

Antique Trap Collecting with Tom Parr

The National Recovery Administration

What does the National Recovery Administration (NRA) have to do with antique traps? This NRA is not the National Rifle Association, the organization founded in 1871, and a strong supporter of our Second Amendment rights and firearms.

This NRA was one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "alphabet soup" agencies, part of the New Deal during the Great Depression. The agency was created to administer the National Industrial Recovery Act, approved by Congress in June of 1933. The act's goal was to institute industry-wide codes to eliminate unfair trade practices, reduce unemployment, establish minimum wages and guarantee the right of labor to bargain collectively. More than 500 NRA codes were established.

A Blue Eagle logo with ("We Do Our Part") was to be used voluntarily by each retailer on all printed matter pertaining to the business. Those businesses that didn't participate in this program were to be boycotted.

Unfortunately, the codes reflected big business interests at the expense of the consumer and small businessman. The codes tended to maintain high prices, low wages and long hours. There were some positives from the codes such as improving labor conditions in some industries and aiding in the unionization movement.

In May of 1935, the Supreme Court ruled that the NRA codes were an unconstitutional delegation of legislative power and further violated the Constitution by regulating commerce within sovereign

states. As a result, NRA was dissolved at the end of 1935.

Where trapping and trap collecting enter into this picture is how during the 1933 to 1935 period NRA was in existence, almost every trapping supply business that produced a catalog would have the Blue Eagle logo on the cover, either in a small spot in a corner of the cover, or some

made it a large part of the cover. Many trapping supply companies also had the Blue Eagle sign pasted on their store front window.

Some trapping supply companies did not date their catalogs. Many couldn't afford to produce a catalog each year. So, if the company's catalog was used for several years, a trapper wouldn't feel it was outdated. Any time

a Blue Eagle appeared on a catalog or magazine cover, you know it was produced between 1933 and 1935.

I have copies of Outdoor Life, The Saturday Evening Post, Hunting and Fishing, Hunter-Trader-Trapper and most of the trapping supply companies like W.A. Gibbs & Son, F.C. Taylor Fur Co., Hill Bros. Fur Co. and many others that all have the Blue Eagle logo on the front cover of their catalog or magazine that represented that period in time.

Scot Dahms, of Ohio, shared his knowledge and research on the NRA for this article.

As for value, I don't believe a Blue Eagle logo increases the value of an item wearing it. Rather it shows a time in history that was not well-recorded and does represent a part of our trapping heritage. ■

