

Lost Artifacts?

I. The Squibb Ancient Pharmacy

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Among the books in Oesper Collections is a small 4.4" x 7" volume of 190 pages by George Urdang and F. W. Nitardy bound in brown leatherette and entitled *The Squibb Ancient Pharmacy: A Catalogue of the Collection*. Published in 1940 by E. R. Squibb and Sons of New York, it describes in some detail the artifacts in a two-room museum of pharmacy located on the 28th floor of Squibb Building at the corner of 58th Street and 5th Avenue.

Purchased from a private collector in Europe by Squibb and brought to the United States in 1932, one room of the museum was arranged like a Baroque pharmacy and the second as a laboratory or "Faust study" containing a reproduction of a period furnace and hood. Most of the collection appears to have consisted of highly decorated period pharmacy containers, spanning the 15th through the early 19th centuries, and a large collection of mortars and pestles, some dating back to the 7th century. In addition, there were rare books, framed prints (many of which I have never seen elsewhere), paintings, sculpture, and some apparatus common to both pharmacy and chemistry, including 18th-century balances, a microscope, glass alembic heads, and several Florentine distillation receivers.

I can find nothing about this museum on the internet, and presumably the Squibb Company has long since been absorbed by some larger pharmaceutical conglomerate. My question is whether any of the readers of the Bulletin have any idea what happened to this museum and to its valuable contents.

Readers having information relating to the above artifacts or questions of their own which they would like to see addressed in future columns should send their comments and questions to Dr. William B. Jensen,



Two views of the Squibb Ancient Pharmacy as it appeared when it was housed on the 28th floor of the Squibb Building in New York City.

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