

FEMALE REGULATORS

Many nineteenth century patent or proprietary medicine producers had a female remedy, usually of herbs, which promised benefits that did not occur. The American Medical Association tried to help the public to “wise up” in the Female Weakness Cures chapter of *Nostrums and Quackery*, first published in 1912. I would like to present some information about female regulators of the past from bottles in my “medicine chest”.



Lydia Pinkham and Dr. Pinkham Emmenagogue.

My earliest example is embossed Dr. Pinkham's / Emmenagogue on one panel of a blowpipe pontiled, deep aqua, square bottle 5 3/4 inches tall. An emmenagogue is a remedy, which stimulates or regulates menstrual flow. I don't know where Dr. Pinkham was located, and have come across nothing to indicate that he and Lydia were related.

A very popular medicine for ladies' complaints came in the bottle embossed Lydia E. Pinkham's / Vegetable Compound, aqua, oval and 8 1/4 inches tall. “It will cure

entirely the worst form of Female Complaints, all Ovarian troubles, Inflammation, Ulceration, Falling and Displacements of the Womb and the consequent Spinal Weakness and is particularly adapted to the Change of Life. It will dissolve and expel Tumors from the uterus in an early stage of development. The tendency of cancerous tumors there is checked very speedily by its use – That feeling of bearing down, causing pain is always permanently cured by its use. It will at all times and under all circumstances act in harmony with the laws that govern the female system.”

Lydia Estes Pinkham began bottling her compound in 1873, in Lynn, Mass. After her death in 1883, the company became known as Lydia E. Pinkham's Sons & Co.

G.F.P. For Women.

A recent addition to my “medicine chest” is an amber, rectangular bottle, 8 1/4 inches tall, embossed G.F.P. / For / Women // Gerstle Medicine Co. // Chattanooga, Tenn. G.F.P. stands for Gerstle's Female Panacea. Leopold Gerstle started small in Union Tenn., in 1871. By 1889 the town was called Bluff City when Gerstle and the town council had a “falling out” over increases in tax and water rates, and Gerstle moved his growing business to Chattanooga. An 1895 ad lists L. Gerstle & Co., Manufacturing Druggists, Office and Laboratory on Electric Street Halloway, Highland Park. St. Joseph's Sarsaparilla and St. Joseph's Liver Regulator were advertised as well as G.E.P. The



Sarsaparilla came in an 8 3/4 inch tall amber rectangular bottle embossed S.J.S. / For The / Blood // Gerstle Medicine Co. // Chattanooga, Tenn. St. Joseph's Family Medicines, L. Gerstle & Co. Continued to be listed in the Chattanooga City Directories through 1920, and the company continues to the present as the St. Joseph's Medicine Co.

In the early 1870s, a young man named Ernest Linwood Andrews was employed by Leopold Gerstle's company, and remained, learning the patent medicine business, until 1888. He formed the Andrews Manufacturing Co., located at 710 Main St., Bristol, Tenn., in 1892. I own an amber, rectangular bottle, 9 inches tall, and embossed St. Andrew's / Wine Of The Life Root, which was Andrew's female regulator. A partial label gives "Female Regulator Or Wine Of Life Root – Prepared Only By Andrews Mfg. Co., Bristol, Tenn." and is attached to the rare embossed St. Andrew's / Sarsaparilla. Charlie Barnette of Bristol, owns an embossed Wine Of Life Root bottle with a St. Andrew's Compound Extract Of Sarsaparilla label. The company continued through 1932.



Another Tennessee female regulator came in my bottle embossed McElree's Wine Of Cardui // // Chattanooga Medicine Co., aqua, rectangular, and 8 1/2 inches tall. Rev. R.I. McElree learned of an herbal concoction used by Indian women to relieve menstrual pain, and introduced his Cadui in 1879. He sold it to the Chattanooga Medicine Co. in 1882. It was continued by the Chattem Labs until 1982; D.L. Ward of Chattanooga purchased the trademark in 1984, reformulated the product using drugs rather than herbs, and had it back on the market in 1985.

Dr. S. Andral Kilmer and Co. had a line of family remedies from Binghamton, NY beginning in the 1870s, which included the Complete Female Remedy. The 9-inch tall aqua, rectangular bottle so embossed is rare. It was soon replaced with long bar to block out Complete; why, I don't know. Then came the 8 3/8 inch bottle embossed all on the front panel Dr. Kilmer's / Female / Remedy / Binghamton, NY. By 1903, the Female Remedy and several other products had been discontinued.

The bottle embossed Bradfield's // Female / Regulator // Atlanta, Ga. // Womans / Best Friend, aqua, rectangular, and 8 1/4 inches tall, was eventually put out by the S.S.S Co. of Atlanta. The label on a later bottle reads: a Tonic For Women and a Relief of Menstrual Functions when not caused by malformation or that do not require surgical treatment – Only to be used externally. I wonder where you were supposed to rub the stuff?

Whether I'm from another planet or not, I know one thing. There's no such thing as a female regulator....

References:

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