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International Expositions & Their Diplomas

BY CURTIS RADFORD MD

World Fairs, International Expositions, or Universal Expositions were designed to showcase the achievements of their host nations. The tradition originated in France in 1798; the French Industrial Exposition of 1844, held in a temporary structure on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, was the tenth in a series of eleven French National Industrial Expositions held to both highlight and stimulate improvements in agriculture and technology. Other European Expositions soon followed including Bern and Madrid in 1845; Brussels, with an elaborate industrial Exposition in 1847; Bordeaux in 1847; St Petersburg in 1848;

and Lisbon in 1849. The national Exposition returned to Paris in 1849 with the Exposition of the Second Republic or Exposition Nationale des Produits de l'Industrie Agricole et Manufacturière, featuring 5,494 exhibitors. In 1855, Paris hosted an International Exhibition. The 1851 Great Exhibition in London, which was open to international exhibitors and greatly outshone the highly successful European Expositions, was inspired by the tenth Paris Exposition of 1844.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 was the first International Exposition. Prince Albert, consort to Queen Victoria, spearheaded 'The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations,' which was held at Hyde Park in the custom-built "Crystal Palace" between May and October. Reflecting the rapid changes of the industrial revolution, this very first World Expo was an unprecedented gathering of nations to showcase the material progress made possible by technological innovation. Its apparent goal was to foster peaceful international competition and encourage the exchange of ideas by bringing together the best and most advanced creations from around the world. Its prime motive was for Britain to display itself as an industrial leader. The Great Exhibition had an enormous influence on the direction of art, design, education, industry, international trade relations, and tourism. This expo was also the precedent for the many international exhibitions that followed.

The "Crystal Palace" was a cast iron and plate glass structure, designed by Joseph Paxton to accommodate 14,000



Figure 1. Hand colored view of the interior of the Crystal Palace transept looking east. One of 13 engravings showing interior views of the building. Read & Co. 10 Johnson's Ct. Fleet St. London. [Author's collection]

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The Ephemera Journal

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of Society
America

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Members and Friends

Congratulations ESA on 42 successful conferences and fairs. This years' theme "Creating Places and Spaces" was a resounding success, made even sweeter by being the first in-person event in three years. The success was not by luck. It took a concerted effort by all board members, volunteers and of course, our fearless Administrative Director, Mary Beth Malmshiemer.

Historically, the conference/fair has its road bumps but having been at it for 40 years, we have an idea of how to overcome any problems. This year, with the lingering virus, we had a multiplicity of obstacles, none of which we had encountered before. Again, thank you everyone for your help to create the success it was.

Just today I received the first video of what I hope will be a series of videos that record the fair in progress from a visitor's perspective. This in time will be followed by a video of our infamous fund raiser ephemera auction.

On the conference side, presentations that are illustrated with ephemera will be uploaded to our website in the near future for everyone to enjoy. Recording them, creating videos, blogging and publishing are all ways in which we are trying to keep members informed.

At our March banquet, it was our honor to recognize to the lifetime contribution of Al Malpa, awarding him the Rickards Medal. This is the highest award the ESA can give, named after a founder of the Ephemera Society UK, Maurice Ricketts. It was received on his behalf by his partner Cary Hull. In keeping with tradition, all Ricketts medal honorees were asked to come forward for the annual photo and who should appear but a life size photographic cutout of Al, along with our recently departed past winner, Bob Staples. The moment was memorable, as you can see by the photo on the following page.

One of the silver linings of the past two years has been the necessity of adopting a larger virtual presence. With the help of Mike Peich, the conference committee became acquainted with delivering online presentations. This is a feature that we will try and integrate into our fairs in future so that all members, no matter where they live, will be able to participate in real time. This digital presence should help present ephemera to a new, younger audience. This is our future — bringing in young members — the collectors, dealers, librarian and academics of the future.

As always, we value your membership and welcome your expertise, your suggestions and your involvement- you are essential to our success.

Enjoy the Journal. It is the bedrock of our mission, presenting and educating about ephemera in hard copy, the ephemera of the future.



David Lilburne
President

Maurice Rickards Award

At our conference banquet, it has become traditional for all the attending recipients of the Maurice Rickards medal to line up and be celebrated. Knowing that we would be especially missing two of our awardees, Barbara Charles arranged for effigies to join our line-up: from left, President David Lilburne wears the Samuel Pepys Medal presented to the Ephemera Society of America by the Ephemera Society of Great Britain on the occasion of their 40th anniversary in 2015; Valerie Jackson-Harris (with her Pepys Medal as well as her 2003 Rickards Medal); Barbara Charles and, in effigy, Robert Staples (1986); Nancy Rosin (2016); Robert Dalton Harris & Diane DeBlois (2008); and Cary Hull with, in effigy, Alfred P. Malpa (2021). Photo courtesy Brian Oloo.

We plan a memorial essay, with several voices, in the next issue to honor Bob Staples. We'd like those who knew him as a colleague (in ephemera, and in design), as well as from those who have enjoyed seeing the museum exhibit work of Staples and Charles (Mount Vernon, the Sixth Floor, etc.) to send a few words. Email them to agatherin@yahoo.com.



Paraphilately

Former president of our Society, Arthur H. Groten, has written several hundred articles on “paraphilately” — a term that he invented for ephemera that is postage stamp adjacent. In format, poster stamps are closest, and Steven Zwilling’s Exhibitors Press of Silver Springs MD has just published a compilation of 62 articles as *Volume 1: Paraphilately and Poster Stamps*, in what he hopes will be a series *Amazing Paraphilately and Ephemera*. (www.exhibitorspress.com for order information, 226 pages). Though poster stamps were a much more popular way to advertise or promote in Europe, American examples are fascinating — everything from Kewpie dolls to Greyhound buses.



In this Issue...

Our annual conference, Creating Places and Spaces, in March was so ‘over-the-top’ great, we here continue the theme.

Curtis Radford, a new Society member, takes us to the first International Exposition Buildings - revolutionary structures, none of which survive. **Jeremy Rowe** shows us how postcards can document another realm of temporary structure - encampments, here with World War I and the first training of women for the military.

Our pre-conference in January featured **Andrew Alpern’s** work documenting the most iconic apartment house, and we felt it deserved a print run. However, this is a reminder to check on our web site to enjoy watching, or re-watching, all the presentations from the virtual and live presentations over the last two years.

Using ephemera, I interviewed **Kathy Sheehan** about her role in choosing the places in Troy NY that would best impersonate Manhattan for Julian Fellowes’s *The Gilded Age*.

William Velvel Moskoff provides a paraphilately piece on Russian Civil war charity stamps, a timely reminder of the victims of war in that beleaguered terrain.

—Diane DeBlois, editor

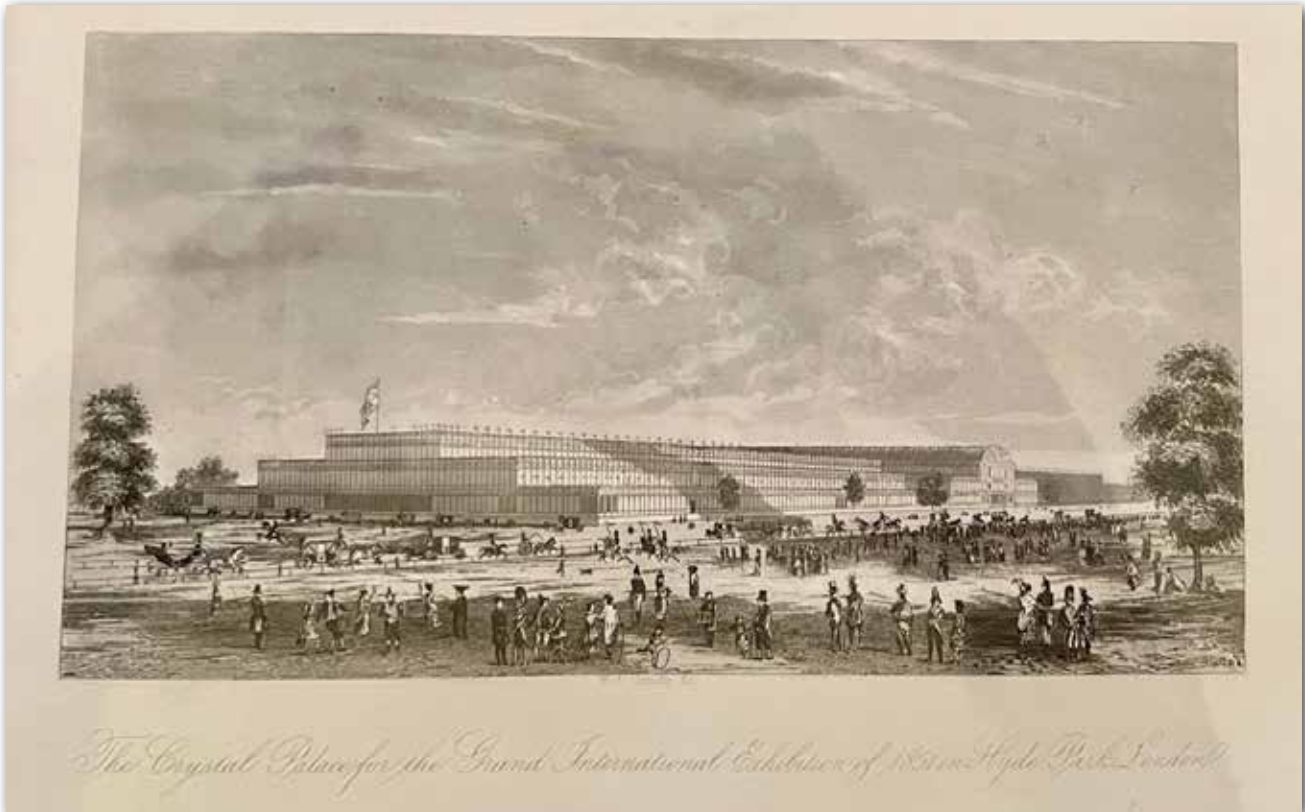


Figure 2. "The Crystal Palace for the Great International Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park, London". Engraved & printed by Selmar Hess, N.Y. [Author's collection]

exhibitors from around the world in its 990,000 square foot exhibition space. At 1,851 feet (564 m) long, with an interior height of 128 feet (39 m), it was three times the size of St Paul's Cathedral. With the introduction of the sheet glass method into Britain by Chance Brothers making it possible to inexpensively produce large sheets, the Crystal Palace featured the greatest expanse of glass ever before seen in a single building. It astonished visitors with its clear walls and ceilings that did not require interior lighting (Figure 1). The Crystal Palace stood in Hyde Park, London, to house the Great Exhibition from May 1 to 15 October, 1851 (Figure 2). After the exhibition, the structure was relocated to the top of Penge Peak next to Sydenham Hill,



Figure 3. The "Crystal Palace" photographed with the view from the Water Temple taken by Philip Henry Delamotte, January 1, 1854. [Author's collection]

an affluent suburb of large villas. It stood there from June 1854 until its destruction by fire in November 1936 (Figure 3).

With six million visitors, the Great Exhibition of 1851 turned out to be a tremendous triumph. Many other countries jumped on board to build “Crystal Palaces” for their own Expositions. In 1853, New York City hosted a World’s Fair called “The Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations” on the site of what is now Bryant Park. It showcased the industrial achievements of the new world and demonstrated the nationalistic pride of a relatively young nation. Opening on July 14, 1853 with the newly sworn-in President Franklin Pierce on hand, the fair was attended by over 1.1 million visitors before it closed on November 14, 1854. The fair featured its own glass and iron exhibition building, the “New York Crystal Palace,” directly inspired by London’s (Figure 4). This Palace was destroyed by fire on October 5, 1858.

The General German Industrial Exhibition of 1854 was designed to highlight German industry to a global audience, but was adversely impacted by a cholera

epidemic. The building, the “Glas-pallast,” was based on the steel and glass architecture of London’s Crystal Palace (Figure 5). Constructed of glass and cast iron, it had two levels. It took over 225,000 square feet of glass to cover the entire building. Following the exhibition, the Glas-pallast had been intended to be used as a botanical garden, but it continued to house exhibitions, helping to establish Munich’s reputation, until it burned down in 1931. The surviving fountain was later moved to the Haidhausen quarter.

World expositions have evolved dramatically since 1851. Three main foci can be distinguished: industrialization, cultural exchange, and nation branding.

World expositions were the platforms where the state-of-the-art in science and technology from around the world were brought together, and industrialization was the main focus from roughly 1800 to 1938. World expositions during this period were especially focused on trade and were famous for the display of technological inventions and advancements. Inventions such as the telephone were first presented during this era. The world expositions

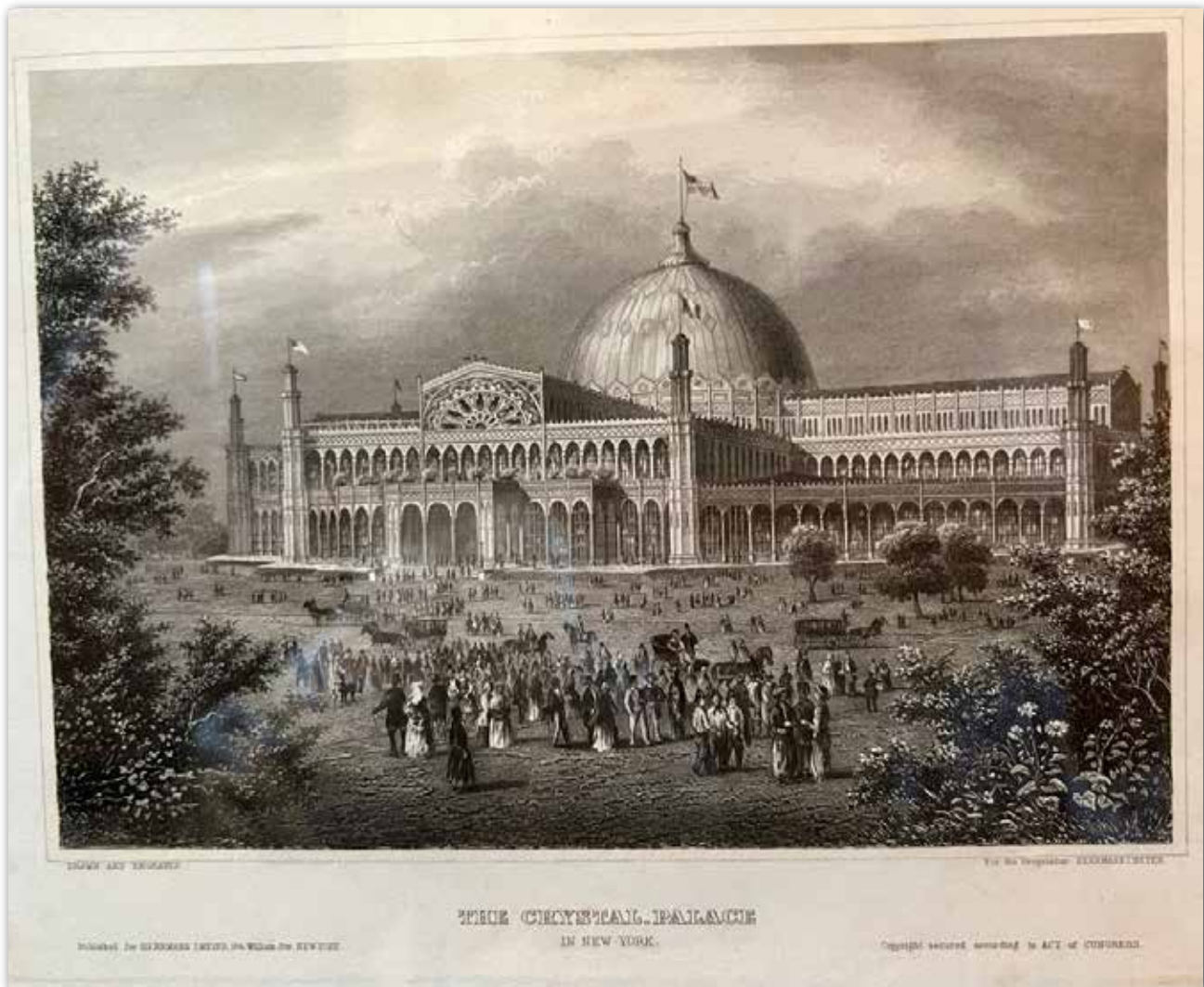


Figure 4. “The Crystal Palace in New York” from *The Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations held in 1853*. A steel engraving printed & published in 1852 for *The United States Illustrated in Views of City and Country*, edited by Charles A. Dana, Herman J. Meyer N.Y. Publisher. [Author’s collection]



Figure 5. The German “Glas-Pallast” in Munich built for the General German Industrial Exhibition of 1854. Engraved in steel by Eigenthum D. Veleger plate from Meyer’s Universum ca1860. [Author’s collection]

values and goals on an international scale.

Throughout most of this 170+ year history, exhibitors were awarded Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals, now very popular with numismatists. Exhibitors, contributors and judges were also given souvenir diplomas which are much less well known. These diplomas featured designs from the world’s greatest artists, engraved by noted engravers, and are great works of under-appreciated art. Prior to the 20th century, these diplomas were frequently printed in intaglio, often by security printers, who typically print such items as banknotes, certificates and postage stamps.

Diplomas were issued by the U.S. Bureau of Engraving & Printing for the Centennial Exposition of 1876 (SCCS # FB 1876A 46,000 printed) and the World Columbian Exposition of 1893 (SCCS # FB1893B 25,555 printed). Despite the large number of diplomas printed for many of these Expositions,

of 1851 London, 1853 New York, 1862 London, 1876 Philadelphia, 1889 Paris, 1893 Chicago, 1897 Brussels, 1900 Paris, 1901 Buffalo, 1904 St. Louis, 1915 San Francisco, and 1933–34 Chicago were landmarks in this regard.

World War II and its aftermath changed the primary focus of the Expositions. Fascination with material progress gave way to the promotion of quality of life and international dialogue. Technology was still at the center of the Expos, but as a means of promoting human development rather than as an end in itself. By creating a platform for discussion and showcasing ideas and inventions in favor of better lives, expos became global platforms for exchange and discussion. The evolving Expo themes from the 1950s onwards demonstrate this shift. Examples include “Progress and Mankind” (Expo 1958, Brussels) and “Man and his World” (Expo 1967, Montreal). Additionally, the process of decolonization led to a marked increase in the number of independent nations adding to the number of Expo participants. Only 39 countries participated in Expo 1958; for the Hannover Expo of 2000, the number of participating countries had grown to 155.

During the 21st century, participation in Expos has widened to include civil society, cities and regions, and international organizations. Today, Expos serve as transformational instruments to demonstrate progress in all areas of human life and endeavor. Over the past 170 years, the format and scope of Expos has evolved, a reflection of changing political, economic and social evolution. Since 1851, Expositions have provided a link between the past, the present and the future, promoting many of the same



Figure 6. Diploma 1851. [British Museum]

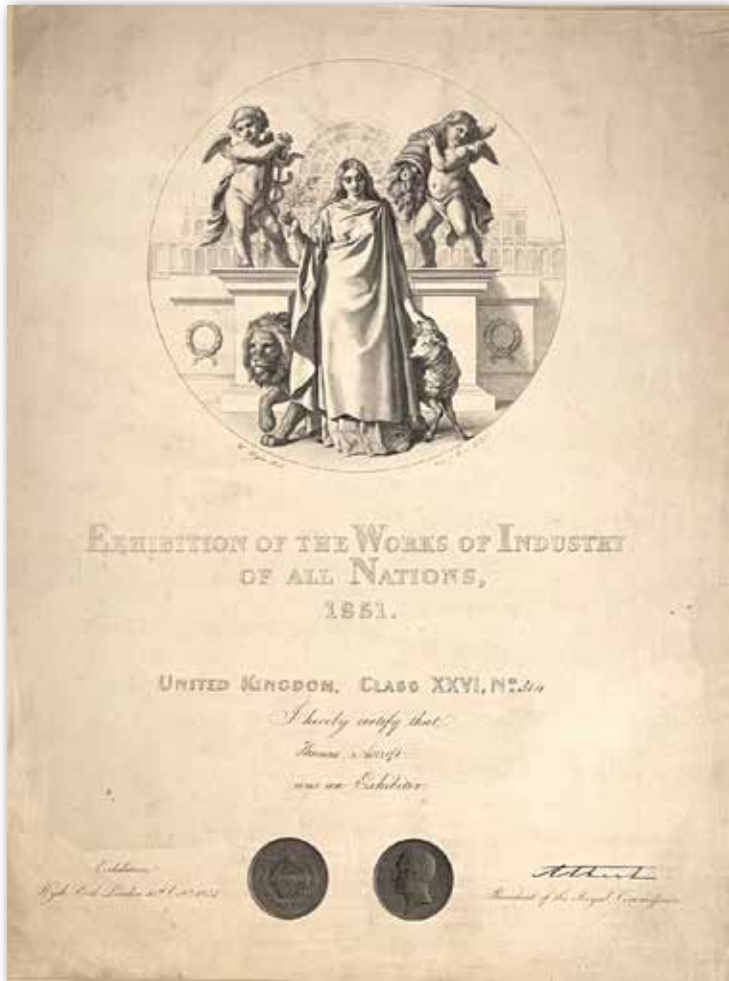


Figure 7. Certificate confirming that Thomas Ascroft was “An Exhibitor” at the Great Exhibition. It measures 54.5 x 40.5 cm, was filled out in ink and was personally signed by Prince Albert in the lower right corner. [Jeremy Norman’s History of Information]

they are very hard to find today. Their large size made them difficult to frame or to store. As a result, most were damaged and discarded over the years. Today, my collection numbers about a hundred; some framed but most in archival pouches on display in a large art bin for flip-through browsing.

The Great Exhibition of 1851

The first International Exposition diploma was from the Great Exhibition of 1851, printed in green or black intaglio. The diploma in Figure 6 was issued to all exhibitors but personalized with the exhibitor’s name. The printer is unknown, but the quality of the engraving suggests it was a security printer.

Five official medals were awarded to exhibitors, along with a diploma illustrated with detailed, actual-size engravings of the medal design. Awardees also received a copy of the extensive Juries’ reports compiled on each of the exhibits.

An engraved certificate signed by Prince Albert was issued, likely for special recognition (Figure 7).

The large engraved roundel by George Thomas Doo is based on a drawing in the Royal Academy by William Dyce showing Peace with a lion and sheep at her feet and two cherubs at her shoulders holding cornucopia and Caduceus (Figure 8); the Crystal Palace in the background forms the halo to the figure representing Peace. Near the bottom of the certificate, both faces of the awarded medal are shown. The roundel was engraved using a process known as “anaglyptography” (engraved to give the subject an embossed or raised appearance; used in representing coins, bas reliefs, etc) by an unknown printer.

Regular exhibitors were given certificates of participation printed by Charles & Edwin Layton of 150 Fleet Street, London. A souvenir version of this print was also produced. The certificate features a black engraved image of Hyde Park with a view of the Exhibition building and various figures on the grounds (Figure 9).

The International Exhibition of 1862

Figure 10 is the earliest diploma in the author’s collection, an “Honourable Mention” from the London International Exhibition of 1862. I. Alfred Émile Léopold Stevens (11 May 1823 – 24 August 1906) was a Belgian painter, known for his paintings of elegant women. William James Linton (December 7, 1812 – December 29, 1897) was an English-born American wood-engraver, landscape painter, political reformer and author of memoirs, novels, poetry and non-fiction. Their skills were brought together in this beautifully executed wood engraving.



Figure 8. Drawing by William Dyce (1806-1864), design for the Certificate of Merit awarded at the Great Exhibition of 1851. [Royal Academy]



Figure 9. Certificate of Participation, Charles & Edwin Layton. [British Museum]

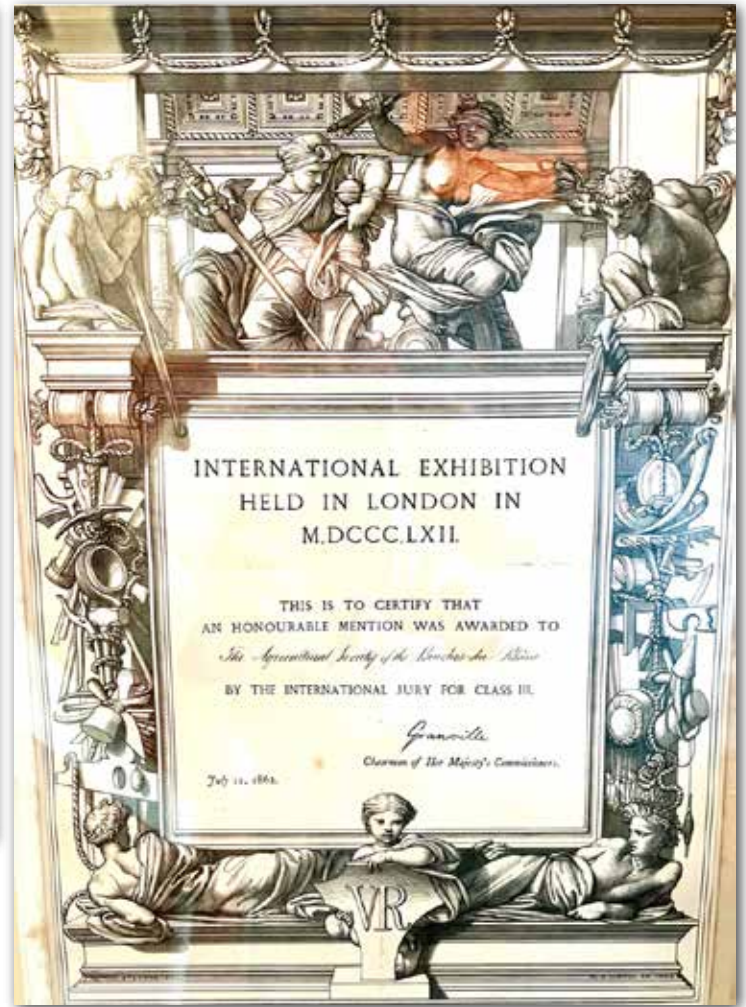


Figure 10. Honorable Mention diploma, London 1862, Alfred Stevens designer & W.j. Linton engraver. [Author's collection]

For more information:

1. A comprehensive list of all Expositions from the 1791 Prague, Bohemia, Habsburg Monarchy – First Industrial Exhibition on the occasion of the coronation of Leopold II as king of Bohemia in Clementinum to the projected Osaka Exposition of 2025 can be found on Wikipedia. Prior to the Great Exhibition of 1851, all expositions were national. International or World Expositions date from 1851 onwards.

2. This rapid development of Expositions organized under different rules and with different themes led to the idea of creating a common organizational framework. This project, first promoted by Germany in 1913, eventually came to fruition in Paris in 1928, when 31 countries signed the Convention Relating to International Exhibitions. The Convention defined Exposition types, their duration and their frequency, established a regulatory procedure for host and participant countries, and created a governing body to apply the Convention: the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE).

3. "History of International Exhibitions, 1851-1951: A New Web Resource" by Alexander C. T. Geppert and Tammy Lau. *Journal of the Association for History and Computing*, vol. 4, no. 1, April 2001.

4. *History of National and International Exhibitions*, by George Collins Levey, C. M. G.; London correspondent of the MELBOURNE AGE, 1878.

5. Jeremy Norman's HistoryofInformation.com.

6. The Royal Academy website.

7. The British Museum website.

Curtis Radford MD

is an Internist who retired from practice in Oshkosh, Wisconsin in 2020. He and his wife Kathryn have 5 grown children and soon to be 7 grand children. They reside on a hobby farm in Larsen, WI. Dr. Radford collected stamps since age 7 and later souvenir cards, having started The Souvenir Card Collectors Society in 1981. For twenty years he enjoyed classic boating and was a founding member of The Chris Craft Commander Club which now has over 4,000 members worked wide. He has been published in *The American Philatelist*, *The Essay Proof Journal*, *The Philatelic Congress*, *Stamps*, *Linn's Stamp News*, *The Souvenir Card Journal (SCJ)*, and *Classic Boating* amongst others. Today, he no longer has a stamp or souvenir card collection other than some stragglers. He does continue to enjoy a collection of International Exposition Diplomas from around the world.



EPHEMERA: the Seeds from which my Books Have Grown

BY ANDREW ALPERN

Collections of ephemera are created for many reasons, although some (most, perhaps?) become collections surreptitiously, revealing their existence only after one has acquired the fourth or fifth item of consistent characteristics, when suddenly the desire to acquire yet another one imposes on the brain the realization that a collection has come into being, seemingly by some process akin to spontaneous combustion. My own accumulation of architectural floor plans clipped from magazines started at an early age, when I realized that I had the ability to draw the layout of the apartment in which my family lived, and could readily draw layouts of the homes of my young friends whom I would visit. Even before I had encountered the word *ephemera*, I had expanded from small clipped plans to large ones prepared as rental aids, and brochures descriptive of apartments for sale.

That accumulation of what by then I knew could be called “ephemera” grew gradually until 1973, when my father turned on a comic-book lightbulb above my

head. Visiting my parents one evening for dinner, I proudly showed them a splendid brochure dated 1910 that I had uncovered in an unlikely shop and had bought that morning. It described a grandiose apartment house proposed for a full block site on Park Avenue in New York’s posh Upper East Side (*Figure 1*). I showed them the beautifully-drawn rendering, its resemblance to an Italian Renaissance palazzo, the fold-out floor plans of its large and well-laid-out apartments, and the boast that the “Lexington Avenue subway, the immediate construction of which has been authorized, will shortly add to the present accessibility of the location.” My excitement at having discovered this brochure prompted my father to suggest that I should write a book about apartment houses. He reasoned that I already knew a lot about them, having lived in one all my life and having visited my friends in their apartments.

The brochure I showed him that evening joined others of similar vintage I had already acquired at flea markets and



Figure 1. 960 Park Avenue, from 82nd to 83rd streets, Howells and Stokes, architects. This building was never constructed. Following World War I, a different 960 Park Avenue was built on the south half of the site, designed by James E.R. Carpenter.

continued on page 10

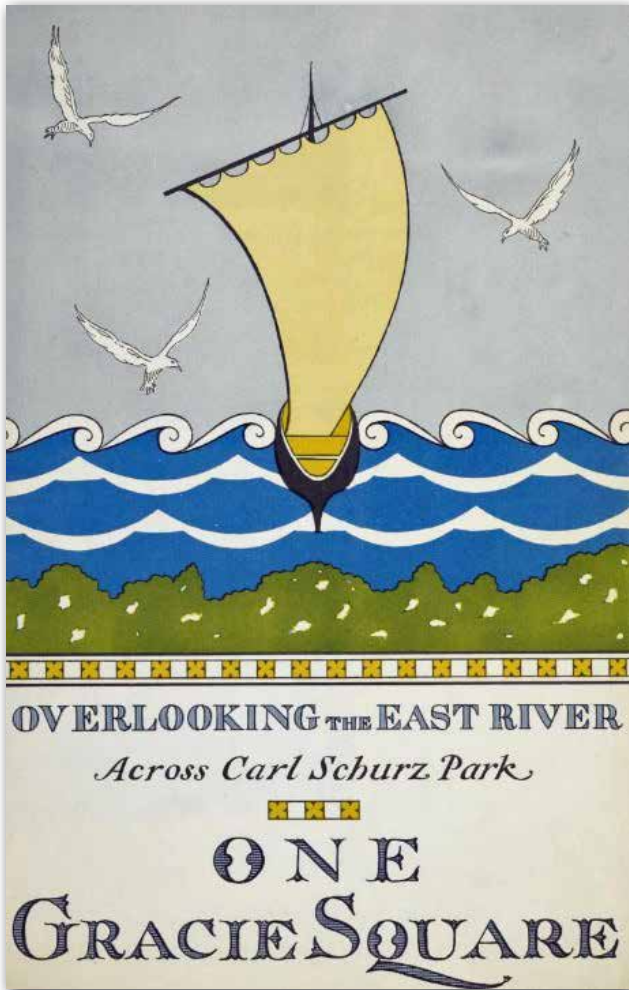


Figure 2. *One Gracie Square*, East 84th Street and East End Avenue, overlooking Carl Schurz Park, Rosario Candela, architect, 1929.

from ephemera dealers (Figures 2 and 3). But if I were going to write a book on the subject I would need a much broader selection of examples, so I started collecting floor plans and descriptive brochures from the rental offices of *new* buildings, tracking ephemera down to their sources, as it were (Figure 4).



Figure 3. *1020 Fifth Avenue* at 84th Street, Warren and Wetmore, architects, 1925.

Once I had amassed a respectable collection of material, I began to seek out specific items that might contribute to the creation of a suitable book. Early into that quest, I set my sights on a building a short walk from where I lived.

The Dakota is a grand old apartment house, the first truly luxury apartment building in New York, and I dreamed of uncovering an original rental brochure for it. Eventually I resigned myself to the reality that such a thing didn't exist. But I did find postcards showing the building, current advertisements of apartments for sale, and even a tissue box whose sides were covered with printed paper images of the building (Figure 5).

A cover of *The New Yorker* magazine carried a charming watercolor image of the Dakota, as did the cover of a Christmas catalogue from the venerable bookstore Brentano's, which had been founded in 1853 but, sadly, is now defunct (Figure 6).

An 1889 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* yielded a charmingly bucolic vision of the Dakota (Figure 7). While the geese and goats in the north-facing drawing may have come from the artist's imagination, this south-facing photograph shows that the blocks adjoining the building were indeed almost bucolic (Figure 8). Facing the camera is a charming little house, complete with picket fence. Commercial ventures are also present. At the bottom of the photograph is a good-sized building bearing a sign: CARPENTER SHOP, and near it is another building advertising WINDOW SCREENS. On the corner of 71st Street

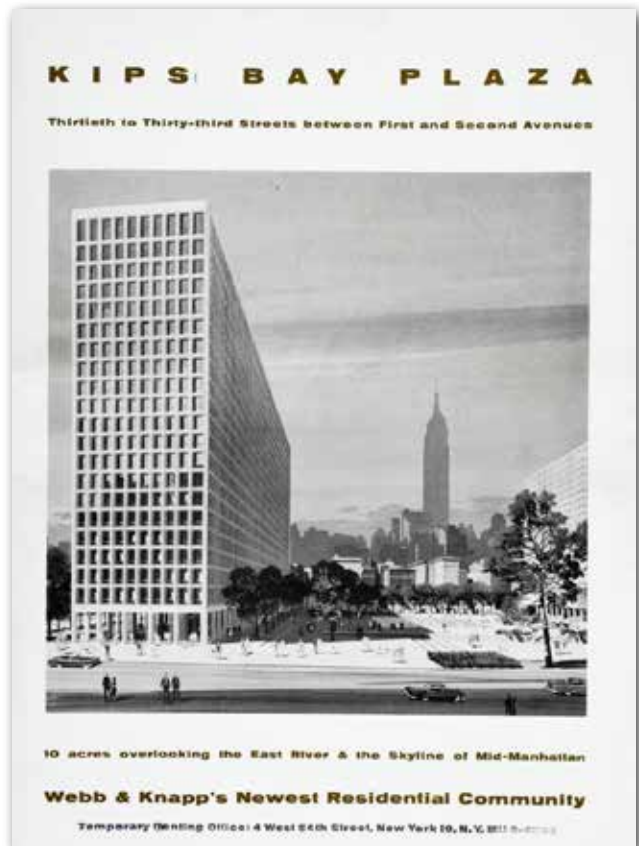


Figure 4. *Kips Bay Plaza*, First to Second Avenues, 30th to 33rd streets, Ioh Ming Pei, architect, 1960.



Figure 5 a (above), b (right), c (above right). Postcard with the Hotel Majestic to the south (completed 1894 designed by Alfred Zucker, demolished for the Art Deco hotel of the same name in 1938); Postcard with the Langham to the north of the Dakota (completed 1906 designed by Charles W. Clinton & William Hamilton Russell); Het Studio tissue box.



is a building and adjoining outdoor space. The sign says it is THE PARK SUMMER GARDEN, with another sign on the roof advertising EICHLER'S DOPPEL BEER.

I found two cast metal models of the building, which are certainly ephemeral and peripheral and thus, in my mind, qualify as ephemera. One is a production of InFocus Tech; the other is one of a series called "Buildings of Disaster" by the Russian artist Constantin Boym, to commemorate the murder of John Lennon at the building's entrance in December of 1980 (Figure 9).

As I often walked past the Dakota, I was very aware of the splendid cast-iron dragons and bearded men who protect the dry moat that in turn protects three sides of the building, so I was pleased to discover an advertisement in a builders' magazine of the period, which shows a photograph of the showroom of the ironworks company that made those castings. One of them is featured right at the front of the photograph, proudly displayed in that long-ago showroom (Figure 10).

I hit the jackpot when I acquired the original application to the Department of Buildings (Figure 11) on which the Superintendent had signed his approval of the construction design drawings on October 6th, 1880, and where an inspector for the Department had signed off the project's completion four years later on November 1st, 1884. Inside the application, the architect Henry Hardenbergh described the thickness of the masonry walls supporting

the building, and the sizes of the beams carrying the floors.

That application described a building significantly larger than anything around it, with an adjoining underground structure housing its boilers. Thomas Edison's cables hadn't yet reached the Upper West Side, so dynamos were installed next to the boilers to create electricity for the building. This plan (Figure 12) is from an atlas that shows each building on every block in the city, with dimensions, heights, and much other information included. The Ninth Avenue Elevated is shown on Columbus Avenue, with a wooden station (colored yellow) at 72nd Street. On this plan the Dakota was identified as an Apartment Hotel because of the private dining room and meal service that was provided for the residents from its opening in 1884 until the labor shortages of World War II forced its closure.

My discovery of the original construction application got me working in earnest. I visited the building and discovered original rental plans. When I realized that

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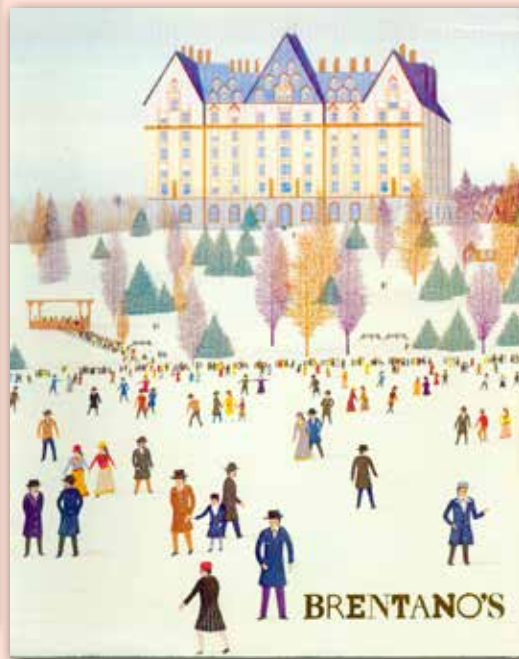
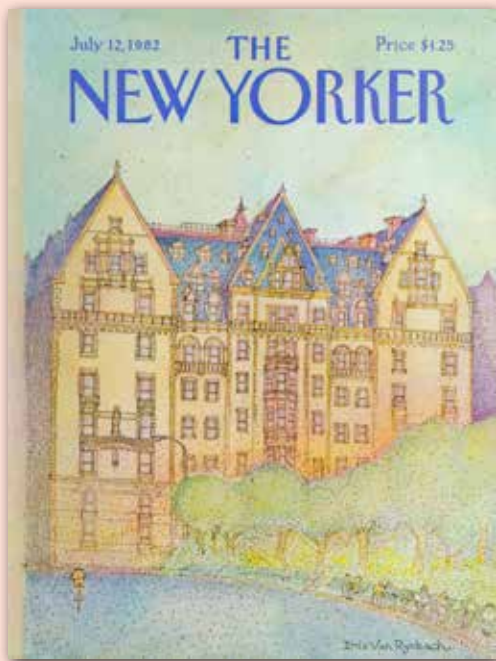


Figure 6. Cover to The New Yorker by Iris Van Rynbach, Condé Nast Publications 1982; Cover to Brentano's Christmas catalog (store closed 2011).

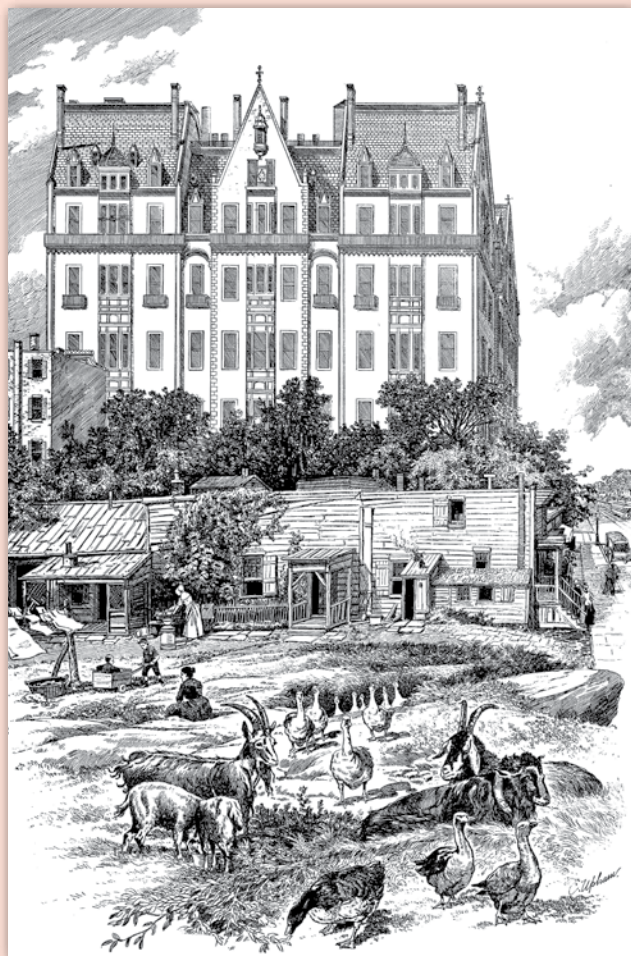


Figure 7. Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, September 7, 1889.



Figure 8. H.B. Jackson, New York Historical Society, negative #7274c.



Figure 9 a, b. The Dakota by InFocus Tech, ReplicaBuildings.com; and by Constantin Boym, www.Boym.com.





HECLA IRON WORKS

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ARCHITECTURAL AND ORNAMENTAL
BRONZE AND IRON WORK



Show Rooms at Office Building of the Hecla Iron Works.

Iron and Bronze Stairs, Railings, Grilles,
Elevator Enclosures and Cars

ETC., ETC.

Figure 10a (author photograph), and 10b. The Architectural Record, November 1902.

MEMORANDA

Drawings filed

The within petition was
allowed unanimously by
Board of Examiners
Oct 19/1880

Inspector

Original
Free Bureau of Inspection
Department of Buildings.

DETAILED STATEMENT OF SPECIFICATIONS
FOR
NEW BUILDINGS

No. 829 Submitted 29th 1880

LOCATION
8th Ave. 2nd and 73rd Sts.

Owner Edward Clark Esq.
Architect H. H. Hartshorn
Builder John Baula

Referred to 18
Returned by 18

Report favorable.

New York, Oct 6th 1880

This is to Certify that I have examined the within detailed statement, together with a copy of the plans relating thereto, and find the same to be in accordance with the provisions of the Laws relating to Buildings in the City of New York; that the same has been approved (subject to the rules and regulations of the Health Department, as applied to buildings), and entered in the records of this Department.

Inspector *Wm. M. Daily*
Superintendent of Buildings.

Referred to Inspector 11. 8th St.
Oct. 22nd 1880
Returned Nov 1st 1884
Theodore W. Daily
Inspector

By order of the Board of Examiners

Figure 11. Original Department of Buildings application to construct The Dakota.

existing layouts were different from what those drawings showed, I had new plans drawn, working from apartment layouts on real estate brokers' websites (Figure 13).

I looked for old photographs of the building and its surroundings and found an unusual view of its back side (Figure 14), whose totally plain façade was so different from the three other elevations that I concluded that the developer, Edward Clark, must have intended to erect a second building, perhaps 25-feet away from the first one once that initial venture was complete and throwing off a cashflow. If that was his plan, it was thwarted by his death in 1882 in the middle of the project's construction.

I also found several charming images of skaters on the Central Park lake with the Dakota in the background, including a lovely stereo card showing the building in its original loneliness, the only high-rise building at the west side of Central Park, and a fitting backdrop for many more of those skaters on its solidly frozen lake. (Figure 15)

I also acquired a photograph of the statue of Daniel Webster with an *unfinished* Dakota in the background on a 3 by 4-inch lantern slide (Figure 16). Look closely at the ridge beams of the three peaked roofs and you will see bare joists. And the truncated central pyramidal dormer is still incomplete. This is, apparently, the earliest known image of the building and the only construction progress photo any archive or researcher has seen.

Almost as old is this image I found in London at the Royal Institute of British Architects (Figure 17). The librarian there explained that the Institute had dispatched a photographer to New York with his view camera and glass-plate films to take pictures of the latest *modern*

continued on page 14

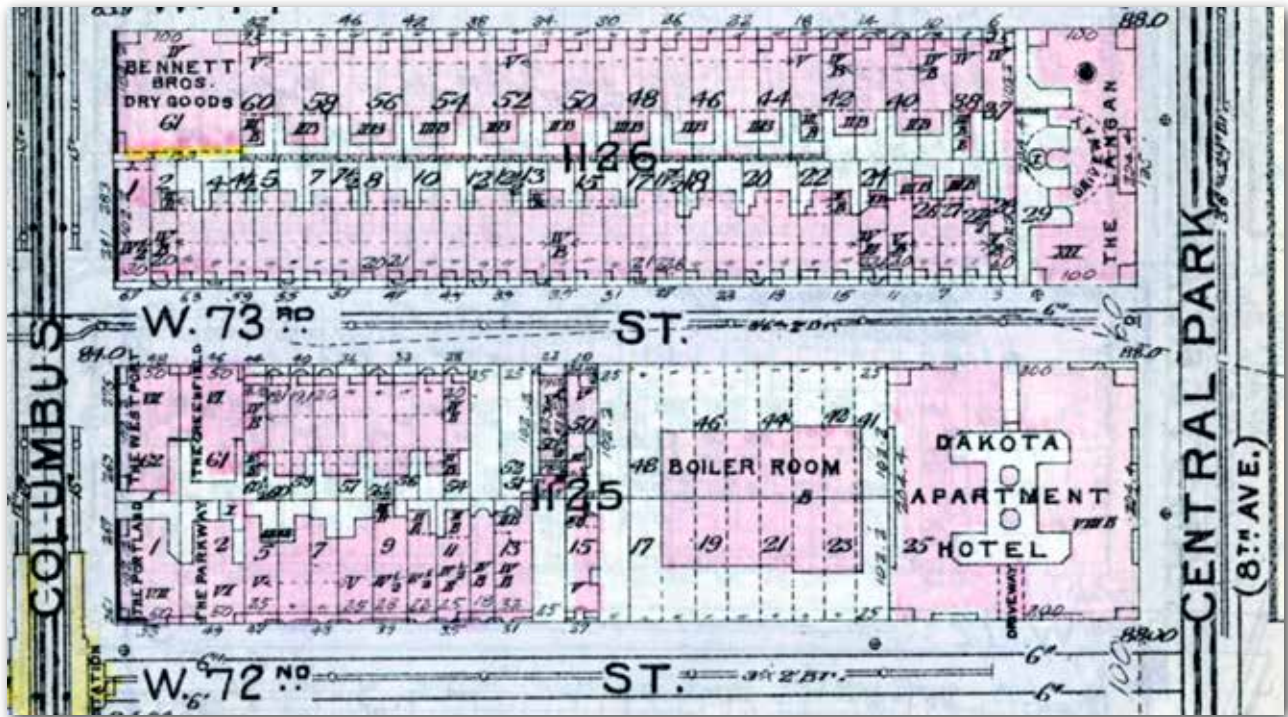


Figure 12. Miniature Atlas of the Borough of Manhattan, E. Belcher Hyde, 1912.

American architecture here for the benefit of English architects on the other side of The Big Pond. In addition to the telephone pole with three arms shown at the front of the building, a pole with six arms was out of the view to the right. Following the Blizzard of 1888, all the wires were gradually relocated underground.

Central Park was effectively the front yard of the building (Figure 18). Look closely in front of the bush

and you will see a man in a straw boater leaning on that rustic fence, made from unfinished tree branches. Along with fences such as the one in this photograph, the park originally had many vine-covered rustic wood shelters with benches. Two were included just inside the entrance to the park opposite the Dakota. Many of them were still in place when I started using the park as a boy, but they gradually deteriorated and most were removed.



Figure 13 a, b. Original rental plan, left, with current configuration plan.



Figure 14. New York Public Library, ID 1152565.



Figure 17. Royal Institute of British Architects RIBA 13670.



Figure 16 (left). Glass lantern slide image revealing the unfinished roof of The Dakota ca1883.



Figure 15. Stereoticon view of skating in Central Park, 1880s.

Magazine articles have provided important material for my books, but especially so for the one about the Dakota. “The Venerable Dakota” was published in 1959 in the magazine *Architectural Forum*. Photographs by George Cserna show the entrance with its gates fully open (it was a simpler time when security was a much less important issue and terrorism was unheard-of in New York), as well as the original doors to the hydraulic elevators and the water tanks that were needed to run them. When conversion to electric operation was complete, those elements disappeared.

“The Great Dakota” appeared in *Look* magazine in 1964 and includes a period piece showing opera critic Edward Downs waiting for the doorman to fetch him a cab to take him to a performance.

In 1993, the Sunday Magazine section of *The New York Times* in an article titled “The Nutcracker Suite,” featured the over-the-top apartment of dancer Rudolf Nureyev in a photo by Oberto Gili of the bedroom, occupying what had originally been the dining room. The decor is an eclectic mix including a canopied Jacobean English bed, and an Italian Renaissance cassone piled high with antique textiles.

At the opposite end of the aesthetic scale was the rooftop duplex of designer Ward Bennett. To accentuate the lines of the steep roof to his home, he designed the seating and table surfaces low on the floor (“Ward Bennet’s rooftop aerie,” *House & Garden*, February 1965, photos by Jon Naar).

Down on the first floor was the apartment that artist Giora Novack created in the Dakota’s original communal dining room (illustrated with a photo by Louis Reens). After Novak and his wife Judith moved out, their expansive apartment was bought by a very wealthy man with several children, whom he proposed to house in a conversion of the original basement kitchens. The refusal of the co-op board to approve this plan led to a 20-year lawsuit, which he ultimately lost.

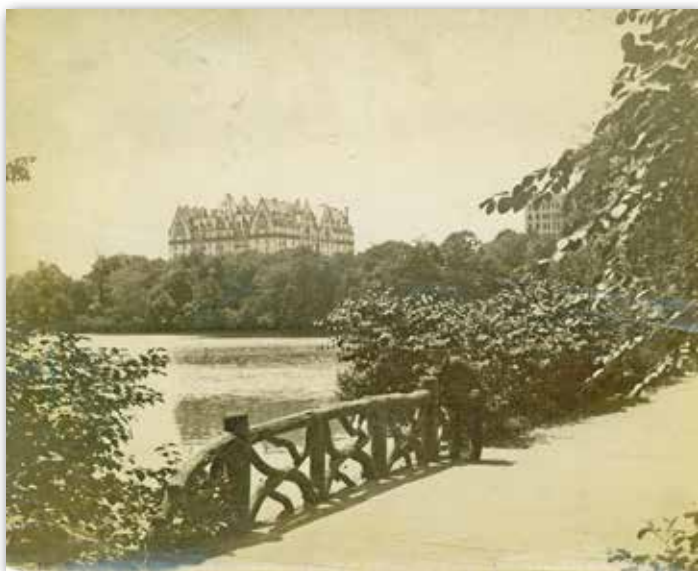


Figure 18. The Dakota from Central Park. At the right, the first section of the Hotel San Remo, opened 1891.

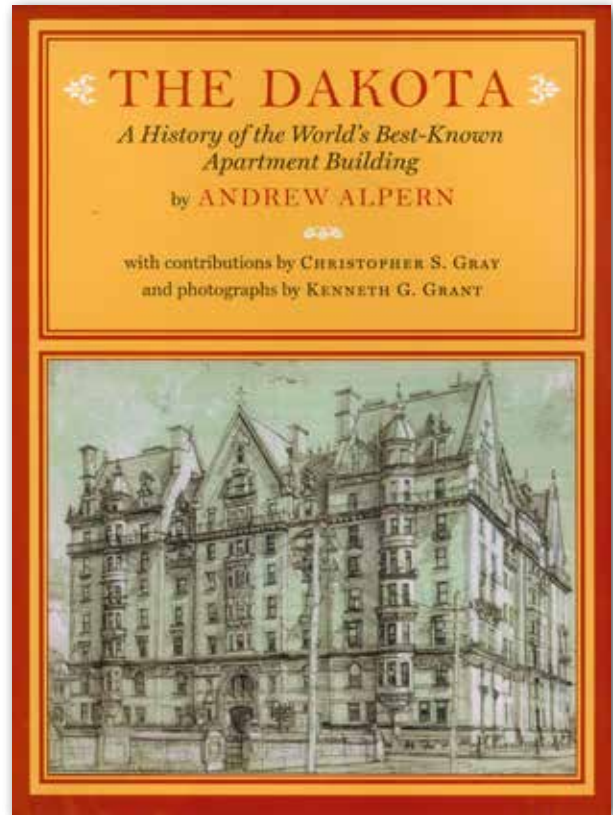


Figure 19. The Dakota, Princeton Architectural Press, 2015

My accumulation of all this ephemera ultimately resulted in a monograph on the Dakota apartment house. (Figure 19). For the cover, I chose a contemporary drawing by Richard Britell, and I also commissioned a watercolor of the entrance from Australian Simon Fieldhouse. The Dakota continues to be a New York City icon, but its charms are international.

Andrew Alpern is an architectural historian, an architect, and an attorney, now retired. Among his eleven books are *Luxury Apartment Houses*, Dover Publications 1992, and *Posh Portals*, Abbeville Press, 2020. Among scores of articles, “The New York Apartment Houses of Rosario Candela and James Carpenter” was reprinted by Dover as *New York’s Fabulous Luxury Apartments*. In 1980 he produced a boxed collection of bits and pieces of the work of Edward Gorey. When asked what to call the little compilation, Mr. Gorey wrote down on a piece of paper the letters F.M.R.A.!



The Gilded Age in Troy N.Y.

BY KATHY T. SHEEHAN



Figure 1. The west side of Washington Park, Troy NY, houses constructed 1840 to 1864, with the private park edged with a wrought iron fence in the foreground. [Hart Cluett Museum]

Julian Fellowes set his quasi-prequel to the immensely popular television series *Downton Abbey* in New York City and Newport, Rhode Island, to follow the lives of fictional wealthy Americans. In 2016 he explained: “These people were extraordinary. You can see why they frightened the old guard, because they saw no boundaries. They wanted to build a palace, they built a palace. They wanted to buy a yacht, they bought a yacht. And the old guard in New York weren’t like that at all, and suddenly this whirlwind of couture descended on their heads. They redesigned being rich. They created a rich culture that we still have—people who are rich are rich in a way that was established in America in the 1880s, ‘90s, 1900s.”¹

Newport’s opulent “cottages” provided good settings but, for 1882 Manhattan and Brooklyn, the television series production designer Bob Shaw turned to Troy, New York. And that meant Kathy Sheehan, Troy City and Rensselaer County Historian, who knows every detail of her city’s historic built environment. Together we looked for ephemera to illustrate her discoveries.

When talking of *The Gilded Age*, Kathy always emphasizes two things about Troy: the elites in its gilded age were essentially the same people as in New York City with the same concerns, including social climbing among the newly wealthy. And the historic streetscapes in Troy that extend for blocks allow for filming scenes in depth.

The area around Troy’s Washington Park proved particularly authentic (Figure 1). The private park, surrounded by

decorative iron fencing, was established in 1840, inspired by New York City’s 1831 Gramercy Park. In *The Gilded Age*, it impersonated Madison Square Park, including a scene with the Statue of Liberty’s torch hand on view. The houses on each side of the park, most completed by the 1860s, became backdrops for action. One on the east side became Peggy Scott’s parental home in Brooklyn; several scenes had pedestrians walking past Washington Place on the south side (Figure 2).

Individual Troy buildings played roles as well: the Troy Public Library of 1896, the Rensselaer County Court House of 1898. The opulent Paine ‘castle’ of 1896 easily stood in for a fictional New York mansion (Figure 3). For key scenes set in New York City’s 1854 Academy of Music, the interior of Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, completed in 1875, was perfect - Kathy said the only touch up she could see was new velvet along the loges. The Cannon building around Troy’s Monument square became Bloomingdale’s department store.



Figure 2. Washington Place, on the south side of Washington Park, by local Troy photographer W.J. Woods ca1880. Designed by John G. Waite and Douglas G. Bucher, constructed 1838-1842. [Hart Cluett Museum]



Figure 3. Delivery wagon for J. J. Alden & Sons grocery in front of the John Welles Paine mansion at 49 Second Street in Troy, designed by Thomas Franklin Schneider of Washington DC, constructed 1892-1893. Paine (1832-1913) was a wealthy financier and attorney, and this was the most elaborate private home in the city. [Hart Cluett Museum]



Figure 4. Monument Square, Troy, before the erection of the monument in 1891 (it was known previously as Washington Square). At left, the 1835 Cannon Building commissioned by industrialist LeGrand Cannon, designed by Alexander Jackson Davis of Town, Davis and Dakin, occupied by Frear's Cash Bazaar; at right the Insurance Company of North America occupying the Burdett, Smith & Company building completed 1881. [Hart Cluett Museum]



Figure 5 (above). The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, designed by Albany architects Fuller and Wheeler, completed 1891. Behind are, on the left, the Burdett Building of 1910 that replaced one destroyed by fire 1896; on the right, the McCarthy Building, designed by Frederick M. Cummings, completed 1904. [Hart Cluett Museum]



Figure 10 (left). 1860s billhead for a tailor occupying part of the Troy House Building. The wood engraving by E. Y. Butler, New York, shows both a private carriage and a horse-drawn trolley on Broadway. [Hart Cluett Museum]

Figure 7 (below). Page from the 1883 Clary Brother Carriage catalogue, Troy NY, illustrating a "Close Top Stanhope." [Hart Cluett Museum]



Figure 6 (right). Kathy Sheehan took this photograph from the second floor library at the Hart Cluett Museum on Second Street, looking at a scene setting (the masks a reminder that the series was shot during the COVID 19 pandemic). The street itself was covered in both soil and fake cobblestones. Un-sung heroes of the filming were the horse handlers, and the wranglers of all the period carriages. [Hart Cluett Museum]





Figure 8. 1892 photograph of the Hart Mansion on Second Street. Designed by architect Martin Euclid Thompson and completed in 1827, it has a distinctive marble facade, and wrought iron urns as part of the decorative fencing. [Hart Cluett Museum]



Figure 9. 1907 postcard printed in Germany of Troy's Oakwood Cemetery, established in 1848 as part of the rural cemetery movement that created pleasant public spaces for graves. Designed originally by architect John C. Sidney and redeveloped in the late 19th century by superintendent John Boetcher whose landscape work is admired in this view. [Editor's collection]



Figure 11. ca1882 chromolithographed tradecard designed by "Kash" (Cassius Marcellus Coolidge, 1844-1934), depicting, as part of a series, William Henry Vanderbilt (1821-1885) riding his hobby-horse, the railroad. Overprinted to advertise Frear's Troy Cash Bazaar (see Figure 3).

Figure 13. Sign 16"x21" chromolithographed on metal by Kaufmann & Strauss of New York. The United Shirt & Collar Company was just one of such firms that gave Troy the nickname 'The Collar City.' This advertisement from around 1890 could be the dreamscape of Gilded Age characters Oscar van Rhijn and John Adams. The two men are reading The Herald (Manhattan newspaper that began 1835) and Puck (a humor magazine first published in English in 1877, located in Manhattan by 1887.) Despite Edison's electric light debut of 1882, the luxurious apartment is still lit by gas. [Editor's collection]

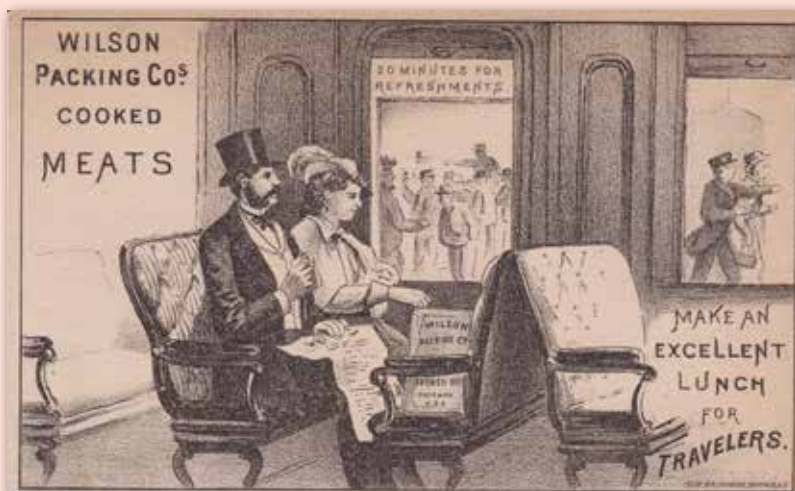


Figure 12. ca1882 tradecard, lithographed by Clay & Richardson, Buffalo NY. Wilson Packing Co. Though the Wilson canned meat firm was in Chicago, it is a reminder that "Uncle Sam" Wilson (1766-1854) made Troy famous for supplying preserved meat for the US Army in the War of 1812. [Editor's collection]



Figure 14 (left). ca1882 advertising playing card for F. Armstrong Braces, Bridgeport CT. The two 'dudes' show front and back of the elastic suspenders, each dressed in the newest style; open on the dresser is a collar box, on the floor at left is the suspender box. [Editor's collection]

Figure 15 (right). ca1882 advertising card for Nonpareil Velveteen, as advertised in Demorest's Illustrated Journal (1863-1899). American-made fabric is portrayed as a substitute for French Silk Velvet, appealing to "discriminating ladies." In The Gilded Age, the discriminating Agnes van Rhijn is shown having clothes made and fitted in New York, when she resists having the new bustle made smaller. In contrast, the nouveau riche Bertha Russell has her gowns imported from Paris. The scene upper left suggests Gladys Russell's ball.



In a particularly dramatic scene, a neighboring structure impersonated the New York Times building on Park Row illuminated by Edison's electric light in September 1882, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument of 1891 recognizable in the foreground (Figures 4 & 5).

Kathy's home base, the Hart Cluett Museum operated by the Rensselaer County Historical Society, appears on screen as does its whole block of the Second Street Historic District (Figure 6 & 7). Wealthy New York merchant and banker William Howard in 1827 commissioned 59 Second Street for his only child Betsey Howard Hart and her husband who was a wealthy banker-businessman (Figure 8). In episode 8, George Russell's valet Watson approaches Mrs. Flora McNeil as she enters this house, causing consternation when he uses the name Collyer (sowing plot seeds for season two).

When the below-stairs characters Bridget and Jack meet at a Brooklyn cemetery - they were filmed in Oakwood (Figure 9). When housekeeper Mrs. Armstrong visits her bed-ridden mother in a squalid tenement, the alleyway filmed is behind St. Lawrence Roman Catholic Church, built 1882-1884 at Jefferson and Third Streets. A horse-drawn trolley marked "Broadway" is filmed leading to Manhattan's shopping district, actually First Street, ironically between another Broadway and State Streets, where the Troy House hotel no longer stands (Figure 10).

The character of George Russell, ruthless railroad man at the heart of the television series, was inspired by William Henry Vanderbilt (Figure 11). One could imagine Vanderbilt or Russell as the traveler in Figure 12, eating, perhaps, a lunch packed by an ersatz French chef. The woman is dressed very like Aurora Fane in one episode: the series costume designer is remarkably true to 1882 fashion. (Kathy did notice one style of Arrow men's detachable collars that dated from the early 20th century - but few others would

notice the minor design differences. Figure 13) The Derby or bowler hat, although created in 1849, was newly fashionable, particularly for young men (Figure 14). And the women, with the exception of the ultra conservative Agnes van Rhijn, wear the slender silhouette and simplified bustle, that translated into evening trains that achieved their maximum effect on the dance floor - as in episode 9 at Gladys Russell's debutante ball (Figure 15).

Kathy Sheehan is giving even more *Gilded Age* walking tours of Troy, now that season one of the television series has ended. She spent five years helping the series designers, and is now sourcing locations for season two. Stay tuned.

Notes:

1. "For Julian Fellowes, after 'Downton' and 'School of Rock' comes 'The Gilded Age'" by Irene Lacher, *Los Angeles Times*. June 4, 2016.



Kathy T. Sheehan

is the Registrar and Volunteer Coordinator for the Rensselaer County Historical Society at the Hart Cluett Museum and serves as the Rensselaer County and Troy City Historian. She has served the community through her infinite research and knowledge, and shares Troy's impressive history with community members and visitors. She invites new generations to experience the stories of the past and engage in the history of those that came before.

Real Photo Postcards from the First National Service School for Women

BY JEREMY ROWE

When I come across a group of related images, I start asking questions about the story they contain. When the images are real photo postcards, they often provide additional clues to follow in the form of messages, addresses and postmarks.

A few comments about my initial research on a group of 15 real photo postcard images by an unidentified photographer that somehow stayed together for over 100 years. The postcards captured aspects of the life of women who answered the call to service in the National Service School for Women in Washington DC at the beginning of WW I in 1917.

Four of the cards in this collection were not postally used. The cards that were sent were postmarked between April



Figure 1. Portrait of five "Soldierettes" at the First National Service School camp posed in front of tent. Nina Williams Gaither may be second from left.



Figure 2. What appears to be First National Service School camp administration. Camp commandant Mrs. Elizabeth E. Poe, general secretary of the Navy League fourth from left, Captain Dorothy Dennis fourth from right, and Adjutant Mrs. Vella Poe Wilson at far right.

17 and May 23, 1917. Of the postally used cards, three are postmarked Chevy Chase and eight are from Washington, D. C. An interesting side note: one of the postmarks commemorates the "27th reunion of the United Confederate Veterans in Wash. June 4-8, 1917."

The eleven postally used cards were sent from "Nina" to either Mrs. Mary Coale Dugan or Mrs. A. S. Gaither, both in Baltimore. A first step in the research was a review of city directories and census records. The addresses of the Dugans and Gaithers indicated that they were next door neighbors on West Preston Street. I also found a listing for a member of the Gaither family named Nina. A search for Nina Williams Gaither found that she was born on April 19, 1887 in Howard County, Maryland.

As a young woman, Nina was socially active and appeared in the society reports of *The Baltimore Sun*. For example, in 1904 Nina was an usher at the Maryland Society of the Colonial Dames of America's evening of plantation songs. Other listings find her fund raising for the Baby's Milk Fund and hosting afternoon teas. In 1913, Nina was a bridesmaid for the marriage of Miss Francis Folsom and Mr. Cleveland Bigelow, before traveling abroad for six months to the Channel Islands. After her return to Baltimore in March 1914, Nina was selected as the Queen of the Carnival at the Mardi Gras ball. Active in the arts, Nina joined Mme. Elise Du Four Ryan's Greek dancing class and was Chairman of the Junior Republican League Christmas party that year.

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Figure 3. Overview of the First National Service School camp.

The National Service School for Women was established after the Naval Act of 1916, building on the momentum of the woman's movement in the early 20th century. An oversight in the language regarding reserve forces failed to prohibit women from enlisting. Following that, a March 19, 1917 letter from the Bureau of Navigation supported the recruitment of women in the Naval Coast Defense Reserve. The letter targeted roles for woman and noted that enlistees could be "utilized as radio operators, stenographers, nurses, messengers, chauffeurs, etc. and in many other capacities in the industrial line."

A new category - "Yeomen (F)" - was created. Women could also be radio operators, and fill other naval rankings that supported district operations. Of course, recruiting raised several logistic challenges, such as medical examinations, uniforms, and housing for women recruits.

Modeled on the civilian training camp in Plattsburgh New York and women's preparedness groups in New York City, the First National Service School opened on May 1, 1916, in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The National Service Schools helped to provide an alternative narrative to the pacifist movements that were discouraging the U. S. from entering the conflict in Europe, in spite of Germany's submarine attacks on American and British ships.

The women's service camps were organized around a military model with uniforms required and military tents for living quarters. The training offered at the camp focused not on "domestic issues," but on practical skills and preparedness to respond to emergencies.

The honorary commandants selected for the camp were high visibility military wives. Included were Lelia Barnett (Marine Corps. Commandant George Barnett), Mary Merrill Scott (Army Chief of Staff Hugh L. Scott), and Mildred Dewey (Admiral George Dewey). Similarly, the

executive committee of the service camp was composed of military spouses, but the camp tried not to promote military training too heavily. At the camp, a calisthenics and drill regimen provided physical conditioning. Medical training by the Red Cross was a requirement. Optional courses focused on communication - heliography, telegraphy, and code work.

The encampment depicted in the postcards was established soon after the U. S. entered WW I, on April 16, 1917, and was to run through May 26. This camp was in Chevy Chase on the west side of Connecticut Avenue between Thornapple and Underwood streets and was sponsored by the woman's section of the Navy League. Mrs. Elizabeth E. Poe, general secretary of



Figure 4. President Woodrow Wilson and camp commandant Mrs. Hugh L. Scott at the official opening of the camp on May 1.



Figure 5. Unidentified photographer taking portraits of the “Soldierettes” on Company Street at the First National Service School camp.



Figure 6. First National Service School camp calisthenics session, possibly in Washington D. C. (Note shadow of Washington Monument in center of the image)



Figure 7. Camp commandant Mrs. Elizabeth E. Poe, leading First National Service School camp members parade, with Adjutant Mrs. Vella Poe Wilson at left of first row, location unknown.

the Navy League was elected camp commandant.

The two-week camp was planned to eventually accommodate up to 1,000 women, who would each be responsible for teaching ten others after their training. On April 3, Nina was appointed Battalion adjutant of the first course at the National Service School for Women. On April 10, it was announced that the full camp quota of 200 women residents had been met, but there were still openings for day students. The camp regimen included lectures on patriotic topics and added courses in nursing, dietetics, advanced signaling, map reading, camp cooking, bicycling, and driving and repairing automobiles. The cost of the camp was estimated at \$14,000 (about \$300,000 today), with \$8,000 (about \$171,000 today) coming from registration fees and the balance from fund raising efforts.

By April 23, the camp layout was well underway. Wooden floors for the sixteen square foot army regulation tents were in position, along with water and sewer pipes and other infrastructure. The tents were originally designed for eight men, but only five women were assigned per tent in the service camp. Unusual for military camps of the era were the electric lights provided in each tent. Issues arose about the code of rules which originally included a prohibition on jewelry in the camp, a rule that was regularly broken. For example, one young woman was observed wearing diamond earrings with her khakis.

Another concern was the prohibition on candies and chocolates, which led to a confrontation at the camp gate when a woman’s chauffeur attempted to bring in a large box of candy with her luggage. With the likely appreciation of the 200 residential camp members, Commandant Poe soon overturned the rule, and permitted the chocolate and other candy to enter the camp.

Nina Williams Gaither had been appointed as a battalion adjutant for the April 16 to May 5 period. All of Nina’s postcards that were postally used date between April 17 and May 23, generally aligning with her time at the Chevy Chase camp.

Nine of Nina’s cards in this collection display numbers added to the negative between 100 to 222. This raises the tantalizing possibility that more images from this series can be located in the future.

One of the unsent cards shows the visit of President Woodrow Wilson and camp



Figure 8. "Soldierette," possibly Nina Wallace Gaither, posed in front of tent at the First National Service School camp

commandant Mrs. Hugh L Scott at the official of the camp on May 1. Other unsent images include an overview of the camp and scenes of camp life such as drilling and parading.

Image 112 shows a woman photographer making portraits of the enlistees in the camp, now referred to as "resident students" or "Soldierettes." Three images (numbered 216, 221 and 222) are portraits of individual women posed in front of a tent. These appear to be stock posed portraits that were likely made of each of the camp members.

Though no images specifically identify Nina, the only postally used card of the three portraits may provide a clue. Image number 222 has a message addressed to Nina's mother, Mrs. A. S. Gaither, but lacks a key line such as "here's a picture of me at the camp" that could confirm an identification. One of the unnumbered images shows an impromptu group of five women posed together at a tent entrance. Based on a comparison of a later portrait of Nina, she may be the second woman from the left in this image.

After the camp in 1917, Nina served as a trustee from Baltimore for the National Republic farm and schools and served as a member of their Board of Management. She also volunteered as a waitress at the Women's Civic League War Food Bureau Luncheon. Maintaining her connection with the arts in Baltimore, in March 1918, she hosted a tea for the Vagabond Players at the Little Theatre on Center Street. In November, *The Baltimore Sun* called Nina "one of the most talented young women in Baltimore," describing her arrival in Paris to serve as an interpreter and nurse's aide. The article goes on to credit her for actively engaging in "war work" and for her philanthropic efforts, including as an organizer of the National Junior Republic. The article also praises Nina for being "the most gifted actress in Baltimore" as it notes her work with the Vagabond Players at the Little Theatre.

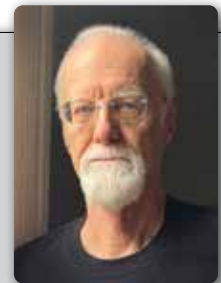
Nina served as a nurse's aide at Military Hospital No. 6 near Paris. The hospital focused on care for soldiers who

had been attacked with poison gas. *The Baltimore Sun* noted her correspondence with the paper reporting that many of her patients were blind, and she sent accounts of the soldiers' heroism and patience during treatment.

After a stint in the states following the war, Nina returned to Europe in 1919. Based on available records, Nina received a passport from the Secretary of State in July for travel to Europe, returning on July 14, 1919, to New York City from Barcelona on the S. S. *Antonio Lopez*. By November she was back performing with the Vagabond Players at the Little Theatre on Center Street in Baltimore.

Nina married Uel Maize Walker on May 10, 1927 and served once again as a volunteer nurse in WWII. After that war, Nina worked at the Veteran's Administration in Washington D. C. until she retired in 1947. In 1964 the Walkers moved from Banning, California to Safford, Arizona where she was employed as a nurse. Nina Williams (Gaither) Walker passed away on April 6, 1967 and is buried in section 12, site 1603 in Arlington Cemetery.

Jeremy Rowe has collected researched and written about historic photography for over 30 years. His collecting has focused on 19th and early 20th century photographs – ranging from daguerreotypes and cased images to mounted photographs, real photo postcards, and vernacular images with an emphasis on Arizona and the Southwest, Lower Manhattan, and the open-ended category of "images that strike me." Jeremy has curated exhibitions and served on the boards of the Daguerreian Society, National Stereoscopic Association, Daniel Nagrin Film, Theater and Dance Foundation, In Focus, and Ephemera Society of America. Jeremy is currently working with the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs to establish a National Stereoscopic Research Collection and Research Fellowship. Jeremy has written numerous publications about historic photography, including *Arizona Photographers 1865 - 1920 a History and Directory*, *Arizona Real Photo Postcards a History and Portfolio*, and *Arizona Stereographs 1865- 1930*. Jeremy is an Emeritus Professor at Arizona State University. He is currently a Senior Research Scientist at New York University and travels between New York City and Arizona.



Soviet Charity Stamps in the Wake of Russia's Civil War

BY WILLIAM VELVEL MOSKOFF, CAROL GAYLE, AND NIKOLAI SOROKIN

The Russian Civil War that followed on the heels of the 1917 Revolution was a major event in Russian history; by its end the nation's general political direction for the rest of the 20th century had been determined.¹ The war was a calamity that arose from the fundamental clash in worldview of the Bolsheviks and an array of opponents, ranging from monarchists and former high-level Tsarist military officers, landowners and capitalists, to democratic parties and various nationality groups. It was lengthy, with three years of direct military conflict and a wrenching aftermath of economic collapse, famine, and scattered popular resistance. The war was immensely costly in terms of lives lost on the battlefield, civilian casualties, the many orphaned or homeless children who wandered the country in unspeakable poverty, and the enormous disruption in the lives of millions of people who were forced from their homes.

The original cause of the war was the opposition of former officers of the Imperial military, many of whom remained steadfastly loyal to the monarchy (Whites, as they would come to be called) to the fledgling Bolshevik government. In their effort to overthrow the Bolsheviks, the Whites would be aided by Russia's former allies in World War I who sent supplies and some 180,000 troops over time to defeat the Bolsheviks. To combat the military forces arrayed against them, the Bolsheviks founded a Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, or "Red Army," which mobilized nearly 6.5 million to fight their many enemies and run the country. The Red Army fought not only the Whites and their allies, but class enemies, recalcitrant peasants, and various nationalist groups. The outcome was decisive, with an absolute Bolshevik victory.

The number of war deaths was very high. One estimate is that from 1917 to 1922, the combined military losses on all sides amounted to 800,000 dead. Epidemics of typhus and typhoid may have killed another 890,000 in 1919 and more than a million in 1920.² According to the American Red Cross, approximately one million children were separated from their parents and required food and clothing.³ Another 3.3 million people became internal refugees, fleeing to the interior of the country. Many fled abroad. It is estimated that another five million died in the famine of 1921-1922 that affected some 25 million Russian peasants.⁴ It is reasonable to conjecture that the war wounded at least two million men and women.

This article focuses on the Russian charity stamps that were issued to aid Red Army soldiers wounded in the Civil War. To understand the production and sale of charity stamps during the postwar years, one must keep in mind the context of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the hybrid society of the NEP years. The NEP of 1921 represented a dramatic shift away from the rigors of wartime government control. By 1928 the NEP was discarded in favor of central planning. During the NEP years, the Bolshevik regime ruled but the private sector was allowed to expand, and many institutions of old Russia resurfaced. Among these was the sale of charity stamps, which had been common during the Tsarist years. Under the NEP, and particularly in 1923 and 1924, charity stamps became commonplace.

The examples shown below were all issued in 1923 or 1924. These stamps have several common features. First, the early ones have a crude graphic quality. The engraving and printing are not as sophisticated or as meticulously produced as earlier Russian Imperial postage stamps or later

regular Soviet stamps. Second, rather than the heroic figures of later war-themed Soviet postage stamps, most of the figures depicted are victims. These portrayals are meant to evoke sympathy, not the admiration accorded to war heroes.

Figure 1 is an earlier stamp issued in 1923. The issuing organization was the Central Labor Department (ЦТД) of the All-Russian



Figures 1 (left) and 2 (right). 1923 Civil War Charity stamps issued by the Central Labor Department of the All-Russian Committee for Aid to Invalids.

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Figures 3a, b. Two printings of a 1923 stamp issued by the All-Russian Committee but without the Central Labor Department insignia.

Committee for Aid to Invalids, an organization that operated from 1920, the final year of the Civil War, until 1939. The image shows a badly wounded man, dressed in a simple jacket, his head swathed in bandages, and carrying a crutch.

Figure 2 is also a Central Labor Department charity stamp from 1923. Like the stamp in Figure 1, the production values are low. It is crudely drawn, printed off-center, and the colors are weak. What is unusual is that this stamp shows the soldier as a warrior, rather than a victim. The five-pointed red star on his helmet clearly signifies that he is a Red Army soldier.

Figure 3, also issued in 1923, is a 5-ruble red, yellow,



Figure 4. A 1923 overprint to raise the value from 3 to 10 rubles to reflect inflation.

and violet stamp issued by the All-Russian Committee for Aid to Invalids, but the term ЦТУ was no longer part of the design. The stamp shows a wounded man being fed by a ministering woman. Like the other 1923 stamps, this one is crudely drawn and poorly printed. There were color variations in many of these NEP-era charity stamps, including this one. The colors of the example shown in Figure 3b, for example, are stronger than those in Figure 3a.

Figure 4 is a 10-ruble overprint on a 3-ruble charity stamp. Issued in 1923, this stamp was initially valued in 1922 rubles and then overprinted to reflect inflation. The image here is of an ambulatory Red Army soldier whose head is swathed in bandages under his helmet and whose arm is bandaged. Like other charity stamps from 1923, the production values of the stamp are poor.

By 1924, more and more organizations, including the central government, the governments of some constituent republics, and the cities of Moscow and Leningrad issued charity stamps for a variety of causes. Figures 5-8 were all issued in August 1924 by the Moscow Committee for Aid to War Invalids. All the Moscow stamps reflect a higher degree of philatelic skill and execution than the 1923 stamps shown in the first half of this article. The engraving is crisp and clear, the colors strong, and the printing well-aligned. Figures 5 and 6 show a lone bandaged soldier staring into the distance. It is likely that the drawings are taken from a common source, as the images of soldiers on the stamps are similar. On the back of these stamps (see Figure 5a) are the words: ПРИНУДИТЕЛЬНОЕ РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЕ ВОСПРЕЩАЕТСЯ, “Compulsory Distribution Prohibited.” This means that citizens could not be forced to buy charity stamps, an admonition that began to appear not long after the Civil War ended, and suggests that it was in fact a common practice from the beginning. The ban on obligatory purchases was frequently ignored despite the admonition on the back of the stamp.

Figures 7 and 8 carry images of Red Army soldiers. One is being wounded in battle, the other is shown returning home to Moscow, dressed in his Red Army helmet and military greatcoat in Red Square. These last stamps go beyond just invoking sympathy; these wounded soldiers have sacrificed for a worthy cause.

Figures 9-11 show charity stamps issued in Leningrad in 1924. These were intended to provide funds for two groups—the war wounded and homeless children, and they all carry the phrase, “In Support of Homeless Children and War Invalids.” These stamps bear images of children and wounded soldiers together, and are noticeably different from the stamps that were meant to raise funds only for wounded Red Army soldiers. There is an illuminating story behind these stamps. In the early 1920s, there were two Soviet charitable organizations, Vseroskomprom (All-Russian Industrial Committee) and Detkomssiia (Child Welfare Commission) competing for public donations. Individuals selling charitable stamps, typically at factories



Figure 5 a, b. 1924 stamp issued by the Moscow Committee with the admonition on the back that compulsory distribution was prohibited.

was not followed elsewhere so it is likely that conflict persisted in other cities.

Charity stamps came to be used as a sort of informal small-change currency and could be used to cover charges for other services. For example, the post and telegraph offices allowed charity stamps to cover added surcharges when accepting payment for services

rendered. At times they were applied to receipts for purchases of money transfers and tickets to entertainment events, as well as on a variety of official documents required by employers and housing authorities.⁵ Another common way to use these stamps was to offer them in lieu of small change owed to customers.⁶

A few Civil War charity stamps were printed with the text in English, as in Figure 12. This five-cent stamp was sold under the aegis of the All Russian Disabled Soldiers Relief Committee. The stamp pictures a Red Army soldier with his left arm in a sling, holding a crutch in his right. These stamps played no role in Russia but were sold in the United States between 1921 and 1930. How successful these foreign sales were is unknown.

and offices, got a percentage of what they sold. It was customary for these sellers to station themselves near the paymaster's window to solicit donations as the workers collected their pay. This led to inevitable conflict, which sometimes turned ugly. In Petrograd (renamed Leningrad after the death of Lenin), the local Communist Party forced the Petrograd chapters of both organizations to collaborate, and they were instructed to find a way to divide the proceeds. As a result of this Party directive, a new set of charity stamps was issued in Leningrad in 1924, with the text "Aid to homeless children and disabled soldiers." It should be noted that the Leningrad model of cooperation

Conclusion

The Civil War was a devastating conflict that touched huge swaths of Russian society. Following immediately on the heels of the heavy losses suffered in World War I, the Civil War and its attendant calamities of disease and famine affected all classes and most regions. Thousands of wounded or maimed Red Army soldiers returned to



Figures 6, 7, 8. Three designs issued by the Moscow Committee for Aid to war Invalids.



Figures 9, 10, 11. Three designs issued in Leningrad.

desolated cities and villages. The young Soviet state did not have the resources to cope with the many problems of the war's wounded. In the mixed economy of the NEP, private charity was allowed to fill some of the gaps with the selling of charity stamps, a method often used in tsarist days. Tapping into private sources to aid Civil War invalids found Soviet Russia doing things "the old way." By 1923 we see several issues of charity stamps raising funds for wounded soldiers, although it is hard to imagine that these and later charity stamps could possibly have raised much money. But charity stamps helped mobilize ordinary citizens to aid their fellow citizen.



Figure 12. A Russian Civil War charity stamp designed to be sold in the United States.

Endnotes

- ¹ Historians do not agree on the dates of the war: Evan Mawdsley dates it as 1917-1920, David Bullock as 1918-1922, and Bruce Lincoln as 1918-1921. See Mawdsley, *The Russian Civil War*, Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987; Bullock, *The Russian Civil War 1918-1922*; Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008; Lincoln. *Red Victory: A History of the Russian Civil War 1918-1921*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.
- ² Mawdsley: 286, 287.
- ³ Margaret K. Stolee, "Homeless Children in the USSR, 1917-1957," *Soviet Studies*, January 1988: 64-83.
- ⁴ Robert Conquest, *V. I. Lenin*, (New York: Viking Books 1972); James W. Long, "The Volga Germans and the Famine of 1921," *The Russian Review* 51, no. 4 (1992): 510.
- ⁵ A. Vova, A. Lukyanov, and Yu. Turchinskiy. Каталог-справочник отечественных непочтовых марок (Handbook-Catalog of the Fatherland's Non-postal Stamps), Volume 3: 17.
- ⁶ Nikolai Sorokin and William Moskoff, "The Homeless Children of the Soviet Union in the 1920s," *Rossica*, Fall 2011: 42

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He often collaborates with his wife Carol Gayle, Associate Professor of History at Lake Forest College, and with fellow collector Nikolai Sorokin.






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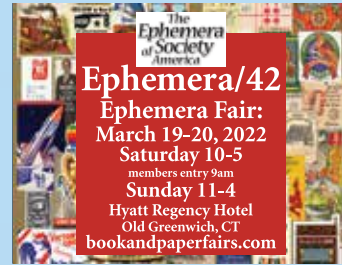
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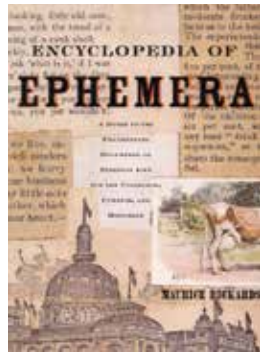
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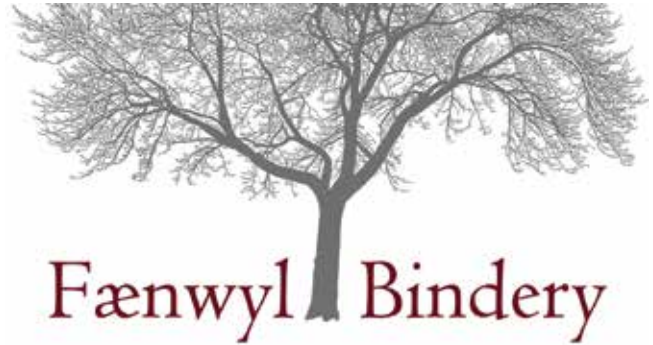


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