

Private Proprietary Stamps of the Civil War:

Stamps and Ephemera

*This exhibit illustrates issued stamps and various advertising
of select medicine companies.*

As part of a massive excise tax bill, passed by Congress on July 1, 1862, to pay the mounting expenses of the federal government to wage the War of Northern Aggression (War Between the States), contracts for printing stamps to show the tax paid for proprietary medicines were advertised. Dr. H. L. Herrick, manufacturer of Herrick's Pills and Plasters, proposed that his company should be allowed to produce stamps of their design. On October 15, 1862, he was given permission to do so. All other proprietary medicine companies were given permission to produce their own distinctive stamps in January 1863. These stamps became a form of advertising for the firms.

Other forms of advertising were also in use by these companies, including almanacs, calendars and trade cards. Trade cards were introduced in the 1700s but became very popular in the latter half of the 1800s. They became a favorite collectible due to their multi-colored and sometimes whimsical designs.

It is estimated that about 2.7 million medicine stamps were produced but are scarce today due to the fact that they were usually destroyed when the packaging was removed from the product or were attached to the medicine bottles themselves. The tax for each item depended upon the price of the medicine itself as follows: up to 25c value was assessed 1c tax, 26-50c value was assessed 2c tax, 51-75c value was assessed 3c tax, 76c-\$1 value was assessed 4c tax, and for every 50c over \$1 an additional 2c tax was assessed.

This exhibit will show the following aspects:

1. Stamps issued by select companies
2. Advertising used by select companies in the form of trade cards, almanacs and a calendar.
3. Brief information about said companies.

Bibliography

2013 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers, Scott Publishing Company
Patent Medicine Tax Stamps, Henry W. Holcombe, Quarterman Publications
United State Match and Medicine Stamps, Christopher West, Castenholz and Sons
United States Civil War Revenue Stamp Taxes, Michael Mahler, Castenholz and Sons
An Historical Reverence List of the Revenue Stamps of the United States, Toppan, Deats & Holland
Castenholz and Sons

J. C. Ayer & Company

Dr. Ayer purchased an apothecary shop and opened business in April 1841. His first medicine was Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. It was introduced in 1841. His Sarsaparilla produced in 1848 and was soon followed by Cathartic Pills.

Stamps were created with 1c and 4c values and produced in various colors.



1c values:
brown carmine
green
black
blue
orange
red
gray lilac

4c values:
red
blue
purple
green
vermillion
ultramarine

J.C. Ayer & Company existed for over 100 years. During those years they used dozens of images on their advertising cards. Two of the more unusual are shown below. The country doctor shows a black physician with children. This would appeal to the rural black families that populated the country after the Civil War even if they were illiterate. The battle scene depicts soldiers of the mid-19th century that European immigrants would be familiar.



E.T. Hazeltine

Hazeltine & Co. prepared Piso's Cure for Consumption in 1864. In 1868, the firm name was changed to E.T. Hazeltine. Seeing the potential in advertising, Mr. Hazeltine contracted the production of a 4c stamp with the Joseph Carpenter & Co. in 1870

Stamps were created with 1c and 4c values both in black.



Mr. Hazeltine produced an almanac for many years. Like most almanacs, it listed weather information, astronomical signs, etc. In between this information and charts were glowing testimonials about the 'Cure'. Shown below is a miniature version from 1889. It was distributed by Bryan & Butterfield of Odessa, MO.



Dr. David Jayne & Son

Dr. Jayne was born, raised and educated in medicine in Pennsylvania. He practiced medicine for eight years before creating his first preparation in 1830. His family of medicines were advertised to cure everything from coughs to worms to hair restorers.

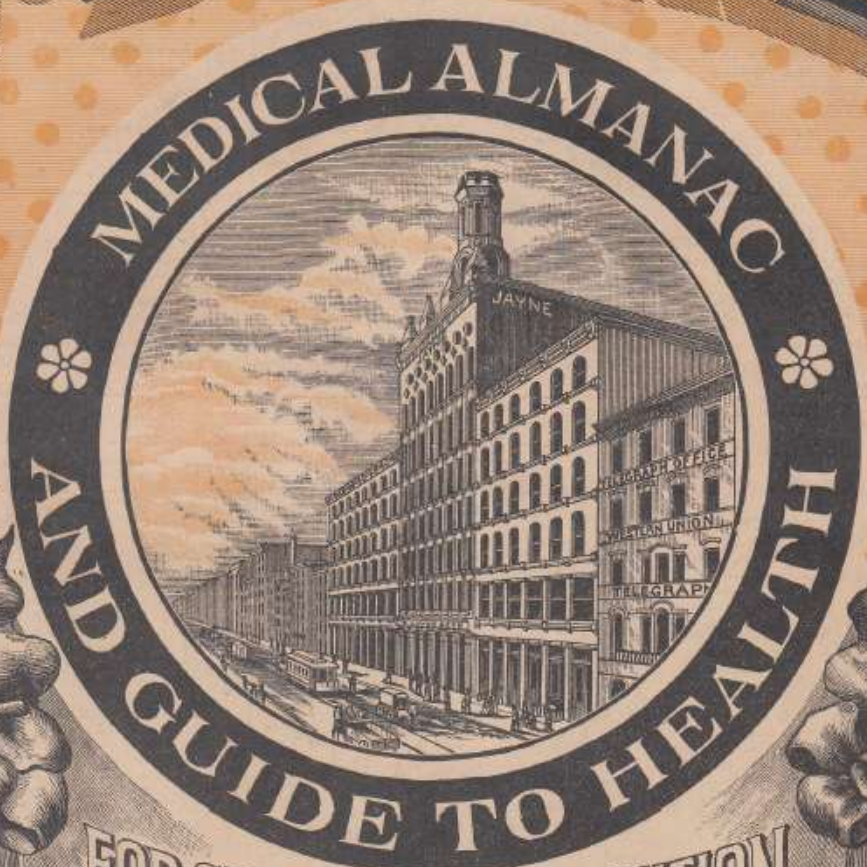
His stamps were in use as early as January 1863. Stamps were created with 1c values in blue, 2c values in black and 4c values in green.



Dr. Jaynes' produced several trade cards and almanacs during its long existence. Shown below are the tenth and eleventh cards in the Album Series. Full length descriptive advertisements are shown the reverse of the cards. The following page features an almanac from 1891.



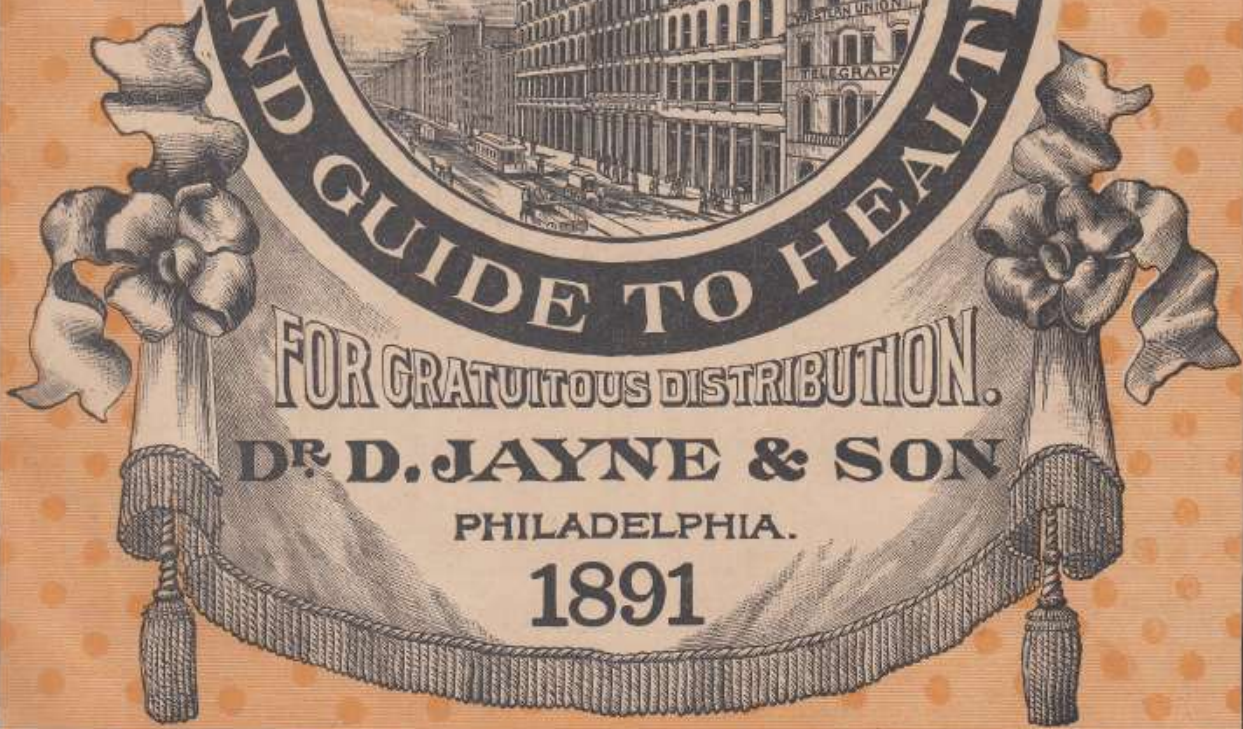
DR. D. JAYNE'S



THE
48TH YEAR
OF THIS
PUBLICATION.

THE
48TH YEAR
OF THIS
PUBLICATION.

FOR GRATUITOUS DISTRIBUTION.
DR. D. JAYNE & SON
PHILADELPHIA.
1891



Merchant's Gargling Oil

Unlike the other medicines described here, Merchant's Gargling Oil was initially used exclusively for animals. "No other remedy ever known covers so wide a range of application to the diseases of Horses, Cattle, Hogs, Poultry, Sheep etc." read their advertising.

The name is a misnomer since you can't get an animal to gargle. It was actually a liniment. Later versions were watered down for use on humans and both were available well into the mid-20th century.

In 1869, stamps were ordered. Stamps were created with 1c values in black and 2c values in green.



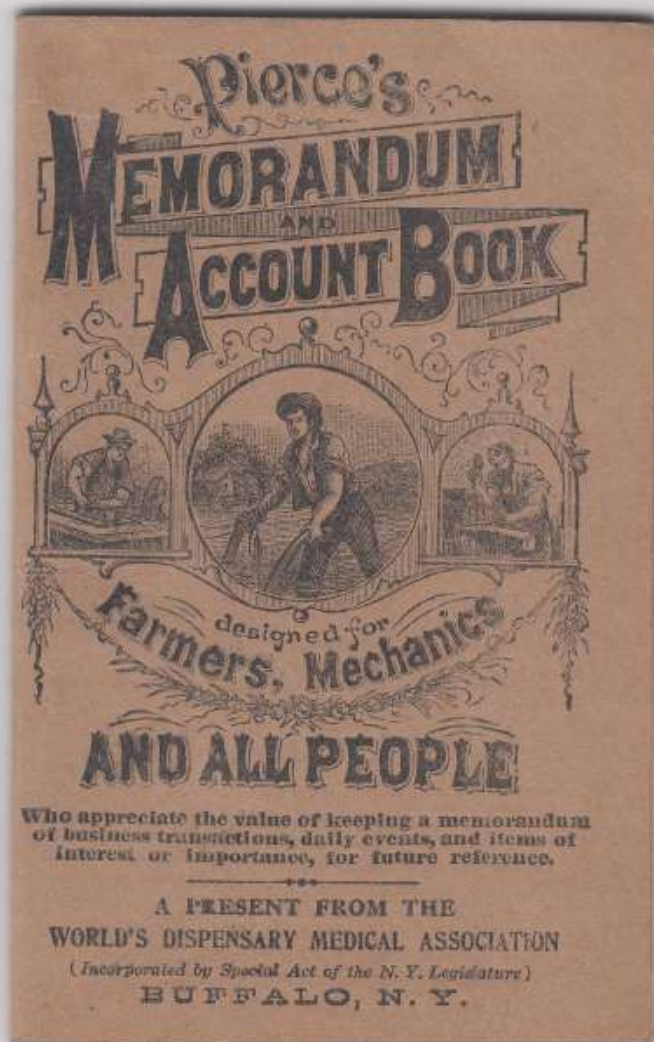
Despite being available for human use, the majority of sales were for use on animals. Most of the company advertising, including the stamps, depicted its number one consumer, horses.



Ray Vaughn Pierce

Dr. Pierce educated in medicine in Ohio and Pennsylvania. He practiced medicine for eight years and built a reputation for curing difficult cases before creating his first medicines for public distribution in 1870. They were immediately successful. This led to Dr. Pierce producing books about good health. This provided the funds to open an invalid's hotel in Buffalo, N.Y. This later merged with an organization of medical professionals. It was called the World's Dispensary Medical Association. Shown below is one of their publications. It doubles as a notebook and advertisement.

Stamps were produced in April 1870. Stamps were created with 1c values in green and 2c values in black.



Joseph H. Schenck

Dr. Schenck of Philadelphia developed his *Mandrake Pills*, a laxative, in 1836. Shortly after he produced his *Pulmonic Syrup*, for consumption and *Sea-Weed Tonic*, for digestion. The Pills were bitter tasting so a sugar coating was added some years later. The business continued into the mid-20th century.

Stamps were produced in the spring 1865. 1c green stamps were created for the pills and 6c black stamps were created for the syrup.



H. H. Warner & Company

the H.H. Warner & Co. was located in Rochester, N.Y. It produced several remedies *Warner's Safe Cure* as shown on the advertising card below. A common phrase for the Warner line was "It Cures when all else Fails".

Stamps were produced in 1881 and 1882. Various sizes of the 1,2,4 & 6c stamps were produced. In 1898, a 3 1/2c stamp was produced. All show a black man gathering herbs, a first.



Children and animals have always been a favorite subject for advertising cards.

