

Psychoactive Drugs:  
from the  
Ancients  
to the  
20<sup>th</sup> Century

*Alcohol, opiates, nicotine and caffeine*

# What were humans' earliest relationship with psychoactive drugs?

- Religion
- Medicine
- Economics
- Recreation

# ALCOHOL

- 8000 BC:** Evidence of mead (honey beer)
- 6400 BC:** Beer, berry wine (a vitamin and enzyme rich beverage) in Iran
- 5400 BC:** Evidence of Sumerian grape wine
- 3000 BC:** Earliest written record of wine making (Egypt; Osiris= goddess of wine and ruler of the dead)
- 1800 BC:** Earliest written records of beer making: Sumerian "Hymn to Ninkasi", the *goddess* of brewing. This "hymn" is also a recipe for making beer  
Babylonians have recipes for 20 types of beer. The Code of Hammurabi established a daily beer ration and regulated taverns.

- 800:** Distillation of alcohol in Arabia
- (alcohol="finely divided spirit")
  - natural fermentation process = 15% EtOH
  - distillation eliminates many nutrients

- 900's:** Italians introduce spirits to Europe
- "aqua vitae" used medicinally

- 1400's:** Scotland uisgebaugh ("whiskey" = "water of life")

In Medieval Europe, the consumption of beer in monasteries reached astounding levels: Historians report that each monk was allowed to imbibe 5 liters of beer per day.

- 1500's:** *Efforts to regulate alcohol use began during the Renaissance in Europe – sumptuary laws*

- 1784:** Benjamin Rush in wrote a pamphlet "An Inquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Mind and Body"
- Demonized alcohol – its effect on the "moral centers" of the brain
  - developed the concept of addiction as a disease.

Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century workers resisted working rigid hours and routines in factories; accustomed to piece work and agricultural work with irregular routines, taking frequent breaks, etc.

Early US history most people used alcohol – drinking alcohol was a common aspect of doing business, but drunkenness considered a sign of weakness

Factory owners began using capital to buy up resources; workers had to take jobs with them, and production quotas became more urgent

Needed to compete with England in trade

A new “morality” was imposed on the workers. Temperance was considered a virtue

**1826:** Society for the Promotion of Industry, Frugality and Temperance founded in Lynn, MA

**1830:** Alcohol use peaked in U.S. (7.1 gal pure EtOH)  
• (compare: 1980= 2.76 gal; 1996= 2.35 gal)

## OPIUM and its Derivatives

- 1300 BC:** Thebes, capitol of Egypt, begins widespread cultivation of opium poppy; trading with Phoenicians and Minoans, spreading to Carthage, Greece and Europe
- 460 BC:** Hippocrates in Greece acknowledges opium's use as a narcotic
- 330 BC:** Alexander the Great introduces opium to Persia (Iran) and India
- 400:** Arabs introduce opium to China
- 1300's:** Opium disappears from European documentation for 200 years after it is linked by the Inquisition to the devil (because it came from the East)
- 1500:** The Portuguese, while trading in East China Sea, initiate the smoking of opium, which the Chinese consider barbaric and subversive
- 1527:** Opium is reintroduced to European medical literature as "laudanum" by Paracelsus. Black pills ("Stones of Immortality") are made with opium, citrus, and spices
- 1600's:** Residents of Persia and India begin eating and drinking opium beverages recreationally  
Portuguese traders begin bringing Indian opium to China

- 1680:** Thomas Sydenham, in England, introduces a mixture of opium, sherry and herbs as “Sydenham’s Laudanum”; becomes very popular for a variety of ailments
- Late 16s:** British begin trading with China; tea export= large trade imbalance for British; British smuggle in opium
- 1700:** The Dutch trade opium with the Chinese, and the Chinese begin smoking opium in a pipe based on the Dutch practice
- 1729:** China's first law against opium smoking and domestic sale: shop owners to be strangled. Can only be used under license medicinally. Opium begins to be smuggled to China from India (British East India Co.); becomes extremely profitable.
- 1750:** The British East India Company assumes control of the preeminent opium growing areas of India, and begin to dominate the opium trade to China
- 1767:** The British East India Co. is selling 2,000 chests of opium to China annually
- Rise of Industrialism in Europe – looking for new markets; conquest of neighboring countries
  - England’s trade deficit – imported Chinese goods, especially tea

**Early 18s:** Americans become rich smuggling opium to China

**1803:** Morphine first isolated from opium by Sertuerner (Germany). Morphine is considered “God’s own medicine for its reliability, safety, and effectiveness

**1839-41:** English Opium Wars with China. Begins with imperial Chinese commissioner ordering foreign traders to surrender their opium. England sends warships. As victors, England received Hong Kong, etc.

**1842:** US treaty with China (Treaty of Nanking) regulating opium trade

**1856:** British and French renew hostilities with the Chinese over importation of opium; begins the Second Opium War; China loses, pays big fine and trade is legalized

Opium production increases in Southeast Asia

The advantages of converting alcoholics to opiates...the comparative physiological effects of the opiates versus alcohol

The mid-nineteenth century invention of the hypodermic syringe and the use of injectable morphine as a pain reliever during the American Civil War led to the first wave of morphine addiction.

**1874:** Heroin isolated from morphine by boiling it over a stove

Chinese laborers who came to work on U.S. railroads in the 1850s and 1860s brought with them the practice of opium smoking.

**1875:** Laws prohibiting "immoral" opium smoking are passed in San Francisco, banning it in city limits (allowed only in Chinatowns)

- anti-Chinese; most Americans "eat" liquid opium

By the turn of the century opium dens were commonplace throughout the nation

Addicts continued to participate fully in the life of the community. Addicted children and young people continued to go to school, Sunday School, and college. Thus, the nineteenth century avoided one of the most disastrous effects of current narcotics laws and attitudes--- the rise of a deviant addict subculture, cut off from respectable society and without a "road back" to respectability.

Most users of narcotics in those days were women. An 1878 survey of 1,313 opiate users in Michigan, for example, found that 803 of them (61.2 percent) were females.

Opiate users are to be found among the educated and most honored and useful members of society at this time

There is a much *lower* proportion of opiate users among blacks than among whites

**1878:** England passes Opium Act; only registered Chinese and Indians can purchase opium for smoking or eating; Burmese are prohibited from purchasing any at all

**1890:** U.S. passes its earliest law enforcement legislation on narcotics, imposing a tax on morphine and opium

Laissez Faire still a policy standard

Tabloids owned by William Randolph Hearst carry sensational stories of white women being seduced by Chinese men and their opium, inducing the fear of the “Yellow Peril” disguised as an anti-drug campaign

In 1895, Heinrich Dreser, working for the Bayer Company in Germany, synthesized heroin. Bayer began to market the drug in 1898.

## TOBACCO

c.1 BCE: Experts believe American inhabitants have begun finding ways to use tobacco, including smoking (in a number of variations), chewing and in probably hallucinogenic enemas (by the Peruvian Aguaruna aboriginals).

c. 1 CE: Tobacco was "nearly everywhere" in the Americas.

1556 – 64 Tobacco is introduced to France, Portugal, Spain and England  
Seems that sailors were the first to take up and spread the habit.

When first introduced to European countries was viewed as medicine – early response to most psychoactive substances.

1604: *"Smoking is a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black, stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless."* -- James I of England, "A Counterblaste to Tobacco."

- 1612: CHINA: Imperial edict forbidding the planting and use tobacco
- 1614: The number of tobacco shops in London in was estimated at 7,000.
- 1614: ENGLAND: King James I makes the import of tobacco a Royal monopoly, available for a yearly fee of 14,000.
- 1619: Tobacco is being used as currency. It will continue to be so used for 200 years in Virginia, for 150 years in Maryland, adjusting to the vagaries of shifting values and varying qualities
- 1619: BERKELEY, VA: The very first American Thanksgiving celebrates a good tobacco crop. The holiday was abandoned after the Indian Massacre of 1622

In Bohemia in 1662, it was reported, "the common people are so given up to the abuse that they imagine they cannot live without several pipes of tobacco a day— thus squandering in these necessitous times the pennies they need for their daily bread."

And from Nuremberg in 1661: "Many a one becomes so used to the stuff that he cannot be parted from it neither day nor night." At Karlsruhe at about the same time there is mention of "the smoking fellows of Northern Germany who live only to smoke and who cannot live without it. . . ."

And from Austria in 1677: "For although tobacco be not necessary for the sustenance of man, yet have matters gone so far that many are of a mind that they would rather lack bread than tobacco."

1629: FRANCE: RICHELIEU puts a Customs duty on the import of tobacco. Following the advice of his minister Cardinal Richelieu, Louis XIII of France levies a tax of 30 sols on every pound of tobacco. Two centuries later Napoleon III would observe: "This vice brings in one hundred million francs in taxes every year. I will certainly forbid it at once – as soon as you can name a virtue that brings in as much revenue." Government monopolies prove so lucrative they persist in several European countries late into the twentieth century

- 1633: TURKEY: Sultan Murad IV orders tobacco users executed as infidels. As many as 18 a day were executed. Some historians consider the ban an anti-plague measure, some a fire-prevention measure. It is rescinded 10 years later by Murad's successor.
- 1634: RUSSIA: Czar Alexis creates penalties for smoking: 1st offense is whipping, a slit nose, and transportation to Siberia. 2nd offense is execution
- 1634: Greek Church claims that it was tobacco smoke that intoxicated Noah and so bans tobacco use
- 1635: FRANCE: King allows sale of tobacco only following prescription by physician.
- 1761: ENGLAND: Physician John Hill publishes "Cautions against the Immoderate Use of Snuff" -- perhaps the first clinical study of tobacco effects. Hill warns snuff users they are vulnerable to cancers of the nose.

From those days until today, it is most important to note, no country that has ever learned to use tobacco has given up the practice

Throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries tobacco comes into use as "Country Money" or "Country Pay" in the colonies. Tobacco continues to be used as a monetary standard--literally a "cash crop"--, lasting twice as long as the gold standard.

**1619:** Importation of Africans for slaves to grow tobacco; tobacco is being used for currency.

**1776: AMERICAN REVOLUTION** Along "Tobacco Coast" (the Chesapeake), the Revolutionary War was variously known as "The Tobacco War." Growers had found themselves perpetually in debt to British merchants; by 1776, growers owed the mercantile houses millions of pounds. British tobacco taxes are a further grievance. Tobacco helps finance the Revolution by serving as collateral for the loan Benjamin Franklin won from France--the security was 5 million pounds of Virginia tobacco. George Washington once appealed to his countrymen for aid to the army: "If you can't send money, send tobacco." During the war, it was tobacco exports that the fledgling government used to build up credits abroad. And, when the war was over, Americans turned to tobacco taxes to help repay the revolutionary war debt.

**1781:** Thomas Jefferson suggests tobacco cultivation in the "western country on the Mississippi."

1830s: TOBACCO CONTROL: First organized anti-tobacco movement in US begins as adjunct to the temperance movement. Tobacco use is considered to dry out the mouth, "creating a morbid or diseased thirst" which only liquor could quench

WCTU objects particularly to the use of cigarettes, and especially to women's use.

1860: Manufactured cigarettes appear. A popular early brand is Blackwell Tobacco Company's *Bull Durham*, which rose to become the most famous brand in world, and gave rise to the term "bull pen" for a baseball dugout

1862: THE CIVIL WAR: First federal USA tax on tobacco; instituted to help pay for the Civil War, yields about three million dollars

1884: JB Duke heads to New York City to take his tobacco business national and form a cartel that eventually becomes the American Tobacco Co. Uses new technology to produce 120,000 cigarettes in 10 hours by the end of the year. In this year Duke produces 744 million cigarettes, more than the national total in 1883.

1886: JB Duke targets women with "Cameo" brand.

1889: Buck Duke spends an unheard-of \$800,000 in billboard and newspaper advertising.

1893: REGULATION: The state of Washington bans the sale and use of cigarettes. The law is overturned on constitutional grounds as a restraint of free trade

1895: ADVERTISING: First known motion picture commercial is made, an ad for Admiral cigarettes produced by Thomas A. Edison's company

# CAFFEINE

## The 3 legends of xanthines

- 350 AD:** First reported use of tea (*camellia sinensis*) in China (primarily medicinal)
  - 900:** Arabian medical book list coffee as medicinal
  - 1610:** First tea is imported to Europe by the Dutch
  - 1650:** Coffee houses appear in England; Charles II outlaws coffee houses (ruling lasted 11 days)
  - 1650's:** Chocolate houses open in England, chocolate sold along tea, coffee
  - Late 16s:** British begin trading with China; tea export= large trade imbalance for British; British smuggle in opium
  - 1674:** England – “The Women’s Petition Against Coffee”; “The Men’s Answer to the Women’s Petition Against Coffee”  
The English East India Co. pushed aggressively to make tea England’s national drink
  - 1765:** British taxation on tea helped lead to the Revolutionary War; turned Americans to coffee as the national beverage (who boycotted English tea).
- As temperance and prohibition grew, so did the consumption of coffee (tea totalers)