



**Introduction**

Augusta University sits on the former Augusta Arsenal. From 1829 until the onset of the Civil War, it served as a United States military installation. Beginning in 1861 and lasting until the end of the Civil War, the Confederacy controlled the Arsenal. After the Arsenal returned to the control of the United States in 1865, it manufactured and repaired weapons for the US military during the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. The Arsenal closed in 1955 and reopened in 1957 as the school that would eventually become known as Augusta University (Flynn 2018). Many bottles were among the artifacts found at the Augusta Arsenal site. 74 of these were patent medicine, and 13 of those were Paine's Celery Compound.

**What's so special about Paine's Celery Compound?**

Paine's Celery Compound, a popular patent medicine, was produced from the early 1880s until at least 1906. It was classified as a bracer, which was a patent medicine in which the primary active ingredient was alcohol (Bause 2017; "The Propaganda for Reform" 1917). Paine's Celery Compound was among the most widely advertised patent medicines of the period and was sold in both the United States and Canada ("The Propaganda for Reform" 1917).

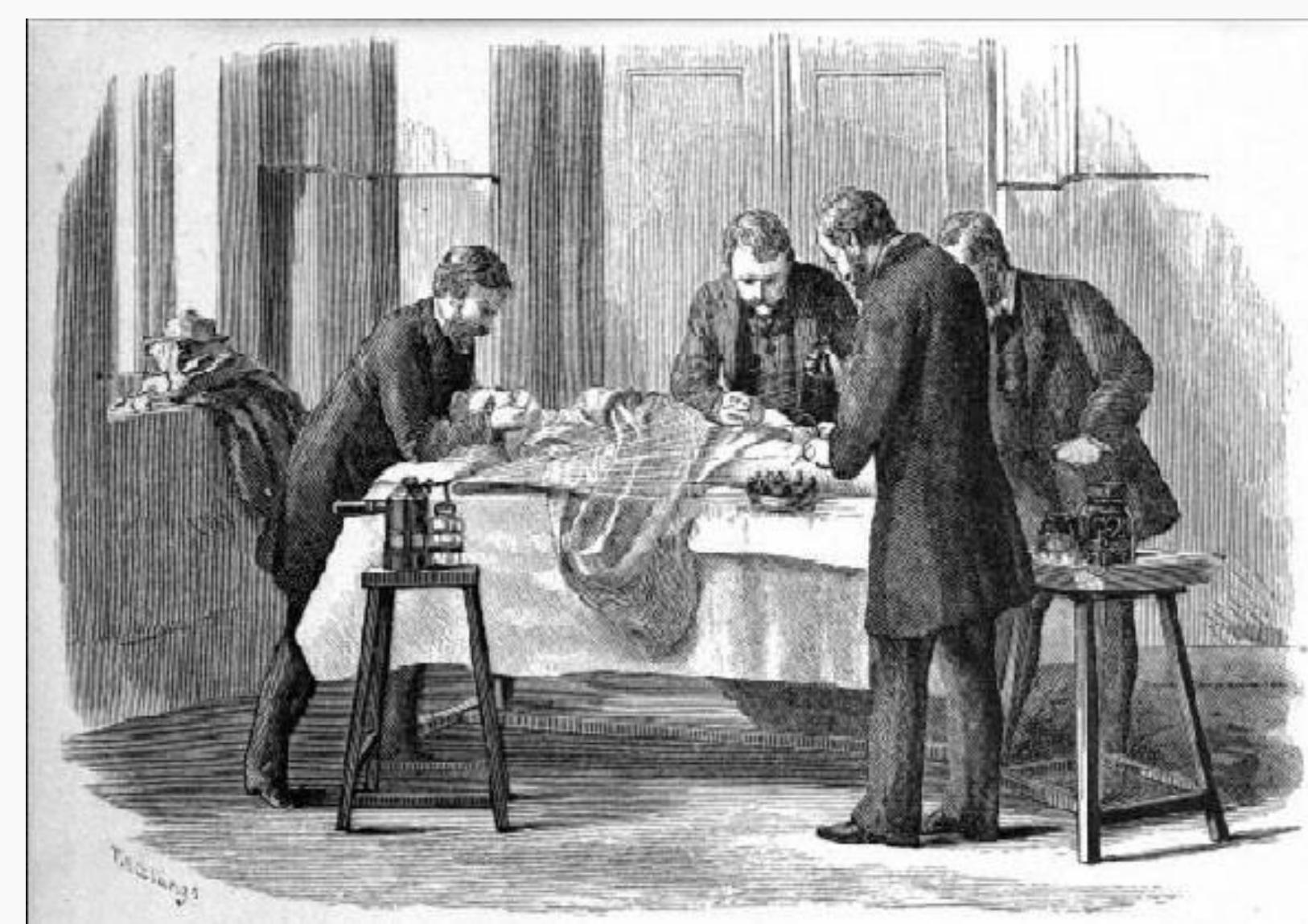


**Paine's Celery Compound Ingredients:**  
 Alcohol, celery seed, calisaya bark, cascara sagrada, senna leaves, prickly ash bark, hops, black haw, chamomile flowers, sarsaparilla root, ginger, dandelion, mandrake, gentian, black cohosh, yellow dock  
 Prior to 1906, may contain: cocaine (Bause 2017).

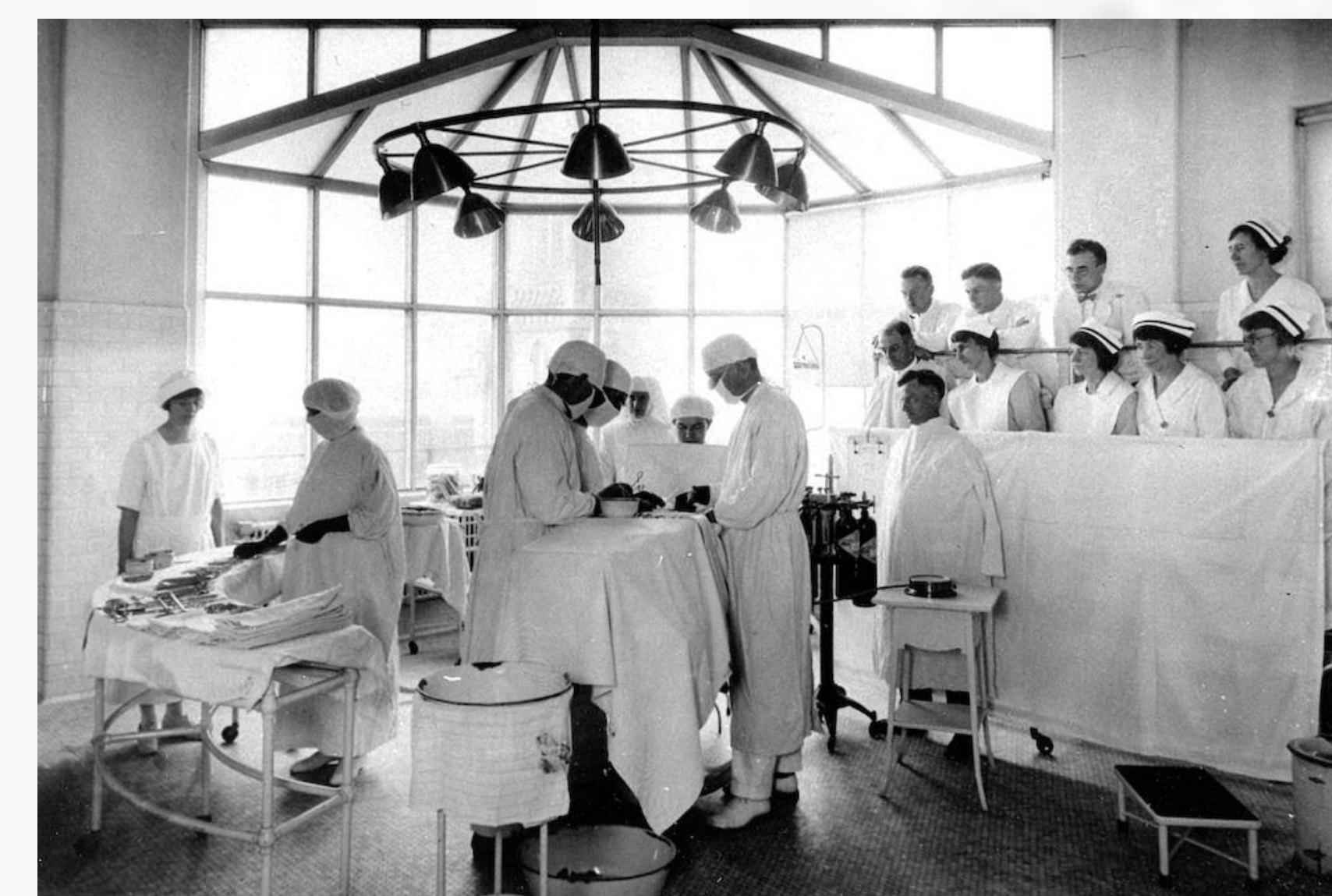
**What are patent medicines?**

Patent, or proprietary, medicines are medicines composed of secret, "proprietary," formulas. It was not the formulas that were patented but the names and bottle designs that were protected (Esherick 2003; History of Over-The-Counter Drugs 2008). While patent medicines made extravagant claims about their powers, it was generally the alcohol, cocaine, or opiates in patent medicines which were actually responsible for the consumer's feeling better (Church 1904).

Patent medicines likely reminded people of folk remedies, which were associated with pioneer women who supposedly knew their families and their families' health needs better than any doctor could (Anderson 2000). This may have contributed to the trust placed in patent medicines. Common people were also "distrustful of elite faculty medicine," which often led them to turn to alternative practitioners or to patent medicines (Porter 1997).



A 19<sup>th</sup> century illustration of a surgery performed involving Lister's Carbolic Acid Sprayer



An early 20<sup>th</sup> century operating room

**Medicine in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, hospitals were for the dying and for the quarantined. Medical schools were poorly staffed degree mills. After the Civil War, the number of hospitals and medical schools in the U.S. drastically increased, showcasing changing attitudes toward medicine (Porter 1997; Cashin 1996; Galdston 1965).

Doctors rarely understood the diseases they were treating, and their treatments often had severe side effects. Prior to the mid-1800s, doctors prescribed cathartics, emetics, stimulants, diaphoretics, toxins, narcotics, analgesics, and expectorants to "strengthen" sick bodies rather than to fight illnesses (Stowe 2004). They used Calomel, which contains mercury, or utilized bleeding, blistering, or other medieval-seeming treatments (Stage 1979; Warner 1989). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, alcohol and opium replaced Calomel and bleeding (Stage 1979).

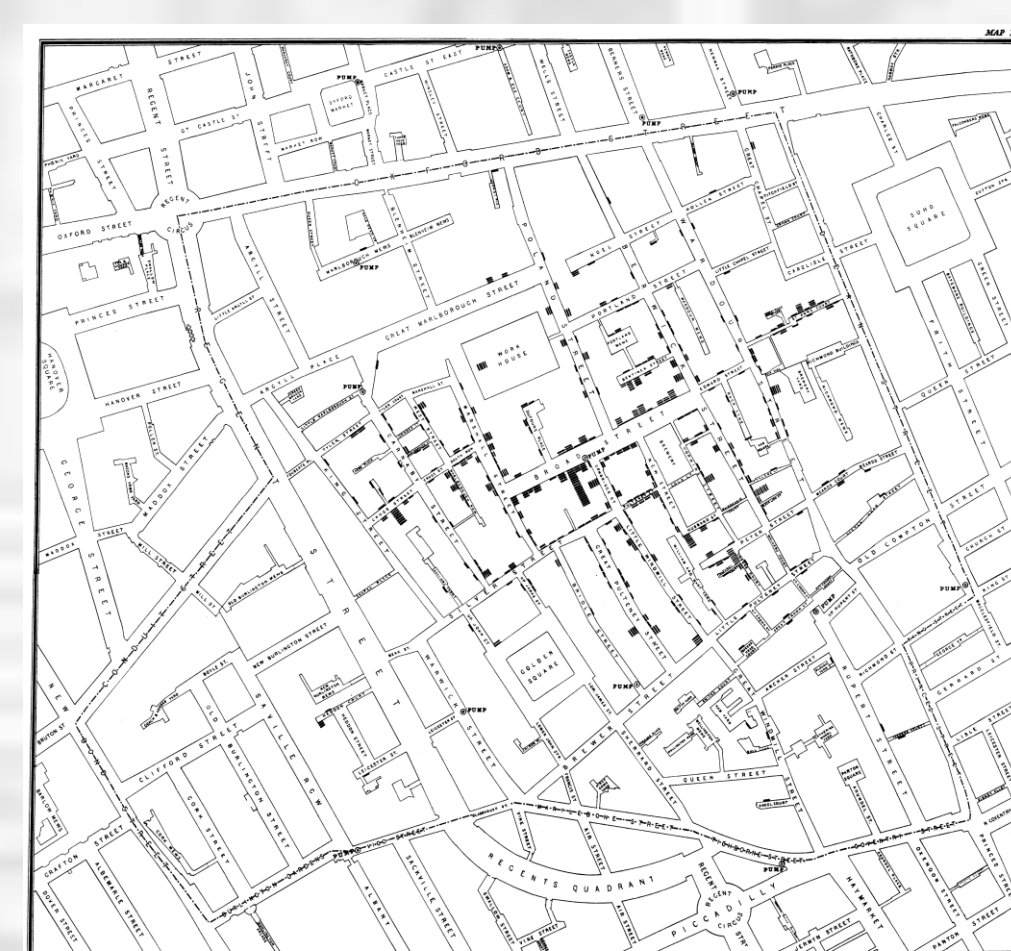
**19<sup>th</sup> century medicine was disorganized and often dangerous, leading sick people to avoid it and turn to other forms of treatment, such as patent medicines.**

**19<sup>th</sup> Century Medical Advancement**

Growth in the scientific side of medicine included advancements in diagnostic technology and techniques (Massengill 1942; Porter 1997).

- Germ theory and recognition that symptoms did not kill, but disease did, so it was important to treat the illness, not just the person (Porter 1997)
- Increased hygiene
- Vaccines for smallpox and rabies
- Treatments for syphilis, diphtheria, and yellow fever (Massengill 1942)
- Isolation of chemicals such as strychnine, quinine, caffeine, nicotine, opiates, and cocaine (Porter 1997)

**While the advancements in medicine made seeking treatment safer for the ill, many people remained hesitant to visit doctors and hospitals due to longstanding concerns and traditions.**



John Snow's map of the 1854 London cholera outbreak. His discovery supported germ theory and spurred public health movements.



U.S. Sanitary Commission building during the Civil War, 1865.



Philadelphia Sanitary Commission coin, 1864.

**Health Movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> & Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

- Sanitarians fought the diseases of civilization (Porter 1997; Galdston 1965).
- Thomsonian medicine taught that cold was the root of all illness and recommended vegetable based therapies (Porter 1997; Stage 1979).
- Hahnemann's homeopathy preached that like cures like, and placed medicine back into the hands of the common people (Stage 1979; Porter 1979).
- Hydrotherapy, faith healing, and animal magnetism also operated on the American medical stage (Massengill 1942).

**Alternative medicines placed medicine back into the hands of the common people, encouraging the same self-sufficiency encouraged by patent medicines.**

**Controversy**

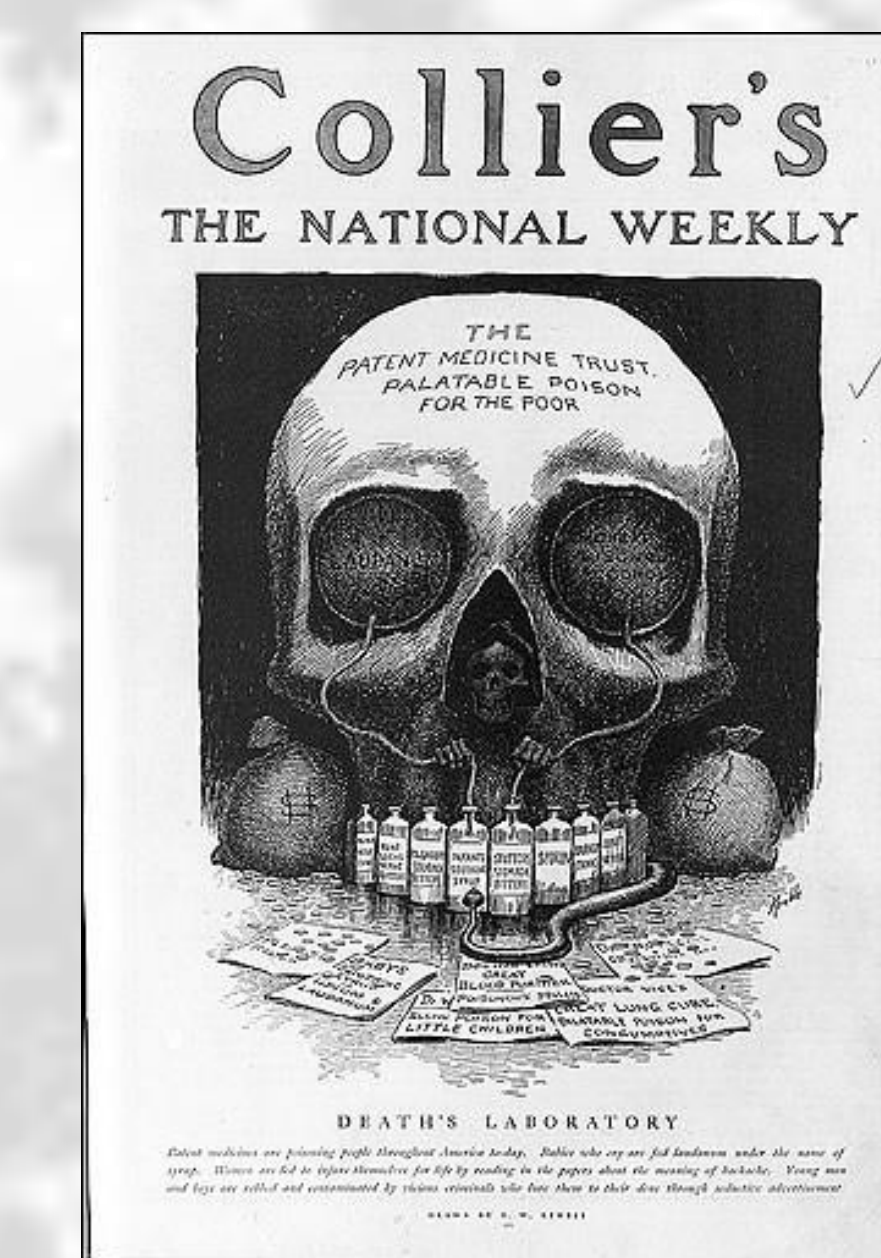
Despite patent medicines' popularity, and arguments that they were the safest accessible medical care for many, they were also controversial (Starwalt 1905).

In 1905, Samuel Hopkins Adams began a series of 10 articles exposing patent medicines for containing cocaine, heroine, opium, alcohol, etc.

The temperance movement condemned patent medicine manufacturers for misleading the masses about alcohol content (Remus 2014).

States that regulated patent medicines rarely enforced it. Manufacturers blacklisted and boycotted those that did (Adams 1905a).

In 1906, anti-patent medicine advocates saw the first of many victories. The Pure Food and Drug Act was the first federal law regulating food and drug safety by requiring "accurate ingredients on the label... and that drugs had to meet certain standards of purity" (Conrad and Leiter 2008). **While patent medicines were seen as a sort of "health in a bottle" and a replacement for doctors when it was difficult to access trustworthy medical care, people recognized their negative aspects as well** (Esherick 2003; History of Over-The-Counter Drugs 2008).



Anti-patent medicine illustrations. The image on the right accompanied Samuel Hopkins Adams' series on patent medicines.

**Conclusion**

Patent medicine bottles on the Augusta University campus suggest that health attitudes at the Augusta Arsenal were linked to the rest of the world. Although the relative scarcity of nostrum bottles on the Augusta Arsenal implies that ill soldiers were often forced to visit the Arsenal infirmary or hospital instead of treating themselves, the presence of the bottles highlights the interconnectedness of late nineteenth and early twentieth century American culture. Soldiers in Augusta, GA accessed patent medicines from Vermont, and were likely involved in the discourse regarding the temperance movement. They likely shared the views on health held by many Americans, such as distrusting medicine, being reticent to visit the doctor for minor illnesses, and attempting to drink when they had less access to liquor, such as when they were on duty.

**At the Augusta Arsenal, the existence of the Paine's Celery Compound demonstrates the spread of health attitudes throughout the United States in the late nineteenth century, including self-sufficiency and distrust of doctors.**



The Augusta Arsenal, between 1900-1906

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