DURHAM A-Z:
A IS FOR ADVERTISING
IN THE TOBACCO BOOMTOWN OF DURHAM,
ENTREPRENEURS USED ADVERTISING TO BUILD
THEIR BRANDS AND THEIR FORTUNES.
In the years prior to the Civil War, branding was in its infancy. Customers would typically ask merchants for the best product rather than a particular brand. But after the Civil War, Bull Durham Tobacco emerged as one of the strongest brands in the country.

In 1865, Civil War soldiers raided John R. Green’s tobacco warehouse in Durham. When those veterans returned home with a newfound taste for Durham tobacco, they provided some of the best word-of-mouth advertising imaginable. Green established Bull Durham as his brand in 1868 and brought W.T. Blackwell.
Bull Durham business partner Julian Shakespeare Carr used advertising to spread the Bull Durham brand across the globe. He was perhaps best known for the teams of painters he sent to paint the brand on buildings and fences across the United States.

In 1918 the U.S. military contracted for the entire output of Bull Durham to go to World War I troops.
“It ain’t no use to tell me that advertising don’t pay. I have studied advertising and am satisfied about it.”

-Julian S. Carr in a letter to W.T. Blackwell.
MAKIN’S OF A NATION


Hill’s sketchbook contains notes on his vision for this and many other American Tobacco brands: “You can make for yourself, with your own hands, the mildest most fragrant cigarette in the world—and the most economical. Machines can’t imitate it. The only way to get that freshness, that flavor, that lasting satisfaction is to ‘roll your own’ with the good old Bull Durham Tobacco.”
COPYCAT BRANDS

Other tobacco manufacturers recognized that the words “Bull” and “Durham” were selling well, and copycat brands such as Black Bull, Old Bull, Sitting Bull Durham emerged in town and further afield.
In 1885, James “Buck” Duke took a gamble on mechanizing cigarette manufacturing and was able to produce far more cigarettes than anyone was smoking at the time. The new Bonsack machine made 200 cigarettes per minute for the Dukes. Even the most skilled hand-rollers were only able to roll three or four cigarettes per minute. Increased production at a lower cost gave the Dukes a strong competitive advantage.

Duke turned to advertising to create a bigger market for his product. W. Duke Sons & Company salesman John Featherstone Small developed collectible trading cards printed on the stiff cardboard found in cigarette cartons. The cards were created through the recently developed technology of color lithography.
Trading cards subtly suggested that cigarettes were as quintessentially American as Benjamin Franklin or Thomas Edison.

Beautiful, sometimes provocative images of stage and early film actresses were used to sell cigarettes, much to the dismay of patriarch Washington Duke, a devout Methodist.
My dear Son: I have received the enclosed letter from the Rev. John C. Hocutt, and am very much impressed with the wisdom of his argument against circulating lascivious photographs with cigarettes, and have made up my mind to bring the matter to your attention in the interest of morality, and in the hope that you can invent a proper substitute for these pictures which will answer your requirements as an advertisement as well as an inducement to purchase... Outside of the fact that we owe Christianity all the assistance we can lend it in any form, which is paramount to any other consideration, I am fully convinced that this mode of advertising will be used and greatly strengthen [sic, "strengthen"] the arguments against cigarettes in the legislative halls of the States. I hope you will consider this carefully and appreciate my side of the question. It would please me very much to know that a change had been made.

Affectionately, your father
Baseball cards got their start as a sales incentive in cigarette cartons. The Dukes recognized children’s pull on the purse strings of American households, and these cards were marketed to children.

American Tobacco Company’s baseball card for Honus Wagner is the most expensive baseball card in history. Wagner asked to be removed from the series because he did not want to be responsible for selling cigarettes to children, and so only a limited number of his card were printed before production stopped.
WOMEN, SMOKING, AND ADVERTISING

Smoking was not socially acceptable for women in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Women were often featured in tobacco ads and promotions, but they were rarely smoking. When ads did show women smokers, they were usually foreigners.

By the late 1920s, women had won the right to vote, and women’s liberation was in full swing. Meanwhile, the temperance movement was publicly condemning alcohol and tobacco use. It was in this environment that Durham companies such as Liggett & Myers and American Tobacco Company turned their attention to a new customer base: women.
In 1928, Chesterfield launched its “Blow some my way” campaign.

In 1929 Lucky Strike proclaimed “Women are Free! An Ancient Prejudice has been removed.” That same year the brand launched “Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet.”
TORCHES OF FREEDOM

American Tobacco Company and public relations pioneer Edward Bernays hired young, liberated women to smoke “torches of freedom” (Lucky Strike cigarettes) on Fifth Avenue in New York.

Women’s cigarette brands

In 1968, Phillip Morris introduced Virginia Slims, marketed to young professional women. In 1971, Liggett and Myers introduced Eve, also marketed exclusively to women but focused on femininity rather than liberation.
Eves of the world you are beautiful.

Now you've got Eva, a new cigarette that takes sensibility. Eva's pack is a wild medley of flowers. Eva's filter tip is a ribbon of blossoming colors. Eva has a menthol taste that makes Eva of the world say, "Beautiful!" Comes in nonmenthol, too.
ADVERTISING AND HEALTH CONCERNS

In the 1940s and 1950s, many tobacco companies prominently featured doctors in their ads to allay customers’ fears that smoking was unhealthy. Mounting evidence to the contrary led to government restrictions in tobacco advertising.

1965 Surgeon General’s warning is required on cigarette packs.

1971 Congress bans cigarette ads from TV and radio.

1984 The Comprehensive Smoking Education Act requires warnings on cigarette packs and advertisements.

1998 Cigarette ads on billboards are removed.

2010 Cigarette companies are banned from sponsoring cultural events and displaying their logo on t-shirts and other apparel.