

# THEN *and* NOW!

## Trading On The Past: The Evolution Of Trading Cards

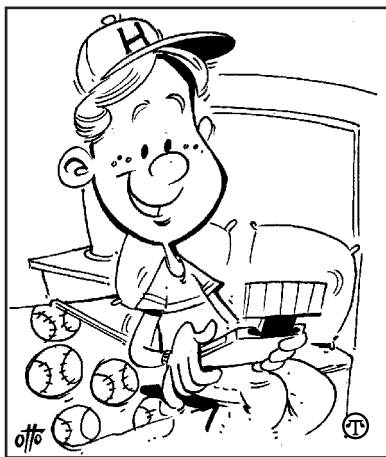
(NAPSA)—Whether it's a Mickey Mantle rookie card from the 1952 Bowman set (now worth approximately \$9,000) or new paper trading cards that contain actual video games, trading cards have long been one of the most popular and profitable forms of collecting.

**Then:** The first "trading cards," produced in 1887, were made of a clothlike material and measured just 1½- by 2-inches. They were part of a unique set that contained baseball, boxing, golf and horse racing cards. Because there weren't any star athletes at the time, all the cards had roughly equal value. Annual sets of these cards were produced until 1901.

Between 1902 and 1935, trading cards took on many different changes. Cards were packed with chewing tobacco, Cracker Jacks, chewing gum and cigarettes. During this period, card manufacturers were experimenting with both size—ranging from the "tobacco" size (1½ by 2-inches) to a sheet of three cards which measured 2- by 5¼-inches—and the printing process. As a result of this experimentation, a large percent of these cards have misprints or flaws.

Though baseball cards were, and continue to be, the most popular of all trading cards, they are just one category in this increasingly popular hobby. Other sets of cards have been dedicated to movies, TV shows and animated characters. In more recent years, popular games, such as Magic: The Gathering, and Pokémon emerged, which are designed to be played with collectible cards.

**Now:** A top electronics and entertainment company, Nintendo, has taken this last concept to new levels of game play with the introduction of the e-Reader. This device, which connects to the popular Game Boy Advance, scans paper cards that contain "dot code" tech-



**Electronic trading cards take video games to a new level.**

nology strips to provide tips for enhancing game play, unlock hidden features in certain games and, in some cases, entire video games.

"The e-Reader creates a completely new experience for game players, fusing the enjoyment of collecting trading cards and the fun of playing video games," says Peter MacDougall, executive vice president, sales and marketing, Nintendo of America Inc. "Now players of all ages can build and enhance their video game collection by picking up a pack of cards."

The e-Reader can be used with Nintendo Game Boy Advance and GameCube systems. The cards come in packs which retail for less than \$5.

Whether it's at the playground, at a trading card convention or during a Pokémon tournament, trading cards can be a fun way for people to relate to each other while getting instant games, tips and information. e-Reader cards bring this popular pastime into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Look for the e-Reader in stores nationwide or visit the Web site at [www.nintendo.com](http://www.nintendo.com). You may find that a fun time trading collectibles is in the cards.