

# Radium Radia

## A Quack Cure with Real Medicinal Benefits

By Dave Maryo



ROBERT EMMET MORRISON

Radium Radia Liniment was manufactured by the Radium Radia Company of Los Angeles.

Robert E Morrison, a prominent lawyer and politician, formed the company in Prescott, Arizona by issuing 100,000 shares of stock valued at \$1 million on March 20th, 1905. Fellow lawyer H. A. Seymour applied for the trademark of "Radium Radia" with the U.S. Patent Office, but the registration was

denied. The Radium Radia Company continued to use the trade mark name, a decision the new business might later regret. An advertisement with the story of the liniment's discovery was published in the March 5th, 1905 edition of the Pittsburgh Press.

The advertisement announced that a miracle-producing mixture which banished pain was available at Pittsburg drug stores. Other very effective advertisements included endorsements from famous athletes of the time. The New York Giants baseball team endorsed the product and implied that liniment helped them to win the 1905 championship by allowing their players to stay in the game after relieving pain from injuries they incurred on the field. Another ad suggested that the liniment helped wrestler Tom Jenkins win the American heavyweight championship the same year.

Even the label on the Radium Radia bottle was a clever attempt at promotion showing before and after images of a man who used the liniment. Before the man used the product, he is shown as weak, bent over and requiring support from his cane. After treatment, he is shown standing upright and walking without needing the cane to help him stand. And, of course, the label also stated that the liniment was "never known to fail."

Radium Radia was only one of many "radium" cures that were very popular in the early portion of the 1900s. Radium

### A Miner's Great Discovery

A Miracle Producing Mixture That Banishes Pain and Doctors from a Western Mining Camp Now Being Given to the Public.

### THE AGONIES OF RHEUMATISM CONQUERED

#### A Wonderful Discovery and a Successful Experiment.

Thirty years ago, in March, 1875, in the mines of the Far West, an old man, crippled with pain, due to the hardships, vile air, which underground always produces, was walking as best he could towards the office of one of the old mines of Jerome, Ariz. It was 5 o'clock in the evening, and at a little distance from where he stood you could see hundreds of men emerging from the earth, as it were. The miners were leaving work, the day was over. They passed him on their way, and all had a word for him, for he was loved and respected among them all. He was a queer old man, and reputed to be very rich. He had offered and spent great sums of money in order to place life in his limbs, now enfeebled with the grip of rheumatism, but to no avail did he succeed. The days went by, and every day the same old feeble creature could be seen walking from his home to the mines and back again, until one day a miner, one of those rough sort of fellows, but with a big heart, came to him and gave him a mixture, a vegetable compound of herbs, and asked him if he would not use it as a rub, as he felt sure it would help him.

The old man looked at him, saying: "Young fellow, I spent many a dollar for these poor limbs of mine and have traveled many a mile to see renowned doctors, but all to no avail. I am afraid there is no more life in my limbs, so to speak, but I will do justice to you and to your rub, and I will use it, if only to please you." The old gentleman did use it, for his word was as good as his bond, and before one week was over the old cane was discarded. He was cured. He died a few years after at the ripe old age of 78 years, but the wonderful rub which had done him so much good was placed in a bucket, in a corner of the miners' dressing room, and when these hard workers were crippled by overwork, pained by rheumatism, colds in their chests, sprains or sore backs, they would go to the bucket and use the rub, now called the Radium Radia, which is put up in an attractive package and sold to the public, so that it may benefit and cure those who are afflicted with rheumatism, gout, lumbago, sciatica, rheumatic fever, inflammatory rheumatism, sprains, backache, stiffness of the joints and other bodily pain.

#### FOR SALE IN PITTSBURG AT

CHRISTY'S DRUG STORE, Fourth Avenue and Smithfield Street.  
P. C. SCHILLING CO. DRUG STORES.  
STENGER DRUG STORE, Sixteenth and Carson Streets, S. S., or  
13 WEST TWENTY-SIXTH STREET, NEW YORK CITY.



was made famous by Pierre and Marie Curie on December 21, 1898 when they discovered this new element that had high levels of radioactivity.

Entrepreneurs around the world quickly found uses for this newly discovered scientific wonder. In the world of medicine, radioactive products were thought to be beneficial for anything from dandruff to sexual virility. Scientists and physicians claimed the radioactive products provided a cure for all diseases. Over time it was discovered that radium's health effects with continued use were more detrimental than helpful. The radiation released by radium caused damage to tissue and bone and in many cases led to cancer and premature death.

Luckily, Radium Radia did not contain any radium as the name implied. In fact, the ingredients were actually beneficial in reducing pain. The main ingredients were capsicum and turpentine. Capsicum is the powdered fruit from pepper plants and has been used in herbal treatments for over 3,000 years by Native Americans. Tribes native to Arizona around the time of the discovery of this miracle liniment were known to have rubbed powdered Cayenne pepper on their joints to

relieve symptoms of arthritis.

Radium Radia used capsicum infused in oil (turpentine) to increase the rate of absorption in the skin and tissues where it was applied. Capsicum contains salicylate compounds similar to aspirin we commonly use today for pain relief. The liniment relieved pain by blocking a natural chemical inside the body that allows pain impulses through the nervous system. Similar products are still on the market today. Both Heet and Watkins Red Oil contain capsicum infused in oils. So if the Radium Radia liniment was beneficial in relieving pain, why did the product disappear from the market around 1906? This Western medicine got caught in the crossfire between the quack cures and the Pure Food & Drug Act.

The decision to keep the "snappy" Radium name was ultimately the reason for the liniment's demise. Most state and government agencies found the product "misbranded" under the new law as it did not contain any radium as the name implied. As a result, the liniment was banned from the market while other medicinal products containing radium continued to be sold for another 50 years.

Robert Morrison seemed to keep his interest in miracle



## THE GIANTS ENDORSE

*Radium Radia*



POLO GROUNDS  
187th ST. & 8th AVE.  
MANHATTAN FIELD  
187th ST. & 8th AVE.  
TELEPHONE CALL  
840 HIGH BRIDGE

OFFICE OF THE  
**New York Baseball Club**  
National Exhibition Co.,  
1182 BROADWAY.

J. F. BRUSH, President  
FRED M. KNOWLES, Secretary  
TELEPHONE CALL  
1877 MADISON SQUARE

New York, May 31, 1905.

Radium Radia Company,  
New York.

Gentlemen:-

The fact that seldom is a member of the champion Giants compelled to remain out of the game of baseball is due in a large measure to Radium Radia, which we have constantly on hand in the club-house and have used with the most gratifying results. I consider it superior as a lotion and for kinks and muscular aches to which athletes are subject to anything I have ever used. Respectfully,

*Sammy Turkel*

Physical Trainer New York B. B. Club.

**Radium Radia Is Used by the Leading Athletes of the Country.  
Cures Every Time the Most Stubborn Cases of Rheumatism.**

PRICE \$1.00

For Sale at All Druggists.

Mailed Anywhere on Receipt of Price.

13 West 26th Street, New York.

cures even after his liniment was banned. In 1909, he was the chairman of an entertainment committee that welcomed President Taft to Prescott. On greeting the president, he handed him a glass of Hassayampa water and explained the water's legendary properties. As the legend is told, anyone drinking Hassayampa water from below the river crossing would have trouble ever telling the truth again. Those drinking the water from above the crossing could never again tell a lie. It is not known if the water "cured" the president, but it did have a great affect on the people of Prescott who saw him drink it. The crowd roared with approval and welcomed him to their town.

