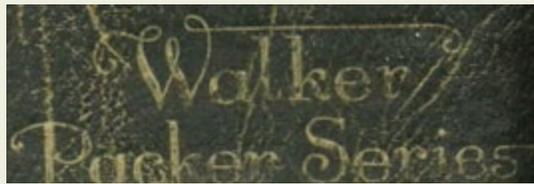


Some Thoughts Regarding the Packers Walker's Cleaners Set and a New Discovery

BY JOHN SPANO



How do we define rarity as collectors? A single known example? A half-dozen? A short-print? A 1/1? Rarity is subjective; and the term has become trite amongst collectors... having the same effect when used as a car alarm sounding off in a parking lot. In collectibles, rarity coupled with desirability equals value; so labeling an item as rare, creating rarity (E.g. chase cards), and redefining rarity in terms of condition are all tactics used in the hobby in an attempt to maximize sales.

Regardless of your perspective, the Packers premiums produced by Walker's Cleaners are rare.

Issued by the Walker's Cleaners of Green Bay in 1932, each of the twenty-seven premiums measure approximately 9"x 10" and picture Packers players and coach Curly Lambeau. A tab attached to each premium provides a player biog-

raphy and describes the promotion by Walker's. The information on the tab states that an album would be issued to any patron "who has a complete set". Based upon that information it can be inferred that singles were issued and albums would be provided only once the customer had a complete set of twenty-seven. It is my feeling, however, that the singles were never distributed as intended. I have been tracking Packers Walker's Cleaners for the last fifteen years and have documented seven complete sets and one set missing a single specimen (all sets were in albums). In that time I have only seen a handful of singles. My assumption, based on the lack of singles available in the market, is that the complete sets in albums were issued and the singles were never distributed (or not distributed in the quantities intended). Singles are available in today's market, to the best of my knowledge; all

came from two complete sets that were broken for distribution a few years ago.

New Discovery

As a collector of vintage football items I often ask myself the question what is remaining to be discovered. Maybe a new Bears or Packers match cover from the 1934 Diamond set? Five more Star Player Candy cards to bring the checklist to a more mentally manageable 48? How about a sheet of 12 unknown National Chicle cards? All possibilities; but typically discoveries are not as mainstream as the items mentioned above.

In addition to the twenty-seven player portraits discussed earlier, Walker's Cleaners issued other Packers items during the 30's; and the piece discovered this past summer was likely a premium of some type. Measuring 12"x 14", the

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No. 13

JOHNNY BLOOD

HALFBACK

Johnny Blood is one of the fastest men on the team and is a dangerous threat on end run plays. He started his professional football with the Duluth Eskimos and acquired his training at St. Mary's. While at St. Mary's he was a great basketball star and a football player par excellence. Last season he was hampered by injuries but many expect that he will make a comeback and give Green Bay fans the great football that is in him. Johnny has often been called upon to play many backfield positions and he is equally as good at one as at the other.

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1932 Packers Walker's Cleaners Johnny Blood photo from the Author's set



Newly discovered Packers Walker's Cleaners piece.

premium commemorates a game played on December 26th, 1932, between the Packers and the Kamehameha Kams in Honolulu, Hawaii. The Walker's brand is prominently displayed as well as their sponsorship of a radio broadcast of the game. The central focus of the piece is a large football with facsimile signatures of Pack-

ers players who participated in the game...of note is Johnny Blood's signature adorned with a Cyclops.

As the vintage football segment of the hobby continues to mature, hopefully more pieces like the Hawaiian Packers premium will be discovered.

John Spano is an advanced collector of early football memorabilia and has been contributing articles on many new discoveries in the hobby since the 1990s. He is co-owner of MSB Sports Cards and BST Auctions.

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