

SELLING, SELLING, SOLD!

The purpose of this unit is to gain insight into turn of the century New Jersey and its inhabitants by examining the sorts of things they purchased, who was selling them, and where.

The pages in this set are from the 1887 Burlington County Fair program at Mount Holly, and the 1891 Great Inter-State Fair at Trenton. In addition to listing things like fair information, competition categories, and prize amounts, the programs contained advertisements. These advertisements are a fantastic window into what was happening during that era.

Also included in this case are trade cards. Trade cards were cards businesses used to advertise their wares and locations. Sometimes the cards were custom-printed. In other instances, businesses just chose from a template and had their business information printed on the template. This meant the image on the card didn't necessarily match what the business was selling!

Some questions to ask while exploring:

- Examine the types of products being advertised. Do you still see any of these products today?
- Are there any products you recognize?
- What sorts of business were advertised? Where are they located? What does that tell us about New Jersey at the time?
- What sort of transportation do you see depicted in the advertisements?
- How do the advertisements reflect life in New Jersey at this time? Was it more urban? More agricultural?
- Are the fair programs and the trade cards advertising the same, or different, businesses? What does this say about the intended audiences?