

Source: <http://www.advancedholistichealth.org/history.html>

10,000-year History of Marijuana use in the World

8,000+ BCE

Use of hemp cord in pottery identified at ancient village site dating back over 10,000 years, located in the area of modern day Taiwan. Finding hemp use and cultivation in this date range puts it as one of the first and oldest known human agriculture crops. As explained by Richard Hamilton in the 2009 *Scientific American* article on sustainable agriculture "*Modern humans emerged some 250,000 years ago, yet agriculture is a fairly recent invention, only about 10,000 years old ... Agriculture is not natural; it is a human invention. It is also the basis of modern civilization.*" This point was also touched on by Carl Sagan in 1977 when he proposed the possibility that marijuana may have actually been world's first agricultural crop, leading to the development of civilization itself (see 1977, below).

6,000 BCE

Cannabis [seeds](#) and oil used for food in China.

4,000 BCE

Textiles made of hemp are used in China and Turkestan.

2,737 BCE

First recorded use of cannabis as medicine by Emperor Shen Neng of China.

2,000-800 BCE

Bhang (dried cannabis leaves, seeds and stems) is mentioned in the Hindu sacred text *Atharvaveda* (Science of Charms) as "Sacred Grass", one of the five sacred plants of India. It is used by medicinally and ritually as an offering to Shiva.

1,500 BCE

Cannabis cultivated in China for food and fiber. Scythians cultivate cannabis and use it to weave fine hemp cloth.

700-600 BCE

The Zoroastrian *Zendavesta*, an ancient Persian religious text of several hundred volumes refers to bhang as the "good narcotic."

600 BCE

Hemp rope appears in southern Russia.

700-300 BCE

Scythian tribes leave Cannabis seeds as offerings in royal tombs.

500 BCE

Scythian couple die and are buried with two small tents covering containers for burning incense. Attached to one tent stick was a decorated leather pouch containing wild Cannabis seeds. This closely matches the stories told by Herodotus. The gravesite, discovered in the late 1940s, was in Pazryk, northwest of the Tien Shan Mountains in modern-day Khazakstan. Hemp is introduced into Northern Europe by the Scythians. An urn containing leaves and seeds of the Cannabis plant, unearthed near Berlin, is found and dated to about this time. Use of hemp products spread throughout northern Europe.

430 BCE

Herodotus reports on both ritual and recreation use of Cannabis by the Scythians (Herodotus *The Histories* 430 B.C. trans. G. Rawlinson).

200 BCE

Hemp rope appears in Greece. Chinese *Book of Rites* mentions hemp fabric.

100 BCE

First evidence of hemp paper, invented in China.

100-0 BCE

The psychotropic properties of Cannabis are mentioned in the newly compiled herbal *Pen Ts'ao Ching*.

0-100 CE

Construction of Samaritan gold and glass paste stash box for storing hashish, coriander, or salt, buried in Siberian tomb.

23-79

Pliny the Elder's *The Natural History* mentions hemp rope and marijuana's analgesic effects.

47-127

Plutarch mentions Thracians using cannabis as an intoxicant.

70

Dioscorides, a physician in Nero's army, lists medical marijuana in his *Pharmacopoeia*.

100

Imported hemp rope appears in England.

105

Legend suggests that Ts'ai Lun invents hemp paper in China, 200 years after its actual appearance (see 100 BCE above).

130-200

Greek physician Galen prescribes medical marijuana.

200

First pharmacopoeia of the East lists medical marijuana. Chinese surgeon Hua T'o **uses** marijuana as an anesthetic.

300

A young woman in Jerusalem receives medical marijuana during childbirth.

570

The French queen Arnegunde is buried with hemp cloth.

500-600

The Jewish *Talmud* mentions the euphoriant properties of Cannabis.

850

Vikings take hemp rope and seeds to Iceland.

900

Arabs learn techniques for making hemp paper.

900-1000

Scholars debate the pros and cons of eating hashish. Use spreads throughout Arabia.

1000

Hemp ropes appear on Italian ships. Arabic physician Ibn Wahshiyah's *On Poisons* warns of marijuana's potential dangers.

1090-1124

In Khorasan, Persia, Hasan ibn al-Sabbah, recruits followers to commit assassinations...legends develop around their supposed use of hashish. These legends are some of the earliest written tales of the discovery of the inebriating powers of Cannabis and the use of Hashish by a paramilitary organization as a hypnotic (see U.S. military use, 1942 below). Early 12th Century Hashish smoking becomes very popular throughout the Middle East.

1155-1221

Persian legend of the Sufi master Sheik Haydar's personal discovery of Cannabis and his own alleged invention of hashish with its subsequent spread to Iraq, Bahrain, Egypt and Syria. Another of the earliest written narratives of the use of Cannabis as an inebriant.

1171-1341

During the Ayyubid dynasty of Egypt, Cannabis is introduced by mystic devotees from Syria.

1200

1,001 Nights, an Arabian collection of tales, describes hashish's intoxicating and aphrodisiac properties.

13th Century

The oldest monograph on hashish, *Zahr al-'arish fi tahrim al-hashish*, was written. It has since been lost. Ibn al-Baytar of Spain provides a description of the psychoactive nature of Cannabis. Arab traders bring Cannabis to the Mozambique coast of Africa.

1271-1295

Journeys of Marco Polo in which he gives second-hand reports of the story of Hasan ibn al-Sabbah and his "assassins" using hashish. [First time](#) reports of Cannabis have been brought to the attention of Europe.

1300

Ethiopian pipes containing marijuana suggest the herb has spread from Egypt to the rest of Africa.

1378

Ottoman Emir Soudoun Scheikhouni issues one of the first edicts against the eating of hashish.

1526

Babur Nama, first emperor and founder of Mughal Empire learned of hashish in Afghanistan.

1532

French physician Rabelais's *gargantua and Pantagruel* mentions marijuana's medicinal effects.

1533

King Henry VIII fines farmers if they *do not* raise hemp for industrial use.

1549

Angolan slaves brought cannabis with them to the sugar plantations of northeastern Brazil. They were permitted to plant their cannabis between rows of cane, and to smoke it between harvests.

c. 1550

The epic poem, *Benk u Bode*, by the poet Mohammed Ebn Soleiman Foruli of Baghdad, deals allegorically with a dialectical battle between wine and hashish.

1563

Portuguese physician Garcia da Orta reports on marijuana's medicinal effects.

1578

China's Li Shih-Chen writes of the [antibiotic](#) and antiemetic effects of marijuana.

1600

England begins to import hemp from Russia.

1606-1632

French and British cultivate Cannabis for hemp at their colonies in Port Royal (1606), Virginia (1611), and Plymouth (1632).

1616

Jamestown settlers began growing the hemp plant for its unusually strong fiber and used it to make rope, sails, and clothing.

1621

Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* suggests marijuana may treat depression.

1600-1700

Use of hashish, alcohol, and opium spreads among the population of occupied Constantinople. Hashish becomes a major trade item between Central Asia and South Asia.

1753

Linnaeus classifies *Cannabis sativa*.

1764

Medical marijuana appears in *The New England Dispensatory*.

1776

Kentucky begins growing hemp.

1794

Medical marijuana appears in *The Edinburgh New Dispensary*.

1798

Napoleon discovers that much of the Egyptian lower class habitually uses hashish. Soldiers returning to France bring the tradition with them, and he declares a total prohibition.

1800-

Marijuana plantations flourished in Mississippi, Georgia, California, [South Carolina](#), Nebraska, New York, and Kentucky. Also during this period, smoking hashish was popular throughout France and to a lesser degree in the US. Hashish production expands from Russian Turkestan into Yarkand in Chinese Turkestan.

1809

Antoine Sylvestre de Sacy, a leading Arabist, suggests a base etymology between the words "assassin" and "hashishin" -- subsequent linguist study disproves his theory.

1840

In America, medicinal preparations with a Cannabis base are available. Hashish is available in Persian pharmacies.

1842

Irish physician O'Shaughnessy publishes cannabis research in English medical journals.

1843

French author Gautier publishes *The Hashish Club*.

1846

French physician Moreau publishes *Hashish and Mental Illness*

1850

Cannabis is added to *The U.S. Pharmacopoeia*.

1850-1915

Marijuana was widely used throughout United States as a medicinal drug and could easily be purchased in pharmacies and general stores.

1854

Whittier writes the [first American](#) work to mention cannabis as an intoxicant.

1856

British tax "ganja" and "charas" trade in India.

1857

American writer Ludlow publishes *The Hasheesh Eater*.

1858

French poet Baudelaire publishes *On the Artificial Ideal*.

1870-1880

First reports of hashish smoking on the Greek mainland.

1890

Greek Department of Interior prohibits importation, cultivation and use of hashish. Hashish is made illegal in Turkey. Sir J.R. Reynolds, chief physician to Queen Victoria, prescribes medical marijuana to her.

1893-1894

The India Hemp Drugs Commission Report is issued. 70,000 to 80,000 kg [per year](#) of hashish is legally imported into India from Central Asia.

1906

In the U.S. the *Pure Food and Drug Act* is passed, regulating the labeling of products containing Alcohol, Opiates, Cocaine, and Cannabis, among others.

Early 20th Century

Hashish smoking remains very popular throughout the Middle East.

1910

The Mexican Revolution caused an influx of Mexican immigrants who introduced the habit of recreational use (instead of its generally medicinal use) into American society.

1914

The *Harrison Act* in the U.S. defined use of Marijuana (among other drugs) as a crime.

1916

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) chief scientists Jason L. Merrill and Lyster H. Dewey created paper made from hemp pulp, which they concluded was "*favorable in comparison with those used with pulp wood*" in USDA Bulletin No. 404. From the book "*The Emperor Wears No Clothes*" by Jack Herer *the USDA Bulletin N. 404 reported that one acre of hemp, in annual rotation over a 20-year period, would produce as much pulp for paper as 4.1 acres (17,000 m²) of trees being cut down over the same 20-year period. This process would use only 1/7 to 1/4 as much polluting sulfur-based acid chemicals to break down the glue-like lignin that binds the fibers of the pulp, or even none at all using soda ash. The problem of dioxin contamination of rivers is avoided in the hemp paper making process, which does not need to use chlorine bleach (as the wood pulp paper making process requires) but instead safely substitutes hydrogen peroxide in the bleaching process. ... If the new (1916) hemp pulp paper process were legal today, it would soon replace about 70% of all wood pulp paper, including computer printout paper, corrugated boxes and paper bags.* However, mass production of cheap news [print](#) from hemp had not developed in any country, and hemp was a relatively easy [target](#) because factories already had made large investments in equipment to handle cotton, wool, and linen, but there were relatively small investments in hemp production.

1915-1927

In the U.S. cannabis begins to be prohibited for nonmedical use. Prohibition first begins in California (1915), followed by Texas (1919), Louisiana (1924), and New York (1927).

1919

The 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution banned the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcohol and positioned marijuana as an attractive alternative leading to an increase in use of the substance.

1920s

Greek dictator Ioannis Metaxas cracks down on hashish smoking. Hashish smuggled into Egypt from Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, and Central Asia.

1924

Russian botanists classify another major strain of the plant, *Cannabis ruderalis*.

1926

Lebanese hashish production is prohibited.

1928

Recreational use of Cannabis is banned in Britain.

1930

The Yarkand region of Chinese Turkestan exports 91,471 kg of hashish legally into the Northwest Frontier and Punjab regions of India. Legal taxed imports of hashish continue into India from Central Asia.

1933

The U.S. congress repealed the 21st Amendment, ending alcohol prohibition; 4 years later the prohibition of marijuana will be in full effect.

1934-1935

Chinese government moves to end all Cannabis cultivation in Yarkand and charas traffic from Yarkand. Hashish production become illegal in Chinese Turkestan.

1936

The American propaganda film *Reefer Madness* was made to scare American youth away from using Cannabis.

1937

U.S. Congress passed the Marijuana Tax Act which criminalized the drug. In response Dr. William C. Woodward, testifying on behalf of the AMA, told Congress that, "*The American Medical Association knows of no evidence that marijuana is a dangerous drug*" and warned that a prohibition "*loses sight of the fact that future investigation may show that there are substantial medical uses for Cannabis.*" His comments were ignored by Congress. A part of the testimony for Congress to pass the 1937 act derived from articles in newspapers owned by William Randolph Hearst, who had significant financial interests in the timber industry, which manufactured his newsprint paper.

1938

Supply of hashish from Chinese Turkestan nearly ceases. The U.S. company DuPont patented the processes for creating plastics from coal and oil and a new process for creating paper from wood pulp.

1940s

Greek hashish smoking tradition fades.

1941

Cannabis is removed from the *U.S. Pharmacopoeia* and its medicinal use is no longer recognized in America. The same year the Indian government considers cultivation in Kashmir to fill void of hashish from Chinese Turkestan. Hand-rubbed charas from Nepal is choicest hashish in India during World War II.

1942 U.S. scientists working at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the CIA's wartime predecessor, began to develop a chemical substance that could break down the psychological defenses of enemy spies and POWs. After testing several compounds, the OSS scientists selected a potent extract of marijuana as the best available "truth serum." The cannabis concoction was given the code name TD, meaning *Truth Drug*. When injected into food or tobacco cigarettes, TD helped loosen the reserve of recalcitrant interrogation subjects.

1945

Legal hashish consumption continues in India. Hashish use in Greece flourishes again.

1951

The Boggs Act and the Narcotics Control Act in the U.S. increases all drug penalties and laid down mandatory sentences.

1960

Czech researchers confirm the antibiotic and analgesic effects of cannabis.

1963

Turkish police seize 2.5 tons of hashish.

1965

First reports of the strain *Cannabis afghanica* and was used for hashish production in northern Afghanistan.

1967

"Smash", the first hashish oil appears. Red Lebanese reaches California.

1970-1972

Huge fields of Cannabis are cultivated for hashish production in Afghanistan. Afghani hashish varieties introduced to [North America](#) for sinsemilla production. Westerners bring metal sieve cloths to Afghanistan. Law enforcement efforts against hashish begin in Afghanistan.

1970

The US National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) forms. That same year the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act repealed mandatory penalties for drug offenses and marijuana was categorized separately from other narcotics.

1971

First evidence suggesting marijuana may help glaucoma patients.

1972

The Nixon-appointed Shafer Commission urged use of cannabis be re-legalized, but their recommendation was ignored. U.S. Medical research picks up pace. Proposition 19 in California to legalize marijuana use is rejected by a voter margin of 66-33%.

1973

Nepal bans the Cannabis shops and charas (hand-rolled hash) export. Afghan government makes hashish production and sales illegal. Afghani harvest is pitifully small.

1975

Nabilone, a cannabinoid-based medication appears.

1976

The U.S. [federal government](#) created the Investigational New Drug (IND) Compassionate Use research program to allow patients to receive up to nine pounds of cannabis from the government each year. Today, five

surviving patients still receive medical cannabis from the federal government, paid for by federal tax dollars. At the same time the U.S. FDA continues to list marijuana as Schedule I meaning: "A high potential for abuse with no accepted medical value."

1977

Carl Sagan proposes that marijuana may have been the world's first agricultural crop, leading to the development of civilization itself: *"It would be wryly interesting if in human history the cultivation of marijuana led generally to the invention of agriculture, and thereby to civilization."* Carl Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden, Speculations on the Origin of Human Intelligence* p 191 footnote.

1977-1981

U.S. President Carter, including his assistant for drug policy, Dr. Peter Bourne, pushed for decriminalization of marijuana, with the president himself asking Congress to abolish federal criminal penalties for those caught with [less than](#) one ounce of marijuana.

1980s

Morocco becomes one of, if not the largest, hashish producing and exporting nations. "Border hashish" is produced in northwestern Pakistan along the Afghan border to avoid Soviet-Afghan war.

1985

Hashish is still produced by Muslims of Kashgar and Yarkland in Northwest China. In the U.S. the FDA approves dronabinol, a synthetic THC, for cancer patients.

1986

President Reagan signed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, reinstating mandatory minimums and raising federal penalties for possession and distribution and officially begins the U.S. international "war on drugs."

1987

Moroccan government cracks down upon Cannabis cultivation in lower elevations of the Rif Mountains.

1988

U.S. DEA administrative law Judge Francis Young finds, after thorough hearings, that marijuana has a clearly established medical use and should be reclassified as a prescriptive drug. His recommendation is ignored.

1992

In reaction to a surge of requests from AIDS patients for medical marijuana, the U.S. government closes the Compassionate Use program. That same year the pharmaceutical medication dronabinol is approved for AIDS-wasting syndrome.

1993

Cannabis eradication efforts resume in Morocco.

1994

Border hashish still produced in Pakistan. Heavy fighting between rival Muslim clans continues to upset hashish trade in Afghanistan.

1995

Introduction of hashish-making equipment and appearance of locally produced hashish in Amsterdam coffee shops.

1996

California (the first U.S. state to ban marijuana use, see 1915) became the first U.S. State to then re-legalize medical marijuana use for people suffering from AIDS, cancer, and other serious illnesses. A similar bill was passed in Arizona the same year. This was followed by the passage of similar initiatives in Alaska, Colorado, Maine, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Washington D.C., Hawaii, Maryland, New Mexico, [Rhode Island](#), and

Vermont.

1997

The American Office of National Drug Control Policy commissioned the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to conduct a comprehensive study of the medical efficacy of cannabis therapeutics. The IOM concluded that cannabis is a safe and effective medicine, patients should have access, and the government should expand avenues for research and drug development. The [federal government](#) completely ignored its findings and refused to act on its recommendations.

1997-2001

In direct contradiction to the IOM recommendations, President Clinton, continuing the Regan and Bush "war on drugs" era, began a campaign to arrest and prosecute medical cannabis patients and their providers in California and elsewhere.

1999

Hawaii and North Dakota unsuccessfully attempt to legalize hemp farming. The U.S. DEA reclassifies dronabinol as a schedule III drug, making the medication easier to prescribe while marijuana itself continues to be listed Schedule I as having "no accepted medical use."

2000

Legalization initiative in Alaska fails.

2001

Britain's Home Secretary, David Blunkett, proposes relaxing the classification of cannabis from a class B to class C. Canada adopts federal laws in support of medical marijuana, and by 2003 Canada becomes the first country in the world to approve medical marijuana nation-wide.

2001-2009

Under President G.W. Bush the U.S. federal government intensified its "war on drugs" targeting both patients and doctors across the state of California.

2005

Marc Emery, a Canadian citizen and the largest distributor of marijuana seeds into the United States from approximately 1995 through July 2005 was on the FBI #1 wanted drug list for years and was eventually indicted by the U.S. DEA. He was extradited from Canada for trial in the U.S. in May 2010.

2009

President Obama made steps toward ending the very unsuccessful 20-year "war on drugs" initiated during the Regan administration by stating that individual drug use is really a public health issue, and should be treated as such. Under his guidance, the U.S. Justice Department announced that federal prosecutors will no longer pursue medical marijuana users and distributors who comply with state laws.

2010

Marc Emery of Vancouver, BC, Canada, was sentenced on September 10 in a U.S. District Court in Seattle to five years in prison and four years of supervised release for "conspiracy to manufacture marijuana" (eg. selling marijuana seeds).

2010

Proposition 19 to legalize marijuana in California is placed back on the ballot (named The Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010). Current voter poles suggest that the proposition has about 50% population support and will likely win or lose by a margin of only 2%.

Oct 2010

Just [weeks](#) before the November 02 California election on Prop. 19 Attorney General Eric Holder said federal authorities would continue to enforce U.S. laws that declare the drug is illegal, even if voters approve the initiative, stating "*we will vigorously enforce the (Controlled Substances Act) against those individuals and organizations that possess, manufacture or distribute marijuana for recreational use.*"

Nov 2010

California Proposition 19, also known as the Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act of 2010, was narrowly defeated by 53.6% of the vote. This would have legalized various marijuana-related [activities](#) in California, allowing local governments to regulate these activities, permitting local governments to impose and collect marijuana-related fees and taxes, and authorizing various criminal and civil penalties.

Nov 2012

The States of Colorado and Washington legalize marijuana / cannabis for recreational use; promises are made to the people that these new initiatives will have no impact on medical marijuana in those states. The country of Uruguay legalizes marijuana / cannabis for recreational use. The US District of Columbia decriminalizes personal use and possession of marijuana / cannabis.

July 07, 2014

[Cannabis City](#) becomes Seattle's very first legal marijuana shop for over-the-counter purchase & recreational use. This generated world-wide media attention and a serious discussion over the legalization of marijuana and a possible end to the American "drug war." The first purchase, by [Deb Green](#) a 65-year old marathon-running grandmother from Ballard, is part of the collection of the [Museum of History and Industry](#) in Seattle, Washington.

Nov 2014

The States of Alaska and Oregon legalize marijuana / cannabis for recreational use; the States of California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii and Massachusetts all begin to draft legalization legislation.

July 24, 2015

With the passage of [Senate Bill 5052 Washington State](#) medical marijuana comes fully under the control of the newly re-named Washington Liquor and Cannabis Board ([LCB](#)).