

Four Aunt Jemima Rag Doll Family Cutouts

[Quaker Oats circa 1920s]

\$3200



Four wood frames containing printed cloth cutout doll fabric with glass on both sides to show the front and rear of the figures. The frames measure 10" x 17" and 13" x 21" with the figures approximately 13" x 6" and 17" x 9". Each frame contains two cloth panels - a front image and rear image - that have been neatly trimmed along the printed dotted line (as intended) and mounted to cards. Aunt Jemima has her name on her apron but the rest of her family member (a older man, young boy, and young girl) are printed on their rear panels.

Aunt Jemima and her product line, which lies squarely at the intersection of race and consumerism, was created by Charles Rott in 1889 but popularized by R.T. Davis Mills in 1893. To advertise the recently trademarked brand, Mills hired Nancy Green, a cook and storyteller who was born into slavery, to play the role of Aunt Jemima at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. She proved a massive hit with attendees and the brand took off by offering housewives a shortcut to pancakes and other scratch-baked items under the guise of labor saving through a mythologized depiction of plantation life. These rag dolls were produced in the mid-1920s in an attempt to expand the Aunt Jemima brand through additional characters: "Uncle Moses," a male counterpart to Aunt Jemima dressed in overalls and pipe; "Diana Jemima," a barefoot girl in a polka dot dress holding a kitten; and "Wade Davis," a barefoot boy with a worn out hat and patches mending this clothes. Several sets of Aunt Jemima family rag dolls were produced for Mills and Quaker Oats (who later purchased the company) between 1909 and 1929, but finding a complete unfinished set in nearly pristine condition is rare. [BTC#422992]



Aunt Jemima











Diana Jemima



