

# VERMONT HISTORY



VOLUME 83, No. 2 SUMMER/FALL 2015

**'Twill CURE YOUR COLD!**

**25c., 50c., \$1.00 per Bottle.**

This famous Cough Remedy is sold by nearly every Druggist in New England. With each of these Druggists that sell GREENE'S WARRANTED SYRUP OF TAR we have a written agreement that they

**Refund the Purchase Money  
if it Fails to Cure.**

You need not have everything to gain, nothing to lose. Be sure that you get it - at once!

**Greene's Warranted Syrup of Tar.**

**NO CURE, NO PAY!**

- Andrew Harris, Vermont's Forgotten Abolitionist
- Opium Eating in Vermont: "A Crying Evil of the Day"
- When Cowboys Rode the Airwaves

*Kevin Pierce Thornton*

*Gary G. Shattuck*

*Mark Greenberg*

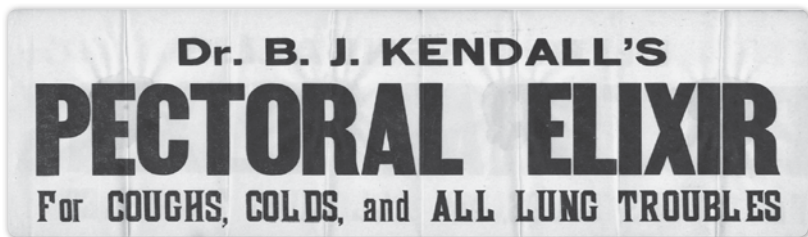
## About the Cover Illustrations

### “’Twill Cure Your Cold!”: Vermont-made Patent Medicines

Vermonters like other Americans in the nineteenth century, sought cures for their ailments, real and imagined, through “patent medicines.” As Gary Shattuck reports in his article, “Opium Eating in Vermont: ‘A Crying Evil of the Day,’” in this issue of *Vermont History*, these ready-mixed nostrums were self-prescribed and vigorously marketed by their creators. Although their benefits were dubious, consumers clung to the hope that, in an era of rapid technological and social change, patent medicines would cure the stresses of modern life. Vermont was home to an untold number of patent medicine companies, many of which are documented by advertisements, publications, and bottles in the collections of the Vermont Historical Society.

This issue’s cover shows an advertising flyer for Greene’s Warranted Syrup of Tar, “sold by nearly every Druggist in new England.” This patent medicine was manufactured by Lester H. Greene, who operated successive drugstores in Swanton, St. Johnsbury, and Montpelier where he prepared his “Syrup of Tar.” The demand for his cold remedy became so great that in 1898 he formed a separate company for the manufacture of the syrup. The company erected a three-story building on River Street in Montpelier and employed numerous people there (see back cover).

The label on the bottle of Greene’s syrup claimed that it contained alcohol, heroin, and chloroform “compounded in proportions and by



*Dr. B. J. Kendall's Pectoral Exlier. Advertising broadside, no date*

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TWO - - - - - DOZEN.

**DR. ROWELL'S** 25  
7750

➤ **CELEBRATED** ◀

**Invigorating Tonic**

—AND—

**FAMILY MEDICINE.**

The People's Favorite for affections of the

**Stomach, Liver, Bowels, Kidneys.**

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25	-	-	Doses,	-	25 Cents.
125	-	-	Doses,	-	\$1.00.

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—PREPARED BY—

**DR. E. ROWELL, SON & CO.,**

**EAST FRANKLIN, VT.      FRELIGHSBURG, QUE.**

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Small Size.      -      -      -      -      -      Small Size.

*Dr. Rowell's Celebrated Invigorating Tonic. Advertising broadside, no date.*

processes known only to the proprietors." In 1916 the United States attorney for the District of Vermont began an investigation into Greene's Warranted Syrup of Tar and its claims to be a remedy for croup and all throat and lung ailments, in violation of the Food and Drugs Act. The company pled guilty and the court imposed a fine of \$50. The lawsuit seems to have put Greene's out of business because its manufacturing building was soon purchased by the U.S. Clothespin Company.

Greene's was just one of many patent medicine companies that flourished in Vermont in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Perhaps the most famous of them was Dr. B. J. Kendall Company of Enosburgh Falls, maker of a spavin cure for horses which was also marketed for human use. Kendall produced a range of other nostrums that he manufactured in an impressively large factory in Enosburgh Falls. They were marketed with attractive, colorful advertising.

Other Vermont patent medicines included Green Mountain Balm of Gilead and Cedar Plaster from M. K. Paine of Windsor, a Blood Purifier and Nerve Tonic made by D.S. Green in Enosburgh Falls, Church's Elixir made by C. F. Smith in West Topsham, Susan Lawrence's Green Mountain Balm from Wm. H. Lawrence & Co., Burlington, Paine's Celery Compound from Wells Richardson & Co., Burlington, Bedell's Balsam or Indian Salve from Richford, and Dr. Rowell's Invigorating Tonic and Family Medicine from Dr. E. Rowell & Son Company, East Franklin, and Frelighsburg, Québec. All of these patent medicines were part of the social and economic scene in the state in the nineteenth century.

PAUL A. CARNAHAN, *Librarian*  
*Vermont Historical Society*

*Front cover: Greene's Warranted Syrup of Tar. Advertising broadside, no date.*

*Back cover: Greene's Warranted Syrup of Tar factory, Montpelier. Photograph, no date.*



# VERMONT HISTORY

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