

Durham

*and* THE RISE OF THE  
BASEBALL CARD

# Duke Tobacco and The Cigarette

## El tabaco Duke y el cigarrillo

When James Buchanan “Buck” Duke took the helm of W. Duke & Sons tobacco in the 1870s, he wanted Duke & Sons to outsell rival Bull Durham Tobacco and become the most profitable tobacco company in the country. The key to Duke’s success was machine-rolled cigarettes.

The cigarette slowly increased in popularity in America after the Civil War, but it lagged behind loose tobacco and cigars through the 1870s. It was not until the early 1880s that pre-rolled cigarettes became popular. By the mid 1880s, competition to sell cigarettes was stiff.

Seeking lower labor costs, Virginia cigarette manufacturers John Allen and Lewis Ginter offered a reward to the first person to develop a cigarette-rolling machine. Twenty-one-year-old James Bonsack invented a working yet imperfect machine in 1880. **6** Though it was the best machine developed, none of the major cigarette manufacturers was willing to take a chance – none except Duke, who leased a Bonsack machine in 1884. With the help of technician W. O’Brien and salesman D. B. Sprouse, W. Duke & Sons perfected the machine and mastered its use. **1** The fast and cheap production process gave Duke the competitive edge he sought.

As Duke’s profits soared, competitors who had hesitated to move away from hand-rolled varieties decided to invest in machines as well. The public devoured the cheaper prices that came with machine production and increased competition. As competition surged in the late 1880s, so did advertising budgets and creative methods to sell tobacco.

**Please see Spanish Language Exhibit Guide located to the right for full exhibit text.**

Encontrará el texto completo en español en la Guía de la Exposición en la parte derecha.

1530 arch St Phila  
Apr. 7/86

J. B. Duke Esq.  
6 Rivington St. N. Y.

Dear Sir,

It is important to me to know  
if it is still your intention to examine  
the Labeling Machine. If you are com-  
ing please kindly telegraph me at once,  
at 438 N. 12<sup>th</sup> St. I much oblige,

Hoping that you can come Jan

Truly Yours  
James A. Bonsack



57/2

Mar. 16th. 86

Mr. D. B. Strouse,

Salem, Va.

Dear Sir:-

Your favor of the 15th<sup>th</sup> inst. just received. We are glad to know that some machines are now on the way from paris. Send us the first two machines that are received as we need them badly

We will send your letter to Mr. J. B. Duke and he will advise you in reference to taking more out of the second lot which you say you will receive 30 days later.

We received an invoice Sunday for 500 reels cigarette paper and have orders out for 1500 reels more, consequently we will not trouble you at present to obtain any for us.

We turned out last week on the four machines here about 2,600,000 cigarettes. What do you thing of that?

Yours truly,

W. DUKE SONS & CO.

*Durham, N.C.*

*Rec Strouse  
Mar. 15 - 86  
J. B. Duke  
Mar. 17 - 86*

# What is a Baseball Card: The Trade Card, The CDV, and The Cigarette Card

## ¿Qué es una tarjeta de béisbol? La tarjeta intercambiable, la “Cardomania,” y la tarjeta de cigarrillos

Baseball cards as we know them today began their life as advertising tools.

After the Civil War, baseball increased in popularity in towns and cities across the United States. Sporting goods companies used the backs of photographic prints of well-known teams to advertise their business. These were the first rudimentary baseball cards.

The evolution of the baseball card is the result of several simultaneous developments:

- Advancements in printing and advertising techniques gave rise to trade cards. Trade cards were thin-stock cards that featured colorful advertisements of products and landscapes. Trade cards were distributed by businesses that sold tobacco products and were collected by their customers.
- “Cardomania” was an international Victorian craze of collecting small portraits – called cartes de visite – pasted into scrapbooks. Americans collected the trade cards and pasted them into albums. The “Cardomania” phenomenon made its way to the United States around the time that trade cards were becoming popular.
- Tobacco companies already used large premiums, signs and magazine advertising to sell their products and were seeking new methods. **4**
- Small card stiffeners inserted in cigarette packs became the ideal method to take advantage of the card-collecting public. Insert cards, as they were known, first comprised photos pasted onto cardboard. The company’s name was printed on the front and later the back of cards. Soon, color lithographs replaced these early insert cards and featured royalty, animals & nature, famous places, “beauties,” military heroes and especially athletes. **10**
- During this time period, the National League marked its first full decade.

The growing popularity of baseball led many manufacturers to include ballplayers with the athletes on insert cards. Some included only baseball players. The baseball card was born.





W. Duke And Sons Color Advertising Sheet. (Duke University)





Album Page Containing Duke's Cameo Cigarettes Insert Cards. (Duke University)

# Competition, Tobacco Cards, and American Tobacco

## Competencia, tarjetas de tabaco y el tabaco americano

Millions of baseball cards were produced for the cigarette wars that raged between 1886 and 1890.

Duke's mastering of the Bonsack cigarette-rolling machine heightened competition within the tobacco industry and drove the production of insert cards. **12** By 1886, five major firms, known as the "Big Five," were producing the most cigarettes: W. Duke & Sons, Allen & Ginter, Kimball, Goodwin and Kinney. While all of the "Big Five" produced insert cards, the two biggest sets were Duke's Actresses and Actors and Goodwin's Baseball set. Both sets contained over 2000 cards each.

Being in the "Big Five" was not enough to satisfy Buck Duke's ambition. Duke's advertising team, including Edward Small, set about to reinvent tobacco advertising and beat the competition, especially Bull Durham. Small had been one of, if not the first, to secure the rights to a celebrity's image. This development became a cornerstone of the advertising business, especially sports advertising and baseball cards. Duke's investment in advertising drove the competition to invest as well. This advertising blitz led to countless products. However, none lasted longer in the American imagination than the insert card.

Within a few years, W. Duke & Sons saw profits large enough to lead the industry. In 1890, Duke led consolidation of the major tobacco firms in the U. S. into the American Tobacco Company (ATC). At the turn of the century, ATC bought up more and more small firms and worked toward consolidating the European market. The heyday of the insert card craze seemed to have passed, along with the intense competition that the 1880s cigarette wars had bred.



President,  
D. B. STROUSE.

CAPITAL STOCK PAID IN, \$100,000.00.

Sec. and Treas.,  
P. A. KRISE.

## BONSACK MACHINE CO.,

Salem, Virginia, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1885.

J. B. Duke Esq.,  
Chicago.

Dear Sir,

I have yrs of the 9<sup>th</sup> inst written to Mr Krise. He knew of my early return home & left the answer of your letter to me. You are our largest patron and we feel disposed to forward your interests in every possible way. I expect to go to Durham soon - as soon as I can - and will then see what can be done looking to our mutual advantage -

As to Kimball & Co I have only to say, that the Allison's agreed with me that they would not place a machine outside of their own factory. Though they said they wanted to sell factory machines and all. They admit that we have them in our power. I learned in Lynchburg last week that one of the Allison's

has constructed a machine for Kimball & Co which I suppose is running -

If this be true as I have no doubt it is, I beg to assure you that we shall stop it, and that speedily -

I have begun a full investigation of the whole matter & no time will be lost.

Your letter is headed "Branch Factory and Office, 6 Rivington Street New York" also Chicago. As I am not sure where to address you I will mail to Durham -

I certainly congratulate you upon the wonderful success of your firm -

Yours most truly  
D. B. Strouse

Please address me here - S -



OVERALL, CHICAGO NATL.  
PASTORIUS, BROOKLYN.  
WAGNER, PITTSBURG.  
BEAUMONT, BOSTON NATL.  
DELEHANTY, WASH.  
STEINFELDT, CHICAGO NATL.  
BRANSFIELD, PHILA. NATL.  
KEELER, N.Y. AMER.  
O'LEARY, DETROIT.  
WILTSE, N.Y. NATL.

**Absolutely Free!**

Handsomely lithographed pictures *in colors* of famous professional baseball players in the major leagues, now in all 5c packages of

**SWEET CAPORAL  
PIEDMONT  
and  
SOVEREIGN  
Cigarettes**

Every baseball enthusiast in the United States should secure this superb series of pictures. Start collecting *today*.

**The American  
Tobacco Company**



# Trust Busting: Sherman Act and the T206 Set

## Desconfianza: Sherman Act y la serie T206

America was baseball crazy in the early 1900s. By 1909, baseball was the most popular sport in the country.

Yet, with the end of the cigarette wars, only a few sets of insert cards, postcards and game cards were produced in the early years of the 20th century. No national set of baseball cards was produced to capture the baseball-loving public's imagination as had the trade and insert cards of the 1880s.

Meanwhile, Duke's tobacco empire was in danger. In 1909, the U.S. Government brought ATC to the Supreme Court for violating the Sherman Antitrust Act. This law had been passed to break up monopolies, businesses that were so big they stifled competition and drove up prices.

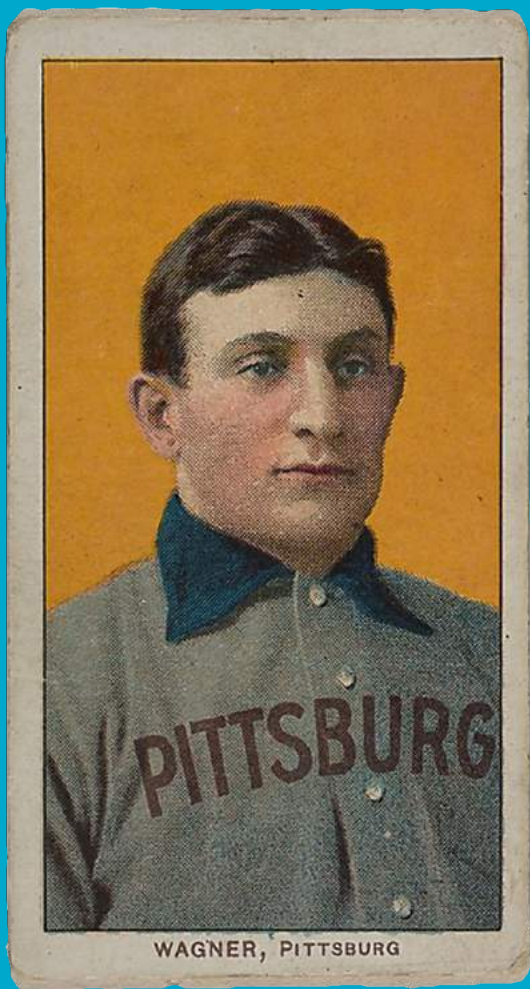
Baseball's popularity, the impending breakup of ATC, rising tobacco tariffs, and fluctuating world financial markets all led to a decision by Duke and ATC to invest once again in insert-card advertising. This set in motion the development of the famous T206 set, which includes the most famous baseball card of them all, the T206 Honus Wagner. **13**

The T206 set of colorful lithographs was distributed through 16 brands in three series released over two years. Cards were inserted into packs, with each card containing a color lithograph of a baseball player on one side and an advertisement for the brand through which it was distributed on the other. **15**

Historians and collectors do not know exactly how many cards were produced, but estimates are in the millions. The cards were printed at the American Lithographic Company on Park Avenue in New York City and shipped to tobacco factories to be inserted into packs. Thousands of cards were distributed through Factory No. 42, the Liggett & Myers factory at Duke and Main Streets in Durham. **5** **11**

By 1911 the Supreme Court decision loomed, and the dissolution of ATC was imminent. Many cards were diverted from other factories to No. 42, which distributed many of the final T206s. **14**

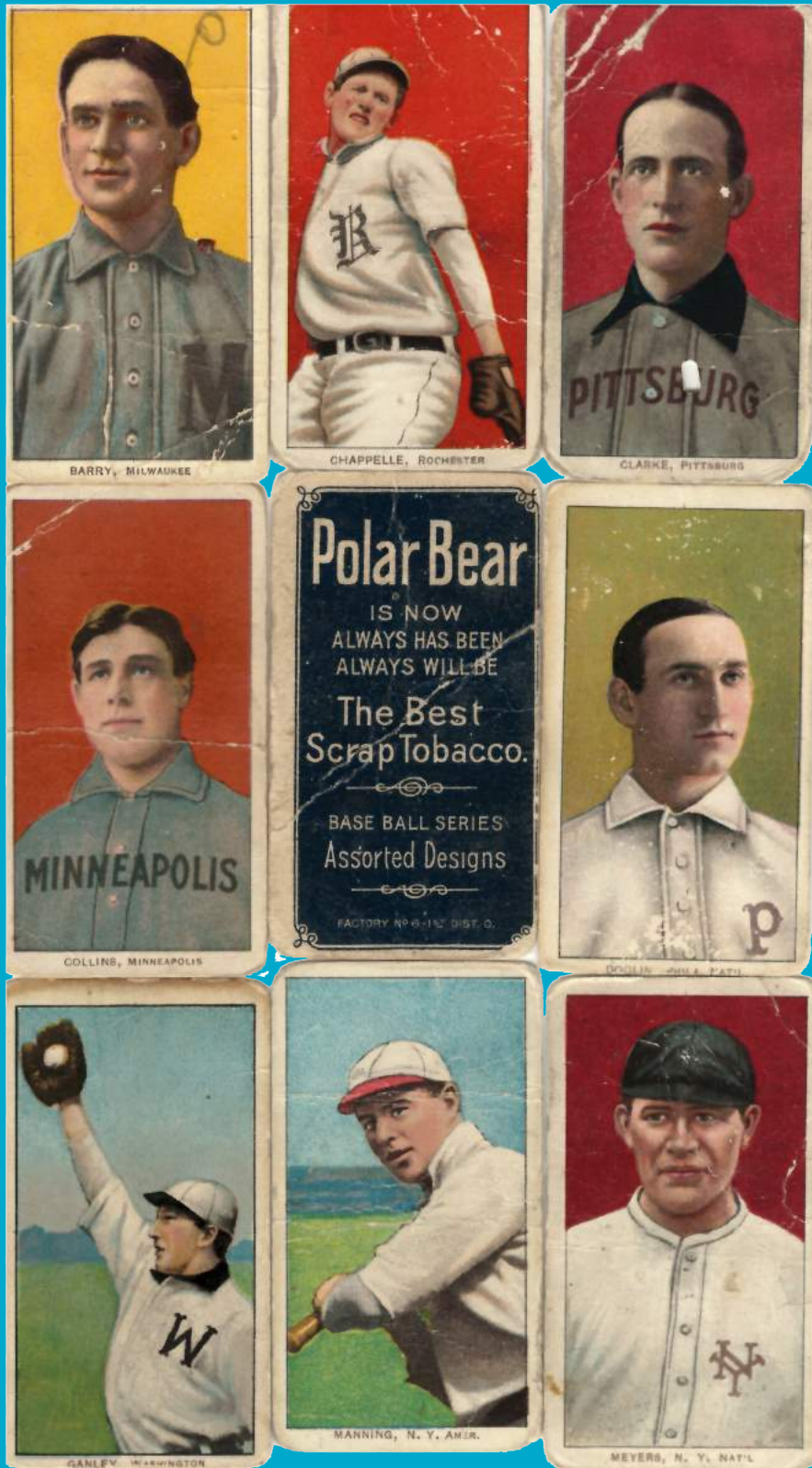
13



1909 T206 Honus Wagner Card. (Got'Em, Get'Em, Need'Em; ECW Press)



5

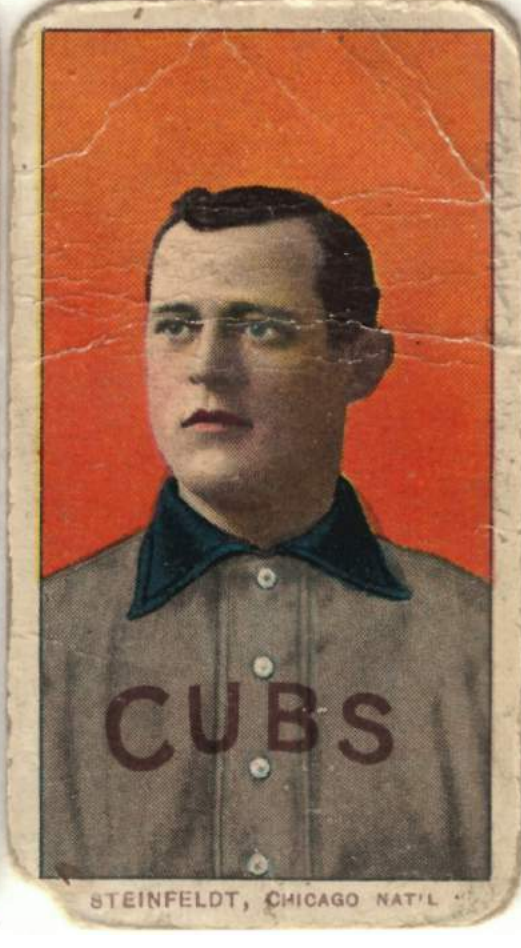


1909-1911 American Tobacco T206 Insert Cards, Various Players. (Curator's collection)

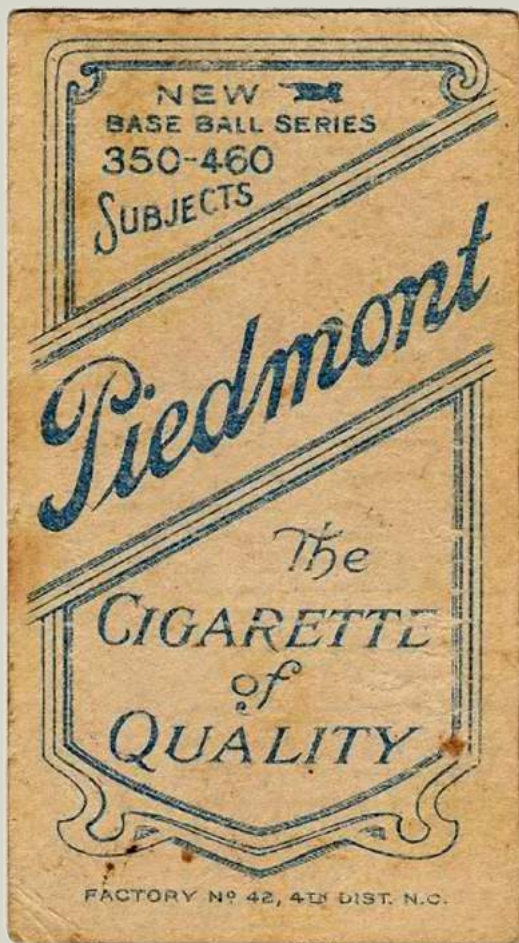




SWEET  
CAPORAL  
CIGARETTES  
The Standard  
for Years  
BASE BALL SERIES  
150  
SUBJECTS  
FACTORY NO. 30, 24 DIST. N.Y.







*Piedmont Cigarettes Inset Card Reverse  
Advertising from Factory 42, Durham.*

# **Legacy: Duke, Durham, and the Million Dollar Baseball Card Industry**

## **Legado: Duke, Durham y la Industria Millonaria de Tarjetas de Béisbol**

The popularity of the T206 set produced by the American Tobacco Company (ATC) inspired manufacturers of candy, gum, and other tobacco brands to create their own cards. The years between 1909 and the beginning of the First World War saw a glut of cards and other premiums. ATC produced several other sets as well, including the T205 and T207 sets in 1911.

On November 16, 1911, ATC was formally dissolved after the Supreme Court ruled that it was “in restraint of trade and an attempt to monopolize.” This ruling transferred the various ATC brands into the power of several smaller companies.

Following the breakup of ATC, baseball cards in cigarette packs declined. This was due in part to federal criticism of tobacco advertising to children, in part to an “anti-gimmick” approach that arose after 1911, and finally to paper shortages during the First World War. Card production and distribution lagged, and no significant, nationally distributed baseball sets were ever used again to promote cigarettes.

Though American Tobacco’s involvement in baseball card history ends with the judicial ruling of 1911, the influence of the sets ATC created is apparent in subsequent cards issued with gum and candy products throughout the rest of the century. These products were produced, distributed and sold much like tobacco and were specifically marketed to children.

By the time the famous 1952 Topps set was issued (which would inspire the nostalgia-fueled baseball card craze of the 1980’s), printing, distribution, contract and copyright methods used had all been formalized by the tobacco issues, which existed due to the influence of Buck Duke and Durham tobacco.



8



T210 Jud Hyames, *Wilmington Sailors*. (Library of Congress)



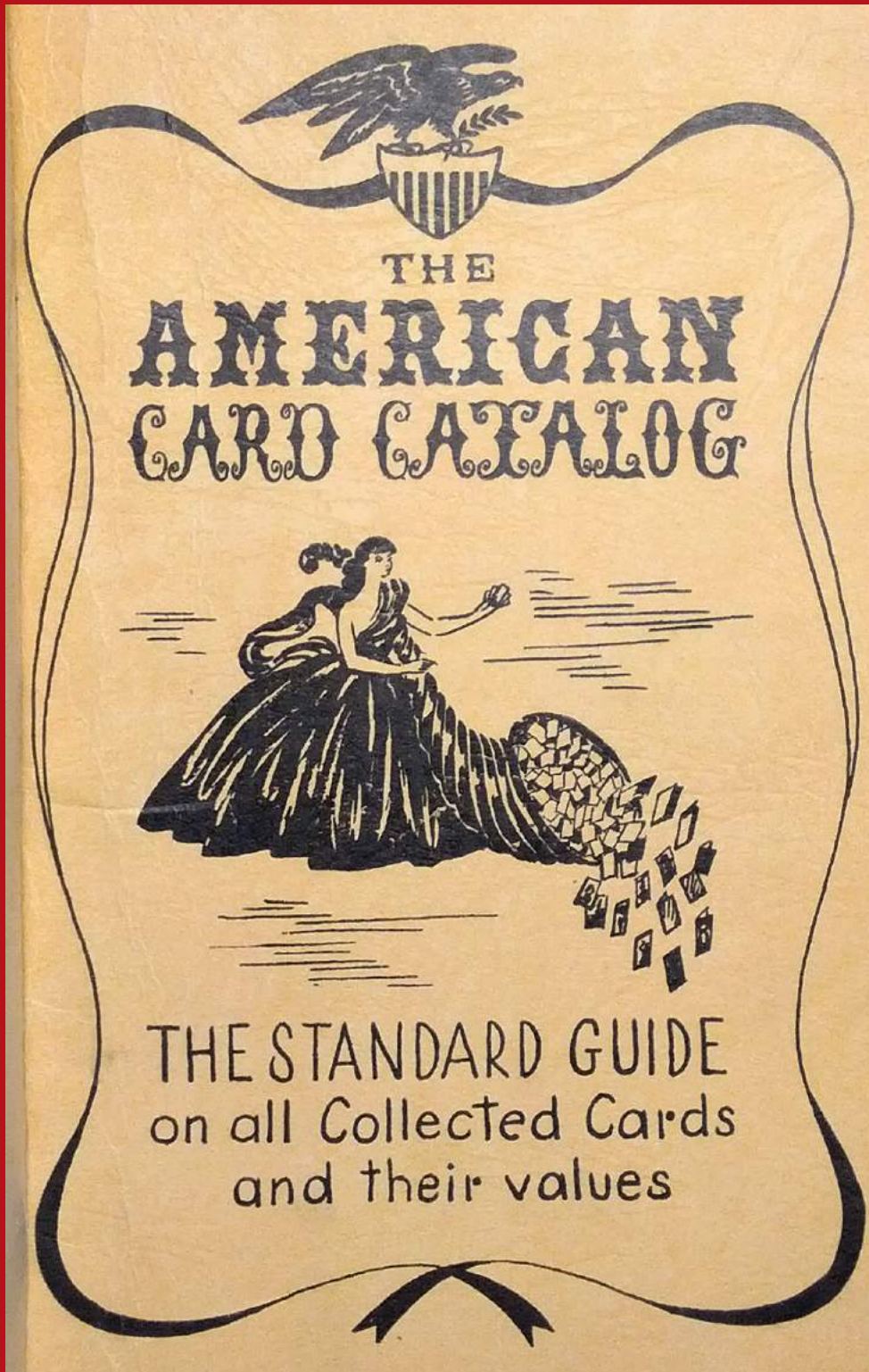
HOFFMAN, RALEIGH.



2



*Red Walsh, Greensboro Champs.* (T209-Contentnea.com)





7



*Liggett & Myers Factory 42.* (Durham Public Library)

# Acknowledgments

## Expresiones de gratitud

This exhibit was curated by **Adam Berenbak** and designed by **Lincoln Hancock**. We would like to extend a special word of thanks to **Duke Energy Foundation** and **Durham Merchants Association Charitable Foundation** for supporting the Our Bull City program, which resulted in this exhibit. The Our Bull City program gives community members a public venue for highlighting historic people, places, events or issues of their own choosing. Visit [www.modh.org](http://www.modh.org) to learn more.

Special thanks to the **Latino Community Credit Union** for exhibit translation.

### ***The Story Continues...***

Visit the Durham Bulls Athletic Park for more Durham and the Rise of the Baseball Card. The story continues in the central dining concourse located near the main entrance to the ballpark. Special thanks to sponsors **Capitol Broadcasting Corporation** and **The Snyderman Fund** for their support.