



Private Die Proprietary Stamps



A Brief Introduction
by Bob Hodges



Introduction

The Revenue Act of 1862 was passed by Congress to help the North pay for the cost of the Civil War. Among the items taxed were matches, patent medicines, perfumes, playing cards and canned fruit.

Revenue stamps were provided by the government to be affixed to the products. Many of these were cancelled or overprinted identifying the company's name at considerable expense.



Introduction

Alternatively, manufacturers were permitted, at their own expense, to have dies engraved and plates made for their personal use. Revenue stamps produced from these private dies became known as “**Private Die Proprietary Stamps**”



Byam, Carlton & Co.
Matches



Dr. D. Jane & Son
Family Medicines

Introduction

The government allowed a 5% to 10% discount on private die stamps and the manufacturers could use their private stamps as free advertisement.

The larger companies were able to purchase large quantities of revenue stamps at the higher discounted percentage.

This was eventually deemed unconstitutional and the stamp tax was repealed on March 3, 1883, effective July 1, 1883.

There are 5 types of Private Die Stamps:

	Scott Designations	No. Diff. Stamps
▪ Match	RO-1 to 186	187
▪ Medicine*	RS-1 to 315	361
▪ Perfumery	RT-1 to 33	33
▪ Playing Cards	RU-1 to 16	16
▪ Canned Fruit	RP-1	1

*Note: Private Die Medicine Stamps RS-278 through RS-315 were issued during the Spanish-American War from 1898-1900.

Total 598

Private Die Match Stamps

- Tax rate of 1 cent per 100 matches
- This tax was about 60% of the wholesale price.
- Issued in denominations of 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 & 12 cents
- Most denominations above 1 cent catalog above \$100

Bock, Schneider & Co.



RO-31

Private Die Match Stamps

The American Fusee Company



RO-9

Notes on Condition

Most Private Die stamps were used to seal the box or container they were attached to. “... the said stamp shall be so affixed on the box, bottle, or package, that in opening the same, or using the contents thereof, the said stamp shall be effectually destroyed;...” 1862 Tax Law, Section 99

Therefore, catalog values are for stamps with minor faults, small nicks and tears and in many times thin paper. A good judge is the appearance from the face side.

Fine to very fine examples can sell for a premium.

Private Die Match Stamps

Star Match Co.



Brocket & Newton



Cramer & Kemp



Jas. L. Clark



H. Bendel Match Co.



William Roeber



Trenton Match Co.



Private Die Medicine Stamps Civil War Era

- Tax rate of 1 cent for each 25 cents of value up to a \$1.
- 2 cents for each 50 cents above a \$1.

Dr. Kennedy



John F. Henry



Private Die Medicine Stamps

Herrick's Pills & Plasters



RS-118

Private Die Medicine Stamps Civil War Era

N.Y. Pharmacal Association



Barry's



Weeks & Potter



Schenck's Mandrake Pills



Private Die Medicine Stamps Civil War Era

John F. Henry



D. Ramsom,
Son & Company



Johnston
& Holloway



A.L. Scovill
& Company



H.R. Stevens



I.S. Johnson
& Company



G.G. Green



Hall & Ruckel



Centaur Co.



T.J. Husband



Helmbold's



Private Die Medicine Stamps Civil War Era

Schenck's Mandrake Pills

Private Die - **Revenue**



Private Die - **Facsimile**



Interesting to note that after 1883 several companies modified their private dies and continued to use them as labels

Private Die Perfumery Stamps

- Issued in denominations of 1, 2, 3 & 4 cents
- Tax rate of 1 cent for each 25 cents of value up to \$1 and 2 cents for each additional 50 cents.

George W. Laird



Kidder & Laird



Private Die Playing Card Stamps

- From August 1, 1864 to August 1, 1866, the tax rate on each pack of cards with a retail price up to 18 cents was 2 cents.
- The rate was 4 cents between 18 and 25 cent retail value.
- Thereafter, the tax rate of 5 cents per deck of 52 cards.
- & 10 cents for a greater number or double decks.
- Issued in denominations of 2, 4, 5 & 10 cents



N.Y. Consolidated
Card Co.

Private Die Playing Card Stamps

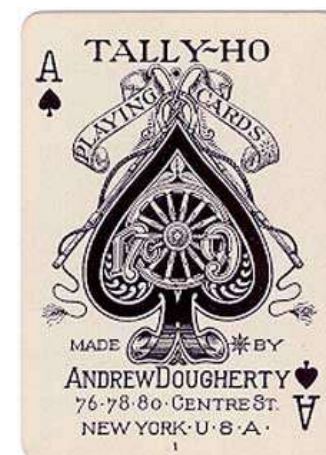
The A. Dougherty Company



Note that these are imported playing cards.



RU-5



Private Die Playing Card Stamps

Samuel Hart
& Co.



Lawrence & Cohen Co.



Victor E. Mauger
& Petrie



Jn. J. Levey



London Goodal



Similar patterns. Goodal operated out of London and Mauger was the firm's U.S. agent.

Private Die Fruit Stamps

- Tax rate of 1 cent per each can, bottle, package or two pounds.
- Used by only one company. T. Kensett & Company of Baltimore.
- Rare. Only 30 copies known. Mostly damaged.



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Spanish-American War Era 1898 -1900

- Private Die Medicine Stamps
- Saint Louis Provisional
- Dr. Kilmer & Co. Provisional

Private Die Medicine Stamps Spanish-American War

- Private Die Medicine stamps were again used from 1898 to 1900 to support the Spanish American war effort.
- Tax rate of $\frac{5}{8}$ cent for each 25 cents of value.
- Only 13 companies used private dies during this period and most can be identified by their $\frac{5}{8}$ fractional amounts.
- RS-278 to RS-306
(29 varieties)



Warner's Safe Cure Co.

Private Die Medicine Stamps Spanish-American War

Lanman & Kemp



J. Ellwood Lee Co.



Radway & Co.



Chas. H. Fletcher



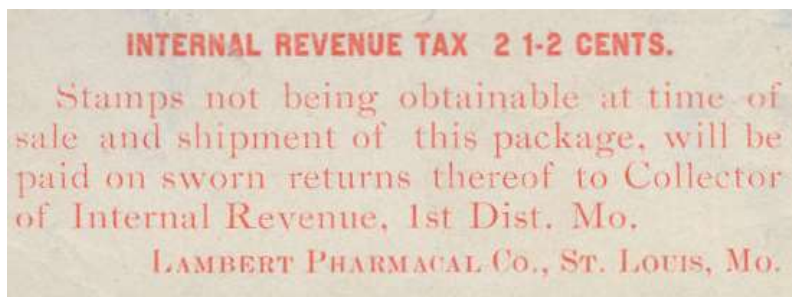
Charles
Merchant

Saint Louis **Provisional**
Private Die Medicine Stamps

- The U.S. Revenue Act of 1898, prompted by the Spanish-American War, required that all proprietary medicines be taxed and a stamp affixed to each box or bottle as evidence the tax had been paid.
- The new "Battleship" Documentary and Proprietary revenue stamps with new tax rates were not immediately available.
- In the Interim, revenue stickers, developed by a local revenue stamp collector, were authorized for 10 companies in Saint Louis and 1 company in Macon, Georgia.
- RS-320 to RS-395 (37 varieties)

Saint Louis **Provisional** Private Die Medicine Stamps

Lambert Pharmacal Co.



Revenue Sticker
Early July, 1898

Subsequent "Battleship"
Revenue Stamp.
August, 1898



Dr. Kilmer & Co. **Provisional**
Private Die Medicine Stamps

- The lack of availability of the new “Battleship” revenue stamps also prompted the Dr. Kilmer & Company to overprint regular postage stamps with “I.R” to serve as proprietary revenue stamps.



- The U.S. Revenue Department rejected this and all stamps were required to be soaked off.
- RS-307 to RS-315 (12 varieties)

Paper Types

There are four major varieties of paper types:

- **Old Paper** 1862 - 1871
- **Silk Paper** 1871 - 1877
- **Pink Paper** 1878
- **Watermarked** 1878 - 1883

Old Paper

- 1862 – September of 1871
- Same paper as the first issue of documentary and proprietary stamps.
- White paper – yellowish or grayish
- No Watermark
- No Silk Fibers



*Earlier printings are
usually thin and brittle*

Silk Paper

- 1871 – late 1877
- Colored silk fibers plentifully distributed
- Occurs on both face & back of stamp
- No Watermark



Pink Paper

- Short-lived: January 29, 1878 to August 6, 1878
- Most likely experimental
- No Watermark
- No Silk Fibers



Watermarked Paper

- 1878 –1883
- Double Line Watermark
- White paper
– yellowish or grayish
- $\frac{3}{4}$ ' high and spaced such
that one letter will appear on
each small stamp.

U S I R



Old Paper – **Experimental Silk**

- Some of the old paper had small, intermittent bits of silk in it and are referred to as “Experimental Silk Paper”
- May appear on front or back of stamp.
- These normally command a premium.



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Old Paper – Laid Paper

- Some earlier printings of Old Paper appear to have laid lines.
- Actually, a wove paper consisting of fine crisscrossed wavy lines
- Normally on Medicine stamps of 1863



RS147 (1863)
Dr. D. Jayne & Son & Petrie

References:

<http://www.rdhinstl.com/mm/mmb1.htm>



Private Die Proprietary Stamps (The "Match and Medicine" Stamps)

This site was designed to show face-different examples of most of the United States Private Die Proprietary stamps of the Civil War and Spanish American War tax periods, and give some information on each of them.



There are two ways to navigate the site. Both are accessible from this page or the General Information Page.

The first way to navigate is to use the Thumbnail Pages. Clicking on any thumbnail page will bring up a life-sized version of it. Each stamp on that page will be a link to a detail page that will show a larger version of the stamp and other stamps of the same issuer or a predecessor or successor, and give some further information.

The second way to navigate is to choose one of the five category links: matches, canned foods, patent medicines, perfumes or playing cards. Each of these will lead to a list of the companies in the

[General Information](#)

[Thumbnail Pages](#)

[Matches \(RO\)](#)
[Canned Fruit \(RP\)](#)
[Patent Medicine \(RS\)](#)
[Perfume \(RT\)](#)
[Playing Cards \(RU\)](#)

References:

<http://www.rdhinstl.com/mm/mmb1.htm>

B. & H.D. Howard
New York Match Company



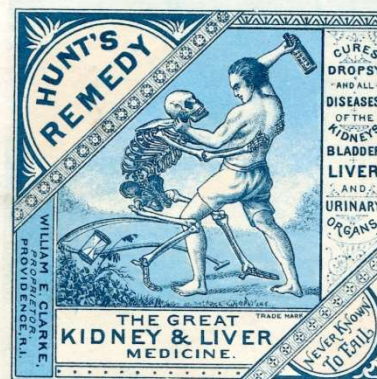
The match company owned by Benoni and Henry D. Howard began operation around 1852 and ended it abruptly in 1869 when Benoni was indicted for counterfeiting his blue stamp. The genuine stamps were issued in red from October of 1864 until November of that year, when the blue stamps were first printed. They were last issued in October of 1869. 2,096,630 of the red stamps and 37,511,940 of the blue ones were issued on old paper. Very few examples of the counterfeits are known.

References:

United States Match and Medicine Stamps

by

Christopher West



CASTENHOLZ and SONS