



Checkerboard

November, 2012

Ben Bey Cigars

Ben Bey Cigar tins are represented in many tobacco-related collections. These popular containers, which cigar expert Tony Hyman described as "very lovely" and "one of the most colorful and highly decorated tin boxes" were copyrighted in 1922. They only reveal a glimpse, however, of the full story of Ben Bey.



Popular Ben Bey Cigar Tin 1920's

Ben Bey cigars were introduced in 1900 by Grommes & Kennedy in Chicago. Nathan Elson was also a partner in the company. The name of the company was changed to Grommes and Elson in 1908 and again to Nathan Elson & Co in 1921. The origin of the name "Ben Bey" is shrouded in mystery, for there was no famous historical character by that name. Ben Bey cigars rose to a position of prominence as a leading seller throughout the 1920's and 30's. The company was sold to DWG Cigar Corporation (which later became Wendy's) in 1947. The Ben Bey brand is still being manufactured by National Cigar Corporation.

While the cigar tin pictured above and a smaller version are the most iconic representations of the brand, dozens of other wooden and cardboard varieties of Ben Bey cigar boxes exist. The rider on horse is depicted on each inner cover throughout the run.



Early Ben Bey Cigar Box 1900-1908

Here are some other Ben Bey collectables and estimated dates of manufacture:



Reverse Painted Glass Sign 36" x 36"



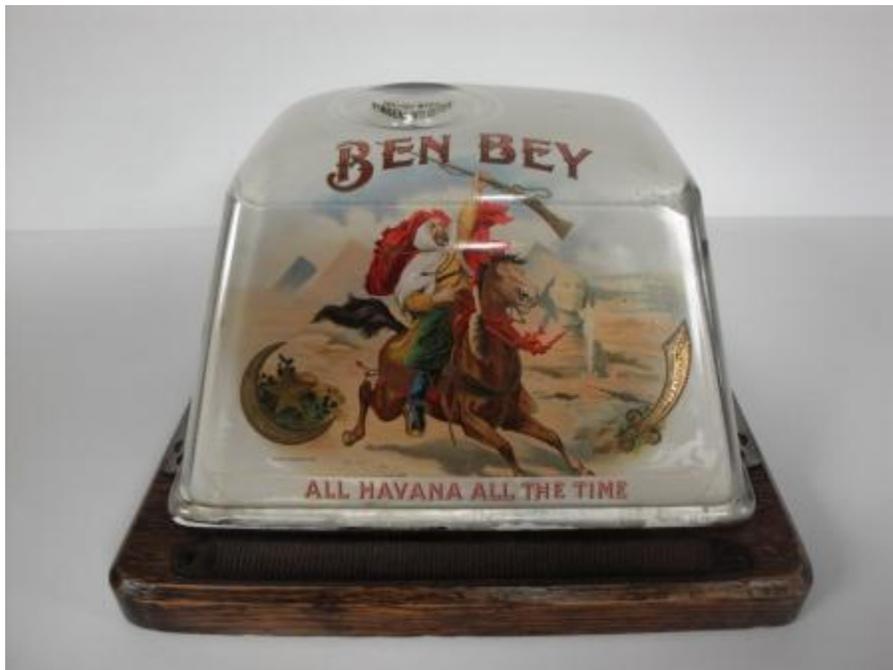
Cigar Lighter 1920's



Cigar Lighter and Wooden Cigar Box Display 1930's



Cigar Clipper 1900-1910s



Cigar Clipper 1910-1920s



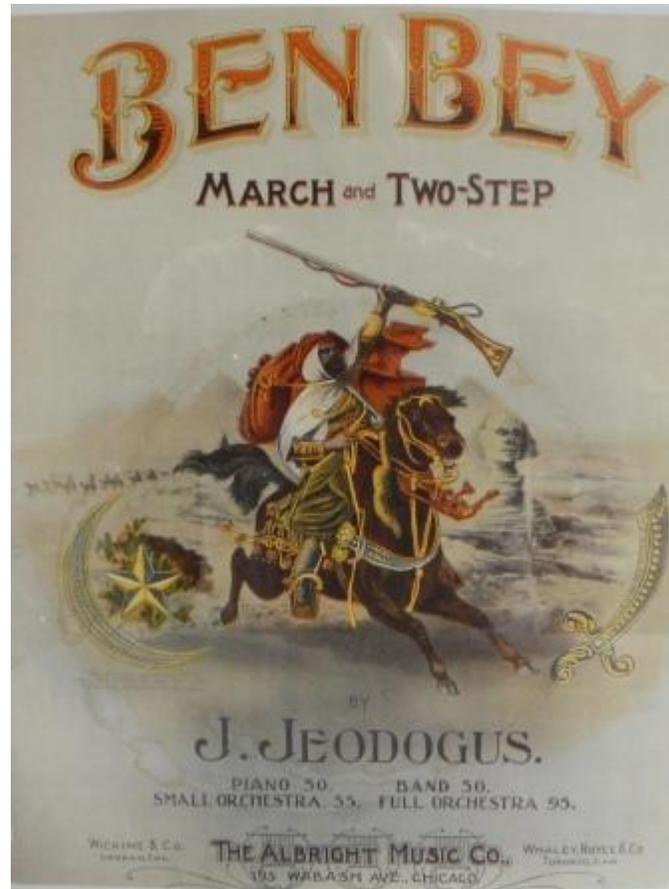
Automobile Mileage Recorder 1930s



Match Books 1930-1940s

The iconic Ben Bey rider on horse image has mysteriously appeared in venues other than cigar-related items. Sheet music for the "Ben Bey March and Two Step" was published in

1904. While copyright credit is given to Grommes & Kennedy, there is no reference whatsoever to cigars. The image was also used on a large cardboard spice bin paper label, circa 1920, without copyright credit.



Ben Bey March and Two-Step Sheet Music 1904

Now, are you ready for the real mystery? An entirely different "Ben Bey" brand exists that sports an image of almost the exact same rider on a rearing horse, with a rifle extended in the air. It was also introduced around 1900 but in Montreal, Canada by Ed Youngheart & Co. There is no known connection between the two companies. Coincidence? You be the judge. If anybody can shed any light on this mystery, please [click here](#) to offer your theories or information.



Canadian Ben Bey Cigar Box 1920's

Wanted Items

In this column are those sought-after items of desire that seem to be elusive. If you know where any of these items can be acquired or if you have one available, please click the link to reply directly to the seeker. To place a listing in this column, [click here](#). There is no fee for AAAA members. Up to three listings per member is permitted.

One (1) Pound FULL [Unopened, Sealed] Key-Wind Coffee Tins: To reply, [click here](#).

Near Mint English Biscuit Tins: 1880 to 1925 To reply, [click here](#).

Scarce or Rare Tobacco Pocket Tins: 1 or collection. To reply: [click here](#).

Indianapolis Brewing Company Ephemera: Circa 1920. Specifically looking for signed documents. To reply [click here](#).

The Celluloid Face for a Wrigley Gum Display: To reply, [click here](#).

Old Automobile Gear Shift Knobs: The kind that screwed on the gear shift that came through the floorboard. Many looked like a large marble. To reply, [click here](#).

Ben Bey Cigar Collectables: Any Ben Bey cigar collectable, other than tin containers. To reply [click here](#).

Antique Adver-Trivia

Here is the latest installment of antique advertising questions designed to test your Advertising IQ.

1. When was the Cracker Jack logo, Sailor Jack and Bingo, introduced?



- A. After the Civil War
- B. After the Spanish-American War
- C. After World War I
- D. After World War II
- E. After the Korean War

2. La Palina cigar tins (below) were manufactured out of:



- A. Denmark
- B. Brass alloy
- C. Early plastic that resembled brass
- D. WWII artillery shells
- E. Metal that was more expensive than the cigars

For the correct answers, [click here](#).

Do you have any fascinating factoids about antique and collectible advertising? If so, please share them with the AAAA *Checkerboard* so we can try to stump our members in future issues. Just [click here](#) and describe your adver-trivia.

2013 AAAA Convention: Reading, Pennsylvania!

Last month, the exciting announcement was made that the 2013 AAAA Convention will take place July 17-20, 2013 in Reading, Pennsylvania. Old traditions will be blended with innovative new ideas for an unforgettable experience. To ensure a room within the AAAA room block, please register NOW to avoid disappointment! For complete details, just [click here](#) for a Registration Form. If you experience technical difficulties pulling up the form, please call Amy Vehling at 812-257-0345.

The AAAA Checkerboard is a monthly e-newsletter that is made available to all AAAA members at no cost. The mission of the Checkerboard is to increase knowledge about antique and collectible advertising among AAAA members. The Checkerboard also provides news and updates about AAAA. It is produced each month with the exception of the four months per year when the award-winning Past Times print newsletter is published. Paul Lefkovitz

plefk@generalstoreantiques.com) serves as Editor of the AAAA Checkerboard.



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