

Impact Statement

Ekaterina Zakharova, Grade 11.

Familiar but Distant, 2017.

Acrylic, charcoal on paper, 42 x 30 Inches.

Moscow, Russian Federation

Unsung Hero: John Pemberton

An unsung hero for me is someone, whose actions have changed the lives of millions people, but no one actually remembers about him or just familiar with his name. This person for me is John Pemberton, a practical pharmacist and chemist of great skill, who has been active all his life in medical reform. I believe that almost everyone familiar with the famous mixture, which has been originally invented by him. The John's life seems really inspiring to me, and I think he deserves to be called as an unsung hero.

John Pemberton was born in Knoxville, in Crawford County and studied medicine and pharmacy at the Reform Medical College of Georgia. He practiced medicine and surgery first in Rome and its environs and then in Columbus, where in 1855 he established a wholesale-retail drug business. Some time before the Civil War, he acquired a graduate degree in pharmacy, but the exact date and place are unknown. Pemberton served with distinction as a lieutenant colonel in the Third Georgia Cavalry Battalion during the Civil War and was almost killed in the fighting at Columbus in April 1865. He soon became addicted to the morphine used to ease his pain. As he searched for a cure to his addiction, he started his experiments with coca and coca wines, eventually creating a recipe which contained extracts of kola nut, which he called Pemberton's French Wine Coca. In 1886, when Atlanta and Fulton County enacted temperance legislation, Pemberton found himself forced to produce a non-alcoholic alternative to his French Wine Coca, so he eventually worked out the preparations which included blending the base syrup with carbonated water by accident when trying to make another glass. His accountant came up with the name "Coca-Cola". Pemberton made many health claims for his product, touting it as a "valuable brain tonic" that would cure headaches, relieve exhaustion and calm nerves, and marketed it as "delicious, refreshing, pure joy, exhilarating", and "invigorating".

John's product has helped not only to war veterans as medicine from opium and Morpheus addiction, but also helped from such diseases as depression, neurasthenia, bowel diseases and other. However after his product hit the market he fell ill and needed to sell his business to a bigger company. Nowadays it is famous as The Coca-Cola Company. But still many people have never thought about a man without whom we would never ever taste this delicious drink.

I made my artwork of John Pemberton using different materials, such as acrylic paint, charcoal and I also made a collage of the old ads of Coke. I draw John in the realism technique using his old photo. I did the red writing upon his eyes to show that looking at this label we should remember this man. The colors of the old photo such as black and brown combines with the color of the drink, which we can see at the bottom of the painting, like it is flowing from somewhere. On the top I draw the chemical formulations of cocaine and opium, which helped to come up with the idea of the drink. The bottles on the left remind us about John's profession.

The whole painting itself shows the origins of Coca-Cola and looking on the portrait we automatically associate it with Pemberton.

By creating this artwork I wanted to show that our famous inventors are also our heroes, especially as like in this case veteran and doctor. More of us should recognize such inimitable people, whose stories have changed our lives completely.