

Astyptodyne—A Natural Healing Wonder for More Than 100 Years

“Here’s to the land of the longleaf pine”

by Sallie Preston

The longleaf pine made many fortunes in our state for hundreds of years. Entire shipping fleets once were built with the tree’s slow-growing, dense wood, with tar and pitch from its sap used for waterproofing. Technology advanced, though, and wooden ships were replaced long before the 20th century began. That left industrial products like turpentine as the longleaf’s primary contribution to a quickly changing world until a Wilmington tragedy ended in discovery – pine oil’s natural healing powers.

It was business as usual in 1906 for a Wilmington turpentine factory when a steam pipe burst, filling the plant with scalding vapor. Running for their lives, three workers headed for the nearest door when one stumbled and fell into a vat of pine oil. Strangely, as the three men were taken by wagon to the hospital, the one who had fallen into the pine oil was the only one not screaming in pain. To the amazement of the doctors, the man covered with pine oil was in no pain when he arrived at the hospital, and he quickly recovered with very little scarring. Thus was born “liquid gold” – Astyptodyne.

Within months the liniment was being sold in Wilmington’s premier drug stores, with druggists pumping the miracle cure directly into customers’ bottles. The natural product’s uses went far beyond relieving aches, pains and burns; it was also used for much more serious conditions. It appeared to cure everything short of a broken heart.

During 1918, when the Spanish Flu epidemic swept through Wilmington, many of its survivors credited Astyptodyne with keeping them safe. Adding it to a pot of boiling water,

they would inhale the vapors to open their lungs and bronchial tubes to protect them from the deadly epidemic. Doctors even used it in the same fashion to break up the mucus collecting in the lungs of those who had contracted the deadly strain of flu. The powerful vapors have also been used by miners to clear coal dust from their lungs, and many claim it helps relieve asthma, bronchitis, hay fever and other bronchial complications.

Astyptodyne was so revered that it holds a place on the wall-length timeline of the region’s medical advancements at both Cape Fear Hospital and New Hanover Regional Medical Center. So why is it that few besides “old-timers” have ever heard of Astyptodyne? Because until recently, the only place it could be found was on the shelves of small, independent drugstores, something two women with a vision, Linda and Nellie Sistrunk, are in the midst of changing.

More than 50 years ago, James Sistrunk, Linda and Nellie’s father-in-law, purchased the rights to the liniment’s secret formula. When their father-in-law passed away a few years ago, his two sons, Linda and Nellie’s husbands, had no interest in running their father’s business. Unwilling to watch a healing creation of nature fall by the wayside, the two women decided they would try their hands at

business and continue Astyptodyne’s legacy. The task proved challenging and even a bit hopeless at times, but the women refused to give up, a decision that seemed justified when they began connecting with people who loved the product. It was time to take things to the next level. It was time to get this natural wonder into the hands of mainstream America.

Area residents inhaled
Astyptodyne’s vapors to open
their lungs and bronchial tubes
to protect them from the
Spanish Flu epidemic in 1918.

Linda and Nellie teamed up with Associates for Commercial Excellence, LLC (ACE), a Wilmington-based business-building company. With the help of ACE, Astyptodyne is now quickly being placed on retail shelves across the country.

Astyptodyne’s name is derived from its main healing properties: antiseptic (prevents infection), styptic (slows bleeding), and anodyne (dulls pain). Astyptodyne is FDA-approved for these qualities. Additionally, a scientific research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service, very recently discovered that a naturally-occurring compound prepared from pine oil deters the biting of disease-causing, blood-feeding ticks and mosquitoes, a serious threat to public health that kills two million annually and threatens billions worldwide. The agency’s scientists found that the pine oil compound not only deters two kinds of ticks from biting as effectively as the synthetic chemical repellent DEET, but it is more effective at deterring mosquitoes from biting. Of course, this is something users of Astyptodyne have known for more than a century.

Currently Astyptodyne offers five products: Astyptodyne Classic, Skee-ter-Go!, Burn Reliever, Hiker’s All-in-one and Pet Helper. Locally, Astyptodyne can be found at Walgreens as well as various other locations. A complete list of retailers carrying the product can be found on the company’s website at Astyptodyne1906.com. To contact the company directly, e-mail Astyptodyne@aol.com or call 910-392-8110.

