

About the History of Medical Advertising

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the history of medical advertising and the fact that "trade cards" for the promotion of medicines are the first form of modern medical advertising. The unique style of text, graphics, images and advertising on the trading cards is illustrated by examples.

KEYWORDS: *medical advertising, "trade card", addressee, text, word game.*

The origin of the first advertisements is associated with the Romans. Various findings try to prove it on the basis of data from historical works. In fact, advertising was created at a time when the first brand was created and people (sellers) felt the need to sell it¹.

Medical advertising has a long history. At a time when the first advertisements appeared orally in ancient times (the sale of slaves in Egypt, calls in Central Asian markets such as "Op koling, kep koling"), there were also folk remedies to cure the disease. However, in the history of world medical advertising, it can be said that the first signs of modern medical advertising appeared in the XVIII-XIX centuries. In the early 18th century, the term "patented medicine" was widely used. Typically, a patent is granted for drugs specifically designed for the Royal Family of England. Naturally, such drugs are known among the population for being "tested" and "reliable." As a result, advertising through "patented drugs" has become a tradition. It is noted that in the XIX century, not all segments of the population had access to medical care. Beginning in the mid-1800s, travelers advertised their "patented medicine" in city squares or behind horse-drawn carriages. Their advertising is in the form of various exhibitions, where the drugs are advertised orally in the form of text, through effective speech. Advocates (tourists) have assured the public that their patented medicine will cure all ailments. Some tourists sang the text of the drug advertisement. This did not go unnoticed by the locals. By 1906, approximately 50,000 patented drugs were manufactured and sold in the United States². As lithography developed, another form of medical advertising became more popular. This was demonstrated by the distribution of small leaflets called "Trading Cards". "Trading cards" are usually around 8x13 cm and include advertisements for medicines, as well as advertisements for clothing, food and cosmetics. In the promotion of a particular drug, along with the influential text urging people to buy the product, there are also images that attract people's attention (visual), as well as affect human psychology (Figure 1).

¹Тангейт М. Всемирная история рекламы. Пер. с англ. — 3-е изд. — М.: Альпина Паблишер, 2016. С. –20.

²<https://library.usa.edu/cures-curses-exhibit>



Figure 1. Trading Card of Ayer's Sarsaparilla (19th Century)³

"Trading cards" were available from vendors (tourists), local pharmacies, department stores, and the postal service. Of course, newspaper advertising was already popular during this period. The uniqueness of "trading cards" is that they are distributed to everyone individually. At the same time, the color images on the leaflets were preferred from the point of view of their ability to attract attention from newspaper advertisements printed on a black and white background. The images on the trading cards were unique. They first describe the patient's "weak" and "sick" state before taking the drug, and then the state of the trigger after taking the drug. This is particularly illuminated by the image of women (Figure 2).

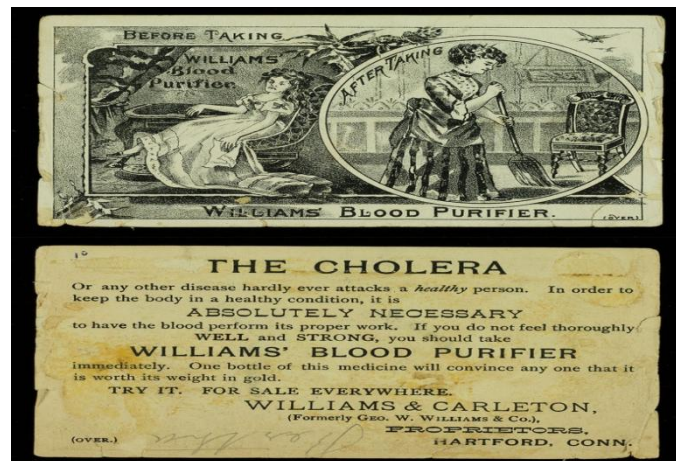


Figure 2. Medical advertisements reflect the patient's condition before and after taking the drug (XIX century)⁴

The images on the "Trading Cards" of some drugs have a plot. The first "trading card" of the drug "Sapanule" describes the acquaintance of two couples. The following cards show couples relaxing together (playing ball). Of course, in order to have such a rest, the human body must be healthy and alert. Attempts have been made to convince the addressee that such a result can be achieved with the help of Sapanule. (Figure 3).

³<https://library.artstor.org/public/28280832>

⁴<https://library.artstor.org/public/28315044>



Figure 3. Sapanule drug advertising card. Display of plot images on "trading cards"⁵

The text of medical advertisements on the "trade cards" promoting medical products was also unique. Known in the East as muvashshah art, this type of art was also reflected in drug advertisements. An example is the "trading card" of Pond's extract. A closer look at the advertising text on the Trading Card reveals that the name of the advertised drug (Pond's extract) is a combination of the initials of the names of the diseases being treated. This allows the drug to be easily and quickly sealed in the mind of the addressee.

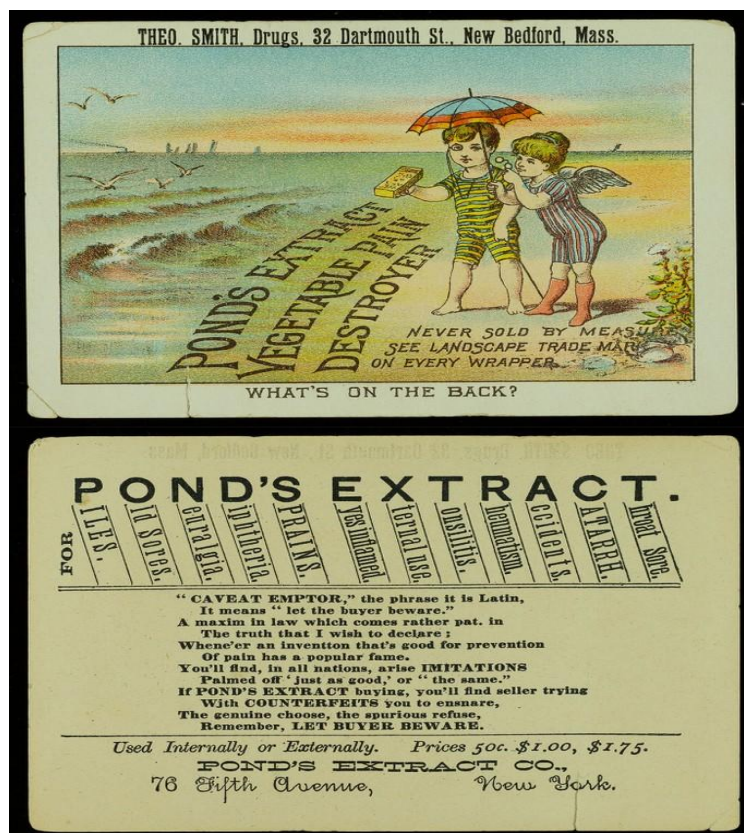


Figure 4. A trade card promoting Pond's extract⁶

It should be noted that the "trading cards" were a kind of advertising of their time. People have collected them and enriched their collections. Over time, more specifically, in the early twentieth

⁵<https://library.artstor.org/public/28313079><https://library.artstor.org/public/28312980>

⁶<https://library.artstor.org/public/28305514>

century, interest in "trading cards" declined. This can be explained by the fact that the taste of the public has changed. Consumers are also skeptical that "patent drugs" are being followed by fraudsters who claim that the drugs they promote do not have the same properties. Samuel Hopkins Adams, one of the leaders in the patent medicine industry, called the production and advertising of patented drugs a "great American fraud" and had a major impact on changing public opinion about the industry. The medical community has also begun to oppose these practices together. Once highly regarded, the U.S. federal government passed the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, a patent designed to protect consumers from misleading information provided by products and their manufacturers in response to drug fraud. This act began the creation of the Food and Drug Administration to ensure stronger branding of medicines⁷.

Manufacturers began to increase their advertising in newspapers, magazines and billboards. The invention of radio in 1913 soon made it possible to use a new way of communicating with the public in advertising. However, the construction of medical advertising text, speeches, images (healthy and happy life, spotless children, happy family circle) aimed at the specific promotion of the medical device on the "trading cards") are still used in medical advertising today. In this sense, "trading cards" can be considered as the first manifestations of modern medical advertising.

An Internet source testified that medical trade cards can now be found in archives, museums and private collection libraries. The archives of the New York Presbyterian / Weill Cornell Medical Center contain 197 types of "trading cards" designed to promote 19th-century medical services and products.

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⁷Cures and Curses: A History of Pharmaceutical Advertising in America. <https://library.usa.edu/cures-curses-exhibit>