Franklin Bache, MD

Acupuncture 1826

“And what we can learn from our forefathers”

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Some time ago a colleague of mine proposed a question to me. I had to stop and think about it for a minute. Her question was “when was acupuncture first used in the United States?” After thinking about it I too was curious to hear your answers. If you answered 1826 (we would have even accepted anytime in the 1820’s) you would be correct. That leads me to my next question, or should I say questions; did you know this? If not why don’t they teach this in every acupuncture school around the country? Before I answer the above questions let me first start off with most know or believe about acupuncture in the United States.
It would safe to say that it wasn't till James Reston, a journalist for the New York Times, wrote about his use of acupuncture in China did it take hold in this country. In July of 1971 Mr. Reston was in China with the President’s national security advisor Henry Kissinger as he was making final arrangements for the president’s trip the following year.

It’s well known in the American acupuncture community that President Richard Nixon helped usher in the acupuncture boom when he established diplomatic relations with the Peoples Republic of China in 1972. Some believe that this was the birth of acupuncture in the United States. Maybe the rebirth, but acupuncture had a long rich history before President Nixon's trip to China in February of 1972.
On the morning of July 12th 1971, Mr. Reston noticed a pain in his groin and by that evening he had a temperature of 103 degrees. The next day he checked into the Anti-Imperialist Hospital in Peking (now called the Peking Union Medical College Hospital as of 1985 its original name). Mr. Rexton was diagnosed with acute appendicitis and had his appendix surgically removed that day. Two days later, Mr. Rexton received acupuncture for his post surgical pain. Most acupuncturists have heard this account before, but most don’t know much about this hospital.
President Richard Nixon personal physician, W. Kenneth Riland, DO, wrote the following about acupuncture:

“I’m afraid that many doctors will attempt to use acupuncture for a therapeutic effect with limited (or practically no) knowledge and a lot of damage will be done.”

Desert Sun, Number 266, 10 June 1972
Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller serviced as President Gerald Fords Vice President from 1974 to 1977 when Richard Nixon left office. Nelson Rockefeller father, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Had a hand in the history Of acupuncture as you will see. Enter the Rockefeller foundation.
In 1913, the Rockefeller Foundation was created to oversee all the grant-giving programs of the Rockefeller family. A top priority on their list was establishing a school that would introduce American-style medical science to Asia. In 1914 China Medical Board launched as the second major program of the newly established Rockefeller Foundation to put the ideas of the China Medical Commission Study into practice.
The Peking Union Medical College (PUMC) in Peking was comprised of 14 hospital, medical school, and laboratory buildings. The school was modeled after Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and completed in 1921.
Fourteen members of the Board of Trustees, including John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (pictured in the middle with a goatee, the guy who looks like Colonel Sanders) and Chairman of the Board, Martin Ryerson from the University of Chicago.
In 1924 PUMC scientists discover and isolate ephedrine from the Chinese herb *mahuang* (*ephedra sinica*).
The best doctor gives the least medicines -

Benjamin Franklin
In the beginning of the 19th century, acupuncture was the dernier cri throughout Europe. By the early 1820’s, acupuncture articles started to appear in American medical journals and physicians in the US began to take notice of acupuncture experiments that were taking place in Europe. There was special interest taken in the literature coming out of France.
In 1825, Franklin Bache, MD (the great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin) translated (from French) the work of J. Morand, Mémoire sur l'acupuncture (Memory on acupuncture). Bache also wrote the first research paper on acupuncture in the USA. Thus the connection to the founding fathers of the United States of America. Acupuncture is as American as Apple pie.

While translating Morand’s book, Bache decided to try acupuncture. He was an assistant physician at the state penitentiary in Philadelphia. Bache chose 12 patients to treat, who were all in extreme pain and suffered from the following conditions: three with muscular rheumatism, four with “chronic pains,” three with neuralgia, and two with ophthalmia.

*In James H Cassedy’s article titled: “Early uses of acupuncture in the United States, with an addendum (1826) by Franklin Bache, M.D.*
Bache concluded that acupuncture caused no harm to his patients. Most experienced relief from their pain, in a few cases there was no change at all. In some cases needle insertion would cause moderate to severe pain before relief was achieved.

Between 1825 and 1826 Bache treated 17 more patients with acupuncture. This time, not all of the patients were inmates. Those 17 patients suffered from the following ailments: headaches, fever, elbow tumors and pulmonary inflammation. Bache reported the following results.

7- patients were cured
7- patients were considerably relieved
3- patients reported little to no relief

In conclusion Bache reported that acupuncture had remarkable power for “removing and mitigating pain.”
Observations From Bache’s Paper

Bache concludes his paper by addressing why he did not go into the philosophy on acupuncture nor needle insertion. He refers the reader to his translation of Dr. Morand’s “Mémoire sur l'acupuncture."

Even though Bache didn’t address the philosophy behind his acupuncture treatments, it was obvious that he used mainly local points. With some of his patients he would start off by inserting the needle right in the of pain. For some of his patients the pain was too much an Bache had to withdraw the needle. He also experimented with needle retention. In a few cases Bache retained the needles in for 1 to 1.5 hours. In other cases he would retain the needles in from 3 to 10 hours and in two cases the needles were retained in for 24 hours. Bache discovered that some patients responded better when needles were left in for longer periods of time.
Bache might have been the most active physician performing acupuncture during this time but he was not the only one.

In 1826, J. Hunter Ewing, a physician from Philadelphia, PA reported great success when he used acupuncture to relieve and cure his patients of neuralgia. Later that year Ewing published his results in *North American Medical and surgical Journal* 3 (1826) 77-78.

According to Cassedy, there were two unpublished medical theses on acupuncture in 1826. One by Thomas A. Elliott in South Carolina and the other by John Jefferson Hall from the University of Pennsylvania. Although we can only document acupuncture starting in 1825, it most likely started before that in America. Both Bache and Elliott mentioned other physicians that had more experience in using acupuncture. Bache thanked his friend Dr. Harris for his guidance on treating the group of 12 patients. While Elliott referred to a Prof Dickerson whom he observed treating a patient with ophthalmia.
Elliott also made an reference to Prof Ramsey and wrote the following, “to whom I am much indebted for a number of cases on which I have experimented.” Elliott also noted a certain galvanic phenomena, “when holding the needle in his fingers.

Even though all three physicians (Dr. Harris, Prof Dickerson and Prof Ramsey) used acupuncture a number of times, none published any articles on the topic.

**From Acupuncture to Elector Acupuncture**

In 1829 the American edition of Tavernier’s *Elements of Operative Surgery* published three pages on how and when one might perform not only acupuncture but also ‘electro-acupuncture’. In 1853 Dr. Holl from York County Hospital in Pennsylvania used DC though acupuncture needles to treat a longstanding nonunion of tibia fracture.
In 1836 William M. Lee of Indian Town, South Carolina writes about his use of acupuncture over the past 6 years (1830 – 1836.)

Lee used acupuncture to treat several cases of rheumatism. He reported that needle insertion caused minor pain, gave quick results, and the needles were easily accessible. Lee wrote that acupuncture was “entitled to far more attention than it has yet received in the United States.”

One acupuncture needle in the 1820’s from England (sold by S. Maw in an ivory case) cost one shilling. To give you an understanding of the cost, one shilling equals 12 pence. While the current currency of England today the Pound contains 20 pence.
What Acupuncture Looked Like In The 1820’s

The needles shown here are made from steel sewing needles, and are equipped with ivory handles.
That same year a group of three Philadelphia physicians—Edward J. Coxe, D. T. Coxe, and Samuel Jackson—conducted experiments with acupuncture as a possible means of resuscitating the drowned. European experimenters had claimed to have successfully revived drowned kittens by inserting needles into their hearts. The Americans, however, were unable to duplicate this success and gave it up in disgust. As Edward Coxe reported: “Whatever others may think of the possibility of resuscitating drowned persons by acupuncture, I can only say that I should think myself highly culpable, if, called to a case of asphyxia, I were to waste time, every moment of which is precious, in endeavouring to resuscitate by a means which I sincerely believe to be good for nothing.”

In 1835 George Washington Carpenter, owner of G.E.O Chemical Warehouse, sold acupuncture supplies through his catalog. By all accounts GEO.W Carpenter’s Chemical Warehouse was the first American company to sell acupuncture supplies. Carpenter’s catalog also listed moxa under the treatment of chronic rheumatism as (Carpenter 1844 n.p). Carpenter also sold glass cups used in cupping treatments.

Carpenter’s medical adviser listed Robley Dunglison’s book “New Remedies” (1839) as a source. Carpenter was a smart business man and would not sell acupuncture needles and moxa if they didn’t sell. When Carpenter died in 1860 he owned over 400 properties and was one of 7 millionaires living in Philadelphia at the time.
301 North. Market Street Today

John Howard and Stephanie Lashmit
Supplies In Medicine Chest Number 3

Carpenter's Medicine Chest: No. 3,

For a large family residing at a considerable distance in the country, or for a plantation where a large number of domestics are employed.

This being a larger chest, is generally made of pine, poplar or cherry, neatly stained and varnished, or can be made of mahogany, if desired, at a few dollars more expense.

On opening the lid the following bottles are displayed.

6, Four ounce canopy Porcelain Jars, containing

Mercurial Ointment,
Simple Cerate,
Blistering Ointment,
Citrine Ointment,
Basilicon Ointment,
Turner's Cerate.

6, Tin Canisters, containing

Epsom Salts,
Glauber Salts,
Senna and Manna,
Gum Arabic,
Arrow Root,
Adhesive Plaster, spread.

Neat and appropriate divisions, containing

Scales and Weights,
Spatula,
Graduated Glass Measure,
Glass Mortar and Pestle,
Glass Cup,
Carpenter's Medicine Chest Dispensatory.

This chest will cost from 35 to 40 dollars.
Topical Bleeding.

CUPPING.

This is done by means of a scarificator, and a glass somewhat like a bell. The scarificator is an instrument containing a number of lancets, sometimes as many as twenty, which are so contrived that when the instrument is applied to any part of the surface of the body, and a spring is pressed, they suddenly stand out and make the necessary punctures.

and a lighted candle should be provided. As many of the cupping glasses as may be judged necessary are to be put in the basin. If sixteen or twenty ounces of blood are to be taken away, four glasses of a size adapted to the surface to which they are to be applied, will generally be required.
Bache may have been the most active acupuncturist of the 19th century but Dr. Robley Dunglison was the most well known. Enter the most prominent acupuncturist of the time.

Robley Dunglison was an English-born physician who studied medicine in England, Scotland, France, and received his medical degree in 1823 from the University of Erlangen in Germany. The following year, Thomas Jefferson asked him to join the first faculty at the University of Virginia as a professor of anatomy and medicine.
Dunglison, who was considered the "Father of American Physiology," served as Thomas Jefferson’s personal physician. He was at Jefferson’s side during his final illness. Presidents Madison, Monroe and Jackson also sought medical advice from Dunglison.

In 1843, Dunglison reported on his use and experimentation with acupuncture. In one report Dunglison’s advocated using larger than average needles to drain off fluid from the cellular membrane in anasarca. Starting in 1839 Dunglison published in *New Remedy's*, an eight page account on acupuncture. For the next seven editions (the last one in 1856) this account appeared almost unchanged.

Dunglison mentions the use of acupuncture needles made from stainless steel, silver, gold and platina (platinum.) The stainless steel needles he describes have a handle made of lead or wax to “prevent it from being forced entirely into the body.” This seems to be a predecessor to the modern J type needle. He describes the steps of needle introduction by first stretching the skin and inserting the needle by applying gentle pressure while rotating it in both directions.

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Synonymes.
Acupuncture; Acupuncturation. German. Die Akupunktur; de Nadelstich.

Although acupuncturation is really an ancient therapeutical agent, attention to it has been so much revived of late years, and its use has been so largely extended, that it may be looked upon as constituting one of the novelties of therapeutics. It consists in the introduction of needles into different parts of the body with a view of removing or mitigating disease. They are usually from two to four inches long, the length being adapted to the depth it may be desired to make them penetrate. To introduce the needles, the skin is stretched, and the needle inserted by movement of rotation preformed in opposite directions, aided by gentle pressure.

*Pages 69 and 70, seventh edition of Robley Dunglison book “New Remedies”*
Number, Time And Length Of Needles

The number of needles to be used varies according to the extent of the parts affected. In the opinion of many experienced physicians, we ought not to be afraid of the number, but rather insert too many than too few, and not at too great a distance from each other. The length of time, during which the needles should be suffered to continue in the part, differs: no fixed rule can be laid down. Some suffer them to remain for an hour and a half, or two hours: at times, a period of five minutes is sufficient. In other cases, they have been kept in for two or three days. It appears to be by no means settled what medicinal influence is exerted by their longer or shorter continuance in the parts.

*from Page 52, fifth edition of Robley Dunglison book “New Remedies”*
Different Kinds Of Needle Metals

Perhaps the *porte-aiguille* or ‘needle-holder’ recommended by Dr. F. Bache,\(^1\) is as good as any that has been invented. The needle, with its *porte-aiguille*, consists of a handle with a steel socket to receive the end of the needle, which may be fixed securely, after having been inserted, by the pressure of a small lateral screw. By this construction, the operator can at pleasure fix in the handle a needle of the length he may desire, and after inserting it he is enabled to detach the handle by relaxing the screw. After all, however, needles prepared in the simple manner mentioned above are adequate to every useful purpose.

Besides common steel needles, those of gold, silver and platinum have been used, but it does not appear that one metal is preferable to another.

*from Page 52, fifth edition of Robley Dunglison book “New Remedies”*
Phantom Limb Pain

J. Cloquet obtained the happiest results from acupuncturation. A case of neuralgia after amputation, has been reported as cured by it. The patient was attacked by agonizing pains, not only in the stump, but also in the opposite thigh, accompanied by convulsions and fainting. In this state, two needles were planted in the course of the sciatic nerve. These produced no effect, but as soon as the third was introduced, the patient exclaimed, “The doctor has struck the toe of my foot.” The needle was then pressed still deeper, so as to pass through the nerve, and the pain immediately ceased. After the needles had remained in half an hour, they were removed, and the patient enjoyed a sound sleep, and awoke free from pain. About twenty days afterwards, the pain recurred; the needles were again applied, and relief as instantaneously followed.

Pages 73 and 74, seventh edition of Robley Dunglison book “New Remedies”
LXXVI. ELECTRO-PUNCTU'RA, Galvano-Puncture

Synonymes.


Electro-puncture consists in a union of acupuncture with electricity. The idea of the conjunction appears to have originated with Berlioz; but Sarlandiere was, doubtless, the first who put it in practice, although J. Cloquet has contested the priority with him—a matter, by the way, as in all such cases, of extremely small moment.

The operation consists in employing acupuncture in the usual way, either with a single needle, or with two or more; and making a communication between them and the prime conductor of an electrical machine in action; or they may be made to form part of the circuit in the discharge of a Leyden jar. In this way, the electrical influence may be graduated from the simple aura to a full shock.

Galvano-puncture has likewise been used by M. Jobert for the treatment of deafness dependent upon paralysis of the acoustic nerve. He introduces Itard's sound through the nasal fossæ into the Eustachian tube; and into this sound a long thin acupuncture-needle is passed, so as to fix itself in a point of the parietes of the tube, whilst the other extremity projects from the end of the sound. Another acupuncture-needle is implanted in the membrana tympani. This being done, one of the conducting wires of a galvanic battery, the trough of which is filled with water and chlorohydric acid, is passed through the eye of one of the needles, and the end of the other conducting wire is made to touch the opposite needle.
CXXVII. MOXA.

Synonyme. Moxiburium.

By the term moxa, the Chinese and Japanese designate a cottony substance, which they prepare by beating the dried leaves of Artemisia Chinensis, a kind of Mugwort.


EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY IN DISEASE.

Moxa – in its different forms – doubtless a most valuable agent, when rapid counter-irritation is indicated. It resembles, indeed, in its action, the ammoniated counter-irritants of which we have already treated, and is applicable to the same diseases; the only difference between them – when cauterization is effected – being, that the agent in the case of the ammoniated lotion is a *potential*, in that of moxa an *actual* cauterant. The moxa must be regarded as one of our most valuable revellents.

With the discoveries of medical anesthesia in the 1840’s, acupuncture articles started to disappear from medical journals. A search of the Surgeon General’s library index catalog from 1850 to 1900 showed only 6 references to acupuncture published in American medical literature during that time. One such reference appeared in Edward Warren’s Civil War surgical manual “An Epitome of Practical Surgery, for Field and Hospital,” where acupuncture was used to stop hemorrhaging.

In 1850 Dr. Fritz ROLKER of Cincinnati, USA (spelled Dr. RÜLKER in some publications) mentioned cauterization of the helix as a good treatment for sciatica – employing the method of J. F. MALGAIGNE (Cauterization on the ear as a treatment for sciatica. Journal Medicine Chirugicale. June 1850).
Never heard of Dr. Rolker? He had some famous friends you might of heard of though. Below is a letter from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Dr. Rolker.

To Fritz Rölker, Cleveland, January 21, 1853

Weddell House
Cleveland 21 Jan'y 1853

My dear Sir,

I dispatched to you yesterday, by the “American Express,” your books, Gervinus & Vischer, with a note written on the steamboat. I am a little anxious that such good books should arrive safely at your proper shelves & therefore trouble you with the additional line to announce the fact, & to repeat my thanks for your goodness. When you shall be in Massachus-sets, it will give me great pleasure to show you my little library at Concord.

Ever your obliged servant,

R. W. Emerson
1822  Articles on acupuncture started to appear in American Medical journals.

1825  Bache translated *Mémoire sur l'acupuncture* from French.

    Bache tested acupuncture on 12 prisoners.

1826  Bache published his research titled: *Cases illustrative of the remedial effects of acupuncture* in a North American Medical and Surgical Journal 1: 311-21, 1826.

    J. Hunter Ewing reports using acupuncture on neuralgia patients.

    Edward J. Coxe, D. T. Coxe and Samuel Jackson experiment with using acupuncture to bring drowning victims back from the dead. They were unsuccessful and gave up in disgust.
1829 - The American edition of Taversnier’s *Elements of Operative Surgery* published 3 pages on how and when to preform acupuncture, as well as the stimulation operation Electroacupuncture.

1836 - William M. Lee writes about his use of acupuncture for 6 years.


1843-1856 - Dunglison published his findings with the use of acupuncture in 7 articles.

1850 - First use of ear acupuncture in the U.S. is documented by Dr. Rolker of Cincinnati, Ohio.

1850-1900 - William Osler worked to keep the practice of acupuncture alive in the U.S.

1853 - First use of electro-acupuncture in the U.S. is documented.
As my co-author and I were doing research for this article, we noticed some uncanny coincidences.

First was Franklin Bache. His last name is pronounce the same way as the famous Dutch painter Hieronymus Jerome Bosch.

In Dr. Paul Nogier’s first book Treatise of Auriculotherapy, the author starts off with a detail from the “hell” panel of Bosch’s triptych The Garden of Earthly Delights. Dr. Nogier was French and the first book on acupuncture in America was the one that Franklin Bache translated from French.

Second is our connection to George Washington Carpenter, the first person to sell acupuncture needles in the US. Carpenter lived in Germantown, PA while my co-author and I live in Germantown, MD.
References:


Dunglison, Robley. The Medical Student; or, Aids to the Study of Medicine. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1837.


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