

FIVE MINUTES ANTIQUES SCHOOL – COLLECTING HALLOWEEN

- Halloween imagery rare in the U.S. before 1900, then began increasing.
- Adult-oriented parties were popular 1915 to about 1950.
- After 1950, images became more kid friendly, cute replaced subtle. “The scarier or more complex the imagery, the older the item.”
- Early Halloween items were meant to be used, and were either damaged or discarded. So finding good quality items is difficult.
- **Imagery:** Pumpkins and JOLs the most common, devils the least common and therefore the most expensive in all categories.
- **Categories** are broad and varied and many different materials are used: tin, cardboard, papier-mâché, paper (tissue, crepe), plastic, etc.
- So, some collectors prefer to specialize: e.g., a category (candy, containers, noisemakers), or a time period (pre-WWII, 1950s).
- Major categories: Jack-O-Lanterns & Other Lights, Die cuts & Honeycomb Decorations, Candy Containers, Noisemakers, Postcards, Halloween party & Trick or Treat Goods.
- **Major U.S. Manufacturers** of paper goods, both still in business: Beistle Co., Shippenburg, PA (also used Luhrs mark); Dennison Manuf. Co., Framingham, MA. Of noisemakers: Chein, Kirchhof, U.S. Metal Toy, T. Cohn.
- **Dating** items: consider imagery, mark and material. Earliest and best items usually came from Germany, hand mad by families in farm cottages or very small businesses. Zenith of German Halloween production ended about 1935. From early 1900’s to about 1930, marked “Germany”, then “made in Germany”. 1945-47, “Made in U.S. Zone Germany” or “Made in Western Zone Germany”. Items made in Japan between 1945-52 marked “Made in Occupied Japan”.
- From 30s on, U.S. began making paper pulp JOLs to replace those no longer available from Germany.
- Post WWII, U.S. began producing good pieces in hard plastic.
- **Criteria to consider when buying:** condition, rarity, price

References

- Campanelli, Dan & Pauline. (1995, updated w/ price guide 2001). Halloween Collectables: A Price Guide. Gas City, IN: L-W Book Sales.
- Ledenbach, Mark B. (2007, 2nd ed.). Vintage Halloween Collectables: An Identification and Price Guide. Iola, WI: Krause Publications.