

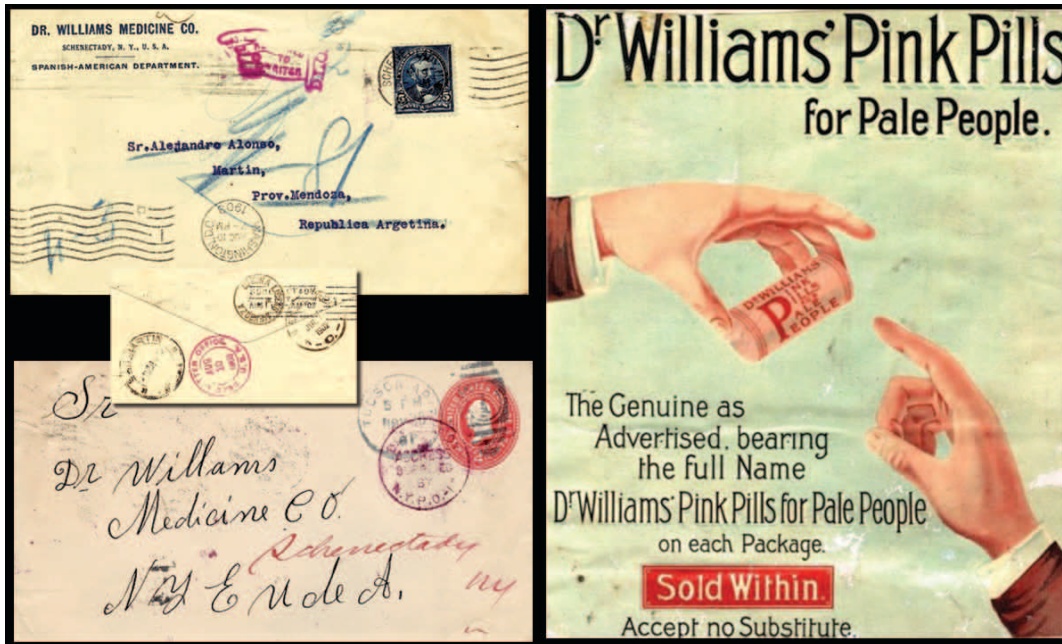
## APS UNIT 28

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EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY



## PINK PILLS FOR PALE PEOPLE

By Bob Bramwell

The turn of the twentieth century was the heyday for itinerant salesmen in decorated wagons peddling patent medicines with claims of vast curative power. Schenectady was home to Willis T. Hanson who promoted his Dr. Williams Pink Pills for Pale People through an international network of sales agents using direct marketing material, such as the poster (right).

Hanson's most extensive sales network was in Latin America. We know that is true because of the steady stream of returned mail, such as a June 19, 1902, letter to Martin, Mendoza Province, "Argetina" that came back to Schenectady on August 11, 1903, after passing from San Martin to Mendoza Directory (LISTAS), the Dead Letter Office, and Washington, D.C. post office (top left).

Occasionally incoming mail needed assistance, this time from the New York Post Office (bottom left). This November 30, 1901, letter originated in Tucson during Arizona's Territorial days. It was directed to NY E[stados] U[nidos] de A[merica] but lacked an important detail that was helpfully added in red ink. The violet auxiliary marking is DIRECTION / ADDRESS / SUPPLIED / BY / N.Y.P.O. A New York postmark and Schenectady machine cancel strike on the reverse put the arrival of the letter on December 6, 1901. ■