

THE ORIGIN OF BEDS

SLEEPING COUCHS CAN BE TRACED BACK TO 700 B. C.

They Were in Use by the Etruscans and Were Mostly of Stone, Terra Cotta and Marble—Bed Furnishings of the Ancient Greeks and Romans.

The oldest bed in existence is a bronze of Etruscan manufacture dating from the seventh century B. C. This was found in excavations made at Gordion, in Asia Minor, and from the fact that it is the only one of its age ever unearthed among the many other pieces of furniture found in ancient ruins the conclusion is drawn that beds at this early era were a novelty.

It is sure that previous to this there is no record of the existence of beds which may be taken as authority. Prehistoric man evidently got along quite well without any bed to lie in, and it was not until the life of Etruscans and Greeks began to verge into comparative civilized luxury that the bed as a component part of the household was universally recognized.

Even then the bed was more kin to the modern couch than the article in which civilized man today takes his repose. According to Greek and Roman wall paintings, bas-reliefs and reproductions in sculpture, the original bed was a bench, often a beautifully carved and decorated bench and one covered with costly draperies, but still in form a bench compared to the beds of today. Many of them were made of terra cotta, some of marble, and then there is the bronze specimen which is still in use.

Etruscan wall paintings of the fifth and sixth centuries B. C. show that these couches were plentiful then. The Etruscans builded well when they came to make beds, for most of the pictures show them as made of stone, terra cotta and marble being favorite materials. In shape they were narrow, set on legs, much like the couch of today, and piled high with cushions. There were two kinds of beds or couches in this period, one for reclining upon at mealtime and the other for sleeping. In some instances the same couch was used for both purposes.

With the early Greeks and Romans the bed played a more prominent part in the life of the people than it does today. Paintings from these times show the bed or couch a prominent factor at all mealtimes and banqueting scenes, the persons participating reclining while they dined or carried on a conversation. Early scenes where the char-

acters concerned are wholly mythological show them meeting death, delivering speeches or reposing idly, all on couches of a nearly similar design. The sleeping couch rarely occurs in this early sculpture or painting.

In form the bed of this era was based on principles much akin to those upon which our beds are now made. There are the body, legs and headpiece, all made much as they are made today. At first, so far as can be found, the body was only a slab of marble laid across two upright stones serving as legs. Later, however, there came to view a leg for each corner and a headpiece. The best examples of modern beds show the skill of the ancients in sculpture and painting and the importance with which they regarded the bed. The legs are often notable examples of the carver's art, and the sides serve as panels whereon the artist of the day depicted the life of the period.

Other Greek couches have legs made of blocks of wood mortised together. Later the entire bed was made of wood. Many of these specimens were of the costliest manufacture, the wood being inlaid with ivory and other articles of ornament. Tortoise shell as a means of decorating couches seems to have been introduced about 100 B. C. Later silver and gold were occasionally used.

In furnishings the ancients pursued about the same system as is in vogue at present. Mattresses, pillows, valances and loose draperies are shown in the early vase paintings. All couches had mattresses, but the thickness, quality and kind varied with the different periods. At first only a few skins thrown over the body of the bed were used.

The pillows were of various shapes, some being long and narrow, others approximately square and still others nearly round in appearance. The Greek or Roman of this period was a most luxurious personage, as he required at least three pillows to enable him to secure a good night's rest. There was one for his head, one for his elbow and one for his feet.

The mattresses and pillows were covered with linen or wool. Leather to some extent was used as a covering for the pillows. Rare instances are found where silk was employed as bed covering.

A great variety of materials was used in stuffing both articles. The commonest article among the Greeks seems to have been refuse wool torn off in carding or flailing cloth. Among the Romans wool especially prepared was the favorite article for this purpose. Straw and rushes were used largely by the poor classes. Feather pillows are first mentioned as being in existence in the fourth century. The draperies and hangings were in many instances rich tapestries.

In the representations of Roman beds the furnishings run generally to luxury and display, and the draperies are the parts given the most attention. The most striking colors to be obtained were used in their manufacture and decoration, and the looms of the east were scoured for the best examples of weaving. Purple was a favorite color, and the wealth of a person was often indicated by the excellence of the bed draperies in his house.

Bedmaking and bed furnishing had attained to this stage in the year 400 A. D. A painting of a bed of this period shows an article of manufacture and furnishings much like the bed of today. There are four legs, sides of wood and wooden slats or occasionally leather interlacing to furnish rests for the mattress. There are two headpieces, one at each end, suggesting that even at this late date the sleeper was accustomed to have a pillow for his feet. Of the furnishings the mattress and pillows are covered with a striped stuff not unlike many cloths of the present, and a blanket covering the mattress is tucked between it and the bedside, much as the neat housewife now tucks in her snowy sheet.

Here, however, the resemblance to the present style of bed ceases. The legs at the head are carved to represent human figures and mythological creations. At the foot a woman with surrounding "picture writing" holds forth. The sides are massive panels carved in a similar manner, and the structure of the whole marks it as an article made to be handed down from one generation to the other.—Chicago Tribune.

An Oversight. Sunday School Teacher—Why, Willie Wilson! Fighting again? Didn't last Sunday's lesson teach that when you are struck on one cheek you ought to turn the other to the striker? Willie—Yes'm; but he hit me on the nose, and I've only got one.—New York Telegraph.

The Prevailing Fever. Fig—Yes, poor Debbigh died of figt.

Fig—Why, I thought it was yellow fever.

Fig—No, it was figt. A mosquito presented his bill to him and he never recovered.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Her Superstition. "Star of my life," whispered the love-lorn youth. "And what star would you call me?" asked the beautiful girl. "Venus—bewitching, entrancing Venus."

"But I would rather be Saturn." "Why, my fair one?" "Because Saturn gets a new ring occasionally." "From stars he changed the subject to clouds and said he thought it was going to rain.—Chicago News.

This is the kind of a Story for which the NATIONAL MAGAZINE is paying \$10,000. Do you know of a better one. Think, Laugh or Cry. JOE CHAPPLE, Editor. 246 DORCHESTER AVENUE, Boston, Mass.

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SOME VALUABLE FACTS IN CLATSOP SCHOOL STATISTICS WORTH FILING AWAY FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

The following tabulated matter embraces a wide field of general information in relation to the public schools of Clatsop county, including District No. 1, the City of Astoria, and has been compiled by County Superintendent Emma C. Warren, and shows the 42 districts of the county, the clerk of each, the directors of each, and their terms; the postoffices of each district, the number of miles such postoffice is from Astoria, the usual attendance in each, customary salaries in the districts outside the city, and the registry of teachers for both country and city. It is a good thing to file away for reference, as it is the latest information of the kind in such composite shape, and is for the current school year, which began July, 1905:

Table with columns: Dist. No., Clerk of Districts, Directors for Three Years, Directors for Two Years, Directors for One Year, Usual Monthly Salary, Months School Attendance, Miles from Astoria, No. of District, Postoffice. Lists names and statistics for 42 districts.

REGISTRY OF TEACHERS. Lists names and locations of teachers across various districts, including Astoria, Hammond, Knappa, Jewell, Olney, Fishhawk, etc.