

## MEDICAL ADVERTISEMENTS: CIVIL WAR ERA

The 19th century American public saw advertisements everywhere in daily life, the majority of these were medical in nature. Advertisements were seen on walls, horse carriages, and packaging. Newspapers of the time relied heavily on money from medical advertisements, often as much as 50%. These ads would play off people's fears, such as death and disease, which were in abundance during this time. Medical companies would exaggerate normal life symptoms as tragic signs of terrible diseases. Manufacturers would use things such as celebrities and patriotism to sell their medications.

There were no clear rules or regulations for the creation and advertising of medicines in the 1800s. The lack of regulations allowed companies to lie about what was in the product as well as its effectiveness. Some companies would leave out dangerous ingredients or side effects. Medical advertisements would use symptoms of menstruations and menopause as a way to argue that women were "genetically inferior" and women should purchase the advertised medicine to "cure" themselves of those ailments.

Products were generally marketed to middle-class White people, but these advertisers used other races to sell their products. Calling their products Chinese or Indian, tended to make them seem more exotic. Racial segregation of this time led to African Americans not receiving the same level of medical care as the White population. They often fell prey to these misleading products as a way to treat ailments.

**Note:** This activity can be done as a full class discussion or as individual student work.

### Subjects that can be addressed within this digital archive:

- Civil War
- Civil War medicine
- Early medical advertising

### Curricular Connections

Below are key standards featured in this Learning Lagniappe.

#### 4th Grade

**4.MS.6** Analyze Mississippi's role in the Civil War.

3. Investigate how Mississippi supported the Civil War through economic and military efforts.

4. Compare and contrast the societal roles on the homefront and battlefield during and after the Civil War.

**4.MS.7** Evaluate the impact of Reconstruction and Post-Reconstruction on Mississippi.

1. Contrast life from the Antebellum period to post Civil War (e.g., population, economy, government, infrastructure, etc.).

#### 6th Grade

**6.13** Examine the challenges of civic engagement in the contemporary world.

2. Categorize the positive and negative impacts of new media resources when obtaining reliable information for informed decision making.

#### 7th Grade Compacted

**7C.12/U.S. History** Identify key people and evaluate the significant events of the American Civil War.

Analyze the factors that led to the Northern victory of the Civil War (e.g., total war, industrial, population, resources, technological advantages, etc.).

#### 8th Grade

**8.9** Identify key people and evaluate the significant events of the American Civil War.

5. Analyze the factors that led to the Northern victory of the Civil War (e.g., total war, industrial, population, resources, technological advantages, etc.).

### Mississippi Studies

**MS.6** Analyze the role of Mississippi during the Civil War and evaluate the effects of Reconstruction in the state. 2. Analyze the significance of the military campaigns that took place in Mississippi during the Civil War and the impact wartime conditions had on the civilian population.

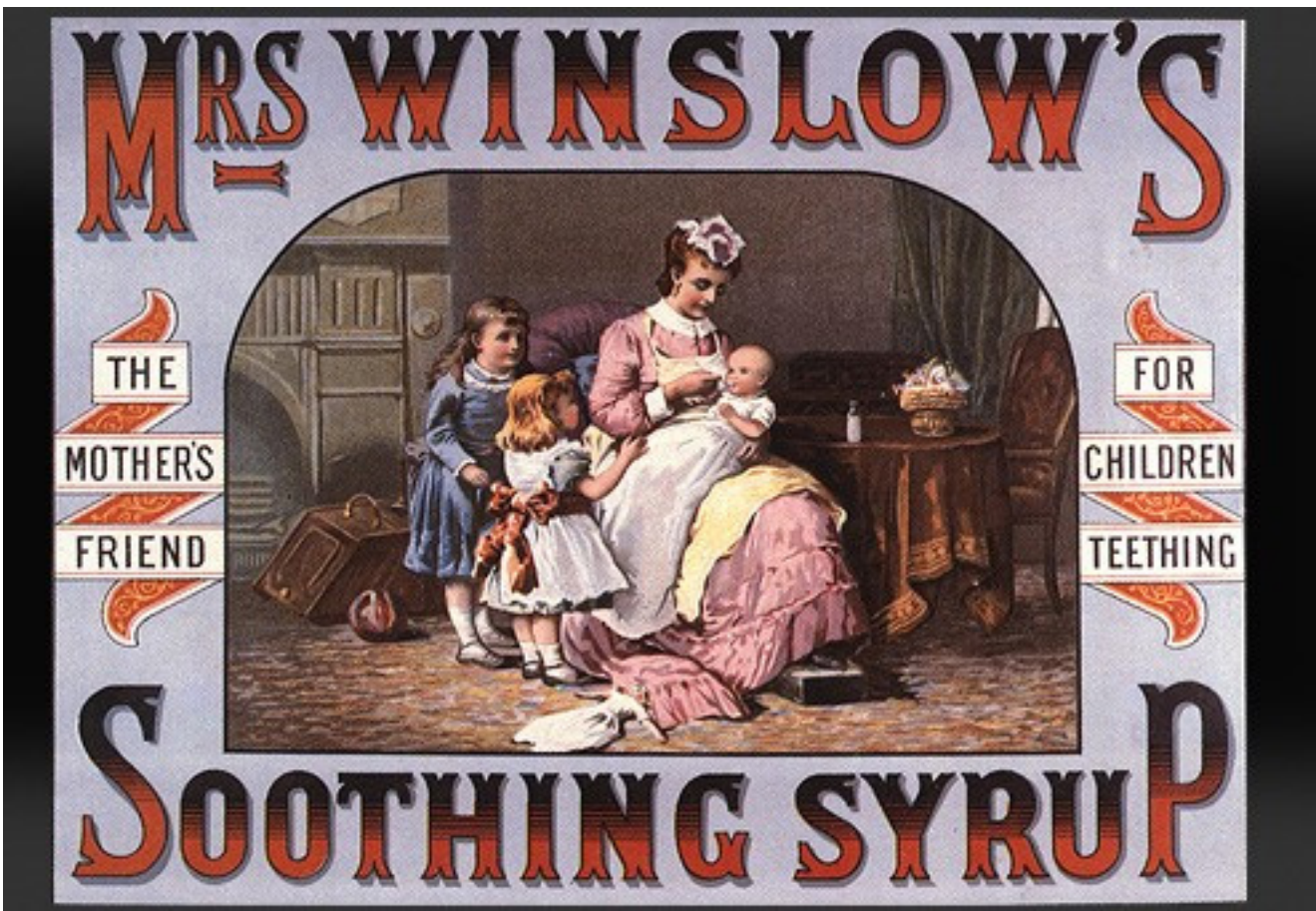
### United States Government

**USG.4** Analyze the creation and implementation of public policy in the United States.

2. Describe the process by which public policy is formed and implemented by the national, state, and local government. 4. Analyze how individuals, interest groups, lobbyists, and the media influence public policy.

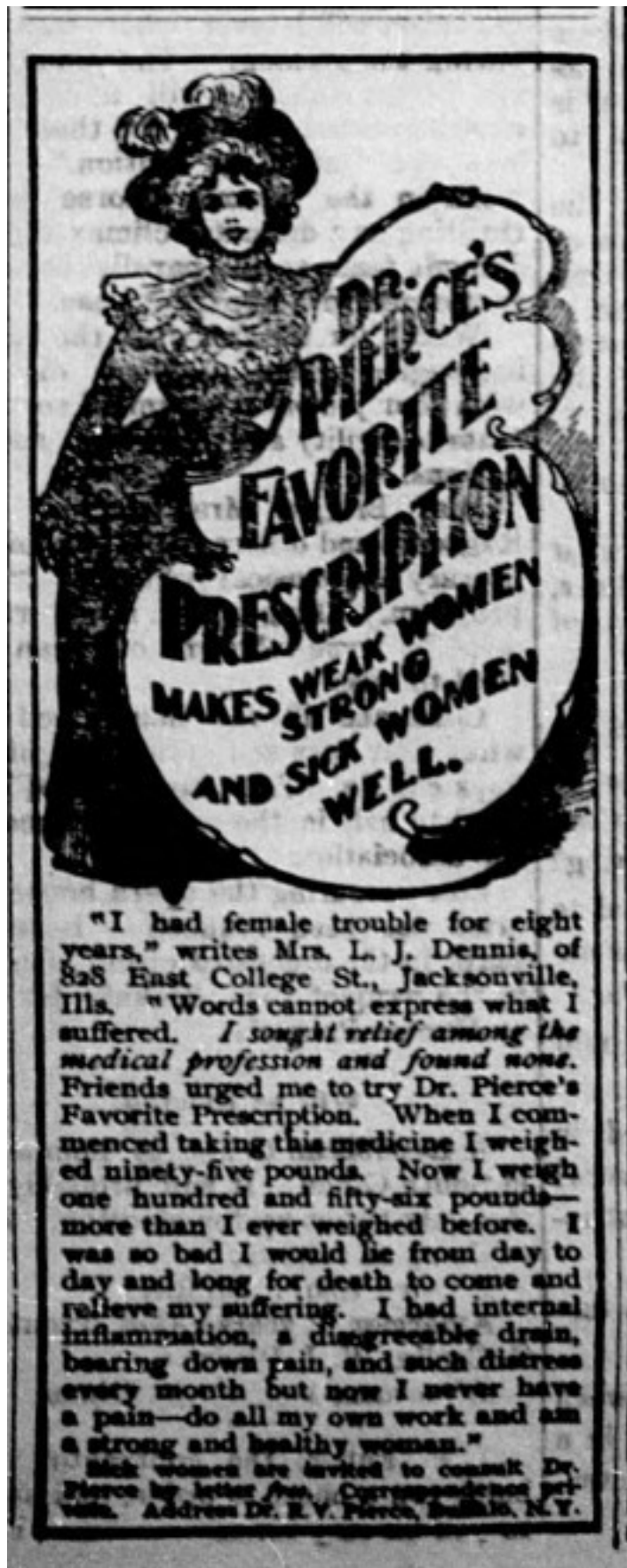
**Directions:** Students should use the linked analysis tool to study the two following advertisements. Teacher may choose to use online version or print the pdf.

<https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/document-analysis/written-document-analysis-worksheet-intermediate.pdf>





Front



Back

**Enrichment Activity:**

All advertisements are designed to persuade, or convince a consumer to purchase a product or service. Design an advertisement for one of the following pain medications: Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup or Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. (both used in previous activity)

Teacher may choose to have students create a digital ad or physical ad.

Include:

- A detailed and colorful drawing of your product
- A catchy name for your product
- At least five sentences which describe your product and what it is designed to cure.
- Determine which group of people are most likely to buy your product. (Men, women, children, young, old, soldier, mom, etc.)
- How much would your product cost if it was sold in the mid-1800s?