I'm not a bot





Why was bromo-seltzer discontinued

The Bromo-Seltzer Collection Database Our collection database is an ongoing work. This record may be updated based on future research. To learn more about our online sharing strategy, visit our website. For information on using content from this page, see the Smithsonian's Terms of Use. If you need to request an image for publication or other use, please visit Rights and Reproductions. Bromo-Seltzer is an antacid medication formulated to relieve pain caused by heartburn, stomach upset, or acid indigestion. Originally containing toxic substances sodium bromide and acetanilide, the formula has been modified over time. The current formulation includes aspirin, sodium bicarbonate, and citric acid. Bromo-Seltzer was invented in 1888 by Isaac E. Emerson and produced by the Emerson Drug Company of Baltimore, Maryland. It was sold as effervescent granules that were mixed with water before ingestion. The product took its name from a component of the original formula, sodium bromide. The factory's notable feature was the Emerson Bromo-Seltzer Tower, built in 1911, which held a sign weighing 20 tons and featuring a glowing blue representation of a Bromo-Seltzer bottle. Bromo-Seltzer has been featured in various films, TV shows, and literature, including The Simpsons episode "Bart Carny", John Steinbeck's novel The Grapes of Wrath, and songs such as "Pachuco Cadaver" by Frank Zappa and his Magic Band, remember those psychedelic rock days? Well, let's take a trip back in time to explore something fascinating. In Spike Jones' version of Laura, the chorus chants "Bromo- Seltzer, Bromo-Seltzer..." to evoke the sound of a chugging train. Now, this phrase might seem unrelated, but it has a connection to an era when patent medicines were all the rage. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, people sought cures for various ailments, and these concoctions often made exaggerated claims. Many of these remedies claimed to ease an array of problems, though their effectiveness was largely due to alcohol, narcotics, or opiate substances rather than herbs or other touted ingredients. Patent medicines thrived during a time when the dangers of such drugs were unknown. They got their name not from being patented but from the designs on labels and bottles. Unregulated ingredients meant no need for transparency, as makers didn't have to list contents or amounts. Several factors contributed to the rise of patent medicines. Firstly, there was a lack of understanding about illness progression and cure. It took Louis Pasteur's experiments in the early to mid-1800s to reveal the relationship between germs and illness. Secondly, herbal remedies had been passed down through generations, making this type of cure familiar. Entrepreneurs capitalized on this trust by creating bottled versions that removed the labor involved in homemade medicines and added supposed revolutionary ingredients. The low prices of patent remedies catered to the masses who couldn't afford physicians. During the 1800s, illnesses were common, especially in children. Desperate parents sought ways to help their kids. After the Civil War, injured veterans looked for pain medicines. Patent medicines acted as convenient palliatives. The Hershey Story has a collection of bottles and ads from this era, showcasing some renowned patent medicines like Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, Old Dr. Townsend's Sarsaparilla, and Paine's Celery Compound. Erythroxylon coca extract was a key ingredient in Old Dr. J. Townsend’s Sarsaparilla, marketed as the world's most extraordinary medicine. The tonic claimed to purify blood and cure various ailments, including rheumatism, pimples, and dyspepsia. Dyspepsia symptoms included poor digestion and stomach issues caused by a diet high in fat and starch. The 19th-century disease was common, with many patent medicines claiming to ease its symptoms. Townsend's Sarsaparilla contained sarsaparilla, herbs, molasses, senna, and alcohol, making it one of the most effective medicines at the time. Other patent medicines, however, contained substances that would be considered illegal today. Ayer’s Cherry Pectoral, for instance, included morphine. Patent medicine companies advertised their remedies through magazines, newspapers, almanacs, calendars, and memo books. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral was widely advertised and had contracts with 1,900 newspapers by 1870. The media began exposing the dangers of patent medicines in the early 1900s, leading to regulations like the Food and Drug Act of 1906. In 1938, a complete listing of ingredients became mandatory, while more recent laws require dietary supplements to be labeled as "not evaluated" and "not intended to diagnose or treat any disease." While some patent medicines may have done more harm than good, they played a significant role in the history of medicine. MANY PEOPLE TODAY STILL USE PRODUCTS THAT WERE FIRST INTRODUSED IN THE EARLY DAYS OF PATENT MEDICINES, EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY NOT HAVE ALL THE SAME INGREDIENTS AND SOME ARE NO LONGER USED AS MEDICINES. FOR EXAMPLE, BROMO-SELTZER AND ALKA-SELTZER ARE STILL SOLD IN DRUG STORES, VICKS VAPO-RUB IS A COMMON HOUSEHOLD ITEM, AND PHILLIP'S MILK OF MAGNESIA IS USED TO HELP WITH DIGESTIVE ISSUES. EVEN COCA COLA AND 7UP WERE ORIGINALLY CONTAINING HARMFUL SUBSTANCES BUT HAVE SINCE BEEN REFORMULATED TO BE SAFER FOR CONSUMPTION. THIS ERA OF PATENT MEDICINES SERVES AS A REMINDER THAT SOCIETY'S UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS IS ALWAYS EVOLVING, AND WHAT MAY SEEM LIKE A GOOD TREATMENT TODAY MIGHT NOT BE IDEAL IN THE FUTURE. IT'S ALSO A TIMELY REMINDER TO RE-EXAMINE OUR CURRENT MEDICINES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN AMERICAN LEGAL HISTORY STARTED WITH A PRESENT THAT WAS SUPPOSEDLY FOR HARRY CORNISH, BUT ENDED UP BEING A DEADLY MISTAKE. A BOTTLE OF EMERSON'S BROMO-SELTZER WAS GIVEN TO CORNISH AS A CHRISTMAS GIFT, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO CONTAIN CYANIDE, WHICH KILLED HIS AUNT AND MADE HIM VERY ILL. AN INVESTIGATION LED BY DOCTOR EDWARD HITCHCOCK REVEALED THAT THE SUSPECT WAS ROLAND MOLINEUX, A FORMER KNICKERBOCKER ATHLETIC CLUB MEMBER WHO HAD BEEN DISMISSSED FROM THE TEAM. Albert Molineux, a renowned general who fought for the Union during the American Civil War, had an unassuming life until his involvement in two high-profile murder cases came to light. Molineux initially studied chemistry at Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and later worked for Morris Herrmann & Company in New Jersey. This job granted him access to a variety of poisons, including cyanides. A feud with the Knickerbocker Athletic Club, where he had a history with another individual named Cornish, emerged as a potential motive. Further investigation revealed that Molineux could have posted the poisonous package intended for Cornish due to his location and timing. Handwriting experts concluded that the label was written by Molineux. A purchase made at Tiffany & Co. in December suggested that Molineux had the means to afford such a box. The second murder, linked with the Knickerbocker Athletic Club, led investigators to Molineux once again. Henry Barnet, a club member who died six weeks prior to another individual's death, was found to have received an anonymous package containing mercury(II) cyanide. The cause of Barnet's death was initially reported as diphtheria, but later confirmed as poisoning. Barnet had told his doctor about receiving the suspicious package before his death, and further investigation revealed that Molineux was married to a woman who had been courted by Barnet prior to his illness. The connections between the two murder cases became clear through handwriting evidence. Molineux's arrest followed, but he was only charged with Adams' murder. The trial focused on this case, while the link between the two murders played a significant role in the prosecution's argument. However, a New York Court of Appeals reversed Molineux's conviction in June 1901, citing that evidence of other crimes is not admissible in court. This decision, known as the Molineux Rule, stated that proof of one crime does not necessarily prove another. The case was retried in the fall of 1901 without mention of Barnet, resulting in a new trial for Molineux. The case of Roland Molineux marked a significant turning point in American legal history. At the first trial, the defense presented their own evidence and witnesses, including Molineux himself, to refute nearly every aspect of the prosecution's argument. The jury delivered a verdict of "not guilty" within less than an hour of deliberation. Over the past 120 years, the implications of this case have been extensively debated, with various legal precedents emerging from it. Despite the passage of time, the Molineux case remains a captivating tale, with its impact on the American justice system and dramatic twists continuing to fascinate readers.