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**PRESCRIPTIONS: "FIFTY YEARS IN THE PAST,
AND THOSE OF TODAY, A COMPARISON."**

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ABSTRACT

More than one hundred prescription files dating from 1916 to 1939 were discovered in the basement of the old Creighton University Pharmacy and Medical Schools previously located at 14th & Davenport Streets in Omaha, Nebraska. An analysis of a group of these prescriptions written in the years 1918 and 1919 was made. Special emphasis has been placed on ingredients, manner in which prescriptions were written, special dose forms, and pharmaceutical processing. The prescriptions written fifty years ago were compared to those written today, and observations were made relating to the comparison.

The Creighton University Medical and Pharmacy Schools were located at 14th & Davenport Streets in Omaha, Nebraska from 1907 until the summer of 1969, when the Pharmacy School was moved to the main campus. During this move, a large number of old prescription files were found in the cellar of the old building. The files were dated from 1917 to 1939. In all there were over one hundred of these old prescription files. The author, who is a member of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, was responsible for moving these files to the present Pharmacy School on the main campus of Creighton University. In addition to the old prescription files, a large book in which prescriptions were filed from 4-1-18 to 1-31-19 was also discovered.

An examination of the prescriptions filed over fifty years ago demonstrate dramatically how medication has changed. It is apparent to one who studies these files that the Pharmacist of fifty years ago had to be well versed in the art of Pharmacy. Practically all of the prescriptions required the Pharmacist to apply his skill in creating unique dose forms. The prescriptions also are valuable in that they demonstrate the many great advances in the medicinals of today, as these are almost completely missing from the medicinal inventory of just fifty years ago.

The author has picked out 100 items at random from the files dated in 1918 and 1919, and beside it is a list of 100 items from prescription files of 1969. The reader will observe the tremendous differences in the items.

The medicinals used in the prescriptions dated 1918-19 were taken at random from the book of prescriptions previously mentioned. Although the one hundred items is a cross section of materials used in those days, it is not a complete list. The materials included in the medicinals from prescriptions of 1969 were taken from a list of 200 leading drugs prescribed in 1968.

Several observations may be made to compare the prescriptions of today with those written fifty years ago. The prescriptions written fifty years ago

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Medicinals from 1918-1919 Prescriptions

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Mild Mercurous Chloride Tablets | 43. Blauds Mass |
| 2. Strychnine Sulfate | 44. Ichthyol |
| 3. Extract Cannabis Indica | 45. Elixir Lactated Pepsin |
| 4. Ammonium Carbonate | 46. Wampoles Creo Terpin |
| 5. Saccharated Pepsin | 47. Fluidextract of Ergot |
| 6. Anise Water | 48. Ergot Extract |
| 7. Bismuth Subnitrate | 49. Cascara Sagrada Evacuant |
| 8. Tincture Opium Camphorated | 50. Elixir Iron Quinine and Strychnine |
| 9. Essence of Pepsin | 51. Liquor Aluminum Actate |
| 10. Camphor | 52. Sarsaparilla Compound |
| 11. Oil of Eucalyptus | 53. Potassium Arsenite |
| 12. Guaiacol | 54. Orange Syrup |
| 13. Pine Needle Oil | 55. Digitalis Infusion |
| 14. Lanolin | 56. Peptomangan |
| 15. Neuronidia | 57. Powdered Alum |
| 16. Aromatic Elixir | 58. Zinc Stearate |
| 17. Iron and Maganese | 59. Februline |
| 18. Phenacetin | 60. Red Iodide of Mercury |
| 19. Salol | 61. Syrup Stillingia Compound |
| 20. Caffeine | 62. Fluid Extract Hydrastis |
| 21. Acetanilid | 63. Rhubarb Extract |
| 22. Quinine Sulfate | 64. Podophyllum |
| 23. Powder Extract Belladonna | 65. Mercury Cyanide |
| 24. Tincture Hyoscyamus | 66. Creosote |
| 25. Syrup Tolu | 67. Strontium Bromide |
| 26. Tincture Aconite | 68. Mass of Mercury |
| 27. Cinnamon Water | 69. Fowlers Solution |
| 28. Elixir Lactopeptine | 70. Elixir Buchu, Juniper and Potassium Acetate |
| 29. Bashams Mixture | 71. Iron Citrate Solution |
| 30. Potassium Iodide | 72. Iron Pyrophosphate |
| 31. Syrup Ferrous Iodide | 73. Cascara Compound Pills |
| 32. Adrenalin Inhalant | 74. Aromatic Spirits of Ammonia |
| 33. Calcreose | 75. Digitalis Extract |
| 34. Veracolate Pills | 76. Potassium Citrate |
| 35. Syrup of Ipecac | 77. Glyco-Thymoline |
| 36. Elixir of Heroin and Terpin Hydrate | 78. Aconite Tincture |
| 37. Hypophosphites Syrup | 79. Veronal Capsules |
| 38. Syrup of Senega | 80. Eucalyptol |
| 39. Squill Syrup | 81. Mixed Treatment Pill No. 1 |
| 40. Tincture of Nux Vomica | |
| 41. Tincture Cardamon Compound | |
| 42. Tincture Cinchona Compound | |

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82. Calcreose
 83. Glycerine
 84. Anti Constipation Pills
 85. Lithium Benzoate
 86. Spearmint Water
 87. Peacocks Triple Bromides
 88. Aloin Belladonna Cascara and Podophyllum Tablets
 89. Hinkles Cascara Compound Pills
 90. Santal Oil
 91. Rose Water
 92. Monobromated Camphor
 93. Colocynth Extract
 94. Astringent Gargle
 95. Chloroform
 96. Soluble Iodine
 97. Citrate of Magnesia
 98. Albolene
 99. Alophen Pills
 100. Yellow Oxide of Mercury
- Medicinals from 1969 Prescriptions**
1. Achromycin
 2. Aldactazide
 3. Antivert
 4. Ampicillin
 5. Artane
 6. Atarax
 7. Azo-Gantrisin
 8. Benadryl
 9. Biphedamine
 10. Butazolidin
 11. Chlor Trimeton
 12. Compazine
 13. Coumadin
 14. Crystodigin
 15. Cytomel
 16. Darvon
 17. Decadron
 18. Declomycin
 19. Dexamyl
 20. Digoxin
 21. Dilantin Sodium
 22. Diabinese
 23. Dimetane
 24. Doriden
 25. Dramamine
 26. Diuril
 27. Donnatal
 28. Dyazide
 29. Elavil
 30. Enovid
 31. Equanil
 32. Erythromycin
 33. Esidrix
 34. Eskatrol
 35. Feosol
 36. Fiorinal
 37. Furadantin
 38. Gantanol
 39. Gantrisin
 40. Hydrodiuril
 41. Hygroton
 42. Ilosone
 43. Indocin
 44. Isodril
 45. Isuprel Mistometer
 46. Kenalog
 47. Lanoxin
 48. Lasix
 49. Librax
 50. Librium
 51. Lomotil
 52. Maalox
 53. Mandelamine
 54. Medrol
 55. Mellaril
 56. Meproamate
 57. Mycolog
 58. Mycostatin
 59. Mylanta
 60. Mysteclin-F
 61. Naldecon
 62. Nembutal
 63. Neosporin
 64. Nitroglycerin

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- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 65. Norgesic | 83. Preludin |
| 66. Norlestrin 20 | 84. Pro-Banthine |
| 67. Novahisitine | 85. Proloid |
| 68. Omnipen | 86. Provest |
| 69. Orinase | 87. Quinidine Sulfate |
| 70. Ornade | 88. Raudixin |
| 71. Ortho-Novum | 89. Rautrax-N |
| 72. Panalba | 90. Renese |
| 73. Penbritin | 91. Seconal Sodium |
| 74. Pentids | 92. Ser-Ap-Es |
| 75. Pen-Vee-K | 93. Serax |
| 76. Peritrate | 94. Synalog |
| 77. Percodan | 95. Tandearil |
| 78. Phenergan Expectorant | 96. Teldrin |
| 79. Placidyl | 97. Terramycin |
| 80. Polycillin | 98. Thorazine |
| 81. Polycillin | 99. Tofranil |
| 82. Premarin | |

required a great deal of compounding on the part of the pharmacist. He was required to prepare capsules, powders, pills, gargles, ointments, masses, and liquid preparations of all types. With few exceptions each prescription required an artful preparation. The prescriptions of fifty years ago contained several (usually three to five or more) ingredients. On examination of the list of materials used fifty years ago, they are distinctly more inorganic in chemical nature than organic. Many materials were obtained from natural sources (plants), and consisted of extracts rather than single materials. The preponderance of flavored waters, syrups, and essences is also apparent. Although trade name products did exist and were prescribed, numerically, these were not as prominent as the Trade Marked medicinals of today. The shotgun aspect of treating disease is also apparent from the prescriptions, as the physicians would use up to six or seven ingredients in the same prescription. The prescriptions written fifty years ago were written in Latin and in the apothecary system of weights and measures. The medicinals missing from the prescriptions of fifty years ago are quite apparent when examining the files. Not one of the items listed in the 1969 medicinals can be found in the 1918-19 files. Antibiotics, tranquilizers, oral hypoglycemic agents, antineoplastic agents, thiazide diuretics, oral contraceptives, anti-inflammatory steroids, oral sustained action medications, insulin, and others are notably absent.

The prescriptions of 1969 consist of synthetics to a much larger extent than the fifty year old medicinals. Extracts have been evaluated and single potent materials are now available (digitoxin). The medicinals of today are overwhelmingly organic in nature. The number of trademarked medicinals is extremely large, and duplications of products exist. Several of the medicinals used fifty years ago are still used but are generally incorporated in prefabricated products.

Writing of prescriptions in Latin has almost completely disappeared and the metric system of weights and measures is used today. The pharmacist of today still must compound many prescriptions, but the art has been transferred to the pharmaceutical manufacturers who produce medicinals on a large scale. The responsibility of the pharmacist has increased as the new number of medicinals has increased. Potency of the newer materials is greater, and the possibilities of drug interactions is great.

The prescription files obtained from the old Creighton Pharmacy School are open to inspection by interested parties. Several types of studies and comparison could be made from scholarly investigation. The author hopes that this article will stimulate this kind of interest.