

## Multiples of the United States Private Die Proprietary Revenue Stamps: Exhibit Synopsis

These pages represent a concerted effort to acquire an important collection of these elusive issues. This exhibit features many rare and unique items, with a good degree of completeness. Excepting one of a kind issues, over 80% of the face-different M&M multiples are represented herein.

Philatelists find a study of these issues challenging, since many of these stamps, common as singles, are quite uncommon as multiples. Nineteen multiples herein are the largest recorded on their respective papers. Another eleven are the only recorded multiples. Over thirty others are one of only two multiples recorded.

Some of the highlights include an ultramarine Ives Match pair on a check stub, eight items with double perforations, unusual among the M&Ms; and four examples of the scarce A. H. Flanders extra frame line variety, and a G. G. Green tete-beche pair. Also, a Hetherington imperforate pair, a full sheet of Piso's with a blank entry, four of the seventeen recorded multiples on experimental silk paper; and two of the eight recorded playing card multiples.

These numbers are based on exhaustive research, culminating in my update of a forty years old checklist compiled by Richard Riley. I found that the Riley checklist failed to capture the massive M&M multiples collection of Morton Dean Joyce, undoubtedly the largest ever formed, which was dispersed in 1991. My update includes these and hundreds of other previously unrecorded multiples.

In addition, I have endeavored to meticulously record every M&M multiple

known. This pioneering census totals nearly 7000 items.

Condition overall is surprisingly very good, particularly when one considers that the private die proprietary stamps are notoriously difficult to find in sound condition. By law, these stamps could be used without canceling only if affixed to the container in such a way that they would be torn upon opening. Almost all were used in this way.

However, even those battered multiples, perhaps discolored by medical compounds of dubious efficacy, or by sulfurous fumes from crude match heads, serve as mute testimony to a bygone era of hype, hearth, and history.

### References:

- *An Historical Reference List of the Revenue Stamps of the United States* by Toppan, Deats, and Holland; 1899: sections on M&Ms.
- *United States Match and Medicine Stamps* by Christopher West (Elliott Perry); 1980: 17-27.
- *Private Die Match Stamps* by Christopher West (Elliott Perry); 1980: all.
- *Patent Medicine Tax Stamps* by Henry W. Holcombe; 1979: all.
- *Multiples of the US Private Proprietary Stamps* by Richard F. Riley; *The American Revenuer*, June 1974: 149-165.
- *Multiples of the US Private Proprietary Revenue Stamps: An Update* by Paul Weidhaas; *The American Revenuer*, January-February 2004, 8-17.

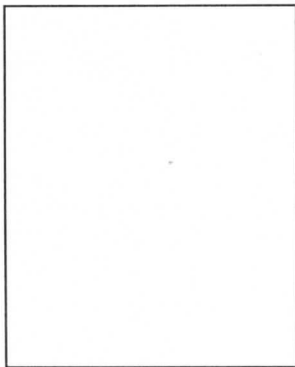
## Exhibit Outline

This exhibit shows examples of the United States private die proprietary revenue stamps (the "Match and Medicines", or M&Ms) in multiple format, with an emphasis on their papers, printing varieties, and usage.

There are four categories of M&Ms from the Civil War era for which multiples are known: friction matches, patent medicines, perfumes and cosmetics, and playing cards. The taxes levied on patent medicines, perfumes and cosmetics were revived in 1898 to help finance the Spanish-American War.

The exhibit begins with an overview of the tax rates, printers, and paper types. The revenue stamps of most firms were printed on more than one variety of paper. Each firm's heading lists the recorded paper types for its multiples.

For instance, the Barber Match Co. has multiples known on four types of paper: old, silk, pink, and watermarked. This firm's stamps were also printed on experimental silk paper, but this variety isn't listed in their heading, since no multiples have been recorded on this paper.



Barber Match Co. partial vertical pair on portion of matchbox; watermarked paper.

Next comes a section on differentiating used vs. unused multiples. Used stamps typically have creases, tears, thins, discoloration, or pieces of packaging adhering to the backs. Most of the stamps herein are used. Mention is made throughout the exhibit whether a particular multiple is used or not.

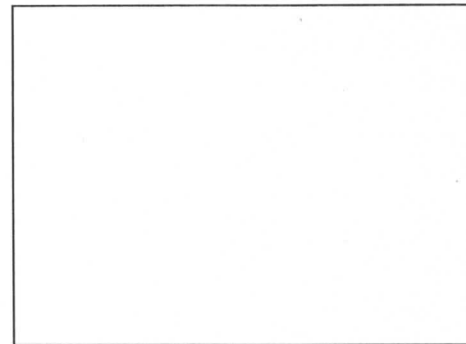
The unused multiples, those with gum or in very large blocks, are usually remainders, acquired from the firms by stamp collectors of yore. Shown is a patent medicine company's offer of unused stamps to an avid collector of the time.

Then follows some six hundred M&M multiples, arranged alphabetically by firm within each category. When a firm changed hands, the new owners normally had the name panels in the dies altered to reflect the change; these lookalikes are grouped together, giving the dates when each firm used its respective stamps.

The relative scarcity of most items is noted, such as those multiples that are the only recorded, or are the largest (or second largest) recorded. These rankings are based on my exhaustive research of the important M&M auctions, collections, and literature, culminating in a 2004 update of Richard Riley's seminal 1974 list of M&M multiples, and in a first ever census of all recorded M&M multiples.

Printing and perforation varieties include shifted entries, double perforations, double transfers, a short transfer, and scratched plates. More than fifty items show plate numbers, printer's imprints, or other marginal markings.

The exhibit concludes with the repeal of the taxes, as exemplified by a singular reference in an 1883 medicine company almanac.



When the patent medicine tax was repealed in 1883, over forty medicine manufacturers affixed facsimile labels to their products, such as this Dr. R. V. Pierce label, since users were accustomed to see revenue stamps. Multiples of facsimiles are quite uncommon.

### ***Why aren't there more multiples on "cover"?***

*Few collectors 150 years ago felt any need or reason to save intact the actual articles stamped with M&Ms. Only 27 multiples have been recorded still affixed to their box or wrapper. Six of these 27 haven't been seen since they were first depicted in match company histories published in the 1930s. This leaves only 21 highly prized multiples now known to be in the hands of collectors.*