



by Allen Vegotsky, Ph.D.

Dr. James Marion Hatchett opened a drug store in Fort Gaines, a small town in southwest Georgia, in the 1870s. He had been a Civil War surgeon as well as a pharmacist.

On the death of Dr. Hatchett in 1894, his son, Samuel Pope Callaway Hatchett, took over the store. Figure 1, copied from an old postcard, shows the drugstore as it appeared about 1915. Samuel Hatchett can be seen in the back of the store on the left. He began to manage the store as a young man in his early twenties and continued to operate the drug store for an amazing 63 years until he died in 1957.

After Samuel Hatchett died, the entire collection entailing thousands of products

was locked up by his widow, Emogene, and kept intact. More recently, the town of Lumpkin, Georgia restored the shell of an old drug store to a close facsimile of the original Fort Gaines store and accepted the entire collection. Dr. Hatchett's Drug Store Museum is a wonderful time capsule of a rural drug store in the middle of the twentieth century, yet the collection has a sizable component of early twentieth century and late nineteenth century products dating back to the 1870s.

Several years ago I visited the museum and was struck by its extensive collection of drug store bottles and memorabilia and by the uniqueness of the museum. Rather than a mixture of donated collections from different places and different times, Dr. Hatchett's Drug Store Museum is a model of a real drug store that transforms the visitor to a particular time in the past. The visitor almost expects Samuel Hatchett or "Pope," as he was called, to step out from behind the counter and offer to show his remedies for female ailments or dyspepsia.

I inquired about the collection and learned that it had not been inventoried. After retirement, I accepted the "inventory challenge" and have been studying the museum collection for the last few years.

Dr. Hatchett's Drug Store Museum covers a very important time span in the history of American pharmacy. It tells the story of dramatic changes in medicine. Many of the medicines are in their original cardboard containers and even have the

original paper inserts describing their products.

For example, Figure 2 shows the museum specimen of EN-AR-CO complete with original container, bottle with paper label, and the descriptive brochure that was folded and included with the package. Together these three sources provide a treasure trove of information about the product. We learn that EN-AR-CO was composed of fusel oil, capsicum (the "hot" stuff in red pepper), turpentine, camphor oil, chlorothymol along with perfumes and essential oils. The advertising reports that the product was on the market "for over 50 years" and that it had been used since 1884. This would date the product in the museum to 1934 or later. (Since the company name was changed in 1944, we can date the product more closely from 1934-1944.)

The product was essentially a liniment and antiseptic for treating "muscular stiffness, aches and soreness, neuralgia..." and so on. EN-AR-CO was also used as a vapor for treating head colds and respiratory problems. Before 1900, the product had been known as "Japanese Oil."

Through this collection, it is possible to follow the evolution of over-the-counter products from a pre-FDA period characterized by secret remedies and exaggerated claims to relatively modern times with carefully defined medicines and more modest claims. The more recent products frequently contained synthetic organic compounds made in the laboratory.

One of the many interesting observations from research on Hatchett's Drug Store Museum was the finding of a large number of products that Mr. Hatchett sold with his own trademark. These included Hatchett's Antiseptic for Wounds (Figure 3), Hatchett's Baby Bowel Remedy, Hatchett's Compound Extract Buchu with Acetate of Potash, Hatchett's Laxative Liver Salts, and many other products. Until relatively recent years, it was common practice for pharmacists to concoct their own medicines for their customers. It was only a small step to go from such preparations to packaged, trademarked medicines, as Mr. Hatchett exemplified.

With a little bit of luck and some clever advertising, these medicines could attract local, regional, national, and even



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

international appeal. In fact, this is probably how many of the patent medicines with household names originated. At the time when Samuel Hatchett was selling his remedies, there was a series of popular medicinal products in the south with the surprising trademark of “666.” The Monticello Drug Company of Jacksonville, Florida made these products and one of them was sold as “666 Malarial Preparation.”

When Mr. Hatchett wanted to market a similar product, he could not use the numbers “666” for legal reasons, so he called his product “Hatchett’s 222 Chill and Fever Tonic.”

From a study of this sort, one can learn not only about medicines and concepts of disease, but also one can learn how drug manufacturers regarded people. I found the different attitudes towards males and females particularly interesting.

One of the more unusual products in this collection has the unlikely name of “Pigeon’s Milk.” The medicine had a milky white color explaining part of the name, but the reference to a pigeon is perplexing. Containers of Pigeon’s Milk and one of the bottles of this product can be seen in Figure 4.

Pigeon’s Milk was the creation of a Dr. Rust, who operated the Rust Medical Company out of Philadelphia and St. Paul. Pigeon’s Milk sold for \$2.00 a container, a lot of money for its time, but it contained an entire kit for the treatment of gonorrhea.

The base of the container had two 2.5-cent revenue stamps required during the Spanish-American War, dating this product to very close to 1900. Each package contained a rectangular bottle, a tin with 50 large pills, a unique syringe, and three separate paper inserts or fliers. The fliers described the product and its virtues and provided a lot of advice for the male patient with gonorrhea, who was told to “live well, but do not use a drop of spirituous liquors, or coffee, or spiced foods, and as little tobacco, in any form, as possible, none if possible.” The consumer was also told to “avoid ladies’ society, and sustain from any sexual excitement, absolutely, until entirely cured.”

As an example of one of the museum’s products for women, we can consider Dr. J. Bradfield’s Female Regulator. This medicine was, as the name implies, intended strictly for woman. It was manufactured by the Bradfield Regulator Company of 89 ½ Forsyth Street in Atlanta. The package indicated that the product was “entered according to the act of congress of 1869 by

Joshua Bradfield...” so it is one of the older products in the museum. If you’re wondering what was being “regulated” by this medicine, it was the menstrual cycle.

In the 19th century, physicians worried a lot about any deviations from what they considered normal in menstruation and these deviations were interpreted as diseases. The trademark on the container is a woman in a lacy Victorian period dress with flowers in her hands and flowers in her hair. Typical of the time of manufacture, the container gives no clue to the medicinal contents of Dr. Bradfield’s Female Regulator other than the presence of 15% alcohol. Dr. Bradfield’s medicine was to be used “for the treatment of non-surgical cases of weaknesses and disorders of the female generative organs, such as depressed or delayed menses, and at the change of life.”

We can get a better indication of Victorian attitudes towards the two sexes by considering a medical product designed for both males and females. Dr. Hatchett’s Drug Store Museum has a container of Allan’s Headache Wafers, sold in a small cylindrical container for twenty-five cents a package. The multi-colored flowery design of the package is suggestive of old-fashioned bedroom wallpaper. The manufacturer was the Allan-Pfeiffer Chemical Company of St. Louis. The contents of the container are dime-shaped wafers to be swallowed with a drink of water. The statement on the container that



Fig. 3

Allan's Headache Wafers are "a positive cure for headaches, neuralgia, dizziness, sick or nervous headache, hysterical headache, bilious headache, and brain fatigue" suggests a date of manufacture prior to the enactment of the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906. Men and women users were addressed differently on the label. The former was told that "Business and professional men who suffer from headache or overwork will find instant relief by use of this wafer."

On the other hand, female users were told that "Ladies whose social duties cause them to encroach on the hours of Morpheus will find that a wafer taken in the morning will clear the brain, dispel that 'don't care' feeling, and equip them for the duties of the day."

The creation of an inventory of the drug store museum has been an educational experience for me. Rather than create a simple listing of products, I chose to prepare a summary of each product (cost, history, medical use, composition, advertising, etc.) using the information from paper labels, containers of products, brochures inserted in these containers, and

additional research based on reference books.

The summary contains an inventory and description of almost 2,000 products housed in Dr. Hatchett's Drug Store Museum in Lumpkin, Georgia. It is about 180 pages and available as a CD-Rom from:

Stewart County Historical Commission  
Box 818  
Lumpkin, Ga., 31815

The cost is \$12 for mailing to addresses within the United States.

Allen Vegotsky can be reached by mail at: 2215 Greencrest Drive, Atlanta, GA 30345-2629, by phone: (770) 270-1034, or by E-mail: [vegotsky@worldnet.att.net](mailto:vegotsky@worldnet.att.net)

## References:

Bergevin, Al. 1990, *Drugstore Tins and Their Prices*; Wallace-Homestead Book Co., Radnor, Pa.

Bingham, A. Walker. 1994, *The Snake-Oil Syndrome: Patent Medicine Advertising*. The Christopher Publishing House.

Fike, Richard E. 1987, *The Bottle Book: A Comprehensive Guide to Historic, Embossed Medicine Bottles*. Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah.

Griffenhagen, George and Mary Bogard. 1999, *History of Drug Containers and Their Labels*. American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, Madison, Wis.

Richardson, Lillian C. and Charles G. *The Pill Rollers: A Book on Apothecary Antiques and Drug Store Collectibles, 3rd Edition*. Old Fort Press, Harrisonburg, Va.



Fig. 4