

## THE PROMOTION OF REMEDIES TO PHARMACISTS IN THE USA, 1800-2000

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During the first decades of the young United States, apothecaries primarily sold remedies of British origin or their American-made imitations. After 1815, small U.S. manufacturers began producing remedies of a more “American” nature, i.e., with native ingredients and recipes. These were promoted to the public through almanacs, broadsides, trade cards, and other advertising methods. Generally, pharmacists responded to demand from customers. By the middle of the 1800s, however, competition among remedy manufacturers became so great that they started to appeal directly to drugstore owners.

This presentation will describe and analyze the changing nature of remedy promotion to pharmacists in the American context. Advertisements in pharmacy journals such as the *Druggists Circular*, *American Druggist*, and *Drug Topics* were the primary medium aimed at community pharmacy owners from 1860 to 1930. Other promotional methods – salesmen, promotional mailings, convention exhibit booths, and “premiums” (gifts to pharmacy owners) – were commonly employed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, so-called “house brands” and franchise brands (Rexall) were promoted heavily. With the rise of mass-merchandisers such as Wal-Mart in the 1970s, pharmacies became less important outlets for most remedies and promotions declined. The remedies that are still promoted to pharmacists reveal something significant about the changing nature of community pharmacy practice in the USA.