

THE INVENTORY TAKEN IN 1762 OF THE SHOP AND MEDICINES OF DR. JOHN SKIDMORE AT DOVER, DELAWARE.

by Warren Skidmore

This is my last draft of a transcript I started in 1998 of the contents of the medical office and apothecary's shop of Dr. John Skidmore at Dover, Delaware as it was in 1762.¹ The original was found there in the Hall of Records, to whom I still remain indebted for an old photostat copy. It is an incredible document, for John Haslet who took the inventory did a meticulous job setting down every medicine, instrument, book and supply that he found in the office - together with their individual weights and valuations. Haslet was born in County Londonderry, Ireland about 1727. He earned a degree in divinity at the University of Glasgow and was ordained a Presbyterian minister at Ballykelly, Ireland in 1752. Arriving in America in 1757 he was appointed a captain in the Pennsylvania militia and went with Braddock on the expedition in 1758 that attempted to capture Fort Duquesne. He settled near Milford, Delaware where he married (secondly) Jemima Molleston, the widow of John Brinkle, and began the practice of medicine perhaps tutored by Dr. John Skidmore who was a kinsman of his wife.² In 1776, at the start of the American Revolution, Haslet was made the Colonel of the 1st Delaware Regiment and had a short but distinguished career. Unfortunately on 3 January 1777, in a skirmish just before the Battle of Princeton, he tried to rally General Mercer's brigade and was instantly killed by a shot to his head. In 1841, by a special act of the Delaware General Assembly, his remains in Philadelphia were disinterred and reburied in the

¹Doctor John Skidmore, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth (Molleston) Skidmore, was born at Dover about 1726. He married firstly Mary, the daughter of John and Anne (Purnell) Fullerton by a bond dated 2 May 1754. She died about December 1755, and he married secondly Mary, the daughter of Nathaniel and Deborah Luff, and was previously the widow of John Marim who had died in 1755.. The noncupative will of Mary (Luff) Skidmore was dated 24 January 1760 and was recorded a few days later on February 4th. It is curious to see that her father's will was signed a day earlier on February 3rd 1760, which suggests that both father and daughter were carried away by some common epidemic complaint.

²Jemima Brinkle was remembered in the will of her mother Jemima, the widow of Henry Molleston, dated 20 August 1760. Her husband John *Brinkloe* had purchased the childhood home of Dr. John Skidmore on 14 May 1760 from his father's estate. Partly built in 1728 it is now the celebrated "Ridgely House" and is reputedly the oldest surviving house in Dover. See sketch at end of paper.

Presbyterian Cemetery at Dover. I have not heard of a similar document to Haslet's work anywhere else and it deserves to be better known.. The weights of his medicines (in ounces and pounds) or their value (in pounds, shillings and pence) set down by Haslet have not been copied here. A part of Skidmore's medicines, entered in Latin, have been identified and sometimes it has been possible to find what ailment they reputedly cured.³ Undoubtedly one of the printed dispensatories that he used in his office would identify and correct many of the spellings given here, frequently only a best guess made from a somewhat defective document. Dr. John Skidmore died in Misippillion Hundred shortly before 24 February 1762 when the administration of his estate was given to his younger brother, Dr. Samuel Skidmore.⁴ The inventory "of the shop and medicines of Dr. John Skidmore late of Kent County" dated 16 April 1762 lists the contents of an 18th century apothecary's shop in a day long before local pharmacies became so common. The inventory of the shop of John Skidmore, *Practitioner*, with bonds, bills, and notes totaled £675 3sh 3d.⁵

"The Inventory and Appraisalment of the Shop & Medicines of D^r John Skidmore late of Kent County [Delaware]"

His Medicines

[Column 1]

Alo: Locotor [*Aloe, a laxative*]

Cort: Peruv: crud: [*Raw Peruvian bark*]

Croc: Angli: [*Saffron, used as a medicine*]

Mac: [*Mace, ground bark from India*]

Caryophyll [*Aceous; clove tree*]

Cremor: Tart [*Cream of tartar, a treatment for gonorrhoea*]

Cinnab: Facht: [*Cinnabar/mercuric sulfide*]

Do. Nativ: [*Ditto, native plant*]

Cinnab: Antimo [*Cinnabar of Antimony, rheumatism*]

Folior: Senn: [*Dried leaves of senna, a laxative*]

Fol: Pealust [*Leaf of Pealust plant*]

³I have read all of Dr. William Buchan's enormous *Domestic Medicine* (London 1785) which identifies many of the common medications for 18th century complaints that are mentioned in the Skidmore inventory. Alas, progressing beyond this point is to work in a bottomless pit. I have supplied the best text possible, and I hope that some young pharmacist or medical student may take on the rest of this chore.

⁴Where the Skidmore brothers had their medical education is unknown. The scope of Dr. John Skidmore's library suggests that it may have been in England, a common practice. Their father was a prosperous inn keeper and legislator who probably could have afforded the expense.

⁵John Skidmore left no issue. According to a conveyance made to Garrett Sipple on 16 July 1774 by his sister-in-law Elizabeth, the widow of Dr. Samuel Skidmore, her father-in-law Thomas Skidmore had died intestate leaving three sons John, Thomas, and her husband Samuel. She also stated that John Skidmore, the eldest son, had died intestate leaving no issue before a division had been made of their father's lands.

Icthyoc:

Alumi: Rup: [*Alum, an emetic or astringent*]

Sulphu: viv:

Flor: Sulph: [*Flowers of Sulphur, hemorrhoids*]

Rad: Jalapp [*Root of the Mexican plant, a purgative to expel worms*]

Gum: Arab: [*Resin from certain Accacia trees*]

Gum: Assa: Feetid [*Asafetida, resin from a plant of the carrot family, an antispasmodic*]

Castor: opt [*Oil from beans of the castor plant, a cathartic and lubricant*]

Gum: Ammon [*Resin from Ammoniac, a Mediterranean herb; a stimulant and expectorant*]

Gum Opi: [*Resin from unripe seeds of the opium poppy, a narcotic*]

Gum Myrr [*Resin from myrrh shrubs*]

Gum Scammon [*Resin from root of scammony plant, a cathartic*]

Imp: Diachy: or Mere [*Emplastrum Diachylon, a plaster of lead oxide and olive oil*]

Succin [*An acid found in many plants*]

Gum Gamb: [*Gambier resin, from the leaves of a Malayan plant*]

Sang: Dracon [*Dragon's blood, a red resin*]

Galb: iss [*Galbanum resin, from an Asiatic plant*]

Tart: Emet [*Tartar emetic, caused expectoration, vomiting, perspiring*]

Rad: Genti [*Root of Yellow gentian, a gastrointestinal tonic*]

Rad: Val(—) Sylv: [*Root of the Wild Valerian, a sedative or antispasmodic*]

Gum Guava [*Guava resin, from tropical American tree or shrub*]

Bals: Tolut [*Balsam of Tolu, a cough syrup*]

[Brought] over: [Column 2]

Rad: (—)retha: [*Root of the Ayretha*]

Sem: Hyosci [*Hyoscine, commonly "Henbane," an alkaloid drug, anticholinergic, antiemetic, antivertigo*]

Sem: Lanton:

Sap: Castil [*Castile soap, a flavoring*]

Sem: Coriandr [*Coriander, expelled flatulence*]

Sal: Nitr: [*Nitrate salt*]

Sal: Ammon: Crud [*Raw antimony salt, venereal disease*]

Vitriol: alb [*White vitriol/zinc sulfate, sulphuric acid*]

Vitriol: Rom

Cort: Cinnamem [*Cinnamon bark, a flavoring*]

(—) C.C.

Baccar: Tunip:

Ocul. Caner

Basil: flav

(-----) Nigr

Lyr: e Sp: Cen:

Ol: Lin [hole in document] [*Linseed oil*]

Emp: Dia [hole]

(—) Emp: [hole]

Em (hole)

Pulv: (hole)
Pulv: R(hole)
Antimon: (hole)
Corall: (hole)
Coccinell
Flor: Benz [*Flowers from Benzoin tree, a perfume*]
Colcoth Vitriol
(—)rug: Oris
Croc: Metall
Sal: Vol: Ammon
Sal. Vol: Succin
Sulph: Aurat: Antim:
Saccar: Saturn
Oulv: Carthari
Athiop: Miner
Antim: Diaphor: Nitrat
Flor: Chamom [*Camomile flowers*]
Argent: viv.
Sal: Tartar:
Turpeth: Miner
Merc: Alcalir
 Brought over: [Column 3]
Extract: e lig. Ca [hole]
Calom: ppt [*Calomel (mercurous chloride), a cathartic for intestinal worms*]
Pulv: Stypt: Helvit
Pulv: Serpent: Virg: [*Virginia snake-root*]
Tinct: Ass: Fatid: [*Tincture of Asafetida*]
Tinct: Castor.
Diascord
Mass: Pill: e Ducb
Theria: Venet:
Mass. Pill: Stomach
Ol: Mac: [*Mace oil*]
Sal: Glaub: [*Glauber's salt, a laxative*]
Sal: Cathart:
C.C.C.
Syrup e Persi
Balsam: Copaib:
Ol: Junip: [*Juniper oil*]
Ol: Anis: [*Anise oil*]
Ol: Succen
Ol: Caru
Ol. Chem: Absynth [*Absinthe/wormwood, an aphrodisiac*]
Tinct. Myrr: Compos

Ol. Nuc. Mosch:
 Ol. Lavend [*Lavender oil*]
 Ol. Rhod: [*Rhodium wood oil*]
 Ol. Cinnamo: [*Cinnamon oil*]
 Ol. Majoran [*Marjoram oil*]
 Ol. Puleg:
 Ol. Camophyll.
 Bales: Sulphur
 Ol. Menth:
 spt. Nitr. Fort
 Li. Laud: Lond
 Ag: Theriac
 Elix: Asthm:
 Sperm: Ceet. [*Sperma ceti*]
 Cerat. Turner: [*Turner's cerate, for burns and skin irritations*]
 Ungt. Dialthe-
 Conserv: Absyn: Rom:
 Cantharid
 Ungt. Do
 Cons: Ros: Rub— [*Conserve of red roses*]
 Ungt. e Gemseng.
 [Brought over. Column 4]
 Conser— [hole] den
 Spt. [hole]inth
 Spt. Lavend
 Galban
 Mann:
 Terebinth
 Confect. Hyacinth
 Conser: Cynosb
 Terr: Japon [*Japan earth*]
 Rad: Liquorit [*Liquorice root*]
 Sem: Cardam: m
 Sem: Conard
 Gum Benzoin [*Resin from Benzoin tree from Sumatra or Java*]
 Opopon
 Poppel
 Galangal
 Cort: Aurant [*Aurant root*]
 Rad: Curcum [*Root of Curcum, tumeric*]
 Sem: Cubeb
 Bol: Arm
 Rad: Sarsapor [*Sarsaparilla root, a tonic and flavoring*]
 Pulu Liquorvit

Rad e Cassumun
Tert: [hole] Cnid
Rad: Valer: Sylie [*Root of Wild Valerian*]
Antim: Cnid
Lap: Heepat
Calamin [*Calamine, for burns and skin irritations*]
Gum Mastich
Litharg: Aur
Sarch: Satur.
Hellebr alb
Thur:
Sal Nit.
Succ: Liquor
Lap: Hyber
Gum Olibar [*Olibanum resin, a resin commonly frankincense*]
Sem: Teengr
Pipet: Long
Pulv: e Che(-)
Gum Mastich [*Mastic resin from a small Mediterranean tree, an astringent*]
Arug: Oris
Rad: Curium
Mini
Cupr:
Corall: alb
 Brought over: Column 5]
Rad: C[hole]
Ras: [hole]
Ceruss: Venet.
Cort (—)Winter

His Instruments

Clyster Syringe wt pipes
Penis Syringes
Case of scapels
Arterial Needles
Ungt. Box
D(it)o. Shell
ii pr. Tooth Drawers
Gold Leaf six Books
ii Scapels
Amputating Knife
ii pr. Forceps

His apothecary goods

ii pr. Scales & weights
i Brass Mortar
Large Marble Mortar
Small D(itt)o
Glass D(itt)o
Sieve
C--c: Amer
lb v Spt. Lavend Comp
14 Flint Glass Bottles & Stoppers
4 Pint D(itt)o
12 Species Bottles, brass tops
30 Pots with Brass Covers
12 Small D(itt)o
Phials, etc.
Gross Phials [*Brought up from end*]
Nest of apothecaries
 Drawers

His Books, titles in italics

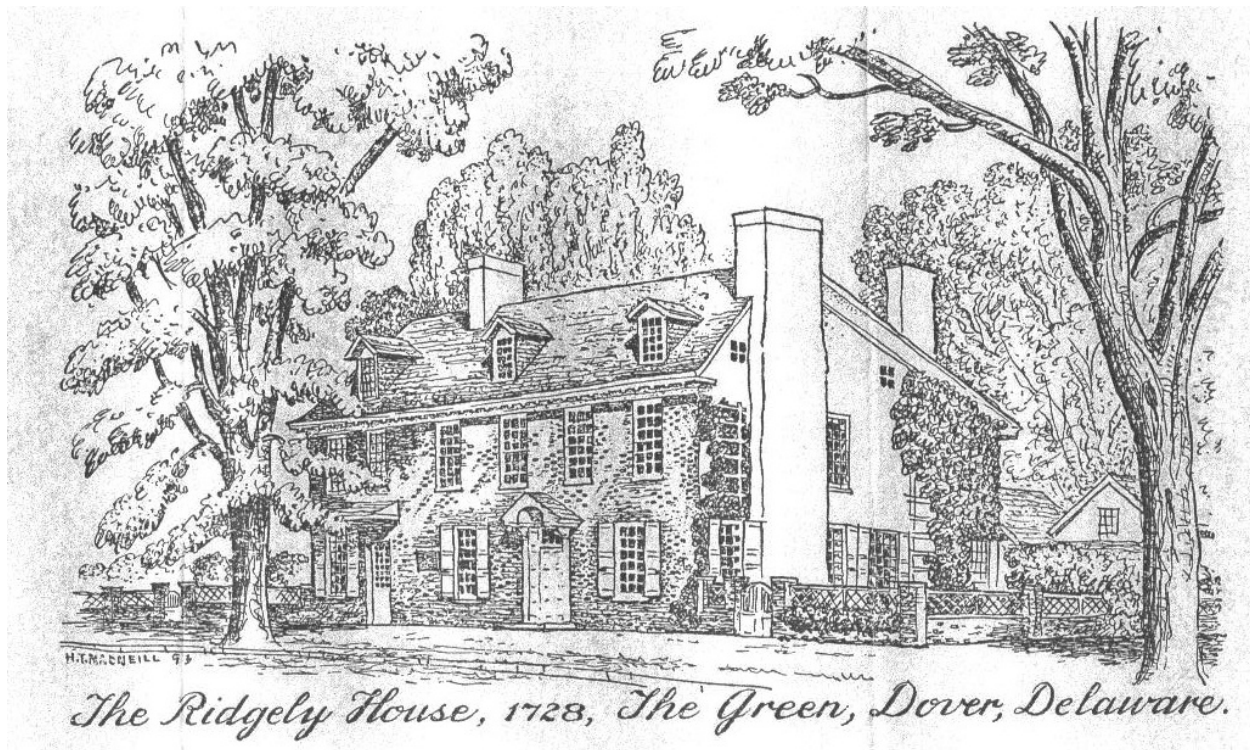
Van Sweeters *Comm. Vol---*
Allens *Synops: Vols 2*
Shaws *Physic Vol 2*
Milhes *Med. Essays Vol: 2*
[John] Pecheys *Sydenham* [biography of Dr. Thomas Sydenham, 1624-1689]
Cheynes *English Malady*
Turner *Syphylis*
Sharps *Surgery*
Pembertons *Dispensatory*
Pitcairns *Elements Physics*
Handleys *Surgery*
Heisters *Surgery*
Quinceys *Dispensatory*
Do [Ditto Quinceys] *Lexicon*
Boyers *Dictionary*
Hoffman's *Endemical Diseases*
Rivieriur *Fornathis*
Burton's *Nonnuturals*
Drakes *Anatomy, 2 Vols*
Hamilton on *Fevers*
Chamberlain's *Midwifery*
LeDrans *Surgery*
Hillary on *Small Pox*
Cheneys *Diseases Body & Mind*
Boishaves *Aphorisms*
Turner's *Surgery 1Vol*

Shaws *Chemistry 2 Vols*
Brought over: [Column 6]
Salmons *Anat[omy]*
Cooks *Marrow [hole] --- ry*
Elegantia Poetica
Virgil in usum Delph:

[Total valuation] £101 7sh 0d

Insspex Apr: 15th 1762

The above, is to the best of my
Knowledge, a just appraisment^t
John Haslet



See Note 2 for an explanation of the Ridgely House.