

# The Leslie Keeley Company and the Keeley Cure

## by Tim Hickman

### on the Route 66 Podcast

This is Dr. Tim Hickman. I am a history professor at Lancaster University in the northwest of England. And I'm going to talk to you today about the Leslie Keeley Company and the Keeley Cure on Route 66.

Hello and welcome aboard the Route 66 Podcast for talks to people living and working along the mother road. I'm your host Anthony Arno and I'd like to thank you for joining us here on our journey today. Today we have a talk with Dr. Timothy Hickman from Lancaster University in the United Kingdom. Dr. Hickman is a leading expert on the historical treatment of alcohol addiction and believe it or not one of the very first treatment facilities in the world was created in the Route 66 town of Dwight, Illinois, long before the double sixes even existed by a Civil War surgeon, Dr. Leslie Keeley. You may have heard about the antics of Dr. Keeley, who some thought was nothing but a quack, but the Keeley Institute continued to exist into the glory days of Route 66. My guest today is a scholar from the United Kingdom who organized a conference along Route 66 a few years ago that focused on the work of the Keeley Institute, and although it no longer exists today, it was at the cutting edge of 19th Century addiction treatment in the small Route 66 town of Dwight, Illinois. The program was known internationally for years as the Keeley Gold Cure, providing an alcohol treatment program which drew sharp criticism from those in the mainstream medical profession. It was widely popular in the late 1890s and thousands of people came to the Route 66 town of Dwight to be cured of alcoholism. Thousands more sent for the mail-order treatment regimen which they took in the privacy of their own homes. Please welcome to the Route 66 podcast Dr. Timothy Hickman of Lancaster University, United Kingdom.

Thanks Anthony.

Well, thank you for joining me today, Tim. You live and work in the United Kingdom almost 5,000 miles from the nearest point along Route 66. What would be your response if someone were to walk up to you on the campus and ask Dr. Hickman? Have you ever heard about Route 66? What would you tell them?

What would I tell them? I would tell them, of course, probably from the song, just like most people I would have thought. I suppose the next thing that comes to my mind immediately would be thinking about Jack Kerouac and Neil Cassidy driving across the country, back and forth, using that route. Certainly, I was there in Dwight and I was very impressed to see Route 66 there and thought about Jack and Neil driving through. Did they ever stop there? What did they see? All of that. So, yeah, that's what I would tell them. That's certainly the first thing that jumps into my mind with it.

Tim, tell us about your background. How did you become interested in the teaching profession, which I also think is one of the greatest jobs in the world.

I grew up in the United States. I'm an American citizen still. I always enjoyed university. I enjoyed history and didn't know what I wanted to do when I finished as an undergrad. I spent a couple of years skiing and then I was a musician playing in rock and roll bands in Los Angeles and decided really that what I wanted to do then was to find a job where I could talk about books, where I could talk to people, talk to young people about history and the way things got to be the way they are and decided that that's what I wanted to do. It would still allow me to pursue music as well. And so that's what I did. As I got involved as a graduate student at the University of California, Irvine. I started to find interest in all kinds of things that were connected back to music, and especially with the problem of addiction. Because it's been a huge thing in the music world from jazz forward. And all kinds of questions started to come from that. What is addiction? Where did they come from? When did they invent this? When did they find this and then as it turned out. It was right in the middle of the the period that I was most interested in U.S. history Anyway, which is the late 19th and early 20th Century, it was very much an idea that is the idea of addiction as it was a product of its time and The Keeley Clinic was certainly a big part of that.

That's very interesting. So what department are you under at the University of Lancaster?

I'm in the history department. It's always a bit of a tough fit. I do really sort of literary and visual culture, but also history of medicine as well. So, it's a tough fit. My PhD is in History, although my dissertation was actually based in the English department at Irvine. So, it's always been a bit of an interdisciplinary to be sure.

And where did you grow up in the States? I grew up all over the place?

West Coast for the most part. I was born in Santa Monica in California, and I lived in Los Angeles more than anywhere else. Although, I spent a lot of time in Colorado. I went to elementary school in Evergreen and then we moved to Bend, Oregon, ski towns, all of these. I lived in Bend, went to high school there and went to undergrad at the University of Oregon in Eugene.

Growing up being born in Santa Monica, you obviously knew a lot more about Route 66 than I thought.

Probably so, yes.

I guess I was waiting for the British accent.

The British accent as well, I know that surprises people often. They expect to hear that, but no, that's not the case.

Tim, prior to 1879, prior to the Keeley arrival in Dwight, what was the history and treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction like? Did people see it in those days as an issue that needed to be addressed?

They started to see it more in that way. There are two different stories. The story of habitual drug use, which is centered around the opiates, particularly morphine and laudanum and opium, going back into the early 19th Century, and then the story of alcohol, which is a much longer story, with full of moral debates around it. I suppose both of them start to become what sociologists call medicalized, medicalization, that is turning long-term human conditions, habit, uncontrollable desire, turning them into medical problems. And that starts really in the early 19th Century for both of them. As far as the drug side goes which is where most of my research has been. There's nothing more widely prescribed there's nothing more useful there's nothing more popular than opiates for medical prescription through the first half of the 19th Century at least, in a period when you couldn't do much for a whole lot of diseases. Opiates worked, both morphine, laudanum, all of those things, they made people feel better. It eased their minds when they had serious conditions. It relieved pain. It did all of these things. It also worked really well for gastric conditions that you get from bad water, dysentery, things like that, you know, it will seize up your bowels. And it helped a lot for that kind of thing physicians loved it both in the U.S. and in Britain and all over and prescribed it like mad. They weren't particularly worried about habit although, they did kind of start to notice it a bit. They were more worried about overdose. There was some popular discussion of habit and also recreational use, there is a sense of recreational use, as using it for something other than a strictly medical problem. But both Coleridge and De Quincey initially started laudanum for medical reasons, for either gastric problems or teeth. There was a sense of a habit there. As far as alcohol goes, alcohol becomes the moral domain of the Temperance Movement, although physicians in the early 19th Century, especially Benjamin Rush, one of the signers of the Constitution, is one of the first people to talk about a medical condition which is habitual alcohol use. They're interested in it, but it really doesn't become more fully medicalized till the later 19th Century.

You mentioned Dr. Rush. I had an earlier guest on the podcast, Steven Freed, who wrote *Appetite for America*, all about the life of Harvey. He also wrote a second book in Philadelphia, which is where I'm at and he's at, about the life of Dr. Rush. Tim, who was Dr. Keeley before he arrived in Dwight? What is his childhood like? What did he do prior to his arrival?

Keeley is an interesting figure. It's very hard to say he's not entirely clear about it himself so we have to look at the obituary and things and the people who talked about him. He's apparently was born in upstate New York. He was the child of Irish immigrant's parents and he was supposedly experience to seeing the people come into his town in New York. There was one particular wagon operator, a train driver, an engineer. I don't remember, probably a wagon operator, who would come into town and sort of entertain the locals and he seemed so worldly and they all liked him, but then he would get real drunk. The little boy, Leslie Keeley, was supposedly enthralled by this and wondered why would this great man do this and what was the attraction, why couldn't he

stop? In any case, Keeley moved West and he went to medical college at Rush Medical College in Chicago. He was there starting about 1860 or so in the medical college just as the Civil War is starting. He comes out of there as a surgeon, goes straight into the Union. This is Illinois, the land of Lincoln, he certainly is not thinking about going yet to fight for the rebels. He goes to work for the Union and while he is its surgeon, he did some amputations as one did in the Civil War. He started to observe the soldier's drunkenness and he thought that it was a disease and that it was something that could possibly be cured. And supposedly that's how he came on the idea that you could find some sort of a cure for the alcohol habit.

And then he comes to Dwight, Illinois. He opens up the Keeley Institute. What was the secret?

It's very hard to say. He came to Dwight just like so many people in so many towns immediately after the Civil War. Dwight becomes a station on the Alton and Illinois Railroad. That instantly ties them into a bigger network throughout the country. Now these little island communities all become hooked up to one another. He goes to work for the railroad and he sets up private practice in Dwight. He rode a 400-mile circuit on horseback and again continued to be interested in alcohol and trying to cure it and supposedly experimented on a cure for all that time. By 1879 he is ready to open up the Keeley Institute. He's taken a partner by this time, a guy named John Oughton, who is an Irish immigrant and the two of them together formulate this cure. He brings in his brother-in-law Colonel Judd, who becomes the business manager and the three of them incorporate the company mid-1880s or so. He started working on this cure. It was something to do with gold. The cure was a secret. This will cause a lot of trouble later. With some sort of a chloride of gold. If you put heavy metals into your body, it will go into overdrive to try and clear them. It settles in your liver. I'm not a physician, so the details I don't know, but it's a really difficult thing to do. Now, gold had been used in all kinds of other cures in the past, but at the tiniest, tiniest bits. So, I think they struggled at first with how they were going to formulate this and how they were going to test it. They found people whose drinking problems were so severe that they would essentially bet anything and go ahead and try it. And if it killed them, oh well, how much worse could it be than the way that they were living then? And they did have a couple of near misses with people that didn't quite die but came close with the first versions of the cure.

So, his success rate, how successful was it?

Well, it depends. Again, it's all very difficult to say. I mean they reformulated the cure. They shut down for a bit and they came out with something they called the bichloride of gold cure. Gold had been used in homeopathy and so how much gold is there and it's very hard to say. The company claimed 95 percent success rates. Now the reason for that is, they said that they only ever saw five percent of the people who came there, come back again. Probably not the most rigorous record-keeping system. They made huge claims for their effectiveness. Joseph Medill, the publisher of the Chicago

Tribune, got wind of this cure institute down in Dwight, which is about eighty miles south of Chicago and he decided to send some of the worst drunkards they could get. They called them in Chicago that they could find, people who really down and out of and at the end of the rope and to send them off to Dwight and to see what would happen. Apparently, they came back cleaned up, dressed nicely, cured, and had no more interest in alcohol. The Tribune gets on side with Keeley, and it really starts to boom at that point. People start hearing about this through word of mouth, through advertising, and the word spreads. kinds of inebriates, inebriety is what they called the condition at the time and that is alcohol, but also opiates start turning up in Dwight to take the cure.

So, when the patients arrived at the Keely Institute, is it true during the first few days of their arrival, he had them drink in excess?

Yes, they could if they wanted. When you got there you were assigned an attendant at first that would sort of help you out and get you used to the place. They were allowed to drink as much as they wanted. They started on the cure as well, usually an injection two or three times a day. Plus, they had an oral version of the cure as well that you would take that was supposedly mixed up for you in particular, what your problems were. You would take that for the first three days or so, but what they claimed and what seems to be the case is that people stopped and they lost interest and didn't want it anymore.

How popular was the program? How many locations did he have throughout the world?

He started to expand. So many people were coming to Dwight that they couldn't accommodate them all. They began to expand. It's very much tied up with the history of the United States and the history of much of the world in the 1880s and 1890s. That is, the modern transportation links, the modern communication links from telegraph to telephones, railroads connecting the entire country, connecting ultimately with shipping lines then in New York and elsewhere, means that they can spread very rapidly. It's a very cutting edge modern medical institution. And they have by 1893, 118 institutes all around the world, mostly in North America and Canada. Although they spread to London, through Scandinavia, Australia, and they sold franchises all over the place. They had them in Mexico, they had them in South Africa. I've had this debate with various medical historians. I think that by around 1900, Leslie Keeley must have been the most famous physician in the world. As I say, that's arguable because people hold up William Osler or Robert Koch, the really famous physicians from the period. And clearly if you were a mainstream scientific physician, those are the people you would point to as the leaders in world medicine. But if we're talking about popular culture, those Keeley Institutes were all the way around the world. They were always accompanied by advertising, by word of mouth, people talked about the cure and that it worked. They had formed in the U.S. particularly, a Keeley League of former patients, their graduates they called them after they left. And there were thousands of people that were members of the Keeley League and they wore little badges with a gold K on them for the gold cure and

for Keeley. They had their catchphrases, I've been to Dwight, means that you had taken the cure and you had lost the craving for alcohol. And they supported one another. But again, that kind of word of mouth, that kind of popular recognition is something that I think would be very tough to equal, although you can't prove the claim, it would be very tough to equal any other physician. Certainly, the ultra-eminant William Osler or Robert Koch, people like that, maybe, certainly in medical circles, those are the leading figures.

As the 20th Century approached, was there any competition to his institute?

There are in a variety of ways, first off, all their imitators, that they've been Keeley cure was secret. This is why mainstream medicine absolutely vilified him and hated him. He made a lot of money on this and there was no way that he's going to divulge the formula. That makes him look like a Snake Oil salesman, like a quack in the eyes of the mainstream. There are more mainstream clinics through the US. Thomas Davison Crothers is sort of a leading figure in this, who had his own Inebriety clinic in Hartford, Connecticut and was much more sort of mainstream medicine and they disliked Keeley immensely. Likewise in Britain and also Norman Carr had his own clinics here for instance and also the British Society for the Study of Inebriety and Keeley was public enemy number one with these people. There was competition, there were also imitators, there were other kinds of gold cures spread all over the place. The Keeley company was on the one hand fighting with the mainstream. The certainly physicians and also fighting with imitators.

How successful was he financially with the Keeley Institute?

When he died everyone talked about the million dollars and more that he supposedly had. I've seen all of the probate material, his will and everything else, and that lists him at \$423,000. He may have transferred property. I've yet to find, for instance, what his wife was holding. Had he transferred a whole lot of stuff to her? But there's not much else on there than that. I think that it's exaggerated. He certainly made enough to travel and live as he wanted. They had a winter house in Los Angeles where they would go all the time. Keeley traveled the world and he seems to have lived very well. They seem to have made a lot of money. The company certainly did and the company continued until 1966. Keeley died in 1900 and went to Oughton, his partner, the Irish pharmacist, and that goes down through the Oughton family, which remained a force in Dwight and Illinois still today and they made a lot of money.

By the mid-20th century with Oughton running the operation, did they change their means or their method for addiction?

Yes, they changed by the mid-1920s. They had stopped talking about gold. This had been the problem? The secret cure, all of these things and they fought and fought about it. In the 1890s when Keeley was first doing it, talking about gold, these are the days the fight for the gold standard versus silver standard, that the progressive people's party is campaigning for a silver standard and they link up with the Democrats in 1896. William Jennings Bryan gives his cross of gold speech, it is his nomination, one of the most

famous speeches in U.S. history. Gold was a powerful thing to conjure with, it had, it meant value, it meant all kinds of things to people. The gold however, that's what people who didn't like him would test for. They tried to find out what was in the formula. Keeley defended it and said that he had a right to his own intellectual property. This is before patenting is accepted in medical practice either that will happened to the First World War and Keeley says he's rid the world of this scourge that is of inebriety, both for alcohol and for opiates and that that's reward enough and that he deserves something back for his efforts. That's the problem, whether there was gold within there or not, who could say. Keeley died suddenly of a heart attack in 1900. None of his partners who supposedly knew it, Oughton would have known it, whatever the formula was, none of them, it's not written down, none of them ever said what it was. By the mid-20s though, when Oughton's son is now in charge, they quit talking about it. They say they take out the gold, they're not doing that anymore, and they also start calling it a treatment rather than a cure.

What did he get right in the late 19th century regarding treatment?

The thing with Keeley, no matter how much the sort of medical mainstream hates him, tens of thousands of people said that it worked. And so you have to call all of them stupid to dismiss that, and people do, and they did at the time they called them, naïve, credulous, not overly intelligent. But nonetheless they said that it worked and if you look in the Keeley archives. The letters that come back years later are really touching about how people's lives were absolutely changed by this and they never went back to what they were doing. What did he get right? On the one hand, it's really tempting and I think the first thing that all of us would say is, well, clearly it's placebo, whatever was in this cure, because there is no such thing. Having said that, though, I was talking to a prominent historian of medicine and historian of pharmacy, Joe Gabriel, who's done a lot on sort of secret cures and on intellectual property rights in medicine, and he just fired right back at me, how do you know? We don't know what was in that cure. Some historians, Bill White who's looked at the Keeley stuff quite a lot has said that it would be unconscionable if Keeley really had a cure for this and he didn't share it with anyone. On the other hand, for someone like Keeley, who was older, who didn't buy the ethical practices of the emerging medical profession, that's only getting really strong then. For Keeley, he just didn't buy that at all, and he thought that he deserved something back for his efforts and that he had done a good thing for the world. It's tempting to say that it was a placebo, that the cure was a placebo but we just don't know what was in it. If we hold that aside though, what did he get right? On the one hand, it seems to me that those patients to go to Dwight had to leave their everyday surroundings. That is, they're not walking by the pub where they go all the time, they're not seeing their mates who are out getting high around the corner, whatever it is they're doing, they get out of that world. They lose all the triggers, all the things that remind them that they'd like to have a drink or go get hold of some morphine or whatever it is. They have to go to this new place out

in really the middle of nowhere and then start walking around there. That disrupts their patterns of habits. Then secondly, the Keeley League really comes before the Twelve Step programs, Alcoholics Anonymous is founded in 1935. It ends up working closely with the Keeley Institute. Alcoholics Anonymous is very much based on having other supporters around you, people who have gone through it and can help you. The Keeley League was all about that. They would get together. They would talk about their experiences. They would talk about how the Keeley cure had helped them, and they would support one another to stay clean and sober ultimately. I think Keeley, we need to take them seriously as one of the real founders of that kind of an idea. Today there are whatever you want to call them, recovery communities, rehab clinics, that sort of thing. And while people still try to find a medical cure for drug and alcohol habits, that still hasn't been very successful. And the community-based cures have helped many, many people and Keeley seems to have caught on to that.

Now I've read that he's cured as many as 300,000 patients. Can that be true?

Yes, it certainly could be. They certainly claimed that and when all those institutes and the ones that came through Dwight. Their claim of numbers vary, but that number seems absolutely reasonable.

From my Route 66 listeners, before Keeley even arrived to Dwight, Prince Albert visited Dwight in 1860. Has the Keeley Institute, have they had any famous people come through there in Dwight?

They did. And I am hesitant to divulge them because these are patient records and things, and they're families. And there are supposedly quite a lot. But one fairly well-known. Mick Spiderbeck, the jazz trumpet player, came through. One of Franklin Roosevelt's sons also did. Other than that, they're still very close-lipped. Those medical records exist and lots of people don't want it known that they were there.

Did he lose his license at all?

He lost his license at some point in the 1890's. It was immediately given back to him by an oversight. What exactly the grounds of that are, I don't know. It is something that comes back to haunt him at other times, that it was taken away, but the position is, and apparently it was reinstated almost immediately and that there was a clerical error.

And that didn't affect his early days of the Institute then?

No, no, no. No, it didn't.

Tim, in 2015 you organized an International Conference in Dwight titled, "I've Been to Dwight". What was the purpose of that conference and how many people attended?

That was, yes, we were there for, it was in 2016, it was the 50th Anniversary, is that right? Am, I adding it up right?

Yes, that's right, yes, it closed in 60, yes.

Yes, in 66. And what had happened is that on traveling there and doing research on this, I found that a lot of the old buildings are still there. There are beautiful facilities there at Dwight, which is a lovely little village south of Chicago and there are facilities



there where you could have a conference and it's just suddenly seemed to me, we could actually do something on the history of treatment and cure here in Dwight. That's why we decided to do it. We brought scholars from all around the world under the wing of the Alcohol and Drugs History Society, which is a large international history society. I'm the president of it now. I wasn't then. We brought people in from all around the world. I did wonder, how am I going to get people down here to Dwight on the Amtrak and things? We did it and it worked. No one got lost and the town just was fantastic. They really opened their doors to us. The local history society took people around, showing us all the buildings. They put on shows and things for us. A lot of the locals who had worked for the company, had family that had worked for it, all were there and were very excited. Members of the Oughton family certainly came in and it was really a fantastic event. There was also the Keeley Institute used to hold something called a summer Round-up and barbecue with Alcoholics Anonymous. It is very hesitant to get involved with so big institutional operations mostly because of their focus on individual alcoholics and drug users themselves and then their own ability to sort out each other's problems. But they were very close to the Keeley Company. They used to in the 1950s, have these huge barbecues every summer. The local central Illinois Alcoholics Anonymous, several groups got together and put together another one of the big barbecues on the last day of the conference, which was fantastic to sit there and think about the history of the Keeley of Dwight, and then to listen to people talking about their own experiences in doing it. For me, it was interesting that for the first time in my life, I had to stand up and introduce myself as Dr. Tim because those are the rules. I got up and I introduced myself and everyone said back, Hi, Tim. I said, I'm Dr. Tim and I am a historian. You can sense the disappointment in the room because there is a certain story, you're supposed to tell right away that the narrative works. That narrative is something that helps people to deal with things that have really been difficult in their lives. It was great to be able to talk to that larger interested community around cure regimes not unlike what the Keeley was doing.

What buildings still exist in Dwight today?

What buildings still exist? The Country Mansion restaurant and events venue is a lovely building. It was John Oughton's home initially, beautiful old late 19th century mansion that has been preserved and converted now to just a fantastic restaurant. It's really a nice place to go for a day out, and the grounds are still there. The big Keeley Laboratory is still there, right by the train station, big neoclassical building. They sold that just late stages of the First World War. Then it became a VA Hospital, a veteran's hospital after the First World War. They built another modernist building near the Country Mansion today. Other buildings too, the so-called Livingston Hotel where many of the people stayed, who had come for treatment is still there and has been converted to other things too. But I was surprised to find so much of it still there and when we had the conference, the fact that we could use the country mansion is what made it possible.

So when you had the conference here in Dwight, did the participants do any sightseeing along Route 66?

They did sightseeing around Dwight and there are lots of markers in Dwight, big signs for Route 66, and everyone's taking pictures of themselves in front of it and all of that. I suppose we could have done more with that. There were people there who came and wanted to drive it as much as they could, people who had come from Scotland and wherever, and who were also going out to see music events all around and things, and doing everything they could to stay on Route 66 as much as they could, because that was an added bonus for them to do that.

Tell us about the Alcohol and Drugs Historical Society.

The ADHS, Alcohol and Drug History Society, has been around since 1979 at least. It comes from an older Temperance history group. It is a group of scholars, all of whom are interested in the history of alcohol and drugs. Temperance is certainly a central story in 19th century American history. I do U.S. History for the most part. All kinds of movements, from the women's movement to abolition, really spring forth from the very fertile soil of temperance, which begins in the early part of the nineteenth century, the 1830s, certainly in response to really high drinking levels. People were drinking more than double per capita on average than what they do now? And drinking was a real problem. The history of drugs also clearly is something that's very much at issue today and a lot of work has been inspired by the current opioid crisis in the U.S. Where does this come from? Why do we think about these sort of substances in the way that we do? And the ADHS really brings together all of these people, supports their work. It's a really supportive environment for younger scholars. We're really sort of proud of our record of bringing through graduate students and early career scholars and really supporting them. I remember when I first went to any of the ADHS events, I met people that I was completely intimidated by. They were the real leading people in the field in their books and it turned out that they were really nice, friendly, supportive people. It was a great experience and we try to keep that experience going.

Now you're the president of the ADHS. Where was your latest conference held?

Our latest conference was in Shanghai, China just last summer which was just a fantastic event and Shanghai in China in general is a real center for world global drug history. The Shanghai Opium Conference in 1919 really sets the agenda for world drug control and then that's certainly how they see it in China for world drug control beginning then. Shanghai is the real center, opium wars, all of that sort of thing is extra real hobbit for that history and that was where our last one was. Where we're working hard now on globalizing the field and I think that the ADHS has been very both North American and in European for as long as it's been around. And now we're working really hard. We finally got to Asia and Shanghai and then bringing in new members and new interests that way. And our next conference in 2021 is going to be in Mexico City.

Today the bottles that Keeley dispensed his match curing can be worth several hundred dollars. What's so unique about these bottles and why are they in such high demand?

There's a whole world of bottle collectors out there. They do, what do they call it? They dig down in what were old outhouses. It's where they go to find these things, apparently. I don't know. I have two of them, only because I've done so much work on its, one was a gift and the other one, I bought off of Ebay. They're nice bottles. There are an odd shape. Some of them are embossed with the name The Keeley Company. They came in little sets of two. They fit together. Remember they're nice bottles. There's an entire world of antique bottle collectors out there. They have their own way of valuing the bottles. They like these bottles and for me, it's what it represents. It's a Keeley bottle. In Dwight, there are very clearly collectors there. I saw a lot of examples of them. They've got a fantastic little Keeley Museum display in the City Museum there which is at the Railway Station.

Yes. The old railway station in the center of town. But from what I've heard is that people if they were taking the treatment plan at home, they didn't want people to find out so they would instantly destroy the bottles.

That could be.

Tim, should Dr. Keeley be a household name today?

I think that he probably should. He's an important figure in the history of medicine, and I think that the reason that no one has ever heard of him. He's the most famous physician that no one's ever heard of and it is because the medical mainstream represented by the American Medical Association on the one hand or the British Medical Association on the other, went after him hammer and tongs as they consolidated control of the medical profession. I think ultimately that's a good thing. I think scientific medicine is, I'm very much on side with that. On the other hand, we've lost things too, and the Keeley cures is one of those things, and then listening to patients, popular cures, popular medicine. I think he's also an interesting figure in the history of the United States, late 19th Century American History, small towns like Dwight's. Famous historians Robert Weavey and others talk about the way that island communities after the Civil War all become interconnected with one another and the way that changes people's lives. Dwight certainly is that and Keeley then becomes a real representative of both that growing interconnectedness in the United States, but also of international business, also at a time of expansion of US international interests, however you want to describe that, imperialism in the Philippines, 1898, 1902, the same time that the Keeley Company is expanding around the globe as well. So that possibility for global medical franchises, global businesses, is something that's part of technological change in the late 19th century. And Keeley really is a fantastic example of that. In thinking about American history, I think that he's a fantastic example, a way to talk about the way these big structural changes affect people, how it works out on the ground, how it affects people's

lives and what they do. Should Keeley be a household word? I think he's a very, it depends on what you're interested in. He's a fantastic example of US history. I think that he offers very interesting examples of ways that one might deal with things like habitual alcohol use, habitual opiate use.

Tim, what are you currently working on that you're most excited about?

Well, I suppose my biggest project is the Keeley book. I am working on a book right now on the Keeley company from its founding up to when it closed in 1966. It's fantastic. There's a Keeley archive that has an immense wealth of resources in it. Bringing some of those things to light, the experiences of everyday people, the way that they described what happened to them and what they did, is something that has been really exciting for me and something I'm very much looking forward to completing.

Where are most of his papers at?

His papers are in Springfield Illinois at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and that's where they're held, it's sort of a funny situation. They were held privately for a long-time by the Oughton family in the Keeley Company. They then went to the Illinois Historical Library, who then divided things up a bit later and that's how they ended up at the Lincoln Presidential Library, which is is where they are now.

Have you written other books Tim?

I have another book called the Secret Leprosy of Modern Days which is about the discovery of addiction or that the construction of the addiction concept in the late 19th and early 20th century United States. The way that moving from this vague concept of some kind of overwhelming desire and how that becomes medicalized and how it becomes formalized as addiction and the policy and treatment consequences of that construction.

Tim, is there anything else you want to share with us before we say goodbye?

I think that's about everything. It's been great to talk to you and it would be fantastic if people in exploring Route 66 were to take a look at Dwight. It's very much worth your while.

How can our listeners learn more about Dr. Keeley and his institute?

There are a few books that deal with that. Sarah Tracy's book on alcoholism in America has a section on Keeley, and I also have a couple of articles that anyone could Google and find, but that's all pretty academic sort of stuff. If you look at the city of Dwight and their online stuff. They've got a reasonably good overview of Keeley and the Keeley Company, but mostly it's gonna be in historical sources, which are pretty focused on other professional historians, really.

All right, thank you, Tim.

Thanks, you too. Bye.

That was Dr. Tim Hickman, professor at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom. Dwight is just under an hour outside of Chicago, and if you're driving through, be sure to stop by and visit some of the sites that are still standing, including the original home of

Keeley's partner, Oughton, which is now the Country Mansion. The Railroad Station, which is now the local museum, it has a small display on Keeley and the bottles that we were talking about during the show that have become collector's items. There's also the bank across the street from the Railroad Station that was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.