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Early American Alcohol and Tobacco Use

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NOTE: The original 1,000+ page manuscript for *Slaying the Dragon: The History of Addiction Treatment and Recovery in America* had to be cut by more than half before its first publication in 1998. This is an edited excerpt that was deleted from the original manuscript.

In the following discussion, we will see how various European drinking tastes and rituals came together to shape drinking patterns in colonial and frontier America, and how quickly the use of Native tobacco became a part of Euro-American colonial life. What is most remarkable about this period is the idea of addiction had not yet been conceived in spite of the pervasiveness of alcohol and tobacco use in everyday life.

Pervasiveness of Drinking

The Spanish, the English, the Dutch, and the French each brought to the Americas a different set of customs on the use of alcohol and other psychoactive drugs. The Spanish and French preferred wine; the Dutch, beer; and the English, Ale. All would later be drawn to the growing presence of distilled spirits. Over a span of two centuries, these customs were meshed into an emerging multinational American culture. The most striking feature of alcohol in colonial culture is its presence and

prominence in every arena of colonial life. Alcohol was not viewed as a drug or an intoxicant, but as a highly desired and socially approved beverage.

Alcohol played a significant role in the American colonies from the very beginning. A Mayflower passenger's journal, currently in the Library of Congress, reveals that Plymouth was chosen as a landing site partly because the ship's stores were running out of beer. (Emboden, 1972; Keller, 1979A,B). Alcohol arrived with the first European settlers and continued to arrive until the colonists were able to produce their own alcoholic beverages.

One of the earliest activities of the new arrivals was to plant the fields the apples, grapes, and hops from which cider, wine, and beer would be made. As early as 1629, apple orchards were planted in Massachusetts; vineyards were planted in New York, Virginia, and the Carolinas by 1700 (Brown, 1966). Distilled spirits were just becoming common in Europe at the time of the English and French migration to

America, and their popularity in America would contribute to a shift in the new republic's perception of alcohol.

There was much alcohol use and little sustained concern about alcohol misuse in the first 150 years after European arrival in America. Alcohol was universally considered economical, wholesome, socially acceptable, and essential for good health. Water was not always safe to drink, and episodes of sickness from contaminated water gave that substance a questionable reputation. During this era, drinking water and offering water to guests were signs of bad social taste. Milk proved no better an alternative. It was not consistently available, it spoiled without refrigeration, and it could lead to milk sickness. The latter was caused by drinking milk from cows who had grazed on jimson weed. Abraham Lincoln's mother later died from milk contaminated in this way (Rorabaugh, 1979). Tea and coffee were available, but they were more expensive than alcohol. In colonial America, alcoholic beverages were the daily liquid staple that filled a void that no other beverage could fill. The English had their ale; the Dutch, their beer; and the French and Spanish, their wine. Alcohol was viewed as a food and a beverage, not as a drug.

Not only was alcohol considered safe, it was actually believed capable of preventing illness and curing minor discomforts. It was viewed as the "Good Creature of God"--a gift from the Almighty that could relieve sorrow, "give courage to the soldier, endurance to the traveler, foresight to the statesman, and inspiration to the preacher" (Keller, 1976). Men, women, and children drank alcohol. Pregnant women and nursing mothers were given mixtures of rum and milk to sustain their health. Children drank warmed alcoholic drinks with their meals, although they were expected to eat bread first (Steinsapir, 1983). Alcohol in colonial America was an important part of all social and business encounters and all community festivities.

The day began, was sustained, and ended with alcohol. Alcohol was a part of every meal, and of most interactions between morning and night. People drank at

home, at work, and in the wider community. George Bungay described the ever-present nature of alcohol in American colonial life:

Intoxicating drinks were used freely by old and young, rich and poor. . . . Weddings and funerals were excuses for the use of fermented and distilled drinks. A friendly call without a glass of something was thought of with a chill. A cupboard without a bottle was more deplored than one without bread. Liquor of all kinds was used freely in the hay and harvest field. At bees, raisings, trainings, and elections the burning fluid had free course. When the minister made a call upon his parishioners he was treated, and the dram was considered the seal of hospitality. The doctor found use for it constantly in his compounds, and he was not averse to using at least a part of his own medicines. The lawyer deemed it no discredit to "wet his whistle in court," and there was often more spirit than eloquence in his appeals. Contracts were baptized with beer and brandy, and apprentices were expected to begin to drink when they began to work at their trade, and some of them became adept in the former before they had mastered the latter (Bungay, 1881, pp 103-104).

All social calls and business meetings called for alcohol. It is no wonder that the colonial preacher, doctor, and salesperson moving from home to home came to be particularly vulnerable to the excesses of drink. Every greeting involved alcohol, and turning down a drink was a social offense.

Alcohol was part of the most casual social intercourse. Stores provided an open jug to restore the weary shopper. Alcohol was the centerpiece of weddings, funerals, christenings, ordinations, barn-raisings, holidays, and all other celebrations and festivities. Alcohol was highly integrated into the social rituals of soldiers in the colonial militia--a fact that alarmed the likes of Dr. Benjamin Rush and George Washington. Alcohol was the centerpiece of work--a part of the workday itself. All workers expected that strong drink would be provided as a source of refreshment during the workday,

and wages were often paid, at least in part, in alcohol (Peeke, 1970). When a government house was built in Albany, New York in 1656, 6% of the total cost of the building was for alcohol for the workmen (Staudenmeier, 1985).

George Washington's contract for payment of his gardener included the following provisions: "four dollars at Christmas with which he may be drunk for four days and nights; two dollars at Easter to effect the same purpose. . ." (Quoted in Kobler, 1973, p.16). Workers drank particularly heavily on weekends, and they often spontaneously declared Mondays a holiday in order to keep their binges going. These impromptu holidays were referred to as "Saint Monday" or "Blue Monday" (Steinsapir, 1983, p. 14).

Actions to temper alcohol consumption in the workplace were slow in coming. For the most part, they were limited to the occasional policy declaring that wages for the day could be withheld if a worker was judged drunk. (Staudenmeier, 1985) In the 1640s, a Boston proposal to cut off alcohol rations for workers led to one of the first labor strikes in the United States. The workers won back their 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. alcohol breaks. When a 1672 Massachusetts law was passed prohibiting the payment of wages in alcohol, it sparked a similar strike (Austin, 1978, p. 98). When discussions arose in 1724 regarding the financial injury to employers caused by alcohol-impaired iron workers, the Pennsylvania legislature outlawed the sale of distilled spirits within two miles of any iron works (Prendergast, 1987, p. 30). Only isolated reports such as these show any concern about alcohol abuse in the workplace before the Revolutionary War.

The amount of alcohol that the average colonial citizen could drink each day was illustrated in a description in William Black's diary. This is what Black was served on a trip to Philadelphia in 1744:

. . . cider and punch for lunch; rum and brandy for dinner; punch, Madeira, port and sherry at dinner, punch and liqueurs, with the ladies; and wine, spirit and punch till

bedtime; all in punch bowls big enough for a goose to swim in. (Taussig, 1928, p. 225)

The tavern, first known as an "ordinary," became the center of social life in colonial villages. Community life often centered in the tavern's "great room," with its large fireplace, sanded floors, tables, chairs, and an occasional writing desk. The tavern was an institution so central to community life that some of the earliest colonial laws were designed to encourage its development (Popham, 1978).

People traveled from place to place in horse-drawn stages, moving at ten miles an hour from village tavern to village tavern, each place offering a brief rest and alcoholic refreshment. Passengers often treated the coach driver to alcoholic drinks at each stop, with little apparent concern for any effect this might have on their personal safety (Earle, 1900). John Hull Brown reports that drivers could be fired for only two offenses--being late and being drunk--and that most lost their jobs due to the latter (Brown, 1966).

In addition to lodging, food and liquid refreshment, the tavern served as the center of colonial social, economic, and political life. It was the location of town meetings, military recruitment, business transactions, political organizing, auctions, dances, dramatic plays, and animal shows--the forerunner to the American circus. Where the law allowed, entertainment included bowling, billiards, shuffleboard, and cards (Grimes, 1993). Taverns also served as post offices, and many served as temporary jails. Breaking a colonial law could lead one to be sentenced to a "respectable tavern." At times taverns also served as hospitals, military headquarters, barracks, courtrooms, and auction houses (Brown, 1966).

The colonial church did not play a strong role in suppressing the alcohol traffic or in discouraging drinking among its members. Contrary to what one might expect for the early Puritans, they saw alcohol as God given and believed that only the excessive use of this gift was a sin. Alcohol was integrated into most church functions, and excessive drinking was

common at weddings, funerals, and church council meetings.

The tavern played an important role in colonial church life. Sunday services usually consisted of a long prayer and sermon in the morning, a noon break, and then more prayers and another sermon in the afternoon. The tavern providing a warm resting place to replenish oneself before returning to the often-unheated church meeting house. Drinking between these sessions was common, and it was not frowned on until the years of the temperance revival. Some early licensing laws required that the tavern be located close to the church meeting hall, to ensure that people would have access to rest and refreshment between religious meetings (Taussig, 1928).

One of the days in the life of the church most closely associated with alcohol consumption was ordination day. This day was so special that even a special "Ordination Beer" was brewed for the occasion. We can see the extent of drinking at this time in a bill for the ordination of Rev. Joseph McKean of Beverly, Massachusetts in 1785. The bill included charges for:

30 bowls of punch and 10 bottles of wine before the meeting
44 bowls of punch at the dinner
18 bottles of wine
8 bowls of Brandy (Taussig, 1928)

The Ministers' acceptance of, and participation in, colonial drinking practices may have been influenced by the fact that taxes on alcohol were often used to support religious activity. In South Carolina, for example, alcohol taxes built parsonages and paid the salaries of ten ministers. It wasn't until 1673 that the Reverend Increase Mather became one of the first to preach against the sin of drunkenness—a subject he addressed in two sermons that year (Taussig, 1928, Cherrington, 1920).

Alcohol was as much a part of America's early colleges as it was of the wider community. Early American colleges such as William and Mary were often supported by duties paid on alcohol and tobacco. Perhaps as a sign of appreciation,

alcohol flowed as freely on the college campus as it did in the workplace. Alcohol use by students and faculty was an accepted and expected part of early social life at Harvard and Yale. At commons tables on the campuses, hard cider was passed from student to student in two-quart tankards (Brown, 1966). Students were discouraged from using distilled spirits, though, and encouraged to be moderate in their use of cider, beer, and wine.

College faculty were well known for imbibing and over-imbibing. At least one report from the colonial era complained that the professors were "drunken, quarrelsome and ignorant of the subjects they professed to teach" (Peeke, 1970, p. 41). This broad acceptance of alcohol on many campuses continued into the late 1700s (Warner, 1970).

Alcohol also played a central role in the political life of the colonies. Not only was alcohol the beverage of choice in most political meetings, but its purchase and distribution (called "treating") was the primary means of political campaigning. When twenty-six-year-old George Washington was a candidate for the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1758, his highly successful campaign consisted primarily of expenses for more than 120 gallons of various alcoholic beverages. Many early American political leaders were in the booze business. Washington operated a distillery that produced whiskey and a variety of brandy products, and Jefferson operated a rye distillery (Taussig, 1928; Grimes, 1993). In the 18th century alcohol was considered so valuable that it actually served as a unit of exchange, in place of money. Following the collapse of the continental currency in 1780, whiskey, tobacco, and the skins of animals served as the only recognized currency of exchange. In places like Lexington, Kentucky, even tithes and donations to the church were payable in Whiskey (Peeke, 1970; Tyler, 1944).

Alcohol was woven into the very social fabric of a developing colonial society—a fact well illustrated by Benjamin Franklin's treatise, *Drinker's Dictionary*, in which he defined some 235 colonial terms to describe

drinking, drinkers, and intoxication. (Some terms, such as "tipsy," continue in common use.)

The Evolution of Alcoholic Drinks

Alcoholic beverages and drinking tastes grew and changed over time. During the earliest colonial days, tastes ran to beer, hard cider, ale and wine--beverages that could be made from harvested grains and fruit. Cider, a thick fermented substance with a high (7%) alcohol content, was by far the most common alcoholic beverage consumed by the early colonists. Men, women, and children drank cider at every meal and between meals. Cider distilled into "applejack" was quite strong, and was known to create "apple palsy" in those who were too fond of the substance (Lender & Martin, 1982).

Beer was brought over on the Mayflower, then made from the hops that grew wild in New England. Captain Sedwick built the first American brewery in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637 (Proctor, 1984). Beer was particularly popular in New York and Pennsylvania. Beer containers were marked with one, two, or three "Xs" to show their alcoholic content. Beer drinking increased slowly as Americans became better at growing barley and mastered the art of brewing.

As early as 1621, vine growers from France taught Virginians the art of grape cultivation. (Taussig, 1928, p. 26). Wines were produced from just about every kind of fruit or vegetable: carrots, celery, dandelions, tomatoes, onions, and berries of every variety. Wine was, however, primarily a drink of the wealthy.

In his social history of American alcoholic drinks, William Grimes (1993) reports that the first distilling of grain into alcohol in America took place on Staten Island in 1640. Distilled spirits, generally referred to as "aqua vitae," were first available in the form of brandy. Many New England settlers immigrated with small stills called "lambecs," which they used to produce various liquors. Rum trade with the

West Indies began in 1659, and domestic distilleries opened in the early 1700s.

Slave ships brought molasses to the colonies, and distilleries were opened to turn the rich brown syrup into rum. By the beginning of the 18th century, the distillation of rum had grown as important to the colonial economy as the drinking of rum had become to colonial social life. The most popular colonial rum drink was called flip. Flip was a mixture of strong beer sweetened by sugar, molasses or dried pumpkin and then mixed with rum (and sometimes with eggs and cream). Into this mixture the colonials thrust a hot poker, called a loggerhead, which set the mixture bubbling and gave it its highly prized burnt taste. Flip was served in glass tumblers that could hold several quarts (Taussig, 1928; Grimes, 1993).

Punch--a mixture of rum, tea, sugar, lemons, and water--competed with flip as the most popular colonial drink. The colonials drank their Punch out of a common bowl passed from person to person. A drink called Black Strap, made from rum and molasses and other now-forgotten ingredients, was also quite popular. So were Grog (unsweetened liquor and water) and Sling (a mixture of gin, water, sugar, and lemon). Another popular drink was Toddy, a mixture of rum, hot water, and sugar.

Rum dominated American drinking tastes until whiskey made from native grain replaced it in the early part of the 19th century. Both drinks came to overshadow beer, cider, and wine. Whiskey and other distilled drinks were often referred to as "strong water" or "hot water." By 1807, 40 distilleries were in operation in Boston, compared to only two breweries. Distilleries began to appear wherever concentrations of people lived or worked (Brown, 1966).

The arrival of distilled alcohol in America also saw the introduction of the cocktail--liquor mixed with substances ranging from sugar, bitters, or water to a variety of juices and spices. In 1806, a newspaper editor, answering a reader's question about the meaning of the term cocktail, suggested that this new fashion in drink was highly useful to politicians, because anyone who had swallowed a

cocktail was ready to swallow anything else (Grimes, 1993).

Distilled spirits changed the course of alcohol in American history. Grain was readily available, easy to convert to alcohol, inexpensive, and easy to transport. These conditions all contributed to the popularity of distilled spirits in the movement toward the westward frontier. Perhaps more than any other factor, the shift in drinking preference from beer and cider to hard liquor transformed colonial drinking customs and gave rise to a significant drinking problem within the culture.

Alcohol and the Revolutionary War

Alcohol played a role in starting the Revolutionary War and influenced the way the War was fought. Rum was an inseparable part of the economic foundation of the New England colonies, and the Southern colonies depended on the health of the New England Rum trade for their supply of slaves. If they had been enforced strictly, the English acts that threatened this economy--the Molasses Act of 1733, the New Molasses Act of 1763, the Sugar Act of 1764-- would have threatened the very survival of the colonies. It was in the colonial taverns that the growing tension between England and the colonies broke into the fiery rhetoric of revolution. The tavern became the seat of political unrest and the birthplace of organized opposition to the perceived tyranny of King George III.

The Revolutionary War stimulated an increase in colonial production of alcohol. The shipping that had brought foreign beers, wine, and West Indian Rum was cut off, creating a vacuum that brought many newcomers into the brewing and distilling trades. The lack of foreign competition also made the domestic alcohol trade far more profitable during the war (Dorchester, 1884). Each colony gave its militia the alcohol that made up the soldier's "grog ration"--one-fourth to one-half pint of whiskey a day, and the Continental Congress sometimes granted extra rations of spirits to boost morale. Soldiers also purchased alcohol from the settlers who sold their wares around

military camps. Soldiers in the Revolutionary War were much more concerned when they ran short of alcohol than when they ran out of food or ammunition. General Washington himself expressed concern about the periodic shortages of rum. In a plea for more reliable provisions, he noted that "The benefits arising from the moderate use of strong Liquor, have been experienced by all Armies and are not to be disputed" (Quoted in Getz, 1978, p. 39).

Some historians have marveled at the amount of alcohol consumed by the Continental Army. Some suggest that the only reason America managed to win the Revolutionary War was the fact that the British troops were equally inebriated.

It is also worth noting that alcohol played a part in the new republic's first domestic emergency. During Washington's first months in office, a financial crisis led the new Congress to pass a tax on whiskey to raise needed revenue. By 1794, public protests of the new tax had escalated to rioting in western Pennsylvania. Tax collectors were tarred and feathered, and their homes were burned. Washington's response was quick and decisive. When efforts to reason with the farmers failed, he sent in militia ordered to arrest anyone who failed to comply with federal law. The Whiskey Rebellion marked the first challenge to the new government's will and authority, a test that it successfully passed (Fleming, 1975).

What is most remarkable about this period of American history--in light of the quantities of alcohol that were being consumed virtually everywhere in the new culture--is the fact that drinking was not considered a significant problem. (Clark, 1976).

Frontier Drinking

The American frontier was a line that moved westward across the continent over a period of three centuries. Each movement of this line was marked in turn by the entry of explorers, trappers, mountain men, cowboys, miners, soldiers, and settlers into

areas previous occupied only by Native People.

By the beginning of the 19th century, the frontier was pushing its way westward across the Mississippi. The western migration intensified at mid-century. The great mining era lasted for fifty years after the discovery of gold in California in 1848. The great cattle drives of 1865 through 1890 brought 40,000 men west working as cowboys. Millions of longhorn cattle were driven from Texas to the railroad towns of Kansas as America's beef cattle industry rose in the Southwest.

Allan Winkler (1968) has given us a detailed picture of the role alcohol played among early frontier people. Trappers, cowboys, and miners lived hard, lonely lives unrestrained by social convention. From time to time they relieved this isolation with visits to "rendezvous"--places where they drank, fought, gambled, and coupled with prostitutes in unrestrained fashion. Binge drinking, episodic but explosive, became the dominant pattern of alcohol use.

Certain characteristics of the people who migrated westward made them particularly vulnerable to problems with alcohol. The West was filled with men described by Mendelson and Mello (1985) as "unemployed, unemployable, rootless, and alienated." These men alternated between monotonous work and explosive bouts of communal drinking. Products like "San Juan Paralyzer" and towns with names like "Delirium Tremens" were testimony to the consequences of this pattern of binge drinking. Whiskey was the drink of choice; Beer did not become popular in the West until after 1870.

The saloon was the central institution in the towns that sprang up in America's Westward migration. The saloon often served as town hall, court house, post office, restaurant, hotel, and brothel. Baumohl (1986) described the saloon as a sort of "community living room" where one went for information, jobs, and pleasure. Saloons were particularly rowdy places on Saturday nights, when miners and cowboys would collect their weekly pay and blow most of it on the booze, gambling tables, and

prostitutes offered by the saloon to relieve the past week's deprivations. While the functions of the colonial tavern and the saloon overlapped, the saloon's association with excessive drinking, gambling, prostitution, crime, and political corruption would make it a prime target for reformers (Winkler, 1968; Popham, 1978).

Pioneer farm families helped temper the unrestrained individualism of the trappers, cowboys, and miners. But in many frontier towns, it would be decades before the more temperate ways of the settlers and traveling preachers would have much influence on drinking patterns. Even then, it was not so much that the earlier arrivals were converted by this new sense of community: they simply moved west when they felt crowded. Those left behind built community institutions--churches, schools, local governments, and jails--that promoted more temperate values related to drinking. When larger numbers of women and children arrived in an area, its climate tended to shift toward more moderate drinking practices, and toward less of the theft and violence that so often accompanied the early binge drinking patterns (Mendelson and Mello, 1985; Winkler, 1968).

This is not meant to imply that the western settlers were teetotalers. The settlers did not eliminate drinking; they merely changed the common drinking patterns. Drinking whiskey every day was acceptable. Whiskey flowed freely at house raisings, corn huskings, weddings, and other communal gatherings. Whiskey was also the primary medicine for physical and emotional complaints. The western settlers viewed alcohol in a positive light, but they expressed strong disapproval of drink-inspired disorderly conduct.

As order was established, community by community, the once-dominant pattern of explosive binge drinking gradually faded. The influence of the temperance movement also spread westward, carried by itinerant preachers who brought its message to their western camp meetings. As permanent churches were established, they had a consistent moderating influence on community drinking--even though drinking

was a normal part of many church activities (Winkler, 1968). As the temperance movement gained ground, however, more and more of these churches picked up the banner of total abstinence.

Tobacco in Colonial America

There is no drug "epidemic" in human history that compares with the spread of tobacco from North America across the world. Fifty years after Native People introduced Columbus to tobacco, the practice of smoking tobacco had reach nearly every corner of the world. By 1614 there were 7,000 tobacco shops in London (Taylor, 1949). Tobacco's spread was unrelenting and unstoppable, in the face of every kind of condemnation, prohibition, and punishments that could include the torture of having one's nose slit (Wagner, 1971). Secular and religious leaders alike were powerless to check this drug's movement across the globe.

The early exposure of European explorers to tobacco left a trail of interesting tales. For example, the modern discovery of the addictive nature of nicotine should not be surprising in light of 15th-century accounts of smoking. De las Casas, who reported on Columbus' encounters with tobacco smoking, noted the following response after he reprimanded the Spanish explorers for smoking:

. . . they answered that it was not in their power to refrain from indulging in the habit. (Quoted in McKenna, 1992, p. 195-196)

While De las Casas was describing what we know today as addiction, it would be almost three centuries before America had a concept of addiction that allowed us to understand this loss of personal will power.

Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes' 1526 account of his travels with Columbus reports the smoking practice among Native People and its spread to others. He notes, "I am aware that some Christians have already adopted the habit, especially those who have contracted syphilis, for they say in their state of ecstasy caused by the smoke they

no longer feel their pain." Oviedo concludes his account of smoking with the prophetic words: "It seems to me that here we have a bad and pernicious custom" (Corti, 1932, p. 41-42).

Rodrigo de Jerez is thought to be the first European who adopted the smoking habit and took it with him on his return to Spain. When citizens in his native land saw smoke pouring from his nose and mouth, they immediately took it as a sign of demonic possession. A priest referred the matter to the Inquisition, which resulted in Jerez's imprisonment. When he was released a few years later, he discovered that his countrymen were now routinely using the very substance for which he had been imprisoned (Corti, 1932).

As tobacco spread to Europe and beyond, the potential commercial value of this product became clearly evident. John Rolfe established the first tobacco plantation in 1612 in Jamestown, Virginia, and within another 40 years tobacco had become the principal export of the American colonies. Its popularity led to an increased demand for slaves in Virginia to cultivate and harvest the plant (Maisto, et. al., 1991; Emboden, 1972). Tobacco was such a significant source of income for the colonies that it actually served as money. Fines for drunkenness were often charged in pounds of tobacco, as were purchases of highly valued goods and services. Early 17th-century Virginia was plagued by an abundance of men and a shortage of womenCa problem that could be solved by encouraging women to move from England to Virginia, where they would work as servants and serve as wives. The fee that planters charged to recruit and import each woman was 120 pounds of tobacco (Taylor, 1949). Church attendance was also mandatory in Virginia during this period. Anyone guilty of failing to attend Sunday services was fined one pound of tobacco (Schlesinger, 1993).

Tobacco use became common among women as well as men in the colonies. Colonial women were reported to smoke (pipes) throughout the day and in bed. This practice continued well into 19th century, when the wives of Andrew Jackson

and Zachary Taylor smoked pipes in the White House (Heimann, 1960).

The Use of Tobacco in Medicine

Native American belief in the healing qualities of tobacco were adopted by the colonists. Tobacco was considered an effective treatment for a broad spectrum of disorders. It was introduced into European medicine as early as the 16th century by the Spanish physician Francisco de Monardes, who recommended tobacco as a cure for syphilis (Maurer and Vogel, 1973). In America, tobacco was exposed to the body in every conceivable manner. Tobacco ashes, leaves, and oils were applied to the skin. Tobacco ashes were used to clean teeth. Tobacco juice was placed in the ears and eyes. Balls of tobacco were given orally, and tobacco snuff was inserted in the nose. Some physicians blew smoke into the mouths of their patients so that the smoke could reach other organs. Medicines made from the juice of boiled tobacco were given orally. Smoke or tobacco enemas were given in cases of intestinal disorder, and vaginal injections of these substances were used to treat gynecological disorders.

The first real challenge to the widespread role of tobacco in medicine came in 1798, when America's most prominent physician, Dr. Benjamin Rush, published his essay, *Observations upon the Influence of the Habitual Use of Tobacco upon Health, Morals, and Property*. Rush attacked the social and medical use of tobacco, noting that, among other problems, its use led to excessive drinking by creating a thirst that could not be quenched with water. (Woods, 1931).

The beginning of the end of tobacco's use in medicine came in 1828, when two Frenchmen, Posselt and Reiman, isolated its primary ingredient. They christened this ingredient nicotine after Nicot, the French ambassador to Portugal who had championed the use of tobacco as a medicine. The isolation of nicotine allowed for more rigorous studies, in which the toxic and addictive properties of the drug could be discovered.

From 1830 to 1860, tobacco came under increasing attack from ministers and physicians who claimed that tobacco was responsible for crime, insanity, and sexual perversion and often led to more serious vices such as drunkenness. Although the medical use of tobacco faded in the mid-1800s, it would be almost another century before the toxic and addictive properties of tobacco were generally recognized in America (Maisto, et. al., 1991).

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