowgill, Marusha seemed to resemble her father in some ways, saying "She, like her illustrious father, would venture beyond the boundaries of status quo." Although her inquisitive mind was not as creative as her father's, she encouraged others to use their talents and to patent their ideas.[2] When she was older, Marusha visited her father in Kirksville. She died only seven years after Dr. Still. Like all the Stills except her father, she never wavered from the Methodist faith.

Children known to be born to Marusha Hale Still and John Cowgill:

Marguerite E. Cowgill – b. September 12, 1871; d. June 6, 1897.
Johnette Still Cowgill – b. September 5, 1872; d. [?], 1935.
Henry Rutherford Cowgill – b. May 5, 1876
Ralph E. Cowgill – b. September 28, 1877; d. 1924.
Jesse Cowgill – b. [?], 1880; d. [?], 1880.
Martha E. Cowgill – b. March 6, 1881; d. [?], 1882.
Martha S. Cowgill – b. [?], 1883; d. [unknown].
Jean Paul Cowgill – b. [?], 1885; d. [?], 1885.
Florence V. Cowgill – b. March 10, 1887; d. [unknown].
Gertrude Cowgill – b. January 9, 1890; d. [unknown].
Alfred T. Cowgill – b. August 11, 1892; d. [unknown].

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[1]Alfred T. Cowgill, "Cowgill Family History," containing family biographical information; from typewritten transcription of an audio cassette recorded September 27, 1980, Still National Osteopathic Museum.

[2]Ibid., pt. 2, p. 2.

CHARLES EDWARD STILL

b. January 7, 1865, Centropolis, Kansas;
d. July 6, 1955

m. Anna Florence Rider, June 30, 1892

Before Dr. Andrew Taylor Still decided to open his school, Charlie's career was on a path offering more stability and glamour. Both he and his brother Herman enlisted in the United States Army in 1888 and were involved in the last Indian

campaign, serving under General Arthur MacArthur in the 14th Infantry. Charlie was a baseball pitching ace and the organizer of the Infantry baseball team at Fort Leavenworth. He rose rapidly from private to corporal through the efforts of a friend and perhaps because of his pitching expertise, which he described as exceptional: "He could throw a ball like a bullet and make it cut didoes over the plate."[3] Dr. Charlie's political skills surfaced at an early age, when he acquired uniforms for the newly organized baseball team by suggesting to the post commander, Brigadier General Alexander McCook, that the uniformed team would be called "the McCook's." The team's bat boy was the son of General MacArthur, the future General Douglas MacArthur, and the young boy idolized Charlie Still. The McCook's went on to win the Army championship by beating the Calvary team and Charlie's photograph was featured in the sensationalist *The National Police Gazette,* much to the embarrassment of his family.[4] Though Charlie was in line for a promotion to sergeant, when his father called for his help, he left the army three years and three months after he had joined.[5] He returned to Kirksville to take up a new profession, not entirely without glamour or danger of a different sort. Of A.T. and Mary Elvira's three sons, Charlie was the one most involved in the management of the American School of Osteopathy. During the years that Charlie traveled throughout Missouri with his father, he never spoke disparagingly about the times his father would say, "Charlie, get a bag of bones, we're going to Hannibal," or whatever town he planned to go to next. Until 1863, all of Charlie's work until 1893 was done under the watchful tutelage of his father, and he always gave credit for any cures to his father's skillful treatments. Dr. Charlie, as he was affectionately called, claimed to be the first one to prove, while he was practicing in Red Wing, Minnesota, that osteopathy was a science which could be taught.

In 1893 several of Dr. Still's Minnesota patients requested that osteopaths set up a practice in Minneapolis, so Charlie volunteered. Dr. Charlie later relocated his office in Red Wing at the request of a patient, Minnesota Senator Peter Nelson, his brother Harry, and an osteopathic student named C. W. Hartupee. One month later a black diphtheria epidemic thrust the Stills and osteopathy into the limelight. Throughout that winter, the three doctors treated the sick with much success, but by orders of the State Board of Health, Charlie and Harry were arrested and placed in the county jail. Fortunately, an angry crowd of local residents gathered outside the jail to demand that the doctors be released. From then on, two large Swedes, fathers of children Dr. Charlie and Dr. Harry had cured, served as bodyguards while the doctors continued to make house calls.[6]

Charlie served as managing director and vice-president of the ASO until shortly after Dr. Still's death, when he was removed from his position by the ASO board of trustees. Turning then to civic affairs, he served as Republican state legislator for fourteen years and was such a successful vote-getter that he headed both the Republican and Democratic ticket on several occasions despite his claim that he never gave a political speech. Charlie was opposed only once, in 1934, and emerged victorious amidst a national Democratic landslide. He once remarked that he was

[3]"Nation's Hero Once Had Kirksville Man as His Hero," Kirksville Daily Express 41 (February 15, 1942): 4.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Charles E. Still, Jr., D.O., Kirksville, Missouri. Personal interview with author, October 1987.

[6]"Osteopathy in Red Wing, Minnesota," *American Osteopathic Historical Society Bulletin* 4 (December 1961.

the "first dry Republican that was ever elected by wet Democrats down in Adair County."[7]

In 1892, Charlie married Anna Rider who accompanied him to Red Wing. They had five children:

Harry Rider Still – b. April 11, 1893; d. December 13, 1983.
Helen Gladys Still – b. December 10, 1894; d. September 3, 1919.
Andrew Taylor Still – b. September 10, 1897; d. October 3, 1905.
Mary Elizabeth Still – b. November 1, 1899; d. [?], 1974.
Charles Edward Still, Jr. – b. March 16, 1907.

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[7]"Celebrates Golden Wedding Anniversary," *Journal of Osteopathy* 49 (August 1942): 30.

HARRY MIX STILL

b. May 15, 1867, Baldwin, Kansas; d. July 18, 1942.

m. Nancy B. Miller, October 7, 1892.

During Dr. Andrew Taylor Still's early itinerant doctoring in Missouri, he began to teach his children the rudiments of his osteopathic technique so that they might assist him. Harry, twin brother of Herman, was the first child to receive such instruction; he eventually established flourishing practices in Chicago, Evanston, Saint Louis, Minneapolis, and New York, where he treated the John D. Rockefeller family. Harry returned to Kirksville in 1907, his health broken.

A doctor's life did not suit Harry. In fact, he did not even like to be around sick people. While in New York, his son Fred became ill with typhoid fever. Harry

promptly bought the boy a huge music box for his entertainment, hired a nurse to care for him, and moved out of the rooms until Fred was well.[8]

Harry had a knack for starting good practices but his genius seemed in lie in financial management, a trait that he may have acquired from his mother, Mary Elvira, and perhaps encouraged by discussions with John D. Rockefeller. After Harry's retirement from active practice, he served as president of the Citizen's National Bank in Kirksville for thirty-five years. He owned nearly nine thousand acres of farmland throughout northeast Missouri. Harry invested in commercial real estate, a dry goods business and was co-owner of the Traveler's Hotel and the Journal Printing Company in Kirksville. He served on numerous boards of trustees throughout his lifetime including The State Teachers College in Kirksville from 1915-1919, and as treasurer of the Methodist Church and the Kirksville College of Osteopathy and Surgery.

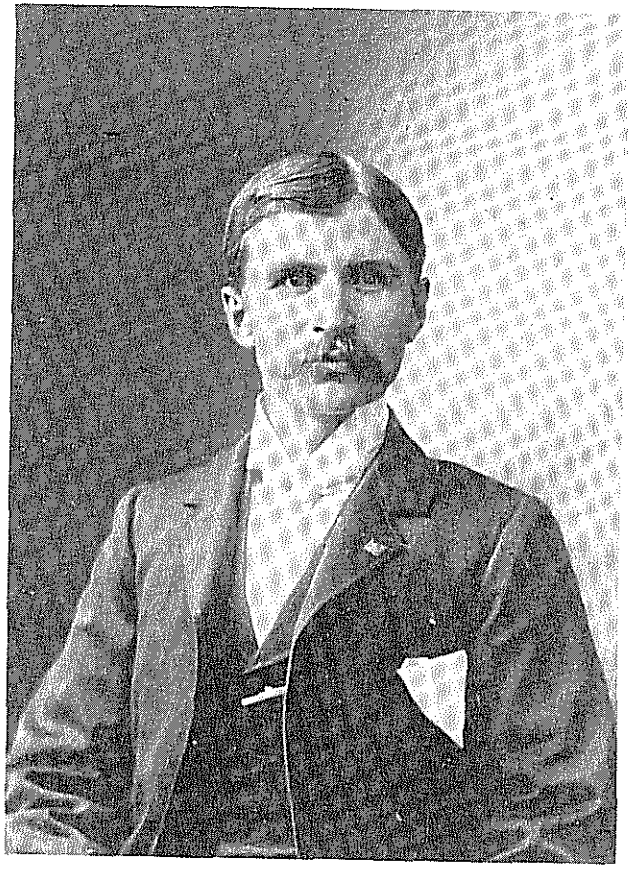
In 1914, Harry and Dr. Arthur Hildreth founded the Still-Hildreth Osteopathic Sanitarium in Macon, Missouri. During his fifty years of practice, the Old Doctor had found osteopathic treatment for mental cases was very successful, but there was never the room or the adequate surroundings to care for the mentally ill. Dr. A. T. Still was convinced by his own experiences that the label of "hopelessly insane" should not be attached to all inmates in the country's asylums. The Still-Hildreth Sanitarium pioneered in the humane treatment of the mentally ill and attracted patients from all over the world.

Harry and Nannie were parents of two children:

Fred Mix Still – b. July 25, 1898; d. June 23, 1978

Richard Harry Still – b. November 25, 1903; d. December 30, 1980

[8]Harry Still, Jr., D.O., Kirksville, Missouri. Personal interview with author, December 1987.



HERMAN TAYLOR STILL

b. May 15, 1867, Baldwin, Kansas; d. October 15, 1941.

m. Bessie Updyke, October 4, 1893; m. Mabel Jones, [unknown]; m. Lottie Garrison, February 12, 1918.

Herman, the twin brother of Harry, does not seem to have had as stable a life as his brothers and sisters. Herman was married three times: first to Bessie Updyke of Kirksville, then to Mabel Jones, a D.O. who practiced in Milwaukee for many years; and last to Lottie Garrison of Texas. Herman's two sons, Eugene Updyke Still and Herman Taylor Still were also D.O.'s.

After graduating in the first class of osteopathy, Herman practiced in several locations including Indiana and Texas, but he returned permanently to Kirksville in 1933. Though Harry and Charlie used to take turns bailing Herman out of his various problems, some in the Still family consider Herman to be perhaps the smartest for he managed to live quite well without ever working steadily. The

story is often told that after Herman was bitten by a rattlesnake at the age of thirteen he was never the same.[9] Dr. A.T. Still also believed that Herman's early development of arthritis was caused by that snakebite from which Herman very nearly died.[10]

To Herman and Bessie was born:

Eugene Updyke Still – b. August 20, 1898

To Herman and Lottie was born:

Herman Taylor Still – b. [unknown].

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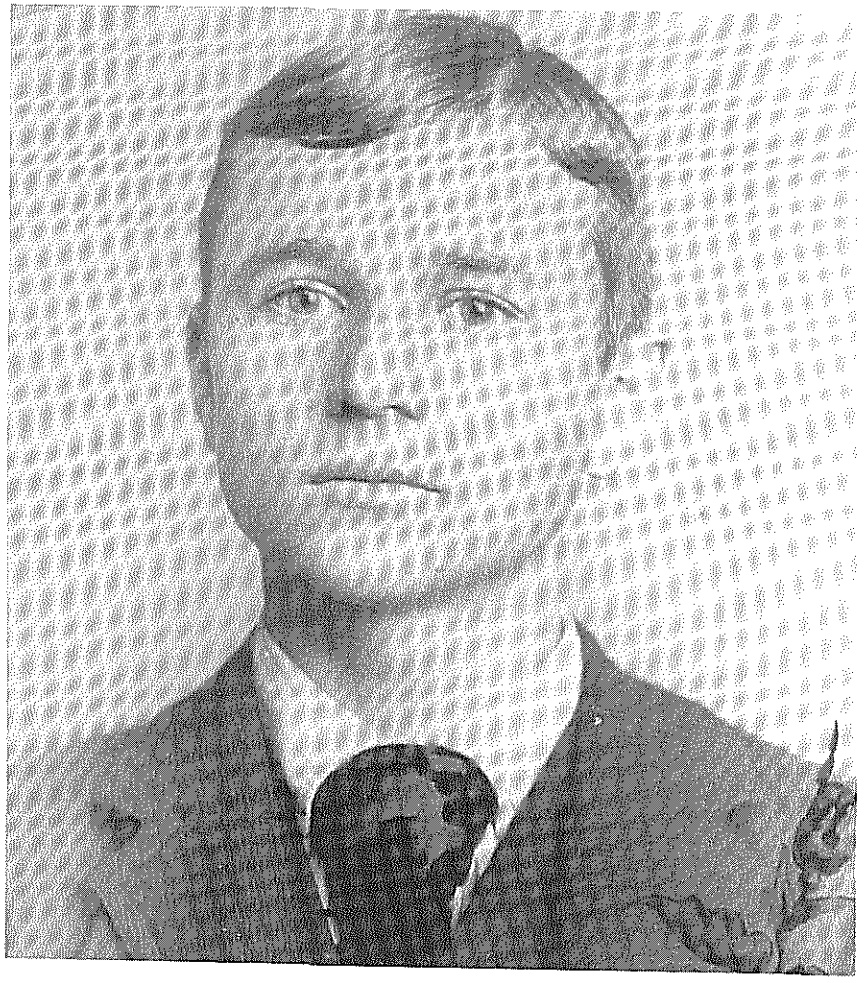
[9]Ibid.

[10]Mary Jane Denslow, Kirksville, Missouri. Personal interview with author, May 1987.



FRED STILL

b. January 15, 1874, Baldwin, Kansas; d. June 6, 1894.

As a child, Fred Still was introspective and studious. He was graduated from the public schools and enrolled at the State Normal College at the age of fifteen, the youngest student in the history of college.

Fred was a member of the first class of osteopathy in 1892. Not only did he prove to be a successful operator, but he aspired to develop his father's broad philosophy to higher levels before an accident took his life in 1894. Dr. A. T. Still wrote this poem after Fred's death.

FRED

We hate the word, "He is dead."
It makes us cry pitiously, that we have lost our best.
As in mind we call the endless roll of our loving dead.
Our souls cry out in anguish, while our loved ones are at rest.
One by one their forms appear; I cry again, "I love my dead."
I view their faces each in turn–father, mother, my dear son Fred. Tears from my eyes from morn til night adown my face as rivers flow.
I ask and reason, "If he is not dead, where, oh, where, then, did he go?"
"Dead! Dead! "He is dead!"
Why, O my friends, please tell me why,
When a friend is dead, "He did not die?"
Like a philosopher, when dying, he said:
"When this job is done, I'll return, not dead."
I hate the word, "he is dead, dead!"
It may be true, but not with Fred.[11]

[11]See "Obituary," *Journal of Osteopathy 1 (June 1894): 1.*

MARTHA HELEN BLANCHE STILL

b. January 5, 1876, Kirksville, Missouri;
d. October 19, 1959.

m. George Mark Laughlin, April 11, 1900.

Blanche was one of five women to enroll in and be graduated from the ASO. She served as editor of the first *Journal of Osteopathy* and later edited a regular column oriented toward the growing number of women osteopaths. Blanche was a beautiful young woman, and her elegant wardrobe would have been the envy of every woman in America. Though she must have had several suitors, we know of only one besides her future husband, George M. Laughlin. When J. Martin Littlejohn, who later founded the Chicago College of Osteopathy, taught at the ASO, he courted Blanche. As far as we know, Professor Littlejohn sent no roses to Blanche;

instead he showered her with a set of encyclopedias–which her children used for many years.[12] But this gift may not have impressed Blanche, for in her early years she was a fun-loving, whist-playing, party-giving practical joker.[13]

In 1900, in an elegant wedding ceremony, Blanche was married to Dr. George M. Laughlin, a recent graduate of the ASO. Dr. Laughlin became the spokesman for Dr. Still's philosophy, remaining a forceful leader of the osteopathic profession for nearly thirty years. Blanche dedicated herself to caring for her aging parents, supervising their twenty-eight room Victorian home which was nearly always filled to capacity with student roomers, visiting D.O.'s, and guests spontaneously invited by the Old Doctor. Though the home was undoubtedly a dream come true for Mary Elvira, Dr. Still–who preferred the solitude of the country–was not impressed.

Blanche and George sold the home to the Acacia Fraternity in 1936. The fraternity eventually deeded the home and seven acres to the Adair County Court which demolished it in 1966 for a new county nursing home. When Blanche was thirty-eight years old, the Laughlin's first child, Mary Jane, was born; four years later she gave birth to a son, George Andrew. After her husband's death in 1944, Blanche lost her zest for life and her will to live,[14] though she lingered until 1959. Through her efforts to save the bits and pieces of early osteopathic history, she laid the groundwork for the Still National Osteopathic Museum in Kirksville, Missouri.

Blanche and George were the parents of two children:

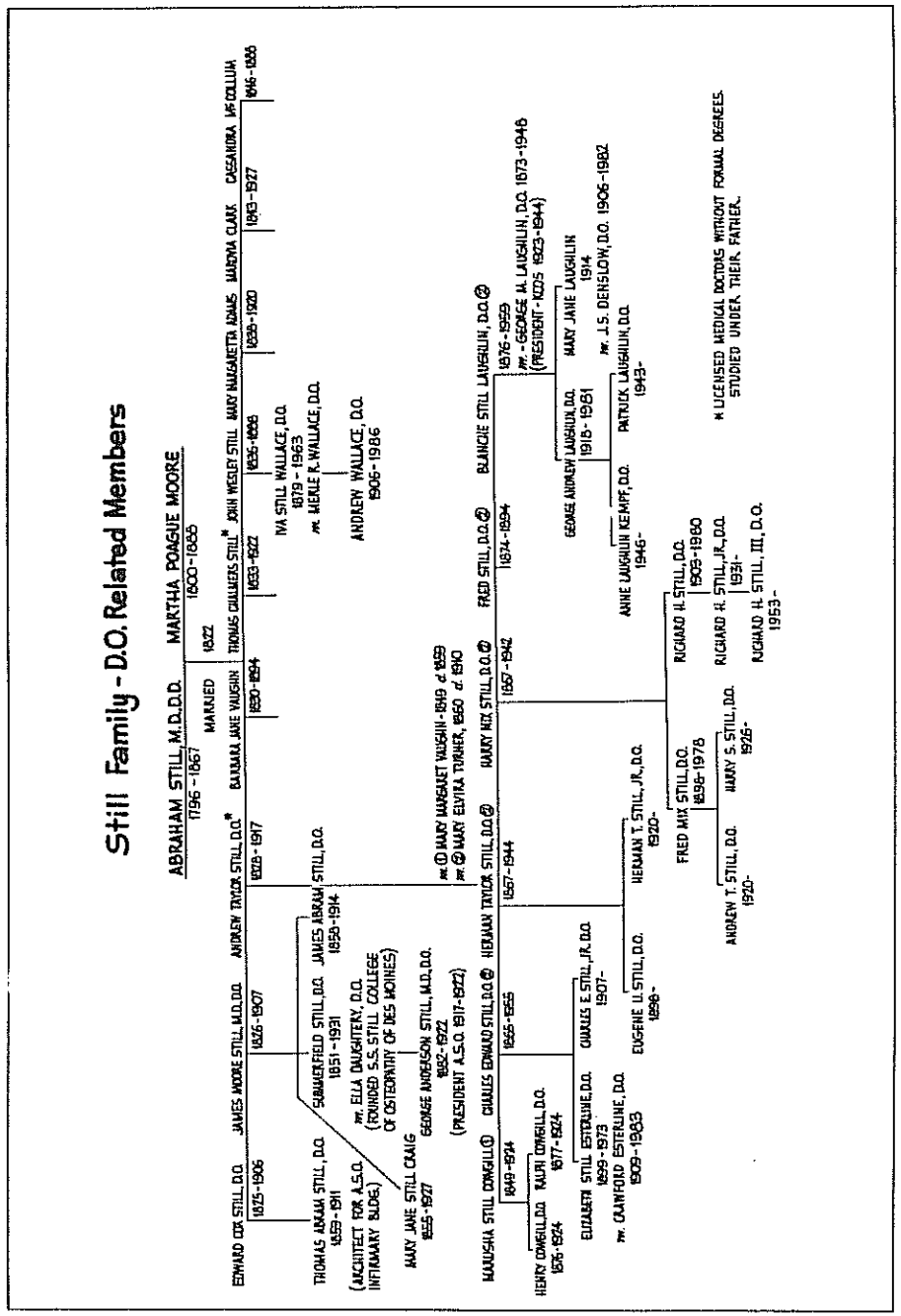
Mary Jane Laughlin – b. January 17, 1914; d. January 15, 1991.

George Andrew Laughlin – b. June 17, 1918; d. October 25, 1981.

[12]Mary Jane Laughlin Denslow, Kirksville, Mo. Personal interview with the author, May 1987.

[13]Elizabeth Laughlin, Kirksville, Mo. Personal interview with the author, September 1987.

[14]Ibid.



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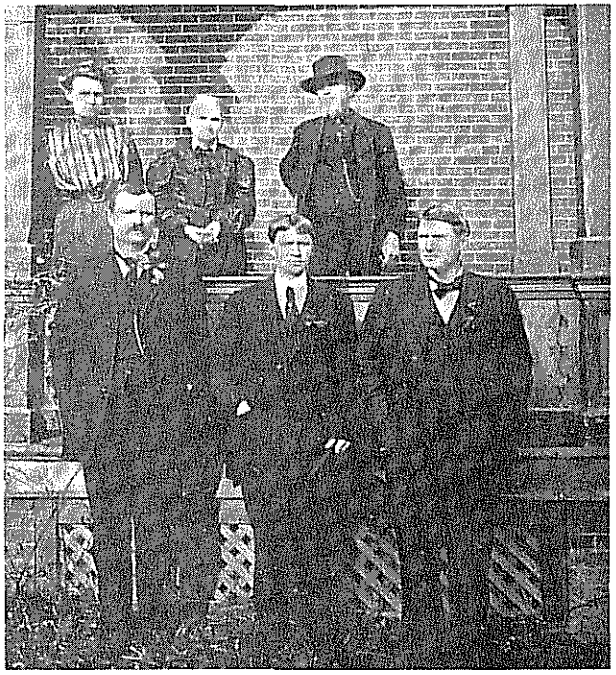

STILL FAMILY, ca. 1906

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Index prepared by Paula Presley, member ASI

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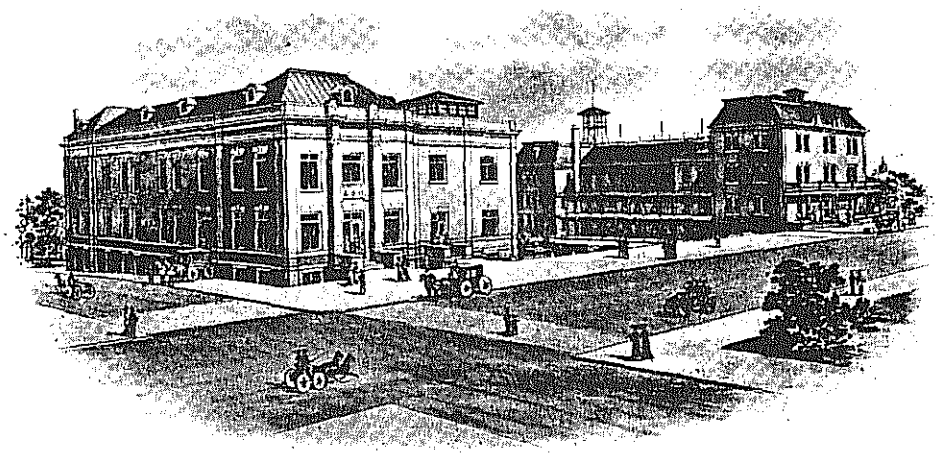

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