The Most Likely Victim…the Busy Man. Ads from Hygeia Magazine

Posted on November 12, 2015 by nyamhistorymed

By Johanna Goldberg, Information Services Librarian

This is part of an intermittent series of blogs featuring advertisements from medical journals. You can find the entire series [here](#).

From 1923–1949, the American Medical Association published Hygeia, an educational health magazine for the American public. Where today you might find Highlights Magazine, Men’s Health, or Prevention at the doctor’s office, Hygeia once filled that role. It frequently included activities to entertain youth, along with health-related articles for their parents. Schools and libraries subscribed—the magazine was a common classroom resource—as well as individuals. In 1950, the magazine became Today’s Health, which continued publication until 1976.¹

Along with articles and activities, Hygeia included a wealth of advertisements. Here, we take a look at those focused on men and work. These ads often tie men’s health issues to work stresses (or, in one ad, boys’ health to school posture). One in particular, a Parke Davis and Company ad from March 1936, shows a commuting man reading a newspaper and states, “The greatest problem Medicine faces today is to get the average person to take advantage, in time, of the help it has to offer him.” This problem continues today: Men are more likely than women to smoke, drink, make other choices detrimental to health, and delay seeking medical attention.² A series of Parke Davis ads—along with ads from other companies—shows the dangers for men who neglect medical problems, often choosing work over seeking care.
Other ads show men and boys in need of products that accentuate their manliness (like Ivory soap: “Most men don’t want to smell like ‘beauty shoppes’”) or provide them the energy needed to get through the workday or wartime (like General Mills, which offered materials on teaching nutrition to help prevent military rejections due to malnutrition).

A third stream of advertisements depicts men as trustworthy medical professionals, even in times of war. The lab coat-wearing Walgreen pharmacist is “a specialist in accuracy.” Sealtest Company doctors offer physicals “as rigid as those in the army.” Wartime doctors, says one Wyeth ad, will remain abroad once the war is done to “prevent epidemics” or return home to care “for casualties of the world’s greatest war.”

When women move into the workplace during the war years, the ads that follow show them as competent employees and a feminizing influence on the workplace. “Let’s not ration loveliness,” advises a 1943 ad from Luzier’s, a cosmetic and perfume company. “With more and more women doing the work of men in defense jobs and in the armed forces, not to mention the thousands of women in various branches of OCD, it is desirable that we cling to those nice habits of personal care...which are such an integral part of the loveliness of American womanhood.”

Click on an ad to enlarge the image.

**Neglect of medical problems:**
The Most Likely Victim...the Busy Man

Yet He Seldom Realizes He's in Danger

Heart disease is the chief cause of death today. And the busy man is its most likely victim. For the pressure and tension of his everyday life cause unusual strain on this hard-working organ. In addition, infectious childhood diseases may leave a mark that has no effect until middle age.

Don't take chances with your heart. Too often the onset of heart ailments is insidious...the condition may not even be suspected until it is too late.

If you are approaching middle age, go to your physician promptly for an examination—not just once, but periodically. If he suspects any untoward condition developing, he will advise x-ray examination to help determine the heart's size, shape, and position, or to detect any fluid of infection that may be contributing to heart disease. You may prevent severe illness—even fatality—by consulting your physician today.

Mail this coupon today for the booklet, "X-rays and Health" with its interesting chapter on roentgenography of the heart.

EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY, Medical Division
335 State Street, Rochester, N.Y.
Please send a copy of "X-rays and Health".

Name...

City & State...
MINUTES of this

LONG, LONG HOURS
of this

The benefits your child derives from a fine school health program are minimized if he is compelled to spend long hours in antiquated, ill-designed school seats... seats of the kind that cramp vital organs, rotard their functioning, strain eyes, and violate health principles.

Classroom furniture should serve as a corrective of some of the physically harmful tendencies which any intensive educational program must inevitably impose on your child.

That is why parents are cooperating with educators who desire to provide pupils with American Universal Better-Sight Desks... a type of school seat which induces good habits of posture and minimizes eyestrain.

We suggest that you allow us to inform you further concerning the relation of school seating to your child's mental and physical progress. Just mail the coupon.

AMERICAN SEATING COMPANY

American Seating Company
Grand Rapids, Michigan

If you have a child at school, or will have, you need this interesting, enlightening booklet. Fill in and mail the coupon for a free copy.

Name ____________________________
Street Address ____________________
City _____________________________ State ___________________________
"Don't worry about me—
it's just a Cold"

The common cold is bad enough in itself. The real danger is that it may blaze the trail for more serious diseases or reduce your resistance to their attacks. Before you realize it, what you think is just a "cold" may develop into influenza or even pneumonia. Pneumonia may start suddenly, even without a cold.

The first symptoms of pneumonia are usually chilliness or a severe chill, pain in the chest or side, headache, cough, and fever. Such symptoms mean that a second should be lost. Go to bed and send for your doctor. Remember that pneumonia is a communicable disease. Proper nursing, complete rest and reasonable isolation are absolutely essential.

Lobar pneumonia is caused by many different types of the pneumonia germ—but each type is specific and can be identified. Should anyone in your family have pneumonia, your doctor will probably arrange for an immediate laboratory examination of the sputum to determine which type of pneumonia is present.

Just a cold nowadays may lead to influenza or pneumonia which, on an average, causes 125,000 deaths each year in the United States. About half of these deaths occur in December, January, February and March.

Serums are available which are highly effective in treating certain of the types. Not all cases of pneumonia should have serum treatment. Your doctor will decide.

During the next four months it will do the most damage to those who are not on guard. If your physical resistance is lowered by overwork or unusual fatigue, too little sleep, overindulgence in food or drink, or exposure to cold and wet, pneumonia germs may gain quick headway.

At this time of the year it is a wise precaution to have your doctor look over you very carefully to see whether or not you have diseased tonsils, sinuses, adenoids, teeth or other physical impairments which may lower resistance.

You will be safer during the coming winter months if you keep your vitality high. Send for the Metropolitan's booklet, "Colds, Influenza, Pneumonia," which contains valuable information about the prevention and care of these diseases. Address Booklet Department 123-6-Z.

Keep Healthy—Have Examined Regularly

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company

Copyright, 1936, by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company

Frederick H. Eckes
Chairman of the Board

One Madison Avenue
New York, New York

Leon A. Lincoln
President

The New-York Historical Society
nymcenterforhistory.org
Which Is The Wise Way To Have a Stomach Ulcer?

This Way
Mr. D. D.: Ruffled by gnawing pains in stomach.

 went to see doctor. Examination revealed stomach ulcer.

Doctor outlined course of treatment that wasn’t too hard for Mr. D. D. to follow and still lead active life.

Checked with doctor regularly. Showed steady improvement.

Condition finally controlled.

Or This Way
Mr. E. F.: Ruffled by gnawing pain in stomach.

Decided it was indigestion and “doctored” himself.

Pain got worse as weeks passed. Suddenly agonizing ulcers.


Two months in hospital followed by life of drastic restrictions.

Tending with your health isn’t unfair to yourself and your family. Better a diagnosis in time than to suffer from an ailment that gets out of control.

Your doctor wants to help you—and everybody else who needs him. He can do the most good, though, when he gets a patient in the early stages of an illness.

These days it will save you time to consult the doctor at his office, and to call for an appointment first. It will also help the doctor arrange his work so as to serve more patients.

A HEALTHY NATION FIGHTS BEST—SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Parke, Davis & Company

Research and Manufacturing Laboratories, Detroit, Michigan

Advertisement No. 193 for Parke, Davis & Company

Parke Davis ad in Hygeia Magazine, April 1945. Click to enlarge.
Mr. X.

Aged 55. During March, 1941, had some twinges that made him worry.

Consulted doctor, who told him that he had the beginning of heart trouble. Doctor advised him to slow down a little and told him some special things to be careful about.

Followed doctor's suggestions. Chatted with him regularly. Still active in his job and getting a lot of fun out of life.

There are more deaths every year from heart disease than from any other cause.

A talk with the doctor will do much to relieve anxiety. It can do more than that...

Many men and women with heart trouble—properly cared for by a physician—live long and useful lives.

Go to see the doctor at his office, if you can. And telephone first. This will help him plan his work and serve more patients.

A HEALTHY NATION FIGHTS BEST—SEE YOUR DOCTOR

PARKE, DAVIS & COMPANY

PHARMACEUTICALS • BIOLOGICALS
SURGICAL DRESSINGS

RESEARCH AND MANUFACTURING LABORATORIES • DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Advertisement No. 250 by Parke, Davis & Co. serves to emphasize the importance of prompt and proper medical care.
THE MAN WHO BROKE THE LAW – of nature!

This man is guilty – of neglecting his eyes.
As usual, crime does not pay! His neglected vision, his strained eyes, held him back from normal enjoyment of life just as surely as would iron bars and prison walls.
But there’s a key to the lock of this prison – periodic, professional eye care.
When were your eyes examined last?

SoftLite Lenses ad in Hygeia Magazine, December 1945. Click to enlarge.
Finally, a man who gets medical attention and follow his doctor’s advice! Metropolitan Life Insurance ad in Hygeia Magazine, October 1948. Click to enlarge.

Accentuating “manliness”: 
Ivory Soap ad in Hygeia Magazine, January 1932. Click to enlarge.
“Call me Sissy because I wash my hands?
I’LL SHOW YOU!”

Now he fights for Clean Hands... not against them!

Let that old manny laugh! He can’t laugh our baby out of the Clean Hands habit! Thanks to the Lifebuoy Wash-up Chart, it’s there to stick!

Simply, clearly, in pictures and words, the Lifebuoy Wash-up Chart tells how to wash, when to wash—and why. It shows how hands may pick up germs from common, everyday objects we have to touch. And its clever device of keeping score makes hand-washing seem like an exciting new game.

The Life Extension Institute warns that 27 diseases may be spread by germs our hands pick up. Washing hands often—always before meals—in Lifebuoy’s rich creamy lather, removes these germs before they can endanger health.

The fust of “beauty soaps” its pleasant, hygienic scent, that vanishes as you rinse, tells you Lifebuoy’s pasty. That’s why it’s such a wonderful complexion soap. Why it protects against embarrassing body odor.

FREE to mothers: A Wash-up Chart and trial size cake of Lifebuoy for each of your children. Simply fill out and mail coupon below. Solve your Clean Hands problem this simple, smiling way.

LIFEbuoy HEALTH SOAP
for face, hands, bath.

Free

— Lifebuoy Health Soap ad in Hygeia Magazine, May 1932. Click to enlarge.

Energy boosts:
Kellogg's Kaffee Hag ad in Hygeia Magazine, February 1931.
What's the matter with Bill?

There's real help in Postum, as thousands of men and women can tell you. Postum satisfies that craving for a hot, delicious nourishing drink. But when it is conveniently and harmlessly. It doesn't mentally stimulate you, for it contains no dose of caffeine. It does not and cannot interfere with Nature's fight against the dangerous poisons of fatigue.

Postum is good. It is so good that over two million American families wouldn't miss it for all the caffeine beverages in the world. Grocers sell two forms of Postum—instant Postum, made instantly in the cup, and Postum Carol, the brand you know.

A Sporting Proposition

Try Postum for thirty days. We will give you the first week's supply. But...
FEELING TIRED AND JITTERY?

FORGET IT!!

TAKE THE TWO-A-DAY WAY

DAYTIME AT THE FOUNTAIN

BEDTIME AT HOME

Don't be a martyr to the tiredness and jumpy nerves of undernourishment. Don't count sheep when you've been counting on sleep. Drink Borden's Malted Milk cold at the fountain for energy—warm at bedtime as an aid to quicker, sounder sleep.

Borden's will help you calm those nerves. Borden's will give you pep and vitality. And here's the reason...

Tests conducted by a great university prove that Borden's is rich in vitamins A, B and G—rich in vitamins and other food elements that definitely promote energy and sound nerves.

Drink Borden's at the fountain. Buy the convenient and economical home package. Drink Borden's warm, made with milk, at bedtime. Then sleep. Send in the coupon below with 10¢ for generous trial package and valuable booklet.

Borden's Malted Milk

Richer in Fat than Many Other Similar Products

GO TO THE FOUNTAIN THAT DISPLAYS THE BORDEN DIAMOND

The Borden Company

Dairy, 1928
100 Madison Ave., New York.

Banned in 1928 (sweeping or shipping which possibly may involve sales) nationally. Sample of Borden's Malted Milk and booklet.

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

— Bordens Malted Milk ad in ad in Hygeia Magazine, December 1932. Click to enlarge.
Medical professionals:
In most respects—the physical examinations given employees of a Sealtest Dairy Plant are as rigid as those in the Army.

Sealtest Companies realizes that the health of their workers plays a vital part in safeguarding the purity and wholesomeness of their dairy products.

But this is only one of many steps taken by Sealtest Companies to protect the millions who use Sealtest Milk, Ice Cream, and other dairy foods.

Sealtest workers—in addition to regular inspections—are given daily checks for neatness and cleanliness. Uniforms must be fresh and spotless... hands and working gloves kept clean.

These precautions— together with scores of laboratory checks and tests—are what help make Sealtest Dairy Products among the very finest in the world. They are sold in thousands of communities under the red-and-white Sealtest Symbol.
Whatever happened to “Doc’s” bedside manner?

They old called him “Doc”, from his best Paris days, because all his friends and family knew that he planned to follow in the footsteps of his great-grandfather and become a doctor.

But Jim is not a doctor. His medical education has never started, his Bedside Manner has never been tried out. Like so many dreams and ambitions of prouder days, they have been shoved aside by the harsh demands of war.

There are thousands of young men whose medical careers have been pushed years into the future. Every year since the war began, fewer and fewer new doctors have been produced. At the beginning of this year, military requirements cut in half the number of students permitted admission to medical or pre-medical courses.

This is one reason why there is only one serious doctor shortage now, but why that shortage will last long beyond the end of the last shot.

There are other reasons. Relieving troops from all over the world will be a long, difficult task—and their doctors will be among the last to be released. Many doctors will stay abroad to prevent epidemics that might eventually come to us. Doctors who do get back will have much of their time occupied by caring for casualties of the world’s greatest war.

The very best way to save your doctor’s time is to make use of his services the minute trouble arises. Never indulge in self-diagnoses. See your doctor early, in time for him to head off more serious trouble. And you can help him further by doing these three things:

Go to him—whenever you are able. Home visits take time when someone else may need him urgently.

Keep your appointment promptly; make it at his convenience so that he can plan his crowded hours better.

Follow his advice to the letter—so that your trouble doesn’t drag on, get complicated, or need extra attention.

Out on a series of amazing adventures is a Wyeth doctor—nominated by the American Medical Association and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. He is the intern of the year, the fresh young physician who has the right stuff—surgical skill, a fever for the fright, and a heart for the battlefront.

Help your doctor save his time!
Women in the workforce:
Dear Bill:

I just couldn’t sit home any longer—
waiting for your letters, worrying, but
doing so little to bring you home sooner.

You see I started in this week at the war plant.
They’re training me to be a drill press operator.
And you can just wipe that grin off your face,
you big goof! The foreman says I’ll make a
darn good one!

So here’s a picture of me in my uniform.
Remember how you used to wipe the flour
smudges off my nose? Well, you ought to
see me now—I’m a regular grease monkey!

I admit I was pretty scared the first
day, until I got up nerve to really look
the place over. I was afraid it would be like
working in a dungeon—all dark
and dingy!

But it’s not like that at all.
Why, the plant’s as bright and cheery as
our own kitchen. Even has that new
fluorescent lighting!

I wish I could tell you what we’re making. I can’t—but I hope one of them may find its way to you
someday—but when you need it most. So I’m
sending my love with every one—and a prayer.

I’m not counting the minutes any longer, because
I know you’ll be back pretty soon.

So, darling......

Oh, oh. There’s the whistle now!

General Electric is doing many things to
speed war production. One of these is to
supply G-E MAZDA lamps—and also the
expert engineering advice needed to keep
lighting at top efficiency twenty-four
hours a day.

G-E MAZDA LAMPS

GENERAL ELECTRIC
References


Call for Abstracts: Sixth Annual History of Medicine Night

Posted on November 10, 2015 by nyamhistorymed
The New York Academy of Medicine’s Section on the History of Medicine and Public Health invites you to submit abstracts for presentation at its upcoming Sixth Annual History of Medicine Night. This event will take place at the Academy, 1216 Fifth Avenue at the corner of 103rd Street, on March 9, 2016 from 6:00 pm–7:30 pm.

We invite all those interested in presenting to submit an abstract concerning a historical subject relating to medicine.

Please note the following submission requirements:

- Abstracts (not to exceed 250 words) must be submitted together with authors’ contact details, titles, and affiliations.
- Abstracts must be submitted no later than Friday, January 15, 2016

Selected speakers will be asked to prepare a presentation of not more than 12 minutes, with an additional three minutes for questions/discussion. Papers selected for presentation will be determined by a panel of History of Medicine Section members and staff of The New York Academy of Medicine.

Submit abstracts electronically to Suhani Parikh at sparikh@nyam.org. Questions may be directed to Suhani via email or phone (212-419-3544).

View our Cartes-de-Visite

By Robin Naughton, Digital Systems Manager

Through the Culture in Transit: Digitizing and Democratizing New York’s Cultural Heritage grant, the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO) sent a mobile scanning unit to the New York Academy of Medicine Library to digitize our collection of cartes de visite, small inexpensive photographs mounted on cards that became popular during the second part of the 19th century.

Our collection consists of 223 late 19th– and early 20th-century photographs of national and international figures in medicine and public health (individuals on three cartes remain unidentified).

This collection contains portraits both of lesser-known individuals and of famous New York physicians, such as Abraham Jacobi, Lewis Albert Sayre, Willard Parker, Stephen Smith, Emily Blackwell, and Valentine Mott. It also includes many with international reputations: Robert Koch, Louis Pasteur, Hermann von Helmholtz, Rudolf Virchow, and others. New York photographers took a number of the photographs; others were created by the New York offices of such establishments as Mathew Brady, as well as by photographers in Paris, Berlin, and London.

We are thrilled to share our entire collection on the Digital Culture website. You can view the front and back of each carte, and find out brief information about the physicians and scientists pictured. View all of the Library’s digitized collections.
Carte-de-visite of Emily Blackwell (1826-1910), English born physician. Photograph by W. Kurtz.

How One Small Box of Photos Inspired Our Staff

Posted on November 5, 2015 by nymhistorymed

By Johanna Goldberg, Information Services Librarian. Photographs by Library staff.

In our stacks sits an unassuming grey-blue box, labeled “[Photograph negatives and positives, taken by Frank Place of the New York Academy of Medicine staff and buildings…] 1925–1941.”
Frank Place worked as a reference librarian for the New York Academy of Medicine library for 40 years, from 1905 until his retirement in 1945. He was at the Academy when it was located at 17 West 43rd Street (its home from 1890), and documented its move in 1926. He took pictures of Central Park, of staff working and relaxing, and of spaces inside and outside the current and previous locations.

In celebration of Frank Place and library and Academy staff past and present, we have recreated a few of Place’s numerous photographs. We could not always take pictures in the original locations—Place took one of the selected pictures at 17 West 43rd Street and several office spaces have been renovated since his time. But we attempted to capture the essence of the photographs and honor Place’s documentarian spirit.

Where possible, we’ve identified the people pictured in the original pictures, but all we have to go on are minimal pencil notes Place scrawled on the backs of the photographs. Unfortunately, he did not always take his own advice, as expressed in the Bulletin of the Medical Library Association in 1944:

*It is not a bad idea to have photographs of the library staff at different periods. And don’t forget to name everybody, and, yes, date the print and the negative. Why not assemble photographs of the members of your society or academy? Some one of you no doubt owns a “candid” camera and can take snapshots with little or no trouble.*

If you know the full names of anyone unidentified or incompletely identified, please let us know.

Click on an image to enlarge.
Left: Dr. Felicia Robbins, 1920. Dr. Robbins (1869–1950), born the Baroness von Autenried, was a gynecologist. A brief biography describes her as having "a more extensive medical literary knowledge than any living person. Most of her time was spent at the Academy among the book stacks."³

Right: Johanna Goldberg, Information Services Librarian, July 16, 2015.


Left: “A. White, maybe 1932.” Right, Paul Theerman, Associate Director, July 16, 2015.

Left: M. Schieck, A. Larsen, M. Roberts, Helen Field, October 1941. Right: Emily Moyer (Collections Care Assistant), Kate Bator (Past Collections Care Assistant), Erin Albritton (Head of Conservation), and Christina Amato (Book Conservator), July 22, 2015.
“Westrom Dr. Clouting Maddocks.” Felix Wesstrom worked at the Academy from 1893–1935. He started “as an elevator boy, became janitor, and had done almost every kind of service in the forty-two years he served the Academy, including a brief period of collecting dues.” Harold Maddocks was the superintendent of the building. We were unable to uncover significant information on Dr. Clouting.

As the original photograph features non-library staff, our recreation does the same. Left to right: Suhani Parikh
A Little Black Book on Witchcraft (Item of the Month)

By Anne Garner, Curator, Center for the History of Medicine and Public Health

'Tis the season for witches and warlocks, and the lure of our 122e classmark—designating books related to the occult—has proven too much to resist. Here, I found a copy of Jean Bodin’s 1593 edition of his manual for witch-hunters—the Demonomanie des Sorciers. First published in 1580 in Bodin’s native France, the Demonomanie was the most influential work on witchcraft published during the 16th century.

I was immediately drawn to the binding, fastened by a set of steeply pointed metal clasps. The book is bound in black sheep, blind-stamped and gilt, with the words “sorcery” and “magic” gilt on the spine, along with the date. In other words, it looks like one might expect any convincing book on witchcraft should (our book and paper conservator, Christina Amato, was equally enamored with it, see below).
Bodin (c. 1529-1596), educated in classics, law and philosophy, served as both a Carmelite monk and a professor in Roman law. He obtained a post as a public prosecutor in Laon in 1576, where he remained until his death. His best known work is a 1576 treatise on government, *Les Six livres de la République*. In it, Bodin argued that it was possible for all religions to coexist within the commonwealth.

Bodin’s attitude towards witches was less forgiving. Trials for witchcraft were commonplace in France in the 15th and 16th centuries. More and more, secular courts conducted these trials, rather than courts of the Inquisition.\(^1\) In 1580, Bodin wrote the *Demonomanie* as a guidebook for the successful prosecution of witches.
In this text, Bodin attempted to provide one of the earliest legal definitions for a witch. A sorcier, he writes, is one “who by commerce with the Devil has a full intention of attaining his own ends.” This definition was sufficiently broad enough to allow for prosecution on a range of charges. Conveniently, witches could be blamed for any number of unexplained ills. In some cases, charges were brought to explain illnesses of unknown origin. Rossell Hope Robbins writes that witches were frequently blamed for the deaths of both humans and animals due to ergotism, food poisoning caused by ingesting a fungus in grain.

Bodin was among the most rabid of the 16th-century witch hunters. He was not averse to bending the usual rules, writing that “proof of such evil is so obscure and difficult that not one out of a million witches would be accused or punished if regular prosecution were followed.” He suggests that torture, enlisting children to testify against their parents, and badgering the accused to confess were all fair game. Of sorcery, he says, there is no crime more worthy of burning.

The text concludes with a refutation of De praestiigis daemonium, first published in 1563 by the Dutch physician and writer Johann Weyer. Weyer (1515-1588) argued that the evils attributed to witches were most commonly the sole work of the devil.
himself, and that the majority of those prosecuted for witchcraft were merely ill or mad.

Ten editions of the *Demonomanie* were published before 1604. The Academy has two other editions of the text: a 1587 edition published in Paris, and a copy in Latin, published in 1581.

Laid-in at the rear pastedown of our 1593 edition is a clipping from a newspaper, enumerating the significance of the number seven in the Bible.

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This copy’s front board is stamped with the name of G.W. Bridges. Could this book have belonged to George Wilson Bridges (1788–1863), the Anglican cleric? Bridges, a rector in Jamaica, later became acquainted with William Talbot and took photographs on his travels to the Mediterranean. This G.W. Bridges was hardly known as a bastion of tolerance. In fact, he was notorious for his criticism of other religions and for his dismissal of slave’s rights. The binding is in a style that is contemporary with this G.W. Bridges’ dates. Our own bookplate reads, “source unknown.”
References


4. Translation from Robbins, p. 54-55.

5. Robbins, 55-56.


Posted in Collections. History of medicine | Tagged Demonomanie des Sorciers, Jean Bodin, sorcery, witchcraft, witches | Leave a reply

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**Remembering “Eating Through Time”**

Posted on October 26, 2015 by nyamhistorymed

Evelyn J. Kim, today’s guest blogger, was our guest curator for this year’s *Eating Through Time* Festival.

With speakers from Jacques Pepin, Tom Colicchio, Lori Silverbush, Bryant Terry, and so many others, there was something for everyone at the Eating Through Time Festival on October 17, whether one’s interests were in history, public health, or culture.

The wide range of topics speaks to the various ways we perceive food. Our first main stage speaker, food justice activist and cookbook author, Bryant Terry, succinctly expressed these perceptions: “Start with the visceral, move to the cerebral, end with the political.”
Politics was a theme for many of our panelists. University of Maryland Law Professor Frank Pasquale emphasized the need for transparency in food regulation appointments. At the local level, Ellie Wilson, a nutritionist and policy maker for New York state, and the New York Academy of Medicine’s own Kimberly Libman focused upon the need to support more than food on plates: wellness programs and support for produce farmers are also a part of just and healthy food systems. This holistic view of changing food policy was encapsulated nicely in our screening of Lori Silverbush’s A Place at the Table. Looking at food insecurity in the U.S., producers Silverbush and Tom Colicchio underscored the need for both federal and local efforts in solving hunger.

Are there other ways of tackling nutrition and health disparities in the U.S.? On our all-woman “Starting Up Health” panel, moderator Nina Meijers spoke with three start-ups on how technology can empower consumer decisions. The “Eating the Future” panel also asked similar questions regarding how new technologies, such as insect proteins and 3-D printing, could feed the world sustainably and address malnutrition concerns.
To demonstrate those possibilities, lead researcher at Nordic Food Lab, Josh Evans, proposed entomophagy as a possible response to food insecurity and sustainability dilemmas worldwide. Passing out insect-based food and beverages, Joshua proved that deliciousness and sustainability could go together. Dr. David Eisenberg called upon more doctors and health professionals to learn about food and nutrition by enrolling in cooking classes, such as Harvard Public Health and Culinary Institute of America’s collaborative program “Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives.”

Culture and the arts can also be a conduit for action. Poet Simone Bridges and non-profit Hip-Hop Health performed pieces that could teach today’s youth about nutrition and health through the spoken word. In a historical context, culture has also been a driver of nutritional theories and practices. Historians Ken Albala presented his research on sex, power, and food in the Renaissance while Betty Fussell discussed purity and danger in food advertisements in the 20th century.
The power of food is also an embodied knowledge. Betty Fussell, our oldest presenter, gave some sage advice on how food (along with naps, sex, and good friends) is a key factor in longevity not only from a nutritional, but also affective standpoint. No one could be a better spokesperson for this than our keynote speaker, Jacques Pépin. Reminiscing on his nearly eighty years, Chef Pépin’s lecture, “Food Memories,” touched on his life in food from his childhood in France to his most recent (and 14th food show!) on PBS. While Chef Pépin attributed his continued stamina to lots of wine, he also stressed the importance of the social and the sensory in his work as a chef. Despite the materiality of food, Pépin reminded us that food is ephemeral: “Food is fragile. You eat it, it goes. What remains are the memories.”

I can’t thank the Academy enough for giving me the opportunity to assemble a day’s worth of programming about the issues I care about most: Food, social justice, and public health. And I certainly will have those memories for a lifetime.

For more Eating Through Time pictures, visit our Facebook page.
The world is a lot less polluted with lead than it was a half-century ago, thanks in part to geochemist Clair Patterson. Fed up with lead contamination in his laboratory, he mounted a research campaign that overturned decades of misguided industry-sponsored science. In 1965 he published a game-changing article declaring: “the average resident of the United States is being subjected to severe chronic lead insult.” Patterson wanted to shock a nation in denial about the cost of its embrace of all things lead. Some saw his argument as darkly prophetic. Others saw it as patently absurd.

Lead’s proponents had 40 years of scientific studies to lean on—science bought and paid for by the very companies covering the earth with lead. In 1923 Standard Oil and General Motors had introduced leaded gasoline—a disastrous debut involving front page horror stories of workers driven to madness or agonizing death from lead exposure. But the lead industries minimized the fallout brilliantly. First, they finessed a federal investigation into the dangers; second, they founded a lead-friendly research institution at the University of Cincinnati. Under the direction of Robert Kehoe, the Kettering Laboratory quickly became the world’s authority on lead and health.

By the early 1960s, when the tobacco industry and others were ginning up the manufacture of doubt about their toxic products, Kehoe had a long career amassing a huge store of what passed for scientific certainty. Dozens of his studies “proved” that lead posed no public health threat. Lead, he explained, was a natural component of the environment, and humans had evolved in a leaded environment. And, Kehoe maintained, a little lead was harmless. It might pose a danger above a certain threshold, but below that level there was no need to worry. Our modern urban environment with lead spewing out of every automotive tailpipe in the country, did not, he concluded, push us above that threshold. Bottom line: the public faced no risk from lead exposure. Patterson’s 1965 research article, “Contaminated and Natural Lead Environments of Man” did not blast a mighty hole in the lead industry’s fortress of certainty but it struck a sharp blow with pinpoint accuracy. The small fissure it opened ultimately undermined the lead industry’s foundation. Initially the industry responded with dismissals and character assassination—the same playbook followed by other polluters under attack. Patterson would not surrender and kept the hard science coming. (He died in 1995 at age 73.)

Patterson’s battles with lead contamination began in the laboratory. Studying the composition of meteorites early in his career he was frustrated by laboratory lead contamination, leading him to develop new clean-room protocols. The payoff came in 1956, when Patterson calculated the age of the earth to be 4.5 billion years, a figure accepted by scientists to this day.

To understand the sources of environmental lead pollution Patterson went to sea to measure the extent of lead in the ocean’s depths. He voyaged to frigid mountaintops and then to the earth’s coldest regions following the lead trail. He proved that lead pollution had been rising since antiquity—and that it had spiked since the introduction of leaded gasoline in the middle of the 20th century. These findings drove Patterson into the thick of environmental politics, perhaps the most treacherous environment he ever braved.

Patterson’s article used the new standards of proof in medicine and public health that looked at large populations instead of individuals, finding relationships between behaviors and health outcomes. The Surgeon General’s first report on cigarette smoking, published one year earlier, used this approach.

Through a brilliant application of the kind of atomic bean counting that he’d employed in establishing the earth’s age, Patterson demonstrated that the average American’s body contained a hundred times more lead than was natural. In later publications he drove this point home with a powerful graphic: the outlines of three human torsos, each with dots representing the amount of lead in their bodies. The figure for primitive man had one dot; the second and third figures, representing the average modern American and a patient at Kehoe’s “threshold” for clinical lead poisoning, were both grey with dots, barely a shade apart. The stakes, Patterson insisted, went beyond the health of individuals. “[T]he course of history,” he asserted, “may have been and is now being altered by the effect of lead contamination upon the human mind.”

Thanks to Patterson’s scientific work and the regulations it ultimately inspired we all live in a much less heavily leaded world than the one Patterson explored. But we still have far to go. Most new uses of lead-containing products have been banned in America for a generation, but the lead left behind from centuries of relying on “the useful metal” still poisons our homes and lands. The tremendous progress since Patterson’s day revealed lingering, pervasive harms caused by the lead that remained—
learning and behavior deficits as well as cardiovascular and immunological consequences. And in many parts of the world, lead pollution remains far worse than in the U.S., with even greater impact on public health. Concerned citizens must demand the regulations and clean up efforts that will eliminate every last “dot” of lead from every man, woman, and child on the earth.

Christian Warren, author of Brush With Death: A Social History of Lead Poisoning, is associate professor of history at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, where he studies the history of health and the environment.

Merman or Mandrake? Costume Ideas From Our Collection

Posted on October 20, 2015 by nyamhistorymed

By Johanna Goldberg, Information Services Librarian

With Halloween just around the corner, our library is here to help with your costume planning. We’ve leafed through our collections for ideas, inspired by items from the late-15th century through the mid-20th century. If one of our images inspires your costume, please send us a picture!

Click on an image to enlarge and view the gallery. *

*Thanks to Anne Garner, Curator; Arlene Shaner, Historical Collections Librarian; Rebecca Pou, Archivist; and Emily Moyer, Collections Care Assistant, for their input and ideas.

Cook like a Roman: The New York Academy of Medicine’s Apicius Manuscript

Posted on October 15, 2015 by nyamhistorymed

By Anne Garner, Curator, Center for the History of Medicine and Public Health

This is one of several posts leading up to our day-long Eating Through Time Festival on October 17, 2015, a celebration of food, cookery, and health. View the full program and register for the Festival.

Ancient sources document the culinary excellence of one Marcus Gavius Apicius, a Roman gourmet who flourished during Tiberius’ reign (1st century CE). It isn’t clear from textual evidence that this Apicius ever wrote a book of cookery. ¹ And yet, the gem of our Library’s cookery collection—a 9th-century manuscript collection of Greek and Roman recipes—bears his name.
Our manuscript, transmitting a 4th- or 5th-century compendium of culinary and medical recipes compiled from a number of 2nd-century Roman sources, packs a powerful wow factor. It contains 500 Greek and Roman recipes from the Mediterranean basin. A handful may date as early as the 4th century BCE. As such, our manuscript is sometimes referred to as the oldest extant cookbook in the West.

This collection of recipes was likely compiled from multiple sources. The 2nd-century satirical writer Juvenal indicated that the name “Apicius” was frequently used to describe a foodie, not a specific person. Other sources suggest that the name conjured luxury and excessive eating.

These recipes appear to be written by and for cooks. While some recipes called for cuts of meat that might have been beyond the means of the average Roman citizen, many others, including a number of meat, vegetable, and legume dishes, were well within the reach of Rome’s tradespeople, builders, artists, and modest farmers. Some of the recipes may have reflected popular dishes served in local popinae (street bars).

A closer look at book one reveals a wide range of useful directives applicable for the Mediterranean home cook. Called Epimeles (careful, or attentive), book one includes recipes for a spiced wine surprise, honeyed wine, and Roman absinthe. Here too are tips for preserving pork and beef rind, fried fish, blackberries, and truffles.

The dishes reflect the polyglot culture of the Mediterranean basin. The dominance of Greek culinary tradition in the early empire makes it likely that the Apicius began as a Greek collection of recipes, though mainly written in Latin, and adapted for a Roman palate. The cookbook incorporates a number of Greek terms, like melizomum (honey sauce) and hypotrimma (here a mixture of cheese and herbs), despite the existence of Latin glosses. Other words are hybrids of Greek and Latin, like tractogalatae, combining the Latin tractum (thin sheet of pastry) and gala, Greek for milk.

The Apicius manuscript is the gem of the Academy’s Margaret Barclay Wilson Collection of Cookery, acquired in 1929. Conservators restored and rebound it in 2006.

Our manuscript was penned in several hands in a mix of Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian scripts at the monastery at Fulda (Germany) around 830 CE. It is one of two manuscripts (the other at the Vatican) presumed to have been copied from a now lost common source.

Images from both 9th-century iterations illustrate the different approaches to the text. The image above shows the gilt and illuminated Vatican manuscript, as replicated in a 2013 facsimile. Below is the Academy’s text. The number of cross-outs and the plain, unadorned style of the manuscript suggest it may have been a teaching tool for scribes.
Apicius has been a bestseller since the beginning of the print era, published in multiple editions since the 15th century. The Academy library holds many print editions, including two of the earliest.

This title page is from the earliest dated edition of the text, published in Milan in 1498. Pictured below is the device of the printer, La Signerre, who later set up shop in Rouen. Our copy is annotated by an early reader who adds the titles of the text’s ten books, grouped by type of dish.
The second earliest dated edition, printed in Venice, offers one of the earliest examples of a title page in printing history. It too is heavily annotated by an early food-lover, fluent in Greek and Latin.
Enthusiasts will find many other print descendants of this extraordinary manuscript in the Academy’s library.

The Apicius manuscript and a number of print editions of the text will be on display in the Academy Library’s Drs. Barry and Bobbi Coller Rare Book Reading Room during our October 17th festival, Eating through Time. A complete schedule of events can be found here.

References


Posted in Collections, Events, History of medicine | Tagged Apicius, cookbooks, De re coquinaria, De re culininaria, Eating Through Time, food, Food 2015, manuscripts, recipes | 1 Reply
For millions of Asians and Pacific Islanders, Spam makes the world go 'round. Seemingly inconsistent with local food cultures, Spam has seeped itself into regional cuisines, including Hawaii’s Spam musubi, South Korea’s Spam jjigae, and Hong Kong’s Spam ramen. In China, Spam is considered a gourmet treat, with Spam gift boxes appearing for Chinese New Year.

How did this piece of tinned meat earn so many frequent flyer miles? The answer lies in the history of Spam. Hormel, the meat processor and eventual food giant, originally developed Spam as a means to commercialize pork shoulder, an unwanted cut at the time, in 1937. Originally marketed as a home alternative to butcher-sliced luncheon meat, Spam’s worldwide debut came with the United States’ entry into World War II. While spurned by American housewives, Spam was perfect for US military rations: it was shelf-stable, compact, and a cheap source of protein. And it wasn’t just for the US military. Thanks to the Lend-Lease Act of 1941, Spam was the star food aid product for Allied countries and troops, finding its way across the United Kingdom, France, and even Russia. By the end of the war, the US government had bought nearly 150 million pounds of Spam.
The same story repeated itself in Asia, but with a twist. US troops also brought Spam with them there. But unlike European countries, where Spam’s utility and popularity waned after the war, the product remained popular in Asia and the Pacific Islands. In many places, including Hong Kong and Japan, Spam was the only meat available immediately after WWII. In the case of Korea, the Korean War insured a steady supply of Spam to the peninsula, even becoming local currency for troops and the civilian population for everything from dental care to building supplies to tactical information.

But the question remains as to why Spam stayed so popular in Asia as opposed to Europe. Europe did not embrace Spam after the war for a number of reasons. While post-war Europe had the same problems with hunger as post-War Asia, Europe reverted to pre-war agricultural production relatively quickly. The other possibility is that the association of Spam with wartime poverty and starvation led to a backlash against the product. This was certainly the case in America. For the troops coming home, the mere mention of Spam sent them into paroxysms of disgust.

While many of the circumstances in Asia were fairly similar in the post-war era, geography and politics may explain Spam’s continued proliferation in the region. With the exception of China, all areas in which Spam was introduced during WWII have limited land for agricultural use, making meat a scarce commodity, even in the best of times. Compared to the price of locally produced fresh meat, Spam was relatively cheap, even after the war. For Hawaii, political conditions allowed Spam to dominate the market. Hawaii had a large population of Japanese residents during WWII. Instead of interning them like on the US mainland, the US government resorted to restricting Japanese-American dominated industries, such as fishing. Without a steady supply of locally available protein, Spam easily dominated the Hawaiian market.

One other major factor explains Spam’s ubiquity across Asia: marketing. Hormel, like many other industries post-war, had to re-market itself. Hormel attempted to re-brand Spam as the food for the modern 1950s housewife. Unfortunately for Hormel, this effort didn’t revive Spam’s sales in North America. However, Hormel’s re-branding efforts were quite successful in Asia. Across the continent, Spam can be found in gift packs for any occasion. Furthermore, Hormel not only has added different varieties to please local markets, but in some places, like China, it has reformulated the recipe.
Spam is now available in 44 countries across the world. Hormel, in some ways, became the case study for food multi-nationals in how to introduce new food product to a global audience. Spam may have lost its battle with the American housewife, but it certainly has won the war across the globe.

References


4. As a side note, the popularity of pork across all Asian nations is also due to a combination of poverty and land scarcity. Pigs have a low feed conversion ratio and have a higher meat yield compared to other livestock. Sigrid Schmalzer, in her fantastic article, Breeding a Better China: Pigs, Practices, and Place in a Chinese County, 1929-1937 (Geographical Review, Vol. 92, No. 1. Jan, 2002. Pp 1-22) discusses the importance of pigs to the Chinese diet.


Posted in Collections, Events | Tagged Eating Through Time, food, Food 2015, Hormel, Spam | 1 Reply
Roy Porter, in his Longman/History Today lecture, warns of the bad eyesight, poor posture, incomprehensible babblings, addled wits, depravity and worse that may befall those who immerse themselves too much in books. 'How poor is the proficiency that is merely bookish!', declared Montaigne. The Moderns in the Battle of the Books proclaimed truth was to be found in Nature, through observation and experiment. So poring over books was pointless. In short, an honourable dissenting tradition has fired off books against books, and such fusillades have been echoed by others of different ideological stripes, fearful of books sapping virtue and piety – hence the setting up in 1559 of the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. Healthy Recipes FOR YOUR NUTRITIONAL TYPE Dr. Joseph Mercola with Dr. Kendra Degen Pearsall Fundamentals of Occupational Safety and Health. 506 Pages·2009·7.74 MB·8,018 Downloads. Fundamentals of Occupational. NUDGE Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness Richard H. Thaler Cass R. Sunstein Nudge: Improving Natural Health and Beauty For Your Body Your Skin. 64 Pages·2012·7.86 MB·5,013 Downloads. Choose Natural Skin Care Enjoy natures purity from Allergic reactions to skin care products