

It Gives Value For The Money

by Lynne Belluscio

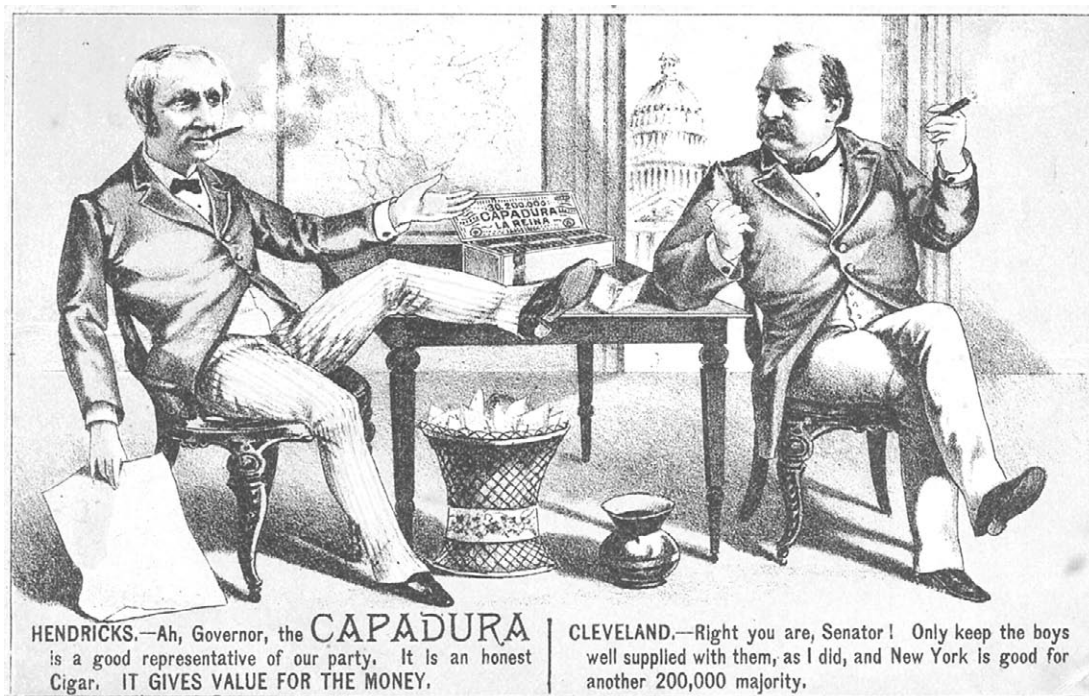
This summer I bid on a cigar advertising card that was distributed by F.T. Wilcox in LeRoy. Today as I was accessioning it into the collection, I decided to do some research about it.

Wilcox received the cards from R.C. Brown, distributing agents in New York City. They supplied Stratton and Storm Cigars, including the "Capadura" which is mentioned in the illustration. The Capadura was a Cuban cigar made from the little shoots that came out from the tobacco plant. Ordinarily, these shoots were plowed under, but someone decided that they could use these shoots to make an inexpensive cigar. And so, capadura tobacco was taken from the second cutting.

It seems that the name Capadura was also Mr. R.C. Brown's middle name. So next I took a look at the illustration. The man on the left, with his leg up on the table is Hendricks (Thomas A. Hendricks, former governor of Indiana). The caption is "Ah, Governor, the Capadura is a good representative of our party (the Democrats). It is an honest Cigar. It gives value for the money." Across the table is Grover Cleveland, the Governor of New York. He responds: "Right you are, Senator! Only keep the boys well supplied with them, as I did, and New York is good for another 200,000 majority."

Cleveland was the 1884 presidential candidate and Hendricks was his vice presidential running mate. Cleveland ran on the Democratic ticket opposite James Blaine, the Republican. Blaine had won the highly contested Republican nomination and he too had cards for Capadura cigars, one of the most popular varieties at the time.

Blaine had not been the favored Republican nominee. That honor went to General Tecumseh, but he ruled himself out with what has become known as the Sherman pledge: "If drafted I will not run; if nominated I will not accept;



HENDRICKS.—Ah, Governor, the CAPADURA is a good representative of our party. It is an honest Cigar. IT GIVES VALUE FOR THE MONEY.

CLEVELAND.—Right you are, Senator! Only keep the boys well supplied with them, as I did, and New York is good for another 200,000 majority.

if elected I will not serve!" (Is history repeating itself again?) Grover Cleveland had been mayor of Buffalo and then elected as New York's Governor. He was known as "Grover the Good" and he had cleaned up a lot of the graft of Tammany Hall. So it came as a shock in July that the Buffalo Evening Telegraph reported that Cleveland had fathered a child out of wedlock and that the child had been placed in an orphanage. Cleveland acknowledged the "illicit connection" and noted that there was no proof that he was the father, but he had assumed responsibility by finding a home for the child. The Republicans chanted "Ma, Ma, Where's my Pa?" After Cleveland won the election, his supporters chanted: "Gone to the White House, Ha, Ha, Ha."

The 1884 election was also marked by the formation of the Equal Rights Party whose candidate, Belva Lockwood, who grew up in Western New York in Niagara County, ran for president. She was the first woman to ever receive votes in a presidential election, even though women did not have the right to vote. Lockwood said, "I cannot vote, but I can be voted for."

Lockwood was a lawyer in Washington, D.C. and became the first woman granted the power

to present a case to the Supreme Court. Another woman, Victoria Woodhull ran a short campaign for president in 1872 but did not appear on the ballot. Lockwood actually won 500 votes in 1884.

The 49-year old bachelor, Cleveland, moved into the White House and in 1886 he married 21-year old Frances Folsom. In 1888, he ran for a second term against Benjamin Harrison. According to cigar history, this election generated more campaign cigars

than any other. (I also learned that the first presidential candidate to have political cigar labels was Henry Clay.) Cleveland lost the 1888 campaign. Some believe that his past had finally caught up with him and his marriage to such a young woman was only one indication of his illicit appetite. A few years later Cleveland was treated for mouth cancer, which was traced to his predilection for tobacco.

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