



# The American Revenueuer

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H. H. Warner's proprietary medicine stamps feature visual and verbal word play: “Safe Remedies” is inscribed on an image of a safe! Even better, a strong double transfer of this vignette has been found. More inside, pages 59–61.



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*Meeting the needs of the fiscal philatelist for over 50 years*  
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# H. H. Warner & Co. "Safe Remedies" Major Double Transfer of Central Vignette on 6¢ Medicine Stamp, RS258dt

By Charles J. DiComo, PhD

This is the first in a series of articles in which I shall revisit previously described double transfers on U.S. private die proprietary revenue stamps. I will briefly review the history of the proprietors, their wares, and the issued stamps. By presenting high-resolution, digital color images of the salient features of the design doubling, the reader will garner a new appreciation for these unusual and uncommon plate production varieties.

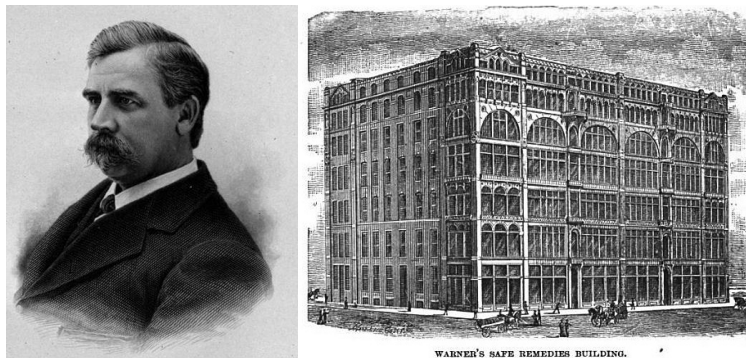
## H. H. Warner & Company "Safe Remedies"

Hulbert Harrington Warner (1842–1923) was a Rochester, New York, businessman and philanthropist who made his first fortune in the 1870s by selling fire- and burglar-proof safes (**Figure 1**). It is estimated that he and his sales agents sold 60,000 safes worth an estimated \$10M at that time (~\$268M in present day dollars). Warner made his second fortune from the sales of patent medicine, with his first acquisition the formula for a nostrum Craig's Original Kidney Cure from Dr. Charles Craig of Rochester, New York.

In the 1880s he had engraved and printed five private die stamps in brown ink on watermarked paper to seal the bottles containing his Warner's Safe Kidney & Liver Cure, Rheumatic Cure, and Nervine nostrums (**Figure 2**). His "Safe Kidney & Liver Cure" sold for \$1.50 a bottle, which required a 6¢ stamp. The first stamp issued was RS255d, a small 6¢ stamp with 340,000 printed and delivered June 14, 1881. The second issued was RS258d, a large 6¢ strip stamp with 3,260,000 printed between November 1881 and May 1883. A bit later, Warner introduced his "Safe Rheumatic Cure and Safe Nervine" and sold for prices that required stamps of one, two and four cents. These are: RS254d, a small 1¢ stamp with 2,651,810 printed between September 1882 and May 1883; RS256d, a large 2¢ strip stamp with 102,000 printed between September 1882 to mid-1883; and RS257d, a large 4¢ strip stamp with 60,000 printed in September 1882. Shortly thereafter on July 1, 1883, the tax for use on proprietary medicines was repealed.

A major double transfer can be found on just one stamp from this series, the 6¢ strip stamp denoted as RS258dt (Riley and DeKay, 1979). This one of just two private die strip stamps for which a double transfer occurs in the central vignette<sup>1</sup>; all other

1. The other being the The Home Bitters double transfer, RS128dt (Eric Jackson, personal communication).



*Figure 1. Hulbert Harrington Warner and the factory he built on St. Paul Street, Rochester, N.Y., the Warner's Safe Remedies Building*

double transfers identified on strip stamps occur on the extreme left or right end or both.

## Warner's Word Play

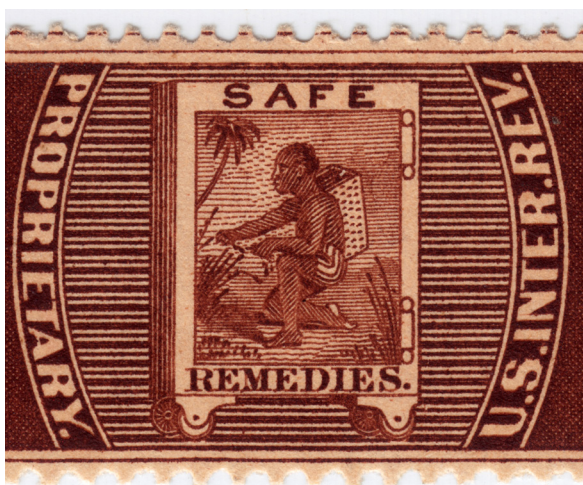
Warner surely had a sense of humor in naming his "Safe Remedies," as that enterprise shared the same building as his business that sold safes, and his private die stamp designs reflect this. Their central vignette (**Figures 2, 3**) features a safe, with an image on its door of a native gathering herbs in an oasis, inscribed "SAFE" above and "REMEDIES" below. The tongue-in-cheek message appears to have been that, just as a safe kept one's valuables



*Figure 2. The H. H. Warner & Co. "Safe Remedies" stamps: RS254 1¢; RS255 6¢; RS256 2¢ strip; RS257 4¢ strip and RS258 6¢ strip*



**Figure 3.**  
*The central  
vignette*



secure, so the “Remedies” would safeguard one’s health when ingested!

The 6¢ strip measures 95x18 millimeters, and was issued in brown in panes of 60 on watermarked paper. The safe is upon a horizontally-lined ground of a central tablet bordered at its ends by a curved label of color between two colorless lines; at left “PROPRIETARY”; at right “U.S. INTER. REV.” Extended out at left and right on a ground of crossed lines is “NOT GENUINE IF STAMP IS BROKEN” and “READ CAUTION ON LABEL.” The design terminates with curved label of color inscribed “SIX CENTS” and “6”; followed by colored, block capital letters “H.H.W. & CO.” on a white background.



**Figure 4.** “PROPRIETARY” NL (left); and DT (right) with horizontal lines and frame of tablet extending into white space above and below



**Figure 5.** NL (left); and DT (right) with doubling of “REMEDIES,” left axle, lower left wheels, and left outer frame of safe

**Figure 6.**  
*Native gathering herbs:  
NL (left); DT (right)  
highlighting doubling  
in palm fronds, face,  
left and right hands,  
lower left grasses and  
horizontal background  
lines*





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## The Double Transfer Under the Microscope

Let us dissect the various prominent features of the major double transfer (DT) in comparison to the normal (NL) variety by examining close-up images of the central vignette. The design shift (west and south) is seen in the center left of the vignette. It is most prominent in “PROPRIETARY” (Figure 4), the left horizontal background design lines protruding into the white arch; all the letters of “REMEDIES” and the left wheels and outer frame line of the safe (Figure 5); and the palm tree and fronds, the left hand, right hand and face of the kneeling native, and the lower left herbs near the ground (Figure 6).

And the search continues; might the 2¢ and 4¢ strips exhibit a similar double transfer?

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- Charles J. DiComo, PhD is a lifelong philatelist, postal historian & award-winning author. He enjoys researching, restoring, writing, publishing, & presenting on a broad array of philatelic & postal history topics. He is President of the Philatelic Society of Lancaster County (PA); President of the Empire State Postal History Society, Editor-in-Chief of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society’s *The Chairman’s Chatter* and Life Member, on the Board of the Pennsylvania Postal History Society and an emeritus member of the Council of Philatelists of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. A native New Yorker, he currently resides in Lancaster, PA with his wife Kathleen and their two daughters, McKenna and Mia. He can be reached at [charles.dicomo@gmail.com](mailto:charles.dicomo@gmail.com).

## My Favorite Stamps: Ottoman Empire 1885 Petitions

By Richard B. Rose

The 1885 Petition stamps of Turkey are what attracted me to collect Turkish revenues in the first place. The design is the epitome of “orientalism,” that combination of abstract Islamic designs with European baroque decoration. The colors are deep and rich. There are about six more colors than

illustrated, the blue is my favorite. Each color is a different value, though the value is printed only on the middle stamp. Most Ottoman revenues are cheaply produced and of indifferent designs, but the Petitions are splendid.

