



FROM BROADCASTING TO PODCASTING — CHIROPRACTIC IS ON THE AIR! (PART 1)

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**Spinal Column Radio host,
Dr. Thomas Lamar**

SHOW NOTES

Title: From Broadcasting to Podcasting — Chiropractic is on the Air! (part 1)

Episode Number: 005

Host: Dr. Thomas Lamar

Show Date: 02/05/2010

Run Time: 11:09

Description:

From the beginnings of Radio Broadcasting to modern day Internet Podcasting, chiropractic has been “on the air” delivering its message. Host, Dr. Thomas Lamar, takes listeners back in time to tell the fascinating – and little known – story of chiropractic radio history and then brings you forward to the present day of chiropractic podcasting. This is one of those history stories that is full of sur-

prises and fun to share with others. (part 1 of 2)

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Links:

Dr. Lamar's article:

[From Broadcasting to Podcasting — Chiropractic Delivers its Message](#)



Does your podcast listening schedule need a little backbone? If so, it's time to schedule an appointment with your podcast chiropractor, Dr. Thomas Lamar.

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Transcript:

Spinal Column Radio, episode number five.

Coming up on Spinal Column Radio: From Broadcasting to Podcasting — chiropractic is on the air! (part 1).



[intro theme music]

And welcome back to another exciting and information packed episode of Spinal Column Radio. My name is Dr. Thomas Lamar, chiropractor and Dad of 6. And this is the podcast that gets you to think. To think about your health in a whole new way. We're the podcast for your backbone... the podcast *with backbone*. Who knew that spinal education could be this much fun?

We'd like to invite you to visit our podcast website at spinalcolumnradio.com where you can learn more about us, podcasting in general, and can access the show notes for this episode. And of course you can also leave comments and ask questions. We also have "socializing" links now to allow to easily share our podcast with friends and family through facebook, twitter, email... and a bunch of others.

[1920's music bed]

[break-in old-time radio voice]:

"WOC is coming to you from the Up-E-Nuf tower atop the Palmer School of Chiropractic, the Chiropractic Fountain Head, in Davenport, Iowa, where the west begins and in the state where the tall corn grows! Broadcasting by authority of the Federal Radio Commission..." Well, if you haven't guessed by now, today's episode has something to do with Old Time Radio. And perhaps, more importantly for our podcast, how chiropractic fits into it all. Now before you decide that that this might be a good episode to skip, I'd like to encourage you to stick around — because this history lesson is one that is pretty darn interesting.

[fade music]

Now before I turn the pages of history back all the way to the early 1920's, let me first take a quick stop in the early 1990's to give you a bit of context as to why I care about this topic so much.

You see, talking to you all through a "radio-like" medium such as podcasting — like I'm doing right now through SpinalColumnRadio — has really been a long standing dream of mine. In episode zero, you might remember how I shared how I was attracted to radio as a teen — mak-

ing my own pirate radio station in the attic of my house and such. So when I learned that chiropractic had a radio connection... I was intrigued, to say the least. And I be lying to you if I didn't tell you that daydreams of becoming the "Chiropractic Dr. Dean Edell" played out in my mind. Well, as I went through chiropractic college, unfortunately I didn't learn as much about chiropractic's radio history as I would have liked. Let's face it, we had a lot on our plate. But I always had my antenna up, so to speak, and would become very interested when I would hear about a chiropractor who was doing radio.

I remember having the incredible experience of meeting up with a great chiropractor and radio personality — Dr. Bob Dubin out of Petaluma, California. (And Bob if by some fluke chance you happen to be listening to us, drop me a line. I did a quick Google Search on you and it showed that you were doing a live radio gig in New Mexico — but that was in 2007. So, love to hear from you, and you can do that of course, through [Drlamar AT spinalcolumnradio DOT com](http://DrlamarATspinalcolumnradio.DOT.com)). Anyway — to get back — Dr. Bob Dubin had — and for all I know still has — his own chiropractic radio show of sorts and a couple of my friends — my chiropractic friends (Drs. David Brady and Lars Trucano)... we were invited to spend the evening with him at a local radio station in the Petaluma area while he was interviewed on a popular radio show. To say it was a very memorable experience would be an understatement. And I know that we all had a great time.

[1920's music transition]

Well, at the top of the program, you heard me put on my "old-time-radio" voice to recreate what radio listeners would have heard coming out of radio station WOC in the 1920's and 30's. The interesting thing about the WOC, was that it was owned and operated by none other than the son of the founder of chiropractic himself. His name was Dr. BJ Palmer. And what you are about to learn, is that BJ Palmer, while often credited for chiropractic's presence today, also played a pivotal role in *radio's* presence today.

As a wise businessman, lover of gadgetry, and excellent communicator, the genius in BJ Palmer saw something in the early days of radio that others did not — simply its ability to communicate messages — chiropractic or otherwise — to a great number of people in the "unseen audience," all at once.

[1920's music bed]

Palmer wrote, [BJ Palmer Radio Impersonation] "Radio is destined to play a much more important part in the lives of those that possess a radio set, for today there is being brought into the home new personalities, new ideas, new situations, which will directly result in a broadening of the intellectual powers and consequently an uplifting of the American standard of intelligence..." (celebrity voice impersonated).

[1920's music bed fade]

In fact, BJ Palmer is known for borrowing an agricultural word to describe this newest of technologies: "broadcasting." I know it's hard to believe... but it's true.

Broadcasting, as it applies to agriculture, or farming, is a scattering or dispersing of seeds by hand or machine for sowing. Palmer saw in radio a potential to "broadcast," or spread, "message seeds" from a central location in a way that no other medium could match. And then of course, to further this analogy, these seeds germinate and, as he said, "broaden listener's intellectual power," and ultimately, "uplift the American standard of intelligence."

[1920's music bed]

In 1922, Palmer purchased radio station WOC. And though the call letters were arbitrarily assigned, by the Department of Navigation Radio Service, the marketer in him was quick to let everyone know that it stood for the “Wonders Of Chiropractic.”

[1920's music bed fade]

Operating atop the Palmer School of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa, the “Wonders of Chiropractic” drew an estimated one million listeners and was credited as our nation’s first commercial radio station west of the Mississippi.

The WOC was very popular and had a wide array of regular programs such as sports, news, weather, farm and stock information, live music, church service, and, of course, chiropractic educational programming. Palmer was known for taking to the airwaves each evening to espouse the benefits of chiropractic care — and he would log thousands of hours over his broadcasting “career.”

[1920's music bed, with BJ Palmer Old Time Radio Impersonation]

“[Chiropractors,]” [as Palmer would write regarding the WOC] “must appreciate the advertising and publicity value of these programs. Those who are wise will take equal pride in announcing in their advertisements that they are graduates of the Palmer School of Chiropractic, Home of the WOC.... Every person who writes or calls at Station WOC receives an acknowledgment of his interest in the programs we broadcast. This acknowledgment is in the form of a circular which tells not only of the station, but also about Chiropractic. This means that thousands of people who otherwise might not be attracted to Chiropractic are given a cordial introduction to this science of health.” [In another publication, he was proud to say that] “The Mission of WOC is to establish Good Will for Chiropractic.... WOC is educating millions [daily] to a favorable mental receptivity to Chiropractic.” [And then adding elsewhere that], “the name of Chiropractic is on the air an average of 28 times a day.”

[1920's music bed end]

Interestingly, while his station only operated on a modest 100 watts, its ability to transmit his chiropractic messages long distances was quite astonishing. Given his station’s central location in the country, and the fact that there were very few airwaves to compete with back then, the signal could often reach incredible distances beyond its wide United States and Canadian coverage — such as the Samoan and Philippine Islands, Chile, Stockholm, Paris, Rome, Alaska, and even the North Pole! The exceptional range was unexplainable, but many postulated that it was due to “peculiar atmospheric pressures” in the Davenport area along with good ground water saturation beneath the chiropractic school itself. Regardless, the WOC soon became the “western leg” of the National Broadcasting Company.

While it might seem a bit unusual for someone such as Palmer to have purchased and operated an actual radio station to get his message out, it soon became wildly popular among businesses back then.... perhaps akin to the businesses of today having websites (or even a podcasts). The question really was not “What businesses were busy buying radio stations?”, but rather, which ones weren’t!

[1920's music bed fade in]

Historians refer to it as the “Broadcasting Boom” of the 1920's. Every one was getting into radio... Banks, newspapers, department stores, universities and colleges, public utilities, cities and towns, an automobile and tractor repair school, a chicken farm, hospitals, pharmaci-

es, creameries, a Detroit police department with the call letters K-O-P.... “KOP”..you got to love it!

The prosperity that was seen in the wake of World War I brought about brisk radio receiver sales to the public. Everybody wanted a radio set, and mail order houses such as Sears & Roebuck and Montgomery Ward quickly rose to the occasion and expanded their catalog offerings to meet this mushrooming demand for this new scientific wonder.

Palmer would later go on to purchase a “sister” radio station — WHO (which he called “With Hands Only”) in Des Moines, Iowa — and then he “synchronized” its broadcasts with those of the WOC.

Yes, BJ Palmer certainly was a radio pioneer. And to say that his efforts were creating a “buzz” around the country would be an understatement. Visitors from all over flocked to get a peek at what he was doing on the top floor of his Palmer School of Chiropractic.

[outro theme music]

And that’s a great place for us to pause on this fascinating history lesson. Not sure we need to do the disclaimer on this episode — but might as well:

Spinal Column Radio would like to remind you that true health comes from the inside out — not outside in. As such, the content of this podcast, along with the show notes and related links, are not intended to cure, diagnose, treat, or prevent any disease. But, instead, is meant to inform and inspire you in asking better questions regarding your health. Since the circumstances surrounding your particular situation are unique, you are encouraged to consult with a Doctor of Chiropractic — or other health care practitioner of your choosing.

Next time, when we pick up this story, we’ll give you an insider’s peek into Palmer’s radio station itself; we’ll highlight some of its most popular programming; and we’ll share with you a little known story about WOC’s most memorable employee. Plus we’ll bring you up to present day 2010 and talk about how chiropractic is finding its place in the world of podcasting. That’s on Part 2 of From Broadcasting to Podcasting — Chiropractic is On the Air!

So, until then, for my son, Logan, tweaking the knobs on the mixer board... This is Dr. Thomas Lamar, your podcast chiropractor.

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Old time music credits:

California Ramblers – shaking the blues away (1927)*

University Six – st. louis hop (1926)*

California Ramblers – is she my girlfriend (1927)*

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