

Five-Minute Antiques School - Country Store Advertising Jim and Debbie McArdle, Iron Horse Antiques, 815/575-1277, www.ironhorseantiques.net

The 1875-1915 General Store sold cradles AND coffins AND everything in between! Collecting field includes figural trade signs (in the shape of the item sold to attract illiterate consumers), advertising signs, store & saloon fixtures, salesman's samples, and advertising give-aways.

If you lived in a rural area 1875-1900, your shopping list for your local country store might include yard goods for clothing, kitchen utensils, food supplies, cleaning supplies, medicines, veterinary products, liquor, and even tools for making furniture.

- In the late 1800s entrepreneurs, always thinking of better ways to sell more product, began to devise ways to entice the public to choose their product over that of another.
- The development of chromolithography (color printing) on tin and paper in the late 1800s made possible some of the most beautiful and collectible store items found.
- Tin & paper signs with strong, colorful images, often copied from classic art, were created for stores.
- Paper advertising in calendars, trade cards and posters reached new levels of advertising artistry.
- Attractive advertising helped companies establish brand recognition & loyalty.
- To create merchant loyalty, the manufacturers began to design and provide colorful and attractive display cases and cabinets from which to dispense their product.
- Some of the most collectible advertising subjects are: Seeds, coffee, sewing, spices, signs, and fixtures.
- Some collectors strive to collect one example of every form issued by one company, while others prefer a more diverse collection.
- It was Americans who made advertising an art form.
- Criteria to consider when buying: age, form, condition, rarity, price

References

- Penn. Richard A. (1998) Mom & Pop Stores. A Country Store Compendium of Merchandising Tools for Display. Volumes 1 & 2. Pennyfield's Publishing, Waterloo, IA. Considered the Bibles for any country store collector though the price guide is obsolete.
- Kislinsky, Roger E. (1999) Saloons, Bars & Cigar Stores. Historical Interior Photographs. Waldo & Van Winkle Publishers, Pasadena, CA
- Congdon-Martin, Douglas. (1991) America For Sale. A Collector's Guide to Antique Advertising. Schiffer Publishing, Ltd. Excellent reference, especially for advertising that hangs on the wall.
- Wilson, David L. (1998) General Store Collectibles. Volumes 1 & 2. Collector Books, Paducah, KY. Good overview for all forms of advertising, though price guide is obsolete.