

An Unusual Bequest to Bottle Collector - Historians

Researched and reported by
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In the Fall 2006 issue of *Bottles and Extras* (in the "Bottle Buzz" column), it may be recalled that a whole column was devoted to the passing of Dr. James Harvey Young (Figure 1), the man who gave us *The Toadstool Millionaires* (Figure 2) and several other fine books.



Figure 1

You can read what we wrote by seeking out the issue of *Bottle and Extras* mentioned above. Below you can read what Jeremy Pearce wrote, at the time, in the *New York Times*:

James Harvey Young, a social historian of American medicine who wrote engaging studies of fraud, dubious cures and health Quackery and later chronicled the birth of federal food regulation, died July 29 in Atlanta. He was 90.

The cause was complications of a stroke, his family said.

Dr. Young, an emeritus professor of history at Emory University, wrote two volumes on the study of drugs and therapeutic devices of the sort once hawked at sideshows and through mail-order catalogs.

In "*The Toadstool Millionaires: A Social History of Patent Medicines in America Before Federal Regulation*" (1961), he addressed the laxatives, tonics and other concoctions "often mixed with a strong dose of alcohol" that were popular in the 19th century, and he profiled their salesmen.

Howard R. Lamar, an emeritus history professor and former acting president of Yale, said the book had "an ironic title, describing people who made money out of questionable medicines, created from herbs or animals or from nothing at all."

A second volume, "*The Medical Messiahs: A Social History of Health Quackery in Twentieth-Century America*" (1967) continued the trend and covered false cures for cancers and

other illnesses. The book also touched on a subject that became the focus of Dr. Young's work on the history and development of federal standards for food and medicines.

Dr. Young looked at milk, oleomargarine, canned pork and beef as carriers of food-borne diseases, and the public's growing demand for regulatory control of food quality. The result was "*Pure Food: Securing the Federal Food and Drugs Act of 1906*" (1989), which examined federal oversight to the 1950s. Lamar called the book a "remarkably fresh treatment of the subject."

Todd I. Savitt, a historian and a professor of medical humanities at East Carolina University, said Dr. Young "allowed us to smile at the past and its imperfections without deriding it."

In another work, Dr. Young wrote about the early history of Georgia. He was a former president of the Southern Historical Association.

James Harvey Young was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. He received an undergraduate degree from Knox College in Galesburg, Ill., and a doctorate from the University of Illinois.

He joined Emory as an instructor in 1941 and remained there his entire career. He served as chairman of the history department from 1958 to 1966 and retired as a full-professor in 1984.

In 1982, the American Association for the History of Medicine awarded him its William H. Welch Medal.

Dr. Young's wife, Myrna Goode Young, died in 2000. Dr. Young is survived by two sons, Harvey G., of Doraville, Ga., and James W. Young of Phoenix and two grandchildren.

The Bequest:

Before he died, Professor Young arranged with Princeton University Press and in his estate planning for his most popular book, *The Toadstool Millionaires*, to be posted in its entirety on the Internet at: www.quackwatch.com/13Hx/TM/00.html.

Those interested in reading this classic piece of patent medicine literature are

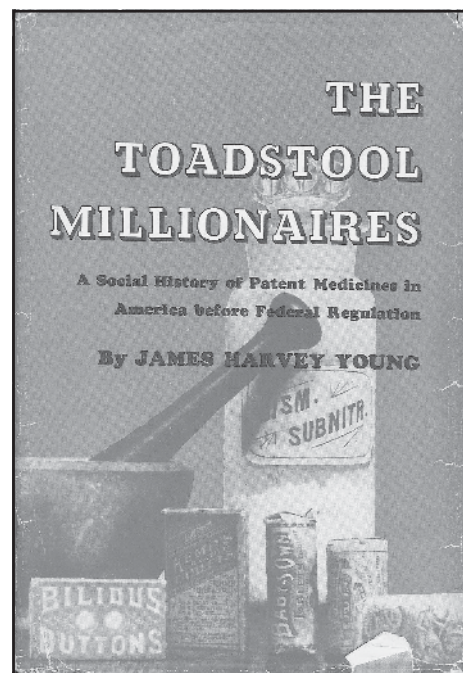


Figure 2

advised to go to the above website and click on the work chapter by chapter. Each chapter can be downloaded (and printed) as desired.

The Toadstool Millionaires: A Social History of Patent Medicines in America before Federal Regulation

James Harvey Young, Ph.D.

This book, originally published in 1961, chronicles the rise of the patent medicine trade from its beginnings in colonial America until passage of the first federal food and drug law. Dr. Young (1915-2006) was a social historian whose special interest was the development of food and drug regulation in America. He served for many years as a professor of history at Emory University and also was a member of the FDA National Advisory Food and Drug Council. The book is reproduced with the kind permission from him and the publisher, Princeton University Press.