

Doctors, Dentists, Druggists, and Patent Medicine Vendors of Harrisburg's Eighth Ward and Surrounding Areas: 1890-1900

Danny Byrd
AMSTD 482/Fall 2004
Penn State Harrisburg

Harrisburg's Eighth Ward and its surrounding locations were vibrant areas that were beset by problems similar to any city.¹ One major problem facing Harrisburg city was that of providing adequate medical facilities and treatment for Harrisburg's forty-thousand residents, many of whom were crammed into areas such as the Eighth Ward.² Harrisburg most certainly saw its share of disease, malady, and injury, and those not unable to take care of their medical problems themselves had to turn to medical caregivers, many of whom had no formalized training, to help cure their ills. Common ailments of the mid- to late-nineteenth century included dysentery, pneumonia, chicken pox, whooping cough, scarletina, syphilis, typhoid, and tuberculosis as well as various fractures and flesh wounds. Surgery was quite common, and many medical experts were adept at repairing joint and ligature damage. However, physicians rarely ventured too deeply into the abdomen during surgery. Surgical anesthesia was becoming widespread, and as medical knowledge, training, and technology increased, the odds of healing people's ailments increased. Physicians of this era, however, were only decades removed from bleedings.³

During the 1890s, the number of physicians listed in *Boyd's Harrisburg City Directory* reached a high of 108 in 1899 and a low of 74 in 1890. A steady increase in population would most likely attract physicians to that area, resulting in a rise in medical professionals as well. With a city population of approximately forty thousand, the number of doctors to residents in Harrisburg averaged to one physician for every 370-540 people, depending on which year in the

¹ This paper has been edited by Stephanie Patterson Gilbert, webmaster of Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward website, found at <<http://www.old8thward.com>>.

² Michael Barton and Jessica Dorman, eds., *Harrisburg's Old Eighth Ward*, (Charleston: Arcadia, 2002), 12.

1890s is being examined. This number compares quite favorably to recent United States figures of one doctor for every 625 people.⁴

In 1890, Harrisburg had three hospitals, and by 1900 that number had grown to five. In addition to the standard hospitals, the Keeley Institute was established in 1892 near the corner of North Street. This facility treated patients addicted to alcohol and drugs.⁵ In the years between the first and second incarnations of the Keeley Institute, the St. Clare Infirmiry operated at the Keeley Institute location and helped many young men recover from illnesses such as typhoid fever.⁶ Other evidence of Harrisburg's respectable health care trade is evident in the four professional medical societies that existed during the latter part of the nineteenth century, including the Dauphin County Pharmaceutical Society, Harrisburg Academy of Medicine, the Dauphin County Medical Society, and the State Pharmaceutical Society. Due to Harrisburg's status as a capital city, it seems reasonable that state and local governing boards and societies would exist and be active in the area.

In addition to Harrisburg's physicians, a large number of druggists set up shop in the area. At least forty druggists called Harrisburg home between 1890 and 1900.

Of Eighth Ward druggists, Thomas Thorley stayed in business the longest. His drug store was a fixture on State Street for thirty-seven years.⁷ Druggists of the day sold a variety of goods and were similar to a modern Walgreens or Rite Aid. Druggists sold patent medicines, elixirs, balms, and remedies of

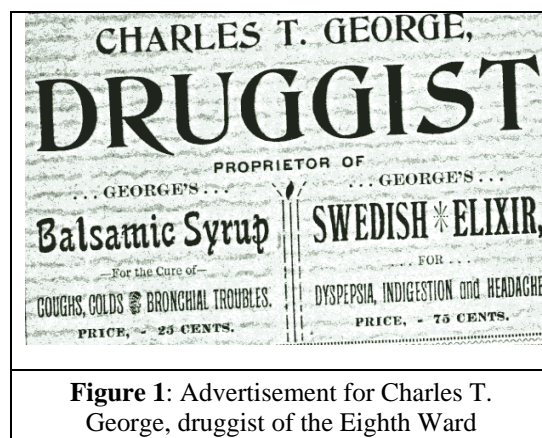


Figure 1: Advertisement for Charles T. George, druggist of the Eighth Ward

³ Berman, 1.

⁴ Dartmouth, 241.

⁵ Barton, 115.

⁶ Ibid., 116.

⁷ Ibid., 114.

all sorts. Many nineteenth-century medicines were designed to “cleanse” the body or masked illnesses using ingredients such as alcohol and narcotics.



Figure 2: Nineteenth-century patent medicines

Quacks and patent medicine hucksters often set up shop in cities and towns, and their businesses were often quite lucrative. By the 1890s, legislation was being proposed that would help regulate medicines, and ultimately, the national 1906 Food and Drug Acts helped eliminate the often harmful patent medicine industry.⁸ From 1890 to 1900, Harrisburg had no fewer than eight listings for patent medicine vendors.

The Harrisburg area was also home to approximately two dozen practicing dentists during the 1890s. By the late 1870s, dentistry had evolved from merely extracting decaying teeth to repairing, rebuilding, and straightening teeth. By 1890, dentists could create usable dentures constructed of vulcanite and help teach cavity prevention after discovering the causes of tooth decay. In addition, dentists were using nitrous oxide as anesthesia and gold foil in fillings. The American Society of Dental Surgeons was founded in 1840 and was later replaced by the American Dental Association, which helped organize, train, and educate American dentists and the public about proper dental hygiene and maintenance.⁹

The balance of this paper offers a listing of Harrisburg area dentists, druggists, and physicians as listed in the Boyd’s city directories between the years of 1890 and 1900.

⁸ Menace, 1.

⁹ History, 1-3.

Appendix 1: Dentists of Harrisburg's Eighth Ward and Surrounding Area, 1890-1900		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Year (s)</i>
Baker, G.W.	1340 North 6th St.	1890-1894
Baker, G.W.	1404 N. 6th St.	1895-1900
Clark, W.B.	722 N. 6th. St.	1899, 1900
Crist, J.B	3 1/2 North 4th St.	1890
Crist, J.B.	17 N. 3rd St.	1891, 1894-1896
Fetterhoff, H.R.	1205 N. 3rd St.	1891
Hain, Galen	701 N. 6th St.	1899, 1900
Heindel, S.J.	1700 N. 6th St.	1893
Honeywell, E.C.	25 N. 3rd St.	1890
Hurlick, W.S.	25 N. 3rd St.	1895-1900
Jones, L.S.	10 South 4th St.	1890-1896
Jones, L.S.	209 Walnut St.	1898, 1899, 1900
Kalbus, J.	818 N. 6th St.	1891-1900
Knauff, H.W.	18 N. 4th St.	1900
Mckelvey, C.L.	1700 N. 6th St.	1893
Naylor, W.E.	263 North St.	1890
Naylor, W.E.	1217 N. 6th St.	1891, 1892, 1893
Noel, J. Anson	25 N. 3rd St.	1898, 1899, 1900
Painter, W.H.	21 S. 3rd St.	1895-1900
Phil. Dental Parlors	25 N. 3rd St.	1898, 1899, 1900
Philadelphia Dentist	25 N. 3rd. St.	1896
Poffenberger, T.M.L.	406 Market St.	1890, 1891
Poffenberger, T.M.L.	10 N. 4th St.	1893, 1894, 1895
Poffenberger, T.M.L.	807 N. 3rd St.	1898, 1899, 1900
Reel, Charles	1119 N. 3rd. St.	1890, 1891, 1896-1900
Rutherford, J.B.	2016 N. 3rd St.	1899
Smith, E.B.	211 Walnut St.	1890
Smith, E.B.	1007 N. 3rd St.	1891, 1895, 1896
Smith, E.B.	931 N. 3rd St.	1898, 1899, 1900
Stine, H.M.	204 Walnut St.	1898, 1899, 1900
Storey, J.W.	1302 N. 3rd St.	1899
Wall, J.R.	1811 N. 6th St.	1898, 1899, 1900
Walter, W.R.	921 N. 3rd St.	1900
Westbrook, C. Jr.	25 N. 2Nd St.	1890, 1891
Westbrook, C. Jr.	134 Walnut St.	1894
Boldface=Eight Ward Address		

Appendix 2: Druggists of Harrisburg's Eighth Ward and Surrounding Area, 1890-1900		
<i>Druggists</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Year(s)</i>
Arnold, C.M.	1601 N. 6th St.	1890-1900
Bishop, K.D.	1201 N. 6th St.	1898, 1899, 1900
Cassell, William E.	1839 N. 6th St.	1890
Clark, J. Nelson	1111 N. 3rd St.	1890
Cotterel, J.W.	1704 N. 6th St.	1890-1900
Deiss, William	401 Walnut St.	1892-1900
Eyster, A.E.	1101 N. 3rd St.	1890
Fager, C.M.	1223 N. 6th St.	1890-1900
Foltz, J.B.	1839 N. 6th St.	1891-1900
George, C.T.	1306 N. 3Rd St.	1890, 1895-1900
Hamlin, B.B. Jr.	824 N. 6th St.	1891-1896
Hay, John W.Dr.	1402 N. 3rd St.	1895-1900
Hess, E.H.	1530 N. 6Th St.	1890-1900
Hoffa, J. Wilson	1342 N. 6th St.	1890-1900
Hoffa, J. Wilson	3rd @ Walnut Sts	1898, 1899, 1900
Jackson, A.	Reily @ 4th St.	1891-1894
Jackson, A.	1500 N. 5th St.	1895
Kalbach, H.A,	1720 N. 3rd St.	1898, 1899
Lehman, S.W.	1839 N. 6th St.	1900
Markley, G.H.	3rd @ Walnut	1890-1896
Mikle, John O.	1800 N. 4th St.	1892, 1893
Nunemacher, A.W.	300 North St.	1890-1900
Pfoutz, Jacob W.	1531 N. 3rd St.	1900
Potts, George C.	1101 N. 3rd St.	1895-1900
Raysor, M.F. M.D.	1800 N. 4th St.	1896-1900
Steever, A.M.	933 North St.	1890-1900
Thorley, J.D.	1839 N. 6th St.	1895-1899
Thorley, T.	449 State	1890-1900
Todd, A.M.	401 Walnut St.	1890, 1891
Weigle, G.H.	1601 N. 3rd St.	1895
Boldface=Eighth Ward Address		

Appendix 3: Physicians of Harrisburg's Eighth Ward and Surrounding Area, 1890-1900		
<i>Physicians</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Years</i>
Ayers, Wilmot	1839 N 6th	1890, 1894-1900
Bill, G.E.	253 North	1895-1899
Bowers, Moses	1337 N 6th	1890-1896
Brandt, Albert F.	9 N 4th	1890-1900
Carmony, C.J.	European Hotel	1892, 1893
Clark, J. Nelson	1111 N 3rd	1890, 1895-1898
Clayton, Mary	130 State	1896
Coover, D.H.	34 S 3rd	1890

Coover, H. Ross	1623 N 6th	1890-1900
DeVenney, J.C.	300 Reily	1895, 1896, 1898
DeVenney, J.C.	1501 N 3rd	1899, 1900
Dunott, D.Z.	132 Walnut	1892- 1894
Dunott, Thomas J.	132 Walnut	1890-1893
Earnest, S.F.	1312 N 3rd	1899, 1900
Ellenberger, J.W.	1312 N 3rd	1890-1898
Fager, C.B.	120 Walnut	1890-1900
Fager, C.B. Jr.	120 Walnut	1893-1900
Fager, C.M.	1223 N 6th	1895-1900
Fager, J.H.	1234 N 6th	1890-1900
Fager, V.H	120 Walnut	1893-1900
Frost, W.M	1011 N 3rd	1890, 1891
Funk, David	228 N 3rd	1890
Gallagher, J.A.	213 Walnut	1900
Garver, Jane K.	State Hospital	1893-1900
Garverich F.H.	1614 N 4th	1899, 1900
Graber, L.K.	232 State	1890, 1891
Hamilton, Hugh	315 Walnut	1900
Harner, D.W.	204 Walnut	1893, 1894
Hassler, S.F.	22 N 4th	1896-1900
Hay, John W.	1402 N 3rd	1890-1900
Hutton, John C.	5 S 4th	1890-1900
James, W.T.	1838 N 6th	1896-1900
Jauss, C.E.	1323 N 6th	1890-1900
Jones, W.H.	159 N 4th	1890-1894
Jones, W.H.	159 N 4th	1895-1899
Jones, W.H.	402 State	1900
Kane, Joseph J.	4th @ North	1899, 1900
Kunkel, G.B.	1113 N 3rd	1895-1899
Manning, C.J.	1500 N 6th	1894-1900
McGowan, Hiram	236 State	1890-1899
Meals, Ezra	3rd @ North	1890-1898
Meals, Ezra s.	274 North	1896
Neuman, Oscar	627 Race	1898- 1900
Ogle, W.M.	1423 N 6th	1893
O'Neal, A.A.	1011 N 3rd	1893
Orth, H.L.	204 Walnut	1890, 1891
Park, G.W.	331 Reily	1898, 1899, 1900
Peters, W.C.	206 State	1899, 1900
Pitcarin, Hugh	206 State	1890 -1896
Pitcarin, Roy	206 State	1895
Rambler, R.A.	1306 1/2 N 6th	1890
Rambler, R.A.	1315 N 6th	1891-1900
Rhodes, O.S.	227 Walnut	1893
Roop, J. Warren	427 Boas	1892-1900

Roth, W.F.	1206 Vernon	1895
Rynard, John A.	562 Race	1892-1900
Sensenig, I.B.	439 Walnut	1892
Shope, Samuel Z.	1642 N. 3rd	1896, 1898, 1899
Shumway, C.D.	606 Briggs	1890
Stickel, H.L.	227 Walnut	1892
Stites, Harry	1500 N 6th	1891, 1892, 1893
Stoner, S.S.	619 Race	1891, 1892
Walker, J.A.H.	505 Muench	1890-1900
Walker, J.A.H.	258 North	1893
Walter, H.B.	1317 N 3rd	1890-1893,1896-1900
Weills, W.M.L.	1826 N 4th	1898, 1899
Weills, W.M.L.	1823 N 4th	1900
Weils, W.M.	332 Broad	1891
Winger, H.C.	430 Stae	1890-1899
Winger, H.C.	622 State	1900
Boldface=Eighth Ward Address		