

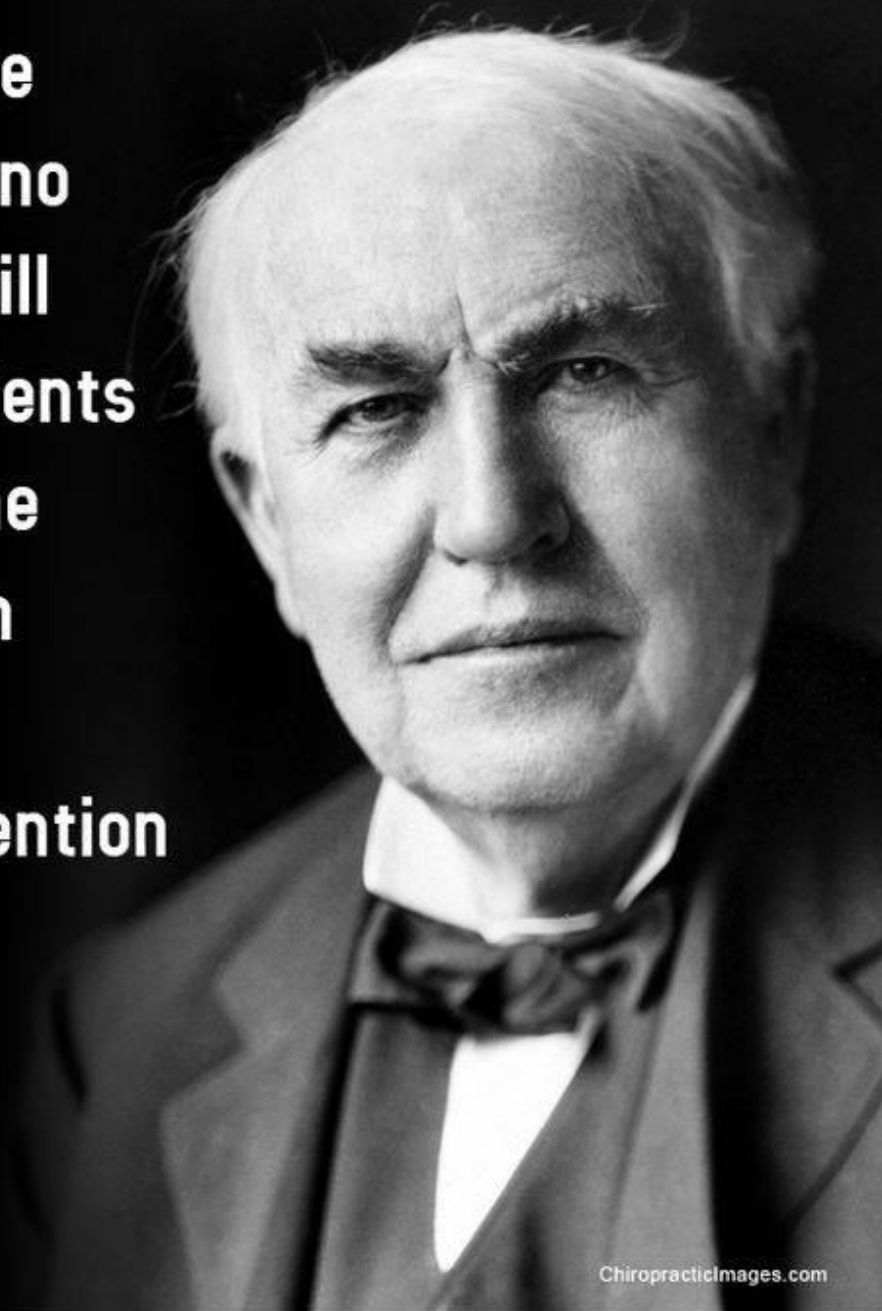
## The Disease, The cure, and Persecution of Practitioners

//

The **doctor** of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease

-THOMAS EDISON

//



ChiropracticImages.com

“Some of you may be aware of the 150 plus years of prejudice and persecution against practitioners of natural medicine and the systematic campaign to eradicate natural medicine in the US. The following story deviates a bit from the focus of the previous stories but provides background information on the historic persecution of practitioners of natural medicine in the United States. It explains why natural medicine is not more mainstream and accepted. We don’t have good medicine in the US, we have drug medicine.

I am able to offer you a first hand account, and to share the oral history's told to me from others, of the injustices and persecution directed against them as they attempted to help their patients.

University 4-6163

Some of you, if you are sufficiently “seasoned” (*older*) will recognize the title of this story as a phone number. It is the former phone number of a remarkable man and highly gifted doctor of naprapathy. His name was Dr. James Schleichert. University 4-6163 was how he answered his telephone, I will tell you why later in this story.

I met Dr. Schleichert in the summer of 1975 at his office on Davis Street in Evanston, Illinois. The meeting was “accidental”. I was accompanying an acquaintance to her appointment at a personnel agency and while in the building I stumbled across a sign on a door that said, NAPRAPATH. I thought that perhaps a naprapath practiced some form of health care that I had not heard of.

Since 1970 I had been studying and practicing herbal medicine, so I was curious as to what a naprapath was. There was a door bell by the sign, so I rang it. After few moments the door opened and before me stood a tall imposing looking middle aged man with a handle bar mustache, his hair was flattened down and parted in the middle. I felt like I had just stepped back 100 years into the past. Of course, this is a case of the pot calling the kettle black since at that time I was sporting a ZZ Top beard and long hair.

“What is a naprapath”, I asked. He politely explained what naprapathy was. When he finished his explanation, I asked to make an appointment. That began my relationship with the remarkable Dr. Schleichert who was to become my mentor, teacher, and partner for several years in practice.

Dr. Schleichert was the sole remnant of what had once been a thriving group practice. His former partners practiced naprapathy until they died, which naprapaths are wanting to do. He was the inheritor of a 60-year-old naprapathic practice.

Some of you may be aware that alternative, natural, or holistic medicine (*whatever you want to call it*) has suffered terrible persecution at the hands and through the actions of the medical profession. Dr. Harvey Hoffmeister, the original founder of this practice, was arrested in the 1950's for practicing medicine without a license when he prescribed the use of distilled water as part of a treatment for kidney stones. The problem was his “patient” was an undercover investigator for the State of Illinois.

Dr. Hoffmeister was arrested in his office and hauled off to jail in a paddy wagon where he was fingerprinted, photographed, given new clothes, and jailed. This persecution, especially bad during the 1950's through the 1970's, was the result of legislative lobbying by the American Medical Association and pharmaceutical company's in every state in the United States.

During the early 1900's the AMA, their lobbyists, and their friends in state legislatures were successful in shutting down most of the colleges and universities for herbal and natural medicine and outlawing the practice of natural medicine in every state.

They then waged a highly successful campaign to characterize anyone who was not a medical physician but who practiced a different form of health care, as a fraud, quack, and charlatan. This campaign included inserting into the health sections of high school textbooks anti natural

medicine propaganda demonizing natural medicine and its practitioners. The AMA went to the extreme action of forbidding their members to socialize with chiropractors, naturopaths, or naprapaths.

The answer to why Dr. Schleichert answered his telephone with his phone number University 4-6163 is because he could not answer it “Dr. Schleichert” without risking attracting undue attention from state investigators, and perhaps being arrested.

If you wonder, why there aren't more competent doctors or practitioners of natural medicine in the United States, this is the reason why.

What happened to poor Dr. Hoffmeister? He was defended by the great attorney Clarence Darrow ([\*the Scopes Monkey Trial\*](#)) and found not guilty.

At the time that I met Dr. Schleichert I was planning to enter the physical therapy program at Northwestern University in Evanston. Once I learned about and experienced the effects of naprapathy I changed my direction and entered the four-year doctoral program at the Chicago National College of Naprapathy in the fall of 1976. I could mention that had I gone to Northwestern, due to my prior military service, my veterans' benefits would have paid for most of my education. My veterans' benefits did not pay for my naprapathic education. As part of the campaign to eradicate natural health care in the United States the US government and Department of Education would not grant accreditation or student loans to schools that taught natural medicine.

I joined Dr. Schleichert in his practice while an intern at the naprapathic college and then remained with him after I graduated. He taught me many things about the true and humane practice of health care that I do not believe that I would have learned anywhere else. The first lesson he taught me was morality and virtue. He explained to me that certain immoral opportunities and choices would be presented to me and the importance of making the correct choice.

He was right, only a month into my practice and I was propositioned by an older female patient, the mother of another patient. I had to learn how take the difficult action of terminating a patient from my practice. His influence on my development through my observing him with his patients, his instruction, and the stories that he shared about the history of naprapathy and the men and women who heroically stood up to persecution and injustice molded and shaped my practice and character.

### **Here are some of the things that I learned:**

- 1. To treat people fairly and as you would like to be treated.*
- 2. Every patient is important and has an equal voice, listen to them.*
- 3. Treat patients whether they can pay or not.*
- 4. You are a doctor, not a salesperson, don't confuse the two.*

Eventually, I left Dr. Schleichert and moved to a rural area in Michigan with my family. As the only practicing member of my profession in Michigan, I was to experience resistance from the medical community and to face my own battles against prejudices and persecution. (*The only other naprapath to come to Michigan was given a choice, stop practicing or go to prison, he chose to quit and became a hearing aide salesman.*)

During my practice my respect for my teachers, their values and the compassion they demonstrated for their patients moved me to develop other values including; don't charge for everything that you do, always give something away, to never charge for serious life threatening or terminal illness, and to treat children free (*under the age of 15*).

There are few voices left from this age to speak of the courage and sacrifice of these early practitioners of natural medicine in America. It was my great privilege to know and to study with these men and women who either practiced or went to school in the late 1800's and early 1900's. As unlikely as it seems I am a bridge between two centuries.

I can tell you that these doctors practiced in quiet dignity, they did not achieve wealth, they did not drive expensive cars or live in big houses in the better part of town. They faithfully served the public good and ministered to their patients through world wars and the Great Depression. They practiced through their own illness, infirmity, and until they died unrecognized and mostly forgotten.

I look forward to the day when injustice and discrimination against my brothers and sisters in health care ceases, when they achieve the recognition that they deserve, when students feel that this is a worthwhile profession and future career and can get student loans to attend alternative medicine schools, and when our colleges and universities can get money for growth, development, and research.

There are already glimmers of this on the horizon, but so much more needs to be done.”

This Article was Written by,  
Dr. Gregory Lawton,  
My Teacher at the [BHA](#)

