



Medicinal tins recovered at Fort Hays.

Field Medicine at Fort Hays

Among the many fascinating items unearthed at Fort Hays are a number of square or rectangular tin receptacles that have protruding corkable spouts. These differ from the common tin cans used for foodstuffs and were most certainly meant for medicinal purposes. A picture of such a container appears in the *Civil War Collectors Encyclopedia*, written by Francis A. Lord and published by Stackpole Company, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This item is complete with a label indicating that it came from the "USA Hosp. Dept." and contained "PILULAE QUINIAE SULPHATIS," quinine sulphate pills that are commonly found in medical supply chests.

Fort Hays functioned from 1869 to 1889 and served to protect the trail west; that is, to protect both settlers and Indians. Troops were always stationed there, but not in great numbers. At its peak population there might have been 200 soldiers, but most of them would probably have been out in the field.

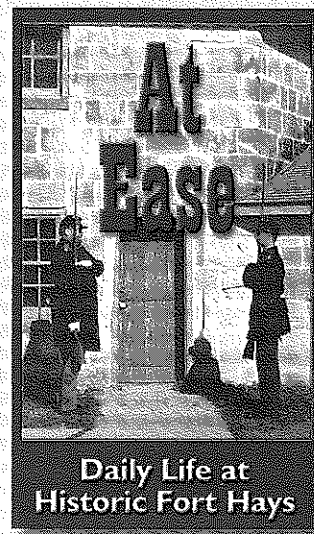
Soldiers clearly experienced frequent traumatic

injuries but often suffered from other maladies, like diarrhea, malaria, infections, and poison ivy. Fort statistics for 1869 show an average population of 200 soldiers of which 106 were taken sick: 1 case of typhoid fever, 35 cases of malaria, 9 cases of dysentery, 3 cases of venereal disease, 6 cases of rheumatism, and 27 cases of catarrhal afflictions (inflammation of the membranes in the nose and air passages). During this time, there was only one death. Study of the afflictions of the rugged soldiers is certainly worth the effort, even though it is complicated by the fact that different names often were used for familiar diseases. The treatments frequently were quite dissimilar to those applied today.

KSHS Lab Supervisor Christine Garst pulled together a small collection of these objects from the excavation of an oven foundation. The tins represent an early period in field medicine. All of the cans are 3.5 inches tall, but they vary in width and depth: the first type is 2 inches wide and 2 inches deep; the second type is 2 inches wide and 1.5 inches deep; and the third type is 1.5 inches wide and deep. As the cans are so similar in shape, size, and construction, it is easy to assume they are "standard issue." They certainly are unbreakable and could be packed or stored very economically. There is a cork in the collection with letters that look like "USCR," a further challenge for research.

The medicines of the time have many strange names, such as "Syrup of Squill," a bulbous herb used as an expectorant, cardiac

This article was prepared by Marshall Clark, a KSHS Archeology Lab volunteer, and Christine Garst, KSHS Archeology Lab supervisor and staff archeologist.



Daily Life at Historic Fort Hays



Cork showing stamped lettering. Some of the tins still retain their cork stoppers.

stimulant, and diuretic; "Extract of Valerian," a perennial herb used as a sedative and gas reliever; and Creosote, distilled wood tar with antiseptic properties. One can wonder if any of these were contained within the Fort Hays tins. The methods and remedies that the early doctors and medical stewards employed would cause today's patients to shudder. One can speculate about what future patients will think about the medicines and treatments used in the year 2005.

Clarification

Feedback on articles published in Kansas Preservation is very helpful. A case in point is a recent response from Jim D. Feagins, an archeological consultant from Belton, Missouri, who wrote in reference to two of my recent contributions, both involving military buttons (see Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 13-14 and Vol. 27, No. 5, p. 17).

The literature that I had consulted indicates that the backmarks on the buttons name the manufacturers; however, according to Feagins, that is not always the case. Apparently, those backmarks frequently designate a distributor rather than a manufacturer. An example is that the Henry V. Allen Company in New York was a dealer in, rather a manufacturer of, military goods and placed its name on items for sale, including the backs of buttons.

As a volunteer in the KSHS Archeology Lab, I really enjoy writing about selected artifacts. A second pleasure comes from receiving input from readers like Feagins who are willing to share their expertise. Continuing to learn is its own reward.

Marshall Clark

Review Board

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example of a combination of the Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival styles with Craftsman accents designed by prolific local carpenter William H. Braun.

Ramsay House, 1415 Riverview Drive, Atchison, Atchison County

The Ronald and Dorcas Ramsey house is a two-story Moderne stone and stucco residence located atop a bluff overlooking the Missouri River. Constructed in 1948, the house is nominated for its architectural significance as a rare example of Art Moderne residential architecture.

Relocation Approval

North Fork Solomon River Lattice Truss Bridge, Norton County

The review board recommended approval of a request to move the North Fork Solomon River Lattice Truss Bridge (NR listed 05/09/2003) from its current location on Road W7 1.5 miles west and 0.1 miles south of Lenora. Built in 1925, the bridge measures 40 feet long and 16 feet wide—too narrow with an insufficient load capacity for current traffic requirements. Unless the bridge is replaced, the road will be closed to through traffic. The county proposes moving the bridge to cover a tributary of the Prairie Dog Creek located on the Prairie Dog Golf Course, a public course south of Norton. The bridge would replace a current 20-foot structure used for foot and golf cart traffic. The proposed relocation will not affect the integrity or the significance of the structure, which was nominated for its engineering significance as "a rare example of a relatively uncommon bridge solution for a short span." In its new location, the North Fork Solomon River Lattice Truss Bridge will be preserved and open to view by the public.

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Darrah Barn, 1330 Moccasin Road, McPherson vicinity, McPherson County

Constructed between 1915 and 1922, the Darrah Barn is nominated to the state register as a good example of its type of dairy barn.

The review board will hold its next quarterly meeting on February 18, 2006, at the Kansas History Center.