[8] Amy Werbel, *Lust on Trial: Censorship and the Rise of American Obscenity in the Age of Anthony Comstock* (New York Columbia University Press, 2018), 51–95.
[9] Anthony Comstock, *Frauds Exposed; Or, How the People are Deceived and Robbed, and Youth Corrupted* (1880; Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1969).
[10] Werbel, *Lust on Trial*, 52.
[11] Van Wagner was arrested on January 17, 1876, and Beebe in December 1875; NYSSV Records.
[12] Werbel, *Lust on Trial*, 68–69.
[13] Testimony of Anthony Comstock, *The People on the Complaint of Anthony Comstock v. Ann Lohman*, Feb. 23, 1878, 5–7; Testimony of Anthony Comstock and Charles O. Sheldon in *The People on the Complaint of Anthony Comstock*, Feb. 23, 1878, 13–14, both in Comstock Folder, Madame Restell Papers, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Understanding Comstock through Primary Sources

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In addition to reading and assigning the essays in this special forum, instructors may want to bring a discussion of Anthony Comstock and the Comstock Laws into their classes through primary sources. This essay introduces a few readily accessible and rich options.

When I teach Comstock, I start with inviting a student to read aloud the original text of the 1873 law.[1] Sandwiched between legislation authorizing a new railroad in Texas and a new board of steam vessel inspectors in Michigan sits what has been for women one of the most consequential passages in all of U.S. federal law: the "Act for Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, Obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use." More commonly known as the Comstock Law, this legislation prohibits citizens from selling, lending, giving, exhibiting, possessing, or offering or causing to be sold, lent, given, or exhibited any material of any sort that could be deemed "obscene" or "immoral." The text is so capacious and yet so vague that reading aloud the litany of actions, intentions, and misinterpretations that could land one in jail really drives home the law's terrifying scope and absurdity.

Primary Source 1: Section 148 of the Comstock Act outlines some of the offenses for which citizens could be arrested and jailed under the new law. "Act for Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, Obscene Literature and Articles of immoral Use," March 3, 1873. "The Comstock Act 1873," *Records of Rights*, National Archives: http://recordsofrights.org/records/24/the-comstock-act

CHAP. CCLVIII. – *An Act for the Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That whoever, within the District of Columbia or any of the Territories of the United States, or other place within the exclusive jurisdiction of the

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United States, shall sell, or lend, or give away, or in any manner exhibit, or shall offer to sell, or to lend, or to give away, or in any manner to exhibit, or shall otherwise publish or offer to publish in any manner, or shall have in his possession, for any such purpose or purposes, any obscene book, pamphlet, paper, writing, advertisement, circular, print, picture, drawing, or other representation, figure, or image on or of paper or other material, or any cast, instrument, or other article of an immoral nature, or any drug or medicine, or any article whatever, for the prevention of conception, or for causing unlawful abortion, or shall advertise the same for sale, or shall write or print, or cause to be written or printed, any card, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind, stating when, where, how, or of whom, or by what means, any of the articles in this section hereinbefore mentioned, can be purchased or obtained, or shall manufacture, draw, or print, or in any wise make any of such articles, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof in any court of the United States having criminal jurisdiction in the District of Columbia, or in any Territory or place within the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States, where such misdemeanor shall have been committed; and on conviction thereof, he shall be imprisoned at hard labor in the penitentiary for not less than six months nor more than five years for each offense, or fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than two thousand dollars, with costs of court.

SEC. 2. That section one hundred and forty-eight of the act to revise, consolidate, and amend the statutes relating to the Post-office Department, approved June eighth, eighteen hundred and seventy-two, be amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 148. That no obscene, lewd, or lascivious book, pamphlet, picture, paper, print, or other publication of an indecent character, or any article or thing designed or intended for the prevention of conception or procuring of abortion, nor any article or thing intended or adapted for any indecent or immoral use or nature, nor any written or printed card, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement or notice of any kind giving information, directly or indirectly, where, or how, or of whom, or by what means either of the things before mentioned may be obtained or made, nor any letter upon the envelope of which, or postal-card upon which indecent or scurrilous epithets may be written or printed, shall be carried in the mail, and any person who shall knowingly deposit, or cause to be deposited, for mailing and delivery, and of the hereinbefore-mentioned articles or things, or any notice, or paper containing any advertisement relating to the aforesaid articles or things, and any person who, in pursuance of any plan or scheme for disposing of any of the hereinbefore-mentioned articles or things, shall take, or cause to be taken, from the mail any such letter or package, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall, for every offense, be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five thousand dollars, or imprisoned at hard labor not less than one year nor more than ten years, or both, in the discretion of the judge."

SEC. 3. That all persons are prohibited from importing into the United States, from any foreign country, any of the hereinbefore-mentioned articles or things, except the drugs hereinbefore-mentioned when imported in bulk, and not put up for any of the purposes before mentioned; and all such prohibited articles in the course of importation shall be detailed by the officer of customs, and proceedings taken against the same under section five of this act.

SEC. 4. That whoever, being an officer, agent, or employee of the government of the United States, shall knowingly aid or abet any person engaged in any violation of this act, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall, for every offense, be punished as provided in section two of this act.

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SEC. 5. That any judge of any district or circuit court of the United States, within the proper district, before whom complaint in writing of any violation of this act shall be made, to the satisfaction of such judge, and founded on knowledge or belief, and, if upon belief, setting forth the grounds of such belief, and supported by oath or affirmation of the complainant, may issue, conformably to the Constitution, a warrant directing him to search for, seize, and take possession of any such article or thing hereinbefore mentioned, and to make due and immediate return thereof, to the end that the same may be condemned and destroyed by proceedings, which shall be conducted in the same manner as other proceedings in case of municipal seizure, and with the same right of appeal or writ of error: *Provided*, That nothing in this section shall be construed as repealing the one hundred and forty-eighth section of the act of which this act is amendatory, or to affect any indictments heretofore found for offenses against the same, but the said indictments may be prosecuted to judgment as if this section had not been enacted.

APPROVED, March 3, 1873

Even before Anthony Comstock succeeded in passing the federal legislation that bears his name, he secured a high-profile arrest under New York's anti-obscenity law in November 1872: Victoria Woodhull. An outspoken feminist and free love advocate, Woodhull pioneered many firsts for women, including becoming the first woman to run for U.S. president (in 1872, on the Equal Rights Party ticket). But, thanks to Comstock, she spent election night in a New York City jail after publishing in her newspaper an account of the affair that the beloved Brooklyn minister Henry Ward Beecher (brother of Catharine and Harriet) was having with his parishioner, Elizabeth Tilton. That's right: the first woman to run for President of the United States spent her election night in jail for writing about the sex that someone else was having.

Woodhull described her big reveal as an "aggressive series of moral warfare," in the November 2, 1872, edition of the newspaper she ran with her sister Tennessee Claflin, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*. She intended her article to "burst like a bomb-shell into the ranks of the moralistic social camp."[2] Woodhull explained that she did not out Beecher because she objected to him having an affair. To the contrary, she outed him because he "has consented and still consents to be a hypocrite." She knew full well that he shared her own views on the institution of marriage, even as he preached the sanctity of marriage from the pulpit each week. Nevertheless, she was jailed for her actions, while Beecher remained free to do as he pleased.

Primary Source 2: Victoria C. Woodhull, "The Beecher-Tilton Scandal Case: The Detailed Statement of the Whole Matter by Mrs. Woodhull." *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*, November 2, 1872, 9–13. Digitized by Hamilton College: https://litsdigital.hamilton.edu/collections/woodhull-claflins-weekly-vol-05-no-07-november-2-1872#page/10/mode/2up

… I condemn him because I know, and have had every opportunity to know, that he entertains, on conviction, substantially the same views which I entertain on the social question; that, under the influence of these convictions, he has lived for many years, perhaps for his whole adult life, in a manner which the religious and moralistic public ostensibly, and to some extent really, condemn; that he has permitted himself, nevertheless, to be over-awed by public opinion, to profess to believe otherwise than as he does believe, to have helped to maintain for these many years that very social slavery under which he was chafing, and against which he was secretly revolting both in thought and

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practice; and that he has, in a word, consented, and still consents to be a hypocrite. The fault of which I, therefore, charge him, is not infidelity to the old ideas, but unfaithfulness to the new. He is in heart, in conviction and in life, an ultra socialist reformer; while in seeming and pretension he is the upholder of the old social slavery, and, therefore, does what he can to crush out and oppose me and those who act and believe with me in forwarding the great social revolution….

To bookend a lesson on Comstock, students might look at the last case Comstock prosecuted before he died of pneumonia in 1915. (The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice was subsequently led by John Sumner until 1950). For years, Comstock had been pursuing birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger, in the hopes of arresting her for publishing "obscene" materials. In 1914, Sanger fled to England to avoid prosecution. (Students can also use the Library of Congress's "Chronicling America" historic newspaper database to track Sanger's travels and arrests.)[3] In 1915, Comstock arrested Margaret's husband Bill Sanger for selling copies of her pamphlet, "Family Limitation." In this fifteen-page treatise, Sanger draws on her experience as a nurse to offer her own, somewhat idiosyncratic advice on how to avoid contraception. For starters, she counsels women to steer clear of the "withdrawal" method, not only because it is not very effective as a means of pregnancy prevention, but more so because it often leaves wives sexually unsatisfied.[4] Sanger's preferred method of birth control was the pessary, a precursor to the diaphragm, but she realized that pessaries could be hard to obtain, so she also described several do-it-yourself methods, including a post-coital douche with Lysol. Lysol was indeed marketed as a staple of "feminine hygiene" for decades, and instructors could pair this reading with an analysis of Lysol's not-so-subtle ads.[5]

Sanger concluded this pamphlet by proclaiming that birth control was already recommended by the best physicians in Europe and the United States, and that the movement "can no longer be set back by setting up the false cry of 'obscenity.'" Nevertheless, Bill Sanger was convicted for selling this pamphlet and spent thirty days in jail. Fifty years later, Margaret Sanger lived to see the day when her 1915 statement became true – at least until the 2022 overturning of *Roe v. Wade* – when the Supreme Court ruled in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) that married couples had a right to privacy, including even the use of birth control; this right was extended to unmarried people in *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972). For a less triumphalist (and perhaps more relevant, as of 2024) encounter with Comstock, students might also study the life of free-thinking birth control radical Ida Craddock, who detailed her many encounters with Comstock in her suicide note.[6]

Primary Source 3: Margaret Sanger, "Family Limitation," New York: Review Publishing Printers, 1914. Digitized by Harvard University Library: https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:2577621$5i

There is no need for anyone to explain to the men and women of America, or elsewhere, what this pamphlet is written for, or why it is necessary that they should have this information. They know better than I could tell them, so I shall not try.

I have tried to give the knowledge of the best French and Dutch physicians, translated into the simplest English, that all may easily understand.

There are various and numerous mechanical means of prevention which I have not mentioned here, mainly because I have not come into personal contact with those who have used them or could recommend them as entirely satisfactory.

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I feel there is sufficient information given here, which, if followed, will prevent a woman from becoming pregnant unless she desires to do so.

If a woman is too indolent to wash and cleanse herself, and the man to[o] selfish to consider the consequences of the act, then it will be difficult to find a preventative to keep the woman from becoming pregnant.

Of course, it is troublesome to get up to douche, it is also a nuisance to have to trouble about the date of the menstrual period.

It seems inartistic and sordid to insert a pessary or a tablet in anticipation of the sexual act. But it is far more sordid to find yourself, several years later, burdened down with half-a-dozen unwanted children, helpless, starved, shoddily clothed, dragging at your skirt, yourself a dragged-out shadow of the woman you once were.

Don't be over sentimental in this important phase of hygiene. The inevitable fact is that unless you prevent the male sperm from entering the womb, you are going to be pregnant. Women, especially the wives of working men, should not have more than two children at most. The average working man can support no more in decent fashion.

It has been my experience that more children are not really wanted, but that the women are compelled to have them either from lack of foresight, or through ignorance of the hygiene of preventing conception. It is the most direct method to help yourselves. Pass this information to your neighbor, and those desiring same, where it is needed….

Every woman who is desirous of preventing conception will follow this advice:—

Don't wait to see if you do NOT menstruate (monthly sickness), but make it your duty to see that you DO.

If you are due to be "sick" on the eighth of August, do not wait until the eighth to see, but begin as early as the fourth to take a good laxative for the bowels, and continue this each night until the eighth. If there is the slightest possibility that the male fluid has entered the vagina, take on these same nights before retiring, five or ten grains of quinine, with a hot drink. The quinine in capsule form is considered fresher, but if this is taken, do not use alcoholic drinks directly after, as it hardens the capsules, thus delaying the action of the quinine.

By taking the above precautions, you will prevent the ovum from making its nest in the lining of the womb.

Women of intelligence, who refuse to have children until they are ready for them, keep definite track of the date of their menstrual periods. A calendar should be kept, on which can be marked the date of the last menstruation, as well as the date when the next period should occur.

Women must learn to know their own bodies, and watch and know definitely how regular or irregular they are: if the period comes regularly every twenty-eight days (normal) or every thirty days, as in the case of many young girls. Mark it accordingly on your private calendar; do not leave it to memory or guess work.

Only ignorance and indifference will cause one to be careless in this most important matter.

A very good laxative (though it is a patent medicine) is Beecham's Pills. Two of these taken night and morning, four days before menstruation, will give a good cleansing flow of the bowels, and assist with the menstrual flow. Castor Oil is also a good laxative.

Physicians may object to this advice because Beecham's Pills are a patent medicine. But until they are willing to give open advice on this subject, we must resort to such as the least harmful until such time as they do.

If a woman will give herself attention BEFORE the menstrual period arrives, she will almost never have any trouble, but if she neglect herself and waits to see if she "comes around," she is likely to have difficulty. If the action of the quinine has not expelled the

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semen from the uterus, and a week has elapsed without no [*sic*] signs of the menstrual flow, then it is safe to assume conception has taken place.

Any attempt to interfere with the development of the fertilized ovum is called an abortion. No one can doubt that there are times where an abortion is justifiable, but they will become UNNECESSARY WHEN CARE IS TAKEN TO PREVENT CONCEPTION.

This is the ONLY cure for abortions.

There is current among people an idea that conception can take place only at certain times of the month.

For instance: ten days after the menstrual period, and four or five days before the next period. This is not to be relied upon at all, for it has been proven again and again that a woman can conceive at any time in the month. Do not depend upon this belief, for there is no reliable foundation for it. There is also the knowledge that nursing after childbirth prevents the return of the menstrual flow for several months, and conception does not take place.

It is well not to depend on this too much, especially after the fifth or sixth month, for often a woman becomes pregnant again without having "seen anything" or without her realizing that she has become pregnant. She thus finds herself with one at the breast and another in the womb.

Use some preventive.

Again, it is believed that conception cannot take place if the woman lies on her left side at the time of the act.

It makes no difference which side she lies upon; she can become pregnant if the semen is not prevented from entering the womb.

Perhaps the commonest preventive, except the use of the sheath or letter, is "coitus interrupts," or withdrawal of the penis from the vagina shortly before the action of the semen. No one can doubt that this is a perfectly safe method; and it is not considered so dangerous to the man as some authorities have formerly viewed it; but it requires a man of the strongest will-power to be certain that he has withdrawn before any of the semen has been deposited in the vagina. It is very difficult to determine exactly whether this has been done.

The greatest objection to this is the evil effect upon the woman's nervous condition.

If she has not completed her desire, she is under a highly nervous tension, her whole being is perhaps on the verge of satisfaction. She is then left in this dissatisfied state. This does her injury. A mutual and satisfied sexual act is of great benefit to the average woman, the magnetism of it is health-giving.

When it is not desired on the part of the woman, and she has no response, IT SHOULD NOT TAKE PLACE.

This is an act of prostitution, and is degrading to the woman's finer sensibility. All the marriage certificates on earth to the contrary notwithstanding.

Withdrawals on the part of the man should be substituted by some other means that does not injure the woman….

The most important part which every woman should learn in the methods of preventing conception is to cleanse herself thoroughly by means of the vaginal douche. After the sexual act, go as quickly as possible to the bathroom and prepare a douche.

Lie down upon the back in the tub, hang the filled douche bag or tin high over the tub, and let the water flow freely into the vagina, to wash out the male sperm which was deposited during the act.

Do not be afraid to assist the cleansing by introducing the first finger with the tube and washing out the semen from the folds of the membrane. One can soon learn to tell by the feeling when it is sufficiently clean.

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It is said that the French women are the most thorough douchers in the world, which helps greatly in keeping the organs in a clean and healthy condition, as well as preventing the male sperm from reaching the womb to mate with the ovum.

Following are some of the solutions to be used for the douche, which, when carefully used, will kill the male sperm, or prevent its entering the womb:—

Lysol is a brown oily liquid which, added to water, forms a clear soapy solution.

One teaspoonful of Lysol to two quarts of water (warm) makes a good solution for douching.

Mix into a pitcher or vessel before placing it in the douche bag.

Bichloride.—Get this in blue or white tablet form from the chemist or druggist; the blue are less dangerous to have about because of their color. Always mix this solution thoroughly in a glass or pitcher before turning it into the douche bag.

One tablet to two quarts of water makes a splendid solution for preventive purposes….

There is little doubt that a thorough douching of the genital passage with an antiseptic solution performed with skilled hands immediately after the sexual act would destroy the male sperm, and nothing else would be necessary.

But there is always the possibility that the sperm has entered the womb before the solution can reach it. It is safer, therefore, to prevent the possibility of the contact of the semen and the ovum, by the interposition of a wall between them. One of the best is the rubber sheath, or "letter." These are made of soft tissues which envelop the male organ (penis) completely, and serve to catch the semen at the time of the act. In this way the sperm does not enter the vagina. The sheaths are obtainable at all the depots and agencies in the large cities, at various prices from 10/- a dozen for the skin gut tissues (elastic sheaths) to 7/6 a dozen for the rubber tissue. These are seamless, thin and yet tough; if properly adjusted, will not break. Fear of breaking is the main objection to their use. If space has not been allowed for expansion of the penis, at the time the semen is ejected, the tissue is likely to split, and the sperm finds it[s] way into the uterus.

The woman becomes pregnant without being conscious of it. If, on the other hand, care is given to the adjustment of the sheath, not fitting it too close, it will act as one of the best protectors against both conception and venereal disease. Care must be exercised in withdrawing the penis after the act, not to allow the sheath to peel off, thereby allowing the semen to pass into the vagina. It is desirable to discard the sheath after it has been used once. But, as this is not always done, care must be taken to wash the sheath in an antiseptic solution before drying it and placing it away for further use.

The sheath is one of the most commonly known preventives in the world. It has another value quite apart from prevention in decreasing the tendency in the male to arrive at the climax in the sexual act before the female.

There are few men and women so perfectly mated that the climax of the act is reached together. It is usual for the male to arrive at this stage earlier than the female, with the consequence that he is further incapacitated to satisfy her desire for some time after. During this time the woman is in a highly nervous condition, and it is the opinion of the best medical authorities that a continuous condition of this unsatisfied state brings on or causes disease of her generative organs, besides giving her a perfect horror and repulsion for the sexual act. Thousands of well-meaning men ask the advice of physicians as to the cause of the sexual coldness and indifference of their wives. Nine times out of ten it is the fault of the man, who, through ignorance and selfishness and inconsiderateness, has satisfied his own desire, and promptly gone off to sleep. The woman, in self-defense, has learned to protect herself from the long hours of sleepless nights and nervous tension by refusing to become interested. The sheath will often help in this difficulty.

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There are many young girls who have had no education on this subject, no idea of the physiology of the act, who, upon any contact of the semen have a disgust and repulsion, from which it takes some time to recover. Much depends upon the education of the girl, but more depends upon the attitude of the man towards the relation….

Another form of prevention is the pessary. This is one of the most common preventative articles used in France, as well as among the women of the middle upper class in America. At one time the cost of these ranged up to 30/-, as they were then all imported from France. To-day they are manufactured in the United States of America and in England, and may be had at the agencies from 6/- up to 7/6 and 10/- each. "Lambert's Improved Pessary" is universally considered one of the best makes, as is also the Mizpath, which costs about 7/6 at any reliable agency.

Pessaries are in three sizes—large, medium, and small.

It is well to get the medium size, as the small ones are only for very small-boned women, and easily get out of place.

The French pessary is slightly different in construction from the American.

In my estimation, a well-fitting pessary is the surest method of absolutely preventing conception. I have known hundreds of women who have used it for years with the most satisfactory results.

The trouble is women are afraid of their own bodies, and are, of course, ignorant of their physical construction. They are silly in thinking the pessary can go up too far, or that it could get lost, etc., etc., and, therefore, discard it. It cannot get into the womb, neither can it get lost. The only thing it can do is to come out. And even that will give warning by the discomfort of the bulky feeling it causes, when out of place.

Follow the directions given for use with each box, and learn to adjust it correctly; one can soon feel that it is on right. After the pessary has been placed into the vagina deeply, it can be fitted well over the neck of the womb. One can feel it is fitted by pressing the finger around the soft part of the pessary, which should completely cover the mouth of the womb. If it is properly adjusted, there will be no discomfort, the man will be unconscious that anything is used, and no germ or semen can enter the womb. If the woman should fall asleep directly after, no harm can happen, and it is not necessary to take a douche until the following morning….

Sponges can also be had at the agencies or any drug store. They have a tape attached to them, to be conveniently removed. They should be soaked in an antiseptic solution before coitus, and then introduced into the vagina as far up as they can be placed. Some physicians have recommended the use of the cotton plug, instead of the sponge, to be soaked in a solution of three per cent. carbolic and glycerine, before the act. The male sperm is destroyed by the weakest solution of carbolic acid. Some of the peasants in Europe use the cotton plug soaked in vinegar for the same purpose, and find it satisfactory. In the U.S. America [*sic*] a boracic acid solution has been used for the same purposes, and with satisfactory results. Of course, this requires a saturated solution, as, for instance, one teaspoonful of the powder to a cup of water stirred until dissolved.

Sponges and plugs can be recommended as perfectly safe, if followed by an antiseptic douche before the removal of the sponge or plug, thus preventing the sperm from entering the womb. The problem is: to kill the male sperm upon entering the vagina, or to wash it out, or to kill it directly afterwards. A weak solution of alum may also be used for cotton plugs and sponges, also CARBOLATED VASELINE ON PLUGS….

Suppositories, or tablets, are becoming more generally used in U.S.A. and Australia than any other method of prevention. These may be purchased at any reliable pharmacy. The majority of them are made from cocoa butter or gelatin, which makes it necessary that they be deposited in the vagina several minutes before the act, in order for them to melt.

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Special ingredients negate the effect of the male seed.
Any reliable chemist will make this up for you:—

Boracic Acid, 0.6 grams.
Salicylic Acid, 0.12 grams.
Quinine Bisulphate, 0.2 grams.
Chinosol, 0.12 grams.
Glycerine Gelatine, 6.0 grams.

Allow twenty minutes for melting…

Practically all vaginal tablets act as preventives, but in U.S.A. the make most commonly used is the Aseptikon suppository or tablet. They are stocked by most druggists. They should be kept in a cool place. They are not poisonous and cause no injury to the membranes. They are distributed into a box costing about 3/9….

I have given, in the foregoing pages, the most commonly known means of prevention. Personally, I recommend every woman to use a well-fitted pessary, and learn to adjust it.

Birth control, or family limitation, has been recommended by some of the leading physicians of the United States of America and Europe. The movement can be no longer set back by setting up the false cry of "obscenity." It has already been incorporated into the private moral code of millions of the most influential families in every civilized country. It will shortly win full acceptation and sanction by public morality as well. In cases of women suffering from serious ailments, such as Bright's disease, heart disease, insanities, melancholia, idiocy, consumption and syphilis, all a physician is allowed to do is to tide these women through their pregnancies, if possible. Even though the life of the woman is positively endangered, he cannot relieve her without calling a colleague in consultation. Therefore, the mortality of mothers suffering from these diseases and their infants is very high, and premature births common. To conserve the lives of these mothers and to prevent the birth of diseased or defective children are factors emphasizing the need of sound and sane educational campaign for birth control.

Additional resources for instructors, including online exhibitions and museum blogs with primary sources and artifacts, can be found at the following sites:

June Titus, "Finding Women in the Archives: The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice and Anthony Comstock's War on Contraception," New-York Historical Society.

"Behind the Badge: The U.S. Postal Inspection Service," Smithsonian Institution National Postal Museum.

"Featured Document Display: Vicecapades: 150th Anniversary of the 1873 Comstock Act," National Archives Museum, 2023.

Rhonda Evans, "Vice Wars: Researching New York City's Scandalous Censorship Past," New York Public Library, Sept. 15, 2017.

"Social Purity: The Anti-Obscenity and Birth Control Movements, 1870–1930," Museum of the City of New York, 2024 https://www.mcny.org/exhibition/social-purity.

"Puck, Anthony Comstock, and the 'Suppression of Vice' in Chicago," Driehaus Museum Blog, Nov. 15, 2016.

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Notes

[1] "Act for Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, Obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use," Mar. 3, 1873.
[2] Victoria C. Woodhull, "The Beecher-Tilton Scandal Case: The Detailed Statement of the Whole Matter by Mrs. Woodhull." *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*, Nov. 2, 1872, 9–13. Digitized by Hamilton College: https://litsdigital.hamilton.edu/collections/woodhull-claflins-weekly-vol-05-no-07-november-2-1872#page/10/mode/2up (accessed June 11, 2024).
[3] "Margaret Sanger and the Birth Control Movement: Topics in Chronicling America," Library of Congress Research Guides, https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america-margaret-sanger (accessed June 11, 2024).
[4] Margaret Sanger, *Family Limitation* (New York: Review Publishing Printers, 1914. Digitized by Harvard University Library, https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:2577621$5i (accessed June 11, 2024).
[5] Rose Eveleth, "Lysol's Vintage Ads Subtly Pushed Women to Use Its Disinfectant as Birth Control," *Smithsonian Magazine*, Sept. 30, 2013, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/lysols-vintage-ads-subtly-pushed-women-to-use-its-disinfectant-as-birth-control-218734/#:~:text=According%20to%20historian%20Andrea%20Tone,contraception%20during%20the%20Great%20Depression (accessed June 11, 2024).
[6] "Ida Craddock's Letter to the Public on the Day of her Suicide," Oct. 16, 1902, https://www.idacraddock.com/public.html (accessed June 11, 2024).

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