Turlington's Balsam of Life

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Abstract
Robert Turlington (1697-1766), weaver, patent medicine vendor, and entrepreneur left his mark in our archaeological record. Bottles embossed BY THE KING’S ROYAL PATENT GRANTED TO / ROBT TURLINGTON FOR HIS INVENTED BALSAM OF LIFE / JANUY 26 1754 / LONDON bear witness to a medicine marketed in distinctive packaging for close to 175 years. Turlington successfully used several strategies to market Balsam of Life, but was less able to protect Balsam of Life from imitators. After his death, his business survived until 1804. The distinctive bottles were still being made in 1919.

Turlington's patent, dated 1743/44, listed 27 ingredients in an alcohol solution, all having perceived medicinal value at the time. Over time, the number of ingredients significantly decreased. His advertisements described numerous ailments treatable by Balsam of Life. In a highly competitive environment, Turlington, and others like him, with no formal medical training, selling pre-packed medicines to people he would never meet, was called a quack and an empiric. In his time, Balsam of Life was consistent with current medical practice and would have been considered appropriate for treating many of the disorders claimed in his advertising.

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Bateman's Pectoral Drops, Godfrey's Cordial, Turlington's Balsam of Life, Hooper's Female Pills, and a half-dozen other similar nostrums originated in England, mostly during the first half of the 18th century. Advertised with extravagant claims, their use soon spread to the American Colonies. To the busy settler, with little time and small means, these ready-made and comparatively inexpensive "remedies" appealed as a solution to problems of medical and pharmaceutical aid. Unfollow turlington balsam to stop getting updates on your eBay Feed. You'll receive email and Feed alerts when new items arrive. Turn off email alerts. Save this search. Shipping to Russian Federation. 7 items found from eBay international sellers. By Virtue of the King's Patent Turlington's Balsam of Life I by Robert Turlingto. C $29.02. Buy It Now. +C $11.86 shipping. From United States. By Virtue of the King's Patent. Turlington's Balsam of Life Is Prepared and Sold. The bottle once contained Turlington's Balsam of Life, an 18th-century patent medicine advertised as a cure-all for a host of ailments. (Photo: Frank Ridley/Canadian Geographic archives). The clear glass was stamped with the words "By the King's Royal Patent Granted To Robt. Turlington For His Invented Balsam of Life," and, on its side, the date January 26, 1754. His curiosity piqued, Ridley began to research the bottle's etrwhile contents and their possible significance to the inhabitants of Ghost River Island. His findings, detailed in the July 1966 issue of the Canadian Geographical Journal, are a fascinating commentary on how far medical science has come in the past 260 years.

Turlington's Balsam of Life was a patent medicine developed by English merchant Robert Turlington. He succeeded in obtaining a royal patent from King George II in 1744, which gave him the right to pursue anyone attempting to pass off their own product as his, one of the earliest medicinal patents. In his patent application Turlington claimed that the balsam contained 27 ingredients, and was effective in the treatment of "kidney and bladder stones, cholic, and inward weakness", a list of ailments he