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ANALYSIS: A COLLECTION OF APPROXIMATELY 50,000 ORIGINAL MOVIE ADVERTISING BLOCKS, 8,000 PLATES, PLUS A LARGE QUANTITY OF ANCILLARY MATERIAL.

My involvement with this collection dates back to the spring of 1999 when I received a phone call from one of the two owners of the collection. I was contacted because of my appearances on the PBS program Antiques Roadshow, doing on-air appraisals of various types of vintage movie advertising (posters, lobby cards, promotional items, etc.) My expertise in these areas was based on my 45 years involvement with the film business and the vast array of material the movies have generated.

The owner described what the collection consisted of: assorted size wood blocks with a metal engraved top usually made of zinc or magnesium and the plates (7" X 10" that included 8 different size ads). When attached to a letterpress a copy is produced by repeated direct impression of an inked, raised surface against sheets of paper. The plates and blocks were produced by an acid etched process from a photographic image.

During my years of actual hands on experience in the movie business running movie theaters, distributing films, publicizing films and my years of being a movie memorabilia dealer, I had run across small quantities of these blocks and been exposed to the results of their use.



These were known as “cuts” in the printing trade. Before the current methods which now operate digitally and before that on photo-mechanical methods, printing of newspapers (and most other material) was done via letter press.

The bulk of the press book was given over to pages of ads, illustrated in a variety of sizes. In the days of letterpress the theatre owner would order cuts, also called ad blocks, which were a combination of wood and metal containing an incised intaglio image of the film pictured in the press book.

The movie theatre could then give these to the local newspaper to plug into their printing forms. In later years, instead of wooden blocks with metal surfaces, plates were used to create cardboard three dimensional images of the ads (there are thousands of these forms in the collection.) Later, when papers were printed via photo offset, actual ads could be clipped from the press book and sent off to the media.

When I was first contacted about this collection, I assumed they had run across a large accumulation of examples from a Midwestern film exchange. As I discussed it further with them and examined some samples sent to me, I became puzzled as to exactly what the horde was. It was not until I visited the site in Omaha where the collection was housed that I realized that they had found the holdings of one of the few firms that actually manufactured the cuts, plates and mats for the film industry. In other words, this was a **source collection**.* The owners have available extensive material about the history of the firm plus valuable ephemera related to its operation.

As for the contents of the collection, there are a very large number of films dating from the 1930s through the 1980s represented. The owners have a listing that is several hundred pages long. The list contains many major titles as well as thousands more that are of interest to memorabilia collectors.

A handwritten mark consisting of a stylized letter 'R' or similar character, positioned above a diagonal line that extends from the bottom left towards the top right.

ANALYZER'S EXPERIENCE: Rudy Franchi was a dealer in movie memorabilia, graphic design ephemera, animation art advertising, war, travel, exhibition. film posters and rock posters since 1969. He was the owner of The Nostalgia Factory (Montreal, Newport, R. I. and Boston, MA, 1969 to 2005) and the website nostalgia.com. He is the author of Miller's Movie Collectibles (Phaidon Press, 2000) and has conducted major cataloged auctions of vintage movie posters at Skinner of Boston, Heritage of Dallas and Christie's New York. For its first 17 years Mr. Franchi was an on air appraiser for the PBS series Antiques Roadshow. Over his time on the show, Mr. Franchi conducted over 100 on air appraisals of a wide range of collectibles, including posters and other design oriented ephemera. He also taped a special segment at the Academy of Motion Picture Art Margaret Herrick Library, perhaps the world's largest repository of material related to the history of cinema. He taped a segment at the Eastman House Film Museum in Rochester New York and has acted as a consultant to the famed Cinematheque Franca is Paris. He has been a guest appraiser on the BBC version of Antiques Roadshow. He has done appraisal work for such institutions as the Boston Public Library (PrintDepartment); the University Of North Carolina Poster Collection; The Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy Of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; the Library of Congress 20th Century Poster Collection; The Ridley Scott poster collection; The Marc Benda Collection of Modern Posters(donated to the Cooper Hewitt design branch of the Smithsonian Institutions, NY) and the design/poster department of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He currently runs the website www.posterappraisal.com



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Co-Author of MILLER'S MOVIE COLLECTIBLES/ 2013 Edition:
COLLECTING THE MOVIES

Official suppliers of movie poster images: IMDb <<http://www.imdb.com>>

Entertainment Memorabilia Appraiser: Antiques Roadshow <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/roadshow>>

Movie Poster News: <http://posternewsbulletin.blogspot.com>

