

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS EMERSON DRUG COMPANY MEDICINE STAMPS

Isaac Edward Emerson was a chemist and the downer of three drug stores in Baltimore when he patented his "BROMO-SELTZER" effervescent salt in early 1889. By May of the same year, he went into business with John F. Waggaman, creating the Emerson Drug Company.

The Emerson Drug Company sold Bromo-Seltzer as a headache and hangover cure. Emerson was a skilled marketer. He sold the medicine in a cobalt blue bottle that became a sort of trademark for the company. In 1907, Emerson incorporated the Maryland Glass Company specifically to produce the bottles.



BROMO-SELTZER ADVERTISEMENT

Emerson used the bottle as the central image on his private medicine stamps, which were printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The engraving on the stamps is so finely detailed that the entire label of the bottle can be read with a magnifying glass.

Stamps were issued in four denominations: $\frac{1}{4}$ ¢, $\frac{3}{8}$ ¢, $1\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ and $2\frac{1}{2}$ ¢. These paid the taxes on 10¢, 25¢, 50¢ and \$1 bottles of Bromo-Seltzer, respectively. The stamps were printed in sheets of two hundred stamps. Around 2,734,000 were delivered to the company - a value of over \$11,000.

Emerson precancelled their stamps with a three-digit code that indicated the date of cancellation. The first number, 1 through 6, indicated the day of the week, Monday through Saturday. The second letter indicated the week of the year, issued in two half-year periods. The third number indicated the year: 8 for 1900, and 1 for 1901.

The first stamps delivered to the company were issued around the first week of November. The first precancelled stamps read "4.S.8." - Thursday on the 19th week of the second half of 1900. The last stamps used by the company were precancelled with 1.U.1. - Monday on the 21st week of the first half of 1901.



RS280
 $\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ CARMINE



RS280
 $\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ CARMINE



RS280
 $\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ CARMINE



RS280
 $\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ CARMINE

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
 MEDICINE STAMPS



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



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 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
 MEDICINE STAMPS



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



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 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE



RS280
 1/4¢ CARMINE

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
 EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
 MEDICINE STAMPS



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN



RS281
 5/8¢ GREEN

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
 MEDICINE STAMPS



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN



RS282
 1/4¢ VIOLET BROWN

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
 MEDICINE STAMPS



RS283
 2 1/2¢ BROWN ORANGE



RS283
 2 1/2¢ BROWN ORANGE



RS283
 2 1/2¢ BROWN ORANGE



RS283
 2 1/2¢ BROWN ORANGE



RS283
 2 1/2¢ BROWN ORANGE



RS283
 2 1/2¢ BROWN ORANGE



RS283
 2 1/2¢ BROWN ORANGE



RS283
 2 1/2¢ BROWN ORANGE

Bromo-Seltzer was originally made with acetanilide, a poison that thinned the blood. The recommended dose of the medicine, "a heaping teaspoonful", would have been enough to cause serious damage or death.

After investigation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, cracking down on fake or dangerous drugs in the early 1900s, the labels for Bromo-Seltzer were changed to lower the dosage and to indicate the effects of the drug. Not much later the formula was changed to a safer recipe. Bromo-Seltzer now contains acetaminophen, the key ingredient in Tylenol.

1898 US REVENUE STAMPS

EMERSON DRUG COMPANY

OVERPRINTS AND CANCELS

Isaac Edward Emerson was a chemist and the owner of three drug stores in Baltimore when he patented his "BROMO-SELTZER" effervescent salt in early 1889. By May of the same year, he went into business with John F. Waggaman, creating the Emerson Drug Company.

The Emerson Drug Company issued its own private die proprietary stamps, which featured an image of their medicine bottle, from 1899 to 1890. During the times when the private die stamps were not used, or when the stamps were not available, the Emerson Drug Company used the government issued revenue stamps. Stamps of the ¼¢, ½¢, 1¼¢, and 2½¢ values were used by the company. Each value was used for a different sized bottle of the medicine. Other values, like the ¼¢ stamp featured on this page, are less common.

Proprietary stamps from the series of 1898 were overprinted or handstamped for cancellation and use by the Emerson Drug Company. These come in several different styles.

HANDSTAMPS



RB20
¼¢ YELLOW GREEN
PURPLE "E.D.CO."
DATESTAMP - 1899



RB21
¼¢ BROWN
GREEN "E.D.CO."
DATESTAMP - 1899



RB21
¼¢ BROWN
PURPLE "E.D.CO."
DATESTAMP - 1898



RB21
¼¢ BROWN
PURPLE "E.D.CO."
DATESTAMP - 1898



RB23
5/8¢ DEEP ULTRA
PURPLE "E.D.CO."
DATESTAMP - 1898



RB23
5/8¢ DEEP ULTRA
PURPLE "E.D.CO."
DATESTAMP - 1898



RB28
2½¢ LAKE
PURPLE "E.D.CO."
DATESTAMP - 1898



RB28
2½¢ LAKE
PURPLE "E.D.CO."
CDS - 1898

1898 US REVENUE STAMPS

EMERSON DRUG COMPANY

OVERPRINTS AND CANCELS

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OVERPRINTS



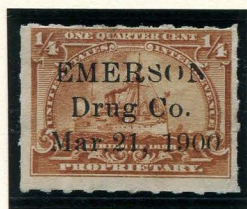
RB21
1/4¢ BROWN
BLACK "E.D.CO."
OCT. 10, 1899



RB23
3/8¢ DEEP ULTRA
BLACK "E.D.CO."
AUG. 23, 1899



RB25
1 1/4¢ VIOLET
BLACK "E.D.CO."
SEPT. 8, 1899



RB21
1/4¢ BROWN
BLACK "EMERSON"
MAR. 21, 1900



RB23
3/8¢ DEEP ULTRA
BLACK "EMERSON"
JUNE 7, 1900



RB25
1 1/4¢ VIOLET
BLACK "EMERSON"
JULY 18, 1900



RB28
2 1/2¢ LAKE
BLACK "EMERSON"
MAR. 18, 1901



RB23
3/8¢ DEEP ULTRA
BLACK "EMERSON"
JULY 2, 1900



RB25
1 1/4¢ VIOLET
BLACK "EMERSON"
NOV. 14, 1899



RB25
1 1/4¢ VIOLET
BLACK "EMERSON"
AUG. 19, 1900

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
ADVERTISING MATERIAL

Beyond using the medicine revenue stamps as advertising labels, Emerson used many other marketing methods to promote Bromo-Seltzer. Booklets, notebooks, matchbooks, sheet music, cards and envelopes were printed and distributed as advertising.



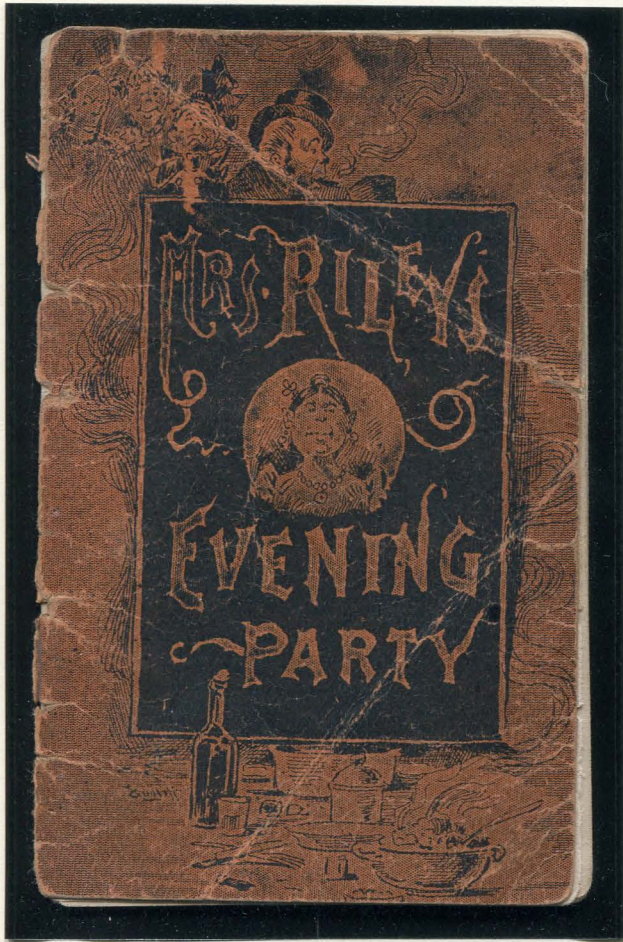
252 : 2¢ CARMINE
BARRED ELLIPSE "8" DUPLEX CANCEL
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND CDS - AUGUST 6, 1895
FOUR-RING TARGET ELLIPSE DUPLEX RECEIVING HANDSTAMP
WALL WALLA, WASHINGTON CDS - AUGUST 11, 1895

The cover above features an illustrated advertisement for Bromo-Seltzer, showing a picture of the blue bottle with cork cap. The cork reads "2 Doses / 10 Cents".

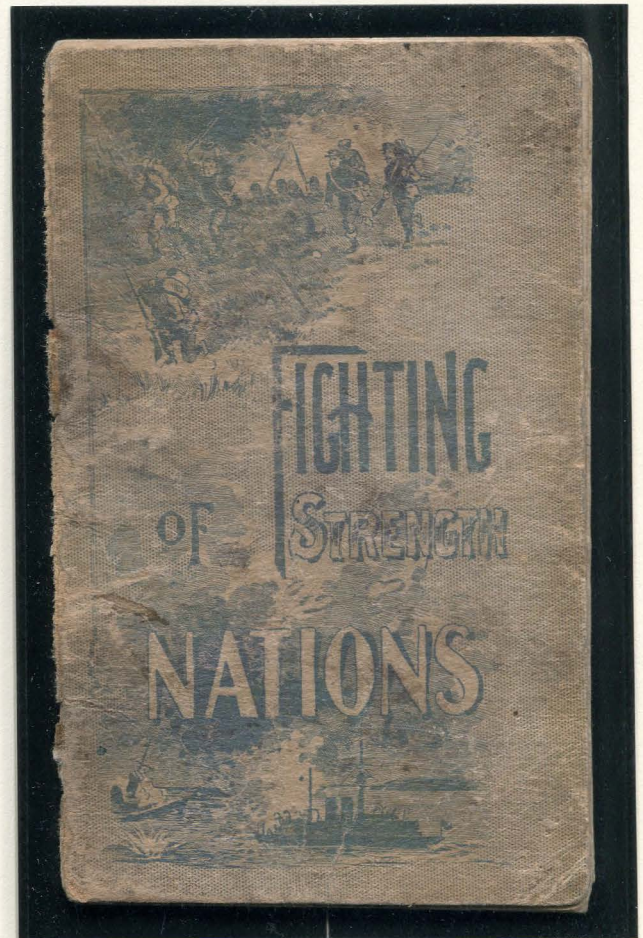
The letter is addressed to the Stewart & Holmes Drug Company in Walla Walla, Washington. This company sold Bromo-Seltzer along with other products.

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
ADVERTISING MATERIAL

The Emerson Drug Company printed small booklets including illustrated stories. These stories were meant to be entertaining or informative, but always featured the use of Bromo-Seltzer. Between pages of text, memo paper was included for use as a notepad.



MRS. RILEY'S EVENING PARTY
(CIRCA 1890)



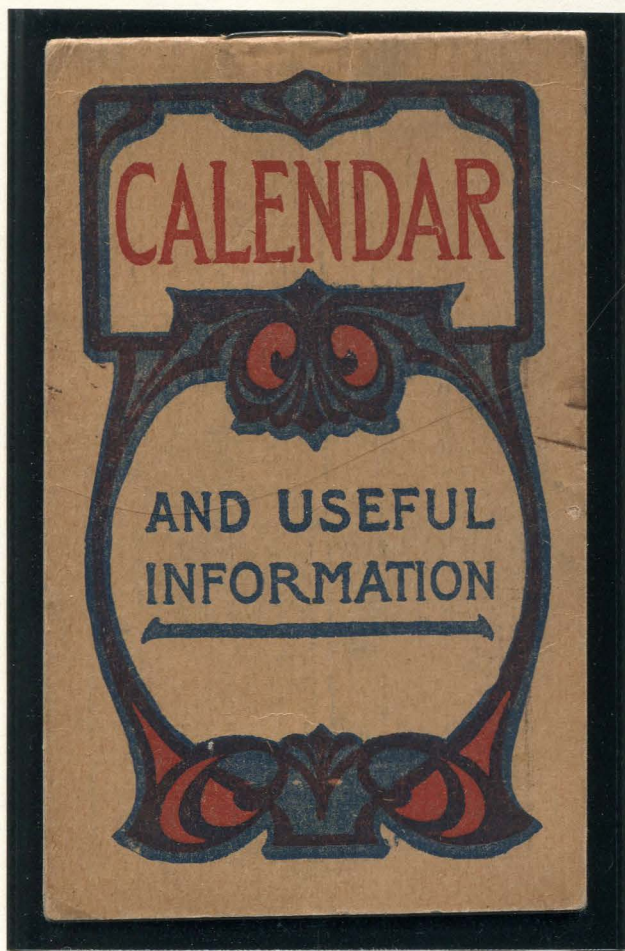
THE FIGHTING STRENGTH OF NATIONS
(CIRCA 1900)



Scanning the QR codes below each booklet will link to a .pdf file of the complete booklet story (some memo pages omitted).

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
ADVERTISING MATERIAL

Pocket calendars in several different designs were distributed by the Emerson Drug Company to advertise Bromo-Seltzer. The calendars were printed on the back of the front cardboard cover, and the remainder of the book alternated between mostly-blank memo pages and printed pages including tips, facts, and advertising.



CALENDAR AND USEFUL INFORMATION - 1911



BROMO-SELTZER FOR HEADACHES - 1923

These Emerson Drug Company calendars and other notebook type materials were published from around 1890 until around the mid-1930s. To see a collection of six different booklets, scan the QR code here or visit: <https://goo.gl/4R1ECQ>



PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
 ADVERTISING MATERIAL

FOR THAT HEADACHE
BROMO-SELTZER

Come through smiling

1933	DECEMBER	1933	1934	APRIL	1934	1934	AUGUST	1934					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30	31	

1934	JANUARY	1934	1934	MAY	1934	1934	SEPTEMBER	1934					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30	31				23	24	25	26	27	28	29

1934	FEBRUARY	1934	1934	JUNE	1934	1934	OCTOBER	1934					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	28	29	30	31			

1934	MARCH	1934	1934	JULY	1934	1934	NOVEMBER	1934					
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	25	26	27	28	29	30	

LITHO. IN U.S.A.

BROMO-SELTZER CALENDAR, 1933-1934

Advertising on matchbooks began in the late 1800s, but was most popular in the 1940s. This Bromo-Seltzer matchbook was probably printed sometime in the late 1930s to mid 1940s.

This 1934 Bromo-Seltzer calendar was intended to be posted on a wall. Advertising printed on the reverse encouraged women to stop at soda fountains when out shopping to relax with Bromo-Seltzer.

CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING MATCH

FAST HEADACHE RELIEF

BROMO-SELTZER

Headache?

SETTLES STOMACH SOOTHES NERVES

Made in U.S.A.
 THE DIAMOND MATCH CO. N.Y.C.

MATCHBOOK
 CIRCA 1940

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
ADVERTISING MATERIAL

The National Recovery Administration was established by President F.D. Roosevelt in 1933 as part of the New Deal. The organization helped to establish minimum wages and 40 hour work weeks, and led to a rise in labor unions.

The symbol of the NRA was a blue eagle. This icon was used by many companies in their marketing materials to show their support and compliance with the NRA rules.

The bag at right would have been given away by drug stores to hold purchases of Bromo-Seltzer. The Emerson Drug Co. included the blue eagle logo on this design.

BROMO-SELTZER
PACKAGING BAG
CIRCA 1933

In 1935, the US Supreme Court ruled that the NRA violated rules for the separation of powers under the Constitution. The NRA stopped its operations, but its legacy was continued by new labor laws and the influence of newly established labor unions.



PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
ADVERTISING MATERIAL

Trade cards are pieces of advertising material, roughly the size of or smaller than a postcard, printed with illustrations and information about businesses and products. These cards were most popular in the 1800s, and many were very decorative to catch the eye of customers. Eventually, these would evolve into the modern business cards.

The Emerson Drug Co. trade card here is a fairly simple design - an image of the Bromo-Seltzer blue bottle with the National Recovery Administration blue eagle logo. Nothing is printed on the reverse, but at some point the back of the card was used to write a note on.



BROMO-SELTZER TRADE CARD
CIRCA 1934

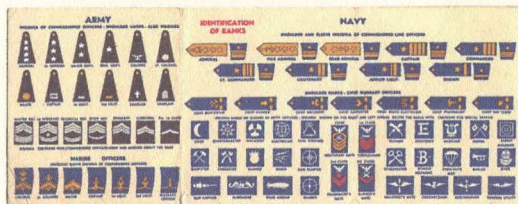
This trade card was probably printed around 1934, since the NRA was only active from 1933 until 1935. The card can also be dated by the screw-top cap on the bottle, which started appearing on advertising materials in the 1930s, replacing the old cork top design.

PRIVATE DIE REVENUE STAMPS
EMERSON DRUG COMPANY
 ADVERTISING MATERIAL

During World War II, many companies used patriotic propaganda in their advertising material. The booklet below not only encourages customers to buy Bromo-Seltzer, but also to "Buy War Bonds and Stamps".



BROMO-SELTZER WWII "KEEP'EM FLYING" U.S. MILITARY INSIGNIA GUIDE - CIRCA 1944



PHOTOCOPY OF
 BOOKLET REVERSE
 REDUCED TO 30%

1942 WWII
 SAVING STAMP
 WS12 : 10¢ RED

