A Nineteenth Century Patent Medicine Trade Card Collection
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Abstract

Objective
To increase awareness about methods used to inform the public about health care in the late 19th century, specifically the development of patent medicines.

Background
Trade cards were used by companies to advertise their products. They were distributed in stores, pharmacies, general stores, etc. Typically printed on paper, they were often rectangular and from circa 2 x 3.5 inches to 5.5 x 6.5 inches. Some were cut in shapes, such as flowers.

Methods
The trade cards are frequently viewed. Some have been used in class papers. The Library purchased a collection of late 19th century patent medicine trade cards. The cards also provide a view of advertising, art, and popular culture in late 19th – early 20th centuries. They illustrate the importance of truth in advertising. The Library will continue to collect in this and related areas (e.g. ink blotter advertisements).

Conclusions
In publications.

Trade Cards
- Sort of like today's baseball cards
- 19th – early 20th centuries
- Distributed by druggists, general stores, etc.
- Usually rectangular but some cut in shapes, e.g. flowers
- Pretty women, children, animals
- Pictures:
- Toll gate puzzles – back has list of hidden pictures
- Blank back
- Modern technology: telephone

Drug Manufacturing Companies in the Late 19th Century
- Some manufacturers increasingly used trade cards to advertise their products in pharmacies.
- "Trade" in the sense of commerce
- Drug Manufacturing Companies
- Ingredients listed (if any) often inaccurate
- "Proprietary" more accurate description (now "over the counter"
- Other manufacturers often advertised with huge (often newspaper) campaigns
- Parke-Davis in U.S. (now Pfizer)
- Burroughs Wellcome in U.K. (now GlaxoSmithKline)
- Became known for scientific research and quality control
- Lists of other drugs by the same company
- Ad for a store other than a druggist
- Some stamped with name of local druggist & sometimes also address
- Pics put in albums

Pure Foods and Drug Act of 1906
- Attempts to pass the law began in the 19th century
- To increase awareness about methods used to inform the public about health care in the late 19th century
- United States Congress
- Required list of ingredients such as alcohol, flavoring, coloring, etc.
- Stricter guidelines for making and advertising of medicinal products
- Publicity before and after the law and its amendment
- Attempts to pass the law began in the 19th century
- 1848 – 1849

Laups Library Collection of PMTC
- Local distributors stamped on back from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New York, Minnesota, Tennessee
- Mostly rectangular and from circa 2 x 3.5 inches to 5.5 x 6.5 inches
- We arranged them alphabetically by company & then by drug name
- Early digitization project as visually appealing and expected would be used

Bibliography
- Institute of the History of Pharmacy, 1986.
- Taken Three Times a Day: A Social History of Medicines in the Twentieth Century: To Be

Credits
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