MEDICAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN PHILADELPHIA
A Study of Early Twentieth Century Medicine Bottles
Excavated at Bartram’s Garden

MICHAEL PARRINGTON

INTRODUCTION
Bartram’s Garden, located on the Schuylkill River in Southwest Philadelphia, was the home of John Bartram, the eighteenth century naturalist. Bartram’s house, a substantial masonry structure built in 1731 as indicated by a date stone on the south end of the building, various other structures survive on the site and comprise a large barn and three other buildings known respectively as the stable, the carriage house and the seed house. According to a descendant of John Bartram, the seed house was built by Bartram soon after he settled there in 1728 and was used to store and process the seeds and specimens he received from, and sent to, England (Cheston 1953: 23).

THE EXCAVATION
To test this statement archaeological excavations were carried out by the Museum Institute for Conservation Archaeology of the University Museum, Philadelphia in June and October of 1979. The aims of the excavation were to obtain dating evidence for the seed house structure, and to recover soil samples from eighteenth century contexts within the seed house. It was hoped that this might yield evidence of Bartram’s botanical activities in the form of pollen or preserved seeds.

A construction related feature was uncovered in an excavation unit located at the south end of the building which contained sherdsof creamware. Although creamware was first manufactured in England around 1762, it is thought unlikely that it was imported before 1769 (Noell Hume 1972: 125-126). Furthermore, one of the shers had a "Royal Pattern" rim which first appears in manufacturer’s catalog in 1783 (Noell Hume 1972: 126). This evidence suggests that the south end of the seed house was built after 1783 and as John Bartram died in 1777 the structure could not have been used by him.

The excavation inside the southern end of the seed house sampled approximately 25% of the interior of the structure. No evidence of eighteenth century deposits was found, so the proposed botanical sampling program was not carried out. One layer of fill was found in the excavation unit which consisted of black organic soil mixed with ash and red gravelly loam. This layer was up to one foot, three inches thick and contained a comparatively large assortment of late nineteenth and early twentieth century ceramics and glass bottles. A total of eighty-seven complete or semi-complete bottles were recovered; of this total, thirty-five were identifiable from their embossed inscriptions or shape as medicine bottles. The others comprised containers for ink, liquor, perfume, salut oil, soda and root beer extract. A full report on the excavations is on file at the University Museum (Parrington 1979).

DATING
Among the other artifacts was a glass jelly jar with an embossed patent date on the base "NO. 72 PAT. IN U.S. DEC. 22, 1903. JULY 27 1904. M.T." Other dating evidence was provided by an embossed inscription on the base of a medicine bottle "JENKS WYOMING PHARMACY 4043 MARKET ST. PHILA." According to Philadelphia City Directories, this establishment is first listed as the Wyoming Pharmacy in 1904 although the Jenks Pharmacy was located at 4043 Market Street in 1888 (Copsills 1888 and 1904). A soda bottle with the remains of a Hutchinson-type stopper carried the embossed inscription on the front "UNIQUE BOTTLING CO. 641 PIERCE ST. PHILA. PA. REGISTERED." This company was first listed at this address in 1904 (Copsills 1904) but doesn’t appear in City Directories after 1908.

Although some of the manufacturers identified by the embossed inscriptions on their bottles are still in existence (i.e., Heinz and Hires) many of them no longer appear in directories after the first decade of the twentieth century. As bottles have a comparatively short life span as containers and are then normally discarded, it seems safe to assume that the bottles from Bartram’s were thrown out as trash shortly after they were made. The jelly jar with its patent registration date of July 27, 1904 provides a more exact terminus post quem or earliest possible date for the deposition of the group of bottles than is usual on most archaeological sites. The Jenks Wyoming Pharmacy bottle must have been made after 1904 when the pharmacy appears to have changed its name, and the Unique Bottling Company soda bottle must have been made between 1904 and 1908 according to the City Directories. This
In the absence of adequate medical treatment it could be claimed that patent medicines filled a need, but many of them contained ingredients that were positively harmful, such as cocaine, opium and heroin. In excavations carried out by MICA at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia in 1979 two fragments of bottles which once contained Swain's Panacea were found (Parrington and Schenck 1979: 78-79). This nostrum was said to cure a large number of ailments, including mercurial poisoning despite the fact that the ingredients included mercury; the other ingredients were water, sarsaparilla, alcohol and oil of wintergreen, which may have improved the taste somewhat (Young 1961: 58-66).

The proprietary medicines found at Bartram's originally contained ingredients which would have had drastic results on the human constitution. An analysis of Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound carried out in 1913 showed that the medicine contained 19.3 percent alcohol and 0.6 percent solid substances which "possessed no distinctive character" (Stage 1979: 183). Osmoluation contained cod liver oil, glycine and small amounts of calcium and sodium (Crap 1921: 100). Dr. Klímer's Swamp Root Kidney Liver and Bladder Cure contained about 9 percent alcohol, sugar, water, flavoring and small amounts of swamproot and field herbs (Crap 1921: 207). Many of the nineteenth and twentieth century proprietary medicines contained large proportions of alcohol, and any cures effected by them were short lived and due to the temporary effects of the alcohol or other drugs in the medicine.

Judging by the claims made by the various manufacturers, the poor souls who discarded the patent medicine bottles at Bartram's suffered from a wide variety of complaints. Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound was initially promoted as a cure for 'female complaints' and for kidney ailments in either sex (Stage 1978: 92). By the 1920s government regulations forced the company to modify their claims and new labels were put on the bottles; these claimed that the medicine was "Recommended as a Vegetable 'Tonic in conditions for which this preparation is Adapted" (Stage 1979: 108). Doctor Jayne's Expectorant was sold as a cure for respiratory diseases (Wilson and Wilson 1931: 47, 122). Doctor Klímer's Swamp Root Kidney Liver and Bladder Cure was very popular, and enabled the proprietors to build a five-story factory with an automated bottling line capable of turning out 2,000 bottles an hour to meet the demand (Wilson and

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**Nancy Linton**

After she was cured by Swain's Panacea.

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**The Following**

**Remarkable Cure**

In Worth of Public Attention.

The results of medicine cannot be easily explained; it is hard to determine how much is due to the patient himself and how much to the effects of the medicine itself. Many patients have been cured by medicine, but it is difficult to say how much of the cure is due to the medicine and how much to the patient's own efforts. The cure of any disease is the result of the combined efforts of the physician and the patient. The physician provides the medicine and the patient provides the will to be cured.

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**CASES OF NANCY LINTON**

Nancy Linton, the only member of the family to be cured, had been suffering from a severe cough for several weeks. Her doctor prescribed a medicine that had been used successfully in other cases of similar cough. The medicine was given to Nancy and she took it regularly. After a few days her cough improved and she felt better. Her doctor was amazed at the improvement and asked her what she had done to make her feel better. Nancy explained that she had been taking the medicine regularly and that it had helped her cough.

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**Dr. Klímer's Swamp Root Kidney Liver and Bladder Cure**

After the success of his earlier product, Dr. Klímer developed a new product for kidney and bladder problems. The product was called Dr. Klímer's Swamp Root Kidney Liver and Bladder Cure. It was a mixture of herbs and roots that were believed to be beneficial for kidney and bladder problems. The product was sold in bottles and was advertised as a cure for kidney and bladder problems.

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**Colliers magazine**

A popular magazine at the time, Colliers magazine was known for its articles on health and wellness. The magazine featured an article about Dr. Klímer's Swamp Root Kidney Liver and Bladder Cure, and praised the product for its effectiveness in treating kidney and bladder problems. The article was written by Dr. Klímer himself and was published in the magazine in 1935.
it is easy to poke fun at the superstitions and medical ignorance of earlier generations and hard to believe that our not so distant ancestors were so ignorant as to accept all the wild and exaggerated claims made by patent medicine proprietors. Nevertheless, the archaeological and historical evidence demonstrates how immensely popular patent medicines were in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In different forms and with different names, patent medicines continue in popularity today although the advertising may be more sophisticated and less blatant than in former years. The inheritors of the nineteenth century proprietary medicine tradition continue to make large fortunes and their advertising agents continue to show that what was true in the nineteenth century is still true today, that most people will believe what they want to believe.

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INVESTIGATING AN ANCIENT SUBURB

Excavations at the TVU mound, Tal-e-Malyan, Iran

ILENE M. NICHOLAS

Archaeology is often described as the science of the human past, a discipline which seeks to explain such complex phenomena as the evolution of early man, the domestication of plants and animals, and the origins of cities and state societies. However, archaeology also continually sheds light on the development of less monumental but intrinsically human institutions and activities. One recent University Museum expedition, the Malyan Project, has, for example, unexpectedly found itself excavating a slice through ancient suburbia.

What is suburbia? Strictly speaking, it is merely the suburbs of a city. According to Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, the word ‘suburb’ is derived from the Latin suburbum (sub- under or near + urb city), and is (a) an outlying part of a city or town, or (b) a smaller community adjacent to a city. Thus one cannot have suburbs without cities. However, suburbia also has additional connotations. Suburbs are not thought to be just small communities lying by chance very close to a larger settlement. Rather, suburbs are believed to have very close functional interdependences with the city they border. For example, many modern suburbs serve as a bedroom zone for people who actually work in the city proper.

Sociologists would say that suburbs are highly specialized communities which lie outside a central city and are politically independent of that city, but culturally and economically dependent upon it. The specialized function of such a suburb need not be wholly residential, but will represent only a portion of the total functional range which the true urban center exhibits. Many of the current connotations of this kind of suburbia are attributed to the development of the automobile. As the automobile became the most popular way of getting to and from work, the small town of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, for example, became the home of many office workers. Bryn Mawr is also the home of the University of Pennsylvania, but Bryn Mawr itself is not an independent community. It is an outlying part of a city, or city suburb, not an independent community, but an extension of the city. Bryn Mawr has its own embodiments and city streets, but it is a suburb of Philadelphia. This is what sociologists call a suburb. It is not adjacent to a city. Thus one cannot have suburbs without cities. However, suburbia also has additional connotations. Suburbs are not thought to be just small communities lying by chance very close to a larger settlement. Rather, suburbs are believed to have very close functional interdependences with the city they border. For example, many modern suburbs serve as a bedroom zone for people who actually work in the city proper.

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