

25 years

# History in the Making

RUTH E.  
WILLIAMS



HISTORY IN THE MAKING

A history of the American Massage and Therapy Association,  
(Formerly the American Association of Masseurs and Masseuses)

Depicting the growth, the aims and the purposes,  
From its beginning in 1943, to the present time of 1968.

TAKE HEED

Are you an active member,  
the kind that would be missed?  
Or are you JUST contented  
that your name is on the list?

Will you take an active part  
to help the work along,  
Or are you satisfied  
to only JUST belong?

Think This Over Fellow Member

YOU KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG.

Are you an active member  
or do you JUST belong?

## DEDICATION

I, as writer of this history of the A.M.T.A., formerly the A.A.M.M., wish to dedicate this report to Milton A. Niedfelt in honor of the untiring work he has done in the forming of this Association. I wish to thank him for the use of the original documents from which much of this information was gathered.

Mr. Niedfelt has been actively engaged in the study and work of massage most of his life. For twenty years he worked hard to band the massage therapists together in the common cause to fight for legislation to protect the massage profession.

He laid the ground work and was actively engaged in trying to form a massage organization in the State of Washington as early as 1942, if not before. He received his Membership Certificate June 25, 1947.

Ruth E. Williams  
Member A.M.T.A. since 1947

## FOREWORD

The A.M.T.A. has gone through many growing pains and several name changes to arrive at the point on which it stands today.

I have taken the information contained in this history from original letters and documents, except where otherwise stated. In a few instances I have had to rely on the memory of old timers. Much of the information that is recorded in the letters I was not aware of, however much of this history is still clear in my mind. It has been a time of laughter and a time of tears as I have searched through the records of this Association.

Since Washington has had a state group of Massage Operators longer than any other state in our Association, I feel that the history of Washington is pertinent and relative to the inception, organization and growth of the A.M.T.A. For this reason, I will include a brief history of the Washington Chapter in this foreword.

September 26, 1943, a meeting of Massage Operators was called at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Murray in Seattle, Washington. It is not clear from the minutes of the meeting exactly who was present, but those spoken of in the minutes are Hugh Murray, Helon Wallis, David Jolly, Della Myers, Robert Cram, Milton Niedfelt, Wilbur Malono, Elsie Miller, Jessie LaBaron, Al Stilley, Vern Zoller, Miss Holt and Mrs. Gardner.

Robert Cram was appointed as chairman and served as first President of the Seattle Association of Masseurs and Masseuses which formed as the outcome of the above meeting. November 1, 1944, the organization adopted a City Constitution and By-laws. The purpose of the organization was to deal with the problem of city licences. Della Myers served as Secretary-Treasurer. Niedfelt was the only one present at the September 26th meeting who is still a member today.

Meetings were held as often as once a week and on September 16, 1944, a banquet was held celebrating the first anniversary with about 25 persons present. November 2, 1945, Joe H. Heisler was elected as president and question of a state law governing massage was the topic of this meeting and many meetings to come. During this year there were many problems which the group had to work on. Among them were; advertising in the form of radio, telephone, letter heads and etc. The organization was asked to join the A.F. of L. Health Machine Operators. This was never officially done.

Dr. E. E. Morrison was elected as President on December 13, 1945. Under his administration many banquets were held for educational and entertainment purposes. At a meeting, May 28, 1946 the group resolved itself into a committee as a whole to attempt to form a State Organization of Masseurs and Masseuses. It was at this meeting that another name change was made and the group was officially called Washington Massage Operators. As a result of this meeting, statewide meetings were called. The first was held on November 3, 1946. The Massage Operators of Washington adopted a State Constitution and By-laws. In

a short time there were one hundred and seventy-seven members of the Washington Massage Operators in good standing and many of them became Charter Members of the A.A.M.M. At this meeting there was a Dr. Clark Cottrell who told them about a national organization by the name of American Association of Masseurs and Massouses.

Milton A. Niedfolt, Secretary-treasurer of the Washington Massage Operators, set into motion the many letters and meetings which led to the one of November 3, 1947 where they went on record as voting to disband the Washington Massage Operators in favor of joining with the National A.A.M.M. Since this could not be done as a group, it had to be done by individual application. (Many of the members of the W.M.O. did not join with the A.A.M.M. Some years later a few of the members revived the W.M.O. as a social group to hold picnics and banquets, which they still do.)

From this point forward Washington became more than a lone state in her struggle to benefit massage operators. She officially became a part of the National Association, whose roots were already strong in Washington, as you will see in the "History of the A.M.T.A."

No doubt, there are many things that should have been added to this history which was left out. On the other hand perhaps there were things included that should have been left out. My excuse is that I am a Massouse and not a journalist.