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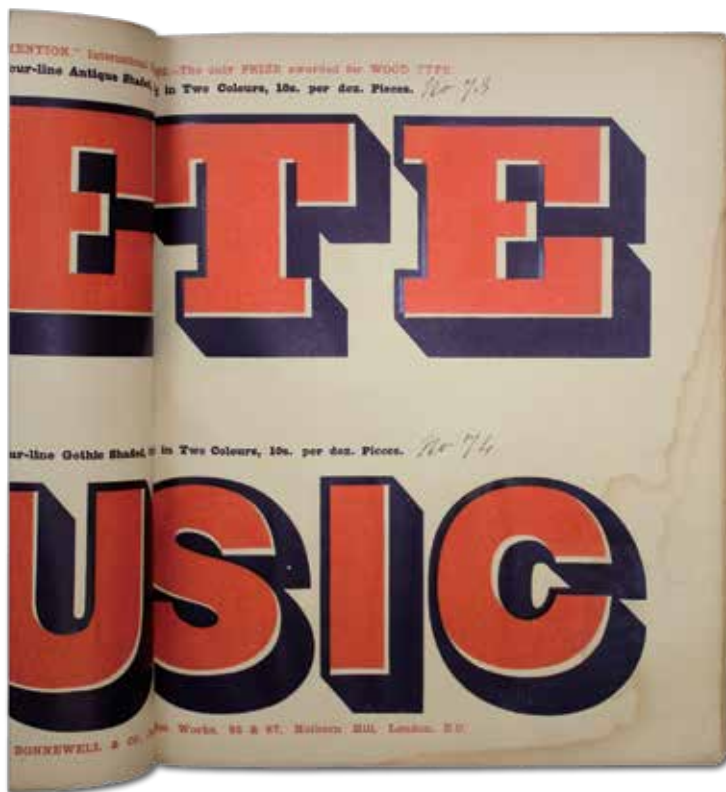
Artistry in Letterpress and Engraving

BY DAVID JURY

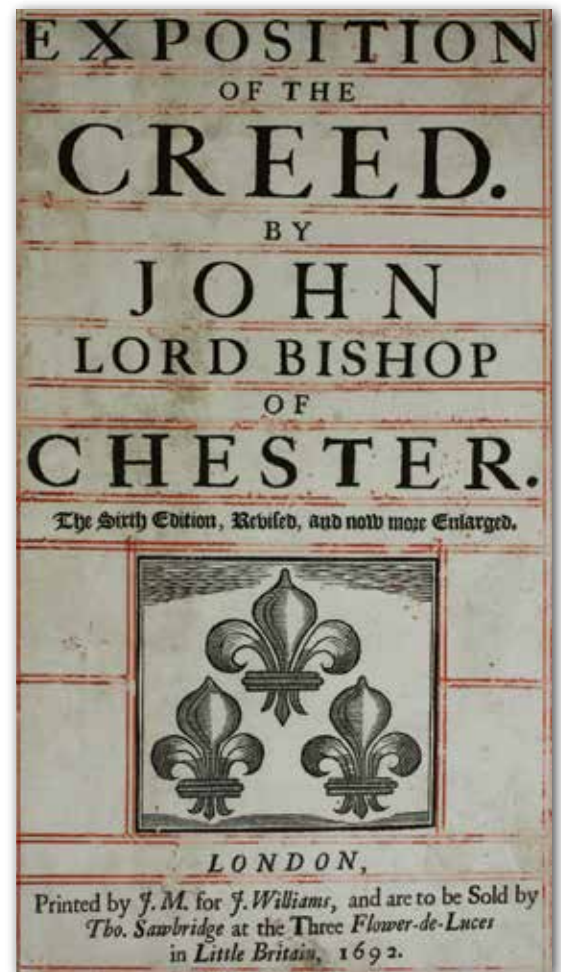
The ambition of any craftsman was to become a 'master' of his trade. However, the idea that craftsmanship might, at its best, result in something that others instinctively call 'art' has always remained the unspoken goal.

The 18th century jobbing letterpress printer

There is no denying that as an employer, the 18th century jobbing letterpress printer had an 'image problem.' He was something of a maverick; he resented and resisted the printers' guild and, later, the print unions interfering in the



Two-color wood type specimens, *Antique Shaded*, Bonnewell & Company, London, ca1865. The carefully-judged 'miss-aligned' printing of the red gives the word additional urgency by the suggestion of 'haste' in its production. It is inconceivable that the Bonnewell Company would have allowed a 'mistake' of this magnitude in their own catalogue – a suitable example of the tail (the jobbing printer) wagging the dog (the foundry)! Courtesy of David Wakefield.



Poster for a book. Two-color letterpress with engraving, London, 1692. Prior to the 19th century, books were often sold without board-covers, giving the title page a temporary function as the cover. It is also known that additional prints of title pages were made specifically to be used as posters. This poster appears to be an example of this practice, being a trimmed version of the book's title page. Courtesy of the Printing Collection, Department of Typography, University of Reading.

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The Ephemera Journal

The
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of America

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Deadlines: April 1, August 1,
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Dear Members and Friends:

Best wishes to everyone for a bountiful New Year filled with health, happiness, and of course, ephemera! Your ESA looks forward to many exciting events, and sincerely hopes you will join in our upcoming activities.

This first year of my presidency has been exceptional; two very successful programs kept us busy, and were immensely gratifying. In March, our premier event, Ephemera 33, the Conference and Fair, was celebrated in grand style. Attendees were rewarded with the pleasure of immersion in every aspect of ephemera, and the camaraderie of shared pleasures.

We enjoyed an extraordinary occasion in September, when we collaborated with The Library Company of Philadelphia, in presenting "Unmediated History: The Scholarly Study of 19th-Century Ephemera." Formidable speakers and an outstanding exhibition resulted in a polished event that reflected our organization as dignified and extremely capable; everyone glowed with the pride of our achievement. The associated tours capped two wonderful days, followed by a productive mid-year meeting of your Board. These mid-year events are always unforgettable, and a special one will take place in Washington, DC, next September 11-12, 2014. Please mark your calendar!

The dates, March 14-16, only weeks away, signal the highly anticipated *Ephemera 34*. Our annual symposium, featuring expert speakers, will be a significant presentation on the theme of *Food and Drink ~ Field to Table*. The range of culinary ephemera will be intellectually explored from past to present, and I am confident that our ever-widening audience will find it stimulating, innovative, and thoroughly enjoyable. The welcoming Cocktail Party, Awards Banquet, Auction, Exhibits, and Book Signings, which accented our enthusiastic program in March, will, of course, be repeated this year!

Dear to everyone, our stellar two-day Fair is the country's most prestigious ephemera resource, featuring the country's finest dealers, and providing a wealth of material, and great fun, for everyone. Spectacular merchandise attracts academics, collectors, dealers, students, and other inquiring minds; we encourage you to please bring inquisitive children, and guide them in developing their interest in ephemera.

The festive auction activities, chaired by our resident expert, George Fox, are designed for maximum participation; all proceeds will remain in our Treasury to fund our many projects and programs. Please view our website for images of all the lots, and participate in online bidding prior to the live event.

The year ahead will provide abundant opportunities to acquire, study, learn, collect, and enhance your experiences with all forms of paper treasures. We reach out to you for your ideas and assistance.

Sincerely,



Nancy Rosin, President

Speakers on the Fascinating Subjects of Ephemera

Event planners looking for experienced speakers on a variety of interesting and intriguing ephemera subjects will find an excellent roster of speakers available on the Society's website, www.ephemerasociety.org/resources/speakersbureau.html. On the same page is an application for being listed as a speaker.

JOIN THE SPEAKERS BUREAU

The Society invites members who enjoy speaking on ephemera subjects to join the Speakers Bureau and share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others.

Ephemera Inspires Artists



The conference co-sponsored by The Library Company of Philadelphia, “Unmediated History: The Scholarly study of 19th-Century Ephemera” was organized to accompany the major exhibit *Remnants of Everyday Life: History Ephemera in the Workplace, Street, and Home*, that showcased the wealth of The Library Company’s ephemera holdings. (We hope to be able to publish conference papers and exhibit essays in another venue.) Inspired by the event, the Philadelphia Cartoonist Society also presented a special exhibit curated by Concetta Barbera and Christian Patchell of The Library Company, using historical ephemera to inspire the new work of nine artists. Barbera, herself, contributed three commercial envelopes overprinted with the cartoon she called *Word Snatcher* after she saw the 1902 envelope, “Ask for

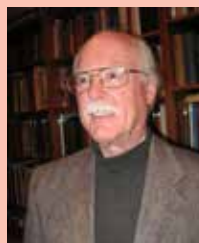
Bell Bros. Co.’s Sheep-Line Coats and Ulsters. Manufactured by Bell Bro’s Co. Dubuque, Ia.” (Gift of Helen Beitler). All artists find inspiration in daily life, and these nine found a wealth of inspiration in ephemera – which communicates through words and pictures, the chosen format for cartoonists. The image collaboration delightfully combined humor and nostalgia.



The Print Center also celebrated the Philadelphia ephemera convergence, with *Ephemeral Sprawl*, featuring artists such as Katie Grinnan (with her *Wall of Lists*) and Emmett Remsted, with a sculptural installation of cash register receipt rolls rescued from Giovanni’s Room bookstore in 1995. The exhibit presented an eclectic cultural and creative survey of the way printed ephemera has woven itself invisibly into our understanding of art and culture. One ‘text based work’ was *List of highly ephemeral objects that I’d like to possess*, 2013 by Ben Katchor – that included: “Cardboard package holding live turtle, Barnum & Bailey circus. Madison Square Garden, New York, c. 1957” and “Contents of 4th Avenue, Manhattan used books stores, May 1, 1939.” A particularly compelling installation was called *Paper Leaf Pile*, 2009 by Stephen Eichhorn, which was a dinner-plate size pile of paper-punch scrap.

Introducing our new Board Member

Glenn Mason has retired from directing the Oregon Historical Society as well as from projects such as the Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program but is now a dealer (partner in Cultural Images with his wife, Judith) in ephemera, vintage photography and fine and unusual books. A lifelong collector, he offers 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. He is a strong advocate of the use of ephemera by historians, and is proud that the institutions he directed are now known for their care and cataloging of ephemera and its accessibility to researchers. His 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.



In this issue...

As we look forward to an exciting conference program in March on the theme of food and drink, we honor last year’s event that brought art and ephemera together. David Jury was the keynote speaker and our lead article is based on his presentation – which looks at the artistry of letterpress printing and engraving. Dick Sheaff provides a portfolio of evidence that a particular image, based on a poem published at the very beginning of the Victorian era, had remarkable ‘sticking power’ in commercial art. Nancy Rosin’s Civil War Valentines hark back to our last issue, and show how both the amateur and professional artist were busy supplying soldiers with love tokens. Kate Greenway explores how ephemera can inspire a very personal art, as well as what she calls auto-ethnography, as part of her Ph.D. dissertation. Laura Verlaque reminds us, with the contents of Box 15 at the Pasadena historic Fenyes Mansion, that archives can change our understanding of art and architecture.

—Diane DeBlois, editor

way he ran his business or how he trained his apprentices. His premises, in which he typically employed three or fewer registered men, were often called ‘rat houses.’ He was accused of recruiting child labor, his equipment was generally old, and, in the opinion of guild ‘officials,’ poorly maintained and dangerous. This, they argued, was not an appropriate environment for an apprentice to learn his trade. In short, the jobbing printer was considered the ‘cowboy’ of the printing industry.

The lack of deference shown by the jobbing printer toward officialdom, and his flouting of their rules, was certainly a key reason for the jobbing printer’s poor standing within the wider printing fraternity. But another, equally important reason was the nature of their work. ‘Jobbing’ work was, essentially, anything other than the printing of books. Letterpress had been invented to enable the printing of books, although it is likely that from the very beginning, printing was also used to convey other information, the imminent publication of a new book, for instance.

The history of printing was, understandably, written by those associated with the printers and publishers of books. These histories celebrate the ‘art of the book’ as the maintenance of a standard established by the Renaissance printers before 1500. This standard was not only one of craft skill but of design. Because the training system was

one where the apprentice’s progress was entirely at the whim of the master, total subservience to maintaining traditional standards was essential to completing an apprenticeship successfully. As if to give emphasis to this, the print establishment used the jobbing printer as an example to demonstrate the moral and intellectual downfall of the printer who left or lost or never had the traditional, regulated security of guild-based standards.

It could be argued that the jobbing printer’s anarchic attitude was a necessary aspect of his character if he were to be successful in his field. The needs of his clients often had little to do with the predictable appearance and function of a book. More to the point, a client with a new competitor on his street required printed material that was sufficiently eye-catching to distinguish him from the competition; definitely not predictable, quiet nor unassuming. In other words, the jobbing printer had to find new ways to convey information; he had to be creative.

However, for the jobbing printer, creativity was extremely difficult to achieve before the 19th century. Not only his training, but also his type and equipment were allied to book production. Typefaces, for example, were of a ‘standard’ style (generally Dutch in origin) with no variation in weight, whilst sizes were rarely available beyond the equivalent of 72pt.



Composition room, 1930s. The men on the left are ‘imposing’ multiple pages by arranging and locking type into chases so that, when eventually printed and folded, the sheets appear in consecutive order. Courtesy of the Printing Collection, Department of Typography, University of Reading.



Engraver's studio, 1915, Bergamo, Italy. A striking feature of the engraver's studio is the redominance of visual reference material. The engraver generally enjoyed the kudos of being referred to as an artist, although his job was often to copy images and lettering provided by someone else. Courtesy of Tipoteca Italiana fondazione.

Another issue that affected the status of jobbing work was its purpose. The printer of books was the 'preserver of all other arts.' Books carry the thoughts of great thinkers, great writers. The jobbing printer, in contrast, dealt with the everyday, mundane needs of local businessmen and government officials. To make matters worse, the printed material these people needed might have a useful lifespan of just a few seconds, requiring no more than a glance before being considered to be redundant. The idea that print, in any form, could be disposable was anathema to the printer of books. Making objects that had a long and useful life, passed down from one generation to the next, had been crucial to the craftsman's status. The nature of what the jobbing printer was communicating was not only menial, but sometimes morally questionable – if not down-right dishonest. Modesty and honesty were integral to the Guild of Printers. Public outcry at the vulgarity of outlandish claims made by manufacturers and service providers in advertisements also implicated the printer. The jobbing printer's effort in making his client's message persuasive called into question his own integrity, while the necessity of creating printed material that attracted the eye was considered, not surprisingly, obtrusive, even offensive.

Nevertheless, as mass-production techniques enabled vast increases in manufacturing output, the purpose of

job printing became increasingly significant. For the enterprising letterpress jobbing printer, there were huge commercial opportunities which encouraged a change of status, if not within the printing fraternity itself then certainly out in the broader commercial world. Printing journals were launched specifically to cater for this new-found area of practice and, for the first time, the jobbing printer dared to believe that what he was doing not only served a useful, even essential purpose, but that it might also be 'Art.'

The 18th century jobbing engraver and printer

Engraving is a very different method of achieving a printed image to that of letterpress. Engraving involves intaglio, meaning that the ink is applied to the surface of the metal plate, which is then wiped clean leaving ink only in the incised (engraved) lines. Letterpress involves

relief printing, meaning the ink is applied to the uppermost surface of type or a cut block of wood or metal.

Printing from an engraved plate is a slow process compared to letterpress; about 300 impressions of a typical trade card could be made from an engraved plate in a working day. The letterpress printer could print approximately 150–170 letterpress printed cards per hour and many boasted of achieving almost twice as many in the same time. Naturally, an engraved print



Detail of an engraved copperplate, date unknown. The letterform is Tuscan styled with bifurcated serifs and a drop shadow. The ability to create such extravagant characters, and the capability to stretch or condense them at will, gave the engraver a huge advantage over the letterpress compositor whose letterforms came readymade in fixed sizes. Courtesy of the Printing Collection, Department of Typography, University of Reading.

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Trade card for Richard Nichols, a bookseller, stationer and binder, engraving, 18th century, Wakefield, UK. Richard Nichols's activities are demonstrated by figures reading (left) a cabinet of books (with the words 'Libraries Purchased') and a male figure working a printing press (bottom right, partly hidden by a pillar). Before the 19th century, the engraver generally depicted words as being part of the physical world: carved into something or here, onto something – rather than simply positioned next to something as the letterpress printer would do. Courtesy of the Printing Collection, Department of Typography, University of Reading.

was considerably more expensive than its letterpress equivalent. However, the technical freedoms proffered by the process meant that the engraver could offer a distinctive and more individual response to the more eccentric predilections of the customer. There was also the fact that the intaglio print clearly demonstrated the drawing and calligraphic skills of the engraver; sophisticated skills that naturally drew comparisons with the work of artists, and in so doing, garnered kudos for the owner of the card.

The engraver would produce a drawing before work on the plate began, and this would be shown to the customer who could request amendments ('make my name larger!') Such changes might even be made in the customer's presence. The drawing would then be transferred to the metal plate and cut. By contrast, the letterpress printer would show the customer a printed 'proof.' Drawing played no part in the letterpress printer's performance of his work. Early letterpress manuals described 'design' as an essentially intuitive process, the insinuation being that the necessity of a sketch demonstrated a lack of technical assuredness. When the customer returned with the proof the letterpress printer could not respond with anything like the same subtlety or flexibility as the engraver because he was limited to the sizes and styles of metal type he had in his printshop. And crucially, if a pictorial or graphical image was required, this would have to be ordered from an engraver.

In fact, the services provided by the engraver and the letterpress printer were often linked. Just as the letterpress printer could not produce his own images, so the engraver could not provide large amounts of text. As a result, collaborations were commonplace. During the last quarter

of the 18th century, it became increasingly likely that the engraving would be cut into a wood block – in relief format instead of intaglio – the potential of which had been demonstrated by the Englishman, Thomas Bewick. For the letterpress printer, the huge advantage of a woodblock was that it could be plane-leveled to the same height as metal type, enabling the block to be locked into position together with the metal type and relief-printed in one pass of the press. Wood was much cheaper, and also easier and quicker to cut, than metal, but more significantly, a huge amount of time was also saved in the printing. This, of course, also gave the letterpress printer control over the project as a whole.

It was during the 18th century that metal plate engraving arguably reached its zenith in regard to commercial job printing. It was a viable proposition at that time because labor was cheap and the required print-runs were small. However, as the 19th century approached, mechanized production was increasing which meant that the required print-runs were getting larger. The technical limitations of size and color also began to be a severe problem for the engraver. Meanwhile, wood-engraving effectually reduced the need for copperplate work.

Seeking recognition for artistry in letterpress

The letterpress printing process required eight or nine quite specialized activities, all requiring different levels of skill. The master printer (who had attained his position by demonstrating his mastery of them all) was famously protective of his 'black art.' But there were, essentially, just two distinct stages to letterpress printing. The first (bespoke) stage involved the compositor, who collected and assembled the individual letters to compose words



Poster for an auction, letterpress printed by Robert Dawson, Norwich, 1830s. Display typefaces changed the way posters worked and gave the compositor additional responsibilities. In an attempt to provide the poster with maximum impact, the compositor now acted as editor by reducing the size of extraneous copy and increasing the prominence of salient words. Eventually, words such as 'on' and 'at' would be considered extraneous. Courtesy of John Hall.

and sentences together with spacing material, knowing how these elements would appear when printed. This also involved adjusting the spacing between characters, words and lines to make the text easier to read and its appearance more harmonious. When complete, he secured this material with wedges into a metal frame so that it could be safely carried to the press-room where the second stage, the printing, took place. Unlike the engraver, the compositor never sought independence from the printing office.

Nevertheless, the status of the compositor began to change within the jobbing printing industry as the mass-production of goods caused fierce competition between suppliers of similar products and services. The printer was asked to provide something different, distinctive, a request which required inventive talents of his compositor. Such a demand was considerably eased by the appearance in 1815 of the London-based typesetter Vincent Figgins's *Specimen of Printing Types*. This landmark catalogue contained a range of typefaces designed specifically for the needs of the jobbing printer. Collectively called display faces, these fonts were heavier, larger – sometimes so large that only one character could be displayed on a page – quirky and eye-catching.

The changing position of the compositor, caused by these new demands, was something Oscar Harpel emphasised in his self-published book in 1870, *Harpel's*

Typograph or Book of Specimens, in Cincinnati. Unique for the time, this was more a design manual than a technical manual, and was devoted entirely to jobbing work. It contained numerous specimens, all described as genuine jobs, tipped-in or sewn-in, many credited to their various compositors, and all solutions to routine design problems faced daily by the jobbing printer. Referring to the compositor, Harpel explained, 'Such a [creative] spirit, if properly maintained, can only promote the interests of all concerned, and serve to elevate Printing still higher as a substantial and creative Art.'

In Harpel's view, the purpose of printed matter should have no influence on the quality of its design or printing. The aim of his book was to demonstrate that the everyday label, invitation or business card provided both compositor and printer with opportunities to achieve something unique by its design and beautiful in its printing: 'commercial success aligned with creative endeavor.' The assumption that the art of printing was restricted to worthy subjects, such as the book, was emphatically denied. Instead, Harpel insisted it was in the communication of ordinary



A printed page depicting a business card, submitted by John Franklin Earhart for the Printers' International Specimen Exchange, volume 1, 1880. In the author's view, this is the most remarkable contribution to the volume. The design of the card epitomizes those characteristics that would become closely associated with the artistic printing movement: letterpress printed, filled corners, strong diagonals, rules separating eight carefully mixed colors and a minimal number of words. The two typefaces used were both recent releases, Glyptic (1878) and Relievo Number 2 (1879) with its drop shadow, both by the Franklin Type Foundry. Equally important and ground-breaking for its time is the way Earhart displayed the design on the page, framed by a rough-edged field of neutral color. Courtesy of St. Bride Printing Library, London.

events, goods and services that the printer should excel, and, in so doing, contribute to the enrichment of urban life and, naturally, the success of his clients' businesses.

During the 1860s, John Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts movement had been gaining influence and the word 'art' became a popular adjunct of many craft-based enterprises. William Morris and his partners, Marshall and Faulkner, had set up their decorative arts firm in 1861 (together with Rossetti and others) in London, primarily designing furniture, wallpaper and embroideries. After restructuring and renaming the company Morris & Co. in 1875, Morris opened a London showroom two years later, followed, in 1881, by a showroom in New York. Many wishing to emulate Morris's ideals (to say nothing of his commercial success) included the word 'art' in the description of their own business. Trade directories list dozens of art

and jobbing printing in Britain and Europe. Leading practitioners and supporters of artistic printing in the United States, for example: Andreas Valette Haight, William James Kelly and John Franklin Earhart, called for a new, distinctly American spirit espousing unbridled possibilities. The compositor who could demonstrate the ability to reinvent or adapt standard materials to serve new purposes was, for the first time, applauded, in a very public manner¹ for his creative initiative. In contrast, the work of the book compositor, previously the elite within the trade, was now referred to as 'straight matter' because it involved no typographic embellishments, headline fitting or tabular work and, therefore, required fewer skills. A remarkable turnaround, although, not surprisingly, not accepted by the book printing fraternity in Britain and Europe.

When, at the turn of the century, art school-educated graduates began to establish design as a viable and quite separate activity from print, the demise of 'artistic printing' was rapid, its practitioner's mocked for their artistic aspirations by the rest of the printing industry. It was the compositor who felt it first and fell furthest.

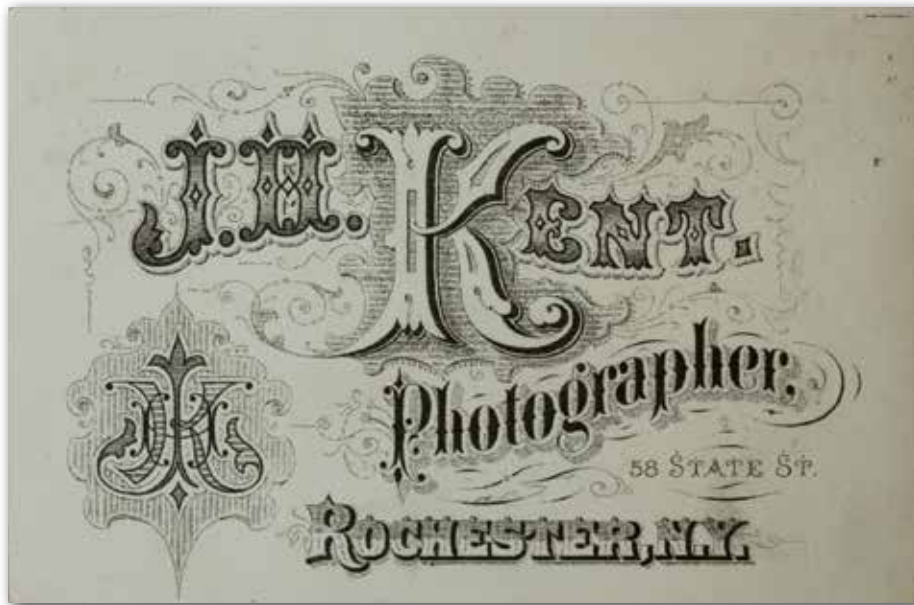
Seeking recognition for artistry in engraving

Since the 17th century, the bespoke engraving of a plate had been an entirely separate activity from the printing of a plate, the engraver working in his studio whilst the printer worked in his workshop. A consequence of this division was to aid the elevation of the engraver to 'artist,' confirmed by his acceptance to the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in France in

1655. Gaining membership of similar organizations in other countries took much longer.

In 1839, the invention of photography was widely reported. Three famous and influential illustrated journals were founded almost at the same time: *The Illustrated London News* (1842), *L'Illustration* (Paris, 1843) and *Illustrirte Zeitung* (Leipzig, 1843). The growth in journalistic illustration and the development of photography are closely connected, despite the fact that photographs themselves could not be commercially printed alongside text until the final decade of the century. Nevertheless, photography, almost from the start, had an enormous, and generally detrimental effect on the status of the engraver, regardless of his field of specialism.

Previously, it had been common practice for a magazine to send an 'artist-reporter' to make drawings in the midst



Engraved trade card for J. H. Kent, photographer, Rochester, New York, late 19th century. A celebration of 'fancy' lettering, demonstrating the engraver's remarkable technical dexterity. Although influenced by the 'artistic printing' of the letterpress printer, the engraver could always outdo his rivals when it came to flamboyance. However, being limited to a single color – almost always black – and small size, could not be overcome. Courtesy of Richard Sheaff.

furniture, metal and leather workers, and jobbing printers began calling themselves 'art', and their work 'artistic printing.'

The ideals expressed in Harpel's book had a resonance with those being espoused by Ruskin and Morris: that art should be at the service of everyday life. Such ideals brought new and exciting meaning to the jobbing printer. Many began calling themselves art printers and their work 'artistic printing'. The idea that printed material might be an art was widely discussed by artists, artisans and writers on both sides of the Atlantic, and in deed, it was in the United States that these concepts were most energetically promoted by a burgeoning, profoundly confident printing industry.

The American printing fraternity never had the same constraining cultural issues that separated book production

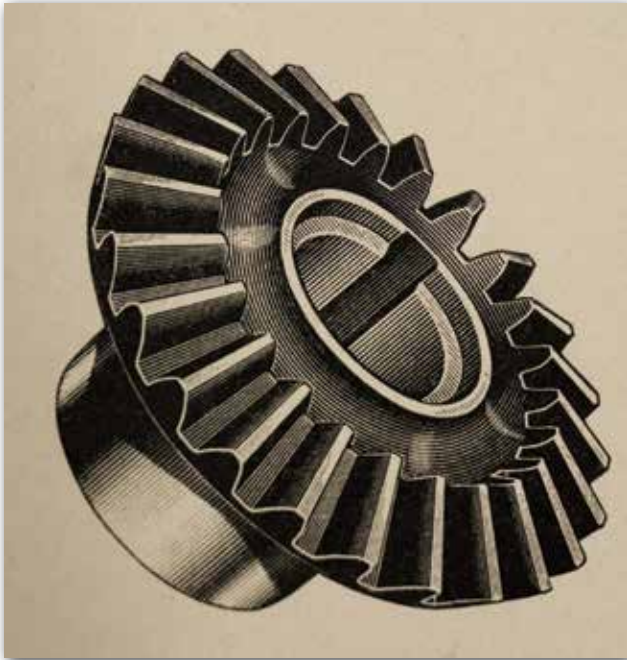


Photo-engraving, Gatchel & Manning Inc. Philadelphia, ca1914. Even when the photographic half-tone process was established as a commercial means of printing an image, the definition was poor. This was because the size of the dot had to be quite large and, since halftone blocks were expensive they tended to be small. The result was an image lacking in tonal range. It was for this reason that the engraver was employed, effectively editing the image to provide clarity. This was particularly necessary for catalogues and advertising material, where precise and accurate visual information and immediate recognition was required. Author's collection.

of, for example, military activities. These would be sent to the publishing house where an engraver would interpret the drawings on copper (or possibly, by now, steel) plates, essentially editing the incidents recorded by several drawings into a single engraving. The creation of an image that encapsulated, for example, the various dramas of a week-long siege, demanded imagination as well as remarkable technical dexterity.

However, photographers inevitably replaced artists in the reporting of events. In fact, *The Illustrated London News* established its reputation through its reporting of the Crimean War in which photographs by Robert Fenton, closely 'interpreted' through engravings, played a crucial role. For the engraver, copying a photograph was considered demeaning and they argued that the outcome lacked the drama provided by their own interpretation (cameras were large and heavy, glass photographic plates, prolonged optical exposures, all quite unsuitable for the recording of a fast-moving event). But both editors and the public alike were, over time, drawn to the new, dispassionate realism photography brought to a subject and the 'melodramatic' story-telling of the engraver was rather quickly rejected.

To make matters worse, the large format of journals such as *The Illustrated London News* meant that a full-page engraved image had to be made by the bolting together

of several wood blocks. An illustrator would then draw the image onto the conjoined blocks which were then unbolted and distributed to several engravers. The finished blocks would then be re-joined and one of the engravers would finish the job by ensuring all lines between blocks coincided. Rapid production and teamwork required engravers with an aptitude to fit into an established and elaborate division of labor. The very idea of synchronized wood engraving (despite remaining a breath-taking technical feat) could not be further away from those heady days of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture.

Postscript

At the famous Bauhaus in Weimar, the Manifesto and Programme (1919) explained that 'there will be no teachers or pupils in the Bauhaus but masters, journeymen, and apprentices.' Only four years later, the idea of a 'new guild of craftsmen' had been dropped to focus on the modern world of mechanization and mass-production. The 'masters' were now 'professors' and the 'apprentices' 'students' as the concept of the medieval-inspired ideology of the arts and crafts was abandoned in favor of 20th century modernism. The print trade, hampered by its own internally regulated training schemes, could not so easily abandon guild-based roots. So, the art of the jobbing printer would become the preserve of the art school educated commercial artist, that 'flashy little stylist'² so despised by a print industry but on whose imagination the printing trade was now so dependent. With thanks to Martin Andrews, Clive Chizlett, John Hall, and David Wakefield.

Endnotes

- 1 The work of the letterpress printer was displayed and critiqued in journals such as *American Model Printer* (1879) and, most significantly, in the *Printer's International Specimen Exchange* (1880 to 1898) established, collated and published in England by Andrew Tuer White (numbers 1 to 8) and by Robert Hilton (numbers 9 to 16).
- 2 'The printer had become the hod-carrier, and the designer, that flashy little stylist, the architect.' Beatrice Warde, 'The Crystal Goblet', *The Pencil Draws a Vicious Circle*, 1955.

David Jury is head of MA Art, Design, and the Book at Colchester Institute, UK. He designs, prints and publishes his own limited edition books as proprietor of the Fox Ash Press as well as writing and designing books for main stream publishers, including *Letterpress: The Allure of the Hand Made*. His most recent book, published by Thames and Hudson in 2012, is *Graphic Design Before Graphic Designers*. David gave the keynote address at the Ephemera 33 conference in 2013.



Civil War Valentines: *Artistry in Love and Strife*

BY NANCY ROSIN

Valentines of the Civil War were often dignified with vivid details of hardship, valor, and wrenching personal tenderness. Evoking a patriotic yet sentimental respect, they add a uniquely intimate element to any study of the conflict. Exploring these resources can be an intriguing adventure, for, in addition to generous opportunities for historic and philatelic research, they retain the gentle fingerprints of love to intensify the tactile pleasure of merely handling such artifacts. Collectors, representing a cross-section of ephemera and philately, covet this memorabilia, while Civil War enthusiasts appreciate the addition of a personal accent for their historic relics.

Sustaining Connections

Mailbags delivered Valentines directly to the field. Stationery was available at minimal cost to the soldiers or distributed free by compassionate volunteers who often helped soldiers craft their messages. Walt Whitman was a well-known visitor to hospitals in the Washington, D.C. area, where he regularly distributed large quantities of writing supplies. Sanitary Fairs (see the article “New York Acquires The Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation” in *The Ephemera Journal* Vol. 16 No. 1) held in several major cities offered visiting soldiers respite, refreshments, stationery supplies (probably including Valentines), and helpful female scribes.

The true course of love, undaunted by war, expressed in many forms...

Throughout history, love has been a constant, undaunted by the adversities of war. Most publishers capitalized on nationalistic motifs, with Valentine embellishments such as golden stars, American Eagles, flags, or patriotic ribbons to reference the War. Some companies, nevertheless, produced their traditionally joyful motifs as if to assure a degree of normalcy. Sentimental and romantic, caustic or satirical, commercial or handmade – all varieties of Valentines were shared during the Civil War. In spite of the country’s serious mood, comic valentines provided vital humorous diversion and were immensely popular. Publishers produced massive numbers of inexpensive products, and heavily advertised them in the newspapers. One offered “Soldiers’ Packets” which, for fifty cents, provided eleven valentines, certainly enough for any dashing cavalier.

While there were numerous artists and publishers, Charles Magnus was the major producer of decorative ballad sheets and notepaper, often advertised on the



Figure 1: Vinegar Valentine, a hand-colored wood engraving making fun of dodging the draft.

sheet at the cost of “fifty cents for ten.” A series of cigarette, or souvenir cards, by Winslow Homer and published by Louis Prang, included the poignant image titled, *Good Bye*. (While establishing his Boston factory, Prang fed the war enthusiasm by busily printing maps of Civil War battles by night, and selling them in the morning. Later recognized as a premier chromolithographer, his success had been aided by the financial security he attained during this early period.)

Artwork on many of the more traditional folded cards bears great similarity to Winslow Homer’s *Campaign Sketches*, which were also published by Louis Prang. Nine different unsigned Valentine designs have been

catalogued, as well as the famous “Romeo and Juliet” envelope (compare figures 6 and 8), whose soldier has that characteristic Homer appearance, all without attribution. The iconic envelope became one of the most famous Civil War images, and appeared in several fascinating incarnations. It is seen in various color inks as a mailing envelope and as an outer packet, but the timely transition from a Shakespearean Romeo to a Civil War soldier is truly dramatic. The cavalier’s plumed hat, however, was not erased from the original lithographic stone, and still lurks behind the more modern lady’s skirt!

Romantic designs such as the *Soldiers’ Farewell* and the *Soldiers’ Return* are reminiscent of the sailor motif in



Figure 21: A soldier’s stationery packet made by Mumford & Co. of Cincinnati – filled with letter paper, envelopes, a pencil, and a piece of jewelry.

England, which appeared throughout nineteenth-century maritime history, and are classic Valentine themes. The poor quality of the paper was a war constraint, so we are fortunate that any have survived. Occasionally, the images have been applied to fine paper, as in the lace Valentine sent to Maria French (figure 7). The rag paper stock, manufactured by the English firm of Mansell, and watermarked “Towgood 1855,” was obviously a more costly version. Companies in New York City and Worcester, Massachusetts, are known to have imported such elegant cameo-embossed paper, although it is rarely seen on Civil War designs.

The glorious image of Captain Robert Cross, amid a wreath of embossed flowers, satin, and silvered paper lace, is attributed to the famed workshop of Esther



Figures 3 and 4: A mechanical Valentine published by Charles Magnus – the Zouave in his colorful uniform likened to a dog apt to imbibe too much whiskey.



Figure 5: A carte-de-visite image of a soldier's farewell, by Winslow Homer, printed by Louis Prang 1864.

Howland, as it bears all of her characteristics. The attached studio card, from a photographer in Troy, New York, proudly records him before his departure, resplendent in his uniform. Records from the National Archives, in Washington, D.C., note that he fought at Bull Run and was hospitalized with injuries. This "ultimate valentine" was obviously treasured and saved. Research sadly revealed, however, that his wife, thinking that he had perished in the war, remarried (figure 9).

The most famous Valentine from the Civil War is known as *The Soldiers Tent*, which is symbolically draped with the American flag (figures 10 and 11). The tent flaps open to reveal the image of a soldier at his camp desk, writing to his beloved, faintly sketched behind him, as if in a dream-like vignette. In this example, sent February 14, 1863, we read, "Dear Sister, ... I must stop riteing (sic) for this time for I must tend to my gard (sic)...Amos Winner." This was sent from Camp Stoneman, near Meridian Hill, part of the extensive fortification network of the District of Columbia (and, coincidentally, near the collector's childhood home). In April 1863, this same Cavalry participated in the famous Stoneman's Raid, a plan to attack Confederate railroads near Richmond.

Made by hand, and heart...

Ribbon, sealing wax, and treasured locks of hair have been the essential elements in many magical creations, which, by necessity or tradition, were handmade. A New Year greeting, in the style of the traditional German *liebessbrief*, or love letter, written in both German and English, was crafted during a respite in the long Siege of Petersburg (Virginia), during 1864 and 1865. A seven-inch round of paper was folded into eight wedges, then embellished with knife-cut hearts and pistol-aiming soldiers. Tilted Army caps, sabers, and brass-buttoned uniforms add an incredible, almost bizarre, juxtaposition of love and war, combining the details of his name, company battalion, and best wishes for the coming year (figure 12).

A handmade marriage certificate, "Executed with a steel pen by Israel Brundage, Prompton, PA, 1863," bears the timely phrase, "Union Forever" – a play



Figure 6: Outer wrapper envelope for a packet of Valentines – the Romeo and Juliet design adapted for a soldier's farewell.

Figure 7 (below): Chromolithographed "Soldier's Farewell" on English paper manufactured by Mansell, watermarked "Towgood 1855" 4.5 x 6.75" enclosed in 'Romeo and Juliet' envelope 7 x 5" Figure 8 (right).

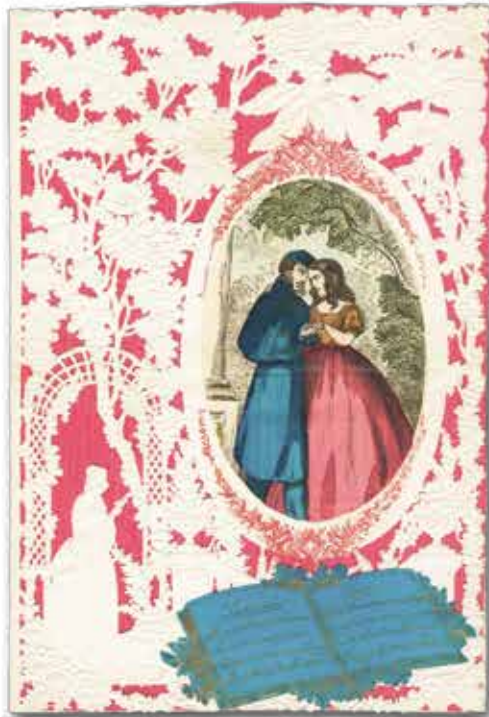


Figure 9: Studio photograph made of Robert Cross in Troy NY incorporated into silvered English cameo-embossed lace-paper, with added embossed flowers and satin. 7.5 x 9.25"



Figures 10 and 11: "The Soldier's Tent" with folded flaps closed and open. 7.5 x 9.25"

on words signifying both marital and martial circumstances. In this charming instance, the artist/calligrapher was also the Pastor who officiated at the marriage ceremony. The imagery incorporates the lyre, an attribute of Apollo, representing marital harmony, doves, a symbol of mating and fruitfulness, the bonds of joined hands, and the symbols representing the Holy Spirit. Created for Mary J. Ogden and Edward C. Carr, this event took place on Wednesday, November 25, 1863, a mere six days after Abraham Lincoln gave his Gettysburg Address, and one day before the date he set aside to be our first National Day of Thanksgiving.

It is impossible to look at any expression of love, bearing the image of the American flag, an

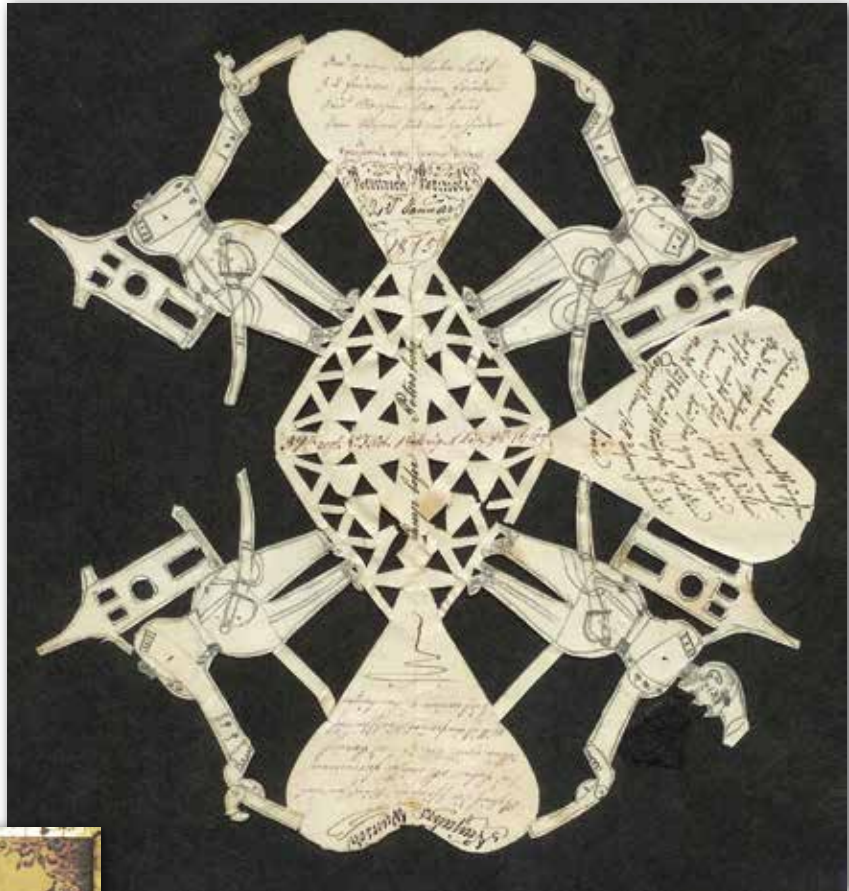


Figure 12: Handmade cutwork from the camp before Petersburg, New Year's 1865, in the manner of a Pennsylvania German Fraktur liebesbrief.



Figure 13: Calligraphic marriage certificate, executed in ink by the minister who officiated at the November 25, 1863 ceremony.

American Eagle, or crossed ribbons of red, white, and blue, without realizing that we were a country at war during the years 1860-1865. We cherish these heirlooms from people, so similar to us, who participated in the greatest upheaval our country has known. These mementos helped to unify and to lift morale, and should be recognized as veritable relics of our country's history; saving them is a tribute to love.

Nancy Rosin, has collected and chronicled Valentines and Expressions of Love for almost forty years. Nancy is President of The Ephemera Society of America, www.ephemerasociety.org. and is President of the National Valentine Collectors Association, www.valentinecollectors.com. She shares her passion through her many articles, and her website: www.VictorianTreasury.com. Feel free to contact her at NancyRosin@aol.com.



The Searchings of an Adopted Daughter

BY KATE GREENWAY

I don't merely collect or study ephemera: my life, my identity, is formed *of* ephemera. Using my own experience as part of the adoption triangle, I employ auto-ethnography, historical research, and art-making, combining these with the bits of ephemera I possess, clues which link me to a past I have never known, to investigate how adoption is and has been represented socially, artistically and culturally in the last half century. Specifically, I focus on the experience of being an adoptee who was part of the non-disclosure legal system in existence until the recent opening of records of Canada, and how that has shaped the lives of so many others who have searched, often unsuccessfully, for their birthmother, and their own identity.

A brief introduction as to the reason for using ephemera as both subject and object, research aid and artifact: the government, until the early 1920s, did not regulate adoption in Canada (similar to the United States). In 1921 Ontario passed the Adoption Act, introducing restrictive disclosure guidelines. Secrecy was enhanced in 1927, and records pertaining to adoption were to be sealed and kept under the jurisdiction of the Registrar General. Adopted persons' birth certificates were legally falsified, reflecting the societal mores of the period: that birthmothers could then be guaranteed privacy and the ability to continue on with their lives after such 'shame' and 'moral transgression,' and the adoptive child and family being able, without fear of interference, to sustain the fiction of "as if" creation, children matched to parents "as if" biologically conceived. Parents were told that only nurture, not genetics, would be a factor in the child's personality formation. As for the child, it was assumed that searching for his/her roots would never be an issue.

This status quo existed until the 1980s and increasing agitation from the adoption community in favour of open records, leading first to the opening of "non-identifying" information and later, in the 1990s, to adoptees able to obtain a copy of their Adoption Order, as well as a change in the Child Welfare Act so that adoptees or birthparents could use licensed search agencies. This is when I myself registered with the Adoption Disclosure Registry, an agency that was understaffed, underfunded and immediately overwhelmed with the volume of search requests, such that to *start* a search from date of registration was seven years or longer: in my case, ten years. Effective in 2009, Ontario adoption records were opened, and access to identifying information was allowed.¹ However, being privately adopted, the opening of records did little to augment the few precious scraps of personal history I possess. And the stroke of a pen does

little to alleviate the social stigma, shame and guilt for those who lived under the precepts of enforced secrecy.

Part of my process in this interdisciplinary project is to produce objects, actually using ephemera not only as a means of research but as a form of art, hoping to render less invisible my own adoptive relationships, and understandings of the birthmother I never knew, and the adoptive mother I lost early to cancer. I experiment with concepts of layering and collage in various mediums with documents, letters, inquiries, and photographs, to build a history of my searchings for self and (m)others; then printmaking reproductions of these ephemera onto glass, particularly fused and mosaic elements, all processes which involve shattering, piecing, and positioning fragments to join together, a process which seems to lend itself to the multiple identities and histories of which I am a product, and the piecemeal documents and artefacts to which I have access.

This raises the question of how to consider such an endeavour: how might we conceptualize such objects, or indeed, the very terms 'art' and 'ephemera'? Is it possible to overlap them? What might be the potential intersections or distinctions? I argue that there are many nuances to contemplate.

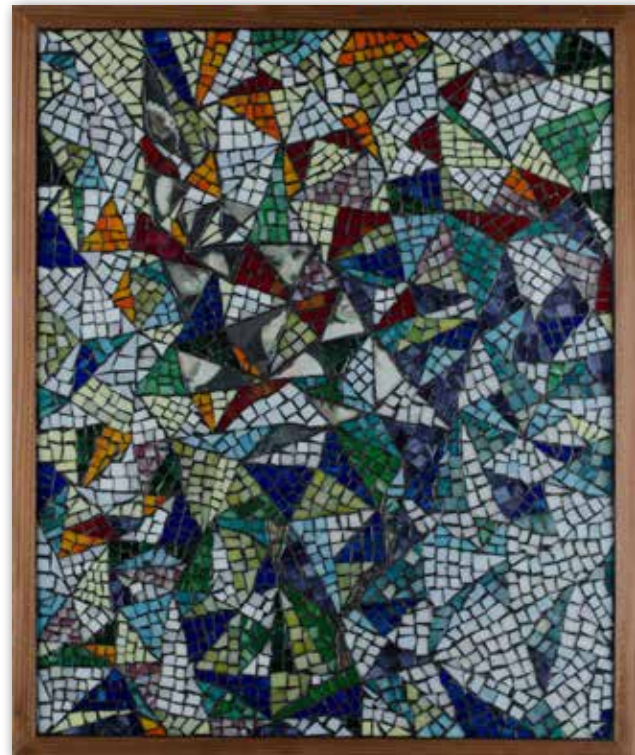


Figure 1: *Untitled (Glass Mosaic, Mixed Media) 2012 17" X 21"*

continued on page 16



Figure 2 Adoption Order

Theoretically, the production or expression of ‘art’ necessitates adherence to aesthetic principles of beauty or significance, wrought through imagination and skill, such that it will endure. Yet encounters with great works of art have no guarantee of producing aesthetic satisfaction. ‘Ephemera’ is considered, traditionally, of transitory significance, made for one time or limited use, (albeit some forms are arguably intended to be kept as mementoes when produced). But this does not mean that ephemera excludes aesthetics, or the deliberate conceptual processes employed in art making. According to John Dewey art is “constructed, cultural and social, not inherent in a work itself.”² Thus we can consider in many cases ephemera as art.

Consider what I will loosely label ephemera *about* art: posters, invitations, tickets and programs that document through text and/or image events that are themselves ephemeral or obscure. These contain not only valuable research information, but also can be themselves of aesthetic value, made in the style of an artist or artwork, or representative of a movement, time or place, fashioned according to then predominate principles of design, beauty and taste, or even the subversion of same.

Ephemeral art, another merging, can be thought of as primarily performative: a particular production or event -- artistic, theatrical, musical, dance -- where the creator will never again produce these specifics in conjunction with the viewer again, no matter if the performance is repeated. There is also more *deliberately* ephemeral art which deals conceptually with impermanence and the transitory, such body painting, chalk painting, sand and ice sculpture, environmental installation and site-specific participatory works, designed to be finite, intended to disintegrate, change or merge with their surroundings, or be interacted with and thus become something different at every viewing.³

There is also art *from* ephemera, such as created by author/collage artist Nick Bantock of the *Griffin and Sabine* series fame. He uses artifacts such as addressed envelopes or stamps to ground his art in a particular time and place, yet does not intend the work to be literal or illustrative. In his treatise urging artists to consider ephemera as a source for art he suggests, “What matters is not the historical fact, but the degree of emotion evoked by the resultant piece of paper.”⁴

I consider art making *from* ephemera is what I am doing, but also taking it a step further: the ephemera I use is personal, not collectable; is indicative of a condition and time, but not from a detached academic perspective; and is being employed for artistic purposes that go beyond aesthetics, but morph into educational and social statement. I aim to multiply and extend the individual experience of my search for identity to a study of the social processes at work in the construction of adoption practices. I attempt in this fusing to provide what John Dewey would posit is

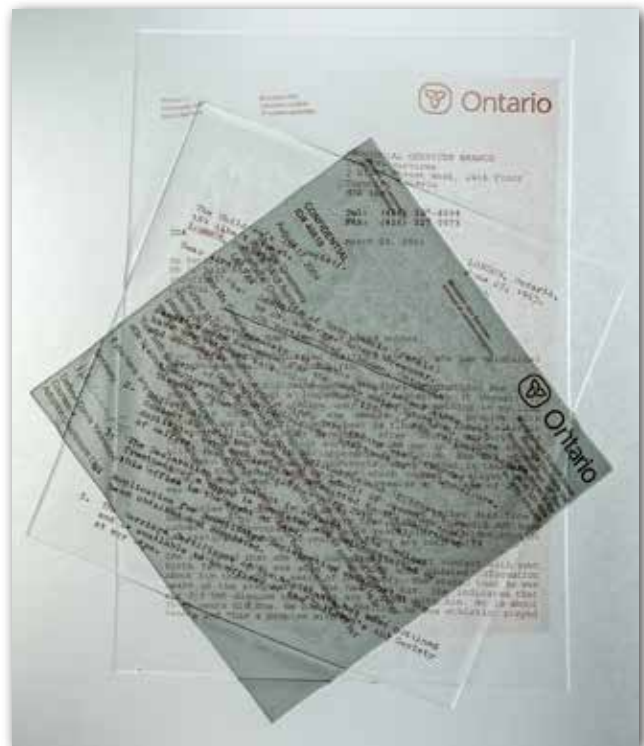


Figure 3 Palimpsest (Fused Glass, Photo Transfer) 2012 10" X 11"



Figure 4 Family Tree (fused glass, photo transfer, enamel) 2013 9" x 12"

the purpose of art, something that expands our horizons and provides a perspective on a realm of experiences,⁵ and which I will then call a case of art of ephemera.

Here then are just a few of the sources I have accrued through over twenty years of building a composite family history, sense of origin, and tenuous connection to the



Figure 5 Class Photo. Figure 6 M & K (Stained glass, photo transfer) 2013 8" x 12"

stranger who bore me, and how I am incorporating them into my exploration of adoption practices, and search and reunion issues.

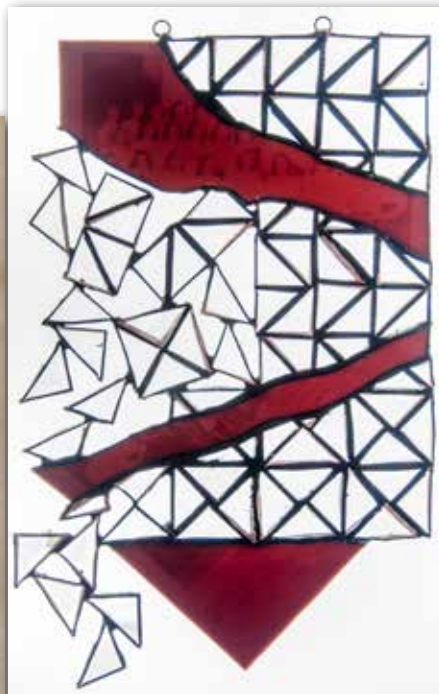
1. The term "adoption triangle," ostensibly denotes the relationship between birthmother, adoptive mother and adoptee, but is a symbol that completely lacks the complexity such a triad entails. Adoptive relationships cannot be reduced to such a one-dimensional and closed representation. I deliberately multiply the triangles, eschewing the simplicity of a single icon while alluding to other triangular possibilities: past, present, future; conception, birth, relinquishment; or adoption, search, reunion as just a few. There are also triangular fragments of one of the earliest photos I have of myself as a baby, in 1962 or 1963, with my adoptive mother. She is dressed in matching coat and hat, with white gloves, and carries a baby in what appears to be a white cap and christening gown, rendered in the black and white of the period. I gently colorize the mouths, the eyes and details as imagine they might have been but cannot know. I chose this photo as an artefact of cultural history, as it marks a kind of ritual reclaiming, in the naming and official ceremony of inclusion into a new faith and family.

2. My father agrees to the release of information contained in my private adoption files, as I am not allowed to search my own identity without permissions: parental, paternal, legal. The package returned to me many years before the government opens public files contains my original Adoption Order, a document most will only see in photocopy, if at all. The most surreal part is learning

my original name, trying to come to terms with an alternate form of reality. And to see my birthmother's signature, affirming that she was the *unmarried* mother – an appendix added in handwriting to the official writ as if a fact not to be forgotten or forgiven and signing away all rights to this child.

3. I receive a phone call, with no warning: "Contact has been made with your

birthmother." *She was overwhelmed with emotion. Not sure what to do. She asked for time to think. She had no choices at the time. She had no information on my adoptive circumstances and agreed to receive info. She is 73 years old. I am told of scant details, medical history, and invited*



to produce a letter for her consideration. In the wisdom of such gatekeepers of identity, no direct contact is allowed. I write a ten-page letter, include photos of my life, trying to introduce myself to a mother who never knew me, who is not certain she wishes to pursue a relationship, and is still filled with conflicted feelings. But: *Further to our conversation earlier today, I am returning your pictures and the non-identifying letter that you had written for your birth mother. Unfortunately your birth mother passed away prior to giving her consent to receive a letter from you or consenting to a reunion. Your birth mother did not provide the name of the father of her baby; therefore we are not able to conduct a search for your birth father.* I will find her obituary in the paper, the closest I come to her.

Figure 3 shows layers of legal documents of three key moments in my journey, falling as if let loose from the pages of a scrapbook or album. One is a 1963 lawyer's letter outlining the terms and conditions of my adoption. Superimposed, the letter from early 2004 stating that contact has been made with my birthmother. Lastly, a letter from the same agency, this shaded more darkly in grey, starkly declaring the death of my birthmother and the return of the unread introductory letter I sent, the abrupt closure of a major door to my unknown past. All these documents interact with each other, just as they have in my own life, distorted reflections of a not quite stable world, physical objects fused into associated stories.

Constructing a family tree is always problematic for adoptees. This piece collages the headers and footers of a selection of agency, legal, and local/provincial/federal

government documents concerning my search efforts, detached levels of bureaucracy holding and withholding information about my origins. Overlapping these is a jungle forest showing roots, branched and leaves that grow from many sources, and suggesting the complexity and density of a family tree I can never fully understand or access.

4. I meet three people to whom I am distantly related, actual blood relations and my only surviving family members, because of a "seeking lost family" piece I wrote for the local newspapers. Although my birthmother did not respond, an aunt pieced together the clues and one day decided to contact me. I carry with me my search file of documents and my layette, left to me as a gift from my birthmother, my only original physical connection to her: rough woollen grey and yellow fringed blanket, cream knit beribboned dress edged in delicate lace, handmade in Italy, with matching bonnet and booties. I am given some photographs of the woman who bore me, the first I have ever seen of my mother. I am then 43 years old.

In this piece I play with the photograph I received and the knowledge of my "other identity," the tension adoptees can feel between fragmentation and plurality. The adoption triangle is alluded to in the neat squares on the right side of the piece, but their arrangement also forms rows of letters, K for my current name, M for my original name, both vying for dominance. Torn fragments of the fraternity photo of my birthmother separate the two identities and cause the stability of both to begin to crumble.

4. I Googled my birthmother's name and found a cryptic listing of file box numbers of the McClelland and Stewart Publishing firm held by the William Ready Archives at McMaster University, in Hamilton, Ontario. Series C, "Editorial Department," is my focus.⁶ These are my mother's files, neat, though many have mysterious handwritten figures and columns appended. Letters are mimeographed in purple ink. Fading brown photocopies and press clippings, carbon paper and onionskin mix with a few notes on scrap. Some papers have red or blue check marks or strokes through them. Amendments on these pages are made in writing scrawled and difficult to read, a pharmacist's signature.

What I'm looking for is small I think. Her handwriting. Other than her signature, I have never seen it. Some indication of her expression, her turn of phrase, since I've never heard her voice. Any personal notes.

She works in promotions, then as Advertising Manager. In January 1962 she begins work on selling the book *Expectant Motherhood*, an ironic task since she will shortly herself become pregnant. She signs her letters "Yours very truly" or "Cheers." Files per 'Rankin' become J.A. Rankin and then (Miss) J. A. Rankin, an emerging sense of self and status. Yet all hand written notes



Figure 7 Studio Portrait (right), Figure 8 (above) 2 Mothers, 2 Daughters (glass and mixed media mosaic) 2013 18" x 24"

on the tops on these documents are addressed to “Steve”, a nickname clearly used daily. In ordering production glossies of authors she writes ‘soonest’ or ‘rush rush,’ as if always behind, always under pressure, always not quite finishing in time, dependent on others to facilitate her work. There is a congratulatory note on promotion to editor of trade books in 1965 and some book reviews of A. A. Milne and Farley Mowat, authors I know and love.

This work explores my double identity and double parenthood. At the centre is a formal studio portrait of my (adoptive) mother and self, circa 1963, ‘touched up’ in the practice

of the period, but this does not tell the whole story. I complicate the ‘presented’ information through adding in fragments of both mothers’ signatures and handwriting



Figure 9 Yearbook , Figure 10 She (Fused glass, photo transfer) 2013 8" x 12"

taken from letters and publishing files, along with clips of legal documents and keywords about my story. Though there appears to be a ‘single story,’ about the mother and baby, I hint at a larger truth. The multiple names attributed to the same people are another way of highlighting this. The pieces of mirror are chosen, both an indication that physical familial connections are not reflected back to adoptees, and to allow the viewer to see himself or herself in this situation, and think more deeply about it.

5. I contact ‘the old girls’ society at the tony private school I learn my birthmother attended, looking for records that might remain. Two photocopied sheets emerge. My mother was a poet, if only amateurish and earnest, published each year in the yearbook. The years 1943-45 are reflected in her patriotism and sentimentality.

6. I write to some of the names listed as colleagues or editorial clients in the McClelland and Stewart firm, and receive several replies, despite the extremely personal nature of my questions, the high profile of some of the authors, and the time elapsed, since most of her contemporaries would be in their eighties. A few scant details of job proficiency, attitude, likes and aptitude emerge, some conflicting, some corroborating, mostly anecdotal.

In this piece I play with collaging the physical and verbal evidence of my birthmother’s personality, constructing a fantasy of who she was through others’ eyes. While some images are literal, or artefactual, some are meant to suggest the nature of ephemera itself, and the ephemeral contact I had with my birthmother, as represented in the mayfly wings, or the ocean wave, as evoked by the shells. The shells also connect with my birthmother’s supposed love of the sea, and the spiral or mandala shape evokes cycles of time and life, and a kind of spiritual journey.



This is just a sample of my work which is ongoing. I will continue both my own personal investigations and reflections on the secrecy that once surrounded adoption, and the resultant trauma, as well as trying to contextualize it for others. Through experimentation combining ephemera with innovative historio-cultural methodology, art making, and the directness of my experience, I hope to bring an understanding of the ways ephemera can contribute not only to a knowledge of our past, but also to our collective humanity, as we think about the future.

Endnotes

- 1 “Ontario Adoption Reform History” (ParentFinders) and Anne Patterson “Adoption in Ontario: A Brief History” (GenWeb).
- 2 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (1934). New York: The Berkeley Publishing Group, 2005, Chapter 1.
- 3 See G. Augustine Lynas, Christo and Jeanne Claude, Jan Fabre, Andy Goldsworthy, Jessica Witte and Julian Beaver among others.
- 4 Nick Bantock, *Urgent 2nd Class: Creating Curious Collage, Dubious Documents, and Other Art from Ephemera* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004).
- 5 John Dewey.
- 6 Holdings Overview, McClelland and Stewart Fonds, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

Kate Greenway is Head of Drama at Holy Trinity School in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. This work is part of her dissertation project for a Ph.D. in Education from York University, Toronto, Canada.



Excelsior!

BY RICHARD DANA SHEAFF

At three o'clock in the morning of September 22, 1841, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow finished his nine-verse poem, *EXCELSIOR*. He had noticed that the word was featured in the New York state seal (as it had been since 1778), and for whatever reason was inspired to write the poem. "EXCELSIOR" went on to become immensely popular and was the beginning of innumerable cultural ripples that continue to this day.

The resulting hubbub is in many ways difficult to explain: a seemingly somewhat pointless tale about a youth carrying a banner bearing the word EXCELSIOR through an alpine village in winter, before marching up into the mountains to his death. Despite the efforts of both a village elder and a young maiden to dissuade him, he insisted on proceeding up into the frozen wilds; the only word he uttered to them was "EXCELSIOR." The next day, a St. Bernard dispatched by local monks found his lifeless body "half-buried in the snow . . . still grasping . . . that banner."



1864 Internal Revenue stamp for a match company in Baltimore



Cover illustration by Alice and F. Corbyn Price for an 1890 edition of Longfellow's poem.

Each of the poem's nine verses ended with the word "EXCELSIOR!" and this repetition seemed to have caught the public eye. *Excelsior* comes from the Latin *excellere*, "to rise, to surpass." *Excelsior* was the adjectival

form, meaning "higher" or "superior." Over the past 170+ years, it has generally been used to mean "Onward and Upward!"

Apparently the American public took the poem and the phrase to mean that each person (and the American nation as a whole) should forge ahead undeterred, ever onward and upward, never allowing anything to interfere with its destiny. This thinking applied to the push westward across the American frontier, as well as to the international policy of "Manifest Destiny," beginning with war against Mexico.

Walt Whitman was inspired to write a subsequent piece entitled "Excelsior" which urged readers to be positive, realize their potential, be unrestricted, move ever upward.

The universality of "Excelsior" in American culture right up to the present



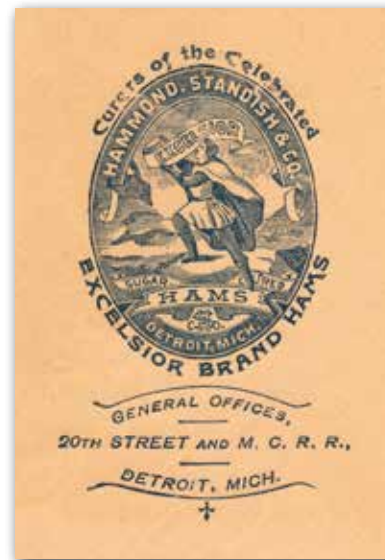
Cover illustration for a vocal duet by John Blockley, ca.1850.



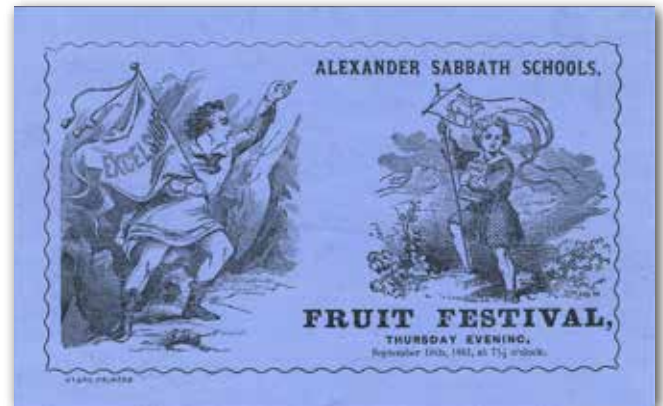
Trade card for the Advance Thresher Co. (founded in Battle Creek in 1881), The Henderson-Ackert Lith. Co. of Cincinnati.



Carte-de-visite back advertising for Charles A. Saylor (1838-1921), photographer in Reading PA.



1880s Hammond, Standish & Co. logo (formed 1872; built first skyscraper in Detroit 1890).



1861 ticket for a Sunday School festival, printed by "Evans"



Advertising envelope, 1890s, for a trunk maker in St. Louis MO



Above: 1905, Manhattan Shoe Company image from a letterhead.



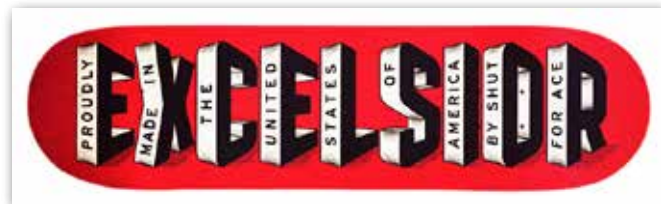
Right: 1880s trade card for a metal polish, Bufford chromolithograph.



Sunday School card for the German Church in Turners Falls MA.



Chromolithographed Christmas card 1890s.



Trademark for Shut Skateboards, 2013.

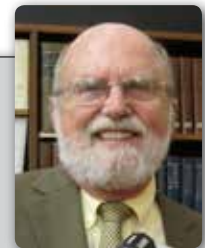


Billhead for a lubricating oil company in Dayton OH, used 1879.

day is simply amazing, with thousands of examples to be found. Prose and poetry pieces titled “Excelsior” were subsequently written by Alexandru Macedonski and P. G. Wodehouse. Longfellow’s poem was put to music by several composers, perhaps the best-known being that by Michael William Balfe. The word still appears on the New York state seal, and became the catchphrase of several folks, including cartoonist Stan Lee, legendary Dartmouth professor Herb West, radio personalities Mark Scott and Jean Shepherd, and Al Gore’s character in *South Park*. A *Star Trek* starship bore the name, as did a famous chess problem by Sam Loyd, and thousands of companies and products. Motorcycles, European football clubs, baseball teams, an insurance company, a French newspaper, a famous large diamond, mineral mines, newspapers, farming equipment, clothes wringers, restaurants, schools and colleges, automobiles, hotels, a television network, cities and towns worldwide, ships, Masonic lodges, a book publisher, a brass band, towns, a Civil War Union brigade, a printing press, fire

hose companies, a recording company, a sky-diving project, a race horse, a European ash tree, a British tank, a Microsoft spreadsheet program, a skateboard . . . all “Excelsior.” The list seems endless. There is even a satirical poem by Bullwinkle J. Moose. As an aside, early wood-shaving packing material also became known as excelsior.

There is a wealth of vintage ephemera bearing the “EXCELSIOR” motif, usually an image of a youth with a banner reading “EXCELSIOR” forging ahead uphill. Sometimes the name of the company or its product is written on the banner, rather than the word “EXCELSIOR,” but the reference is clear. Countless other companies and products took the name Excelsior without adopting the youth-and-banner graphic motif.



Dick Sheaff is a retired graphic and communications designer, who designed or art-directed over 500 U.S. postage stamps. Dick has served several terms on the Ephemera Society’s board of directors, collects many sorts of ephemera, researches various subjects and writes frequent articles, with a particular interest in design and typography. He also maintains an ephemera-related, non-commercial website (www.sheaff-ephemera.com).

The Secrets of Box 15

Uncovering the History of Fenyes Mansion

BY LAURA VERLAQUE

Out of a vast archival collection, careful study of the ephemera contained in a single box is beginning to shed new light on the decorative history of one of the last remaining historic mansions on Orange Grove Avenue in Pasadena, California. Known as “Millionaire’s Row” at the start of the 20th century, only Gamble House, Wrigley Mansion (now the headquarters of the Tournament of Roses), and Fenyes Mansion remain.

Fenyes Mansion, operated by Pasadena Museum of History, was built in 1906 by Eva Scott Fenyes (1849-1930). Eva and her heirs lived in Pasadena for the next seventy years, and their history is intertwined with the growth of the city. In 1970, Eva’s daughter and granddaughter donated their ancestral mansion to the Museum to open as a historic house museum. In 2010, grant-funded staff completed a multi-year project to catalog and process the family papers, which had been stored in desks and cubbyholes throughout the Mansion. These papers, known as the Fenyes-Curtin-Paloheimo Papers, now occupy over 219 archival boxes and contain a treasure-trove of ephemera.

The recent availability of the family papers coincided with a multi-year closure of Fenyes Mansion to undergo restoration. During

that time, staff and volunteers began to look closely at the family’s archival papers to better understand Eva’s original plans, both exterior and interior, for the Mansion. Of particular interest was Box 15, which contains billheads, business cards, correspondence,

H. F. HUBER & CO.			
1042 FIFTH AVENUE			
NEW YORK			
Sold to Mrs. Eva S. Fenyes, Pasadena, Cal.			
Table purchased from T. A. J. Skoda for Reception room,		500	00
Chairs,		375	00
Furniture for Dining-room from Tiffany Studios-			
Carved oak serving table 6' long,		120	00
Small oak side table,		50	00
Carved oak extension table, 4'-0" x 10'		100	00
Six (6) oak side chairs, at \$25.00		150	00
Two (2) arm chairs, at \$42.00		84	00
Small Terra cotta jar,		3	00
Goods purchased from H. F. Huber & Co.,		150	00
Eight (8) chair seats to be made in hand-tooled illuminated leather as per design shown and as per patterns furnished us by Tiffany Studios, at \$9.00		72	00
		1000	00

Figure 2: Invoice from H.F. Huber & Co. to Eva Scott Fenyes, identifying Tiffany Studios dining room furniture. December 3, 1906. (Courtesy Pasadena Museum of History Archives, FCP.15.8)



Figure 1: Fenyes Mansion, garden façade about 1915. Courtesy Pasadena Museum of History Archives (PHS2-2)

sketches and photographs related to the building of Fenyes Mansion in 1906. Research in the box by project archivist Julie Stires indicates that the interpretation of the Mansion had drifted far from Mrs. Fenyes’ original design and use of the space.

Independently wealthy, well-educated and well-traveled, Eva Fenyes moved to Pasadena in 1896 with her second husband, Hungarian nobleman Dr. Adalbert Fenyes (1863-1937). They first lived in a lavish 30-plus room Algerian-style mansion on South Orange Grove Avenue. By 1903, due to her declining health, Eva made the decision to down-

continued on page 24

size to a more modest 21-room mansion. Eva worked closely with her architect, Robert Farquhar, on the design of the house. She was involved in details large and small, including the design of the attic spaces, their adequacy for proper air circulation and practical access to water pipes and electrical conduits.

Box 15 also yielded valuable information about the original interior of the Mansion. For years, the Museum's docents assumed that Eva acquired the collection of eclectic antiques that furnish the interior over her many decades of world travel. However, the billheads in Box 15 indicate that the majority of the furnishings in the entrance and reception halls were purchased during a single, whirlwind shopping trip in New York City in 1906. Eva worked closely with a New York-based interior designer, Theodore Schumacher of H.F. Huber & Co., to select furniture, wall and floor coverings, and lighting fixtures for her house. Schumacher acted as an agent for Eva, liaising with other East Coast-based furnishings dealers and manufacturers, such as Tiffany Studios, Chadwick & Co., J.B. McCoy, and Johnson & Faulkner. He advised her frankly about aesthetic choices regarding the colors, materials and quality of furnishings. He arranged the shipment of all of her furnishings to the West Coast and paid her bills. The correspondence provides a remarkable source to extrapolate the original look of Eva's mansion.

Another popular story in the Museum's spoken narrative about the Mansion previously held that the matching suite of oak dining room furniture was carved by a Southern Californian craftsman. Receipts in Box 15 told a different story. The suite, consisting of a ten-foot dining table, a serving table, a side table and eight chairs, was purchased from Tiffany Studios. The original leather seats were hand-tooled and illuminated by Huber & Co. craftsmen to Tiffany's designs.

The project of sifting through the documents in Box 15 to further the Museum's understanding of the Mansion's turn-of-the-century architectural design and interior decoration is still underway. The results have already been used to amend the spoken and written narrative about the Mansion, and restore the interior furnishings to their original layout. Careful examination of ephemera from the Fenyes-Curtin-Paloheimo Collection will continue to provide a new and deeper understanding of how the collection was amassed within the context of Mrs. Fenyes' preferences, the culture of the time, and the design and decoration tastes of the era.

Laura Verlaque, is Director of Collections, Pasadena Museum of History, in Pasadena, California. An Ephemera Society regional tour will visit the Fenyes Mansion and the museum on February 5, 2014.

Interesting Books

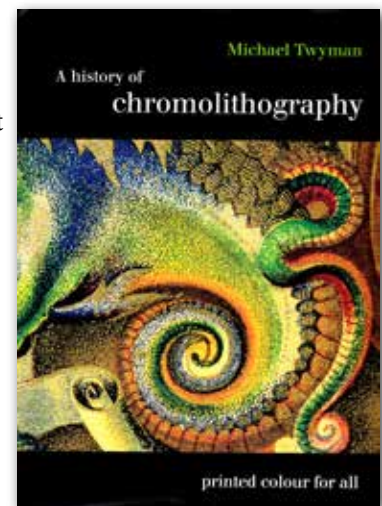
Two large books – both in girth and poundage – have recently appeared that are the *ne plus ultra* of their respective subjects. The most important to ephemerists comes from Michael Twyman, the University of Reading Emeritus Professor of Typography & Graphic Communication who, in 2000, finished the magisterial *Encyclopedia of Ephemera* begun by Maurice Rickards, founder of The Ephemera Society (in Great Britain 1975).

A History of Chromolithography by Michael Twyman, The British Library & Oak Knoll Books 2013, 9 x 12, 728 pages, 600 illustrations in color, hardbound, dust jacket. List price \$130.

Twyman acknowledges that there are a great many excellent books already published about chromolithography (among them Jay T. Last's indispensable reference on chromolithographers, and Sally Pierce's work on Boston lithographers) but his desire is to place the process in the broadest context: the widest range of examples (from fine art illustration to tradecards), the longest scope in terms of years, and a global perspective. The book gives particular attention to the movement of artists, printers, equipment, materials, products and ideas across national boundaries. Twyman also draws on more than the chromolithographed examples, using manuals, journals, correspondence, preparatory drawings, proofs, and interviews with people in the trade.

Part One is an illustrated history from about 1818 to 1970, under headings: Precursors; First steps; Tinted lithography; The Colour Revolution; Early publications; Pictures in colour; A Process in transition; Mass markets and masterworks; Decline and reinvention; Competition: hand colouring, chromotypography, and photomechanical printing. Most of the illustrated objects are of European origin – many from The British Library who published the book – a great advantage, and one enhanced by Twyman's experience teaching courses at the Musée de l'Imprimerie in Lyons.

Part Two on 'The lithographic trade' is organized under: Growth and regulation (the comparison of the trade's development in the United States with that in Europe is particularly useful); The chromolithographic artists; The print-



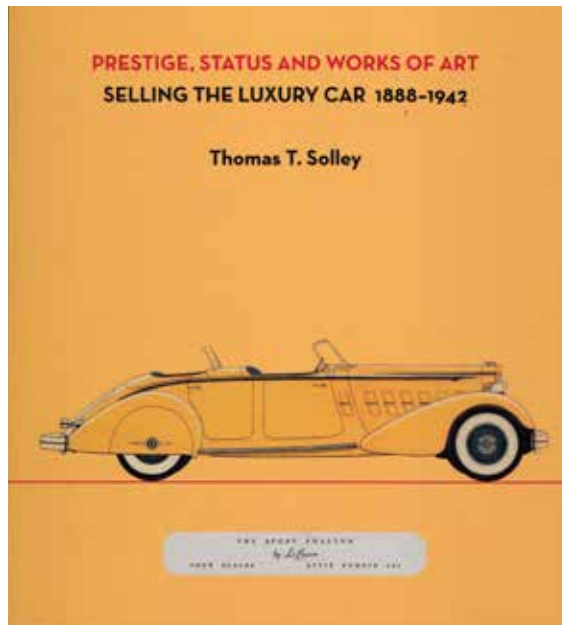
ers; Apprenticeship and training; The workplace; The trade's own publicity (Twyman's use of U.S. archives is particularly evident in this second part).

Part Three, 'How a chromolithograph was made', begins with the caveat that not every chromolithographic process was alike, and "some of the more arcane practices of chromolithographers will probably remain forever beyond our full understanding." Nevertheless, Twyman takes us From stone to plate, and From hand-press to powered machine. He then describes Mark-making for the hand-press, Mark-making for machine printing, Registration and registration marks, Paper stretch, Inks and pigments. A chapter on Visuals and the visualizer puts an artist firmly in the most important role (a chromiste in French) and takes him through The key-line drawing, The number and sequence of workings, Progressives and other proofs, and then Multiplying the image and changing its size, followed by Special processes.

Oak Knoll, who represents the book in the U.S., sold all the copies brought to the Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair on opening night – no surprise, as this reference will have broad appeal in the whole spectrum of art collecting.

Chromolithography and art came together very strongly in the Golden Age of selling luxury cars – and Thomas Solley (1924-2006), an architect and for many years Director of the Indiana University Art Museum, built a very large research collection of such automobile sales catalogs. The collection was donated to the Lilly Library on his death, but this handsome volume continued in production.

Prestige, Status and Works of Art: Selling the Luxury Car 1888-1942 by Thomas T. Solley, Racemaker Press 2013, 10 x 11, 430 pages, 53 color plates, over 1500 other illustrations in color and b/w, cloth, boxed limited edition with a set of 10 plates. List



price \$150 (standard edition, case bound, on archival paper \$100.)

The book identifies and catalogs all the early luxury car promotions, using not just his own collection but also others worldwide. He also wishes to put these objects in context: how did the literature reflect both the evolution of the automobile and the changing times; when, exactly, did the automobile become a status symbol and for whom; does the literature reflect social and economic reality/emotions; did it anticipate or shape consumer taste or did it merely respond to popular demand.

It is easy to see why automobile advertising posters from this period have been commanding such impressive prices at auction. The combination of the sculptural forms of the car with the idealized settings rendered by artists, often anonymous but at the cutting edge of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, is heady stuff.

Colin Warner, Australia's only official Ephemera Librarian (at the State Library of New South Wales) is also an artist, and designed the cover art for

a little pamphlet that explores the concept of ephemera from as many different angles as possible.

On Ephemera by Colin Warner, number 51 of a limited edition of 100 produced May 2011 at the Blackdown Press in Sydney, Australia, for private circulation to friends and supporters of the Brandywine Archive project by J. Wegner, PO Box 419, Eastwood NSW 2122, Australia. 12 leaves, sewn into card cover, tissue dustcover.

Warner says many wise things about ephemera but, for this issue focused on the intersection with art, we'll quote just this:

"A powerful sense of the creative energy to which ephemera testifies is a major realization in its study. Not only the energy directly involved in the design and printing of ephemera, but the energy which emanates from every conceivable avenue of human endeavour represented by ephemera. It is this effort that drives human history, day after day, and generates the constant supply of ephemera. In human society, as in nature, ephemera manifests most clearly the life force that animates the entire living eco-system."



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55911 Gratiot Avenue
Chesterfield, MI 48051

Sally Brazil

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Thurston H. Briggs

209 South Ramsey Street
Manchester, TN 37355

Kerry L. Bryan

118 South 21st St., Apt 1012
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Heather Buechler

Columbia College Chicago
4429 N Winchester Ave. #1B
Chicago, IL 60640

Honor Bulkley

PO Box 597006
San Francisco, CA 94159-7006

Sarah Bury

Cobweb Hotel Vintage
11859 Abercorn Court
Reston, VA 20191

Michael Clark

130 Horseshoe Hill Road
Pound Ridge, NY 10576

Talia Coutin

University of Delaware
1355 Ridge Ave, #2
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Molly Dotson

Yale University
P.O. Box 208318
New Haven, CT 06520-8318

Cole Ferry

W.C. Ferry and Associates
910 West End Ave. 9E
New York, NY 10025

Paul Franklin

*Bonanza & Borrasca Western Ameri-
cana*
124 West Jeffrey Pine Road
Reno, NV 89511

Dan Furtak

3543 S. Ferguson Ave.
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Joe Gourd

27 W 058 Fleming Drive
Winfield, IL 60190

Edward Grabowski

111 Prospect Street, 4C
Westfield, NJ 07090-4074

Frank Haddleton

P.O. Box 64649
Burlington, VT 05406

Darryl Hogan

7 Prospect Street
Clinton, NY 13323

Lorrie Jagiello

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Carol Johnson

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Charles Robinson

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Krystle Satrum

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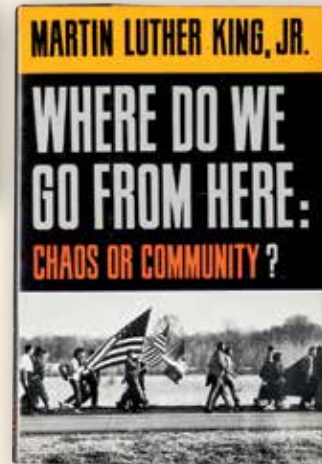
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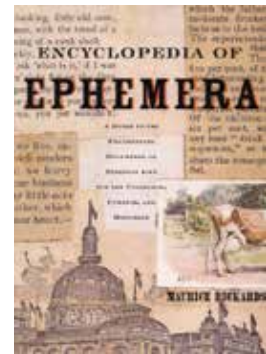
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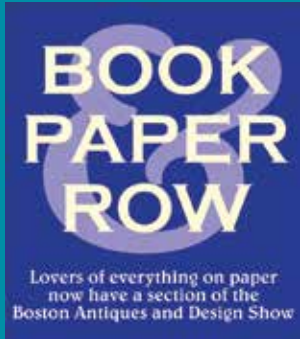
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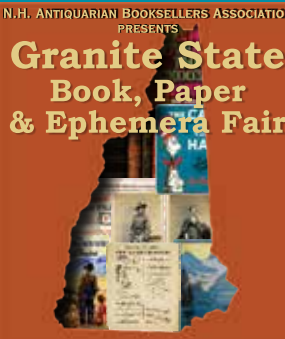


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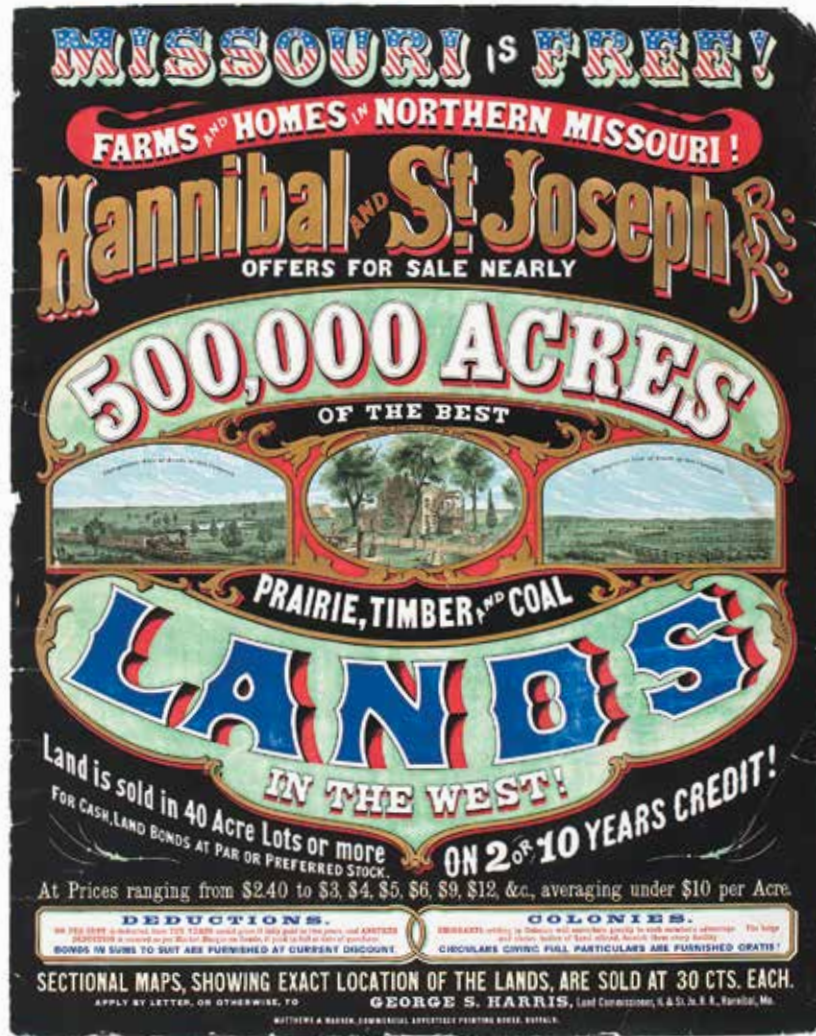
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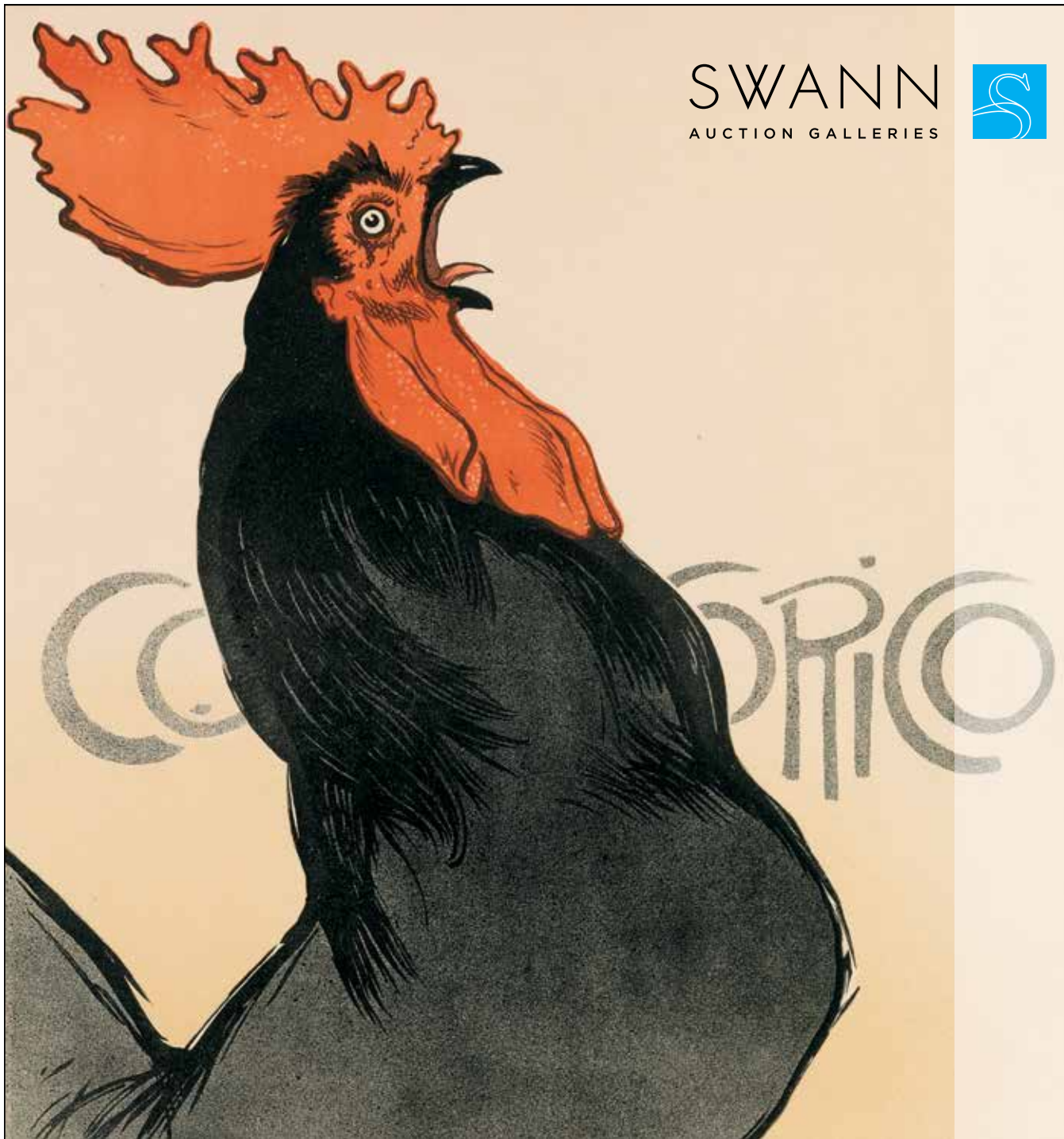
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