

John Uri Lloyd - Pharmacognosy Pioneer



The idea that plants could be useful in the treatment of medical conditions has been in existence since mankind's early history. Current methods of extraction and utilization of plant compounds in medicine is, of course, much more advanced now than it was in those early years. One of the pioneers in the modern use of plant extracts in medicine was John Uri Lloyd.

Lloyd was born in 1849 and became one of the most prominent pharmacists of his day. He founded a pharmacy in Cincinnati with his two brothers and was twice president of the American Pharmaceutical Association. During his time as a pharmacist he fought for the traditional role of the pharmacist as the one who prepared the drugs, rather than the newer role of simply dispensing them. Due to this constant struggle with his peers, his name is rarely mentioned in the history of the American pharmacy.

Between the years of 1897 and 1915, Lloyd published many pamphlets related to plant drugs. Some of the plants he worked with included Belladonna, Golden Seal, *Damiana*, and *Aloe* species, just to name a few. Many of these plants became recognized by medical and pharmaceutical societies, partly due to Lloyd's contributions, as legitimate treatments for certain ailments.

Lloyd had a specific format that he followed in discussing a plant and its medicinal uses. As an example of his extensive research and knowledge on the subject, one of Lloyd's

important pamphlets discussed several species of *Aloe*. He began with a detailed description of the appearance and biology of the plants. In Lloyd's publications, such descriptions would often span pages. He then gave an account of the locations and different varieties of *Aloe*. Following this, he gave an explanation of the methods of isolation and the purity of commercial *Aloes* and, depending on the plant, he would also give a history of recorded documents pertaining to the plant and its uses. Finally he gave a description of the various uses of *Aloe*, and methods of isolation and purification that he had encountered during his research. He concluded with an account of the pharmacological record of the different *Aloe* species.

Lloyd was dedicated to his work and he never lost his interest in plant medicine. During his career he published many works, mostly non-fiction involving plant medicine and drug chemistry, but also several bestselling works of fiction. One of his most important contributions was the creation of a group of plant extracts called the Specific Medicines. After his death in 1936, his pharmacy was kept open until the 1960's. Despite the closing of the pharmacy, Lloyd's presence is still felt today in the form of the [Lloyd Library](#) in Cincinnati, Ohio. This library contains the largest collection of medical plant books in the world.

John Uri Lloyd was an important part of the growth of pharmacognosy, especially in the use of plants as treatments for medical conditions. His love for plant medicine and his attention to detail was instrumental in continuing the search for new medicines from natural sources that is evident today. For additional information on the life and works of John Uri Lloyd see: [<http://chili.rt66.com/hrbmoore/HOMEPAGE/HomePage.html>]

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