**Setting the Stage**

**Comstock Law:**

 "Every obscene, lewd, or lascivious book, pamphlet, picture, paper, writing, print or other publication of an indecent character,

and every article or thing designed or intended for the prevention of conception or procuring of abortion,

and every article or thing intended or adapted for any indecent or immoral use,

and every written or printed card, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice of any kind giving information, directly or indirectly, where, or how, or of whom, or by what means, any of the hereinbefore mentioned matters, articles, or things may be obtained or made,

and every letter upon the envelope of which, or postal card upon which, indecent, lewd, obscene, or lascivious delineations, epithets, terms, or language may be written or printed, are hereby declared to be non-mailable matter, and shall not be conveyed in the mails, nor delivered from any post-office, nor by any letter-carrier."

**Law explained -** made it a crime to sell or distribute materials that could be used for contraception or abortion, to send such materials or information about such materials through the federal mail system, or to import such materials from abroad

**Intent of Law** – to stop the transport of pornography across state lines

**Arguments against abortion and contraception at that time:**

* growing societal concerns over obscenity, abortion, pre-marital and extra-marital sex, the institution of marriage, the changing role of women in society, and increased procreation by the lower classes
* nationwide spiritual and moral revival
* upper classes grew worried that members of the lower classes were procreating at a faster rate
* The American Medical Association (AMA) voiced concern about abortion, not only because of the danger to women, but also because of the possibility of a woman overlooking the duties imposed on her by the marriage contract
* The Catholic Church condemned abortion and birth control

**Effects of Comstock Law**

* Over 4000 people convicted under the law
* Many women persecuted for years by Anthony Comstock
* Limits reproductive rights of women
* Invades privacy of husband and wife