DEATH'S LABORATORY

Patent medicines are poisoning people throughout America today. Babies who cry are fed laudanum under the name of syrup. Women are led to injure themselves for life by reading in the papers about the meaning of hiccough. Young men and boys are robbed and contaminate by vicious criminals who lure them to their dens through seductive advertisements.
How the Death of Two Utica Infants Helped Trigger
the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906

By Jon Landers

On June 30, 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. The bill which took effect on January 1, 1907 was an important piece of legislation and although it was not perfect, it was a revolutionary landmark in the history of consumer protection in America.

Unfortunately, the case history of the accidental death of two Utica, New York twin infants had been one of the examples cited in a series of articles published by the Ladies Home Journal on the dangers of patent medicine use. In a 1906 article the names of Adam and Eve Gnad of 25 Kossuth Avenue appeared at the top of a list of babies who had recently died after being given a patent medicine. The list was titled, “Thirteen Little Victims of Man’s Greed.” The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 was a result of the public outrage that was started by articles written by a journalist named Mark Sullivan for the Ladies Home Journal and later continued by free-lance journalist Samuel Hopkins Adams for Collier’s, The National Weekly “The Great American Fraud.” Following the campaign spearheaded by the Ladies Home Journal, his articles stirred up even more attention about quack medicines. The stories captured the attention of the American people and alerted them to the dangers associated with patent medicines.

The Utica connection started with a newspaper article that appeared in the Utica Herald Dispatch on January 26, 1906. In bold print, the headlines read, “TWIN BABIES DIED SUDDENLY, Coroner Dodd Investigating the Case - Were Irregularities - Doctor Preston Called to Attend Five Weeks’ Old Children Who Had Been Given a Soothing Syrup - The Investigation.” The commentary that followed was the tragic story of how Adam and Even Gnad died after being given a patent medicine and mentioned certain details about the parents that made the doctor and coroner a little suspicious about the circumstances surrounding the event.

An urgent call had been made to Doctor Preston to come to a house at 25 Kossuth Avenue, the home of Adam and Eve Gnad. It seems that Stanislaus Gnad, the father of Adam and Eve had administered a dose of a patent medicine named Kopp’s Baby Friend to the infants and the next day they became seriously ill. Doctor Preston arrived just before they died and he decided to summon Coroner Dodd.

Coroner Dodd used an interpreter to take a deposition from Mr. Gnad. The parents of the babies lived in the same house although they were not married. The Polish couple had lived in the same boarding house in Cohoes, NY but, decided to come to Utica to work in the mills in East Utica. The mother of the children Caroline Stronczek was married but, her husband was away in Austria. Mr Gnad claimed his son became ill and because he didn’t have money for a doctor, he bought some medicine at a store on the corner of Nichols and Bleecker Streets. Gnad gave Adam four drops of the medicine which was the prescribed dosage on the label and only two drops to Eve. The infants died the next day. Coroner Dodd noticed that a good amount of the medicine was gone from the bottle and the father stated that it had tipped over causing some of the contents to be spilled.

Dodd tried to subpoena the mother of the babies but could not find her. It was stated she was out making arrangements for the burial of the children. The stomachs of the babies were removed and the contents were to be analyzed along with the medicine. Although the dosage was four drops, a rumor had circulated that the babies were given ten drops.

About one month later, the February 23, 1906 issue of the Utica Herald Dispatch carried a follow-up story of Coroner Dodd’s decision on the death of Adam and Eve Gnad. Dodd stated that he did an autopsy on the bodies of the infants and analyzed the contents of their stomachs along with the medicine known as Kopp’s Baby Friend. It revealed the babies had died from an overdose of Kopp’s Baby Friend which contained morphine. His decision: “I find and decide that the said Adam and Eve Gnad,
otherwise called Zarlok, died from an overdose of “Kopp’s Baby Friend,” which was administered by their father, but without criminal intent.”

After reading of the tragic deaths of Adam and Eve Gnad, the people of Utica, NY clearly understood why the editor of the Ladies Home Journal and Samuel Hopkins Adams journalist for Collier’s had written and passionately campaigned against the evils of patent medicines.

The manufacturing and sale of Patent Medicines in the second half of the 19th century escalated into a multi-million dollar industry in America. One reason for the successful sales of these nostrums was the huge advertising campaigns bankrolled by the people and companies making the medicines. Their ads often appeared in local newspapers almost on a daily basis and made outrageous claims about their products. Patent medicine makers usually claimed their elixirs would cure almost anything but whose ingredients were a trade secret. Unknown to the consumer, many quack medicines contained large doses of alcohol and some harmful narcotics such as cocaine, heroin, morphine and opium. These were unscrupulous people who would do anything to make a buck.

There were no laws in the U.S. prior to 1907 that prohibited any person from mixing any kind of ingredients, bottling it, labeling it and claiming that the concoction would cure anything. Sadly, most newspapers were reluctant to print anything negative about patent medicines because advertisements of the elixirs were a large part of their advertising revenue.

Evidence began to build against the dangerous medicines and the campaign to rein them in continued until strong public sentiment had been created against the whole business of patent medicines. Some conscientious newspapers stopped advertising patent medicines and several States passed legislation on the subject.

Finally, the public had been awakened to “The Great American Fraud” thanks to several people who were dedicated to the cause. Congress and the President could no longer ignore the reality of the patent medicines that were harming, addicting and often killing the men, women and children of our country. When the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 went into effect on January 1, 1907, it ended the “Patent Medicine Era” which was a shameful time in American History; but not before two small innocent victims from Utica, NY died at the tender age of one month and one day.

Editor’s note: For years I searched for the actual newspaper articles that detailed the deaths of Adam and Eve Gnad, but was not successful by cranking microfilm at the Utica Public Library. It took only a few seconds to find the articles on fultonhistory.com. Like most experienced bottle collectors I have read material on the patent medicine era and the history of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, however; it was much more shocking to read a story that took place in the city where I grew up; even if the event happened over a century ago. This story is tragic to read but unfortunately is a part of our history. The significance of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 as far as bottle collectors are concerned is that after January 1, 1907 almost all patent medicine makers ceased to use the word “CURE” on their bottles and labels because the new law required that patent medicine makers be able to prove their claim if the term, “cure” was used.

See Newspaper Articles on Next Page
TWIN BABIES
DIED SUDDENLY

CORONER DODD INVESTIGATING
THE CASE.

WERE IRREGULARITIES

Doctor Preston Called to Attend Five
Weeks’ Old Children Who Had Been
Given a Soothing Syrup—The In
vestigation.

Coroner Dodd was called late yester
day afternoon in the case of twin
children, 5 weeks of age, who were
surprised to be suffering from an over
dose of a soothing potion for children
which is known as “Kopp’s Baby
Friend.” The children were living in
the same house with their parents,
who were unmarried, at 25 Kosswitz
avenue. One of the twins, Adam, died
at 1:30 p.m. and the other at 5 p.m.
The Coroner made a brief preliminary
examination last evening and found
that the couple had formerly lived in
Cohoes and only came here recently to
work in the East Utica mills.

This morning through John P. Ko
walsky, as inspector, the Coroner
took the deposition of Stanislaus Ciel,
who admitted that he was the father
of the twins. He said he was unmar
ried, but had lived in the same board
ning house in Cohoes with Caroline
Stynzek, who is a married woman and
the mother of the children. Last
Sunday the boy was ill, but on Mon
day seemed better. The witness gave
the boy four drops of “Kopp’s Baby
Friend,” on Wednesday, and gave the
girl two drops at the same time. That
was all he gave them and he knew of
no one else giving them any. He bought
the medicine at the corner of Aver
dale and Reeve street three or four
weeks ago. Quite a bit of the contents
of the bottle were missing, which fact
be attributed to the overturning of the
bottle. He said the mother seemed to
love the babies and exercised and
nursed them. When the babies were
taken sick he said he did not employ
a physician because he had no money
and he did not know about applying
for relief to the Charity Clerk.

Doctor Preston was called just be
fore the death of the children and not
ified the Coroner.

Coroner Dodd tried this morning to
summon the mother of the babies,
but could not find her. It being stated
that she went out arranging for the
burial of the children. Her husband
is in Austria.

The stomachs have been removed
from the bodies of the children and
will be analyzed at the direction of the
Coroner. The medicine will also be
analyzed. The prescribed dose on the
bottle is four drops, and there
is a rumor that the children were
given ten drops.

UTICA HERALD DISPATCH
Friday Evening, January 26, 1906

PATENT MEDICINE
CAUSED DEATH

CORONER DODD IN
THE CASE OF TWIN BABIES.

WHO TOOK SOOTHING POTION

Coroner Finds That Death Was Caused
by One Dose of “Kopp’s Baby
Friend,” Which Was Administered
by Father Without Criminal Intent.

Coroner Dodd has rendered a de
cision in the case of the twin Polish in
fants, Adam and Eve Gaul. It fol
lowed:

“That the said Adam and Eve Gaul,
otherwise known as Zarnok, died on the
25th day of January, 1906. The boy
died at about 2:30 p.m., and the girl
died at 7 p.m. at No. 25 Kosswitz
avenue, in the city of Utica, of morphi
ne poisoning. The evidence shows that
Stanislaus Gaul, the father of the in
fants, had administered to them a dose
of a mixture which is known as
“Kopp’s Baby Friend” on the night of
January 24, 1906, and that the infants,
whose age was one month and one day,
died on the following day.

“Now, after investigating the cir
cumstances attending such deaths, and
obtaining the report of Dr. James G.
Hunt and H. F. Preston, who made an
autopsy on the bodies of the deceased
infants, and also the report of Doctors
Nelson and Smith, chemists, who made
an examination of the stomachs of the
dead infants, and their contents there
and an examination of a portion of the
mixture above mentioned showing that
it contained morphia, I find and de
cide that the said Adam and Eve Gaul,
otherwise called Zarnok, died from an over
dose of ‘Kopp’s Baby Friend,’ which was administered
by their father, but without criminal in
tent.”

UTICA HERALD DISPATCH
Friday Evening, February 23, 1906
## Thirteen Little Victims of Man's Greed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age at Death</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
<th>City, State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Rogers</td>
<td>2 years, 8 months</td>
<td>Died in April, 1906</td>
<td>Buffalo, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Swan</td>
<td>3 weeks old</td>
<td>Died in April, 1906</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William D.</td>
<td>6 months old</td>
<td>Died in August, 1905</td>
<td>Seattle, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John D.</td>
<td>1 year old</td>
<td>Died in September, 1905</td>
<td>Morocco, Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W.</td>
<td>3 months old</td>
<td>Died in December, 1905</td>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Johnson</td>
<td>2 weeks old</td>
<td>Died in December, 1905</td>
<td>Victoria, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Johnson</td>
<td>1 month old</td>
<td>Died in January, 1906</td>
<td>Utica, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Moore</td>
<td>2 months old</td>
<td>Died in March, 1906</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph LaChance</td>
<td>6 weeks old</td>
<td>Died in June, 1906</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Jackson</td>
<td>8 months old</td>
<td>Died in August, 1906</td>
<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Wilson</td>
<td>2 months old</td>
<td>Died in September, 1906</td>
<td>Duluth, Minnesota</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In every case the medicines taken were believed to be "perfectly harmless." Why not? The labels said as much, and the parents, in their haste to relieve their babies from pain, did what they supposed was exactly right. But what a price they paid for accepting without question the statements on the labels!