

# AMERICANA

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## *Cars on Paper*

"THERE ARE TWO OR THREE MILLION old-car hobbyists with an interest in what I'm selling. They come to me for the hard-to-find stuff," says Walter Miller, who owns more than a million pieces of antique factory-printed automobile literature—the largest collection in the world. Miller, thirty-three, has turned what began as a school-vacation hobby into a thriving mail-

order business. From his headquarters in Syracuse, New York, he buys, sells, and trades items from his collection (6710 Brooklawn Parkway, Syracuse 13211, 315/432-8282).

Miller has sold everything from a 1929 French Bugati showroom poster to the original stylist's renderings of a 1955 Thunderbird advertising brochure to such prestige catalogues as the Duesenberg's.

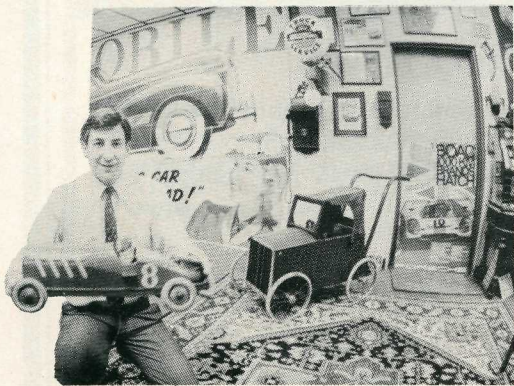
Among his more unusual inquiries are frequent requests for old ambulance and hearse literature. Rock groups and film companies have enlisted his help in researching old model cars for videos, and police and district attorneys' offices have sought sales literature to identify cars and to use in lawsuits.

At a recent car show in Hershey, Pennsylvania, a stranger from Denmark approached him, offering to sell a large quantity of old literature. Miller asked to see photos first. After

one look, he was on the next plane for Copenhagen. "This man had the entire archives of General Motors from 1926 to 1976," explains Miller. "Virtually every piece of sales literature produced during those years was included, printed in six languages! This was a real find."

Because his business fluctuates, Miller watches economic trends and is always ready to offer tips to those starting a collection. "The demand for Ferraris is way up," he observes, "which affects the demand for Ferrari literature. If I see that something's hot, I usually try and stock up." The 1959 Cadillac is also popular. "It's sort of chrome and gaudy, usually pink, and epitomizes the fifties," he says.

Miller believes that his business gives new life to old literature. "A lot of people have the stuff sitting around in old shoeboxes in attics waiting to be discarded," he says. "If they only knew what they had."—Ann Forstenzer



*Walter Miller with his collection*