



The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association—the beginning

The first issue of THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION appeared in September 1901. Reprinted here are two selections from that issue; the first is the “Greeting” introducing the new journal. A.L. Evans, the first editor, noted: “The mission of this JOURNAL is to serve as a medium for the dissemination of information concerning the work of the Association, and of communication between its widely separated members....” This mission remains for THE JOURNAL, and JAOA has become the primary scientific and medical outlet of the profession. It is archived in the National Library of Medicine database and read internationally.

THE JOURNAL is truly the world’s window on osteopathic medicine.

The second article was written by John Martin Littlejohn, PhD, MD, DO, after an address to the American Osteopathic Association in Kirksville, Mo, earlier that year. He had joined the faculty of the American School of Osteopathy (ASO) in 1898, coming from the presidency of Amity College in Iowa. He had been trained as an MD and PhD in Scotland and earned his DO degree after joining the ASO faculty. At the time of the paper, Dr Littlejohn and his two brothers had recently left Kirksville to found the American College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery in Chicago. Dr Littlejohn was serving as its president.

The article presents his thoughts on the osteopathic medical profession as a system of medicine. In the introduction, however, Dr Littlejohn feels compelled to defend his philosophy of osteopathic medicine as taught at Chicago.

In his remarks, Dr Littlejohn expounds on the new profession’s relationship to medicine in general, and on its basic principles and definition. He defines its legal status and main modes of therapy. He discusses the relationship of osteopathic medicine to the germ theory of disease and the role of surgery in osteopathic medical practice. Later in the section on “Health and Disease,” he delineates the relationship between health and disease and the natural basis for both. He recognizes the importance of the sympathetic nervous system and the role of pain in health.

This is a wide-ranging article that gives a glimpse of how the osteopathic medical profession viewed itself and its attitudes on medical practice at the turn of the 20th cen-

tury. It will show the astute reader the beginnings of much of the context of the profession today. It also shows the sophistication of the writer.

The foundations of today’s osteopathic medical profession were being laid.

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JAOA Associate Editor

Editor’s note: The articles being republished have been electronically scanned so that they are reprinted in the format, page size, and typeface in which they originally appeared.