

Exercise in American Homeopathic Medicine, 1840-1870

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In the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century, homeopathic physicians attempted to provide a rational basis for the understanding of disease and its treatment and health and its maintenance. Exercise was an integral part of both of these aspects of medical practice. The systematic use of exercise in the preventative and curative process was unique to homeopathic therapy.

The formulator of homeopathy, Samuel Christian Hahnemann (1755-1843), was more a theorist than a practitioner. He had a thorough knowledge of the current medical literature of his day and translated the significant medical texts into German. In 1790 while translating William Cullen's *Materia Medica*, Hahnemann began developing the fundamental law of homeopathy, *similia, similibus, curuntur* ("like cures like"). Cure was accomplished by medicine that produced symptoms similar to the symptoms which characterized the disease. A series of "drug-provings" tested the law of *similia*. Hahnemann gave pure and simple medicines to healthy subjects and asked them to describe their sensations. The sensations were compared to the symptoms of diseases and treatment was based on these "provings." Hahnemann called these "provings" the law of infinitesimals. This law stated that homeopathic doses should be extremely weak. The smaller the dose, the more effective the medicine would be in stimulating the natural healing processes of the body.

In seeking to explain how the law of *similia* worked, Hahnemann modified a form of vitalism. Vital force produced and controlled all human action. Disease resulted from an external agent disrupting the vital force. Combatting the external agent and preventing its recurrence was the object of Hahnemann's therapeutics.

Exercise was part of the homeopathic treatment used to prevent and combat disease. Hahnemann himself promoted specific exercises for the development of health. Gymnastics gave vigor to the body, while walking was indispensable as a means of recuperating vitality. Although Hahnemann did not develop a formal system of therapeutics based on exercise, with his encouragement, his American followers did. Dio Lewis developed a systematic regimen to prevent and relieve disease. He believed that motion was the great law of the universe. When life-force (vital force) ran low, the natural and most effective method of invigorating it was found in movement. Lewis' system, called "The Movement Cure," provided exercise programs for specific diseases, as well as programs directed at improving individual health. One comprehensive form of exercise equipment that Lewis promoted was the Pangymnastikon, an apparatus which combined bars, ladders, and swings into one unit that was meant to be used in the home.

Another American homeopath, Dr. David Thayer promoted the lifting of weights as a cure for some diseases. "The Lifting Cure" relieved the body of disease conditions by strengthening and invigorating the body.

Homeopaths held no universal views concerning the role of exercise in the treatment of

disease. Dr. Isaac Jennings cautioned against the excessive use of exercise during the recovery period. He argued that exercise consumed strength that was needed by vital force to fight disease. Jennings did approve exercise for the “purpose of renovation,” and for health maintenance.

For American homeopaths, exercise played an important role in the maintenance of a healthy body. Homeopaths associated motion with life, therefore a lack of exercise contributed to the debility and destruction of the body. They believed that a person who pursued a proper regimen of diet, fresh air, rest, and exercise would be able to fight off the influence of most illnesses. Homeopaths recognized that maintenance of health was at least as important a responsibility of the physician as was the treatment of disease, and exercise was an important component of both.

The North West Mounted Police Force and the Development of Rugby Football in Western Canada 1873-1908

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Rugby football was introduced to Canada mainly by British settlers and garrisoned troops in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It's popularity gradually increased in the larger centers of population and the game was taken up by several educational institutions, notably Trinity College and Upper Canada College of Toronto. In British Columbia and the Maritime Provinces the Royal Navy helped generate interest in the sport. In the North West, which became part of the Dominion of Canada in 1870, the development of rugby was greatly influenced by the North West Mounted Police Force.

Formed on August 30th, 1873 to establish law and order in the newly acquired territory, the N.W.M.P. quickly established a network of barracks that were the foundation stone for many of the first settlements. Before the large influx of settlers that began in the 1890's, the police played rugby amongst themselves and on occasions with the native Indians. As settlements increased, the N.W.M.P. began to arrange fixtures with local teams. In 1890 a team from the Regina Division travelled to Winnipeg and played the local teams at rugby and cricket. In the same year the game was introduced to Calgary. In 1891 Lethbridge and Ft. Macleod saw their first games and the police also introduced the sport to Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan and Battleford.

Many of these developments were due to the work of Commissioner L. W. Herchmer, who took command of the N. W. M. P. in 1886. Herchmer was particularly concerned about the reputation and morale of the police force and he was quick to realize the significance of