

LOCAL HISTORY

# A History of Pharmacy on the Mountain Top



By Dede Terns-Thorpe

All across America the local "drug store" was looked upon as a valuable member of a community. From urban America to the soda fountain in rural America, the local drug store always felt safe. A place where a family member could turn in times of need. A place where a community could connect with each other.

Our Mountain Top community was part of this American story and has enjoyed a rich "drug store" history beginning in the late 1800's.

According to the 1949 local Guide to The Catskills published by Arrowhead Press out of Haines Falls, the Mountain Top community was "on fire" with five full-time drug stores: Ralph Lord's Drugstore on Main Street, Tannersville; Reg-

having a pharmacy back on the mountain top, located in the historic Astor House building.

A special thank you to Ed Ullman, Wellness Center proprietor and pharmacist for his enlightening history on a pertinent part of small-town living.

Additional pharmaceutical facts:

The medical image of a serpent wrapped around a staff is based on snakes being revered as sacred and used in rituals honoring Asclepius (Greek God of medicine). Snake venom was thought to be remedial and skin-shedding viewed as a symbol of rebirth and renewal.

In the 16th century, Paracelsus (wise Swiss physician) declared that the only difference between a medicine and a poison was in the dose, that all medicines were

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Pharmacist. Therefore, the physician must start from nature, with an open mind. (Paracelsus.)

**Past Pharmacies:**

Dayton Slater from Jewett opened the 1st drug store in Hunter (1883.) Appears the name changed to Slater & Austin, west of MaMa's Pizza (7730 Main St.)

Twilight Park Pharmacy opened in 1888.

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"on fire" with five full-time drug stores: Ralph Lord's Drugstore on Main Street, Tannersville; Regina Lackey's Drugstore by the traffic light in Tannersville; Solomon "Doc" Horowitz's Rexall Drug on Main Street, Tannersville; Harry Schuman's Drug Store on Main Street, Hunter; and Leo Schuman's Haines Falls Drug Store operated by Harry's brother Leo. (Additional drug stores listed below.)

Three of the full-time Mountain Top drug stores in 1949 contained soda fountains, all provided souvenirs to guests and the Rexall Drugstore became a Trailways Bus Stop center.

As the years progressed, Doc Horowitz's son Cy operated the Rexall Drugstore for years. Pharmacist Tom McManus purchased the Rexall in 1976, renamed it McManus Pharmacy and operated it until August 2006.

The town was without a pharmacy until the Wellness Center Pharmacy opened in 2015.

The community welcomes and appreciates

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In the 16th century, Paracelsus (wise Swiss physician) declared that the only difference between a medicine and a poison was in the dose, that all medicines were toxic.

The technology of making drugs was crude at best: Tinctures, soups, and teas were made with water, or alcohol-based extracts of freshly ground herbs or animal products such as bone, fat, and sometimes from minerals best left in the ground - mercury among the favored. A frequent healing prescription called for regular doses of "Blue Mass." Blue Mass was a mixture of mercury, rose-water, honey, licorice root, sugar and dead rose petals. Mercury poisoning was frequent.

During the early 19th century, the natural world and the plants within were the source of most medicine. Before the end of the 19th century, medicines were a mixture of experimentation and prayer.

Today's modern complex organic chemistry opens a world created in the laboratory. The art of healing comes from nature, not from the physi-



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Mulford T. Bailey - Druggist in Tannersville. (Greene County directory 1896.)

Lackey and Lord Pharmacy opened in 1920 located at the four-corners.

Austin and Alden's Pharmacy was mentioned in 1901 & 1903.

Alden's was a busy drug store, especially since Flag Pharmacy (unknown) closed. (1909 Tannersville newspaper.)

Matthews Drugs was mentioned in Haines Falls (1907) Haines Falls.

The Model Drug Store located in the Honigsbaum Building near 6037 Main St. Tannersville (1916)

Lackey/Lord and Austin/Alden later became individual pharmacies.

Until next time, take care. Be thankful & be kind. You never know how your act of kindness may change someone's life.

Comments appreciated: Hunterhistorian@gmail.com, or 518-589-4190.