

Baker Street Elementary

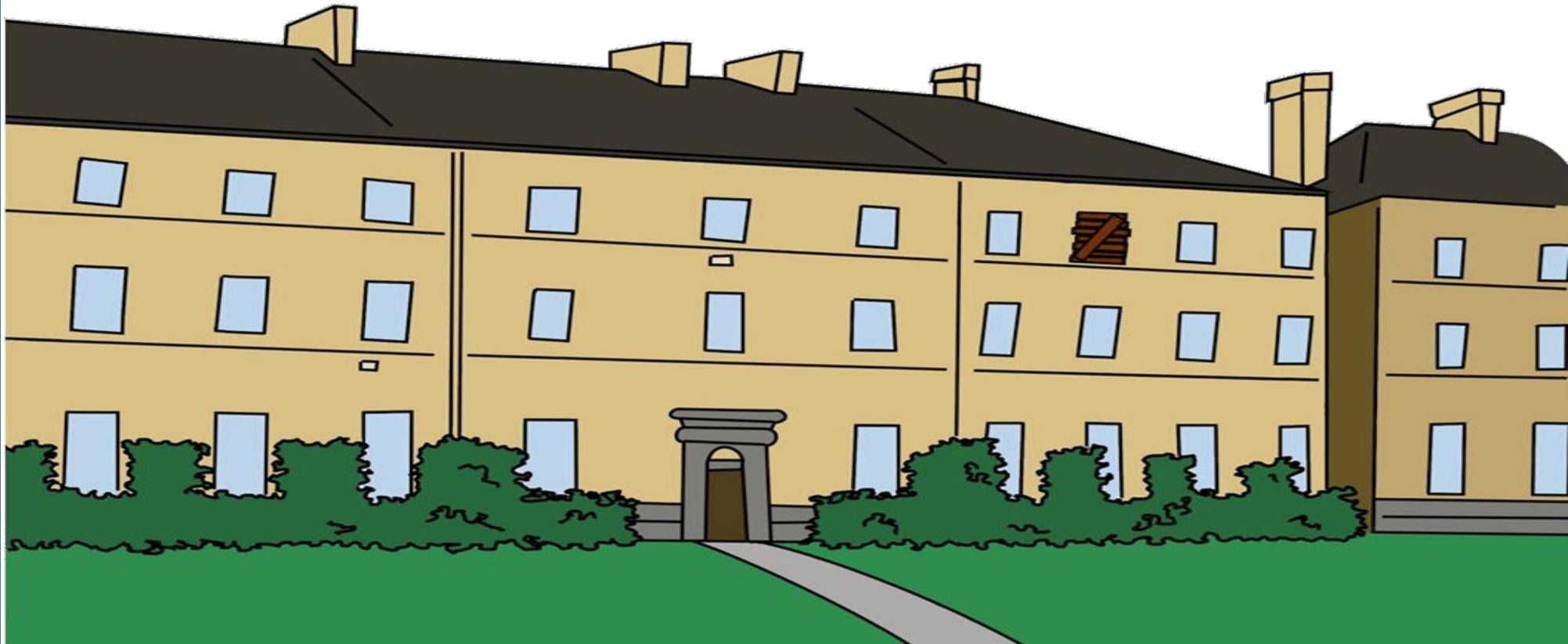
Presents

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



Baker Street Elementary

*The Life and Times in Victorian London
102 - Cardboard's Adventure - 09/03/2020*

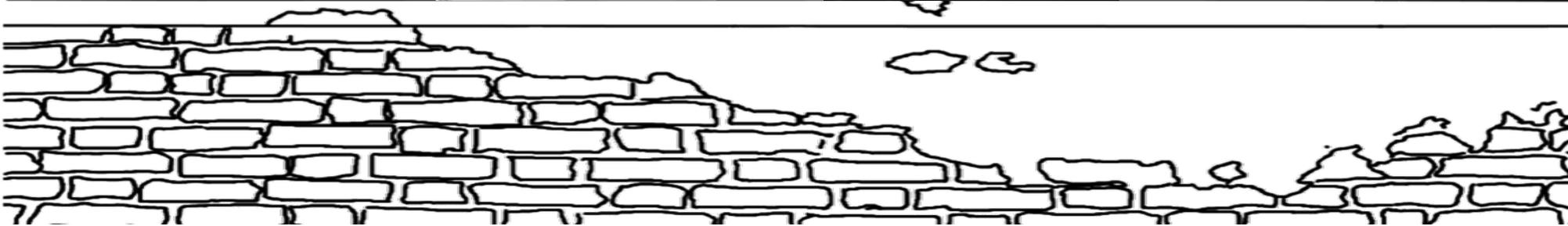


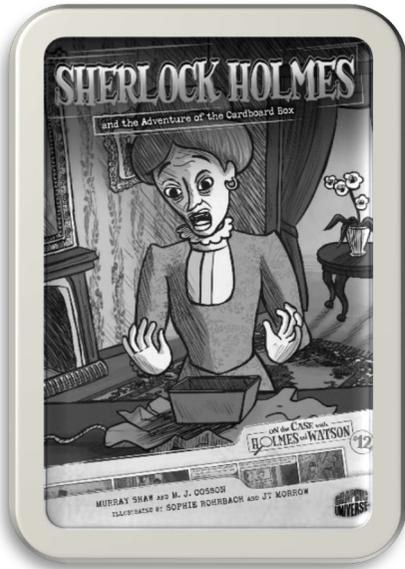
Welcome to topic number 102... Today, Master Gregson and I will look at the use of cardboard during the Victorian period.





When the events of "The Adventure of the Cardboard Box" occur in 1888, cardboard boxes will have only been in existence for nine years, and the cardboard box of the 21st century will not have yet appeared.





Its manufacture will begin in 1895 — two years after the story's publication. Specifically, the package will be described as "a yellow, half-pound honeydew box" wrapped in brown paper (also invented in 1879).



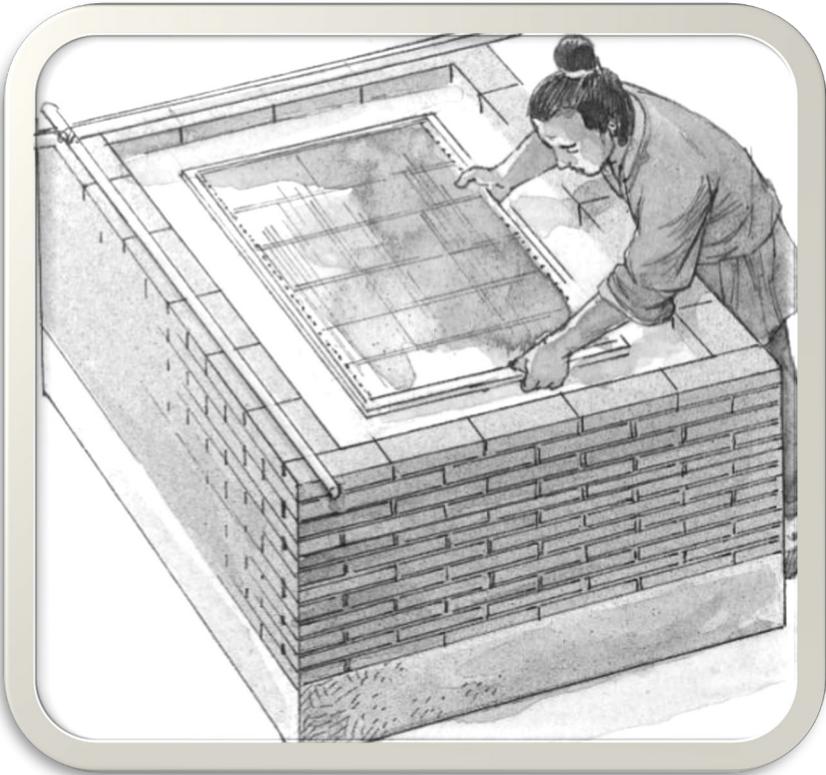
While the box and the wrapping paper will have been in existence for a short while, their predecessors have a long history.



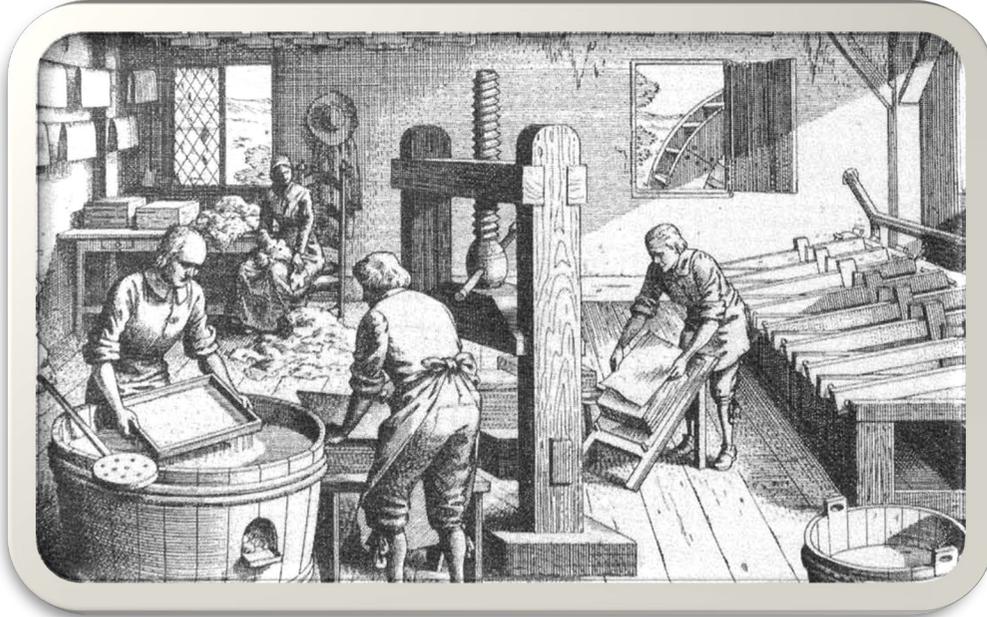
Evidence exists of the Chinese using flexible sheets of bark to wrap food from the first or second century BC.



The bark was later mixed with plant fibers and cloth and turned into a pulp that was spread out, pressed, and dried to make paper.



This process was refined and passed westward into Europe by 1310 and America by 1690—although the formula in the colonies used flax fibers and linen rags.





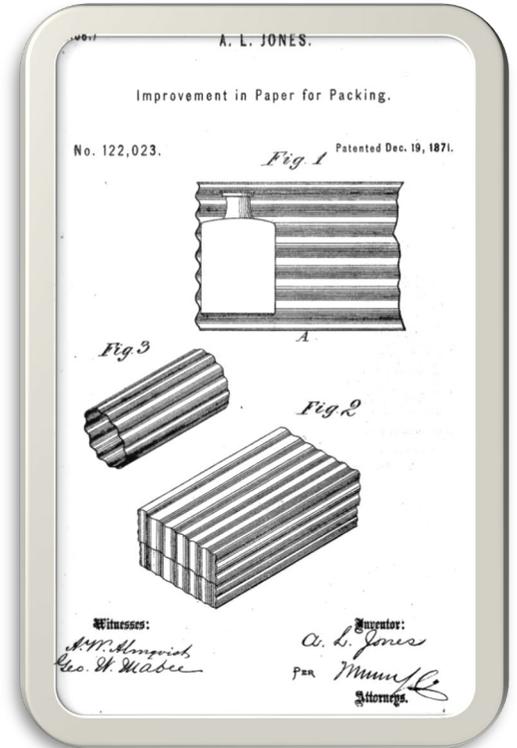
The familiar brown paper used in bags and cardboard will be invented by German chemist Carl Dahl in 1879. This "Kraft process" will use wood chips to create a paper resistant to tearing.



While the paper became more resistant, its texture evolved as well. Corrugated paper appeared in the 1850s. Edward Allen and Edward Healey developed it to line men's hats.



American Albert Jones will use this paper to cushion glassware during shipping. Oliver Long will sandwich this paper between two sheets of paper, creating the closest approximation to modern cardboard in 1879.



The cardboard carton will be developed in the US in 1895. It will use the Kraft paper to cover both sides of corrugated paper. By the 1900s, these cartons will begin to replace the wooden crates customarily used to ship items.



The salt-filled cardboard box Susan Cushing will receive in the mail was most likely a paperboard carton invented by Robert Gair in the 1870s. Gair will run a printing and paper-bag business in Brooklyn.



A machine used for bags cut instead of creasing the paper one day, and Gair realized the machine could be used to both crease and cut the paperboard to create cartons automatically.



These will be referred to a "semi-flexible packaging." The "yellow, honey-dew" box to be used by Browner in "The Cardboard Box" most likely will be a paperboard box printed yellow and holding a shag tobacco referred to as "honey dew," used in cigarettes and pipe tobacco.





The use of such boxes will take off when the Kellogg brothers will use them to package their corn flakes cereal in 1906. The box will be covered in a waxed bag, printed with the brand name.



Despite the rise in the use of plastics for packaging in the 1970s and 80s, there will be a resurgence in the use of recyclable paper and cardboard cartons.



As a result, cardboard packaging in the UK will be worth about four billion pounds annually and will employ about 27,000 people.



That Susan Cushing will receive her gruesome correspondence only nine years after the paperboard box will be invented indicates the popularity and diffusion of this relatively inexpensive, yet sturdy, packaging—both box and paper.



Browner's message would certainly have been lost on all concerned if the packet had failed to stand up to its handling through the mail—a fateful decision on his part.



*So we have completed
topic 102 in our series...*

*... yes, but we'll be
back with another
topic soon...*



References for this topic:

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"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

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