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An Amazing Discovery!

by Scott Lovelace

Oh, what a discovery it was.

Fifteen years ago, a couple of gentlemen from Thief River Falls, Minnesota, stumbled onto an amazing stash of vintage beer advertising items. There were over 100 individual pieces found and most of the items were Hamm's. All the items dated back to the late 1930s and most of the signs were in excellent or better condition. Many of the signs had never been seen before, even by the most veteran collectors. It turned out to be an amazing story that turned the Hamm's collecting community on its ears, now 15 years later, I felt it was a great time to revisit the story and the impact it had on our collecting community.



Very rare and gorgeous "Red Head" sign

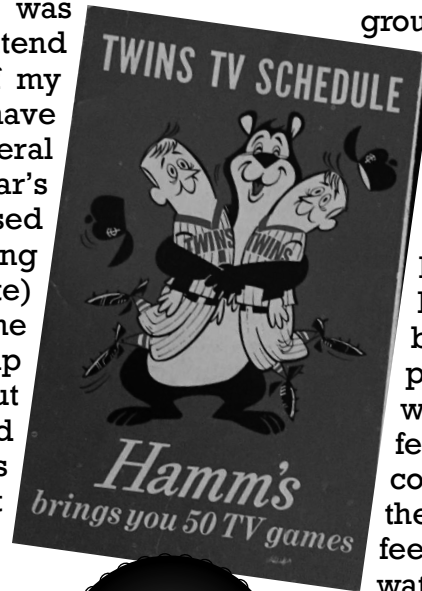
A Very Special Relationship - Hamm's and the Twins

by Doug Sandin

On March 28th, the Minnesota Twins opened the 2019 baseball season at home against the Cleveland Indians. I was fortunate enough to attend the game with three of my buddies, which we have been able to do for several years in a row. At last year's opener we were surprised to see that after entering Gate 34 (Puckett's gate) there was an area to the left that was selling tap beer. They had about 20 different brands and one was Hamm's. This was the first year that Hamm's was available at the Twin's new stadium. I had to have one. As a Hamm's collector I was curious to see what tap knob they were using and it was the common plastic one with the bear on it. We went to the same vendor this year and were disappointed to find out that once again, no Hamm's. My brother who was with me (A big

Twins fan but not a fan of Hamm's beverages) made the comment, "I can't believe you can't get a Hamm's Beer at a Twins game."

His disbelief comes from remembering how important the relationship between Twins Baseball and Hamm's Beer was back in the '60s and '70s. As kids we would go to Twins games at the old Met Stadium with a group called the



An early 1960s Hamm's /Twins pocket schedule

"Knot Hole Gang." The "Knot Hole Gang" name was used as a reference back to the 1900s when baseball was played in fields with wooden fences. Kids couldn't afford the admission fees so they would watch the games through the knot holes in the boards. "Knot Hole Gangs" consisted of youth baseball players and their coaches or parents who could gain entrance only as long as they were wearing their green "Knot hole Gang" sticker.

An Amazing Discovery ~ continued on page 4

An Amazing Discovery ~ continued on page 3

President's Thoughts

Hi, everyone! I hope all of you are enjoying your summer. We have been busy here at the Hamm's Beer Club. We have some very exciting news that we are announcing in this Gazette. The Hamm's Beer Club now has it's own "Member's Only" closed Facebook page. The only way to have access and to interact with fellow collector's is to be a member of our club. This new page will be a place for Hamm's Beer Club members only, to learn about all things Hamm's and Hamm's collecting. You will be able to post pictures of your collection, interesting items you've seen, items you are looking for, stories and links about Hamm's Beer and collecting. You can also use this forum to ask questions about items you are looking to purchase or to verify if an item is authentic or fake. This forum is for you and we hope that this helps enhance your collecting experience. We are excited to offer this new benefit to all of you, our members, we hope you enjoy it as well. To find out more info on the site and how to join see the longer article in this Gazette.

We have a couple of very interesting articles in this gazette for you. The first one is written by Hamm's Beer Club member, Doug Sandin, and it is on Hamm's long-standing sponsorship of the Minnesota Twins, and what that has meant over the years to the Twins fans. The second article, about a cache of old Hamm's signs discovered 15 years ago, has generated quite a bit of buzz on social media. A couple of months ago, I started posting pictures of some of the signs from that discovery on the club's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram sites. The pictures of those signs produced some real excitement and many questions. I think most, if not all, of those questions will be answered in


this article. We initially did an article on this discovery 15 years ago. It turned out to be an amazing story and an iconic find of extremely rare signs, so we thought that it was time to revisit that story and it is quite a story!

We also have our popular "Hamm's on the street" section and the "Did you see?" section, that details new and interesting items that have been recently sold on eBay. There are always some interesting and exciting items highlighted in that feature. We have an update on MillerCoors as well. Hamm's continues to grow in popularity, and demand is increasing as well. MillerCoors is doing their best to ramp up their distribution across the U.S.

I want to thank all of you, the members, for your support! This club would not exist without that support. We are constantly looking for new and exciting ways to enhance our club, so if you have some ideas, please let us know. Our new "Members only" Hamm's Beer Club Facebook page, is one of our recent enhancements and another added benefit to our loyal members. We are excited to see that page take off!

The Hamm's Bear reminds you to check your membership status on the address label; we don't want to lose you as a member, or have you miss out on all the benefits.

Cheers,
Scott Lovelace
Hamm's Club President
608-444-9182
hammsbeerclub@yahoo.com



The Hamm's Beer Club, LLC was founded in January of 2016 under the laws of the state of Wisconsin. The Bruins Gazette is the official newsletter of the Hamm's Club.

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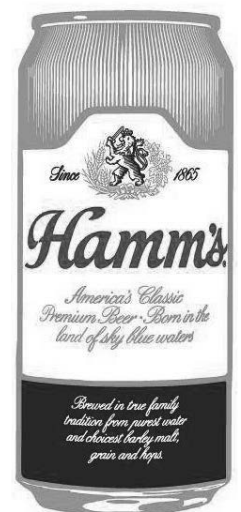
Full Page	\$200.00
1/2 Page	\$100.00
1/4 Page	\$50.00
1/8 Page	\$35.00

Classified (25 words or less) per year: \$15.00
minimum for first 25 words & .20¢ per word after that.

Display ads may have additional set-up costs.

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES:

hammsbeerclub.com or call Scott at 608-444-9182



We would sit out in the right field bleachers hoping Killebrew or Oliva would hit one out to us. We always brought our gloves.

The favorite snacks that were enjoyed were the Frosty Malt cups and the popcorn that came in the paper megaphones that were sealed at the bottom. Once the popcorn was gone you could punch out the seal and use the megaphone to cheer for your favorite players and boo the opposition. These megaphones usually had scoreboards on them so you could track the score inning by inning if you were lucky enough to have a pencil. These megaphones usually had ads for Hamm's Beer on them. I can also remember going to games with my father and watching him take a pause to refresh during the seventh inning stretch with an ice cold Hamm's.

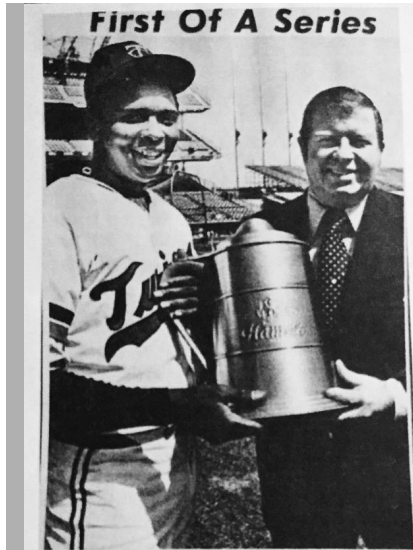
Hamm's was a huge sponsor of



The iconic and rare Hamm's / Twins cardboard baseball scoreboard

the Twins, during the years 1961-1973. The pocket schedules for the

Twins from those years are very desirable for collectors to this day. It was during these years that, in my opinion, the

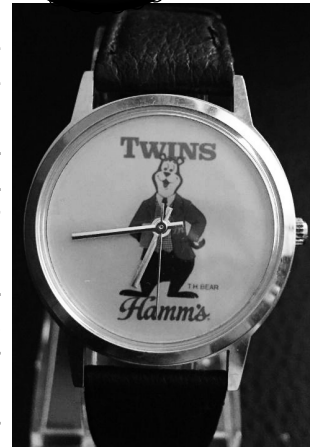


Robert Troast, vice president-marketing, for the Theodore Hamm Co., St. Paul, Minn., kicks off the brewery's "Player of the Week" award to Minnesota Twin's Jim Bolt with a giant beer stein as Bolt's personal memento. The company will present 25 awards during the Twins' season, in recognition of the week's top player, but the real winners are the 25 area youth baseball teams who will receive \$100 worth of equipment in the winning player's name.

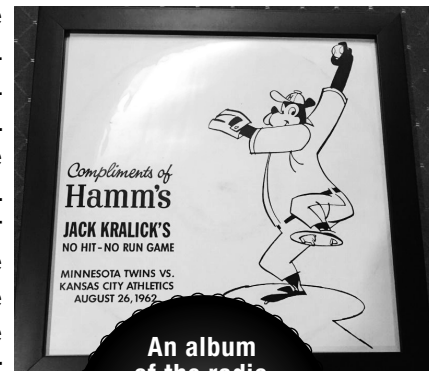
An article on Hamm's Twins player of the week award

Another rare collectable piece is the large cardboard easel back scoreboard with the bear in catchers gear. They have dials on them with all the teams from both leagues listed on them so you could track any game you chose and keep score inning by inning. These scoreboards were intended to be given to bar and restaurant owners, so they could have them up, and in sight for patrons to track how a

The Hamm's and Twins collector's watch. It's rare and very cool.



An album of the radio broadcast from Jack Kralick's 1962 "no-hitter", given out compliments of Hamm's



given baseball game was doing. These are very hard to find in good condition. Hamm's also came out with this same scoreboard sign for the Milwaukee Braves.

Other nice Hamm's/Twins collectables are the Jack Kralick album commemorating the first No-Hitter in Twins history. It was Hamm's that put the album out and even today when you listen to it, it tends to send a chill up your spine. The Hamm's Bear/ Twins wrist watch is another very rare item. It is one of my favorite pieces in my collection. There are very few of these around.

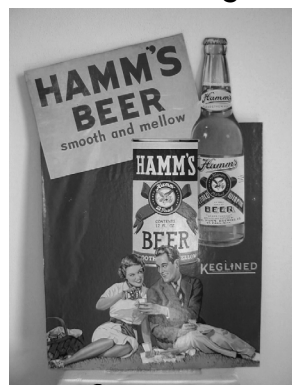
In 1973 Hamm's decided to award the Twins selected "Player of the Week" with the giant beer stein cooler, presented by a Hamm's dignitary as a memento. These steins have become nice collectables and ones that aren't dented are hard to find.

I'm always on the lookout for Twins/Hamm's memorabilia. For me the two will always go together. A question many collectors are

asked is why they collect what they do. For me, and maybe many other Hamm's collectors, it's because thinking of Hamm's takes me back to my youth and brings all those great Twins memories

I enjoyed as a kid. I'm just hoping someday soon I can enjoy another cold Hamm's at a Twins game.

In the early spring of 2005, two men started a remodeling project in an old beer warehouse in Thief River Falls, Minnesota. The warehouse was built in the late 1920s and had been vacant for several decades. The owner was hoping to create a space within the warehouse to use for his business. During the course of their work the men discovered a large cache of cardboard and metal beer signs on top of an



Rare "couples" sign # 1

this was, but they would soon find out. The story of the excitement, interest and questions this discovery generated is detailed below - and it is quite a story!

In May 2005 Hamm's collectors were taken by surprise when a Hamm's Cardboard sign from the late 1930s showed up on eBay. The sign was in near mint condition, stood over 5 feet and displayed a gorgeous red headed lady wearing in a beautiful white dress. She was also was holding a tray of Hamm's Preferred Stock beer bottles. My first response when I saw the listing was "WOW!" I knew it was probably rare, but it wasn't until I spoke with fellow collectors,

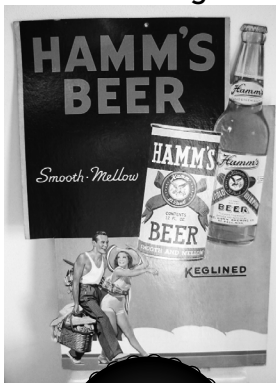


Neat Picnic Beer sign

that I realized how rare this piece really was. Only one collector had seen this "red head" sign before. That collector had only seen one before, and it was in rough shape. As expected, the auction drew a lot of interest, and the final bid price was nearly \$1,200.00.

The sale price was not unexpected given its age, condition, and scarcity. Think about it... a near mint 1938 cardboard stand up piece, how many of these could've survived over the past 80 years? As it turned out, a few of these signs had survived.

After the "Redhead" sign auction ended the seller (who went by the eBay Id "Bigwhitedodge") listed several more Hamm's signs and a couple of Peerless signs. About 10 different styles showed up. These signs were smaller and



Rare "couples" sign # 2

varied in size and averaged 18 inches by 24 inches. Most of the signs were cardboard easel backs. A few tin embossed signs were also listed. The signs were in varied levels of condition: some were near mint while others were in lesser condition with water and dirt staining, but most of the signs fell somewhere between the two extremes. Everyone agreed these were all VERY RARE and dated back to the late 1930s. Amazingly enough, most of these signs had never been

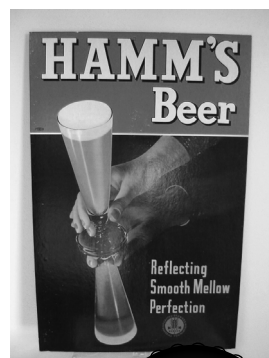
seen before by even seasoned collectors.

When the first listings of these signs started hitting eBay it kicked off a firestorm of questions and excitement within the Hamm's collecting community. It also started a very surprising and interesting journey for the person who made the initial discovery and his friend (Bigwhitedodge) who listed them on eBay for him - more on this later.

Hamm's collectors had many unanswered questions concerning these signs and this, in turn, stirred up speculation. Where did these signs come from? How many of each sign does this seller have and what condition are they in? Probably the most asked question that

each collector was asking themselves was: "what will I have to pay to get one or more of these signs for my collection? It was obvious that if you wanted one of these signs, you had to be prepared to spend some serious money. The questions and speculation didn't deter many people from opening up their wallets; many of the first signs that were listed on eBay went in the \$350-\$450 range.

The first round of auctions for these signs ended, yet questions about this stash of signs remained. One group of auctions would end, and another would start up again with some of the same signs from previous auctions and some new ones, that were unseen up to that

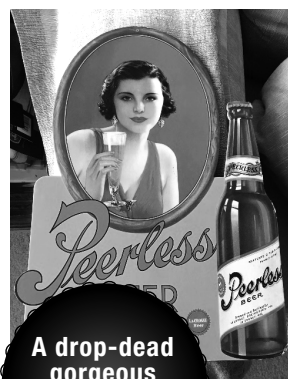


Very elegant pilsner glass sign



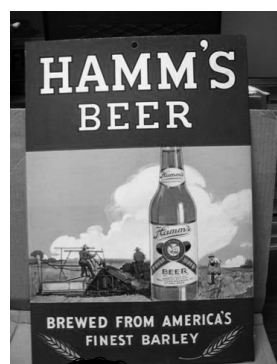
Very rare dimpled tin sign

point. Interested buyers asked question after question from the seller "Bigwhitedodge", but little information filtered out. The



A drop-dead gorgeous Peerless sign – very rare

rumor mill started to take off. The rumor was that, some guy found these signs on top of a walk-in beer cooler in an old beer warehouse, but nothing else was known and even the beer cooler story was speculation at the time. I remember being told that thousands of these signs had been found, and then I was told that there were only a handful of each sign. There was even a speculation that these signs may not be authentic (was somebody reproducing these signs?). That rumor was quickly put to rest when the winners of these early auctions started to speak out. It



A unique ag-themed Hamm's Beer Sign

became very clear that these signs were not fakes. Then something happened... just when Hamm's collectors thought they were finding out some of the answers to their questions; a new seller appeared on eBay that was selling a supply of the same signs. It was no longer "Bigwhitedodge" from eBay, now it was someone else. The questions and speculation started to swirl again. This new seller was even selling multiples of the same sign at the same time.

Confusion ran rampant, what was going on now? Was there truly 100s of each of these signs out there? Why are there two separate sellers offering the same very rare signs out on eBay?

The new seller was peppered with questions and according to this new seller, all of the signs (the ones he was listing and the ones listed by "Bigwhitedodge") came from the same guys and the same find. Specific answers were still hard to come by. There was still quite a bit of ambiguity around who found the signs, how many were found and the condition of the signs still to be sold.

Interest was still there for this new listing of signs, but instead of the \$350-\$450 that each of the signs commanded in the first auction from "Bigwhitedodge", these signs were going for about \$100-\$200 less per sign. Another "Red Headed Lady" sign popped up and this time it sold for \$880, and had a couple of condition issues.

This was an exciting event that was going on. Very rare signs were for sale on eBay, but the mystery around these signs was hard to get a handle on. As I look back, it was fun to talk and speculate with fellow collectors, but frustrating when answers were difficult to come by.

I was fortunate enough to acquire a number of these signs when they originally went up for sale 15 years ago. I made most of my purchases from the eBay seller "Bigwhitedodge", as a result I was

able to ask him many questions and he was always very friendly and helpful. Bigwhitedodge's real name is Craig. I began writing my original article about this discovery in late 2006 and I started my research with Craig. I emailed



Hamm's picnic beer sign #2

Craig and asked if the gentleman who was involved in making the initial discovery of the signs would consider answering some questions. I informed him about the swirl of excitement and confusion this discovery of signs created. I was

interested in writing an article for our Hamm's Club Gazette to put all the rumors to rest. I also knew that many people would be excited to hear the entire story. Craig didn't think his friend would be willing to help—he is a quiet man who doesn't like the "limelight", he is also on the road quite a bit and difficult to get a hold of. I then asked Craig if he

would be a source for my article, he graciously said "yes". As it turned out he knew almost all the details behind this story and he was an enormous help in writing this article.

I sent Craig several questions and he answered all of them. In the



Very cool "in handy cans" sign

paragraphs below, I have compiled the responses I received from Craig. It's great to go back and revisit his answers to my questions. Craig really did a great job of answering most of the questions that were out there pertaining to the discovery and sale of the signs and the signs themselves. Enjoy!

Hamm's on the Street - - - - -

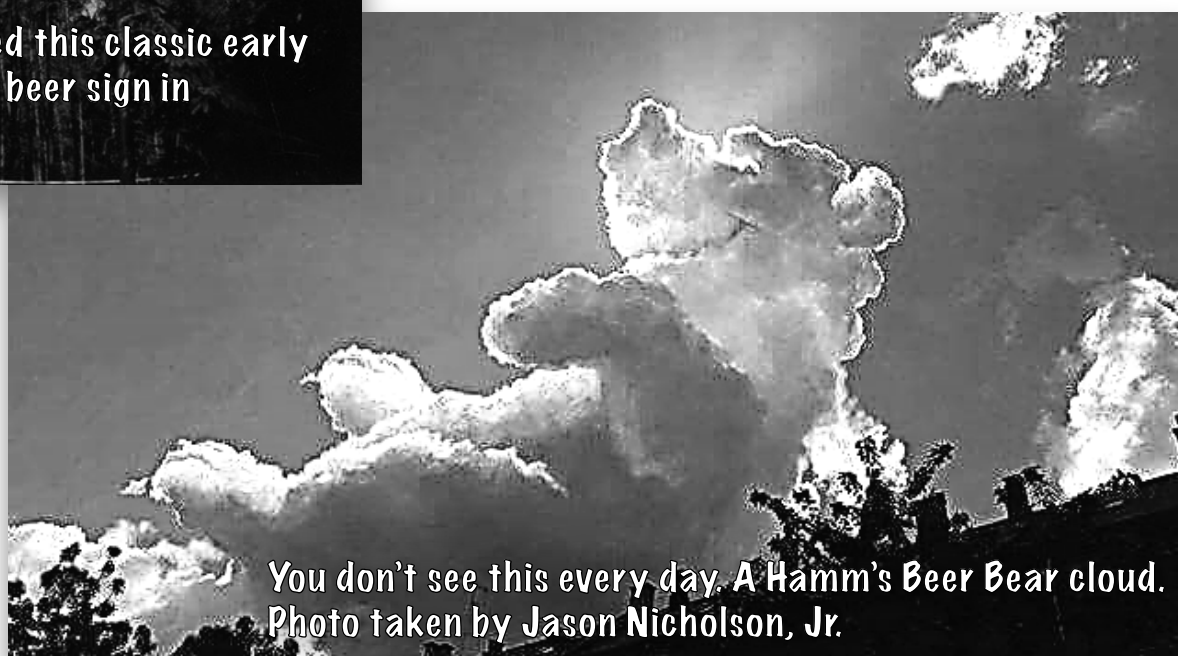


An awesome Hamm's Beer porcelain sign can be seen here hanging outside the West Side Tavern in Wabasha, MN

Here is a great banner, seen recently at Sundance Golf & Bowl in Maple Grove, MN. Photo by Kirk Schnitker



Bob Pirie spotted this classic early 1960s Hamm's beer sign in St. Germain, WI



You don't see this every day. A Hamm's Beer Bear cloud. Photo taken by Jason Nicholson, Jr.

MillerCoors is creating some awesome new signs promoting our favorite brand.



Hamm's Beer Club member, Dave Bullock, spotted this new neon sign in a bar in Browntown, MN

Chad Hatzenbuhler spotted this classic Crown Logo Hamm's sign in Minot, ND



Hamm's Beer Club member, Will Boone, sent us this photo while enjoying an ice-cold Hamm's tallboy



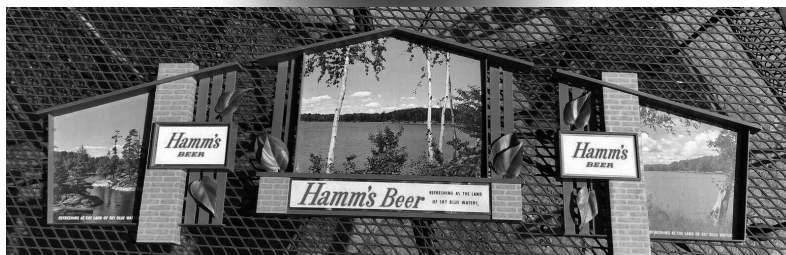
This is a great Hamm's Sign hanging outside Northeastern Hotel and Saloon in Cloquet, MN. So cool!
Photo taken by Jeff Lonto

Did you see? Interesting items sold on eBay recently



↑
**Smith Miller Custom
Hamm's Semi – Sold for
\$750 with 23 bids**

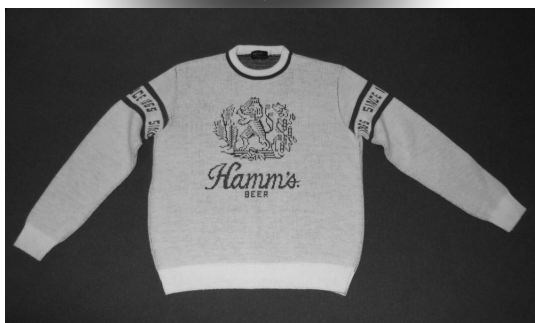
Rare “Refreshing as” Hamm’s Sign Set – Sold for \$402



↓
**Vintage Hamm’s sweater –
I am always amazed at
what vintage Hamm’s
clothing sells for –
Sold for \$95**



↑
**Rare Hamm’s Beer
Valuform - \$535 with 19 bids**



↑
**Hamm’s “Famous Beer” opener,
with the blue eagle logo –
this was in great shape –
Sold for \$338 – with 35 bidders**

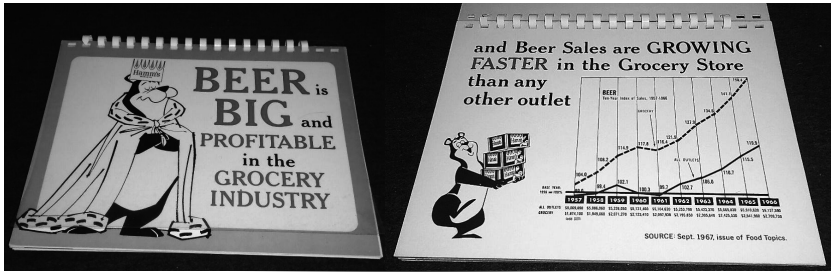


↑
**Neat Hamm’s Bear
ashtray with Rochester
Dist listed on it –
Sold for \$99 - buy it now.**

**Nice West Coast Billboard
sign with frame – Sold for \$406**



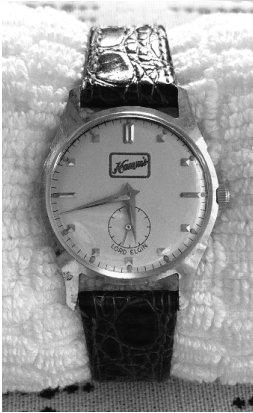
↑
**Hamm’s Beer
“Smooth and Mellow”
tin over cardboard sign,
some condition issues –
Sold for \$280**



1960s Hamm's Sales Easel display – Sold for \$64 – This piece had some great graphics!



Hamm's "Thirst Aid" cardboard display Sold for \$150 – Buy it now.

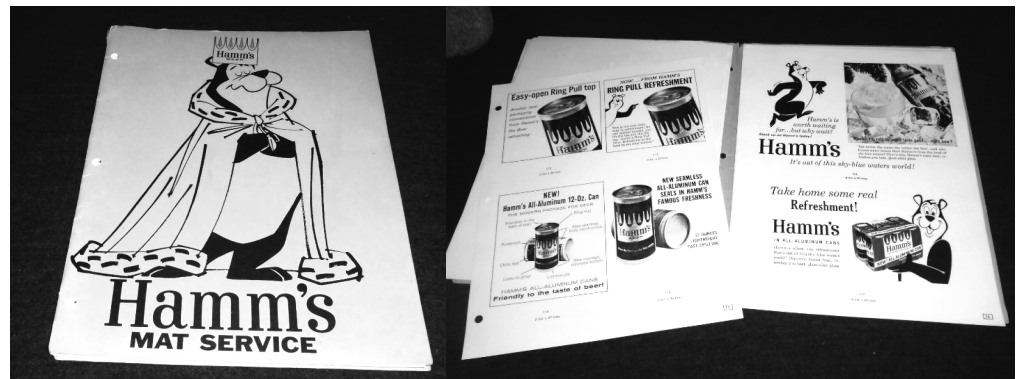


1968 Hamm's gold watch – Sold for \$218 with 14 bids

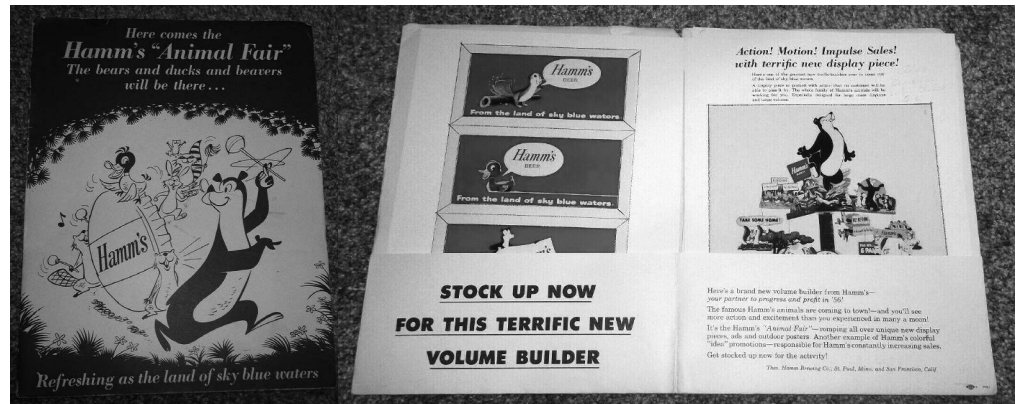
Early 1900s Hamm's Beer letter opener, this is cool! – Sold for \$95



A great 1950s "Hamm's on Tap" bullet pencil from Farmers Tavern in Guthrie Center IA. Sold for \$61 with 20 bids.



Cool 1960s Mat Service folder – containing over 30 pages of Hamm's Ads – Sold for \$128



Hamm's "Animal Fair" salesman folder – 1950s – There were some great color graphics in this folder! sold for \$145

SL: What type of a warehouse was it that these signs were found in?

The warehouse was approximately 80' by 100'. It was of steel construction and had a cement floor. The roof was also made of steel panels. They roof must have been somewhat good, as there was very little water damage to most of the signs. This is amazing in its self, as steel roof in a climate such as we have in Northern Minnesota, hot and humid in the summer and cold in the winter does not agree with steel roofs.

SL: As you know there was another seller that appeared on eBay that had listed a number of the same signs you have listed, do you know how he came to have possession of these signs?

The person I sold for split the signs with the owner of the building. I would guess about 70% stayed with him and 30% went to the owner. The owner then sold his to a 3rd party, who in turned put them on eBay.

SL: How many signs were found originally?

I don't know how many pieces were found originally, but with what I have sold and the other person's sales, I would guess around 200. Some never made it to eBay because of off-auction sales and some were in such bad shape (many were in pieces) they had to be tossed. I know that the person I'm working with spent a couple of days, on top of that walk-in cooler digging through the sawdust, coal dust and just plain dust to get to all of the signs. The day he stopped here to show me the signs, all I could see was his eyes because of all the dirt and dust on his face.

SL: What was the condition of the signs?

The signs were covered with layers of sawdust, which I was told, was put there to help insulate the cooler in the warm summer months. This probably was a big reason why the signs were kept dry and preserved for almost 70 years. Even though the signs were covered with sawdust the ones that were found on top of the piles were filthy with dust and really beat and some were in pieces. I would guess around 25-30 had to be just tossed. I commented that day that a few signs gave themselves to protect the rest. The remainder of the signs varied in condition from near mint to good and a few poor, but a majority of the signs were in excellent condition or better.

SL: How many of the signs were Hamm's vs. other brands beer signs?

Just over 100 were Hamm's signs (mostly cardboard, but some metal signs also), about 30+ were Peerless Beer signs and 8 were Engesser Export Beer signs.

SL: Out of all the Hamm's signs found, which ones were the most common and which were the rarest?

I would say the "Picnic Beer" signs were the most common, both the large and smaller version. The smaller metal Hamm's "Dimpled" signs were the fewest, and about half were near perfect, the rest had rust and paint issues. The "Redhead" sign was 2nd with only approximately 10-15 being found and about 6 were in fair to good condition, four in exceptional condition and the rest in poor condition. The two versions of the "Couples" signs were the rarest. There were two versions of this sign, one with a couple sitting and having a picnic and another with a couple walking to the beach. The "Couples" signs were up in numbers, but with the fewest (useable). They were probably the ones that sustained the most damage from storage, making them in my estimation the rarest. There was probably only 7-8 of each of these "couples" signs that were in good enough shape to be sold.

SL: Did you have any idea what kind excitement the sale of these signs on eBay would generate?

No, we hadn't a clue they would produce so much interest. I've known the guy who found the signs for years and he is always stopping to show me his latest finds. If there is a hole or an attic, he's in it. He also does some salvage work and digging for old coins when he gets some free time. It surprised me when he pulled up with is pickup box full of all these cardboard signs. I asked him what he planned to do with them and he said "I will probably use them for fire starters in my wood burning stove." I asked him "do you want to put some on eBay and maybe get a few bucks to pay for your time digging in that mess to pull out all of those signs?" He laughed and agreed to let me put together an auction and the rest is history.

SL: I'm sure it's been an interesting journey selling these items over the past year, what was your biggest surprise that came from selling these pieces?

Of course the money generated has been one of the biggest surprises. I about had a stroke the day the first auction ended. It was for a "Redhead" sign, and probably the one in the best condition. When I called the guy I'm selling these for, he couldn't talk for a couple of seconds and then said "ok, tell me the truth!" I said "I am," he was then speechless. We went to the liquor store and got a 12 pack of (you guessed it) Hamm's.

Another interesting thing is the people I've had dealings with. 98% are very nice, love their collections and have been a pleasure to work with. I've talked with some on the phone, some I've met personally, but most I only know from their eBay name. I'm so glad that these signs will be preserved for future generations. In this day and age we do not find artwork like this, and we'll never see it again.

SL: Is there any thing else you would like to share?

I would just like to say thank you to everyone who has purchased a sign or, in some cases, signs from me; it has really been a fun part of my life. I hate to see it come to an end, but as all good things, it will. Thank God for eBay and the loyal Hamm's collectors...we were very close to losing a big piece of brewery history in Minnesota.

There you have it, the story of a fantastic find of very rare Hamm's pieces. It is now 15 years later, and I still find myself thinking and talking about this discovery with fellow collectors, several times a year. A hand full of signs, from this find, seem to pop up every year at shows or on eBay. They seem to always be the most common signs. The Red Head sign and the couple's signs never show up for sale. They are tucked away in a few collections, and won't hit the market any time soon, maybe never. All the signs are very unique and so is the story behind them. I still believe that everyone who purchased one or more of these signs, even at the high prices some of them sold for, got a bargain. You have a valuable, beautiful and very rare piece of old Hamm's history for your collection!

Membership Application/Renewal Form

(photocopy as needed)

Name: _____ Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

PH: (H) () Day: ()

E-mail: _____

Area of Interest: _____

Membership is \$25.00 a year per person. If you wish to purchase additional memberships of other members of your household, use a separate piece of paper, Members get three (3) Gazettes.

Mail to: Hamm's Beer Club, 902 Kottke Dr, Condo 8, Madison, WI 53719, ATTN: Scott Lovelace

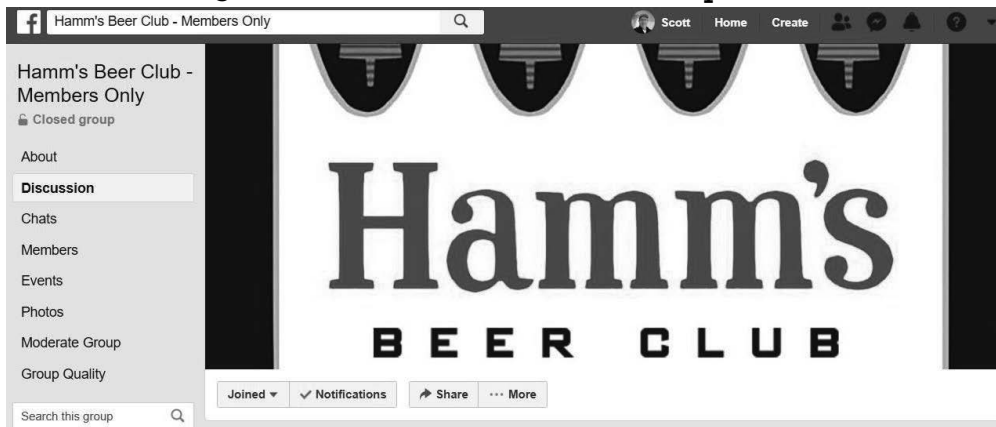
Make checks out to the Hamm's Beer Club, or payment can be sent via PayPal to scottlovelace2000@yahoo.com

Members Only Facebook Page

by Scott Lovelace

This is exciting news! We, at the

pictures of your collection, interesting items you've seen, items you are looking for, stories and links about Hamm's Beer and collecting. You can also use this forum to ask questions about items



Hamm's Beer Club, have recently created a Hamm's Beer Club Members Only Facebook page. It is a closed group, so you will have to "click to join." Once we verify your active membership in the Hamm's Beer Club, we will add you to this exclusive community.

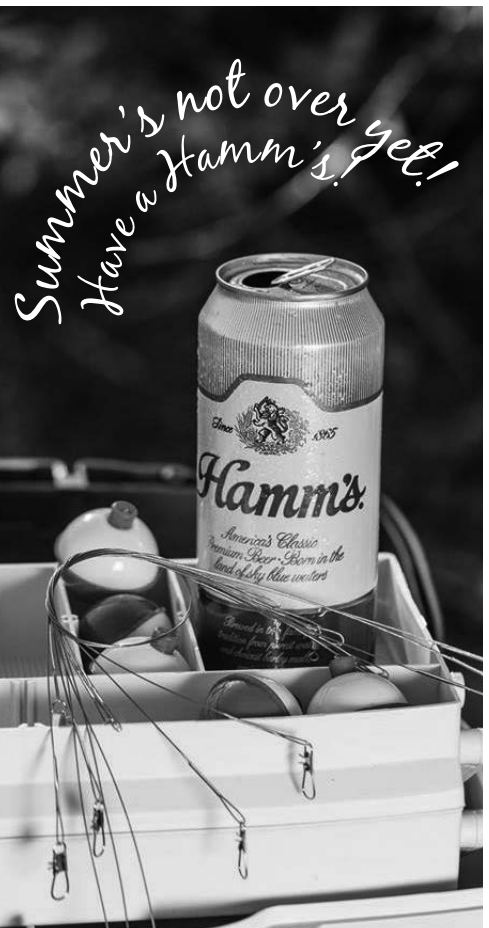
This new page will be a place for Hamm's Beer Club members only, to learn about all things Hamm's and Hamm's collecting. Members will be able to post

that this helps enhance your collecting experience.

JOIN TODAY, simply go into Facebook and search for Hamm's Beer Club - Members Only and select "Join Club", after we verify your current Hamm's Beer Club membership, you will be accepted. You can then start posting pictures, asking questions and interacting with fellow club members.

you are looking to purchase or to verify if an item is authentic or fake. This forum is for you and we hope

BLAST FROM THE PAST



So far this year, we continue to see tremendous growth in bars as drinkers discover (and rediscover!) Hamm's as their beer of choice.

This past June, we held the first 'Hamm It Up!' Bar Crawl in Chicago, which had over 60 attendees and featured 4 of the

Lastly, we are already hard at work on exciting Hamm's updates for 2020. Look out a brand new calendar of Offbeat Holidays coming out in early 2020, as well as a new lineup of Hamm's merchandise and signage featuring our iconic brand imagery, and course, the Hamm's Bear!

