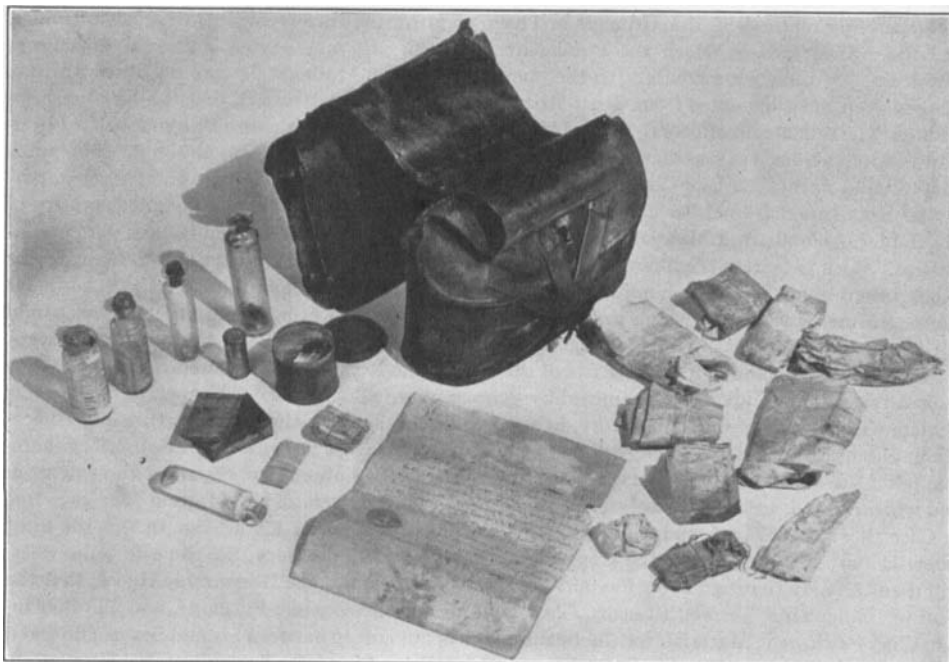


IN THE BAG—FOR NINETY YEARS.*

BY WALTER M. CHASE.¹

There came into our possession recently this pair of saddle bags, originally owned and used nearly a hundred years ago in Bloomfield, Oakland County, Michigan, by Dr. Ezra Smith Parke. Dr. Parke was the father of Hervey Coke Parke, one of the founders of Parke, Davis & Company.



Dr. Parke was born in New York State late in the eighteenth century. Following the completion of a professional course at Geneva College, New York, he came to the Territory of Michigan in 1825—Michigan was not admitted to the Union as a State until 1837—and started the practice of his profession in the town of Bloomfield, which is located only a comparatively short distance, some 10 or 12 miles, from the City of Detroit. He lived and practiced in Bloomfield for over thirty years, until claimed by death in an epidemic which swept over Michigan in 1856.

These saddle bags, as will be seen by the picture, are of the type used by physicians of a bygone generation when travel by horseback was the accepted mode of local locomotion. They are of solid leather construction and even now, after a hundred years, are still in an excellent state of preservation.

One of the most interesting things found in the bag when it was opened a short time ago was a document which Dr. Parke evidently carried with him on his daily rounds. It was his "License to Practice Physic and Surgery in the Territory of Michigan," and reads as follows:

* Presented before the Section on Historical Pharmacy, A. P. H. A., Minneapolis meeting, 1938.

¹ Parke, Davis & Co., Detroit, Mich.

To All Whom It May Concern:

This may certify that Doctor Ezra S. Parke, on the Eleventh day of January A.D. 1825 presented a Diploma from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Western District of the State of New York, To the Medical Society of the Territory of Michigan, which was deemed satisfactory, and is therefore entitled to all the privileges and immunities appertaining to Physicians and Surgeons in the Territory aforesaid, pursuant to the Statute in such case made and provided to regulate the practice of Physic and Surgery in said Territory, adopted the 14th day of June 1819.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Medical Society
of the Territory of Michigan this 10th day of June A.D. 1829.

(Signed) R. S. RICE, *Secretary. M. S. T. M.*

An endorsement on the License reads:

Territory of Michigan
County of Oakland

I the undersigned Clerk of the County of Oakland do hereby Certify that on the 11th day of July A.D. 1829 a true copy of the within Diploma was filed in the Clerks office of said County.

The testimony whereof I have hereto affixed my Seal of office
and subscribe my name this 11th day of May A.D. 1831.

(Signed) ELIAS COMSTOCK, *Clerk.*

Apparently, speed was not the essence in those days, for—please note—while Dr. Parke's diploma was presented to the Medical Society of the Territory in January 1825, the true copy of it was not filed with the County Clerk until July 1829, and it was not until two years later, May 1831 that the Clerk got around to affixing his seal.

Another interesting document found in the bags was a certificate of marriage between one of the doctor's daughters, Cornelia Lucintha Parke and Marquis W. Kelsey. This certificate is dated July 3, 1844.

Still another was a pamphlet, the title of which read:

ESSAY
on the
A M E R I C A N S Y S T E M
or
Reasons Why the Productive Classes
Should Not Support
H E N R Y C L A Y
for the
PRESIDENCY
Washington

Printed at the Spectator Office

1844

Unfortunately the text of the pamphlet is missing, but, judging from the title, people of ninety-odd years ago must have taken their politics as seriously then as

many of us do to-day. Apparently, too, the propaganda against Henry Clay had its effect, for, of course, James K. Polk was the successful candidate in the election of 1844.

These three documents, as well as some of the other material pretty well date the bags as having been in active use around 1844 or 1845.

No instruments of any kind were found in the bags—possibly the doctor had a separate case for whatever he used in this line—but there was a profusion of drugs which will perhaps serve to indicate fairly closely some of the medicaments that were in use by physicians of a century ago.

Included in the assortment are some thirty or more different drugs—some of which were easy to identify and some of which weren't. The sense of smell, usually an important aid in identification, was of no help, for the drugs are of such antiquity that even such strong smellers as valerian and cardamon have lost most of their scent.

A majority of the drugs were wrapped in paper, some of it ordinary wrapping paper and some in old newspapers. Most of the papers are stained and discolored from contact with the drugs, and some of them show evidences of worm holes, which is not to be wondered at in view of their nearly a century's storage.

When the drugs were removed from their paper wrapping, it was interesting to see how well preserved some of the specimens were. A packet of ergot spurs, for example, looks as clean and bright as does this year's crop, and a handful of henbane leaves still keep their original shape. Others that were easily identifiable because of their excellent condition were anise, quassia, Virginia snakeroot, pinkroot, wahoo, rhubarb—all of them standbys of nineteenth century physicians.

Three tin boxes were in the bag. The square one contained aloes, the small cylindrical one was empty and the larger round one contained five small paper-wrapped packets of powders—possibly potent drugs or chemicals, or perhaps an assortment of medicaments which the doctor dispensed in combination with each other.

Of the five glass bottles, three are of a hand-blown type never seen to-day. The other two are of the early machine-made type, with raised letters on the outside. One reads "Balsam of Honey," and the other "True Cephalick Snuff By the Kings Patent." Of particular interest are the handcut cork stoppers—giving signs of much usage, but still tough and lively.

CONFERENCE OF ALLIED MEDICAL PROFESSIONS OF NEW JERSEY.

At the annual meeting held in the offices at Trenton on the 16th, Dr. R. P. Fischelis, secretary and chief chemist of the Board of Pharmacy of New Jersey, was reelected Chairman for the ensuing year, Dr. David B. Allman, a physician of Atlantic City, Vice-Chairman and Dr. Edward H. Peplow, a dentist, Secretary-Treasurer.

The Conference passed a resolution commending Governor Moore for his foresight in appointing a State Conference on Health and Welfare Problems for the purpose of determining the adequacy of medical resources in New Jersey and the extent to which the proposed National Health Program is applicable to the New Jersey situation.

The Conference also went on record in favor of revision of the New Jersey Food and Drug Act to bring it into conformity with the new Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Law.

The Conference is composed of delegates from the Medical Society of New Jersey, the New Jersey Dental Society, the New Jersey Pharmaceutical Association and the New Jersey Nurses' Association. It was formed in 1934 to consider and act upon problems of mutual interest to the four professions.