



# Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America

*Andrea Tone*

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A down-and-out sausage-casing worker by day who turned surplus animal intestines into a million-dollar condom enterprise at night; inventors who fashioned cervical caps out of watch springs, and a mother of six who kissed photographs of the inventor of the Pill -- these are just a few of the fascinating individuals who make up the history of contraceptives in America. Scholars of birth control typically frame this history as one of physicians, lawyers, and political activists. But in *Devices and Desires*, Andrea Tone breaks new ground by showing what it was really like to produce, buy, and use contraceptives during a century of profound social and technological change.

Tone begins with the passage of the 1873 Comstock Act, which criminalized the birth control business, and ends with the inventions of today (including Depo-Provera and Norplant). Along the way she assesses the social and economical effects of chemical prophylaxes kits for World War I soldiers, condoms, the Lysol antiseptic douche, and the 1973 Dalkon Shield disaster (among others). In lively and engaging prose, her book illuminates the industry's trails from an illicit trade located in basement workshops and pornography outlets to one of the most successful legitimate businesses in American history.

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