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Greeting Cards Go to War

BY ANNE STEWART O'DONNELL

For a century, when America has gone to war, so have greeting cards. In their subject matter and symbols used, these cards open a window on the experiences of soldiers and civilians. But behind that story lies another one—the tale of how the greeting card industry adapted itself to World Wars I and II, emerging as strong as, or stronger than, before those conflicts. Together, these two stories give us a fuller picture of how American business as well as American families responded to war.

By 1914, the year World War I began, the era of fancy, fringed Victorian cards had passed. The great American chromolithography firm, the Prang Company, had abandoned cards in the 1890s to focus on educational and art supplies. Postcard-mania was on the wane, having reached its height around 1910. Britain and, above all, Germany led the world in color printing, and much of their output reached the U.S. in the form of greeting cards.

A number of American companies had entered the holiday card arena around 1906, including A. M. Davis, the Gibson Art Company, Rust Craft, Norcross, Volland, and Ernest Dudley Chase. (The Hall brothers were still wholesaling cards and postcards for other companies; the future Hallmark corporation didn't seriously publish on its own until 1915.) Only a few years old, the American "industry" was still very much in its infancy. Raphael Tuck of London was the eight-hundred-pound gorilla of the American market; its 1910 line offered American dealers a staggering 5,500 Christmas designs.[1]

When the Kaiser declared war on France and Belgium in August 1914, Britain deployed its powerful navy to embargo German and Austrian trade. Imports from Germany stopped cold; America's greeting card retailers, awaiting Christmas shipments, were hit especially hard. Domestic card publishers gladly stepped into the breach as the months went on, though not without difficulties. Since Germany had been the primary source of inks and other chemicals, American printers had to scramble for alternatives. Increased demand for paper,

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Figure 1. American "doughboys" and Red Cross nurses featured in countless World War I-era greeting cards. "To My Valentine" was published by A.M. Davis (Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress). The others are unmarked. (Unless noted, all images are from the author's collection.)

The Ephemera Journal

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Dear Members and Friends:

Please come to Seattle. ESA board member Glenn Mason and Judith Mason have created a four-day series of ephemera events and a symposium beginning October 6, 2016. The fun begins at the Washington State History Society which has, for example, ephemera relating to women's suffrage and the *au courant* mystery of D. B Cooper.

On the evening of October 6, a wine reception will be held at the home of ESA member Dan Kerlee who will share his extensive collections of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, early Washington Territorial material and items relating to the American composer Henry Hadley.

On Friday, October 7, you will have an opportunity to join special curated tours of four institutional ephemera collections: the Museum of History and Industry, the Seattle Public Library, the University of Washington Conservation Center, and the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections.

On Friday evening, you are invited to mix with fellow collectors and dealers at a cocktail reception sponsored by ESA, the Book Club of Washington, and the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the ABAA.

On Saturday, the Seattle Antiquarian Book Fair opens for the benefit of ephemera hunters and ESA will exhibit ephemera there from the Civil War collections of Jeff Rombauer and the baseball collection of David Eskenazi.

On Saturday evening, ESA and the Seattle Public Library are co-sponsoring a symposium on ephemera at the library's Central branch. The founders of *Beautiful Angle*, graphic designer Lance Kagey and writer Tom Llewellyn, will give an illustrated talk about poster design, design inspiration and the role of posters in American culture. *Beautiful Angle* is a "guerrilla arts" poster project which distributes letterpress posters monthly throughout Tacoma using staples and paste. Perhaps tellingly, *Beautiful Angle* produced its first poster on the anniversary of the posting of *The Ninety-Five Theses* by Martin Luther. The firm uses printing processes such as split fountain, two color double run and a brayer over a printed image to create its inventive, small run posters. Edward Nolan, Curator of Special Collections of the Washington State Historical Society, will speak about a 19th century collector of Klondike gold rush ephemera and political handbills who plucked items from streets, posts and buildings. Lastly, Glenn Mason will present images of ephemera from the American Arts & Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest.

On Sunday, the Seattle Antiquarian Book fair remains open and perhaps a few ephemera dealers in Pioneer Square might be persuaded to open their shops for your perusal.

I am most pleased, privileged, and proud to report that two of the most beloved and distinguished members of ESA, Rickards award recipients Diane DeBlois and Robert Dalton Harris, have received the extremely prestigious 2016 Luff award for Distinguished Philatelic Research from the American Philatelic Society. Unfortunately, I cannot begin in this space to summarize their monumental contributions to this field, which consists, in part, of the interplay of ephemera and postal history. But, one should know they have taught many courses on postal history, made numerous presentations to highly regarded institutions and published innumerable important articles for which they are in the Philatelic Writers Hall of Fame. Please read their impressive list of accomplishments here: *http://stamps.org/NewsItemDetail.aspx?id=136*

Rebecca Rego Barry profiles long time ESA member and dealer Peter Luke in the eminently readable book *Rare Books Uncovered True Stories of Fantastic Finds In* Unlikely *Places*. Peter is honored by being referred to as the "dominant force in book scoutery." I believe it would be relatively easy to build a consensus among the cognoscenti that he is most likely the best "ephemera scout" in the United States and that this latter title more accurately defines his activities.

When autumn leaves begin to fall, I hope to see you in Seattle.

Bruce

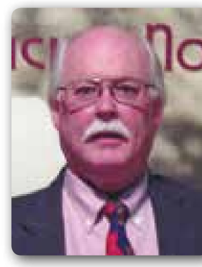
Bruce Shyer, President

Please VOTE!

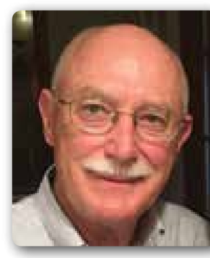
Nominations for a 3-Year Term on the Board of Directors.

There are two candidates for two open slots on the Board of Directors; there is also one candidate who is running for a second term. We are asking for a vote in support of the entire slate. Candidate profiles are presented here and a ballot has been inserted in the magazine. The board elects its officers in January.

BARBARA FAHS CHARLES (New Board Member): I would be honored to serve on the Board of ESA. With my partner/husband Robert Staples, I have been a member of the Society almost from its inception. Together we were the second recipients of the Maurice Rickards Award (after Mr. Rickards). We were selected for our designs for museums and the extensive use of ephemera in our exhibitions. In truth, it is through searching for visual materials for exhibitions and getting to know the collections of our museum clients that I was seduced into the world of ephemera. Recently, I have had the pleasure of using my museum contacts to develop the programs for the past two mid-year gatherings. As a board member, I hope to continue to expand our outreach to museums, archives, and libraries with ephemera collections and to encourage more scholars and curators to participate in the Society.



GLENN MASON (2nd Term): As a retired museum/historical society director, special collections consultant, life-long collector, and now a dealer (partner in Cultural Images with my wife, Judith) in ephemera, vintage photography and fine and unusual books, I offer a special knowledge and appreciation for ephemera and its historical value as both artifact and purveyor of historical information, as well as its care and use. A strong advocate of the use of ephemera by historians, the institutions I directed are now known for their care and cataloging of ephemera and its accessibility to researchers. My physical location in the Pacific Northwest adds to the geographical representation on the ESA board and may present new opportunities to enhance the mission of the Society. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that the future may bring.



MICHAEL PEICH (New Board Member): A member of the Ephemera Society of America's Conference Planning sub-committee, I am a baseball fan, historian, and vintage ephemera and card collector. I have written about vintage baseball cards and early 20th century minor league baseball, and gave a talk, *19th Century Baseball Ephemera: Early Marketing of the National Pastime*, at Ephemera 35. That talk later appeared in *The Ephemera Journal* (Volume 17, Number 3). My website, *www.t209-contentnea.com*, is devoted to early 20th century Southern minor league baseball cards. I am currently an Emeritus Professor of English at West Chester University (Pennsylvania) where I founded Aralia Press, a fine printing imprint that issues contemporary poetry. I co-founded the acclaimed West Chester University Poetry Conference, and established the WCU Poetry Center. I live in West Chester, Pennsylvania and am a long-suffering Phillies and Cubs fan.

Ephemera Society of America

Board of Directors Ballot Enclosed with Magazine

3 Ways to Vote!

e-mail: info@ephemerasociety.org

Fax 315-655-9139 or mail the enclosed ballot by November 15 to:

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In this Issue...

The theme for this issue might be “Spreading the Word” – for each contributor is helping our Society fulfill its mandate to educate. In our last issue, **Donny Zaldin** provided a full account of Richard J. Ring’s presentation on his work with students and ephemera (and Donny should have been given author credit for that piece – the editor depends on volunteers like him to cover ephemera events). In this issue, Rick Ring begins the first of a series of student pieces – here by **Carsten Lohan** – based on their experience with ephemera in the Watkinson Library. Rick’s piece as reported by Donny inspired **Bob Chandler** to describe how he has promoted ephemera in a variety of contexts – and we hope other members will come forward with their experiences in introducing ephemera to different audiences.

The 2016 recipient of our Jones Fellowship, **Shana Klein** Ph.D., provides a piece that looks more critically at the advertising trope of watermelon and African Americans – a portion of her upcoming book *Fruits of Empire*. She is actively promoting ephemera as editor of the journal *Food, Media, and Culture* at American University.

Charles Epting is another very young recent university graduate who has been spreading the word about ephemera via blogs (one under the aegis of UC Berkeley), journal articles, and monographs. His piece here on collecting ephemera of the National Recovery Administration is based on his presentation at this year’s annual conference.

Anne O’Donnell’s article is also based on her ESA 36 presentation, and represents just one of the many ways in which Anne has been promoting greeting cards as a primary resource in understanding American culture. She deserves credit for institutions such as the Bard Graduate Center (in 2011 Yale University Press published their *American Christmas Cards 1900-1960* by Kenneth L. Ames, promoted with a talk by Anne) taking this form of ephemera seriously.

Librarian and Gunnery Sergeant **Kira Wharton** entertained guests at our annual banquet with a presentation (including music) about our country’s Marine Band – interpreting the band’s history has become her career, thanks to ephemera saved at the D.C. Marine Library.

—Diane DeBlois, editor

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and a shortage of the European pulp and rags used to make it, caused card stock to leap up in price. American manufacturers responded by shrinking the size of cards and producing more single-sided greetings, rather than folders.

When America entered the war in April 1917, and soldiers of the American Expeditionary Force began to leave for “somewhere in France,” card makers found a fruitful new field—greetings for the troops and those they left behind. Khaki-clad doughboys and Red Cross nurses became favorite motifs (figure 1). Life on the home front was reflected in cards that showcased gifts of War Savings Stamps, or referred to movements such as “Hooverizing,” the popular term for the program led by United States Food Administrator Herbert Hoover. With slogans like “Food Will Win the War,” Hoover urged Americans to conserve so more resources were available to send overseas. Though voluntary, the plan worked: through “Meatless Mondays,” “Fuelless Fridays,” and other measures, Americans reduced consumption fifteen percent. The best-selling Christmas card of 1918 celebrated Hooverizing with a “hand-drawn” design on coarse paper tied with cheap twine (figure 2). Inside, even the traditional holiday wish was reduced to initials.

Cards for the troops sometimes incorporated small gifts (figure 3). E. D. Chase glued sticks of gum to cards, and Hall Brothers dreamed up a greeting with a Pall Mall cigarette attached. (It was very popular until a federal

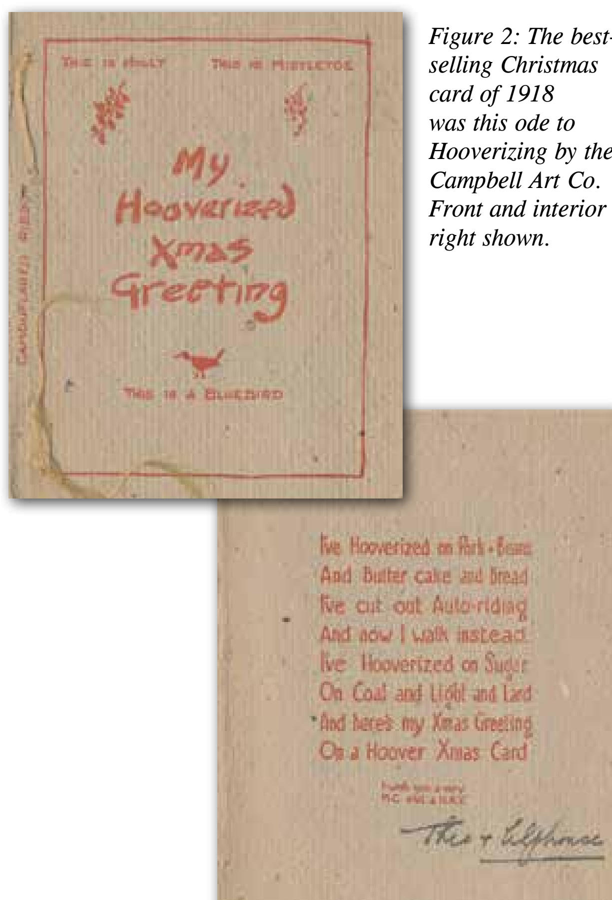

Figure 2: The best-selling Christmas card of 1918 was this ode to Hooverizing by the Campbell Art Co. Front and interior right shown.

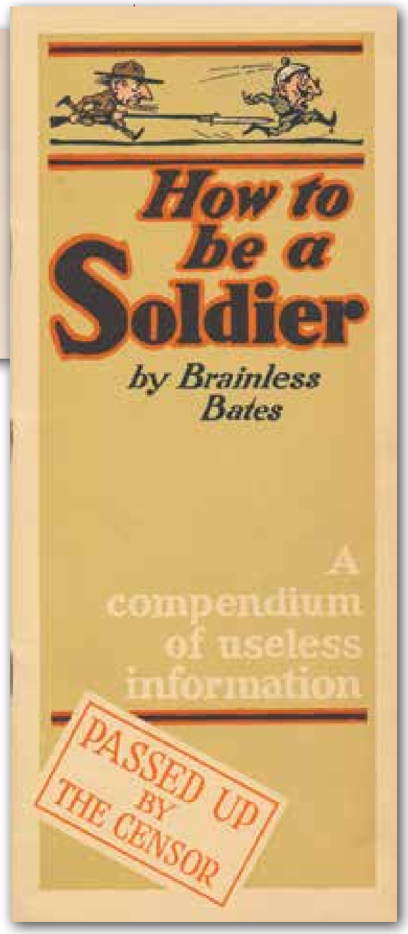

Figure 3. Something extra for the soldiers, circa 1918: chewing gum card published by Ernest Dudley Chase; humorous booklet by the A.M. Davis Company.

agent decreed that each card would require a separate cigarette tax stamp—an expensive proposition. Thousands of the cards had to be destroyed.) The A. M. Davis Company made a specialty of comic booklets, which Brainerd Bates, the art director, wrote and illustrated under the *nom-de-plume* Brainless Bates. His *How To Be a Soldier* parodied the forms that soldiers had to fill out and the advice handed out to new recruits. Army manuals listed small items a soldier could slip into his pack to make life more comfortable at the front; Bates's version of the list included "one bass violin…one mahogany bar…one 1906 Ford." His Medical Report form asked questions like, "Have you ever committed suicide?"

By the end of 1917, homes across America displayed the Service Flag, a red-bordered banner with a blue star indicating a family had a soldier in the war. Novelty and jewelry makers used the design freely until its creator, a Captain Quiesser of Cleveland, Ohio, patented it and began to demand royalties.

Reluctant to forego such a potent symbol, some card makers paid Queisser and marked their products with a patent notice (figure 4a). Others skirted the issue, using stars, but in a different configuration than Queisser's (figure 4b). Before long, the Service Star idea—easily linked with that of the Stars and Stripes—caught the public imagination to the point that "stars" became shorthand for the troops themselves. Cards might refer to the Navy as "America's Stars at Sea," or address a particular service member as "Dear Star" (figure 4c).

Figure 4. World War I-era cards incorporating the Service Flag or Service Star idea. A. "Our Wish," published by the Campbell Art Co., uses Captain Queisser's patented flag design flanked by laurel wreaths. "Service Flag Emblem Pat. Nov. 6-17" appears on the back of the card. B. "A Prayer and a Kiss" by the A. M. Davis Company uses a symbol similar but not identical to the patented design, avoiding the issue of royalties. (Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress) C. In "America's Stars at Sea," the stars refer to American sailors as well as the American flag. Probably designed by Rene Pesle; published by the YMCA, 1918.

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Figure 5. YMCA cards designed by Anita Parkhurst and printed by the French firm Draeger, 1918.

Soldiers in France sent cards home, thanks to the Young Men's Christian Association. The YMCA supplied servicemen overseas with all kinds of small comforts, including millions of sheets of stationery with envelopes. In 1918, the "Y" also commissioned greeting cards from French and American artists, with printing handled by French firms like L'Imprimerie Draeger. Often, YMCA cards (figure 5) showed French children engaging with American soldiers—or at least with their headgear, in the case of the child cradling a Santa doll in a doughboy's iron helmet (figure 6). American illustrator Anita Parkhurst designed at least two such cards while she traveled with a Y-sponsored troupe in France, entertaining U.S. soldiers.

Other YMCA cards depict armaments—tanks, battleships, biplanes, and Zeppelins. One example shows Santa flying a 1918 Lewis Vought VE-7, known as the "Bluebird" for its gleaming blue trim (figure 6). The Bluebird was built as a trainer aircraft, but the first ones performed so well that the Army ordered a thousand more in the fall of 1918. Although that particular order was cancelled when peace broke out two weeks later, the VE-7 went on to become the Navy's first fighter aircraft.

By the fall of 1917, the first divisions of the AEF had landed in France. Back in the States, like other Americans, card makers and card retailers did their part for the war effort. They waved farewell to friends, employees, and family members who joined the armed services. They Hooverized, bought Liberty bonds, and supported the Red Cross. And, like their neighbors, they sought to carry on their businesses despite freight disruptions, shortages, and climbing prices. Even given these difficulties, the outlook for American card makers seemed relatively rosy as Christmas1917 neared. Some predicted that the higher cost of living would steer consumers towards greetings as an inexpensive substitute for presents. Besides, America's leading gift-buyers—its women—now had more important things to do than shop. As one manufacturer put it, "With women throughout the country knitting, rolling bandages, and otherwise engaged in works of mercy, there will be a big sale of greeting cards [since they] represent a minimum expenditure of time, energy and money."

Around Thanksgiving, however, a number of newspapers began to urge readers to give to war charities instead of "wasting money" on holiday frippery. In its December 8th issue, *The Saturday Evening*

Figure 6. Santa waves to French children from a Vought VE-7 "Bluebird" in this 1918 YMCA greeting. Designer unknown; printed by Draeger.

Post (circulation, two million) added its stentorian voice to these murmurings. "Your Christmas does not need the usual litter of…Christmas cards this year," it informed readers. That money should go to the Red Cross instead.

The pronouncement came as a stunning blow—"an editorial bomb," one manufacturer called it. *Geyer's Stationer,* a trade magazine, labeled the idea "Senseless Hysteria." Why should one particular line of business be singled out to sacrifice? The greetings currently in the stores had been bought from the manufacturers months before; shopkeepers across the country would take a heavy hit if their stock didn't sell. *Geyer's* suggested tartly that the *Post's* readers should fund the Red Cross by cashing in their subscriptions; only a handful of stockholders would be ruined, rather than hundreds of small businesses.

There was no time to counteract the damage; holiday cards sales "slumped." Furthermore, shopkeepers proved reluctant to order cards for 1918, citing rumors that the government would soon ban the mailing of greetings to soldiers overseas. *Geyer's* called the rumors "apparent German propaganda," suggesting that "a venomous foreign source" was bent on bringing down its competitors in the American card industry. Card publisher Ernest Dudley Chase wrote to Washington: "Has there been a ruling that greeting cards cannot be sent to the soldiers in France?" The answer was no, yet, by July,

Figure 7. The Greeting Card Association ran this full-page ad in the nation's leading magazines, November and December, 1918. The service flag in the window shows the family has a husband / son at the front. Both adults and children are cheered that so many friends remembered them with cards.

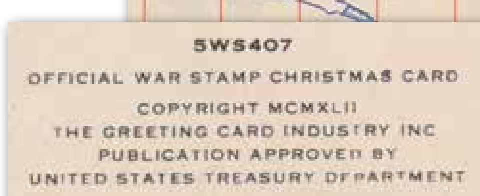

Figure 8. Front, interior, and publication details of a popular war stamp Christmas card, published 1942 by the Greeting Card Industry, Inc. with approval from the Treasury Department. The stamp shown is a War Stamp, which replaced Defense Stamps once the U.S. entered World War II.

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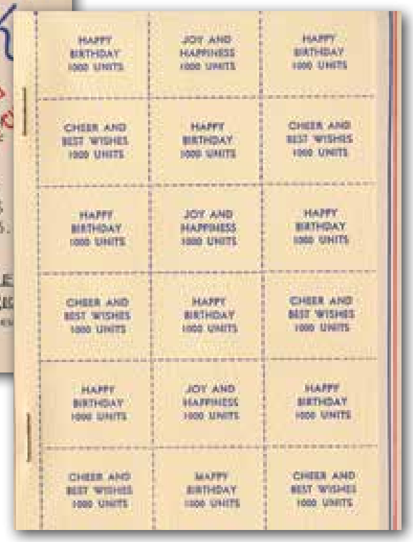


Figure 9. World War II-era birthday cards reflecting home front experiences. Air raid blackout drill card (Norcross, undated) and mock ration booklet with coupons (Gibson, undated).

manufacturers reported that orders for the coming Christmas were down forty to fifty percent.

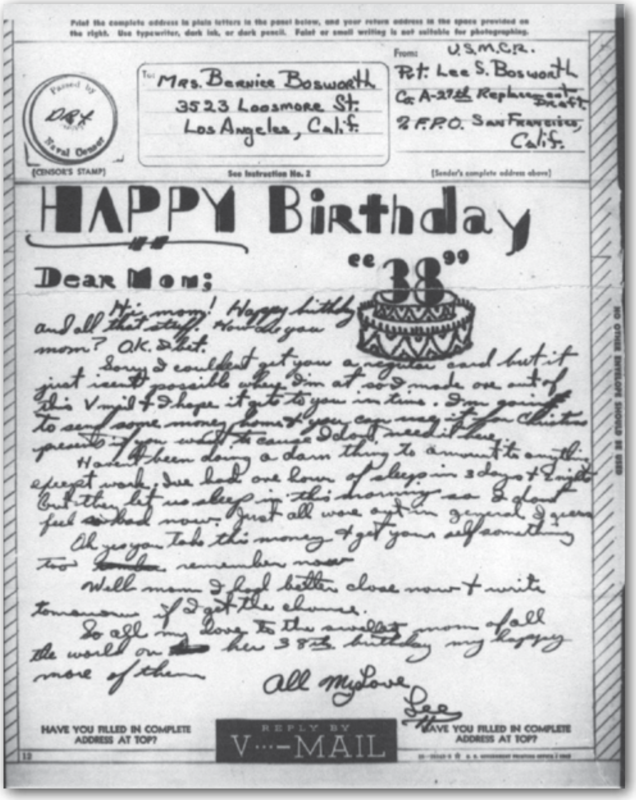
Though barely a decade old, the American greeting card industry had to grow up fast. The National Association of Greeting Card Manufacturers (the Greeting Card Association, or GCA, for short) had been formed three years before as a clearinghouse to share credit information on retailers. Its leaders sprang into action, determined to spread the word that cards were a vital way to keep families in touch and maintain troop morale. Further, the GCA hoped to boost the profile of greetings year round, for all occasions. Association members contributed thousands of dollars for an unprecedented ad campaign. The vision for the campaign and for the future of greeting cards was expressed, again, by E. D. Chase:

"There are millions and millions of people right here in our own country who do not know what a greeting card is….these people should be educated up to the greeting card…and a 'get-together' of the manufacturer and dealer is necessary to the winning of unworked fields. Let there be strong co-operation and there will be victory."[2]

The GCA announced its plans to retailers at the end of August: "At the top of this page is the call to arms—at the bottom is the battle cry. We are going to put greeting cards on the map as never before."[3] Next came full-page ads in the major national magazines—including the *Saturday Evening Post*—stressing just how essential cards were to the war effort. One ad depicted troops at mail call, eagerly tearing open envelopes from home. "Nothing must interfere," insisted the text, "with getting into the hands of every American soldier and sailor, on Christmas day, a message of hope and cheer from every member of his family and from his friends. *No fight was ever won by gloom.* Smiles are bullets. Brave thoughts are bayonets. Words of cheer are trains of powder that run straight and swift to the enemy lines. You may not be able to get packages to your boys at the front. *But a Christmas greeting card will go anywhere, even into the front line trench,* and do the trick of answering the German snarl with a Yankee grin."[4]

In November, the GCA struck "the most powerful blow" in its campaign—a full-page color advertisement in the nation's leading periodicals, explaining how greeting cards served "in the fight to bring back Peace on Earth, by giving voice to your Good Will to Men" (figure 7). Thousands of posters with the same image went to dealers nationwide, with stirring flyers to hand out to customers.[5] Ironically, the war ended almost as soon as the ad appeared. The great greeting card campaign continued, however—an ongoing effort that must certainly have helped embed the idea of greeting cards deep into American life. Well into the 1930s, the GCA placed ads in prominent magazines and supplied dealers with posters, streamers, printing-blocks for ads in local papers, and glass slides which could be projected on the screen at movie houses. It put out booklets to explain "The Etiquette of Greeting Cards," and, from 1929 to 1936, published *The Greeting Card* magazine to bring dealers relevant news, ideas for striking window displays, and more. In the end, the wartime threat that might have killed the industry made it stronger than ever.

History repeats, however—as the minutes of a meeting held in July 1941 attest.[6] The topic of the meeting was one word: "preparedness." Although the U.S. wouldn't enter the conflict until December when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt had been gearing



Print the complete address in plain letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided on the right. Use typewriter, dark ink, or dark pencil. Faint or small writing is not suitable for photographing.

To: Mrs. Bernice Bosworth
3523 Loosmore St.
Los Angeles, Calif.

From: U.S.M.C.R.
Pvt. Lee S. Bosworth
Co. A-27th Replacement Draft
% F.P.O. San Francisco, Calif.

(CENSOR'S STAMP) See Instruction No. 2 (Sender's complete address above)

HAPPY Birthday

"38"

Dear Mom;

Hi mom! Happy birthday and all that stuff. How are you mom? O.K. I bet.

Sorry I couldn't get you a regular card but it just isn't possible where I'm at so I made one out of this V-mail & I hope it gets to you in time. I'm going to send some money home & you can use it for Christmas presents if you want to cause I don't need it here.

Haven't been doing a darn thing to amount to anything except work. I've had one hour of sleep in 3 days & 2 nights but they let us sleep in this morning so I don't feel so bad now. Just all wore out in general I guess.

Oh yes you take this money & get yourself something too remember now

Well mom I had better close now & write tomorrow if I get the chance.

So all my love to the swellest mom of all the world on her 38th birthday & many happy more of them

All my Love
Lee

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP? REPLY BY V···–MAIL HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?

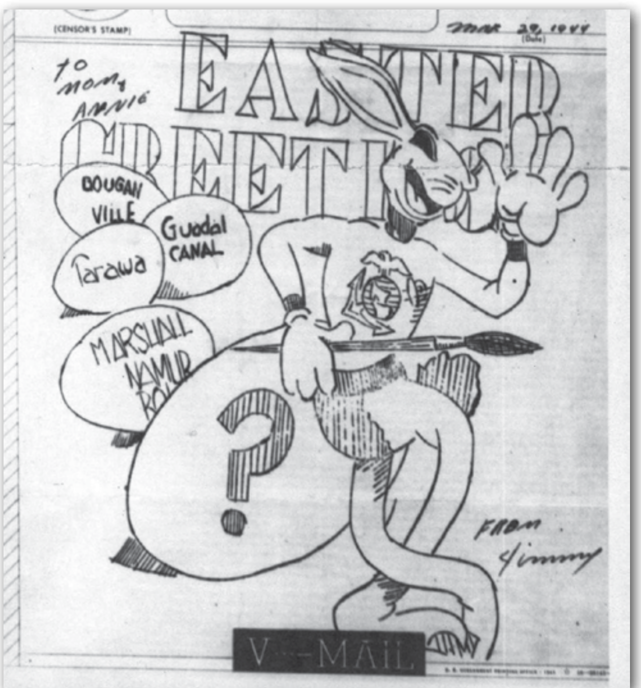


Figure 10. Birthday V-mail "card" drawn and sent by Marine Corps Private Lee Bosworth to his mother. And, detail of an Easter V-mail sent by Private First Class James Ivanoff, stationed in the Pacific with the 4th Marine Division (USMC Archives, Quantico).[1]

[1] Full attribution: By USMC Archives from Quantico, USA (Happy Birthday V-Mail, 1945) [CC BY 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0)], via Wikimedia Commons. And: By USMC Archives from Quantico, USA (Easter V-Mail, Private First Class James Ivanoff) [CC BY 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0)], via Wikimedia Commons.

up for war more or less since Hitler invaded Poland in 1939. Key to the policy he called "preparedness" was converting American industry from civilian to military production, making the United States "the great arsenal of democracy."

Greeting card executives—many still running the companies they had in 1917—remembered all too well the narrow escape they'd had during World War I. This time, they were determined to be proactive. Fifty card industry leaders convened to hear a Treasury Department official speak about the drive to raise billions for preparedness through sales of defense bonds and stamps. First, he mentioned that companies from Coca-Cola to Wrigley Chewing Gum had stepped up to promote purchases of these bonds and stamps (Wrigley's had pledged its entire 1942 advertising budget to the cause). Next, he noted that the government was at work defining, for each civilian industry, "the economic need of each compared with their demand for materials, labor, transportation." Each industry would then be classified as essential or non-essential. The greeting card industry, so far, was deemed "non-essential."

Anticipating such a rating, however, a vice-president from Rust Craft had already proposed to the Treasury Department that special Christmas cards could be used to sell defense stamps, and had visited Washington with samples hastily dummied up by his art department. Sold to the public on a non-profit basis, each card would contain a grid for the stamps. The sender could affix stamp number one to the grid, starting the recipient off filling in the remainder.

The Treasury official reported that the Department thought the stamp card a "splendid" idea, and was willing to use "radio broadcasts and other…publicity to promote its retail sale." However, he and a second guest, a government consultant, both warned that "it was important they follow to the letter the proposal to make defense cards," because the Department would surely pull the plug on the industry if it didn't see results. Finally, the Rust Craft executive addressed his colleagues, stressing that they were being offered "the opportunity of the age to do something in line with defense activities, having full sanction and publicity support of the Treasury Department [which] had not only promised to publicize greeting cards, but to smother any adverse publicity that might come up, as had happened in the World War No. 1."

Once again, manufacturers put competition aside, voting to cooperate on the stamp card program without delay.

The first designs appeared for Christmas 1941, and cards for other occasions were soon in the works. A particularly lively example attracted comment in several 1942 newspapers (figure 8). The front urged, "Let's STAMP OUT the dictators!" while Santa gave the two-fingered "V for Victory" sign. The attached booklet turned collecting stamps into games such as "Sink the Sub" and "Muzzle Mussolini." In return, card makers were permitted to continue publishing regular cards—

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although the manufacturers took care to keep them on the patriotic side; approximately half the designs produced had a war theme. Some were intended for soldiers overseas, while other designs showed civilians coping cheerfully with the duties and privations of wartime—such as air raid blackout drills and rationing (figure 9).

Card manufacturers had rationing to deal with as well. In 1944, for instance, the government allotted them only sixty percent of the paper they had used in 1942.[7] In response, the stock used became thinner, and dimensions shrank. Nevertheless, the popularity of greeting cards grew during the war years, not merely because greetings were sent to soldiers, but also because an estimated fifteen million civilians lived away from home, engaged in war work—and receiving and sending cards.[8]

In addition, greetings became part of the most innovative public communications effort of World War II—Victory Mail, or V-mail. With V-mail, soldiers overseas wrote to their loved ones (and vice versa) on a special form. After passing the censor, each letter was photographed and converted to a tiny microfilm negative. Microfilm allowed 150,000 pages to fit in a single mail sack, freeing up valuable cargo space for war materials. Once the letter arrived at its destination, it was blown up again to readable size.

Between 1942 and 1945, Americans sent over a billion V-mails—millions of which were greetings. Some V-mail forms came pre-printed with holiday designs, many probably supplied by the greeting card industry; others were embellished in the field (figure 10).[9] "Hi mom! Happy birthday," wrote Marine private Lee Bosworth. "Sorry I couldn't get you a regular card but it just isn't possible where I'm at so I made one out of this V-mail." Cartoon hula girls appeared on V-mails from Hawaii, kangaroos on those from Australia. Servicemen with drawing skills created designs reflecting their unit's location or battles fought, which were printed and proudly sent home by fellow soldiers. Making and distributing V-mail greetings united the energies and talents of the card industry, the government, the Army and Navy, and individuals civilian and military. Like the other greetings discussed here, V-mail "cards" represent the intersection of historic forces, commercial enterprise, and private lives. Each one links us today to a moment in the past, as it once linked family and friends across a world at war.

(Endnotes)

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[6] "Report of Greeting Card Industry Meeting Held at the Commodore Hotel, New York City, July 31, 1941" ([Association of Greeting Card Manufacturers], 1941), The Buzza Company, box 1, "Correspondence" folder, Minneapolis Collection, Special Collections, Hennepin County Public Library, Minneapolis, MN.

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Anne Stewart O'Donnell is a freelance writer and researcher based in College Park, Maryland. Former Editor in Chief of Style 1900 magazine, she has written two books and innumerable articles on turn-of-the-century design. Her 2002 thesis for a Masters in the History of Decorative Arts is now a book manuscript nearing completion, *From Friend to Friend: Greeting Cards and the American Arts and Crafts Movement.*

Roosevelt's Blue Eagle: The NRA and Mass Culture

By Charles Epting

The story of the National Recovery Administration begins on March 4, 1933, when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated. In his speech, the President stated that the country's "greatest primary task is to put people to work." Roosevelt's first 100 days have gone down in history as one of the most influential periods in this nation's history; from the closing of the banks on March 6 to the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps on April 5, the entire federal government worked at breakneck speed to realize the promises that Roosevelt had campaigned with.

Figure 1

The National Industrial Recovery Act was passed by Congress on June 16, less than three and a half months into Roosevelt's presidency. Its self-described goal was to "encourage national industrial recovery, to foster fair competition, and to provide for the construction of certain useful public works, and for other purposes." The NIRA established two separate federal agencies: the Public Works Administration, tasked with funding construction programs across the country; and the National Recovery Administration, whose goal was to create and enforce "codes of fair competition."

As with any piece of legislation, the intricacies of the NIRA are complex and impossible to explore fully in a single article. Instead, this piece will focus on the real-world implications of the establishment of the NRA—namely, the agency's "Blue Eagle" logo that would come to be used countless times by companies that adhered to the government codes. While the government could not mandate that consumers support compliant businesses, they could allow companies to only use the Blue Eagle if they conformed to the NRA's regulations. Consumers were urged, in the name of patriotism, to only support such brands.

The NRA's logo is very simple in its design (figure 1). A stylized eagle, vaguely Art Deco in appearance, stands with its wings outstretched. In its right claws it holds a gear, a symbol of industry, while in its left it holds three lightning bolts, a symbol of power. The blue color of the eagle became perhaps its most recognizable feature. Above its head, in block letters and typically red, were the letters "NRA," while beneath the eagle was the slogan, "WE DO OUR PART." The creator of the logo is generally considered to be Charles Toucey Coiner, an art director who went on to design a number of patriotic posters during World War II.

General Hugh S. Johnson, a World War I veteran and member of Roosevelt's "Brain Trust," was chosen to head the NRA. His energy and optimism were integral in promoting the program, and many have credited his leadership with the NRA's success. In support of the newly-formed agency, Johnson famously said, "When every American housewife understands that the Blue Eagle on everything that she permits into her home is a symbol of its restoration to security, may God have mercy on the man or group of men who attempt to trifle with this bird."

Blue Eagle signs began appearing in storefront windows in August of 1933; by September, newspaper and magazine advertisements were including the logo in their design. By the end of the year, the Blue Eagle was impossible to avoid. Magazine covers, food packaging, license plates, and clothing were all branded with the logo, conspicuously reminding the consumer that the brand in question was "doing their part" to help in the economic recovery (figure 2).

Figure 2

Today, countless relics of the National Recovery Administration survive. While

continued on page 12

continued from page 11

Figure 3

many of the items bearing the Blue Eagle were made to be disposable (think newspapers and food products), the sheer amount of production taking place between 1933 and 1935 ensured that not all would be thrown away. The remainder of this article will examine the different ways in which one can collect the NRA, so to speak.

For me personally, the most appealing aspect of the NRA is that it facilitates a "jack of all trades, master of none" approach. Rather than becoming an expert on vintage sheet music, or cigar boxes, or license plates, or fruit crates, I can instead dabble in all of the above while still maintaining a focus for my collection. It makes browsing an antique store much more fun when I am not looking for one specific thing, but rather anything bearing the NRA's Blue Eagle.

I still remember the first item that sparked my fascination with the NRA. It is a lace doily, about 15 inches square, hand-stitched with the Blue Eagle as its central motif. Given that much of my academic research had related to the New Deal, I was familiar with the political and economic background of programs such as the NRA. But the doily, for the first time, allowed me to appreciate the cultural impact that these programs had. Far removed from the bureaucracy of Washington, someone had taken time out of their day to stitch this doily. The program had evidently impacted their life in such a way that they were compelled to create a lasting testament to it.

From there, I began actively seeking out any NRA-related ephemera that I could find. With a background in philately, I was immediately drawn to the 3-cent purple stamp released on August 15, 1933 to commemorate the program. Showing four people marching together—representative of agriculture, business, labor, and women—the bottom of the stamp reads, "IN A COMMON DETERMINATION." The stamp, which is the subject of a book I am currently working on, can rightfully be considered one of the most controversial postage stamps in the history of the United States Postal Service.

Figure 4

The NRA stamp provided companies and private individuals with a way to show their support for the government through their mail—but for many, this simply wasn't enough. Many companies large and small also printed the Blue Eagle onto their envelopes (figure 3), or attached an adhesive NRA label in addition to a postage stamp. Rubber handstamps, typically in blue, purple, or red ink, were also common. Postage meter slogans too were utilized to promote the NRA. Collecting such covers is an endless endeavor, as there are innumerable variations of these labels and stamps.

In addition to mail, another subset of NRA collecting is food packaging. Everything from coffee tins and cardboard oatmeal containers to sacks of flours and wooden fruit crates can be found with the Blue Eagle.

Figure 5

Particularly popular amongst collectors are wax bread wrappers and candy wrappers (Wrigley's Spearmint – figure 4, Doublemint, and Juicy Fruit gum, Curtiss Butterfinger and Baby Ruth, and Necco Lip Sticks are just a few of the candies known to have sported the logo). Certainly one of the strangest NRA collectibles in existence is a Challenge Butter wrapper with the Blue Eagle (figure 5). Just why such an item has survived so long remains a mystery.

In the same vein as food packaging are cigar boxes and labels, a number of which sport the Blue Eagle. Some cigar boxes merely kept their traditional designs and added a small NRA logo in the corner (figure 6). Others, meanwhile, adopted over-the-top patriotic designs. Perhaps the most extreme example of this came from Frank "Ted" Scott of Peoria, Illinois, whose "Roosevelt" brand cigars featured a portrait of the President flanked by two NRA Blue Eagle flags—subtlety was obviously not Mr. Scott's strong suit.

Figure 6

Perhaps the most popular area of NRA collecting today is clothing manufactured under the various codes of fair competition laid out by the U.S. government. Women's clothing and accessories are particularly popular, and elegant pieces can fetch exorbitant prices. There were a number of different codes of manufacturing for clothing, and therefore a range of tags can be found on clothing (figure 7). Some of the more common ones include the Dress Code Authority, Ladies Handbag Code Authority, Cotton Garment Code Authority (shirts), Knitted Outerwear Code Authority (knit caps and bathing suits), Men's Clothing Code Authority (tuxedos, jackets), Men's Neckwear Code Authority, Coat and Suit Code Authority, Corset and Brassiere Code Authority, Millinery Code Authority, and Undergarment and Negligee Code Authority. It would provide an interesting and difficult challenge to assemble clothing with one of each type of label.

Tangentially related to NRA clothing are NRA sewing patterns, that I've encountered quite frequently. Vintage clothing enthusiasts love such patterns, as the presence of the Blue Eagle dates them more accurately than is often possible. As NRA clothes can be delicate and expensive due to their age, some collectors have taken to reproducing clothing from patterns that bear the logo.

Sheet music collecting is a popular pastime for many, particularly the lavishly illustrated examples from the first few decades of the 20th century. The number of titles which have the NRA logo is not very large; they include Guy Lombardo's "Annie Doesn't Live Here Anymore," Vera Van's "I Raised My Hat," and George Olsen's "The Last Round Up." The key item for any NRA sheet music collector is Dick Powell's "The Road Is Open Again," from the Warner Bros. Vitaphone short of the same name. And no NRA music collection would be complete without a copy of Bill Cox's 78RPM record, "N.R.A. Blues." The song's last verse showcases the optimism felt by many towards the New Deal:

When you all join the NRA,
Sweet thing, sweet thing.
When you all join the NRA,
We'll all feel happy and all feel gay.

Similar to sheet music is magazine collecting, of which there are numerous examples that would fit into an NRA collection. From the technical (*Popular Science*) to the romantic (Street & Smith's *Love Story*), from the innocent (*American Boy*) to the risqué (*Film Fun* – figure 8), nearly every major magazine in America proudly carried the Blue Eagle on their covers. Inside, too, magazines were littered with advertisements emblazoned with the same logo. What few people realize is that General Hugh S. Johnson was *Time* magazine's Man of the Year in 1933, and that he was pictured on the January 1, 1934 issue. Although there's no Blue Eagle on the cover, it is still an exceptional addition to any NRA collection.

This overview of collecting areas is by no means intended to be comprehensive. In my collection I have shaving razors (figure 9), typewriter ribbons (figure 10), buttons, and other items too esoteric to be neatly categorized. This is perhaps what draws me to the NRA—my collection will never be complete, and there will always be new and exciting artifacts coming to my attention. The National Recovery Administration impacted so many facets of industry and manufacturing that there truly is an inexhaustible wealth of material out there for collectors to search for.

Given that this entire article has been about how widespread and ubiquitous the NRA was, it is important to briefly cover the program's ultimate demise. On May 27, 1935—less than two years after the NIRA was passed—the Supreme Court handed down a decision in Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States. More commonly known as the "Sick Chicken Case," the suit revolved around the Schechter Poultry Corporation selling animals that were unhealthy. However, the Court used the case as an opportunity to render the whole of the NIRA unconstitutional on the grounds that it violated the Commerce Clause and delegated legislative powers to the executive branch.

As quickly as the program had begun, it was suddenly all over. The codes of fair competition were abolished, and the Blue Eagle logo was quickly removed from all products and advertisements. The ruling marked a serious blow to the Roosevelt administration, and helped signal the end of the "First New Deal"

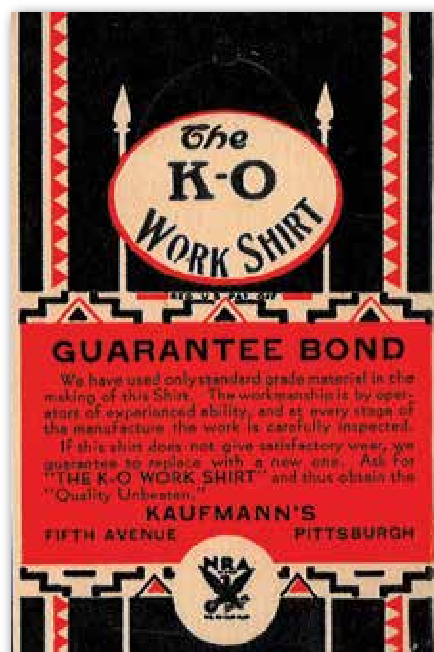

Figure 7

continued on page 14

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Figure 8

(the "Second New Deal," featuring the Social Security Act and the Works Progress Administration, would come in the following months).

There is much work to be done chronicling the cultural impacts of the NRA. While the economic and political history of the agency has been studied since the 1930s, very little research has been done with regard to the ways the NRA impacted people's daily lives. Before every film, the NRA emblem was shown. On every box of cereal or bottle of milk, there was an NRA logo. For supporters of the president, it was a sign of recovery and progress; for the president's detractors, it was a constant reminder of new role the federal government played in everyday life.

It is my hope to someday compile a checklist and price guide of NRA-marked items. Obviously such a guide would be far from complete, and it is unrealistic to expect to catalogue every single item manufactured by every single company that followed the NRA's codes. But there is a definite need for a guide that would at least provide ballpark price estimates for general categories of items.

Figure 9

The effects of such a book would be twofold. On the one hand, both buyers and sellers might develop a deeper understanding of the history of the NRA and appreciate its impact on consumer culture. Most of the NRA items I purchase for my collection are not sold as such, and it takes a discerning eye to see that they were produced under the agency. Conversely, a price guide would help to prevent sellers from asking exorbitant prices for relatively common NRA collectibles. For example, pinback buttons with the Blue Eagle are fairly common, yet inexperienced sellers assume they are rare and charge multiple times what they're actually worth.

Figure 10

It has been 83 years since the Blue Eagle, wings spread and boldly declaring "WE DO OUR PART," first appeared. In those intervening decades, there has never been anything quite like it (perhaps the closest analogue is the CC41 in Great Britain). It is more important than ever to document, collect, and preserve the traces of the NRA that still exist today in order to have a better understanding of what daily life was like at the height of the worst economic situation ever faced by this country. So the next time you see anything—a license plate, a fruit crate, or even a simple postage stamp—with the NRA on it, I urge you to begin a new collection.

Charles Epting is a recent graduate of the University of Southern California. His published books include *The New Deal in Orange County* and *Victorian Los Angeles*, and he is writing a biography of silent film actress Bebe Daniels. He is currently employed by the philatelic auction house H.R. Harmer, while continuing to be a research associate for UC Berkeley's Living New Deal program. He serves on the board of the US Philatelic Classics Society and the Historic Resources Board for the city of Huntington Beach.

The United States Marine Band

By Gunnery Sergeant Kira M. Wharton

The Marine Band has been fulfilling our mission to provide music for the President of the United States for more than two centuries. We trace our origins back to an Act of Congress dated July 11, 1798 that re-established the Marine Corps and allowed for 32 fifers and drummers. Most of these musicians were stationed at various Marine Corps posts throughout the United States and aboard naval ships where they provided music for the Marines stationed there. A small group of musicians were kept at Marine Corps Headquarters in Philadelphia where they provided music for the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

When Headquarters Marine Corps moved to Washington, D.C. in July 1800, the Marine Band followed. This move brought a new venue to the Marine Band – a building that eventually became known as the White House. The first appearance of the Marine Band at this iconic location occurred on January 1, 1801 at the New Year's Day reception hosted by President and Mrs. Adams.

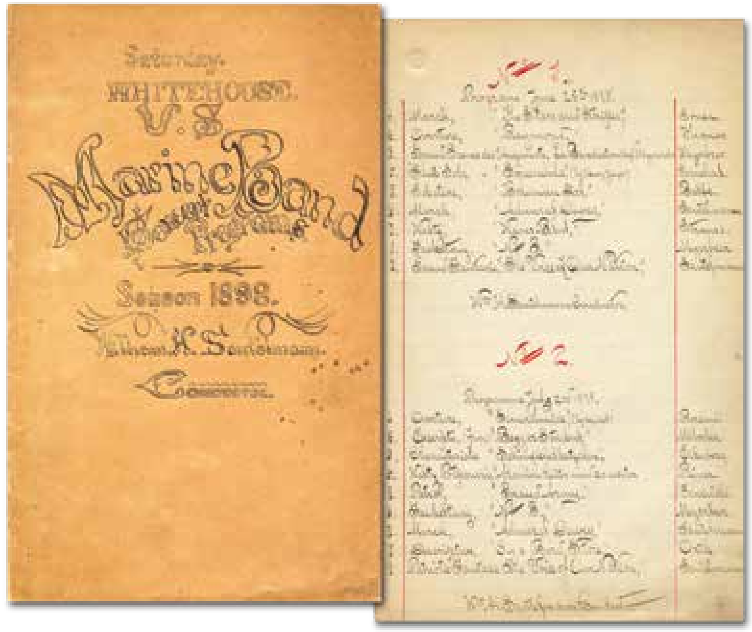
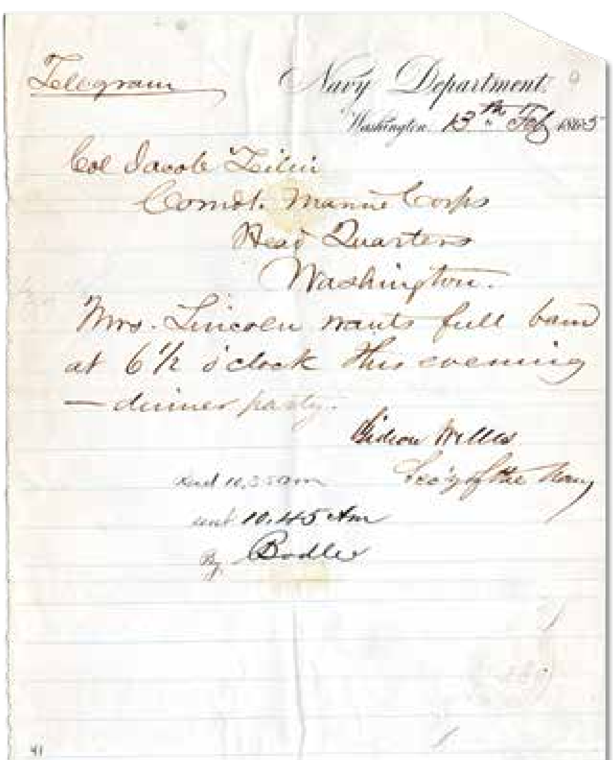


Figure 2

The band's presence at the White House was often at the discretion of the president. President Abraham Lincoln was known to write the letter of request himself, but Mrs. Lincoln made her requests in a more formal manner. Figure 1 shows a telegram from Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, to Colonel Jacob Zeilin, Commanding Officer of the Marine Barracks in Washington requesting the band on behalf of the First Lady.



Telegram Navy Department
Washington 13th Feb 1865

Col Jacob Zeilin
Comdt. Marine Corps
Head Quarters
Washington.

Mrs. Lincoln wants full band at 6½ o'clock this evening — dinner party.

Gideon Welles
Secy of the Navy

Recd 10.55 am
sent 10.45 Am
By Bodley

Figure 1

The Lincolns, particularly the President, were lovers of music. He would have had ample opportunities to hear the band at dinners and receptions held at the White House and would also have heard the Marine Band every Saturday in the summer on the White House lawn during his tenure in office. The tradition of Marine Band concerts on the White House lawn began in the 1840s and continued into the early 20th century. Programs from the 1898 Season (figure 2) give us an idea of what these concerts were like. We do not know who created the ornate cover for these programs, but it may have been the librarian of the band at that time, George Sousa – John Philip Sousa's younger brother. While these programs are more than a century old, they are still an excellent example of programming for a Marine Band summer concert – a mixture of marches, orchestral transcriptions, and popular music from the era. A few of the titles are probably familiar: "The Stars and Stripes Forever," *Les Hugenots*, *Semiramide*, and many of the composers may also be familiar: Giacomo Meyerbeer, Johann Strauss and Giaochino Rossini. Some titles are definitely period pieces – "In a bird cage," "The Voice of our Nation." The wide variety means there was always something for everyone.

While these particular concerts were open to the public, some concerts at the White House were for special guests only. On May 20, 1943, the Marine Band played a concert

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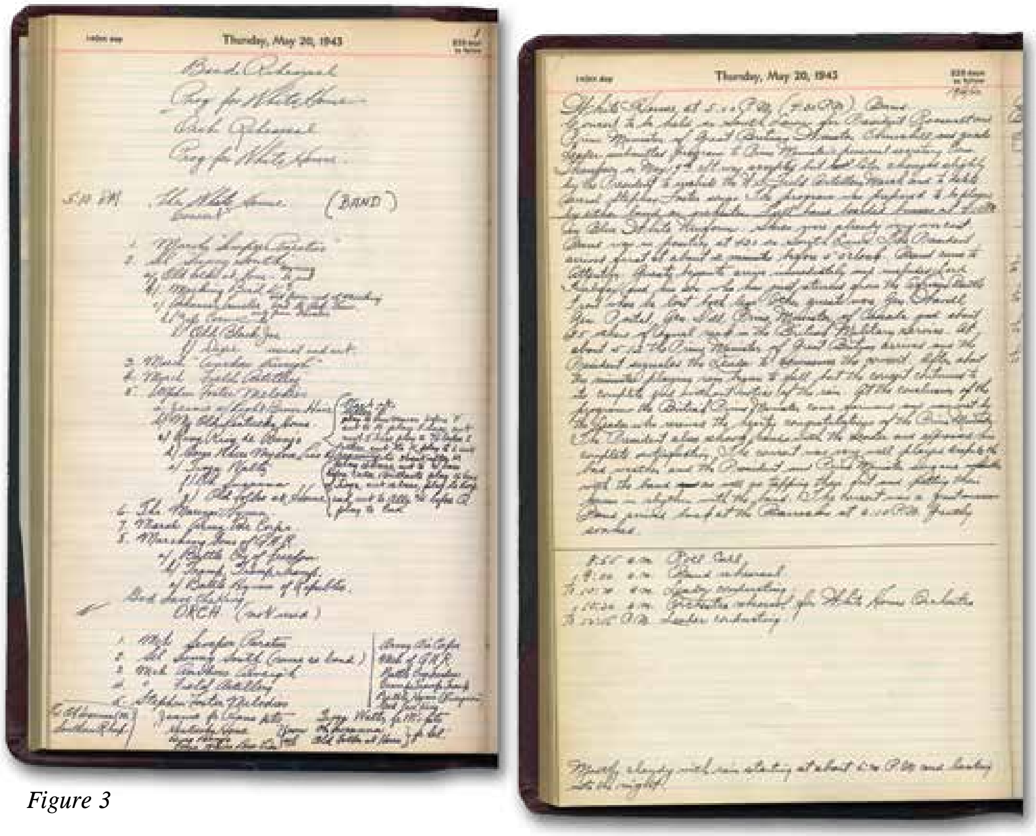

Figure 3

for President Franklin Roosevelt and his guest, Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The concert was a salute to the U.S. armed forces and America folk music. Each of the military service songs appeared on the program along with three arrangements of American music, most of which hark back to an early conflict – the American Civil War.

To learn more about this concert we can look at the entries in the band's Leader and Library Logs (figure 3). These logbooks, or daily diaries, were started early in the 20th century and offer a unique glimpse into the daily duties of the band. According to the Library Log, both the band and orchestra rehearsed the same music the morning of the concert. If weather permitted, the orchestra would play. If weather threatened, the band would play. The choice of ensemble did not really affect the personnel; at this time, wind players were required to double on a string instrument and string players were required to double on a wind instrument. So everyone would play the concert, they just might play a different instrument depending on which ensemble was chosen. Looking at the Leader Log, we can see that since the band was selected to play the weather must not have been good. And play they did, despite the downpour of rain that ensued ten minutes after the concert began. According to the Leader Log, the band played well in spite of the rain, the President and Prime Minister singing and whistling along with the music, and offering congratulations after the concert. The last line of the entry reads "Band arrived back at the Barracks at 6:10 PM greatly soaked."

For the most part, the specific pieces of music used at the White House are often left to the discretion of the Band Leader, but occasionally a special request is made by the President himself. One such request was made by President John F. Kennedy. In the summer of 1963, the President took a trip to Ireland where he visited several counties, including Wexford. The President met with the mayor and mentioned that his ancestors had emigrated from Wexford. The mayor gave Kennedy several pieces of Irish music including one entitled "The Boys of Wexford." Upon returning from the trip, President Kennedy sent the sheet music to Colonel Albert Schoepper, then Director of the Marine Band, and requested that a few Irish tunes be arranged for the orchestra to play. One of the results was this jaunty tune, "The Boys of Wexford," arranged for small orchestra by band arranger Sammy Nestico. It was premièred at a dinner in September 1963. Kennedy enjoyed the piece so much that the Marine Band made a recording of it for him to listen to on Air Force One.

Today the Marine Band is still a frequent sight at the White House. Whether it is the chamber orchestra welcoming guests to dinner, the band announcing the arrival of the President, or a jazz ensemble providing music for special guests, the Marine Band continues its mission to provide musical support to the President of the United States.

Librarian Gunnery Sergeant **Kira Wharton**, a Ph.D. in musical arts from the University of Iowa, joined the US Marine Band in 2003. As a Marine Band Librarian (since 2008), she prepares music for performances by the Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra, and assists with maintaining the music library. As Historian (since 2013), she researches and preserves the band's history, maintains the archives and conducts oral history interviews with former members.

The Watermelon Trope: *Food and Racial Stereotype in 19th Century Trade Cards*

By Shana Klein

In an article on "The Southern Watermelon Trade" in *Harper's Weekly* from 1888, the writer describes a dark green watermelon variety commonly known as the "Niggerhead." Using a racial slur for the name of a watermelon is not surprising given that magazine illustrations, advertisements, minstrel songs, and silverware designs all reproduced a nasty racial stereotype in the late-nineteenth century claiming that African Americans possessed an insatiable lust for the fruit. Depictions of black men and women feverish for watermelon demonized African American people and portrayed them as a savage and infantile race. I chronicle the evolution of this stereotype in the larger book project, *The Fruits of Empire: Contextualizing Food in Post-Civil War American Art and Culture,* which was awarded this year's Philip Jones Ephemera Society of America Fellowship. In my analysis on the social politics of food, I demonstrate how representations of fruit like watermelon were neither innocent nor straight forward, but ideologically-loaded images that shaped national discourses on race and identity. Nowhere is this point more explicit than in the third chapter of my book project, "Cutting Away the Rind: A History of Race and Violence in Representations of Watermelon."

This section of the book reveals how the racialized watermelon trope was pervasive in nineteenth-century print culture (see figure 1). The popular *Puck Magazine*, for instance, published the illustration, "Darkies' Day at the Fair," marking one of the only occasions that African Americans were allowed to visit Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Watermelons were distributed for free at this event, despite objections by black members on the Exposition Planning Committee who wanted "Negro Day" to be "a no watermelon day."

They no doubt anticipated illustrations like those in *Puck Magazine* that depicted a derogatory view of African Americans with wide eyes and moist lips eagerly waiting in line to purchase "ice-cold watermillons" from a vendor. People who have already purchased the fruit sit barefoot and cross-legged on the ground, eating watermelon without silverware, napkins, or other tools belonging to Victorian etiquette. The absence of silverware in this illustration reinforced stereotypes about the laziness of

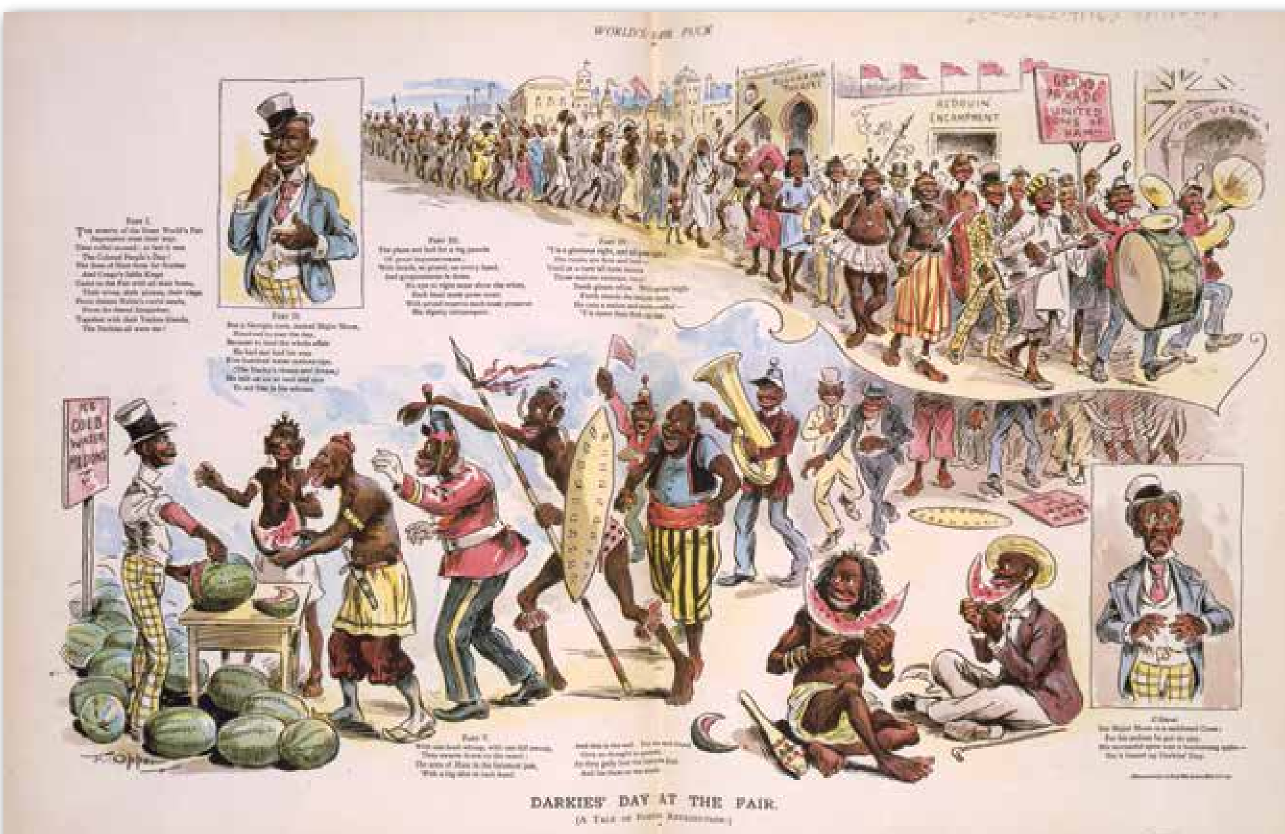

Figure 1. Frederick Burr Opper, "Darkies' Day at the Fair." Puck Magazine *(August 21, 1893), 186-187. Lithograph, Library of Congress, Washington DC.*

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Figure 2. Shaped 1890s chromolithographed trade card, overprinted for Enoch Morgan's Sons Co., makers of Sapolio, a soap introduced in 1869. John and Carolyn Grossman Collection, Winterthur Library, Delaware.

African Americans who were thought to naturally prefer foods they could eat with their hands. Black members of the Columbian Exposition Planning Committee keenly understood the symbolism that watermelon carried in popular vernacular and its ability to advance the trajectory of racism.

While magazine illustrations broadcasted the watermelon stereotype widely, trade cards depicted the most disturbing iterations of this racial trope. Trade cards advertised a wide variety of wares (soap in figure 2; furs in figure 3), often with stock imagery such as African Americans transforming into watermelons, their black faces embedded in the pink flesh of the fruit. With their heads cropped and bodies chopped from the picture plane, the entire identity of these figures is defined by watermelon. Such images postulate that African Americans had watermelon on the brain, or watermelon slush for brains. Trade cards showing babies cradled in watermelons further bolstered this stereotype and the notion that black people were born loving the fruit.

A trade card for the Boston Dental Association (figure 4) advances this cruel agenda by displaying a black man's face distorted in the shape of a watermelon. In addition to his green, waxy complexion and elongated face, his lips crack open to show red meat forming the interior of his mouth and white rind replacing his teeth. Illustrators forged a visual likeness between the shape of the figure's smile and the broad, crescent shape of the watermelon, thereby reducing African Americans to the very object after which they supposedly lusted. Although trade cards also showed white figures in the shape of watermelon (figure 5), it was their bodies rather than faces that adopted the fruit's figure. This registers a very different sensation for the viewer since white men with watermelon bodies look cheery and confident in contrast to black men with watermelon faces who look grotesque and disfigured. In mass-produced trade cards that permeated American visual culture, images of black faces morphing into watermelons served to dehumanize African American people and literalize the watermelon stereotype for viewers. Trade cards displaying

Figure 3. Shaped 1890s chromolithographed trade card, overprinted for a fur manufacturer in Rochester NY. John and Carolyn Grossman Collection, Winterthur Library, Delaware.

Native Americans morphing into corn and Dutch women into cabbages joined the chorus of ethnic caricatures that employed racial stereotypes to sell product.

By repeatedly manipulating the human form into foods, trade cards maintained the widely held belief, "you are

Figure 4. "What-er-melon," 1890s chromolithographed trade card, overprinted for the Boston Dental Association of Hartford CT. Jay T. Last Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino CA.

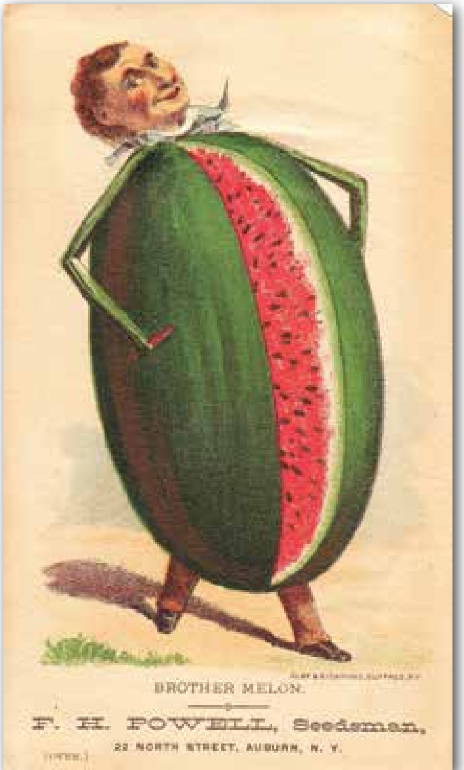

Figure 5. "Brother Melon," 1880s trade card chromolithographed by Clay& Richmond, Buffalo NY, overprinted for F.H. Powell, Seedsman of Auburn NY. Jay T. Last Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino

what you eat." Diet experts endorsed this theory in the nineteenth century, declaring that what a person ate directly shaped a person's mental and physical constitution. Writer and critic Francis Grund explained earlier in the nineteenth century that "what one eats assimilates with us, becomes our own flesh and blood, and influences our temper." With disdain, Grund concludes that Americans "are made up of potatoes, raw meat, and doughy pie-crust! The very thought of it is enough to lower our self-respect."

Trade cards showing people of color transforming into watermelon subscribed to this logic, suggesting that the inferior character of African Americans is defined by the foods they eat. This same principle was used to comment on Chinese immigrants whose rice-heavy and meat-impoverished diets were thought to create unmanly and un-American bodies in the nineteenth century. Critics targeted Mexican foods as well, declaring that salsa and tortillas created weaker bodies in comparison to white bread which fortified strong men and women. Food, as a result, functioned as a marker of identity and difference in the late-nineteenth century that buttressed the theory "you are what you eat."

It is meaningful that racialized images of watermelon specifically emerged in the decades after the Civil War when African Americans were obtaining greater civil liberties with the abolishment of slavery and emancipation. Many whites, especially in the South, felt threatened by the changing status of black people in society. Portraits of black watermelon eaters as lustful brutes supported this group's belief that African Americans were unable to achieve the standards of intelligence or morality like whites and could thereby never become fully assimilated into American society. Pictures that portrayed black people as unfit citizens ultimately helped justify their segregation and disenfranchisement. Re-inscribing this message with watermelon to a broad audience in both high-end and ephemeral objects spoke to the sheer urgency of picturing black inferiority. There was no moment more crucial to prove this argument than in the decades after the Civil War when African Americans were obtaining greater civil rights as a result of national efforts to incorporate them into society. The watermelon stereotype, therefore, was not only a device to publicize black deviance, but a political strategy to maintain white dominance in a period when African Americans were gaining power.

Few scholars have considered the racial politics of watermelon on trade cards because, in general, the cards have been dismissed as insignificant advertisements that were dispersed indiscriminately across the country. But this is precisely what makes trade cards, crate labels, and other ephemeral objects of food such important artifacts of study; their widespread production provides invaluable insight into the visual and social consciousness of the nation. Investigating ephemeral representations of food reveals how illustrators and viewers used the subject of food to address important conversations about race and identity. A number of today's archives, however, are removing trade cards with bigoted content from collections. Scholar Kyla Tompkins argues against this action in her book, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the Nineteenth Century*, encouraging scholars to both preserve and analyze trade cards in order to "render their historical weight visible and material but also to recognize both sides of their terrible ambivalence, their often loving and intimate as well as deeply hateful depictions of the co-presence of whites and nonwhites in the urban spaces of the late nineteenth century."

There is justice, therefore, in preserving these ephemeral materials for the documentation of history and the continued study of race in America. By recognizing the ways that racist discourses operate in watermelon ephemera, it is hopeful that we can move one step closer to reversing the racial prejudices so firmly planted in images of this charged fruit.

Shana Klein, holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of New Mexico, where she defended her dissertation, "The Fruits of Empire: Contextualizing Food in Post-Civil War American Art and Culture." Shana has been awarded several fellowships for her research at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Huntington Library, Henry Luce Foundation, Georgia O'Keeffe Museum, among others. She has published research in the journals *American Art*, *Panorama*, and the *International Review of African American Art*. Shana also serves as a member of the Chesapeake Food Studies Group and Managing Editor of the journal, *Food, Media, and Culture* at American University in Washington, D.C.

Nathaniel Sheldon Wheaton & the Trinity College Library

By Carsten Lohan

The following essay (in digest form) was written by Carsten Lohan, Class of 2016, who attended Ephemera 36 as one of the student panelists for my talk on "The Alchemy of Special Collections." This work was done as part of an independent study I directed in the Fall of 2015, wherein Carsten utilized the Wheaton Papers, which contain relevant ephemera, to tell the story of Wheaton's trip to England in 1824 (see below). Images are all from items in the Wheaton Papers, courtesy of the Watkinson Library at Trinity College (Hartford, Connecticut).

—Richard J. Ring

Figure 1

Nathaniel Sheldon Wheaton (1792-1862), one of our founding Trustees and second president, took a trip to Europe in 1823 and 1824 to solicit donations for the newly founded Washington College (re-named Trinity College in 1845), and to buy books for a college library (figure 1). The entire voyage, lasting over a year, is represented in certain selections from Wheaton's published narrative, entitled *A Journal of a Residence During Several Months in London; Including Excursions Through Various Parts of England; and a Short Tour in France and Scotland in the Years 1823 and 1824* (Hartford & New York, 1830). The Watkinson Library owns two copies, along with the original handwritten journals kept by Reverend Wheaton, letters, documents, and receipts related to his trip and the books he purchased. Other copies of the 1830 publication can be found in libraries across the United States, and the Harvard University Library has digitized a copy that can be read online via Google Books, or downloaded. The *Journal*, as published in 1830, is largely true to Wheaton's own handwritten volumes, kept almost daily while abroad (even during a hurricane in the Atlantic!). Quotes herein are primarily from the text of the published volume, but others (duly noted) are from the manuscript volumes.

After the 1818 ratification of the state constitution, Congregationalism ceased to be the established church of Connecticut—"no preference shall be given by law to any Christian sect or mode of worship." Episcopalians immediately began planning for a new college. Leaders of the Episcopal Church of Connecticut had agreed on the need for an institution of their own, having grown weary of the monopoly that Congregationalist Yale held on higher learning in Connecticut. A competition ensued between Hartford, New Haven, and Middletown for the honor of the new college's hometown. Hartford was finally chosen due in part to the generosity of its residents, who made generous donations of both goods and funds.

Washington College, newly founded in the spring of 1823, held classes in the Fall of 1824 with a staff of five faculty to instruct nine students—six Freshmen, one Sophomore and one Senior (transfer students!), and one part-time student. The Board of Trustees appointed Wheaton to assemble the college's library. Then serving as rector of Christ Church, Hartford (now Christ Church Cathedral, on the corner of Church and Main streets), Wheaton left his congregation and traveled across the Atlantic to England, France (figure 2), and Scotland, where he collected 400 titles (comprising 1,146 volumes) for Washington College's library. Nearly half of these were purchased with donated funds from abroad and at home.

A key reason for Wheaton's voyage to England was to inspire the generosity of Anglicans towards their Episcopalian brethren in America. However, Reverend Wheaton encountered some unexpected competition, as two other Americans were in England in 1823, competing for Anglican donors for the same reason—Philander Chase for Kenyon College (Gambier,

Figure 2

true to the original notes the Reverend completed seven years earlier, and fits snugly within the genre of travel writing that was popular in the early 19th-century. "Voyages to Europe have now become of such frequency," proclaims a publisher's advertisement in the *Journal*, "and are performed with so much celerity in the regular packets, that in ordinary cases, a journal of occurrences can excite little interest beyond the circle of private friendship."

Ohio), and John Henry Hobart for The General Theological Seminary (New York, New York). While the college library likely could have been stocked by correspondence with London booksellers, the trustees of the school believed that sending a representative would more effectively compel donors in England to give to their cause. Reverend Wheaton carried a letter of introduction by Bishop Thomas Church Brownell, stating that "the best friends which Great Britain has in America, will be found among the members of the Episcopal Church."

The *Connecticut Mirror* reported that "The Rev. Mr. Wheaton, Pastor of the Episcopal Church in this city, has gone to New-York, to take passage for England. His objectives are, to obtain a Library for Washington College, and to regain his health. In both of which we hope he will succeed." There were many packet ships that ran between New York and Liverpool delivering mail, passengers, and small cargoes. While the voyage was not overly dangerous, it was not without risks. Wheaton was possibly aware of another Liverpool packet, the *Meteor*, which had been lost at sea earlier that year. He boarded the packet ship *Cortes* in New York on September 8th, 1823 and arrived in Liverpool on October 3rd, spending 25 days aboard and documenting his journey in great detail—often noting the ship's latitude and longitude, obtained from Captain De Cost. Clearly nervous about the sea voyage, on September 8th he writes: "It was the first time I had been out of sight of land; and if some emotions of a pensive nature came over my feelings, as I looked in vain for a trace of my native land, they were probably no more than thousands have experienced before under similar circumstances, and thousands will experience again."

Wheaton kept his journal with faithful regularity as his year abroad continued. His hand is a neat cursive, and he used as much of the page as possible. Clearly kept with the goal of publication, the journal first appeared serially in the *Episcopal Watchman*, published by the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut. Weekly installments continued for two years, beginning in June 1827, before it was issued as a book in 1830. The book is remarkably

Before leaving for Europe, Wheaton was given a letter of introduction by Thomas Church Brownell, addressed "To the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church of England," soliciting donations for the College and its library. The letter establishes "Nathaniel S. Wheaton, A.M. Rector of Christ Church, Hartford, to proceed to England, to solicit your friendly assistance; and we beg leave to commend him to your hospitable reception, as a man of piety and worth, and every way worthy of confidence and esteem . . . The best friends which Great Britain has in America," the letter continues, "will be found among members of the Episcopal Church."

Episcopalians were in essence the American offspring of the Church of England. Samuel Seabury, the first Episcopal Bishop of Connecticut, was a known Loyalist throughout the Revolution and the War of 1812. When the letter reveals the name of the school ("Washington College"), it is glossed by a note which reads "It was necessary that *some* name should be given in it to the charter…Should some munificent benefactor to the institution be found, it is intended to honor it with his name." However, as Wheaton wrote in a private message to Trustee Charles Sigourney, "the giving

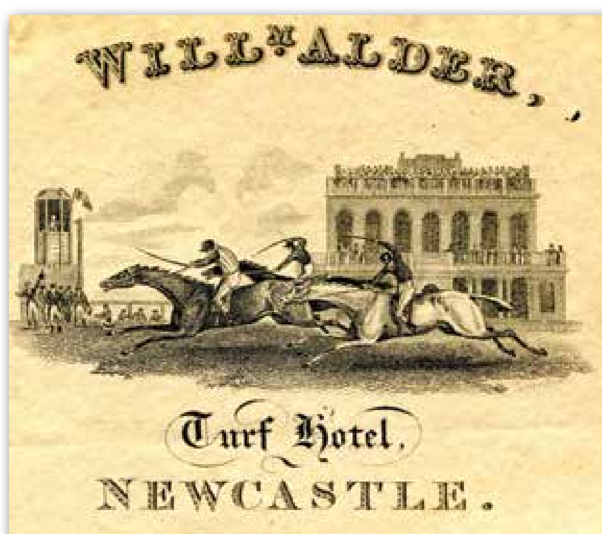

Figure 3

continued on page 22

continued from page 21

Figure 4

people seem to be interested in the Ohio cause." It would be another Episcopal school that would find not one, but two generous benefactors, Lord Kenyon and Lord Gambier. That college, in the sleepy town of Gambier, Ohio, has been known as Kenyon College since 1824!

Upon arrival in London, Wheaton took up lodging in a private home, renting a room on a street that ran between the Thames and the Strand, bracketed by Somerset Place and Temple Garden. The room rented for two guineas a week, far less expensive than a hotel room (figures 3 and 4). Thrift is a constant theme in his travels, made clear by a note written by Wheaton to Sigourney, expressing misgivings about his success in procuring a library, and offering to pay his own expenses. Clearly he was economizing for the sake of the new college.

Donor subscriptions were responsible for half of his purchases, and the remainder was paid for with other funds. It took time to solicit and accumulate donations, which is why Wheaton completed his purchasing towards the end of his voyage, spending £128 at Rivingtons & Cochran—evident from the original bill of sale in the Wheaton Papers, dated the 31 August 1824, three weeks before his return voyage (figure 5). It was necessary for Wheaton to wait until he had accrued significant funds, as the booksellers he visited offered discounts for bulk purchases, as well as those made in cash.

The book trade of London in the 1820s was a thriving industry, with many of the printers and binders centered around St. Paul's Churchyard, and the booksellers of note located on the Strand. Rivingtons and Cochran, of 148 Strand, would have been a brief walk from Wheaton's aforementioned lodgings. Paying in cash, and buying in bulk, Wheaton received a good discount on most of his purchases from European booksellers, and had to have the books shipped to America in crates via a packet ship to New York. They were then sent by horse-cart to Hartford by the Manhattan firm Haydn & Timmings of 58 Pine Street.

In the 1820s, library borrowing privileges were indeed a privilege, for which one had to pay. All students wishing to use the Library had to pay one dollar per semester. The library was open only several hours a week, and as former Archivist Peter Knapp writes: "No reader other than a faculty member, whose limit was twelve, could borrow more than three books at a time." The Library would undergo numerous additions from faculty members who elected to incorporate their own personal libraries into the collection. Wheaton himself would do so when he became Washington College's second president in 1831.

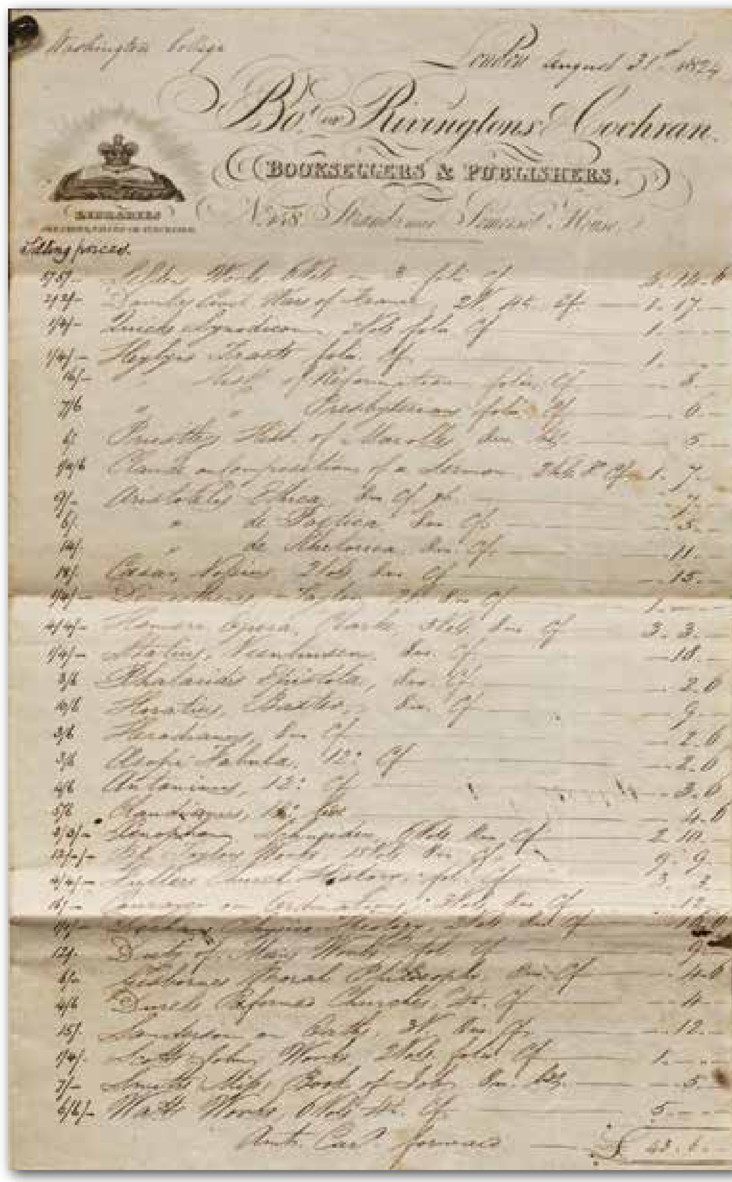
Washington College
London August 31st 1824
Bot. of Rivingtons & Cochran
Booksellers & Publishers.
No. 148 Strand near Somerset House

Figure 5

My “Dog and Pony Show” – Ephemera Meant to be Handled

By Robert J. Chandler

“Yes, it is real!” People desire to see, read, and even touch authentic ephemera. Through it, History becomes alive to them. Now, I assemble what I flippantly call my “Dog and Pony Show” each time I go speaking. Rick Ring’s “hands on” college program in the May *Ephemera Journal* reminded me of my journey.

I am a slow learner, and this “truth” has had to emerge in many forms over my half-century as a graduate student and public historian. Ephemera is so much fun! Encompassing others in this joy is so much “funner,” as our young daughters formerly said.

In the 1960s, I needed to educate myself. I got “high” during long hours at the microfilm reader. As I gained a doctoral degree analyzing the California press during the Civil War, I quickly became aware of what a lack of ephemera could do: virtually all of the Southern-spouting Democratic newspapers had vanished. Luckily, the California State Library held bound volumes of the vituperative and crucial *American Flag*.

Seeking, in a small way, to redress the lack of ephemera pertinent to my 1860s research, during the 1960s and 1970s at University of California Riverside and along Berkeley’s Telegraph Avenue, I collected ephemeral social protest leaflets. No telephone pole was safe; each day brought a new crop. In 1977, I dumped eight linear feet, measured tied together, on UCR’s Special Collections. This gift was not entirely altruistic; an unreasonable wife insisted I make room for our newly-born daughter. Both women are pleased I did, while scholars may research a dated, daily collected, decade.

In 1978, I became a corporate historian for Wells Fargo Bank and retired 32 years later in 2010 as its senior research historian. The Gold Rush express business—carrying and protecting treasure, coin, and letters—is the most exciting part of Wells, Fargo & Company’s history, and the 6-horse, 9-passenger, Concord Mail Coach rolls boldly as Wells Fargo Bank’s icon. Wells Fargo looms large in Western lore, popular culture, and the collectors’ market. Real stagecoaches, treasure boxes, and gold scales always draw a crowd. This 1852 San Francisco Bank’s historical collection began in 1928 and its museum opened in 1935. The Bank now supports eleven. Another free public museum is on the way.

A corporation tells its story through what it made, what it did, and whom it served. Surviving evidence consists of printed handbooks, advertisements, checks, forms, receipts, and various obsolete objects. They were new to me; such material normally does not appear in university libraries. What did they mean? Innately curious, I began closely reading checks and check stubs, forms, gold assay receipts, and bills of exchange, and arranging them chronologically. Wells, Fargo & Company’s Letter Express envelopes carried between 1852 and 1895 became a huge other interest.

Of course, everything is obvious—150 years ago. Luckily, I gained two mentors, senior bankers: Robert D. Livingston of Sacramento and Jack Weaver in nearby Woodland. Bob collected Wells Fargo Agents and Agencies. He used his collection, augmented with notes from non-searchable, microfilmed newspapers, to write regional California histories of Wells, Fargo & Company’s Express and its competitors. Jack was a pioneer check collector in the United States. California’s 1870s checks payable in two U.S. moneys that circulated at different values—say $500, with $300 demanded in gold coin and

Figure 1. Guests in Ross, California, in March 2015, enjoyed my long “Dog and Pony” show on Civil War California and the privilege of picking up objects and documents for closer observation. Ephemera starts conversations.

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continued from page 23

Figure 2. Another appreciative audience in January 2016 examined Wells, Fargo & Company's Express service to Half Moon Bay, California, as told along a 30-foot table of ephemera.

at California State University at Hayward. Orsi asked: "What did I do? What did I look at daily? And would I present a class project?" I circulated a half-dozen basic Wells Fargo documents, but knew an analysis of the changes in simple express receipts over 70 years, for instance, is too convoluted for a short class session. Instead, I chose 140 years of San Francisco Gas Company bills, up to contemporary Pacific Gas & Electric Company bills I had paid, to illustrate societal changes. One class analyzed 1855 to 1910; the next class, 1910 to 1985. I brought originals, but photocopied sets of eight for several groups of six students each to discern and discuss. We enjoyed ferreting out the changing social milieu revealed in these simple invoices. Each class unveiled new nuances from the same material.

Concurrently, I presented real material before general audiences, my irreverent "Dog and Pony Show." I choose common items that emphasize and amplify my speaking points. Often I forego PowerPoint. The authentic, laid out on tables, has replaced photographic representation. Well, the REAL reason is that Mrs. Chandler says I speak much better without slides.

$200 in silver coin, intrigued him. Jack continually asked questions. Whenever I had a satisfactory solution, a new query would lead me to start over. Through this process, I grasped the basics of the Gold Rush banking and express business. Numerous articles emerged from, first, my electric typewriter and then, thank goodness, my computer.

Mastery of the minor allowed me to write the storyline, select documents and artifacts, and write captions for the 1986 remodel of Wells Fargo Bank's San Francisco Museum. In the same year, my knowledge of the individual item enabled me to produce a brief, lavishly-illustrated, pamphlet history, *Wells Fargo*: *Since 1852. Wells Fargo*, a formulaic Arcadia book comprising 128 pages of illustrations and captions only, followed in 2006.

My job required public speaking. First, I joined Toastmasters International, that invaluable self-help group that assists addressing unknown audiences. These occasions also meant slides. Ephemera dominated. Sharp, single items make superior illustrations. A camera, copy stand, and lights allowed me to customize mine.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Professor Richard Orsi asked me to speak to his Public History class

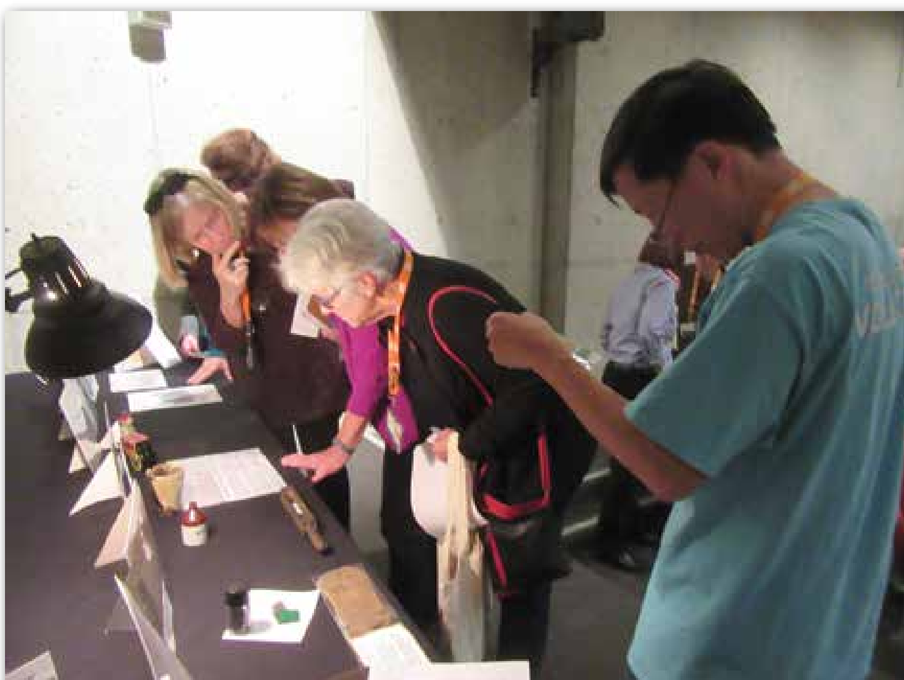


Figure 3. Curious Oakland Museum docents in February 2016 looked at mining items, and balanced weights on a steelyard Chinese Dotchin scale similar to the huge one they have on display. The three balance points with appropriate graduations on the beam amazed and enlightened them.

I protect documents, prints, and photographs with Mylar coverings and mount them with double-stick tape onto thick white cardboard, such as document dealers use as stiffeners. Taking that same cardboard, I cut triangular stands to glue or tape to the back, after first making a quarter inch fold and splitting the cardboard so it will adhere.

When I talk on Wells Fargo or the Civil War in California, I can easily lay out thirty-foot “Dog and Pony Shows.” I always attempt a local touch. Captions lie either in front of the item or attached to it. Everything may be picked up. A stereo viewer always grabs attention! My guests interact with my display, while I interpret items, encourage closer examination, and answer questions. When I then speak, my audience has a hint I may know my subject. The key is that touchable ephemera placed there among them.

Ephemera has shaped the careers of other public historians, leading them to experience this joyousness of sharing what is “real” with the public. The legendary product of one San Francisco factory left a corporate colleague no choice but to daily use originals. In 1989, Lynn Downey became the first historian and archivist for famed Levi Strauss & Co. Instantly, she realized Levi’s archival treasures are its apparel.

During her 24-year tenure, Lynn intuitively sleuthed, acquired, and assembled a 140-year line of changing fashions, beginning with those 1873 patented riveted jeans. Dangerous, abandoned mines seem to be the source for the oldest pants. In February 2014, a delighted Lynn Downey illustrated her tale of Levi Strauss & Co. with a half-dozen antique garments. Oh, to have the mileage-plus points that the 1879 pair of jeans has earned!

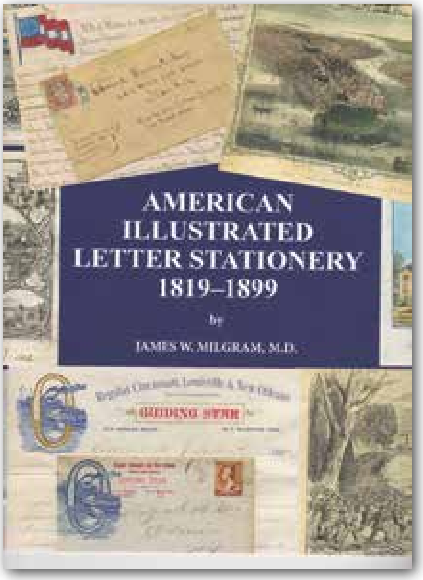
Independently, Lynn and I arrived at the same conclusion. Lynn gave public talks with Levi jeans in hand - her constant around-the-world traveling companion was an 1879 pair of blue jeans. An international cult of enthusiasts from Japan to Russia to Italy came to see those first Levi’s. And, for me, accompanying a talk with authentic contemporary documents and mining artifacts placed them in their social context.

We know by the results: Nothing beats the presence of period ephemera to enthuse an audience! History becomes “real.” They wish to know more.

Robert J. Chandler, Ph.D. is retired historian of Wells Fargo Bank. His 2014 book, *San Francisco Lithographer: African American Artist Grafton Tyler Brown*, was published in The Charles M. Russell Center Series on Art and Photography of the American West.

Figure 4. Awaiting Book Club of California perusal in March 2016 is a small Dog and Pony Show for my book, San Francisco Lithographer [1860-1882]: African American Artist Grafton Tyler Brown [1841-1918] *(University of Oklahoma Press, 2014). I built this book on ephemera, as I compare Brown’s job printing of maps, sheet music, stock certificates, and billheads to his competitors. Lowly billheads are especially revealing.*

Interesting Books



American Illustrated Letter Stationery 1819-1899, by James W. Milgram, MD. ISBN 0-9614018-5-0. 560 pages 8.5 x 11", hard bound, 1120 illustrations in color. $90 including domestic shipping, Northbrook Publishing Co., Inc., 1352 Estate Lane, Lake Forest IL 60045. Returnable.

E. Richard McKinstry, the Ephemera Society of America's first Philip Jones Fellow in 2008, acknowledged the assistance of Jim Milgram in researching the output of Charles Magnus, and especially noted Milgram's books: *Abraham Lincoln Illustrated Envelopes and Letter Paper, 1860-1865* (1984) and *Federal Civil War Postal History* (2007). In his new book, Milgram returns the compliment, and recommends McKinstry's reference work, *Charles Magnus, Lithographer: Illustrating America's Past, 1850-1900* (2013). Among the thousand plus illustrations of items in Milgram's collection are Magnus examples that even McKinstry had not seen (Milgram has included images of pieces in other collections as well as his own vast holding – see the Statue of Liberty illustrations, figure 1-122, owned by Reginald Good).

Milgram also acknowledges the assistance of Phil Jones, another avid collector of illustrated lettersheets. Both men drew a distinction between lettersheets and letterheads (the former usually a folded sheet of paper designed for correspondence, even if advertising a business). And they both considered 'vinegar' valentines to be lettersheets.

It might be accurate to call this volume a 'coffee-table book' – it is large, heavy, and profusely illustrated in color – primarily the record of one man's extraordinary collection, rather than a true reference work. There is no index, the caption information is not standardized, and references to other works are embedded in introductory text to each chapter. For instance, the chapter on Gold Rush Miner Lettersheets includes a listing of the 343 titles of *California's Pictorial Lettersheets: 1849-1869*, the impressive scholarly work by Joseph A. Baird – a boon, for the 1967 book still commands a hefty after-market price – plus 23 additional titles from the Sloan auction of the Henry H. Clifford collection. Revisiting the Baird work emphasizes what Milgram is missing: cross indexing by engraver, lithographer, location, etc.

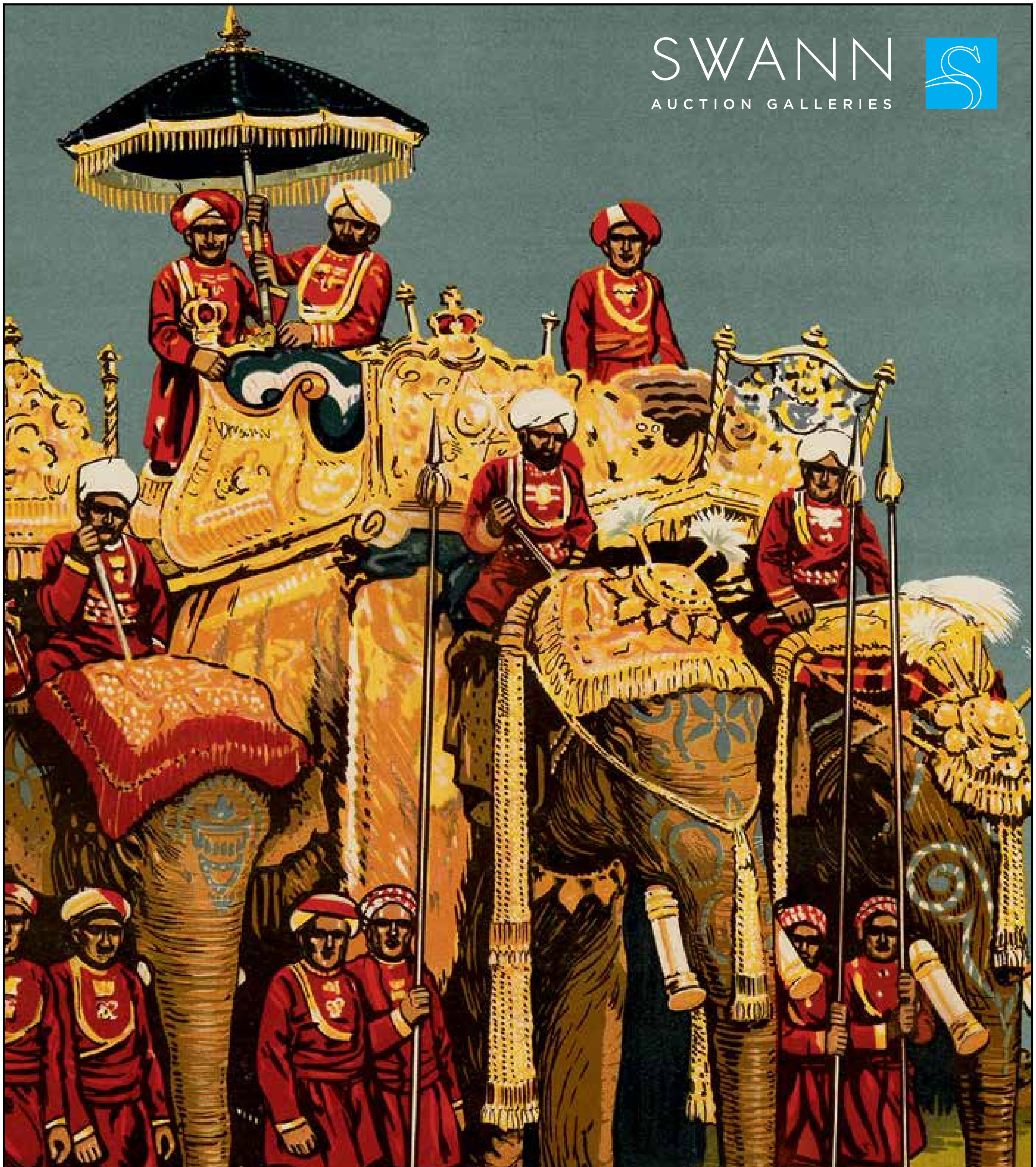
Milgam's extensive publishing (included is a listing of 525 books or articles) has been in the world of postal history. So it isn't surprising that the chapters on both Union and Confederate Civil War Patriotic Letter Paper and Songsheets are the most thoroughly described.

I was disappointed in Milgram's readings of the images themselves. For instance, on a *View of Buffalo* "is a printer's imprint to the left under the picture that is difficult to read" – yet the image shows quite clearly the mark of Buffalo engraver H. Tubesing. A Chicago image is described: "bears four different signatures of engravers, publishers and perhaps the artist" - when, to be more precise, the engraver, Childs & Co., was Shubal Davis Childs who retired in 1860; the job printers were Scott & Fulton of 191 Lake Street; and the book store that sold the stationery was Keen & Lee at 146 Lake Street (Lee died in 1857 and Joseph Keen continued); "Barry, del." does indicate he was the artist. Figure 1-70 shows a design by Helmuth Holtz, a German who joined the Union army in 1862, and in 1860 drew images of Matagorda – understood by the historic print community (but not by Milgram) to have been sent by the artist to be lithographed in Hamburg. Not all captions disappoint, and do include both what the eye can see and other information (the inclusion of the watermark on Figure 1-184 is a great detail) – I just wished for more.

Except for the repetitiveness of patriotic images, the range and detail of the delineation of 19th century reality is what impresses me the most. City plats and ship rigging, the architecture of buildings, signage and cemetery plots, what people wore and, over all, what they chose to accompany their words to friends, family, clients – it all is compelling and an important record not found anywhere else. Historian David Henkin would add that this proliferation of inducement to write letters (for, as Dr. Milgram points out, this stationery was not expensive to purchase at the time) joined lowered postal rates, and population dispersion due to the Gold Rush and the Civil War, in "postalizing" Americans. That is, turning us into letter writers.

This Magnus view of the Statue of Liberty dwarfing the city covers one whole side of the lettersheet plus part of another. Milgram notes that it is known to exist with all German text (and a large German population in a city seemed to be common among lettersheet views).

THE MAGIC COLLECTION OF
DAVID BALDWIN


SWANN
AUCTION GALLERIES