

A Life Chronology of the First Osteopath

Andrew Taylor Still (1828-1917)

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Family History, an Introduction:

Andrew Taylor Still's maternal grandfather James Moore IV was kidnapped/captured in 1784 at the age of 14 by Black Wolf, a Shawnee Indian chief and warrior while living with his family in Virginia. He was then taken to live with the Shawnee tribe in the Ohio Valley. The same band of warriors led by Black Wolf later returned to Virginia and massacred James' mother and father as well as all the remaining European settlers in the area. James was later sold, as a slave, to a French trader who lived with the Native Americans in the area around Detroit. He was ultimately rescued in 1788 and returned to his homeland in Virginia and in 1797 married Barbara Taylor—Still's maternal grandmother.

Andrew Taylor Still's father, Abram Still (1796-1867) was born in America to Boaz Still, a Scotch-Irish frontiersman, and Mary Lyda Still, of Dutch descent. Andrew's mother, Martha Poague Moore Still (1800-1888) was born in America to James Moore IV and Barbara Taylor, and was of Scotch-Irish and German descent.

Andrew Taylor Still is born on August 6, 1828 in Jonesville, Virginia.

Andrew Taylor Still (known as Drew by his siblings) was the third of nine children (5 boys and 4 girls) born to Abram Still a Methodist minister/circuit rider and frontier medical doctor, and Martha Poague Moore. Four of Abram and Martha's children later became physicians. Still and his younger brother Thomas both apprenticed with their physician father and were trained as medical doctors. Drew's older brother James attended allopathic medical school becoming an MD and later a DO under the tutelage of his younger brother, the founder of Osteopathy. The oldest of Abram and Martha's children, Edward also became a DO; he was in the first class at the American School of Osteopathy in 1892.

1834 (Drew is 6 years old): The Still family moves from Virginia to New Market, Tennessee.



1836 Spring (Drew is 8 years old): The Rev. Still requests a transfer from Tennessee to Missouri. The Still family treks over 700 miles from eastern Tennessee through Kentucky across the Ohio River through the southern tip of Illinois, northwest to St. Louis, then crossing the Mississippi River traveling to north central Missouri in Macon County. The Still family leaves Tennessee traveling 7 weeks overland with 6 children (the youngest being less than one year old) in two covered wagons and six horses.



1838 (Drew is 10 years old): Drew fashions a rope swing to self-treat his headaches. Dr. Still, retrospectively, proclaims this act is the first Osteopathic treatment.



1847 (Drew is 19 years old): Drew wants to enlist in the army to fight in the war between the United States and Mexico. He states, "I was boiling over with fight."¹ His father refuses to give consent, stating that Drew was under age.



January 1849 (Andrew is 21 years old): Andrew marries Mary Margaret Vaughn, she is about 16 years old (birth date unknown-died 1859). Mary Margaret is sick and weak during most of their marriage. Each of her five pregnancies were physically exhausting and she became increasingly feeble over the 10 years of their marriage.



July 4, 1849 (Andrew is 21 years old): Andrew's primary occupation is that of a farmer, with 60 acres of land plowed and planted in corn a hail storm destroys the crop. The family is decimated financially. Andrew teaches school that fall and winter for \$15 per month.



December 8, 1849 (Andrew is 21 years old): The first child to Andrew and Mary Margaret is born, Marusha (1849-1924).



1849 (Andrew is 21 years old): Andrew begins a "formal" two year apprenticeship with his father to study as a medical doctor.



1853 (Dr. Still is 24-25 years old): Andrew serves as a physician in John Fremont's expedition that set off from Kansas City to try to find a central route across the Rocky Mountains for the transcontinental railroad. The expedition was forced by bad weather to turn back in Utah.



November 12, 1852 (Andrew is 24 years old): The second child, and first son, to Andrew and Mary Margaret is born, Abraham Price (1852-1864).



1853 (Dr. Still is 25 years old): Dr. Still and his wife Mary follow Andrew's father, the Rev. Still, and move from Missouri to Wakarusa Mission, Kansas. A. T. Still lives in Kansas for the next 22 years. Wakarusa Mission is located, ironically, on Shawnee Indian reservation land and his father is assigned to preach at the Methodist Church at the reservation. The Shawnee tribe had been, against their will, "relocated" by forced march during the Trail of Tears ordered by President Andrew Jackson to Kansas from the east. Still worked and plowed 90 acres of land. "Some days I broke four acres of sod."² He farmed and helped his father to "doctor to the Indians." While at the Wakarusa Mission Andrew learns to speak some of the Shawnee language.



April 1855 (Dr. Still is 27 years old): Still begins to think about new methods of healing and to question medical tradition after conversations with his friend and mentor Major James B. Abbott. It is thought that at this time he began his study of Magnetic Healing.



1855-1857 (Andrew is 27-29 years old): Andrew studies mechanics and machinery under the tutelage of Boston educated Professor Sole.



1855 to the early 1900's: Andrew is fascinated with technology and mechanics. He builds and opens a steam powered sawmill in the mid 1850's. He invents a mowing machine to harvest wheat, but before he can submit the patent, his idea for the invention is stolen by the Wood Mowing Machine Co. In 1871 he invents an

improved butter churn. Between 1904-06, while in his 70's, he invents a modern antipollution device that allows for smokeless combustion in coal burning furnaces; in 1910 he was issued a patent for the device.



March 9, 1855 (Andrew is 27 years old): The third child, to Andrew and Mary Margaret is born, George, he dies one day later.



April 11, 1856 (Andrew is 28 years old): The fourth child, to Andrew and Mary Margaret is born, Susan (1856-1864).



October 6 1857 (Dr. Still is 29 years old): Dr. Still is elected to the State Legislature in Kansas, serving for 5 years.



1857 to 1861 (Andrew is 29-33 years old): A. T. Still is active in the anti-slavery movement in Kansas. He participates in the "Bleeding Kansas" battles (between the pro and anti-slavery citizens) until Kansas was admitted into the Union as a free state in 1861. He is friends and allies with the famous anti-slavery leaders John Brown and Jim Lane.



July 29, 1859 (Andrew is 31 years old): The fifth child, to Andrew and Mary Margaret is born, Lorenzo Waugh, he dies 5 days after birth.



September 29, 1859 (Andrew is 31 years old): Andrew's wife Mary Margaret Vaughn Still dies. He is left with 3 living children: Marusha (10), Abraham Price (9), and Susan (6).



November 25, 1860 (Dr. Still is 32 years old): Andrew is remarried to a 26 year old school teacher named Mary Elvira Turner (1834-1910), they are married for 50 years.



Early 1860's: Still self-reports attendance at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Kansas City, Missouri. However, no records demonstrate evidence of the existence of the school or his attendance. He self-reports that he attended this medical school by never completed the course of study due to personal conflicts regarding the curriculum.



1861-1864 (Major Still is 33-36 years old): Still fights in the Civil War on the side of the Union Army. He serves his entire military career in Kansas in several different militia units. His earliest rank is that of a sergeant and he is listed as a hospital steward, who functions as a pharmacist and surgeon's assistant. After his first militia unit is disbanded, he reorganizes a new militia and is promoted to Captain and ultimately he achieves the rank of Major. His unit is involved in the Battle of Westport (also known as the Gettysburg of the West). In his Autobiography he reports only his combat duty as an infantry officer, he never served as a medical officer in the Civil War as a physician or surgeon.



September 12, 1861 (Andrew is 33 years old): The first child, to Andrew and Mary Elvira is born, Dudley Turner he dies 6 weeks later.



January 13, 1863 (Andrew is 35 years old): The second child, to Andrew and Mary Elvira is born, Marcia Iona (1863-1864).



1864 (Major Still is 36 years old): In the Battle of Westport, Major A. T. Still suffers a ruptured inguinal hernia. This injury is severe enough that he is no longer able to do the heavy work/labor required of a farmer and, out of necessity, devotes more time to his duties as a physician.



February 1864 (Andrew is 36 years old): Three of Dr. Still's children die of spinal meningitis all within two weeks' time (Abraham, age 11, Susan, age 7, and an adopted daughter age 9—her name is unknown). Two weeks after the three older children died, the youngest daughter (Marcia Iona, age 1) dies of pneumonia. Abraham and Susan are children from his first marriage and Marcia Iona was the only living child from his second marriage. The great tragedy was that four of his children died within a 4 week time period just after he had returned from combat duty in the Civil War. Andrew was "torn and lacerated with grief."³



January 7, 1865 (Andrew is 37 years old): The third child to Andrew and Mary Elvira is born, Charles Edward (1865-1955).



May 15, 1867 (Andrew is 39 years old): The fourth and fifth children of Andrew and Mary Elvira are born, the twins Harry Mix (1867-1942) and Herman Taylor (1867-1941).



1867 (Andrew is 39 years old): Andrew's father, Abraham, dies at age 71 of pneumonia. Still was very close to his father and this death was a great loss.



1867: Andrew begins to study Spiritualism.



January 15, 1874 (Andrew is 46 years old): The sixth child to Andrew and Mary Elvira is born, Fred (1874-1894).



1874-1883: Dr. Still practices Magnetic Healing and begins exploring bone-setting as a healing art. It is not known from whom he learned the art of bone-setting.



1874 (Dr. Still is 46 years old): Still advertises his services as "A. T. Still, Magnetic Healer" in a newspaper the North Missouri Register.



1874: A letter of A. T. Still's is included in a regional Spiritualist newspaper.



At 10 AM on June 22, 1874 (Dr. Still is 46 years old): Andrew Taylor Still has an epiphany. He has a prophetic vision where he is shot, as he describes it, "not in the heart, but in the dome of reason."⁴ In an instant "like a burst of sunshine the whole truth dawned upon my mind."⁵ This vision transformed him and he stated that "I saw a small light in the horizon of truth."⁶ Thus revealed to A. T. Still is the whole of what will later be termed Osteopathy. He retrospectively states that on this date and time, "I flung to the breeze the banner of Osteopathy."⁷ Still was living in Baldwin, Kansas with his wife, Mary Elvira and six children.



1874: Dr. Still presents his new ideas for reforming medicine to Baker University, a Methodist college which was co- founded by Andrew's father Reverend Abram Still. Dr. Still and his brothers had donated the land and helped in the building of the university in the mid 1850's.



1874: Dr. Still is publicly "read out" (or formally removed and banished) from the Methodist Church by the minister in Baldwin, Kansas. Because of his "laying on of hands" Dr. Still is accused of trying to emulate Jesus

Christ and is labeled an agent of the devil. He is condemned as practicing voodoo medicine and his practice dropped off rapidly. He was socially and professionally ostracized, financially destitute and was ultimately forced to move his family to Macon, Missouri in 1875.



Autumn 1874: Dr. Still performs the first “recorded” Osteopathic Treatment in Macon, Missouri treating a four year old boy with bloody flux (hemorrhagic gastroenteritis).



November 1874: Andrew’s oldest brother Edward Still (also living in Kansas) is in poor health. He could scarcely walk and was using 75 bottles of morphine annually. Dr. Still stayed with his brother for 3 months, got him free of opium and then moved to Kirksville, Missouri.



1875 (Andrew is 47 years old): Still meets Robert Harris, a devoted friend and influential teacher.



Up until 1875: Andrew formally listed his occupation as a medical doctor, but in 1875 he publicly recorded his occupation to the Kansas census as machinist.



May 1875: Still sends for family (his wife Mary and their four remaining children) to come to Kirksville, Missouri. They had been living in Macon, Missouri prior to the move to Kirksville. Still had been living in Kirksville for 3 months in advance of his family. Kirksville at that time had a population of 6000.



January 5, 1876 (Andrew is 48 years old): The seventh and last child of Andrew and Mary Elvira is born, Blanche (1876-1959). In 1876, Still has six living children: Marusha from his first marriage and Charles, Harry, Herman, Fred, and now Blanche from his second marriage.



September 1876 until June 1877 (Andrew is 48 years old): Andrew suffers from a severe infection of Typhoid Fever. He was unable to work half the time, he was feeble physically and weak financially for nearly a year during the illness.



1864 until 1882: Andrew and his wife Mary Elvira repeatedly petition the US government for Andrew to receive a pension based upon injuries received in the Civil War. However, because the Kansas Militia was not officially sworn in to the Union Army, his pension requests are denied. He reports to have suffered an inguinal hernia during the Battle of Westport. In the years following the Civil War the Still family suffers many financial hardships, his earnings barely kept pace with his expenses.



Winter 1878/1879: Dr. Still is called back to Kansas to treat a family member who is ill. “I treated partly by drugs, as in the other days, but also gave Osteopathic treatments.”⁸



From 1880 until 1886 (Dr. Still is 52-58 years old): Dr. Still works as an itinerate/traveling physician migrating from town to town in rural Missouri. The towns included Wadesburg, Clinton, Holden, Harrisonville, Palmyra, Rick Hill, Kansas City, and others. He would be gone away from his wife and children for months at a time.



1883-1890 (Dr. Still is 55-62 years old): Dr. Still formally advertises himself a Lightning Bone Setter, not an Osteopath. His business card clearly lists his “occupation” as a Lightning Bone Setter.



1885 (Dr. Still is 57 years old): Still coins the term Osteopathy, after discussion and advice from his friend Dr. Sweet. Prior to this date Still was utilizing the new principles and practice of this non-traditional non-allopathic approach that up to this time did not have a name. Up until 1890 Dr. Still continued to advertise himself as a Bone Setter.



1886 (Dr. Still is 58 years old): Still finds that work is so plentiful that he can remain at one place and let patients come to him. So he mostly gives up traveling and remains primarily in Kirksville, Missouri.



November 1, 1892 (The Old Doctor is 64 years old): Dr. Still opens the first school of Osteopathy: *The American School of Osteopathy* (ASO) in Kirksville, Missouri. Five of the original students in the inaugural class were children of Andrew and Mary Elvira (Harry, Charlie, Herman, Fred, and Blanche) and one was his older brother Edward.



1892: The Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy by A. T. Still is published, then mysteriously withdrawn from distribution. It is finally re-released and publicly distributed to a very limited degree in 1902.



June 6, 1894 (The Old Doctor is 66 year old): Just after graduating from the first class at ASO, Fred (age 20) dies from injuries suffered in an accident. Fred was the most studious and gifted of A. T. Still's children. Fred and his father were exceptionally close. His death was a great tragedy for the Old Doctor and for the burgeoning Osteopathic profession.



Autumn 1894: the second class at ASO begins with 30 students.



1896: Vermont becomes the first state to legally license DO's, the second state is North Dakota.



1897: Missouri grants DO's licensure.



1897 (The Old Doctor is 69 years old): Autobiography of A. T. Still is published. A 2nd expanded edition is published in 1908.



1899 (The Old Doctor is 71 years old): Philosophy of Osteopathy by A. T. Still is published.



1903 (The Old Doctor is 75 years old): Dr. Still attends the Mississippi Valley Spiritualist Association meeting in Clinton, Iowa.



1906 (The Old Doctor is 78 years old): Dr. Still's health begins to fail.



1907 (The Old Doctor is 79 years old): Dr. Still is reported to practice meditation as a method for obtaining answers to philosophic questions.



1910 (The Old Doctor is 82 years old): Research and Practice by A. T. Still is published.



May 28, 1910 (Andrew is 82 years old): Mary Elvira "Mother Still" dies. Andrew and Mary had been married for 50 years.



1914 (*The Old Doctor is 86 years old*): Dr. Still suffers a mild stroke from which he never fully recovers his speech.



December 12, 1917: Andrew Taylor Still dies at 89 years of age in Kirksville, Missouri.

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¹ Still, A. T. *Autobiography of A. T. Still*, (1908; reprint, American Academy of Osteopathy, 1981), page 46

² Still, A. T. *Autobiography of A. T. Still*, (1908; reprint, American Academy of Osteopathy, 1981), page 56

³ Still, A. T. *Autobiography of A. T. Still*, (1908; reprint, American Academy of Osteopathy, 1981), page 97

⁴ Still, A. T. *Autobiography of A. T. Still*, (1908; reprint, American Academy of Osteopathy, 1981), page 258

⁵ Still, A. T. *Autobiography of A. T. Still*, (1908; reprint, American Academy of Osteopathy, 1981), page 85

⁶ Still, A. T. *Autobiography of A. T. Still*, (1908; reprint, American Academy of Osteopathy, 1981), page 339

⁷ Still, A. T. *Autobiography of A. T. Still*, (1908; reprint, American Academy of Osteopathy, 1981), page 94

⁸ Still, A. T. *Autobiography of A. T. Still*, (1908; reprint, American Academy of Osteopathy, 1981), page 99