

# Teaching the History & Social Aspects of Pharmacy

## Issue #10

Welcome to the tenth issue of Teaching the History and Social Aspects of Pharmacy and the final issue under my editorship. This newsletter is issued twice a year in an electronic format and distributed via email by Greg Higby, Executive Director of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy ([ghigby@pharmacy.wisc.edu](mailto:ghigby@pharmacy.wisc.edu)). The Newsletter also is posted on AIHP's website ([www.aihp.org](http://www.aihp.org)).

In this issue, Shirley Stallings provides course materials on reading and interpreting historic gravestones. She originally prepared these materials and a slide show for a guest lecture in a "Death and Dying" course. The seventh of Anne Marie Lane's ongoing column on *Remedies from Rare Books* focuses on remedies for children from sources spanning 300 years. The final contribution is an editorial that reflects and comments on the importance of history and related social sciences to the study and understanding of pharmacy and drug use.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as editor of this important Newsletter over the past six years. I will miss the interesting contributions and feedback, but it is time to bring a fresh perspective and energy to this publication. I thank the authors, especially Anne Marie Lane, for their great contributions, the readers for their thoughtful comments and feedback, and Greg Higby for his support and for allowing me to be editor. I hope the

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teaching of the historical and social aspects of pharmacy and drug use will continue to grow and flourish.

Respectfully yours.

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## Next Issue

I am pleased to announce that the new editor of THSAP is Dr. Barry Bleidt, Professor and Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Texas A&M University's Irma Rangel School of Pharmacy. Please submit your articles, reviews, and announcements to Barry at: [bbleidt@pharmacy.tamhsc.edu](mailto:bbleidt@pharmacy.tamhsc.edu).



Dr. Barry Bleidt  
*Professor and Associate Dean*

## **Farewell Editorial**

### **Why Do Student and Practicing Pharmacists Need to Know the Historical and Social Aspects of Drug Use and Their Profession?**

Over the past 30 years, through courses, lectures, and continuing education programs, I have educated student and practicing pharmacists about the value of the social and historical foundations of drug use, and by extension the profession of pharmacy. In many ways, it has not been easy.

Most students do not readily see the practical application of history, sociology, or political science to their everyday lives and certainly not to their pharmaceutical courses. They typically find these subjects to be dry and boring. Pharmacists tend to be even less interested in the history of drugs and pharmacy, the socio-political aspects of drug development, promotion, and use, and the cross-cultural similarities and differences in drug giving and drug taking.

My greatest difficulties oftentimes have been with colleagues and librarians. In the past decade or so, faculty, when they do task students to engage in writing essays and other exercises, insist that reference materials be no more than 5-10 years old. The assumption is that any research study, monograph, or theoretical treatise published before 1990 is dated, flawed, simply worthless. Library staff, or those responsible for “instructional resources,” have systematically decimated historical collections and materials and blindly accept online/web-based databases to the exclusion of anything else.

So what’s the big deal? In my career, I have witnessed four different pharmacy or drug-specialty libraries discard huge portions of their collections. The materials were not incorporated into a larger health science library, sold to desirous collectors, or even offered to other libraries (though to be fair, some parts of these collections were offered to other libraries that had the same issues: no space, no resources to conserve or maintain, no time, no need given internet archiving). Complete runs of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century American and European pharmacy journals were thrown out, or intercepted on the way to the garbage bin by a few concerned faculty. But why bother; it’s all on the internet.

Well, not exactly. A social or historical researcher is lucky if a journal has archived online their issues prior to 1980, let alone 1940 or 1900. Archiving online (and even the traditional approach of binding and shelving) usually results in the expulsion of important historical materials: advertising, announcements, illustrations, minutes of meetings, and reports. Say good-bye to your historical records and be doomed to repeat history.

In many ways then student and practicing pharmacists, faculty and pharmaceutical researchers, who want to pursue historical or social studies are placed at a great disadvantage. Most colleagues, faculty, and administrations do not support them, let alone encourage them. To be fair, there are wonderful exceptions and examples, and to those people and institutions, we should be eternally grateful. In fact, some of the best archives of social, historical, and political materials on drug use have been created and maintained by individuals without the support of academic institutions,

professional organizations, or foundations.

Why is this so important? As a brief example, consider the following five major issues or concerns that are discussed, argued, and promulgating angst in today's world: 1) over-prescribing and misuse of drugs (including non-adherence, inappropriate self-medication, and social-recreational drug use); 2) the impact of promotional activities, mass media representations, and literary accounts of drugs and drug effects on drug use; 3) the allegedly corrupt activities of the pharmaceutical industry, and the influence manufacturers of quack products have on consumers; 4) counterfeit medicines, drug diversion, and other major flaws in the drug distribution system; and 5) the ever-present belief in "magic bullets," and the public's delusion that there is a "pill for every problem," including problems of a personal, social, and spiritual nature.

But lo' and behold, none of this is new. These are not phenomena of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, or even 19<sup>th</sup> century. Each of these major issues or problems is a repeat occurrence, a cyclical reappearance of drug use that we have seen in the past and never resolved. But to most people who are ignorant of the history of drug use and the social-political aspects of drug development, distribution, and use, it appears that these problems are plaguing us for the first time (or at worst within the past 25 years).

How do we encourage interest in the history and social aspects of pharmacy and drug use? Advocates have argued for and implemented various topics in core pharmaceutical courses, developed elective courses and a few continuing

education programs, researched and written articles, books, curricular materials, and supported the efforts of groups and organizations in their examination of contemporary issues and problems, emphasizing an appreciation of their social, cultural, and historical bases. There is however much more that can be done. It is very important to motivate the involvement of academic institutions, professional organizations, and the health care and pharmaceutical industry.

Most important of all is a highly personable, individually oriented stimulation of interest and excitement in learning more about the social and historical aspects of specific topic or issue. Those of us with experience and training must encourage our friends and colleagues. This is rather easy, as I have learned. When discussion or debate focuses on the problem of counterfeit drugs, I interject with a brief history of this problem in the 1960s and 1970s, even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Pretty soon, the discussion broadens to include creation of safety standards for the drug distribution system, and that then brings use to the Pure Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, related legislation and the FDA. How have these past efforts succeeded and also failed? How can they be improved based on what we know has happened before?

I have found that most everyone has an innate interest in history, a curiosity about what happened before. It takes only a little effort to arouse that inquisitive nature, to pique interest in learning and knowing more about the social and historical foundation for the way things are today.

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## Course Materials

### Gravestones: Commemorating the Dead

by Shirley Stallings

An invitation to give a lecture for a death and dying course at the college level was the motivation for this slide presentation. It provides a template in providing a localized cultural perspective on one aspect of American funerary practice. Within the context of specific localities, this slide show can be replicated. The sections that follow are the introduction, handout text, and slide presentation text with slide descriptions.

#### Introduction for using “Gravestones: Commemorating the Dead”

What better way to provide an understanding of how Americans view death than by investigating the monuments to the lives of those that lived before us? In this case the focus is regional New England, and Boston in particular. Everyday people, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters – people trying to make sense of the world they lived in.

My interest in pre-Victorian American material culture, most particularly architecture and art provided a foundation for viewing artifacts as evidence not only of particular historical styles, but of how people at certain times in our history thought. Unlike death and dying which is a universal given, the accoutrements that surround the final event have changed over time, as have the technologies and scientific discoveries that have contributed to more healthful living and longer lives. Over time, cultural changes engendered

different ways of coping with death and dying. And gravestones present an *in situ* record of beliefs and attitudes that surrounded burials at particular times and places.

Memorials, or more specifically gravestones, are perhaps the most accessible and visible historical American funerary practice. Virtually every society throughout time has created memorials of some sort or another to remember and respect their dead. In particular, burial monuments throughout the world reflect cycles of cultural and historical trends in the disposition and methods of commemorating the dead. As a European legacy, New England gravestones of the seventeenth through the early nineteenth century illustrate the changes of how a particular group of Americans perceived death.

Such things as language, ways of living and dying, religion, technology, and other traditions are often inherited by successive generations. These types of cultural practices - things that come from ideas and concepts, change over time. However, not each and every funerary practice of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries continues because they were not fashionable, or were deemed unacceptable because of increased understanding of public health issues. However, the idea of gravestones continues today as a way of remembering the people that lived before us.

A number of basic ideas need to be conveyed in the slide show to promote a fuller perspective of the subject matter. Not only do the visual symbols that decorate gravestones need to be presented, but they need to be described

as well. In the same vein, the symbolism represented by the decoration and the shape of the gravestones needs to be interpreted in historical terms. To provide a material culture reference anchor, slides depicting related residential and religious architecture offer contextual evidence for understanding the time period and style of gravestones under discussion.

Along with the slide presentation, a handout can be created as a supplement. Within the handout, line drawings illustrating the general shape or architecture of the gravestones under discussion can be useful. Also a section of meanings related to gravestones can include the shapes of gravestones, their placement in the burying ground, materials used, the artisans, stylistic vocabulary, the written vocabulary on the stones, quality of the object, how stones they were (are) generally paid for, and a chronology of symbols. Perhaps representative and particularly interesting verses or epitaphs can be included in the handout. Rounding out the handout is a list of sources for those who are interested on finding out more about gravestones.

### **HANDOUT: Gravestones of 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Century New England**

Eighteenth and early nineteenth century gravestones reflect the magnitude of Protestant Puritan influence throughout New England the cultural importance that was placed on reminding the spectator of what the future was to hold for each and every person. Many people consider New England's old burying grounds to be enchanting, others see them as wonderful resources for studying history. By visiting New England burying grounds a chronicle of

religious beliefs, history, art, military campaigns, epidemics, family genealogy, geology, tragedy, scandal, and even humor can be discovered. The time and place of colonial New England dictated gravestone styles and meanings, but other factors also affected gravestones.

Shapes of gravestones were of a general architectural type that consisted of a central arched panel, flanked by shorter arched or flat-topped side panels. Variations on the general shape or unusual shapes depended upon various factors including the artisan, the deceased (or the deceased's family) desires, geographic area, and artistic influences.

Placement of gravestones occurred in burying grounds (the word cemetery did not acquire common usage until the nineteenth century). Some burying grounds were adjacent to the meetinghouse or church, and sometimes they were a distance away.

Materials depended on the type of stone available in a geographic location. For instance slate was readily found in Boston. Red sandstone was used for gravestones along the Connecticut River valley, while marble or granite markers were common in Vermont and New Hampshire. Artisans were the tradesmen who created gravestones and often went through an apprenticeship with a stonecutter. Some were self-taught. Some were able to use design source books from Europe for their ideas.

Stylistic vocabulary from which stonecutters worked included Biblical, symbolic, salvational, and even magical images. Issues of good vs. evil and immortality were addressed through a

variety of visual patterns. Written vocabulary included spelling variations such as lyes vs. lies and or deceased as decd vs. departed or died. Many carvers were not able to read English and could not decipher Latin. Capital letters were often used.

Quality of gravestones depended on stone type, artistic involvement (whether the master or the apprentice spent more time on the stone), length of verse, size of stone, and other similar factors. The quality of the finished marker was then an indication of inexpensive, modestly priced, or elaborate quality. Payment for a gravestone was generally from the deceased's estate.

Chronology of symbols between 1700 and the 1830s can be simply divided into three periods. Popular early symbols continued to be used during later periods.

Early: coffins, spades, skulls, skeletons, and bones; crowned death's heads, bony skulls with hollow nose and eye sockets, and rows of teeth grinning from lipless mouths.

Eighteenth Century: winged skulls, skull and crossbones winged death's head; winged hourglass and various other objects.

Late: urns, weeping trees, and hearts; blooming flowers such as tulips and lilies; child and lamb resting beside a lion; birds; and military symbols.

#### VERSES/EPITAPHS (An Overview)

Build me a grave upon the grey  
sea's shore

So that the future learn of  
luckless me

On it there shall be raised the  
towering oar

I used to ply while I still saw the  
light

(Homer's Odyssey)

Here lies all of Cremonini  
(1540s, Galileo, Italian)

She done what she could  
(Jaffrey, New Hampshire)

Behold and See as You Pass By  
As You are Now so Once was I  
As I am Now you Soon will Be  
Prepare for Death and Follow Me  
(common 18<sup>th</sup> century sentiment)

Friends and physicians could not  
save  
Their mortal bodies from the  
grave  
Nor can the grave confine them  
here  
When Christ shall call them to  
appear  
(1840, Vermont)

One lies inter'd beneath this clod,  
That always did obey his God;  
And willingly resigned his  
breath,  
For Christ his Lord has  
conquer'd death.  
(1787, New Hampshire)

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## **GRAVESTONE SLIDE PRESENTATION**

By: Shirley Stallings

Slide content description with gravestone location are given in parenthesis at the end of presentation text for each slide number (39 slides = 50 minutes)

1. Memorials, or more specifically gravestones, are perhaps the most accessible and visible historical American funerary practice. Virtually every society throughout time has created memorials of some sort or another to remember and respect their dead. In particular, burial monuments throughout the world reflect cycles of cultural and historical trends in the disposition and methods of commemorating the dead. As a European legacy, New England gravestones of the seventeenth through the early nineteenth century illustrate the changes of how a particular group of Americans perceived death.

(Winged skull motif; Granary, Boston)

2. The FAIRBANKS HOUSE in Dedham, Massachusetts, is the oldest surviving wooden structure in America. It was built in 1636, shortly after the Puritans began the formal settlement of New England as an important economic source of raw materials for the debt ridden English island economy which badly needed new resources in order to maintain their world supremacy. The Puritans brought with them the cultural beliefs and values of their English homeland, as well as their new religion, the revolutionary Calvinistic Protestantism. Art was not a generally accepted expression of the Puritans because it was reminiscent of old European religions and therefore considered to be a distraction from the focus on their God. And quite simply, it just wasn't a practical priority in a new wilderness settlement. Like other products the colonists made for themselves out of their limited resources and time, simple wooden crosses often marked the earliest graves of the departed in burial grounds established and maintained by civil rather than religious mandates. (Fairbanks house, c. 1836, Dedham, MA)
3. The SHAPE of a typical New England gravestone is a simple upright central arched panel with shorter and narrower parallel side panels. The earliest stone marker known of this shape, was from 1638 in Dorchester, one of the earliest settlements of

Massachusetts Bay, not many miles from Dedham and the Fairbanks house. The characteristic gravemarker became fairly commonplace by the 1670s. Virtually all New England gravestones were usually quarried and carved within 15 or 20 miles of where they were used. The most common types of stone used were fieldstone, slate, sandstone, granite or marble, depending on the geographic location of the community and quarry. Each geographic area also produced its own recognizable gravestone styles. Grouped together in a burial ground they created a city of the dead. Gravestones usually faced away from the body, with the headstone facing west and the much smaller footstone east, and the body positioned to greet the new day, invoking symbolic notions of the cycles of the sun, sleep, and beliefs in the world order. Many old burying grounds have been rearranged, some even relocated so that original burial patterns have often been lost, and old footstones have been removed or placed elsewhere as a current convenience to maintenance. (Skeleton/Grim Reaper motif; Rebecca Sprague, 1747; double winged cherub/effigy tympanum; vine border; concentric circle on shoulder; King's Chapel, Boston)

4. Another early means of marking graves was with a SLAB STONE that was a large, flat, coffin-sized, horizontal stone. They were often simply called slabs or sometimes referred to as "wolf

stones" because they were meant to prevent animals from disturbing the burial site. During the Middle Ages in Europe, graves were often inside the church and slabs served both as a grave cover and as part of the flooring, and often were decorated with symbols as part of the art and architecture of the church building. During the later Middle Ages, the slab evolved into a "table tomb" that was supported either on columns or solid walls that were symbolic replacements for the English and European religious custom of burials inside the church. Generally this type of gravemarker was most popular with the affluent and well-educated citizens of New England. (Slab stones; "wolf stones"; table tombs; Granary, Boston)

5. In many instances gravestones were PURCHASED shortly after the burial but it was not uncommon to wait ten years or more, particularly in the case of husband and wife when stones were obtained following the death of the surviving spouse. Young married women, especially those who died shortly after marriage or in childbirth with their first child, were frequently buried near their parents or parents-in-law rather than near their husbands. In colonial America there were no funeral directors. Rather, Puritan social organization was homogeneous, and the communal sense of the population supported family and friends of the



- deceased in a familiar environment. Disposition of the dead was simply a part of living to be carried out in a spirit of compassion, kindness, and respect. (Double arched winged skull motif, 1704; King's Chapel, Boston)
6. The most striking aspect of gravestones is the CARVING, the design. The carver, if he had been an apprentice might be influenced by the designs that the master of the shop used. He would also be affected by the work of his competitors, by the wishes and wealth of his patrons, by styles then current, and by his own ideas and creativity. Other influences were popular printed advertisements called broadsides, psalm books, emblem books, and even the imagery used in sermons. Clearly, cultural preferences were expressed, as were economic considerations. And each geographic area or locality produced its own recognizable gravestone designs. And it was in the burial grounds, communities of the dead, where death and salvation fought over the soul that parted from the body. (Skeleton/Grim Reaper motif with hourglass, 1743; vine border with fruits and vegetables; King's Chapel, Boston)
7. The OLD SHIP MEETINGHOUSE was built in 1681 in Hingham, Massachusetts. The interior of the square wooden structure is a large plain room that accommodated both religious and community assemblies. A simple pulpit and hard benches were the only furnishings. Puritans did not use the term church because it reminded them of the European churches that they wanted to purify and that they separated from. For the same reasons, the Puritans did not make their churches fancy nor did they include religious art as they did in Europe. (Old Ship Meetinghouse, c. 1681, Hingham, MA)
8. The two-dimensional, or flat, SKULL AND CROSSBONES and the hourglass carved on the arch or tympanum, were popular symbols when the Old Ship Meetinghouse was built, and into the 1700s. The skull and crossbones to us, seem rather grizzly. However, for the Puritans they were uncomplicated symbols that represented the idea that only the body of the deceased was a part of the grave. The small hourglass beneath the skull and crossbones represents the idea that time is fleeting and that a person's life on earth is transitory.
- Beneath the symbolic carving on the arch or tympanum, the epitaph on the central transcription panel of this 1709 stone reads:
- Here Lies  
Deposited the  
Remains of Mr.  
Thomas Webb  
Who died Very  
Suddenly Much  
Lamented. He was  
born in the City of  
Glouster in  
England

The words "here lies deposited the remains of." reinforce the Puritan beliefs that only the body is buried. For the Puritan, the problem of human existence was life as it was normally lived, a chronicle of accidents and blunders, afflictions, and defeated hopes. Death could not be avoided.

The side panels have a finial, an arched top, on which is carved concentric circles that were a universal symbol for eternity. Out of the concentric circles flow vines down the panels. Vines were a Biblical symbol for the Christian Church and represented the human soul being nourished by the vine or the Church. (Skull/crossbones motif with hourglass, 1709; Granary, Boston)

9. This SKULL AND CROSSBONES carving differs from the last one in so far as there is no hourglass and the vine design is not as bold, but it does surround the central transcription tablet. And the epitaph is also more simple: "in memory of Mrs. Sarah Todd." Gravestones were meant to be a reminder to the living of the deceased and of what the future was to hold for each and every person. Gravestone carving was generally probated work which means that the stonemason was paid out of the estate of the deceased person. Common stock stones cost from 1 to 3 English Pounds and made up the major part of a stonemason's business. Elaborate carving that included fancy designs such as the family

coat of arms on a tomb could cost 50 to 60 English Pounds. Not only were cultural preferences presented on gravestones through the shape and types of symbols carved, but also economically people had choices as to how much they wanted to spend on stones according to the amount of design and wording they wanted or could afford.

(Skull/crossbones motif; "in Memory of Mrs. Sarah Todd"; Granary, Boston)

10. By the 1720s, this style of house architecture was popular for throughout New England. It isn't square and it has a steeply pitched roof. There are more and larger windows--glass, had initially been a costly commodity to import into New England and there was limited glass manufacturing in the colonies. It reflects the rising prosperity of the New England colonial economy, as well as marking a slight transition in the beliefs and values of the Puritans. Since the original founding of the colonies, the initial Puritan religion was beginning to relax because the first zealous generations were dying off, and the new generations did not have the direct pilgrim experience. (The Bidwell House, c. 1750, Monterey, MA)
11. During the first half of the 18th century, the SKELETON AND GRIM REAPER gravestone carvings also marked a transition in symbolic motifs and an awakening to just how transitory

life was, even in a prospering colony. This stone for Rebecca Sanders who died in 1745, illustrates issues of good versus evil, immortality, and time. The winged figure of Father Time, also known as the Grim Reaper, or even as the messenger angel, points heavenward while the skeletal figure of Death tries to extinguish the flame or breath or the candle of life.

The border panel design is a bit different than what we have already seen. Beginning at the bottom center a scallop shell represents the human's journey through life, and more particularly a pilgrim's journey. From either side of the shell, vines spring forth to climb the panels bearing the tools of a life of work, hourglasses with the sands of time marking the passing of life, fruit such as figs and apples, and flowers which were symbols of the nourishment of religion, as well as the bounties of living. At the finials of the side panels, the vines thread through circles of eternity and then end in the tympanum arch on either side of the struggle of time. Through a combination of images, a story is told of transitory life that exemplifies how the New England colonist's world was mediated for them by symbolic meanings provided by their culture about how the body and soul were no longer one after death. (Skeleton/Grim Reaper motif with hourglass; Rebecca Sanders, 1745; vine border/scallop shell/concentric circle on panel shoulder; King's Chapel, Boston)

12. This is a close-up of the SKELETON/GRIM REAPER tympanum arch design. Notice how the word "lies" is spelled, "lyes." At the time there was no standardized spelling. Stone carvers, like the general population, often could not spell, or even read, and needed written words to copy. And sometimes that would mean the difference between a transcription epitaph being carved in all capital letters or words spelled differently than we know them today. Noah Webster's dictionary did not begin to standardize spelling until after 1783. Even Latin words were difficult to master. However, most everyone could understand the carved designs that often had symbolic origins in ancient Egypt and Greece. (Skeleton/Grim Reaper motif, close-up; King's Chapel, Boston)

13. This close-up reveals the same SKELETON/GRIM REAPER design, but the figures are placed differently: the skeleton on the right and the grim reaper on the left. Also the figures were probably done by a different carver than the last slide we saw. On this stone, the skeleton holds a scythe, an implement for cutting grain or grass that adds to the skeleton's symbolism of death, ready to cut a person's life short. The grim reaper maintains his status in the struggle between good and evil, immortality, and time.

After 1725, there were more carvers working outside the boundaries of urban areas as

- populations expanded into wilderness and frontier areas. Some stonecutters were itinerants who traveled to inland towns collecting orders to be carved during the winter months when burials in New England were uncommon and difficult because of the frozen ground. (Skeleton/Grim Reaper motif, close-up; skeleton with scythe; Grim Reaper holding hourglass; King's Chapel, Boston)
14. This simple stone with DRAPERY, carved for Sarah Leveret who died in 1767, was unusual for the 18th century. Until the 1750s, making textiles or cloth was a labor intensive process, and thereby making cloth a rather expensive commodity. But the invention of power looms in France made the manufacturing processes of textiles much easier and the final product less expensive. By the 1750s, America also happened to be the most prosperous economy in the European world. At this time it was popular for Europeans and Americans alike to use mass quantities of cloth to decorate beds, and thus, the symbol of drapery probably represented the idea that the body of Sarah Leveret was laid to rest, or sleep. (Drapery motif; Sarah Leveret, 1767; "Here lies Sarah Leveret..."; Granary, Boston)
15. Another popular 18th century design was the WINGED SKULL, or death's head. This was a familiar death emblem in use since the European Middle Ages that reflected the harsh and often ambivalent New England colonist's attitudes about death. It is a shorthand, or abbreviation of the skeleton/grim reaper design in that the skull represents death, and the wings represent father time in the eternal struggle of good and evil, immortality, time, and that body and soul were no longer one. And note the circles of eternity and vines of the nourishment of the religion on the side panels.
- These stones are of Abigail Peck on the left, and her mother, Elizabeth Peck on the right who both died in the 1750s. The child's stone is smaller than her mother's and the carving is a bit different. On Abigail's stone, there is only a winged skull. On her mother's stone is a winged skull and a small set of crossbones at the top of the tympanum arch. The carving of the skulls is almost identical, but the wings show a subtle variation in the way the feathers are done. It is possible that the stones were carved in one shop and that the skulls were carved by one man, while the wings were carved by different people, which implies an apprentice system or even a family operation. (Winged skull motif on two separate stones; Abigail Peck and Elizabeth Peck, died in the 1750s; Granary, Boston)
16. This close-up of a WINGED SKULL and crossbones tops the stone of Deborah. The skull in overall shape is similar to those in the previous slide except for the rows of teeth grinning from a lipless mouth. The wing feathers

- are also carved a bit differently. And the border panels are of the familiar vine and circle design. The simple epitaph: "Here lies buried the body of..." reiterates the simple belief that the body only is buried, and not the soul.
- Since the original settlements, colonial New England retained English folk treatments, home remedies, alcoholic home brews, distilled spirits, as well as the occasional imported proprietary concoction from the homeland in an effort to ward off illness and death. In the spirit of exploration and discovery, colonists acculturated mysterious Native American botanicals, including tobacco, into their medical mystery bag. But the abilities of traditional physicians and apothecaries to effect cures was limited because few of the available drugs could actually prevent or heal illness and death. They only offered peace of mind for many colonists. (Winged skull with crossbones motif; Deborah W.....; King's Chapel, Boston)
17. This WINGED SKULL is similar to the previous one in shape, and details like the rows of teeth in the lipless grin, and the way the feathers of the wings were done. The difference is in the scroll work at the top of the tympanum arch. Even the epitaph of: "Here lies the body of..." for Capt. Thomas Proctor is similar to the previous slide. (Winged skull motif; "Here lies buried the body of Capt. Thomas Proctor"; King's Chapel, Boston)
18. This stone shows a variation on the WINGED SKULL design. It was probably carved by a different carver than the previous slides. The skull and its facial features are flattened, and the wing feathers are elongated and not as well defined as the earlier ones we've seen. Above the winged skull there is winged sphere with concentric circles that represents the universe or heaven that is hoped will be the destination of the soul. Again we see the use of multiple images to describe the colonial beliefs of body, soul, and heaven. The border panels have weathered to a point where we can barely see them. (Winged skull motif; Mr. Samuel Adams and Mrs. Lydia Adams; King's Chapel, Boston)
19. Another popular 18th century design was the SOUL EFFIGY, or winged face, or cherub that stressed the more optimistic attitudes of immortality that were becoming prevalent by the mid-1700s. Notions of soul transference and spiritual salvation experienced another subtle transformation that commemorated a person's profession or social position. This 1770 architecturally elaborate gravestone shows, among the varied details, the winged facial representation of wealthy land-owning Gershom Flagg rather than a lipless skeleton. Flagg was a member of the very old fraternal Mason's organization that valued carpentry and building. Thus, the architectural symbolism of fancy columns on the side panels, and

- the broken scroll pediment represent Flagg's mortal life. But these elements also suggest the door of heaven. Within the broken scrolled pediment on the tympanum arch, is Flagg's soul effigy or stylized portrait. On Flagg's head is a crown that supports a pineapple, a universal symbol for hospitality. Above the pineapple, actually completing the pineapple visually, is the symbol of the Masons, a builder's compass and square. Despite the elaborate decorations on this stone, the epitaph was rather traditional in that it proclaims: "Here lies the body of Gershom Flagg..." This stone cost in English pounds, 3 pounds, 11 pence, and 7 shillings. And notice that the decoration is not simply carved two-dimensionally into the stone, but projects out away from the stone towards us, the spectators. (Winged soul effigy motif; Gershom Flagg; "Here lies buried the body of Mr. Gershom Flagg who departed this life the 23rd day of March MDCCLXXL, aged 66"; Masonic compass and square; pineapple; crown; broken scroll pediment supported on stop fluted columns; Granary, Boston)
20. Close-up of the ornate tympanum arch of Gershom Flagg's stone. (Winged soul effigy motif; Granary, Boston)
21. Like the other designs we've seen so far, carving styles did affect the WINGED EFFIGY design. The traditional side panel vine designs remained, but often were more stylized. The following slides illustrate the different styles of the same design and its variations. The epitaphs remain traditional indicating that the body is buried, but the soul is not. (Winged soul effigy/cherub; side panel vine; "In memory of Mr. Luke Roberts"; King's Chapel, Boston)
22. A DOUBLE WINGED EFFIGY suggests that the deceased had two lives: a mortal life and a spiritual life, and that at one time they were one and at another time they were separate. (Double winged soul effigy/cherub motif; "Here lies buried the body of Mrs. Rebecca Sprague"; King's Chapel, Boston)
23. A DOUBLE WINGED EFFIGY holding up a crown that represented the glory of heaven and salvation. (Double winged soul effigy/cherub supporting a crown; "Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Rosanna Black, The virtuous and amiable consort of..."; King's Chapel, Boston)
24. A DOUBLE WINGED EFFIGY with celestial stars representing night time when people sleep, and also the heaven to where it is hoped the deceased's soul will find a resting place. (Double winged soul effigy/cherub motif with stars; 1773; "Here lies buried the body of Mr. Nathaniel Bond..."; King's Chapel, Boston)
25. A SINGLE SOUL EFFIGY (Winged soul effigy/cherub motif; 1771; Mrs. Ann Dearden; King's Chapel, Boston)

26. A SINGLE SOUL EFFIGY under a universal symbol for heaven. (Winged soul effigy/cherub motif; Phillip William Smith; King's Chapel, Boston)
27. A SINGLE SOUL EFFIGY under a universal symbol for heaven that resembles an umbrella. (Winged soul effigy/cherub motif; "In memory of William Wel...?"; King's Chapel, Boston)
28. A SINGLE SOUL EFFIGY (Winged soul effigy/cherub motif; King's Chapel, Boston)
29. An elaborate DOUBLE SOUL EFFIGY holding up a crown of salvation. This stone is curious because on the left side the epitaph is in memory of William Evens. The right side epitaph is in memory to Mrs. Maria Savage, consort of Mr. Isaac Savage. (Double winged soul effigy/cherub holding up crown; ornate tympanum; transcription tablet divided vertically in half; Granary, Boston)
30. After the American Revolution, New Englanders were moving out of their tradition of religious orthodoxy, their powerful single religion. Other religions were becoming popular. And also, people were very preoccupied with creating a self-sustaining nation that recently gained the rights to make their own laws, their own institutions, and their own manufactured goods. The new American Constitution was based on classic Greek notions of governance. The classic urn, based on an ancient Greek and Roman style became the death emblem of choice. The form was popular also because of the archeological discoveries at Pompeii in Italy. And the new style of gravestone design reflected the Greek revival that was taking place in all facets of New England culture. The weeping willow arching over the urn completed the imagery in terms that the tree represented paradise, a new term applied to salvational heaven, and coincidentally, what many people thought of their new nation. (Urn and willow motif; John Hurd, 1784; Granary, Boston)
31. The URN AND WILLOW design also was interpreted by carvers in different ways. Also notice that the side panels do not have arches, but rather flat shoulders, and there are no side panel borders. (Urn and willow motif; Polly Loring; King's Chapel, Boston)
32. The classical influence was also exhibited in other shapes such as the OBELISK, which was used in Greece and Rome to commemorate well-regarded statesmen and war heroes. This is a two-dimensional example that commemorates two deceased persons: "...Elizabeth Hickling and Mary Hoodin heirs of Deac. John Lee." (Obelisk--flat; "This tomb is the property of Elizabeth Kickling and Mary Hoodin heirs of Deac. John Lee"; Granary, Boston)

33. This three-dimensional OBELISK commemorates Thomas Cushing, Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts, who died in 1788. It also memorializes his war efforts and members of his family. (Obelisk-3 dimensional; Thomas Cushing, Lieut. Gov. of Mass. died 15th of Jan 1788 aged 63 years...Deborah Fletcher widow of Thomas Cushing died in 1780 aged 63 years..."; Granary, Boston)
34. This 1795 ARCHITECTURAL gravestone also represents the post-Revolutionary times of building a new nation. In this instance the architectural symbolism extends to the celestial city and the gates of heaven which are supported on columns. The sun is centered in the universe. It is a microcosm of an ordered universe. The epitaph continues the traditional separation of body and soul: "Dust thou art and unto dust shall thou return. Beneath this stone rests the mortal part of James Foster...." Notice that there are no side panels. (Building on columns motif; Obit December 1795 Eiat 45; King's Chapel, Boston)
35. By 1800 the wealthy were building their houses to resemble Greek temples, not just one temple, but several temples put together. Despite the progress that Americans had made since their first 17th century settlements, death remained a mysterious part of life however and whenever it should happen.
- Life continued to be recognized as a delicate state of being at best, and death was a force beyond their physical control. Cycles of epidemics and illness continued to occur: diphtheria, smallpox, cholera, typhoid, and scarlet fever took their toll. In 1798 Boston for instance, life expectancy for a man was about 35 years. A new baby had a 50-50 chance of survival. And children often died in the summer, while the elderly often died during the winter months. High infant mortality and maternal mortality rates also took their toll. (Gore Place, c. 1806, Waltham, MA)
36. In the early years of the 19th century, when industrialization began to develop and spread, manufactured grave monuments became increasingly available and popular in New England and hastened the trend toward conformity of the classical URN AND WILLOW design. Again, the side border panel symbolism has been dispensed with, and the panels have flat shoulders. (Urn and Willow motif; "Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Hannah Gealey consort of Mr. Daniel Gealey who died July 30th 1795"; Granary, Boston)
37. Also in the 19th century, MEETINGHOUSES began to take on the characteristic shape that we recognize today. They were also beginning to be referred to as churches rather than meetinghouses. Their function was no longer that of a community meeting place to



- decide politics and other civil issues, but they were becoming specialized in religion. (Congregational Church, North Granby, CT, c. 1830)
38. Burial grounds also took on a new shape. No longer were the dead buried in neat and orderly rows near the meetinghouse or church, but in cemeteries often far away from the religious institution. The term cemetery did not become common until after the 1820s. They were designed with meandering walkways and roads, and became not cities of the dead, but gardens of the dead, and a recreation for the living. Gravestones were no longer always simple stone memorials giving testimony to a revolutionary religion. They were transformed into what genteel society deemed tasteful and artful commemorations to the deceased person or families. They were sometimes theatrical in shape, size, and materials, but they reflected the new society that produced them. (Urn--3 dimensional; Charles Bulfinch, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, MA)
39. Gravestones of New England in all of their varied forms convey messages about a complex subject. They have been a visual public acknowledgement that a member of the community died. From the 17th century Puritans who tried to reconcile their understanding of the undecipherable mystery of their physical and spiritual world to the Victorians of the nineteenth

century who embellished death to an art form, gravestones offered hope and promise rather than threats--a universal perception that served as a reminder to the living. Gravestones have also marked important changes in social values and beliefs through their designs. They are a legacy that defines New England heritage, and they can teach us about the world we live in. (Winged skull motif; Granary, Boston)

## Special Column

### Remedies from Rare Books VII

by

Anne Marie Lane, Faculty Curator of  
Rare Books  
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### TRADITIONAL REMEDIES FOR SICK CHILDREN

#### INTRODUCTION

In the past six columns, we have explored specific types of remedies documented in books from the late seventeenth through early twentieth centuries. Another aspect we can consider is how those remedies were modified—or different ones used—for “the little ones.” The rate of mortality for infants and children was much higher in the past than it is today. Dr. John C. Gunn, in his health book from 1860, said “Of all the children born, about one half die before they attain five years of age.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, keeping sick children from getting sicker would certainly have been an issue of tremendous concern for parents.<sup>2</sup> Following are some selections

of interest from books in the Toppan Rare Books Library that cover over 300 years of attempts to help children get better.

### **THE LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:**

**-From *The Accomplish'd Ladies Delight in Preserving, Physick, Beautifying, and Cookery*, by Hannah Woolley (London: Printed for Benjamin Harris), Fifth edition, 1685:**

“For all Feavers and Agues in sucking Children,” p.67:

“Take Powder of Chrystal and steep it in Wine, and give it to the Nurse to drink, also take the Root of Devils-bit,<sup>3</sup> with the Herb, and hang it about the Child’s Neck.”

“For the Worms in Children,” p.69:

“Take Wormseed<sup>4</sup> boyled in Beer and Ale, and sweetned with Clarified Honey, and then let them drink it.”

“For the Rickets in Children,” p.76:

“Take of fennel-seeds and dill-seeds, but most of the last, boyl them in Beer, and strain it, and sweeten it with sugar and let the Child drink often *Probatum.*”

“For Infants troubled with Wind and Phlegm,” p.77:

“Give them a little pure Sugar-candy, finely bruised in Saxifrage-water,<sup>5</sup> or Scabious-water,<sup>6</sup> in a spoon well mingled together.”

“A most excellent Medicine to cause Children to breed<sup>7</sup> their Teeth easily,” p.77:

“Take of pure Capons grease very well clarifi’d the quantity of a Nutmeg and twice as much of pure

honey, mingle and incorporate them well together, and anoint the childs gums therewith three or four times a day when it is Teething, and they will easily break the Flesh and prevent Torments and Agues, and other Grievs which usually accompany their coming forth.”

### **THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:**

**-From *Medical Botany, containing systematic and general descriptions, with plates, of all the medicinal plants, indigenous and exotic, comprehended in the catalogues of the Materia Medica, as published by the Royal Colleges of Physicians of London and Edinburgh...*, by William Woodville, M.D., of the Royal College of Physicians, London (London: printed and sold for the Author by James Phillips), 1790:**

“*Atropa Belladonna* = Deadly Nightshade,” Volume I, pp.1-3:

“...the berries, though less powerful than the leaves, furnish us with many instances of their fatal effects, particularly upon children, who are readily tempted to eat this fruit by its alluring appearance and sweet taste.”

After Woodville discusses the terrible manner of death that can occur, he says that “vinegar, liberally drunk, has been found very efficacious in obviating the effects of this poison; evacuations should however be always first promoted.”

“*Convolvulus Jalapa* = Jalap Bind-Weed,” Volume 1, p.61:

After describing the appearance of the root as sold in shops (being imported from South America), Woodville says that the resin is an efficacious and safe purgative and that “the gummy part” has no cathartic

power, but is extremely active as a diuretic. He continues, “Hoffman thought it particularly improper and unsafe to administer this medicine to children,” but a contrary opinion is then given: “Dr. Cullen observes that if Jalap is triturated with a hard sugar, it becomes in moderate doses, a safe medicine for children, which in this form they will readily receive, as the jalap itself has very little taste.”<sup>8</sup>

### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY:

**-From chapter 15, “Directions for the Sick,” in *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy; Which far excels any Thing of the Kind yet published, by Mrs. Glasse (London: Printed for J. Johnson, etc.), 1803:***

“Liquor for a Child that has the Thrush,” p.270:

“Take half a pint of spring-water, a knob of double-refined sugar, a very little bit of alum, beat it well together with the yolk of an egg, then beat it in a large spoonful of the juice of sage; tie a rag to the end of a stick, dip it in this liquor, and often clean the mouth. Give the child over night one drop of laudanum, and the next day proper physic, washing the mouth often with the liquor.”

**-From “Observations on the Materia Medica of the Indians,” in *Manners and Customs of Several Indian Tribes located West of the Mississippi...by John D. Hunter (Philadelphia: printed for the author by J. Maxwell), 1823:***<sup>9</sup>

“Angelica = La-Go-Nee-Haw = Agreeable taste,” p.369:

“They sometimes give it in the diseases of their children, but it has no

great claims as a medicine. It is sometimes mixed with other remedies, to render them more palatable.”

“Columbian root = Kow-O-La-E-Ko = Physic for horses,” p.374:

“When their children are afflicted or supposed to be afflicted with worms, they will administer this tonic in mixture with anthelmintic remedies, as they believe it dangerous to purge off the worms when they are much debilitated, without the observance of some such precautionary measure.”

“Gentian wild = Ton-Ga-Shin-Ga = [note the translation:] It gives strength to a child,” p.377:

“The Indians make great use of the root in cases of debility; especially when accompanied with affections of the stomach. They most commonly make use of it in decoction, though they sometimes take it in substance. They combine it with dog wood and wild cherry bark, and give it in cold infusion in intermittents, while the fever is off.”<sup>10</sup>

“Seneca snake root = Ag-Ga-Shu = Short crooks,” p.387:

“They esteem it very highly in their female complaints, and also in diseases of their children when there is great difficulty of breathing.”<sup>11</sup>

“Tulip tree = Es-Pe-Ton-Ga = Poplar tree,” p.392:

“...the seed balls are given to their children to destroy worms.”<sup>12</sup>

**-From newspaper issues of *The New England Farmer, containing Essays, Original and Selected, relating to Agriculture and Domestic Economy...* edited by Thomas G. Fessenden (Boston: John B. Russell):**

“Mode of giving Medicine to Infants,”  
October 15, 1824 issue, p.93:

“It is best for persons of every age, and particularly for infants, that they swallow as little medicine as possible; but since it is sometimes indispensable, we have reflected on and practiced all the different modes of administering it which are in common use, and find none so convenient as to give it in the form of powder; to place the powder, mixed with a little fine sugar, on the tongue, and then give the child the breast.”

(Taken from the *Medical Intelligencer*)

“Convulsions,” December 3, 1824 issue, p.149:

“When convulsions occur in children, they are best relieved by a warm bath, about 92 or 94 degrees Fahrenheit, which operates by its anti-spasmodic power, and by determining the blood to the surface. Should this fail, blood should be abstracted either by leeches, cupping, or by opening the jugular vein, blisters should be applied to the extremities, and an ice-cap to the head. There is nothing more powerful, however, in shortening paroxysms, than cold affusion of the face and head.

The purple colour of the face, in cases of convulsion, is occasioned by spasm of the muscles of respiration, which retards the passage of the blood through the lungs; this symptom may be removed by inhalation of ammoniacal gas.”

(Taken from the *Medical Intelligencer*)

“Walnuts—an excellent family medicine,” February 25, 1825 issue, p.245:

“Every body eats walnuts; every body knows how to make a pickle of walnuts; few, however know the medicinal virtue of walnuts. Now the fact is, walnuts when prepared *secundum artem*, are an excellent opening medicine and alterative; and this is the way to prepare them...” [description of boiling with sugar follows]. “One walnut is a dose for a child six years old, as a purgative; and it has this advantage over drugs, that, whilst it is an excellent medicine, it is at the same time very pleasant to the palate, and will be esteemed by young folks as a great treat. Who can say as much of salts, jalap, and other doctor’s stuff? And in a large family it will abridge the doctor’s bill ten pounds a year.” (No attribution by the newspaper of the original source)

“Cholera Infantum,” July 8, 1825 issue, p.397:

“In our climate this disorder is frequently of a very fatal nature in the season which is now approaching...Accordingly, what we believe to be the most successful mode of treatment, is in the first place to empty the stomach and bowels by small doses of ipecacuanha and rhubarb.<sup>13</sup> Antimonial medicines and calomel may frequently be prescribed with good effect in this stage of the disease....In case that the intestinal irritations continue after the febrile symptoms are removed, the chalk julep, with the addition of laudanum or paregorick, may be advantageously prescribed...”

“Among the means of prevention, we cannot enough recommend the use of flannel worn next the skin; this preserves the action of the vessels on the surface, and while it acts as a nonconductor, it guards the tender infant from the extreme heat and great vicissitudes frequently experienced in

the hot months of the year. Warm bathing, too, at this season, by lessening the effect of excessive heat, and sudden transitions from hot to cold, is extremely useful to all fragile constitutions.

But of all the remedies with which we are acquainted, either to prevent or remove this disease, we know of none so effectual for those in the city who may be attacked by it, as removing to the pure air of the country, particularly near the sea shore, where the atmosphere is not only cooler, but in a particular manner has a tendency to restore the appetite and strength of the patient.”

(From the  
*Boston Medical Intelligencer*)

**-From *The American Physician, and Family Assistant...* by Elias Smith, Physician (Boston: B. True), 1837:**

“Worm powders,” in the section “Vegetable medicines prepared by Dr. Elias Smith,” p.x:

“Useful for children troubled with worms.”

“Worm powders,” in Smith, Part II, “Extensive improvement in the preparation and use of vegetable medicines,” pp. 131-132:

“To make these powders, take one pound wormwood,<sup>14</sup> made fine, one pound thoroughwort,<sup>15</sup> fine, four ounces bitter root,<sup>16</sup> four ounces nerve powder,<sup>17</sup> two ounces golden seal,<sup>18</sup> all made fine and sifted. Mix them together. Put two tea spoonful in a tea cup, and add one table spoonful of molasses, stir it all together as you would sulphur and molasses, take from one to three tea spoonful, two, three, or four times a day, according to the age of the child. For a grown person, take twice the quantity, as for a child.”

“Compound tincture of lobelia,”<sup>19</sup> in the section “Vegetable medicines prepared by Dr. Smith,” p.xii:

“This is particularly useful for Children who are troubled with cold and foul stomachs, and costiveness. It operates moderately to vomit the stomach, relieve costiveness, and calm the whole system, and is perfectly safe for old or young.”

“Tincture of lobelia,” also in the above section,” p.xiii:

“This is an emetic for very young children, in all cases of fits, pain in the bowels, and any internal difficulty peculiar to young children.”

“Emetic herb, or Plant of renown,” in Smith, Part I, “Medicines for common use,” pp.54-55:

Smith quotes the Essex District Medical Society’s recommendations that the proportion for the tincture of lobelia shall be two ounces of the dried plant to one pint of diluted alcohol. The Society also had agreed that twenty, forty, or even sixty drops of the saturated tincture could be safely given children of one or two years old, increasing as occasion may require.

“Peach leaves--stones,” in Smith, Part I, p.75:

“A strong tea made of the leaves are excellent for the cholic, and such like complaints peculiar to children and young people.”

“Pennyroyal--the herb and flowers,” in Smith, Part 1, pp.74-75:

“This is an excellent herb, and its virtue ought to be understood by all.” After quoting from the ancient Greek physician Dioscorides and the ancient Roman naturalist Pliny, Smith says that

it is the best tea he can find to make the emetic operate. "Often in attending young children, this sweetened, and the emetic, is all necessary to give them, to clear the whole system of cold, and other difficulties attending them."

"Red raspberry leaves," in Smith, Part I, pp.77-78:

"Children who have sore mouths, or are otherwise troubled with canker humors, ought to drink this tea freely and for a considerable time. It is a useful tea for children, to take with the emetic when it is given."

"Tansy," in Smith, Part I, pp.87-88:

Smith quotes Culpeper: "The seed of tansy is good to give children that are troubled with worms, and the juice of the leaves in drink have the same effect."<sup>20</sup>

"Pulmonary drops," in Smith, Part II, pp.132-133:

After discussing the use of these drops for adults, Smith says they are useful for children who have the croup or any obstruction in the throat. Children should take half the dosage of an adult. He describes making the drops as follows: "Take four gallons of rye gin, eight ounces myrrh,<sup>21</sup> fine, one pound East India Pepper, four pounds loaf sugar, one gallon pure water, eight ounces golden seal, four ounces nerve powder, all pounded fine. Put all these into the gin and water, stir them together every day for one week, and it is made and fit to be taken. Take from half to a whole wine glass full, two or three times a day."

"Nerve drops," for various nervous complaints, 'dreaming of frightful objects,' and insomnia," in Smith, Part II, pp.130-131:

"To make these drops--Take one pint and a half of best Holland gin, half a pint of water--add to this two ounces of nerve powder, or valerian, made fine, one ounce of hops,<sup>22</sup> pounded fine. Put these into the gin and water, shake it twice a day for ten or twelve days, and it is fit for use."

He recommends these nerve drops for insomnia instead of opium, laudanum or paregoric. In his directions, the dosage given is less than for adults: "For young children give one or two tea spoonsful, in a table spoonful of pennyroyal tea, several times in a day, as their situation may require."

"Cathartic compound," in the above section, p.129:

"This compound is prepared by mixing equal parts of cathartic and nerve drops, and shaking them together....This is an excellent preparation for almost any internal complaint to children--whether from cold, cough, foul stomach, costiveness, slow fever or general langor." He later relates how he used it successfully for a child with scarlet fever.

"Cathartic drops," just after the above, pp.129-130:

"...take one pint and a half of best Holland gin, add half a pint of water, add two ounces of bitter root, and one ounce of mandrake.<sup>23</sup> Shake it once or twice a day for ten or twelve days, and it is fit for use. This liquid is designed to regulate the stomach and bowels, particularly the bowels."

His following directions for young children note a smaller dose than for adults: "give one or two tea spoonsful of it, night and morning in one table spoonful of thoroughwort or pennyroyal tea. If two tea spoonsful does not remove the difficulty, take one or

two more until the costiveness is removed.”

“Croup, in Smith, Part III, “Diseases, and manner of curing them with vegetable medicine, without the use of minerals, bleeding, or blistering.” pp.167-169:

“The manner of curing this disease, as directed by those of our day, called the most skillful, is to bleed often, give emetics, or antimonial solutions; to apply mustard poultices, blister the throat, etc. Doctor Ewell directs the tincture of foxglove, or calomel, from thirty to sixty grains; and in some cases laudanum. It is not strange that children with this disease so generally die. I do not think there are many well children that would live long, if they were to take what is given to children seized with the croup...”

“Warm pennyroyal and mayweed tea is very good, in slight cases of the croup; but the only certain cure is, to give the emetic, as prepared for children, and continue this every day, or every other day, as the case may require...”

“St. Vitus Dance,” in Smith, Part III, p.169-170:

He describes this as a kind of convulsion that generally effects youth between ten and fourteen years old, with females more liable to it. He recommends first clearing the stomach with emetics, than using some of the products he makes and markets<sup>24</sup> (hygeian compound, panacea pills, and restorative), and bathing (with his bathing drops or elixir and botanic ointment), night and morning. Then he says: “Electrifying with Dr. Brown’s machine is useful in this case.”

Measles,” in Smith, Part III, pp.188-190:

“In common cases of measles, a strong tea of saffron,<sup>25</sup> snake root, mayweed, yarrow, or pennyroyal is sufficient, in addition to keeping the children comfortably warm, by staying in the house, etc.” In worse cases, he recommends his vegetable powders. In the very worst cases, his vegetable emetic, no.3<sup>26</sup> “must be given in a tea made of hemlock bark,<sup>27</sup> red raspberry leaves, sumac berries,<sup>28</sup> or hazel leaves.”

He then goes on to criticize the use of tobacco tea during the 1821 measles epidemic in Boston. His own four-year old daughter survived because of his remedies, but he mentions other children who took four or five tablespoons of the tobacco tea and died. “I doubt whether there is a well child in Boston that could live after taking so much tobacco tea. But the doctor ordered it, and they never have the name of killing children. The Lord takes them away; and it is said he has a right to his own--even if he takes them with tobacco tea.”

**-From *Peterson’s Magazine*, Philadelphia (Vol. XXXII, no.3), September, 1857:**

“Hooping-Cough,” in the “Sick-Room, Nursery, etc.” section, p.222:

“The following remedy will be found invaluable if steadily applied. Oil of amber (the foreign is the best) to be rubbed every night at bed-time on the palm of the hands, the soles of the feet, the small of the back, and the pit of the stomach. The oil, if good, is so essential that ½ a teaspoonful is enough for a child at one time of rubbing.”

**-From *Peterson’s Magazine*, Philadelphia (Vol. XXXII, no.5), November, 1857:**

“A Cure for Chilblains,” in the above section, p.363:

“Take of ammoniac gum (the real drop) ½ oz.; reduce it into a smooth pulp with as little water as possible; then add ½ oz. of extract of hemlock, and three drachms of the strongest mercurial ointment; the whole to be well mixed together. When used it should be spread on soft leather and sewed on the feet, and need not be removed above once a week. For recent chilblains and for their prevention, this plaister is infallible. The above quantity is sufficient for a family of three or four children for the winter if their feet are properly attended to.”

**-From “Diseases of children,” in *Gunn’s New Domestic Physician: or Home Book of Health: a Complete Guide for Families....* by John C. Gunn, M.D. (Louisville, Ky: Middleton, Strobridge & Co.), 1860, pp. 532-566.** Gunn’s chapter is much too extensive to try to summarize here, but the following examples give an idea of his methods:

“Mumps,” pp.555-556:

“In most cases this disease is mild, and requires only good nursing, and care that the body be kept warm and dry. Children should stay in the house, and be kept quiet, as violent exercise, or whatever stimulates the system in a high degree, may excite a disease of the brain, testicles, or breast, or cause more or less fever....”

“If the swellings are painful, give a dose of Paregoric or Godfrey’s Cordial, and get the child into a sweat with hot herb teas, such as Pennyroyal, Catnip, or Peppermint. . .and anoint the swelling with Opodeldoc liniment, and apply round the neck a warm piece of flannel, or a clean woolen stocking, which should be kept on. If a purgative

is necessary, give a little Epsom Salts, or Castor Oil....”

“If the parts are very much swollen, hot poultices applied to the swelling will give relief; and if the pain and swelling are very severe, one or two Leeches may be applied to the swelled parts. In general, however, I have always found the application of hot fomentations of Chamomile or any bitter herbs, to afford speedy relief.”

“Stoppage of the nose, commonly called snuffles,” p.540:

“Some children are liable to a slight catarrhal affection or cold, which nearly or quite prevents their breathing through the nose. This is so common a complaint, that it requires but the most simple remedies to relieve it in a few minutes. Cleanse the parts or nostrils with tepid or warm water, and then use the Camphorated Olive Oil, rubbing it over the whole surface of the nose....”

“Or you may grease the nostrils with Lard, or Sweet Oil, or Mutton Suet, and keep the head warm. ....or you may give some warm tea, as Catnip, Sage, Balm, or Pennyroyal, and bathe the feet and legs of the child in warm water.”

“Catnip,” in Gunn’s chapter “Medical flora; or vegetable materia medica,” p.764:

“Catnip tea is good for the flatulent colic of children; it is also an excellent drink in fevers, to promote perspiration, and to induce sleep. A warm tea of Catnip and Saffron is excellent in small-pox, measles, and scarlet fever, and may be used with advantage in all cases of colds.... It should always be kept on hand where there are children, as a remedy for colic, as well as in fevers, and colds, and may always be taken freely.”



“Saffron.” in the above chapter, p.852:

“...cultivated more or less in the gardens of this country, both as an ornament and for its medicinal properties...used mostly for children, in the form of a tea or infusion, to produce perspiration, and in cases of small-pox, measles and the like, to produce a determination to the surface...can always be had at the drug-stores.”

“Peppermint.” in the above chapter, pp.840-841:

“It is also good...in bowel complaints of children, and to render other medicines more agreeable....Dose of the Essence, from one to two teaspoonfuls for a grown person, and ten to thirty drops for infants, in a little sweetened water; of the Oil, from one to five or six drops, on a little sugar. The Oil and Essence may always be had at the drug-stores.”

“Rules to administer medicines.” in the “Practical receipts,” section of Gunn: p.925:

Suppose the dose for an adult to be one drachm:

A child under 1 year will require but 1/12, or 5 grains;

2 years = 1/8, or 8 grains;

3 years = 1/6, or 10 grains;

4 years = 1/4, or 15 grains;

7 years = 1/3, or 1 scruple;

13 years = 1/2, or 1/2 drachm;

20 years = 2/3, or 2 scruples;

A person above 21 years, the full dose of one drachm....Women, in general, require smaller doses than men, owing to a difference in size and constitution.

**-From *The Young Housekeeper’s Friend* by Mrs. Cornelius (Boston: Thompson, Bigelow, & Brown), 1871:**

“For a child just weaned.” p.252:

“There is always danger, especially in warm weather, that the stomach, even of a healthy child, will become disordered by being weaned; and it is important to guard against the evil, by careful attention to the diet, for a little while. Boil every morning new milk enough to last twenty-four hours, and stir into it the best of arrow-root wet in cold water, in the proportion of a large teaspoonful to a quart. Add a very little salt, and boil it up again for one minute, then set it in a cold place.”

“Flour Gruel (for children sick with teething complaints).” p.252:

“Tie up in a piece of thick cotton cloth a coffee-cup of white flour. Put it into boiling water, and keep it boiling steadily three hours. Then remove the cloth and lay the lump where it will become perfectly dry. To use it, grate it and thicken two gills of boiling milk with a dessert spoonful of it wet in cold water. Put a little salt in the milk. This is excellent food for feeble children.”

**-From *Peterson’s Magazine*, Philadelphia, 1870s and 1880s:**

In the issues of this time period, Abram. Livezzy, M.D. had a monthly column called the “Mothers’ Department,” in which he focused on symptoms and treatments for prevalent diseases and injuries. The columns are too lengthy to transcribe here, but anyone interested in late nineteenth-century children’s medicine might want to find copies of this magazine and read through Dr. Livezzy’s entries. Among the topics he discussed were measles, scarlet fever, small-pox, burns and scalds, diseases of the eyes, poisoned wounds, derangement of the bowels, cutaneous eruptions, and bad blood.

## THE VERY EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY:

**-From *Common Sense in the Household, a Manual of Practical Housewifery*, by Marion Harland (N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons), 1902:**

"Herb Teas," in the "Sick room" section, pp.510-511:

"Catnip tea is the best panacea for infant ills, in the way of cold and colic, known to nurses."

"A tea of damask-rose leaves, dry or fresh, will usually subdue any simple case of summer complaint in infants."

"Wheaten grits," in the "Nursery" section, p.515:

"4 tablespoonfuls grits (cracked wheat) soaked in a little cold water one hour, and then put into the kettle, 1 quart boiling water, 1 cup milk, a pinch of salt. Boil the soaked grits in the quart of water one hour, stirring up often; add the milk and boil half an hour longer. Sweeten to taste, and if the child is well, pour cream over it. This is designed for children over a year old. It is slightly cathartic; especially if the milk be omitted, and is most useful in regulating the bowels. When this can be done without drugs, it is far better."

## CONCLUSION

Marion Harland gave basic good advice in the above 1902 book that, for the most part, transcends time. For example, in the section on "The Sick room," she said "The sick-chamber should be the most quiet and cheerful in the house—a sacred isle past which the waves of domestic toil and solicitude glide silently. This is not an easy rule to

obey. Whoever the invalid may be, whether the mother, father, or the sweet youngling of the flock, the foundations of the household seem thrown out of course while the sickness lasts."<sup>29</sup>

At the end of "The Nursery" section, she stressed "Always see for yourself that his last waking thoughts are pleasant; that he shuts his eyes at peace with the world and in love with you; that his feet are warm, his stomach easy, and his body not overloaded with blankets and quilts; also, that the nursery is clean and freshly aired. These are better prescriptions for sound slumber than all the old wives' fables of the excellent properties of that pernicious drug—Soothing Syrup."<sup>30</sup>

In a late nineteenth-century health textbook<sup>31</sup> in the Toppan Library, "soothing-syrups" are noted as containing opium—given to keep the babies from crying. The accompanying illustration shows a mother giving a child in a highchair a spoonful of the syrup from a small bottle in her other hand. The caption says "Don't give soothing-syrup to children." A sidebar illustration to this shows a skeleton hiding behind an opium plant in full flower.

It appears from the above two books, as well as some of the mid-to-late nineteenth century examples quoted earlier, that there were increasing efforts to minimize or eliminate the use of certain medicines and techniques that were deemed dangerous. From our perspective today, some of them certainly sound unpleasant, others downright scary (even for an adult, let alone for little children): like the routine emphasis on cathartics and emetics, using leeches for mumps, ammoniacal gas for convulsions, bleeding "often" for the croup, and "electrifying with Dr. Brown's Machine" for St. Vitus Dance.

But, the parents and physicians surely had the best of intentions: that is, to restore health, in the only ways they knew, to all those “sweet younglings.”

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<sup>1</sup> From *Gunn's New Domestic Physician: or Home Book of Health: a Complete Guide for Families....* by John C. Gunn, M.D. (Louisville, Ky: Middleton, Strobbridge & Co.), 1860, p.480. In his chapter on the diseases of children, Gunn includes a full page steel engraving of a night scene (between pages 532 and 533), where a lamp on the fireplace illuminates a mother bent over a baby in a cradle. She holds a handkerchief in one hand, and clasps her baby's tiny hand in the other. The father is in the shadows, with his head bent down over the mother's chair. The title of this scene is “The dying babe.”

<sup>2</sup> The “Health Department” column of *Godey's Lady's Book* from 1863 (Vol. LXVII.), pp.277-278, edited by Jno. Stainback Wilson, M.D., takes a more psychological tack, presumably for children with less serious diseases: “We have many a time, in our professional experience as to sick children, found more benefit to be derived from a beautiful or interesting toy, than from a dose of physic. The greatest humanity a mother can exhibit in respect to her sick child is to *divert it*, DIVERT IT, DIVERT IT, in all the pleasing ways possible, as we ourselves, who are larger children, feel sometimes really sick, when a cheerful-faced and much-loved friend has come in, and before we knew it, we had forgotten that anything was the matter with us.” (Attributed to the *Hall's Journal of Health*)

<sup>3</sup> “Devils-bit” is defined in a late seventeenth-century dictionary as “a plant whose root seems bitten [by the Devil, out of envy to mankind, for its rare vertues]:” from *An English Dictionary...* by E. Coles, School-master, and Teacher of the Tongue to Foreigners (London: Printed for Peter Parker, at the Leg and Star over against the Royal Exchange in Cornhil), 1692. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 1969 reprint, says that devil's bit, a species of Scabious (*Scabious succisa*), is a common meadow plant with blue flowers and a thickish pre-morse root, and also refers to it as “Devil's bit Scabious.”

<sup>4</sup> Wormseed is not in the above dictionary by Coles, but a slightly later eighteenth-century

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dictionary in the Toppan Library defines “Wormseed” as “The Seed of a Plant called Holy Worm Wood;” under “Worm Wood,” it says “An Herb well known:” from *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, edited by N. Bailey (London: Printed for R. Ware, etc.), 1747. The *OED* defines wormseed as a name for various plants considered to have anthelmintic properties; and defines wormwood as the plant *Artemisia Absinthium*, whose leaves and tops are used in medicine as a tonic and vermifuge, and for making vermouth and absinthe.

<sup>5</sup> Coles, in 1692, defines “Saxifrage” as “An Herb that breaks the stone in the Kidneys.”

<sup>6</sup> Bailey, in 1747, defines “Scabious” as “An Herb so called from its Virtue in curing the Itch.” *The New Century Dictionary* (N.Y.: Century Co.), 1889, defines scabious as a plant so called because it was supposed to be efficacious in curing scaly eruptions. Note also from endnote 3 that devils-bit is in the scabious species; and, in fact, *The New Century Dictionary* goes on to mention several “conspicuous species” of it, such as “*S. succisa*, the blue scabious, or devils bit.” It is not clear from Hannah Wooley's text whether “scabious water” might perhaps include her earlier mentioned devils-bit as an ingredient.

<sup>7</sup> The seventeenth-century connotation here of “To Breed” was “to produce, to nourish, etc.,” from Coles, 1692.

<sup>8</sup> Woodville has a footnote here that cites Cullen's *Materia Medica*, Volume 2, p.540; but he doesn't indicate which edition he is using. Dr. William Cullen was a famous eighteenth-century Scottish physician and professor of medicine. The Toppan Library has an 1802 edition of *A Treatise of the Materia Medica*, by him (N.Y.: printed by L. Nichols & Co for T.& J. Swords, etc.), and the quote about jalap use for children is on p.305 of that Volume 2 (two volumes bound into one).

<sup>9</sup> Adult remedies from the Hunter book were related in my last two “Remedies from Rare Books” columns: the Spring, 2005, issue contained “Native American *Materia Medica*, Part 1;” and the Fall, 2005, issue contained “Native American *Materia Medica*, Part 2.”

<sup>10</sup> A similar description is given for the Anglo-American uses of this plant in Dr. Gunn's

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chapter “Medical flora; or vegetable materia medica.” He says that “Gentian root is an excellent bitter tonic and restorative, laxative, somewhat stimulant, and in large doses cathartic. . . . Useful in intermittent fevers, especially as a restorative tonic after the fever and ague have been broke:” p.795.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Gunn says that Seneca Snakeroot is most commonly used for its expectorant properties, in cough, colds and lung affections, and is considered good in croup, asthma and chronic bronchitis (and related to the other way that Native Americans used it, Gunn says that it is also used in suppressed menses): p.856.

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Gunn describes the Poplar (*Liriodendron Tulipifera*), which he says is also known as the Tulip tree. Worms are included among the ailments that he mentions; but instead of using the seed balls like the Native Americans did, he used the bark of the root in a decoction: p.840.

<sup>13</sup> In Woodville’s 1790 *Medical Botany*, he notes that “Rhubarb has been considered as the most proper means to be employed in cases of diarrhea:” in Volume 1, p.131.

<sup>14</sup> Under “Wormwood—leaves and flowers,” Smith says “This is a common herb, known generally. It grows by the way side, on mountains, and in gardens, and is plenty in America: p.82.

<sup>15</sup> Smith talks about all the different ways thoroughwort is used on pp.92-94, and notes that one of its alternate names is “Indian sage.”

<sup>16</sup> Smith describes “Bitter root,” on pp.67-68, and notes that it “does not relax, but move the bowels as they ought to be moved.”

<sup>17</sup> In Smith’s section on “Nerve drops,” he notes that “nerve powder” is valerian: p.130. For further information, see his section “Valerian, nerve powder, Ladies slipper, Whipo’ Will Shoe [Indian name—Adam and Eve],” pp.65-67, where he describes valerian as easily found growing in various parts of New England. He prepared it for his nerve powder by drying and pounding up the root.

<sup>18</sup> Under Smith’s description of “Golden seal,” it is also known as “Indian paint,” and is “an

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excellent medicine for old and young, male and female:” p.270

<sup>19</sup> Smith extensively discusses the lobelia plant, also called “Indian tobacco” and “Puke weed,” and its uses from pp. 49-65.

<sup>20</sup> Smith’s book does not have footnotes or a bibliography, but this reference probably came from an edition of one of the books written by the seventeenth-century London physician Nicolas Culpeper. In an earlier discussion of the pepper plant (on p.39), he refers to Sibly’s edition of Culpeper’s *English Physician*, printed in 1798, so that could well be the book he used for his other entries. (Smith spells the name as both Culpepper and Culpeper.)

<sup>21</sup> In his description of “Gum myrrh,” derived from a plant growing in the East Indies, Smith says that it is an essential part of his “vegetable elixir,” and is “a medicine, which will overcome more difficulties perhaps, in the human body, than any other preparation now in use:” p.86.

<sup>22</sup> Smith’s account of the various medicinal properties of hops, on p.83, is derived from Culpeper.

<sup>23</sup> This is not a reference to the European mandrake used since ancient times as a narcotic (and superstitiously thought by some to be half-plant and half-human). In North America, the term was used for the May apple. In Dr. Gunn’s book, under “May-apple root,” he notes that mandrake is an alternate name, and describes its use in detail as a “certain, powerful, and very valuable hydragogue cathartic:” pp.826-829.

<sup>24</sup> Smith’s shop was at No. 140 Hanover street, in Boston. In his Part II, “Extensive improvement in the preparation and use of vegetable medicines,” pp. 98-138, he gives the ingredients, uses, dosages, and ways of making his various emetics, powders, bitters, elixirs, ointments, salves, drops, syrups, poultices, pills, and cordials.

<sup>25</sup> In the description of “Saffron,” Smith calls it a narcotic, and says that it “is remarkably fragrant, and is highly esteemed, as it exhilarates the spirits when taken in small doses; but if used in too large portions, it produces immoderate mirth. . . .” pp.95-96.

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<sup>26</sup> Smith goes into detail about his Emetic No. 3 on pp.105-106.

<sup>27</sup> Smith explains about hemlock: “There is a poisonous plant called Garden Hemlock, or Cicutia, which should never be used, as it is a deadly poison. Hemlock bark is taken from the hemlock tree. The inner bark or meat, is the part to be used for medicine. It is an excellent medicine for canker...to wash canker sores or to make poultices....”pp.33-34.

<sup>28</sup> In his description of “Sumac--commonly called shumake--the leaves, berries, and bark of the trunk or roots,” Smith says that the dried berries are best in cases where the stomach needs souring: p.77.

<sup>29</sup> From *Common Sense in the Household, a Manual of Practical Housewifery*, by Marion Harland (N.Y.: Charles Scribner’s Sons), 1902, p.492.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.513.

<sup>31</sup> In the *Child’s Health Primer for Primary Classes, with special reference to the effects of alcoholic drinks, stimulants, and narcotics upon the human system* (Pathfinder Physiology, No.1), no author given (N.Y. and Chicago: A.S. Barnes & Co.), c1885, pp.59-60.

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## Announcements

The 15<sup>th</sup> International Social Pharmacy Workshop is scheduled for this summer (July 8-11) in Queenstown, New Zealand. The Workshop theme is “Globalisation, Pharmacy and Medicines.” Information on the workshop is available at: <http://www.pharmacy2008.ac.nz/pharmacy2008/registration.cfm>

The Lloyd Library and Museum will host a program on “The History of the Natural Health Movement” on **1 March 2008** from 4 to 7 PM. Speakers include Rosemary Gladstar, A. Douglas Kinghorn, Mark Blumenthal, and Anna Heran. The Lloyd Library is located at 917 Plum St in Cincinnati, OH. For more information call (513) 721-3707 or visit <http://www.lloydlibrary.org/>