

potions. Among his medical publications was "The abuse of the male reproductive organs and diseases to which it gives rise."

Valentine Mott Pierce was heir to his father's considerable fortune. Educated at Harvard in 1888, and graduating from the University of Buffalo Medical School in 1891, he was a Republican, a Mason and a prominent member of the Hasty Pudding Club and the Harvard Club of New York City, where he hobnobbed with J. Pierpont Morgan. Pierce was a mover and shaker in the presidential campaigns for both William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.

He was an early campaigner against, and is said to have been the most aggressive

opponent of government regulation of the content of food and drugs. Not surprising given that the foundation of his massive fortune was proprietary medicines, a euphemism for "snake oil."

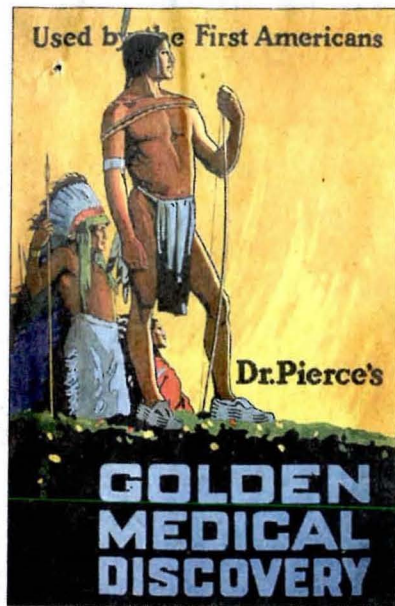
V.M. Pierce fought valiantly against the 1906 enactment of the Pure Food and Drug Act, the first attempt by the

federal government to assure quality control in food and medications. Opponents of the act argued that standardizing labeling and advertising of consumables under federal law would be confusing and burdensome, and that the standards would be subject to change with each new administration.

The regulation of patent medicines and packaged food became a states rights issue, with opponents arguing states were capable of punishing their own "common cheats and swindlers."

V.M. Pierce was also famous for an advertising campaign in which the image of American Indians was displayed on thousands of barns across the U.S.

In addition to his medical empire, which extended to Great Britain, V.M. Pierce was president of the Pierce Glassworks of Pittsburgh, the Charter Bond Company of New York, and the Pierce Coal and Lumber Company of Jackson County, Alabama. He and his wife, Louise, were frequent visitors to St. Vincent Island, which they owned.



SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

This poster for Dr. Pierce's Golden Discovery was displayed on barns across the U.S.

Pierce patriarch 'Prince of Quacks'

By Lois Swoboda
Times Staff Writer

Dr. Valentine Mott Pierce, who owned St. Vincent Island while the Camerons lived there, was a captain of industry. He was the son of Dr. Ray Vaughn Pierce, who purchased St. Vincent in 1907.

R. V. Pierce was a physician, graduating in 1862 from Eclectic Medical College in Cincinnati, which focused on early American herbal medicines, including the use of mercury-based remedies and bloodletting.

After practicing in a hospital for four years, he became a well-known entrepreneur and has been described by scholars of medical history as the "uberquack" and the "Prince of Quacks from the Queen City (Buffalo)." He built and operated the opulent Invalids

Hotel and Surgical Institute in Buffalo, N.Y., which medical historians say was patronized by Butch Cassidy and Etta Place on their way to Colombia in 1901.

After serving as a member of the New York state senate from 1877 to 1879, Pierce was elected from New York as a Republican to the 46th Congress and served from March 4, 1879, to Sept. 18, 1880, when he resigned.

He was famous for his herbal patent medicines, including Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets, marketed by the World's Dispensary Medical Association, a family-owned business. He authored the "People's Common Sense Medical Advisor in Plain English," which sold more than two million copies and was primarily a vehicle for marketing his patent



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Dr. R. V. Pierce.

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