

Collecting Drug Stores

by Mike Prero

Drug stores, pharmacies, apothecaries have been part of American culture almost from its beginning. Not surprising that a wealth of covers from such have flowed out in production and into the eventual hands of collectors.

As soon as Columbus started his explorations of the Americas in the late 15th century, a European effort to find valuable medicinal plants among the flora of the New World to add to the medical canon got underway. About 170 drugs used by the Indians of British North America, and perhaps 50 used by the indigenous people of the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America became important enough in the U.S. (as the practitioners of chemistry and pharmacy eventually catalogued, analyzed and understood them) to merit listing in the United States Pharmacopoeia (est. 1820) or the National Formulary.

The first "drugstores" in North America appeared in Bethlehem, PA; Boston; New York; and Philadelphia, with likely proto-drugstores—for example Gysbert van Imbroch ran a "general store" that sold drugs from 1663-1665 in



Wildwyck, New Netherland, today's Kingston, New York—preceding the dedicated apothecary shops of the 1700s, and providing a model. Because of that model, and customs that stretch back to the first apothecary shops in the medieval Arab world. most drug stores continued selling more general goods, perfumes, cosmetics, and drinks of all sorts alongside medicines, and still do.

The Philadelphia College of Pharmacy the first step forward in the development of a system of pharmaceutical practice in the United States and also aided the rise of the American Pharmaceutical Association (APhA), which formed at a founding convention congregated in the Hall of the College, October 6 to 8, 1852. William Procter, Jr., who graduated from, then taught at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy for 20 years, went on to exert so much influence over the formative years of professional pharmacy that he's now widely considered the "Father of American Pharmacy."

In 1860, the first pharmacists arrived on the west coast of America in the newly formed state of California.

Elizabeth Gooking Greenleaf was the first female apothecary in the Thirteen Colonies. She is considered to be the first female pharmacist in the United States.

The vast majority of covers, here, are front-strikers, of course, with many/most having specific addresses. With the later advent of chain drug stores, one sees the influx of Nationals into the category. Drug store covers are also a good source of covers for the Medicine and 'Oldies' categories.

This is a good, solid category with lots of covers available. Gayle Hofacker, OH, currently has 4,349 listed , so there are lots to go after and not much competition! [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history_of_pharmacy_in_the_United_States]

