

A Remedy For Every Ill: Hatchett's Drugstore and the Evolution of American Pharmacy

By Mike Bunn and Allen Vegotsky



Hatchett's Drugstore, circa 1940. Samuel Hatchett at right.

This article was generated from research compiled for an exhibition at the Columbus Museum in Columbus, Georgia. "A Remedy for Every Ill: Hatchett's Drugstore and the Evolution of American Pharmacy" was on view from February 26 – July 16, 2006. Hatchett's Drugstore Museum and Soda Fountain in Lumpkin, Georgia, is open Monday through Friday from 10-4 and Saturday by appointment. For more information, call the Stewart County Historical Commission at 229-838-6419.

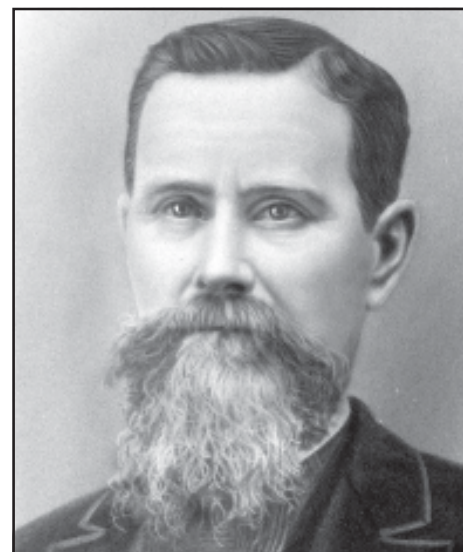
This exhibition was made possible by generous funding from the Historic Chattahoochee Commission.

Hatchett's Drugstore was founded in the late 1870s in Fort Gaines, Georgia by Dr.

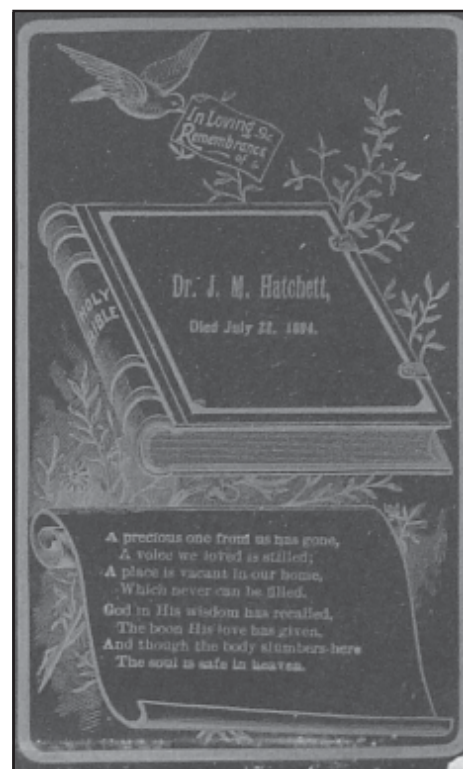
James Marion Hatchett, and closed in 1957. The store's contents, an amazingly intact inventory of an early 20th century drugstore, were donated by the Hatchett family to the Stewart County Historical Commission in 1973. With the exception of a small portion, currently on loan to the Historic Columbus Foundation, the collection is housed in *Hatchett's Drugstore Museum and Soda Fountain* in downtown Lumpkin, Georgia, which operates as a museum and luncheonette. Appropriately, the collection's current home once housed Barr's Drugstore, a long-time Lumpkin establishment.

The Hatchetts

Dr. James Marion Hatchett, founder of Hatchett's Drugstore, was born in 1824 in



Dr. James Marion Hatchett



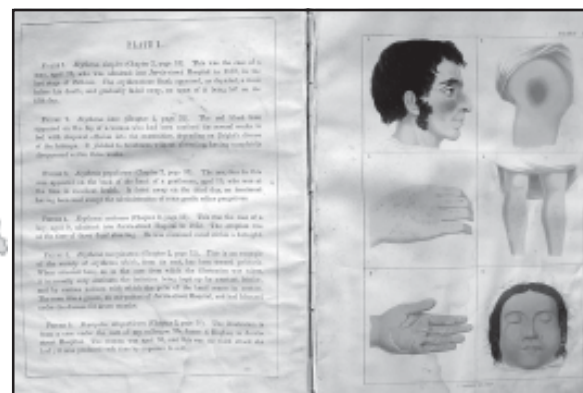
Card announcing the death of Dr. Hatchett



James Marion Hatchett's druggist license.



Map of west Georgia showing Harris County and Fort Gaines.



James Marion Hatchett's medical book.



Hatchett's Drugstore, circa 1915. Samuel Pope Hatchett at left.

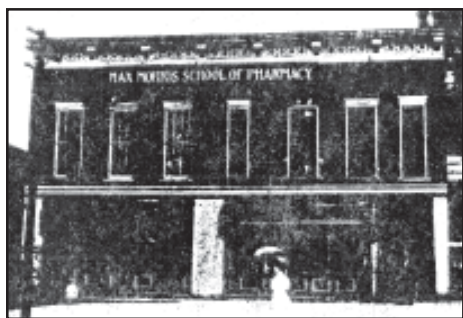
Tennessee. Hatchett is believed to have apprenticed to become a doctor in the 1840s and served in the Confederacy as a physician during the Civil War. Afterwards, he pursued certification as a pharmacist, working for a short time as both a pharmacist in Whitesville and West Point, Georgia. He later moved to Fort Gaines in Clay County, Georgia, where he opened a drugstore in the late 1870s.

Hatchett's son, Samuel Pope Callaway Hatchett (known as Mr. Pope), ran the store after his father's death in 1894. Though he learned much from observing his father,

Samuel enrolled in the Max Morris School of Pharmacy in Macon, Georgia in 1906 to prepare for the State examination in Pharmacy. Upon his return, he operated the store until his death in 1957 when his wife literally locked the door with the contents intact until an agreement was reached with the Stewart County Historical Commission to house the approximately 5000 products and pharmaceutical artifacts in Lumpkin.

Drugstores of the Late 19th and Early Twentieth Centuries

Drugstores were a relatively new phenomenon in America at the time Hatchett founded his store. Although forms of "pharmacy shops" had existed as far back as the eighth century, the development of stores like Hatchett's can be traced more directly to late medieval Europe. Apothecary shops, or drugstores, became relatively common at that time, and over the following centuries gradually started to take the shape they would become closely associated with in American history: a store



The Max Morris School of Pharmacy in Macon.



Image of Samuel Hatchett's class at the Max Morris School of Pharmacy; Samuel can be seen at far right (circled).



Perhaps the items most closely identified with the profession of pharmacy are the mortar and pestle. Used in the mixing of drugs since ancient times, especially ones that had to be ground to a powder, mortars and pestles were a recognized symbol of pharmacy as early as the 13th century.



This engraving, entitled *Salutis emporium*, from Johann Michaelis' *Opera medica chirurgica* (Nuremberg, 1688) depicts the annual inspection of a European pharmacy's stock.

[Courtesy National Library of Medicine]



Der Apotheker, from *Oeconomus prudens et legalis*, by Franciscus Florinus (Nuremberg, 1722). This image shows what a typical European apothecary shop of the early 1700s looked like.

[Courtesy National Library of Medicine]

with a glass front and a large rectangular interior space featuring rows of shelves and drawers in which medicinal ingredients were stored. As American drugstores began to develop, they emulated well-established European traditions.

The first drugstore in Georgia was opened in Savannah by Dr. Samuel Nunez in the 1730s. It was not until after the Civil War, however, that large numbers of these shops could be found in the state.



First Hospital Pharmacy in Colonial America, ca. 1750. Image from *Great Moments in Pharmacy* (Detroit, 1966).

[Courtesy of Pfizer Incorporated]



Glass bottles similar to the ones shown here lined most drugstores during the 1800s. They had both practical and decorative functions, as they stored ingredients the pharmacist used in compounding medicines, and by their orderly arrangement served as an advertisement conveying a sense of professionalism. The bottles slowly began to disappear from American pharmacies as chain drugstores came on the scene.

The Profession of Pharmacy

During the early years of Hatchett's Drugstore, the practices of medicine and pharmacy were much more interconnected than they are today. Far from being simply the dispenser of drugs, pharmacists played a vital role in diagnosing and treating illnesses, and they were usually the best

source of information for their customers on the potentially dangerous incompatibility of drugs. Respected in the community for their knowledge, pharmacists were generally viewed as professional equals of doctors despite the fact most had only apprenticeship, rather than academic training.

Pharmacists not only sold and compounded pre-packaged drugs, they often developed, produced and marketed their own remedies. This long-standing custom dated to the beginnings of pharmacy, as mass-produced medicines were unknown until the late 1800s. Largely "vegetable" drugs, utilizing parts of plants such as roots and barks, most of the



The Hatchetts used equipment such as shown here to produce medicines: hand balance and weight for measuring ingredients; cork press used to cap bottles of medication; and pill tile. To produce pills, pharmacists would mix the ingredients into a thick paste and roll it out on tiles such as this one. The roll would then be cut into pills; the markings on the tile enabled the pharmacist to make pills of the same size and control the dosage of the medications.



Though it became increasingly rare for pharmacists to make the majority of their own medicines during the years of Hatchett's operation, Samuel Hatchett did develop and market some of his own remedies. The items shown here are believed to be Hatchett's version of popular medications of the day: Hatchett's Chill and Fever Tonic, Hatchett's Baby Bowel Remedy and Hatchett's Sage Sulphur,



Many of the common dosages of medicines we know today were developed by pharmacists. They dispensed drugs and medicines as powders, pills, capsules, lozenges and wafers. Liquids were dispensed as tinctures, emulsions, ointments, liniments and lotions.

pharmacist-created medicines contained from one to five ingredients. For many years, pharmacists were judged by their skill at compounding these items.

Patent Medicines

Beginning in the 1880s, American drugstores increasingly carried mass-produced medicines on their shelves. These proprietary, or "patent," medicines were products whose ingredients were generally kept secret before federal legislation prohibiting the practice in 1906. Despite their name, very few of these products were actually patented. Often featuring sensational and exaggerated claims as a result of lax regulation and trademark rights, these products were sometimes effective, but often dangerous by contemporary standards.

Legislation passed after the turn of the 20th century eventually led to the end of many of the patent medicines. The Food and Drugs Act of 1906 was the first national



Common ingredients the Hatchetts used in compounding medicines.



As interesting as proprietary medicines themselves were the marketing campaigns that accompanied them. Manufacturers' claims were sometimes outrageous but chosen carefully to reach a wide audience, and drastically different language was sometimes employed in marketing the same medication for men and women.

legislation aimed at regulating the production and advertising of medicines and ensuring they contained no poisonous ingredients. A series of federal, as well as state, laws passed in the ensuing decades, coupled with advances in synthetic drug manufacturing, radically altered the formulation of industrially-produced drugs and greatly curtailed outrageous advertising. Though most eventually disappeared, some medicines, with altered formulas and claims, survived the period and are still popular today.

Pills, Potions, Soda and Ice Cream

Drugstores like Hatchett's, especially those in small towns such as Fort Gaines, sold a wide variety of items. Because for many years it was difficult to sustain a business selling medicines alone, it was a



Surviving medicines and health foods from the era of patent medicines.



Types of patent medicines sold at Hatchett's Drugstore.

long-standing tradition for pharmacists to sell a variety of sideline items, or "sundries," to increase their store's profitability. Some of these items, including perfumes, cosmetics, spices and flavorings, became the province of druggists because chemicals used to create them were often exclusively sold in pharmacies.

One of the sideline enterprises most closely associated with American

drugstores is the soda fountain. The first soda fountains opened in the 1820s, and



Above and below: The variety of sideline items sold in drugstores such as tobacco and spices and flavorings such as vanilla, peppermint and ginger, helped make drugstores identifiable as much by their aroma as their appearance.



Medical advertising from the turn of the century sheds light on the state of pharmaceutical science. An emphasis on maintaining balances of fluids in the body for good health, which dates back to the time of the ancient Greeks, is evidenced in the labeling of some of the products. One of the most common treatments involved dealing with specific organs to cure illness. It was widely believed that certain organs, such as the liver and kidneys, were the main source of common maladies. Accordingly, many medicines alleged that they specifically targeted those organs.





Typical soda fountains in 1900 and the 1940s.
[Courtesy of the American Institute
of the History of Pharmacy]

by the 1920s, an estimated 60 percent of American drugstores featured them. These enterprises, a natural fit for pharmacists given their knowledge of complicated flavor mixes and carbonation, gradually expanded to offer menus including sandwiches and ice cream. Fountains reached the height of their popularity during prohibition when they replaced bars as community gathering spots. Hatchett's did not contain a fountain, though it probably did sell ice cream. An old ice cream scoop is among the artifacts in the Hatchett's Drugstore Museum.

The End of an Era

Several significant developments occurred around the turn of the 20th century that had a profound impact on drugstores such as Hatchett's. Increasingly stringent federal regulation regarding the content and compounding of drugs limited the manufacture of medicines by pharmacists. Coupled with mass production of medicines and the growth of advertising by drug companies, a central component of the pharmacist's traditional job was steadily



Hargis Hall at Ashburn University first housed the School of Pharmacy.
[Courtesy of Auburn University]

reduced, and the pharmacist became as much a business operator as a health professional.

During the time these changes were occurring, pharmacy began to become more standardized. Colleges and universities began to expand pharmacy curriculums, resulting in more stringent educational requirements for pharmacists. Perhaps most importantly, though, drugstore chains such as Walgreen's and Liggett's presented established drugstores with competition for which they were unprepared. Stores like Hatchett's could not compete with the lower prices and unparalleled selection of products the chain stores offered, and they were forced to expand their sideline businesses or risk failure. These factors, as well as the economic pressures associated with operating in a small southern town and Samuel Hatchett's deteriorating health, contributed to Hatchett's eventual decline.

Schools of Pharmacy began to develop at universities in Alabama and Georgia during the early years of Hatchett's



The Southern School of Pharmacy's first home, in downtown Atlanta.
[Courtesy Mercer University
Southern School of Pharmacy]



Students at the Southern School of Pharmacy, circa 1920. [Courtesy of Mercer Univ.
Southern School of Pharmacy]

operation. Alabama's first school opened in 1885 at Auburn University. In Georgia, the Southern School of Pharmacy and the University of Georgia's school opened in 1903.

By preserving the store's tremendous collection of nearly 5,000 artifacts, the Stewart County Historical Commission provides a unique window into American pharmacy during an important period of transition.



Interior of a pharmaceutical plant, ca. 1940s.
[Courtesy of Pfizer Incorporated]



Hatchett's today. Soda fountains became so common in American pharmacies that even certain types of furniture are identified with them. These tables and chairs, once common in drugstores with soda fountains, are still referred to as "ice cream chairs" and "ice cream tables."



The Jacobs Pharmacy Company, opened in Atlanta in 1890, was the first chain drugstore to open in Georgia.

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Above: Hatchett's Drugstore Museum and Soda Fountain in Lumpkin.

Left: The original Hatchett's Drugstore building still stands in Fort Gaines. It is privately owned and rented out for special events. [Courtesy of Ken Penue]

