



Time Ran Out for Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup (and the Shakers, too)

By John Ault

Editor's note: John Ault of Gravesend is one of England's top collectors, a researcher and writer. Once again, we thank him for his contributions. (The AB&GC has edited the article for space.)

There are only a handful of these brass-cased clocks that have cropped up in the U.K. which advertise Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. Most of those don't have the original advertising clocks. The mechanism was cheap and many had after-market replacements fitted that don't feature the wording on the face.

Luckily this one survived, albeit with a broken spring. Andrew J. White was the New York agent for the medicine which had a branch at 35 Farringdon

Road, London EC. The base label shows that these clocks were given as gifts to valued customers or traders at Christmas. The contents for the medicines were actually produced by America's Shaker community, a religious sect well-known for its production of prolific amounts of plant extracts and ingredients.

In 1875, medicine maker A.J. White established a business relationship with the Shakers, agreeing to purchase the various botanical herbs from them in exchange for business loans. White helped them

meet their growing need for distribution by printing almanacs and selling their products via various agents, noting that "The business is respectable, for all goods made by the Shakers are known to possess real merit. It cannot be classed with the ordinary patent Medicines of the day, as there is no secret about its composition, the formula from which it is prepared being printed on each bottle."

White's reputation before this business deal was that of a shady quack patent medicine salesman. According to the

BELOW: Ads for the product were found in the Australian Star (of Christchurch) issue on August 4, 1903. Another ad was found in a Welsh paper, The Merthyr Express, on March 13, 1909. Note that this product could cure women and, most important of all, "Does not interfere with household duties."

A TIP FOR TEETOTALLERS.

A famous English surgeon has expressed his opinion, that more people acquire diseases and shorten their lives by over eating than by over indulgence in alcohol, and the increasing prevalence of indigestion would seem to give colour to his theory. Be this fancy or fact, it has been proved beyond doubt that indigestion does breed disease and shorten life, and that the simplest and surest way to prevent or cure indigestion is to take a dose of the root and herb extract—Mother's Seigel's Syrup—after each meal. "In 1899 I suffered very much from indigestion and derangement of the stomach," says Mr J. Thompson, of Edward Street, Merewether, near Newcastle, N.S.W., "The food I ate was productive of much pain. It is now more than two years ago since I was restored to health by Mother Seigel's Syrup and I am still well and hearty—pretty good evidence that Seigel's Syrup cures thoroughly." 4



SHAKER EXTRACT OF ROOTS

(SEIGEL'S SYRUP),

Cures Indigestion and Dyspepsia and all resulting ailments, such as Rheumatic Gout, and all affections of the liver, bladder and kidneys. The success of this remedy has been brilliant and permanent in Europe, India and Australia, as well as in this country. It is prepared by the Shaker Community, of Mount Lebanon, N. Y., whose name it bears, and is the most useful product of their knowledge of the curative powers of mountain herbs.

Here is a single commendation out of thousands: "I suffered for several years with kidney trouble, the effect of chronic dyspepsia. Providentially I got hold of one of your little books, and so tried

SHAKER EXTRACT OF ROOTS.

(SEIGEL'S SYRUP)

Before I had used the second bottle I felt better than I had for years, and am now cured. It is a wonderful thing. Yours, etc., L. H. NELSON, 421 Main St., Dallas, Texas."

Its action is slow, gentle and thorough, making it a favorite with women and invalids. As a spring and fall medicine for the blood it excels all others.

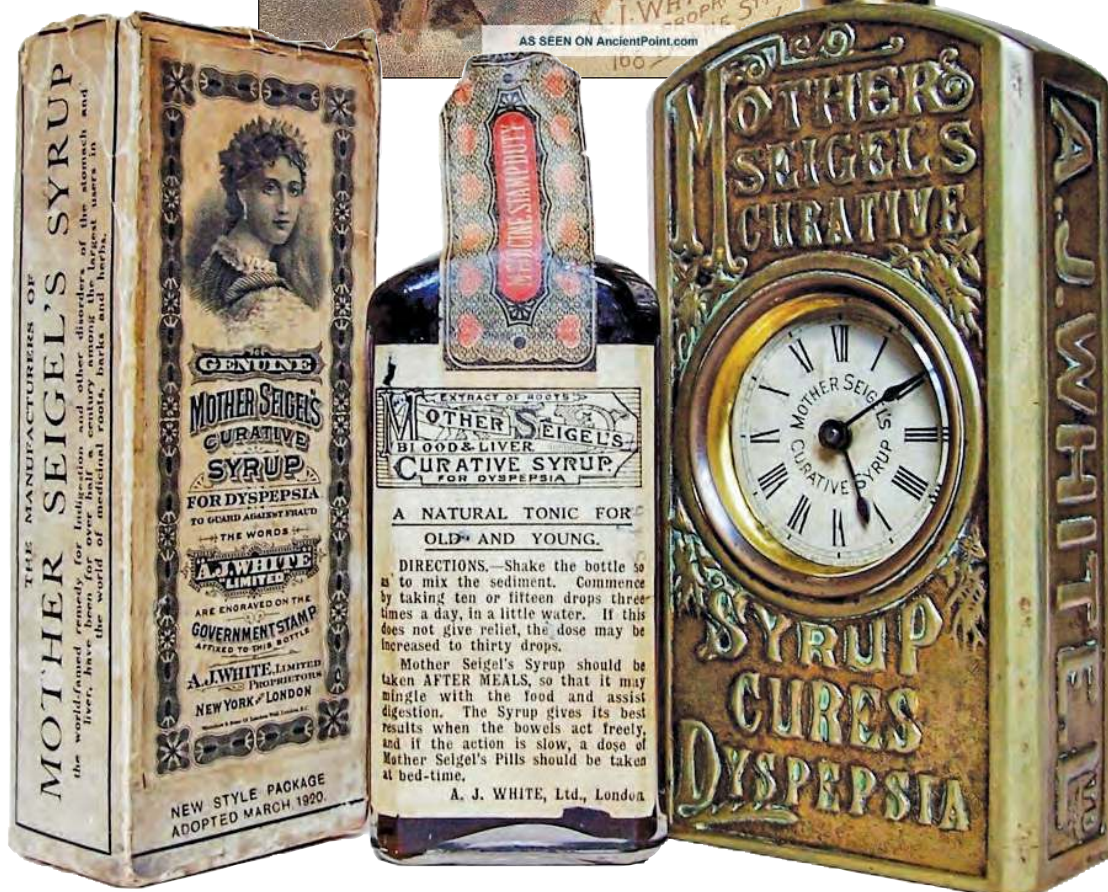
For sale by all druggists and dealers in medicines, or address the proprietor,

A. J. WHITE,

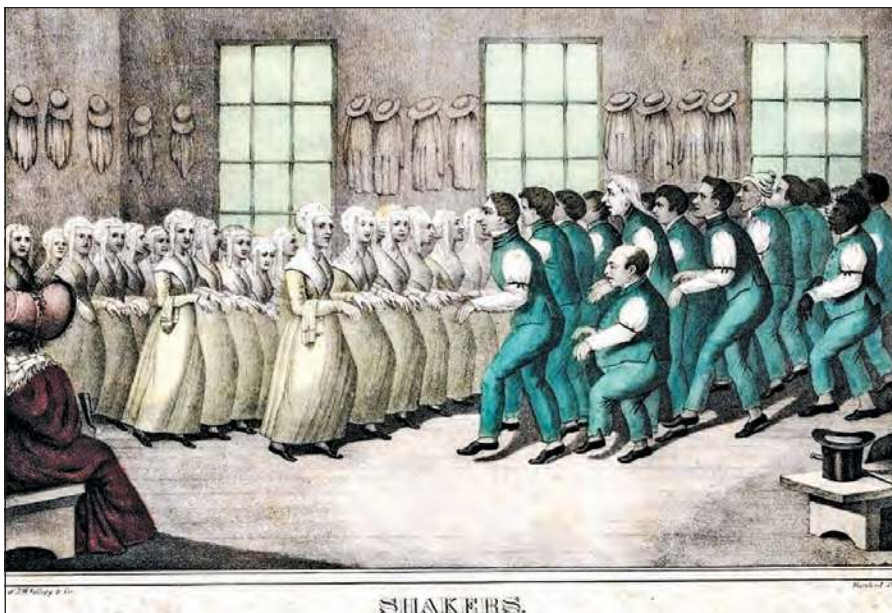
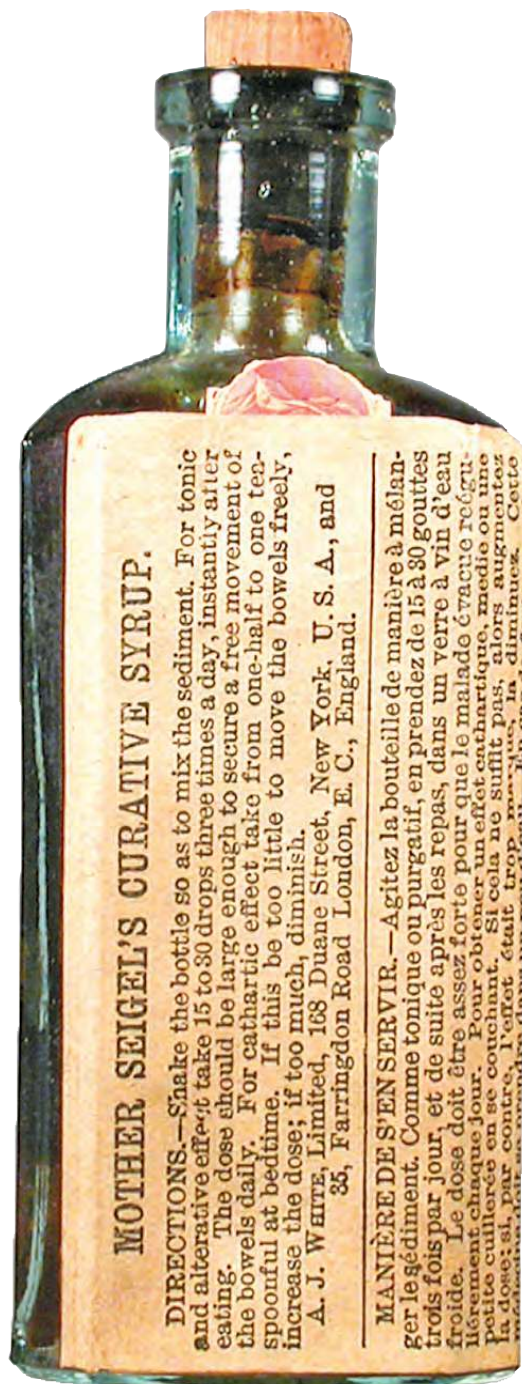
168 Duane Street,

New York, N. Y.

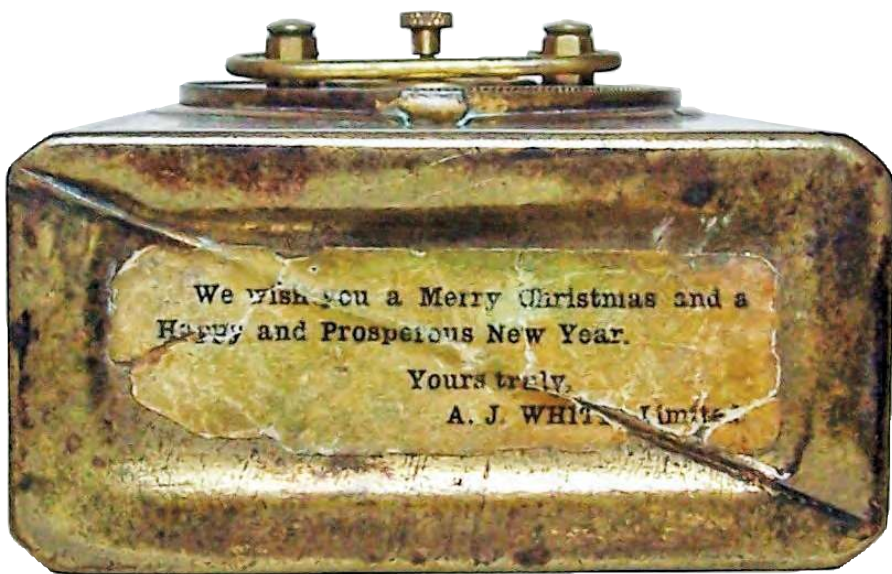
ABOVE: Shaker trade card (front and reverse).



LEFT: Original bottle with label, box, and advertising 'clock bottle.' All of the great clock images in this article are courtesy of John Ault.



Doin' the Shaker dance: "You put your right foot in..."



The base of the advertising 'clock bottle.'

ABOVE: Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup bottle with original label.

RIGHT: The box for Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup.



August 22, 1884 issue of *Health: A Weekly Journal of Sanitary Science*, his Mother Seigel's contained a "decoction of aloes, with borax, capsicum, gentian, oil of sassafras, oil of wintergreen, taraxacum, treacle, and rectified spirit."

Trading this hodgepodge recipe for the reputation of ingredient purity associated with the Shaker community led to a great resurrection of both reputation for Mother Seigel's and also extra business for White, who became extremely wealthy. In fact, Andrew White's company was successful enough to be carried on by his son, Albert, until the corporate entity was sold to Smith, Kline, and French Laboratories in 1957.

The Shakers also made "White's Curative Syrup." A record for the community at Mt. Lebanon dated Oct. 5, 1881, stated: "Brother Benjamin came to offer the Church a chance to prepare and put up a new medicine compounded and invented by A.J. White of New York who gives preparations to the amount of twelve hundred dollars and New Lebanon gives two hundred. The Church gladly and gratefully accepted the offer."

The Shakers were originally an English Christian sect founded in 1747 who broke off from the Religious Society of Friends. They were initially known as "Shaking Quakers" because of their ecstatic behaviour of body movements, dancing, and speaking in tongues during worship. The first devotees were Jane and James Wardley, who claimed to have received a divine command to start the one true church. However, the most influential leader was Ann Lee, who had lost four children as infants and claimed to have received messages from God saying that sex was an evil.

As a result, abstinence was required for devotees as preparation for their eventual entry into heaven. In England the Shakers were often incarcerated for disturbing the peace by disrupting other Christian services and hounded for

their beliefs. In 1774, they emigrated to America to escape this persecution, with initial settlements in New Lebanon and New York's Mount Lebanon. They led a celibate communal lifestyle and were very much ahead of their time. They practiced pacifism, were anti-slavery and believed in equality of the sexes, which they institutionalized in their society in the 1780s.

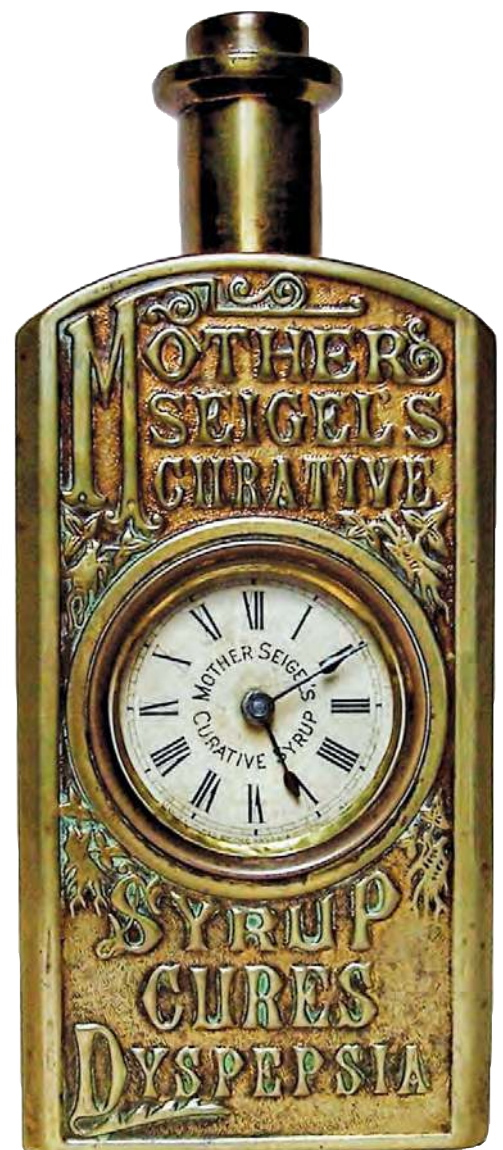
The Shakers won admiration for their model farms, orderly and prosperous communities, beautifully simple furniture, and fair dealing with outsiders. Their industry and ingenuity produced numerous inventions, including the screw propeller, babbitt metal, a rotary harrow, an automatic spring, a turbine waterwheel, a threshing machine, the circular saw, and an improved washing machine. They were also the first to package and market seeds, plus cultivate their range of pure medicinal herbs.

At its peak there were 6,000 believers and 19 communities. Their numbers were also swelled by taking in orphans, before the advent of state-run institutions. However, at the present time there is just one active village, *Sabbathday Lake, which is located in Maine. Their celibacy and opposition to child-bearing resulted in the inevitable drastic thinning of their numbers, and consequently many of the other settlements are now simply run as museums. Unfortunately, today there are only two surviving members of the community, Sister June Carpenter, and Brother Arnold Hadd.

Truly the end of an era for the Shakers. Time really has run out for them.

Editor's note: *Sabbathday Lake, near New Gloucester and Poland, Maine, is the last active Shaker community, with just two members as of 2018. The community was established in either 1782, 1783 or 1793, at the height of the U.S. Shaker movements. As of last April, Carpenter was 82, Hadd was 64. And Ralph was 81.

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Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup clock bottle advertising piece.