

Knock! Knock!.....It's the Fuller Brush Man!

If you're over 40, this probably won't mean much to you, but to the rest of us the Fuller Brush man was an institution. In fact, I remember quite well the hilarious Red Skelton movie, *The Fuller Brush Man*, made in the late 1940s, I believe. All the more incredible since the bane of any householder is the door-to-door salesman...or the door-to-door anything, for that matter! But *not* the Fuller Brush man! Somehow, he became an American institution akin to the neighborhood ice cream truck. Thus it was that my eyes locked onto the cover shown here when I happened to be sorting covers not too long ago. Even so, if you're like me, you've lost track of the Fuller Brush man over the years. You probably don't even know if he's still around. Well, *he is!* And he represents the classic American success story.

On a cold, crisp winter's day, as the story goes, New Year's 1906, a 21 year-old entrepreneur from Nova Scotia began an enterprise which has become known worldwide as the Fuller Brush Company. He was Alfred C. Fuller. As with many, and perhaps all, such entrepreneurs, Alfred had had a number of earlier ideas that hadn't set the world on fire, but success means persistence, and Alfred was persistent. From a bench between the furnace and the coal bin in his sister's New England home, young Fuller set out to make, in his own words, "...the best products of their kind in the world." Judging from his success, he did!

Through the years, the Fuller Brush Company has grown from one man's fiber suitcase, filled with the unique, custom-made brushes, to a wide collection of home/business care and personal care products, all crafted with the same quality and precision that Alfred Fuller intended, and all the result of Alfred's three basic manufacturing rules: 1) Make it work; 2) Make it last; 3) Guarantee it no matter what.

Today, almost a century later, the Fuller Brush Company is not only still going, but [*according to its web site*] its sales force continues to grow. One salesman's utilitarian idea, acted upon at almost one hundred years ago, has become a livelihood for thousands of men and women

And *where*, exactly, do Fuller Brush brushes come from? In 1973, the company completed construction of a state-of-the-art, 500,000 square foot plant on twelve acres near Great Bend, Kansas, and today the Fuller Brush Company is the major employer in Barton County. More than 2,000 different items are churned out by the company, including: household cleaning aids, industrial cleaners, polishes and waxing products, cotton and synthetic mops, floor brushes and brooms, stainless steel sponges, twisted wire brushes and swabs, lotions and fragrances, hair care aids, made-to-order products, aerosols, chemicals, and personal care brushes.

Well, now you know everything you ever wanted to know about the Fuller Brush Company! And if you're *really* interested, the company is always looking for more people to represent its products.

By the way, the Diamond Match Co. cover shown here is from the 1930s-1940s. It's the only one I've ever seen for the Fuller Brush Company, although it looks like a stock cover with the particular sales outlet plugged into the front panel, so I would assume that there are others in existence. Do you happen to have any others? Drop the Ed. a line with a photocopy and we'll share the info with everyone else. Now the question is...*What do you file this cover under??*

