

“Taking the Cure” The Emergence of the Public Health Industry in New York State

Education Material

Background

Saratoga Springs, NY is a community whose location and natural springs were thought to have healing properties. Using the primary sources below explore how this public health industry grew in 19th and 20th century New York.

Review the primary sources below and answer the following questions.

NYS Social Studies Standards

4.6d Farming, mining, lumbering, and finance are important economic activities associated with New York State.


- Students will examine New York State’s key agricultural products during the 1800s and compare these to the key agricultural products of today.
- Students will explore which resources were extracted in New York State over time, the location of those resources, and the economic activities associated with those resources.

8.2b Population density, diversity, technologies, and industry in urban areas shaped the social, cultural, and economic lives of people.

Questions

- **Using the highlighted transcript of the Congress Spring broadside**, is the product a natural resource?
- What claims does the company make regarding the advantages of drinking this water?
- **Using the photographs**, what evidence is there that this health claim turned into a profitable industry?

Primary Sources



STATE OF NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CONGRESS WATER is a purely natural, acidulous or carbonated, saline aperient Mineral water; bottled from the Congress Spring, in the State of New York, U. S. A., and conceded to be the best Mineral water of its kind known.

Its effects are cathartic, alterative and purifying, slightly stimulating and tonic; producing its alterative and beneficial effects without the debility invariably succeeding a course of artificially compounded curatives. It is used to great advantage in affections of the Liver, Dyspeptic, Rheumatic, Calculous and Nephritic (Kidney) Complaints, Scrofula, Cutaneous diseases, Gout, Paralysis, Chlorosis, &c.

The medicinal ingredients of the Congress Water are so naturally pure, and are held in such perfect solution through the agency of the carbonic acid gas, that the water will remain clear and free from precipitation or deposit in any climate, provided the corks do not leak; and it is equally efficacious whether drunk under the torrid or temperate zones.

No artificially compounded medicine has yet been discovered, that can at all compare with this *natural* product, distilled as it is, from the bowels of the Earth by the hand of Omnipotence.

The Congress Water is peculiarly beneficial as a general preservative of the tone of the stomach, and of the purity of the blood, removing by its aperient and alterative effects all predisposition to *fevers, bilious or liver* complaints. It is very generally used throughout the United States of North America, and in the Southern States, it is considered, a *preventive* and *cure*, of the Southern fevers, as well as all those diseases entailed on the white man, by the effect of the Southern climate.

The judicious and persevering use of the Congress Water will almost invariably cure the diseases for which it is herein recommended, unless the disease has passed beyond remedy from the curatives of this world. The proper time to drink the water, to derive most benefit from it, is in the morning before breakfast; if possible, using exercise in the intervals of drinking the requisite number of glasses; the action on the bowels will be accelerated, by drinking some hot coffee, chocolate or cocoa, *before eating* the *solid* portion of the breakfast. The quantity necessary to produce a cathartic effect varies, some constitutions requiring nearly double the quantity needed by others; but when the desired effect is not produced by taking from two to four pints, the conclusion is then, that the bowels are not in proper state to receive and be acted on by it, in such cases, from five to ten grains of Blue Pill (*Pillule Hydrargyri*) should be taken over night, and from two to four pints of Congress Water, drunk on the following morning, in the manner heretofore recommended; when once the bowels are relieved, it is seldom they require a repetition of the pill, the Congress Water, being then sufficient to produce the desired effect unaided, and under its use, the cause of disease will be gradually removed, and the cure go steadily on; the system meanwhile gaining strength instead of being shattered by the means of cure (a common result from the use of cathartic drug medicines), and the spirits recover that elasticity and joyousness which accompanies health alone.

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<p>As analyzed by Dr. JOHN H. STEELE, at the Spring:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Chloride of Sodium</td><td style="text-align: right;">385,000 grains.</td></tr> <tr><td>Hydriodate of Soda</td><td style="text-align: right;">3,500 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Bi-carbonate of Soda</td><td style="text-align: right;">8,932 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Bi-carbonate of Magnesia</td><td style="text-align: right;">95,788 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Carbonate of Lime</td><td style="text-align: right;">98,099 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Carbonate of Iron</td><td style="text-align: right;">5,075 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Silicx and Alumina</td><td style="text-align: right;">1,500 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Hydro Bromate of Potash</td><td style="text-align: right;">a trace.</td></tr> </table> <p>Solid contents in a gallon. 597,943 grains. Carbonic acid gas. 311 cubic inches. Atmospheric air. 7 " "</p>	Chloride of Sodium	385,000 grains.	Hydriodate of Soda	3,500 "	Bi-carbonate of Soda	8,932 "	Bi-carbonate of Magnesia	95,788 "	Carbonate of Lime	98,099 "	Carbonate of Iron	5,075 "	Silicx and Alumina	1,500 "	Hydro Bromate of Potash	a trace.	<p>Analysis, made in London by SIR HUMPHRY DAVY and Professor FARADAY, from Congress Water bottled seven months:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Chloride of Sodium</td><td style="text-align: right;">385.44 grains.</td></tr> <tr><td>Hydriodate of Soda</td><td style="text-align: right;">4.02 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Carbonate of Lime</td><td style="text-align: right;">116.00 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Carbonate of Magnesia</td><td style="text-align: right;">56.80 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Oxide of Iron</td><td style="text-align: right;">.64 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Carbonate of Soda</td><td style="text-align: right;">.56 "</td></tr> <tr><td>Hydro-Bromate of Potash</td><td style="text-align: right;">a trace.</td></tr> </table> <p>Solid contents in a gallon 563.46 grains.</p>	Chloride of Sodium	385.44 grains.	Hydriodate of Soda	4.02 "	Carbonate of Lime	116.00 "	Carbonate of Magnesia	56.80 "	Oxide of Iron	.64 "	Carbonate of Soda	.56 "	Hydro-Bromate of Potash	a trace.
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All business communications relative to Congress Water should be addressed to "CLARKE & WHITE.—Congress Spring—Saratoga Springs, N. Y.," or "New York City."

Clarke And White. *Congress Spring. State of New York, United States of America...* Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Saratoga Springs, 1855. Image.

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.1210290a/?sp=1>.



New York State Archives. *Washing, Filling, and Crowning Mineral Water Bottles at Saratoga Springs*. Saratoga Springs, N.Y. November 1918. Image.

<https://www.nysarchivestrust.org/exhibits/industrialization/factories/washing-filling-and-crowning-mineral-water-bottles-saratoga-springs>



New York State Archives. *Mineral Water Bottles Being Labeled at Saratoga Springs*. Saratoga Springs, N.Y, November 1918. Image.

<https://digitalcollections.archives.nysed.gov/index.php/Detail/objects/7198>

Congress Spring. State of New York, United States of America ... Saratoga Springs. N. Y. [c. 1855].

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As analyzed by Dr. John H. Steele, at the Spring:
Chloride of Sodium 385.00 grains.

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Bi-carbonate of Soda 8.982 “
Bi-carbonate of Magnesia 95.788 “
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Solid contents in a gallon. 597.943 grains.
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