



Who Needs a Doctor? This Elixir Will Do!

A Primer on U.S. Revenue Private Die Proprietary
Medicine Stamps and Nostrums

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Introduction to the Proprietary Tax Stamp

- › By the 1850's, many U.S. Drug Catalogs listed over 400 different proprietary medicines.
- › In the 1860's, the U.S. Government looked to numerous industries to collect revenue to meet the ever-growing expenses from the Civil War.
- › In August 1862, the printing of tax stamps began for such commodities as Playing Cards, Matches, Perfumes, Cosmetics, Canned Fruit and the lucrative business of packaged remedies, also know as Proprietary Medicines.
- › The engraved stamps were produced from modest to eye catching, and while more than two billion were produced, many are unobtainable since they were invariably torn when the bottle or package was opened.



What is in that Nostrum?

- › Many proprietors proclaimed their “magic cures”. There were 35 physicians, or persons claiming to be physicians.
- › There were retail and wholesale druggists, apothecary’s, ministers, liquor merchants, clerks, showmen, bookbinders, etc.
- › A few gained fame, and were elected U.S. Congressmen
 - Demas S. Barnes & Ray Vaughn Pierce
- › By the end of the 19th Century there was an outcry by journalists, physicians and pharmacists over the secrecy of these nostrums, exposing the possible dangers in some patent medicines.
- › This led to the enactment of the 1906 Food and Drug Act.
- › What follows is a brief overview of the firms and products they manufactured and the beautiful affixed Private Die Proprietary stamps.

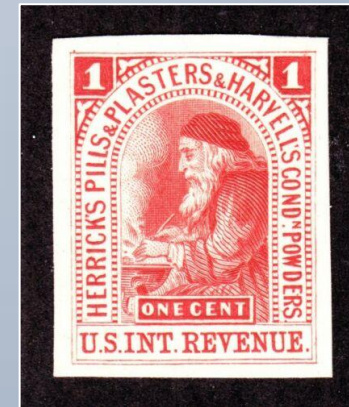


Dr. Herrick's Sugar Coated Pills (& Plasters)

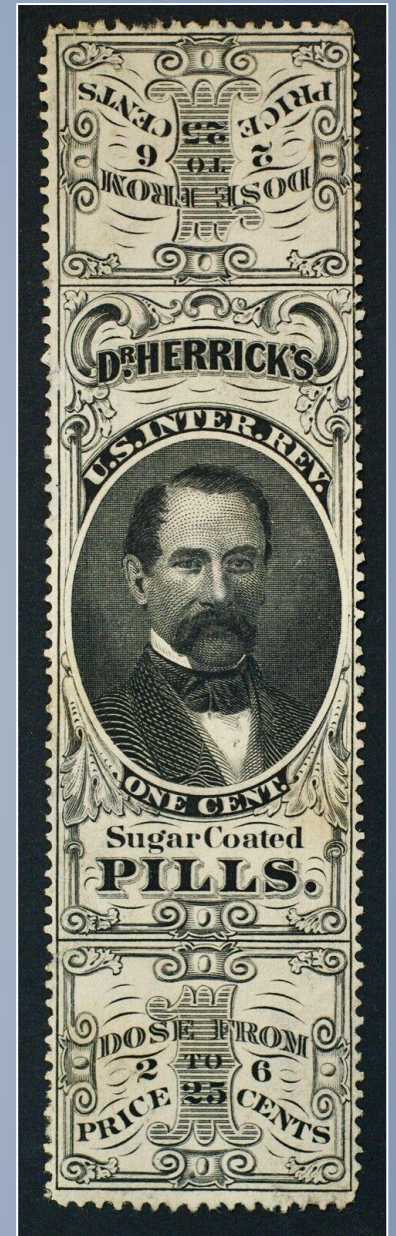
- › In late 1862, certain manufacturers questioned if they could obtain distinctive stamps with their own design and/or trademark.
- › Dr. Herrick had his request approved on Oct. 25, 1862 and became the first to take advantage in the trade.
- › L.R. Herrick, MD originated his sugar-coated vegetable health pills, a cure for many ailments.
- › He also sold many different kinds of plasters (an adhesive strip of material for covering cuts and wounds).



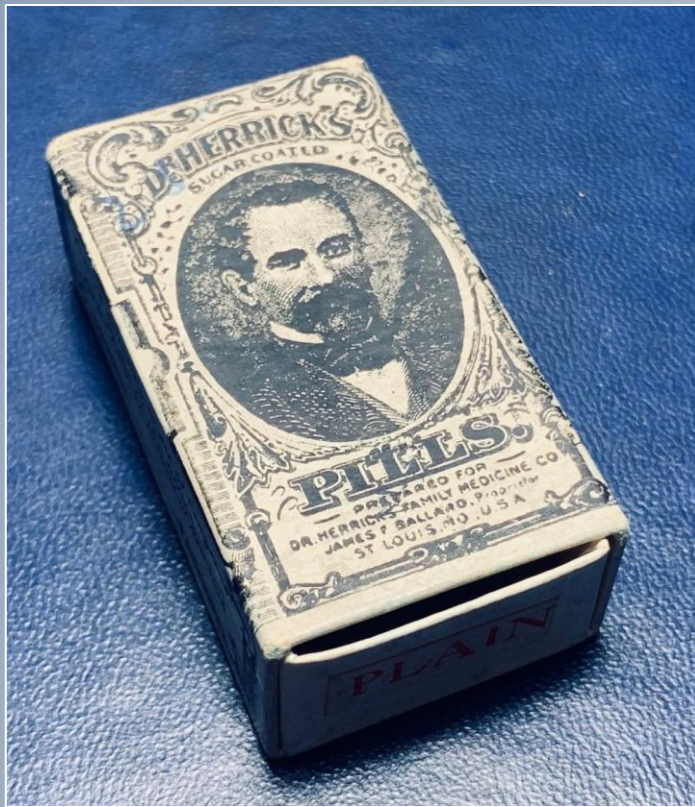
RS118 1¢ Red



RS118P 1¢ Red

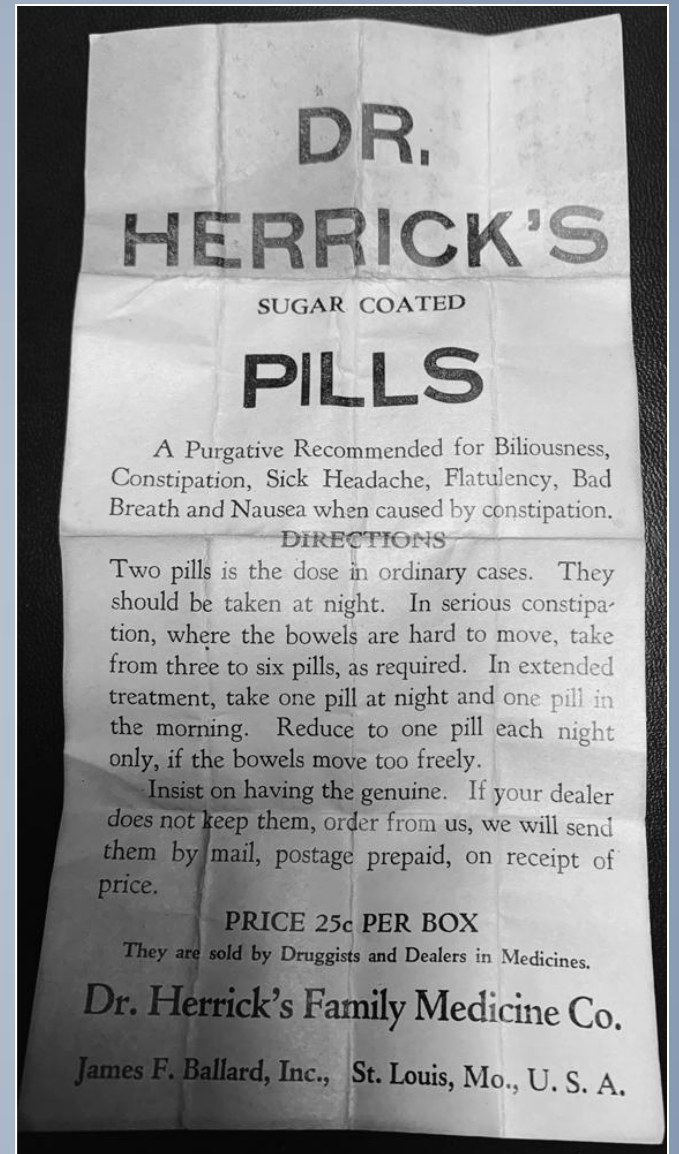


RS117 1¢ Black



Dr. Herrick's Sugar Coated Pills Box, "Plain", circa 1920 with original contents.

Dimensions:
50x30x20 mm



DR. HERRICK'S SUGAR COATED PILLS

A Purgative Recommended for Biliousness, Constipation, Sick Headache, Flatulency, Bad Breath and Nausea when caused by constipation.

DIRECTIONS

Two pills is the dose in ordinary cases. They should be taken at night. In serious constipation, where the bowels are hard to move, take from three to six pills, as required. In extended treatment, take one pill at night and one pill in the morning. Reduce to one pill each night only, if the bowels move too freely.

Insist on having the genuine. If your dealer does not keep them, order from us, we will send them by mail, postage prepaid, on receipt of price.

PRICE 25c PER BOX

They are sold by Druggists and Dealers in Medicines.

Dr. Herrick's Family Medicine Co.

James F. Ballard, Inc., St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.



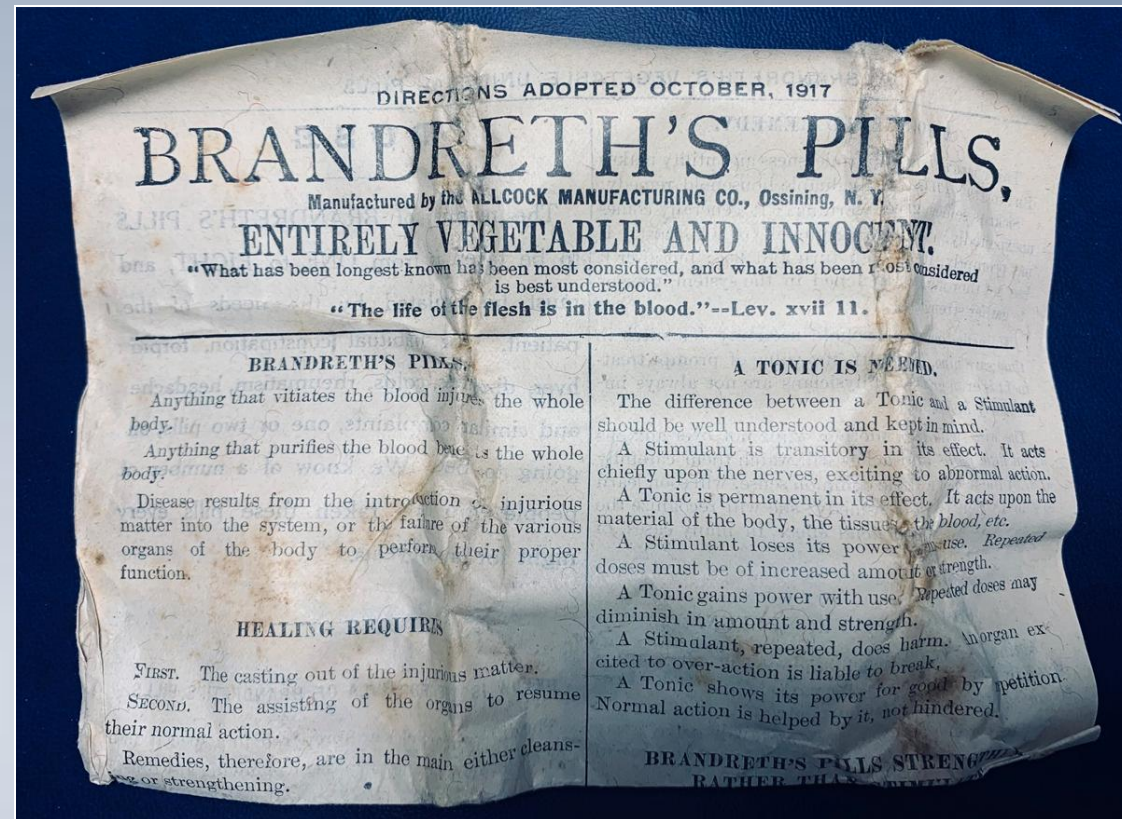
B. Brandreth's Pills & Allcock's Porous Plasters

- › Brandreth's Pills were first manufactured around 1835 in NYC and shortly thereafter moved to Ossining, NY.
- › Soon Allcock's Porous Plasters became another product line.
- › Brandreth was attuned to advertising and commissioned private die stamps early on.
- › Issued imperforate Jul. 1863 to Feb. 1865.
 - 4,925,084 were issued on old paper
 - 10,542,572 on silk paper
 - 105,600 on old paper & 550,000 on silk paper were perforated.



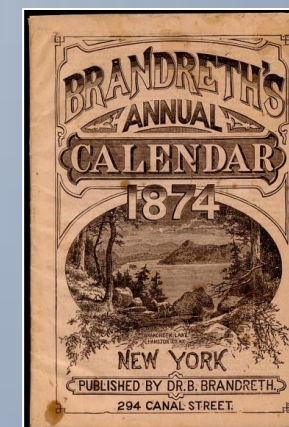
RS34b 1¢ black 41x50mm on silk paper





Brandreth's Pills Wrappers:
Chocolate Coated & Plain
with a facsimile stamp
resembling issued revenue.

Dimensions:
60x45x20 mm





Fleming Brothers, Pittsburgh, PA

Dr. McLane's Celebrated Vermifuge & Liver Pills

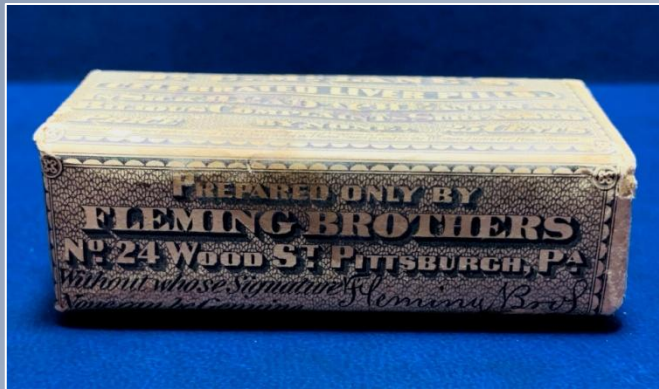
- › Dr. C. McLane died in 1855, his proprietary medicines lived on as products of the Fleming Brothers.
- › These included:
 - Dr. C. McLean's Celebrated Liver Pills
 - Dr. C. McLean's Celebrated American Worm Specific or Vermifuge and Cruciform (for rheumatism of man or beast)
 - Fleming's Ivory Polish (for the teeth)
 - Fleming's Mikado Cologne
 - Kidd's Cough Syrup.



RS88: 1¢ black, issued May 1863 to Oct. 1880. 2,488,362 on old paper & 1,596,573 on silk/watermarked papers.



RS90: 1¢ black (193,500 old paper 1863) and 1¢ blue 1863 to 1883. 5,249,78 on old paper, 3,136,888 on silk paper and 3,566,100 on watermarked paper.



Original, unopened box of McLane's Celebrated Liver Pills, circa 1875.
Dimensions: 63x43x20 mm

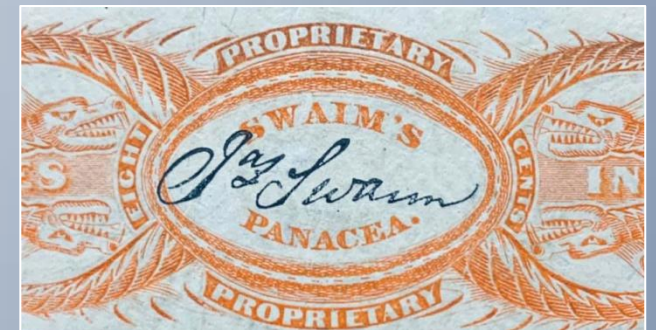
Trade Card for Liver Pills



James Swaim, M.D., Philadelphia, PA

Swaim's Panacea & Swaim's Stomachic Elixir

- › James Swaim, M.D. established a proprietary medicine business in 1820, offering both elixirs until 1870, when William Swaim took over.
- › Butler & Carpenter of Philadelphia, PA were directed to engrave a private die in strip form in orange with dragon-headed snakes which could be used as a cork seal on the Swaim bottles.
- › Measures 160x32 mm, printed in sheets of 16 (2x8), imperforate or die-cut on various paper types, with printed or manuscript signature.
 - RS231: 6¢ issued April 1863, 17,963 on old paper.
 - RS232/233: 8¢ Jas. Swaim issued May 1864.
 - RS234/235: 8¢ Wm. Swaim, issued ~1870 to 1883
 - › 128,805 Jas. and Wm. Swaim issued on old paper
 - › 139,477 on silk paper
 - › 75,553 (presumably all Wm.) on watermarked paper.





1864
WILLIAM AND JAMES SWAIN, PHILADELPHIA, PA
8C ORANGE, DIE CUT



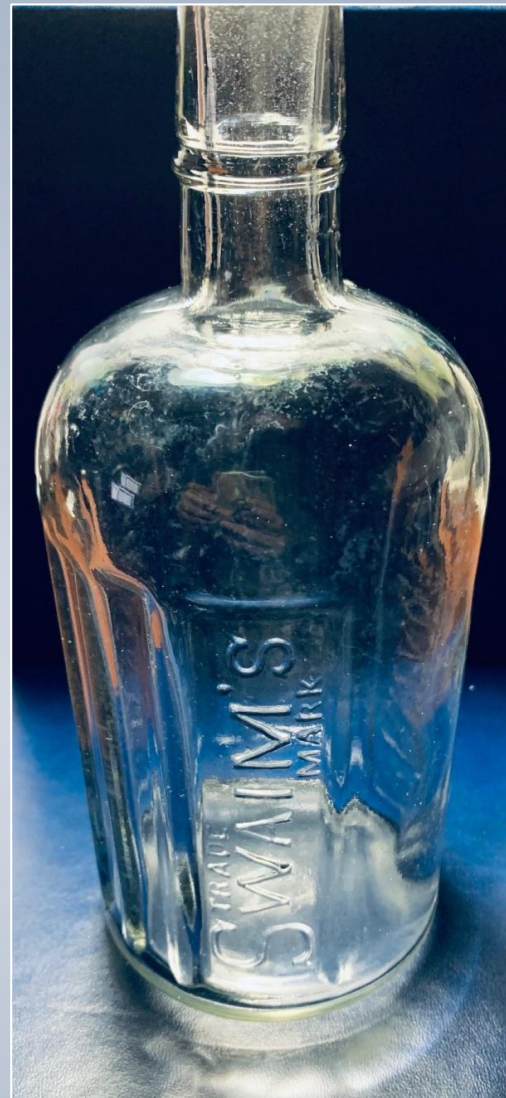
1864
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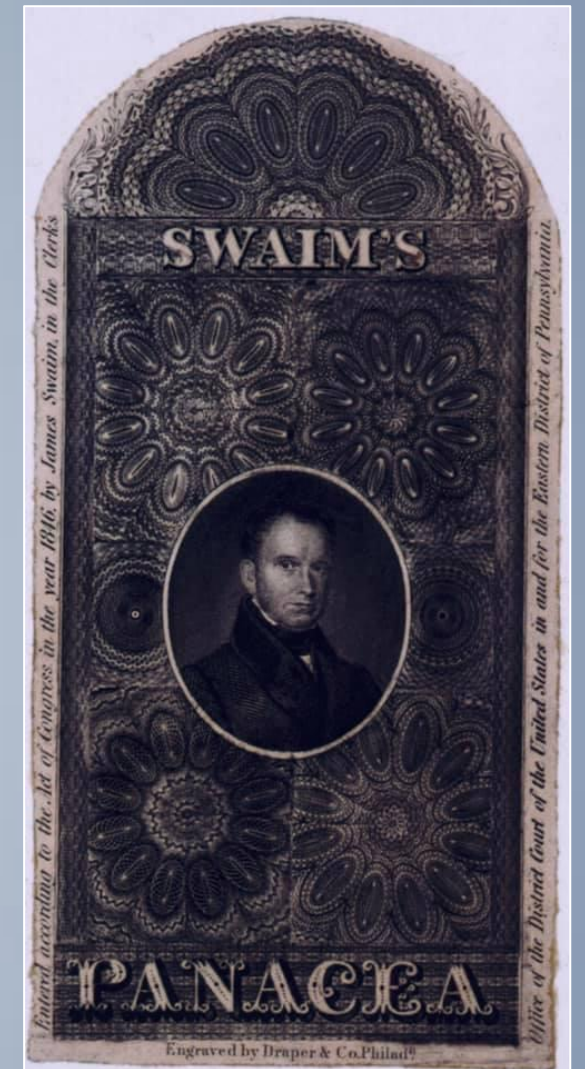
Dr. William Swaim (1830-1883)



Headstone Wm. Swaim

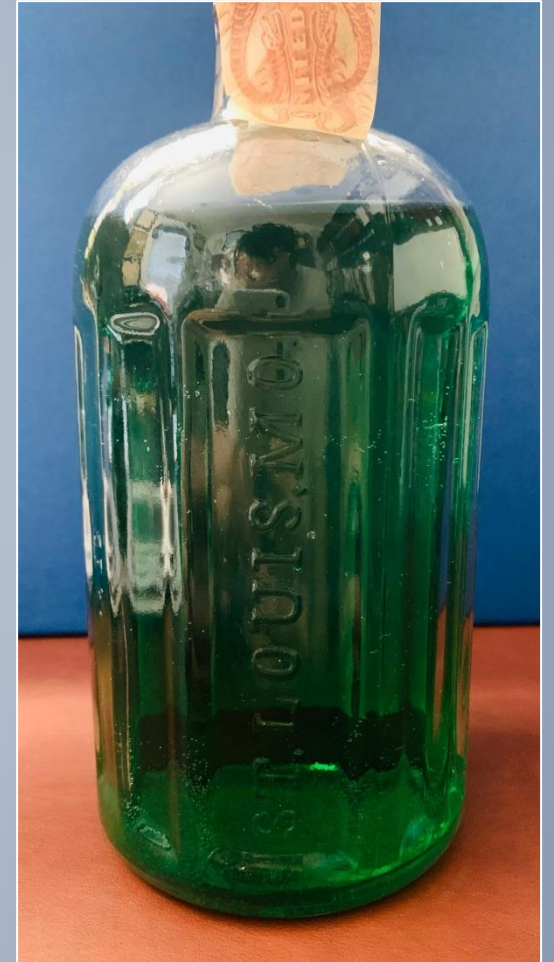


Swaim's Panacea Bottle:
Hand blown in mold, applied lip
(BIMAL) early smooth base,
aqua, round with sunken panels.



Swaim's Panacea Bottle
Label by Draper & Co, Phil.

Facsimile of a Swaim's Panacea Bottle with Draper label & 8¢ Stamp adhered as Cork Seal



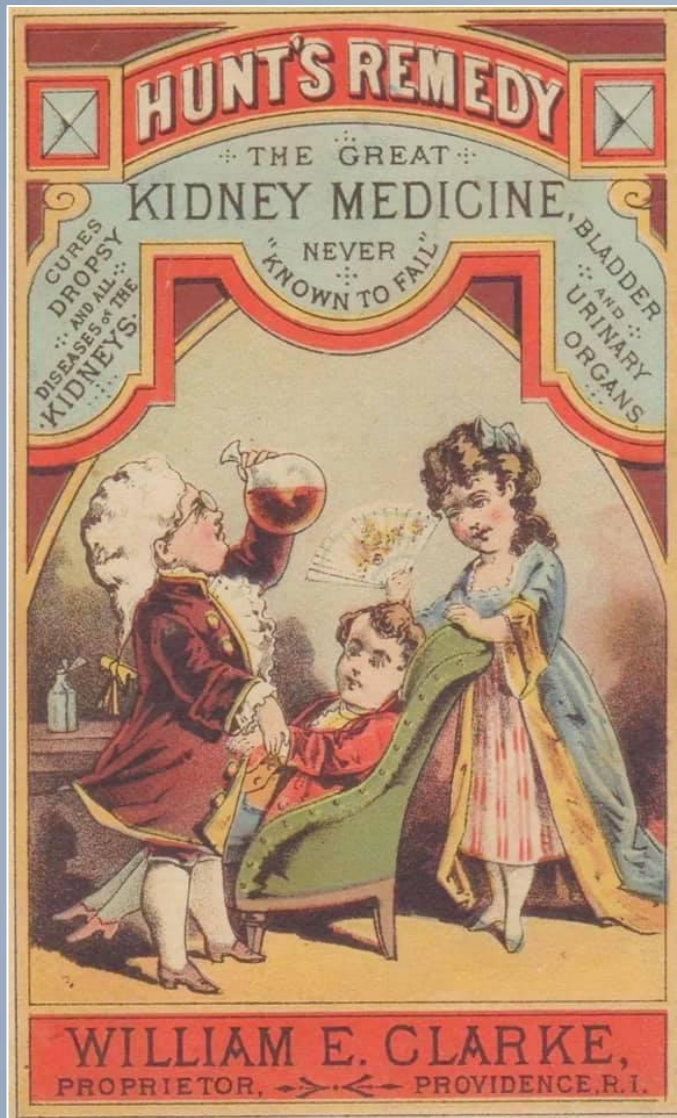


William E. Clarke, Providence, R.I.

“Hunt’s Remedy” - the Great Kidney Medicine

- › “Hunt's Remedy” dates back to early days of Manhattan; was manufactured before William E. Clarke of Providence, R.I. took possession in 1872.
- › Clarke then added Health Pills & Liver Cure, as well as “Hunt's Infallible Eye-Wash”, to his products.
- › Hunt passed away in late-1880/early-1881. The business operated as Hunt's Remedy Company; with no new stamps issued.
 - RS56 - 3¢ Blue, macabre image of man grabbing neck of “death” (see scythe and hourglass) preparing to strike with a bottle of Hunt’s Remedy.
 - Issued in 1880: 9,000 printed on watermarked 191R paper.





Hunt's Remedy Trade Card, ca. 1880



RS57 - 6¢ Black, image of banner advertising Hunt's Remedy "The Great Kidney Medicine."

Issued in 1879-1880:
115,000 on
watermarked paper.



Hunt's Remedy Trade Card, 1883



Benjamin A. Fahnestock, Pittsburgh, PA

“B.A. Fahnestock’s Vermifuge” – It Never Fails...

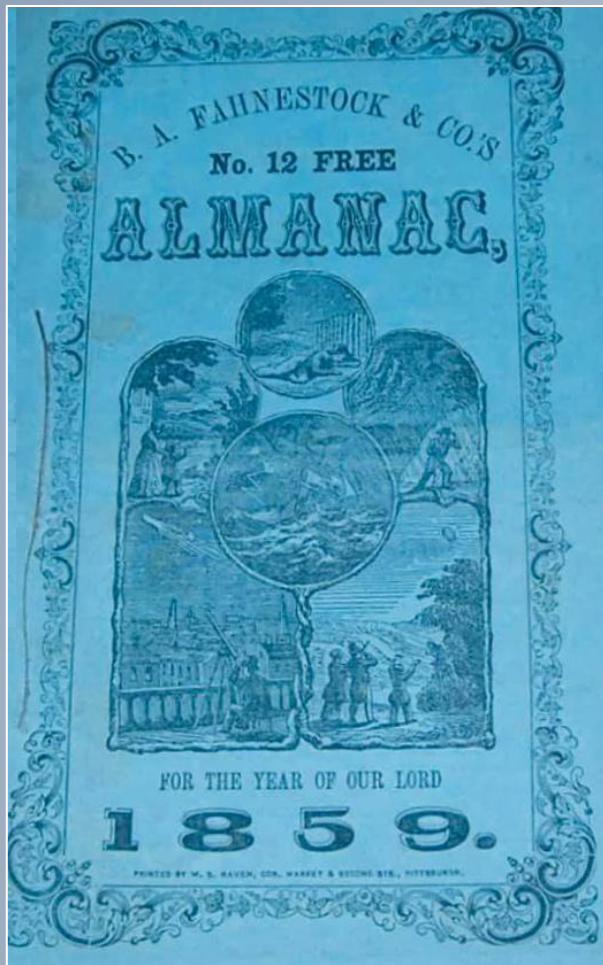
- › Benjamin A. Fahnestock began to market his vermifuge in 1830. It was successful & when stamps were required in 1862 he quickly had one prepared. Issued Feb. 1863 to Aug. 1875. 2,522,750 issued on old paper & 1,322,500 on silk paper.
- › In 1868, Fahnestock died and Schwartz & Haslett took over his drug & proprietary medicine business. They continued to use the Fahnestock stamps until 1875.
- › By then the firm was known as J.E. Schwartz, which appears on revised design in lower left label & ‘Pittsburgh’ moved to lower right label. 750,036 of revised stamps issued on silk, pink & watermarked papers from 1875 to Dec. 1882.



RS84a -1¢ lake, Eagle on branch facing left, imperforate, old paper.



RS215d -1¢ lake, updated design, imperforate, watermarked 191R.



B.A. Fahnestock & Co.'s
No. 12 Free Almanac 1859



Trade Card depicting jolly St. Nicholas dancing, with glove missing, holding holly, as three Owls look down from their perch. Reverse shows an advertisement for Vermifuge.

ESTABLISHED 1827.

B. A. FAHNESTOCK'S
VERMIFUGE.

Children often look pale and sickly from no other cause than worms, and spasms are most frequently the result of these hidden sappers and miners.

When they are irritable and feverish, sometimes craving food and eating ravenously, again refusing wholesome diet, tossing restlessly in sleep, moaning and grinding the teeth, then be assured these symptoms are indications of worms.

Uneasiness and pain in the abdomen, with swelling and hardness, are generally attendant upon their presence.

Many a helpless child has been laid in the grave, when the disease which caused its death has been entirely misunderstood, and when worms have really been the cause. It has been proved beyond cavil that worms exist in the human system from earliest infancy; therefore parents—especially mothers, who are more constantly with their children, cannot be too observing of the first symptoms of worms, for so surely as they exist can they be safely and speedily removed from the most delicate infant by the timely use of B. A. Fahnestock's Vermifuge.

Physicians do not hesitate to recommend it and use it in their practice; and many of the most eminent of the profession, from all parts of the country, testify to its uniform success. In fact it *never fails*. It has frequently been given to children as a safe purgative, not suspecting the cause of the illness, and large quantities of worms were discharged and immediate relief afforded.

Great caution must be used by every purchaser to examine every bottle he buys of it. The simple name of FAHNESTOCK is not sufficient. He must look closely and carefully to see that the initials are B. A. FAHNESTOCK, and be satisfied with nothing else.

FOR SALE BY
O. BROKAW,
Cor. Eighth & Locust Sts., St. Joseph, Mo.

J.B. Rose & Company, New York Centaur Liniment & Castoria

RS204b - major double transfer of "TWO CENTS" in top label and top frame line. Position 1, top row, guide dot top center, double dots upper right, multiple side scratches at left.



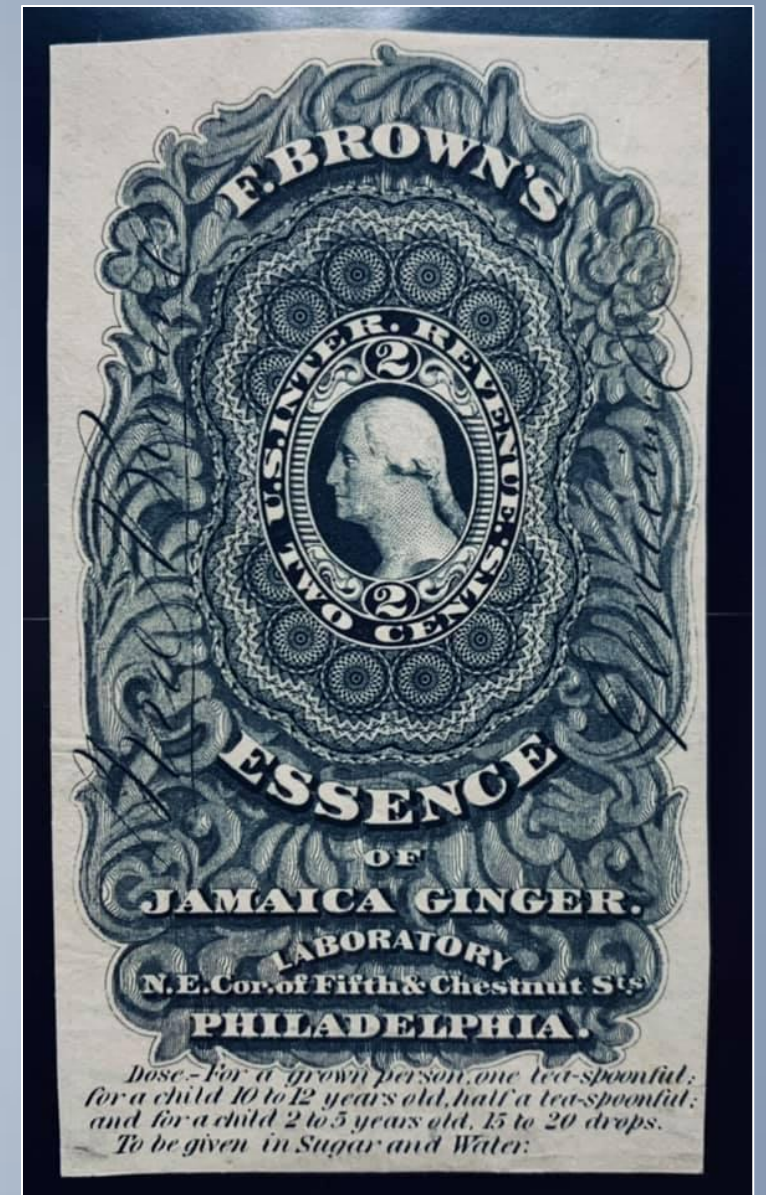
RS204b 40x12 mm





F. Brown's Essence of Jamaica Ginger Proprietary Stamp & Bottle Label

- › Frederick Brown (1796-1864) Co. manufactured and advertised Brown's Essence of Ginger, Brown's Cholera Mixture and several other proprietary's until the early 20th century.
- › In 1822, Fred opened an apothecary shop (Laboratory) at "N.E. Corner of 5th & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia" (as seen on stamp) and thereafter began manufacturing his Essence of Jamaica Ginger (contained *ginger, calamus, snakeroot, cinnamon, mace, cloves* and 50% alcohol).
- › His eldest son Frederick Brown, Jr. graduated from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy in 1861, joined his father's firm, and assumed full control of company when his father passed.
- › Jos. Carpenter & Co. engraved the die, approved March 1869, each measures 52x103 mm, found on thin old, silk, pink and watermarked (USIR) papers.



RS37 2¢ in black, silk paper, imperforate



RS37 - Die I (incomplete 'E' in 'Fred' facsimile signature)



RS38b - Die II (complete recut 'E' in 'Fred' in signature)



The adult and child dose is described in the white space at the bottom of the stamp design, "*To be given in Sugar and Water:*"

This Private Die Proprietary U.S. Revenue Medicine stamp also served as the bottle label.



The engraving detail (rosettes & tessellation) on these stamps is some of the finest produced by Carpenter.

Demas S. Barnes / D.S. Barnes / Demas Barnes & Co.

A Man of Many Talents, including Proprietary
Medicines Owner



- › He served as a Congressman, trustee of the Brooklyn Bridge, director of the Long Island Railroad, and owner of proprietary medicine patents bought from various developers.
- › Born in 1827 in Canandaigua, NY. Opened a wholesale drug firm NYC in 1853, later establishing branch offices in San Fran., N. Orleans & Montreal. Served as agent for various proprietary medicines, incl.: Drake's Plantation Bitters; Wynkoop's Pectoral; Lyon's Magnetic Powder; Lyon's Kathairon; Mexican Mustang Liniment; Hagan's Magnolia Balm & Marchisi's Uterine Catholicon.
- › In 1866, Barnes elected to a term in U.S. Congress from Brooklyn and two years later sold his wholesale firm to John F. Henry. Retired 1870, retained financial interest in variety of enterprises, incl. Lyon Mfg. Co.; P.H. Drake Co.; A.L. Scoville Co. & The Centaur Co. Died May 1, 1888.



The first stamps used by Barnes featured a facsimile of his signature at the bottom, with both his initials issued from March 1863-1865 all on old paper.

In 1863, Barnes wanted his stamps in carmine, was persuaded to use vermilion due to cost. Vermilion color ran, so after initial supply used printing in black resumed.



RS15a 1¢



RS16a 2¢



RS17a 4¢ (n=24)



RS20a 4¢



RS19a 2¢



RS18a 1¢

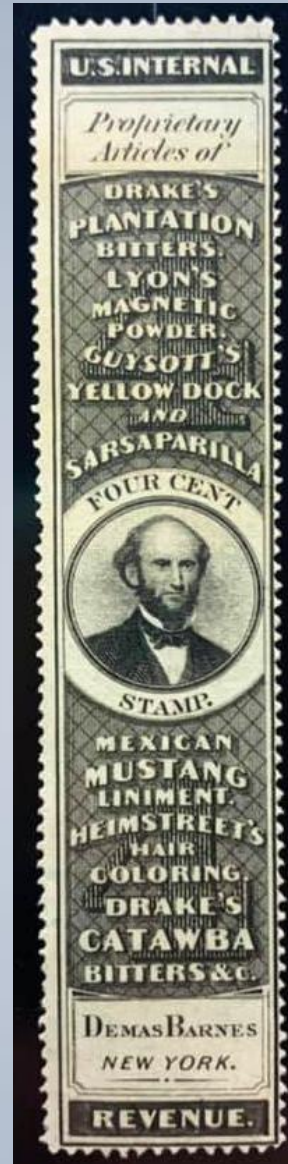
In 1864, Barnes instructed Butler & Carpenter to change his signature on the stamps to a printed name, dropping middle initial, on old paper.



RS21a 1c



RS22a 2c



RS23a 4c



RS24 1c



RS25 2c



RS26 4c

In 1866, Barnes chose to use Demas Barnes & Company on his stamps when they were re-designed horizontally with central image of the firms 'Medicine Warehouse' at 21 Park Row.

J.C. Ayer & Co., Practical & Analytical Chemists, Lowell, MA.



- › James Cook Ayer was in railroad building, invention and patent medicine, manufacturing his own medicines while running an apothecary in the 1840's.
- › When the 1862 Revenue Act was passed, he began to advertise and differentiate his products through private die stamps.
- › Ayer trialed various colors, with the 1¢ stamp being issued in seven colors. 5,336 each of red, carmine, purple, orange and green stamps were delivered May 1863, along with 18,584 in blue and some number in black (RS4).
- › Black chosen, 12,113,122 issued on old paper; 6,411,995 on silk paper & 6,348,393 on pink & watermarked papers, printed up until Jan. 1883.



Stamp was used to seal the wooden box top to the base, and was torn to access contents.



#RS9b & RS9d, silk and watermarked, 2 shades. Used to seal tops of Bottles.



#RS10d, watermarked USIR, ex. Joyce.



The 4 ¢ stamps were also issued in small quantities in black, red, vermilion, green and purple: 4,560 of each in April 1863. Blue was also issued up to April 1883: 9,143,374 on old paper; 6,712,339 on silk paper & 5,384,582 on watermarked paper. Most were die cut into star shapes, others left imperforate.



Trade Card: Ayer's Sugar-Coated Pills, "The Little Favorites"



Encased Postage EP13 & EP15 for Ayer's Sarsaparilla



Aqua Bottle: Ayer's Ague Cure, Lowell, Mass.



Select References

- › *“Patent Medicine Tax Stamps, A History of the Firms Using United States Private Die Proprietary Medicine Tax Stamps,”* by Henry W. Holcombe, Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1979.
- › *“United States Match and Medicine Stamps,”* by Christopher West, Castenholz and Sons, 1980.
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- › *“The Revenue Stamps of the United States,”* by Christopher West, Castenholz and Sons, 1979.
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- › *“The Morton Dean Joyce Private Die Proprietary Collection,”* Auction Catalog, by Andrew Levitt, Philatelic Consultant, Danbury, Ct. 1991.



Thank You!

Questions?

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