

COMSTOCK PATENT MEDICINE COLLECTION
Mss. Col. No. 96

Scope and Contents

This small collection was donated to the university by Dr. Robert Shaw. Shaw wrote a history of the Comstock Patent Medicine Company of Morristown, New York. The collection consists of a copy of Dr. Shaw's history, four metal printing plates used to print labels for the medicines, and a small container of pills sold by a competitor of the Comstock company.

Company History

William H. Comstock, Sr., owner of one of the country's largest patent medicine companies, the Comstock Patent Medicine Co., moved his operation from New York City to Morristown NY in 1867. The company manufactured such products as Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills, Comstock's Dead Shot Worm Pellets, and Comstock's N. & B. Liniment. They employed as many as 40-50 persons, mostly women, during the golden age of patent medicine between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of WWI. When sales of patent medicines in this country began to decline, sales abroad continued strong. However, the number of employees dropped to 16 in 1922, then fell to 3 by the late 1950s. The factory was closed in 1960 at the death of William H. Comstock Jr.

Series

- I. Company History
Shaw, Robert B. *History of the Comstock Patent Medicine Business and Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972.

- II. Metal Plates for Printing Labels
Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills
Oldridge's Balm of Columbia
Longley's Great Western Indian Panacea
Carlton's Liniment

- III. Pills
Windham Bilious Pills. 1 metal container with label. [These were the product of a competitor of the Comstock Co.]