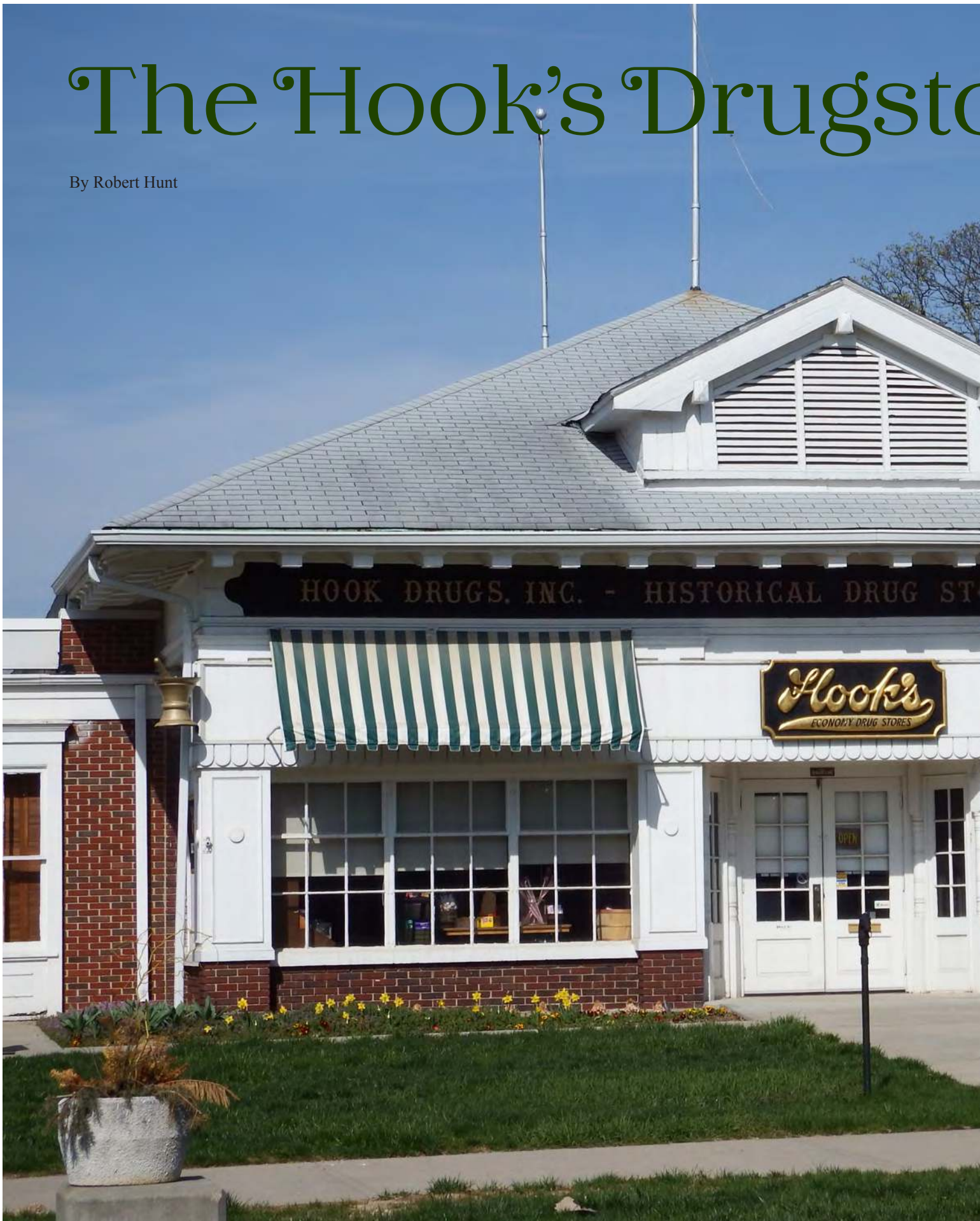


The Hook's Drugstore

By Robert Hunt



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The Hook's Drugstore Museum originally opened in 1966, as a three-month exhibit, sponsored by the Hooks Drugstore chain, their contribution to help celebrate Indiana history upon the sesquicentennial of statehood that year. The Museum was well received, and actually won the "Governors Trophy" as the best corporate exhibit for the sesquicentennial in 1966.

Because of its huge popularity and appeal, Hook's and the State Fair agreed to allow the Museum to remain open after the three months expired. Hooks subsequently kept the museum open everyday except Christmas and New Years for over 20 years. They also used the Museum as a frequent subject and backdrop in their television commercials and other advertising through the early 1980s, stressing their home-grown Indiana traditions and popular nostalgia.

Revco acquired all assets of Hook Drug Inc. in their 1994 buyout, including the Museum. Revco themselves would soon be swallowed by CVS just 9 months later, but before the CVS merger, Revco donated the museum and all artifacts to a surviving separate Hook charitable foundation.

In 2005, the non-profit Hook's related charity that operated the museum agreed to transfer ownership to the current non-profit organization, one created solely to preserve, protect, and promote the Museum for future generations of Hoosiers. Thanks to partnership with the Indiana State Fair, which maintains the building and grounds, the Hook's Museum today enjoys an enduring, remarkable, and unique place as one of the oldest continuously operating, and most visited venues of its type in the world (conservatively estimated total attendance 4 million since opening, and 60,000 each year during the Indiana State Fair).

Bud Hook, CEO and Senior Hook Board Members created the museum with the vision that visitors would not simply see a collection of old artifacts, but rather feel as though they had stepped back in time into a real 1800s era drugstore in Indiana. As soon as visitors walk through the door,

The Hook's Drugstore located at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Those were the "good old days"

At Hook's Historical Drug Store,* every visitor is reminded of the colorful past . . . "when I was a kid" . . . "when grandmother had one of those" . . .

They were wonderful days. And we at Hook's are proud to have been serving you and your grandparents since 1900, when medicines didn't cost much. But they didn't do much either—though they were the best available anywhere. Today, there's a big difference, because nine out of ten drugs were unknown then—drugs to save your health—to save your life!



And they still don't cost much. The average prescription runs about the same as 10 gallons of gas for your family car. We admit you'll love our antique store, but then you'll really appreciate the "Good NEW Days" . . . and what our 99 new stores offer you.



**Hook's Historical Drug Store and Pharmacy Museum is open seven days a week, noon to six p.m., at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, Indianapolis. No admission charge.*



An Original hanging store display from Hook's Drugstore, which can be found hanging in the Museum

they understand the "magic" that creating such a cohesive, immersive space can create.

The cabinets in the main room with the fancy reverse glass painted advertising came from Cambridge City Indiana, where they had originally been installed in 1852. These walnut and ash cabinets were custom manufactured to the highest quality in Cincinnati, and delivered to Cambridge City, Indiana by canal boat, prior to trains being available. Today, these beautiful pieces are some of the finest 19th Century drugstore cabinets surviving in the entire US. The colorful reverse glass advertising panels at the top of the cabinets were likely added piecemeal over a couple of decades by itinerant commercial painters, paid by manufacturers who wanted to promote their products. Kind of like the old "Mail Pouch" tobacco signs that used to be painted on barns all over the country by contracted painters. Dating individual panels is difficult, however one panel advertises "Alisma for the Hair" by Seward, Bentley and Cheney. This business was only known by that particular name from 1869 to 1874, so clearly later than the cabinets, but still quite old.

The glass bottles, advertising, patent medicines and other products and displays shown in the museum were largely acquired as donations by Hooks from pharmacists and drugstores across Indiana, who

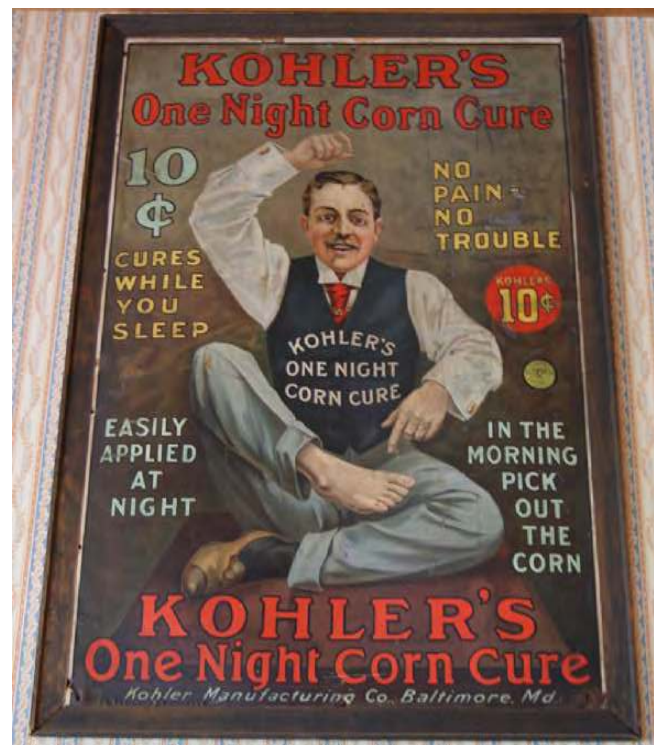


Original Store Displays with original glass. These cabinets are from an old Drugstore in Cambridge City Indiana.

wished to see the antiques of their profession and business preserved and displayed for future generations. The Museum displays apothecary bottles and patent medicines in the museum much as they would have been in a working drugstore of the era. The back cabinets on one side has glass doors, where “ready-made” medicines and other products could simply be taken down on the shelf by a clerk or apprentice and sold directly to the customer. The other side of the store is stocked with apothecary bottles filled with bulk materials. These materials were utilized to create custom made medications, as well paints, stains, adhesives, spices, pesticides, perfumes, and more. The druggist was really a neighborhood chemist who could manufacture on demand small quantities of a myriad number of products that might otherwise difficult to obtain in many rural areas of the country.

When observing the bottle and product displays in the museum, its clear that drugstores did not want customers to serve themselves as we due today. Virtually every product displayed was behind glass doors, in glass cases, or, behind the store counters, and out of reach. Reportedly petty theft was a big problem, or at least a big concern for store owners.

For the past three years the Museum has been working to care-



One of many original color lithographs hanging in the museum



Original location of all the display cabinets, located in the Hooks drugstore museum

fully catalogue and document every item in the collection. Each item is photographed, assigned an accession number, and its location clearly identified in our software database "Past Perfect" which is designed to organize and catalogue museum collections. So far we have catalogued over 3,000 individual artifacts, with likely about another 1,000 still to go. The long-term goal is to eventually place our collection on-line, so that collectors and researchers around the world may use the images and description of artifacts in our collection as a tool to help interpret the history of drugstores and medicines in the US.

Hook's Drugstore Museum is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day during the 17 days of the State Fair, and during selected other events during the year, depending on traffic and parking restrictions that come with those individual events. We are also available to open for special events and tours upon request, subject to charges to defray the cost of staffing and other related. Find us on Facebook, Hooks Drugstore Museum.



Store Displays would create vivid colors and draw in the customers