

THE EPHEMERA JOURNAL

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The Hands of an Artist: *Joseph Jacinto “Jo” Mora (1876-1947)*

BY PETER HILLER

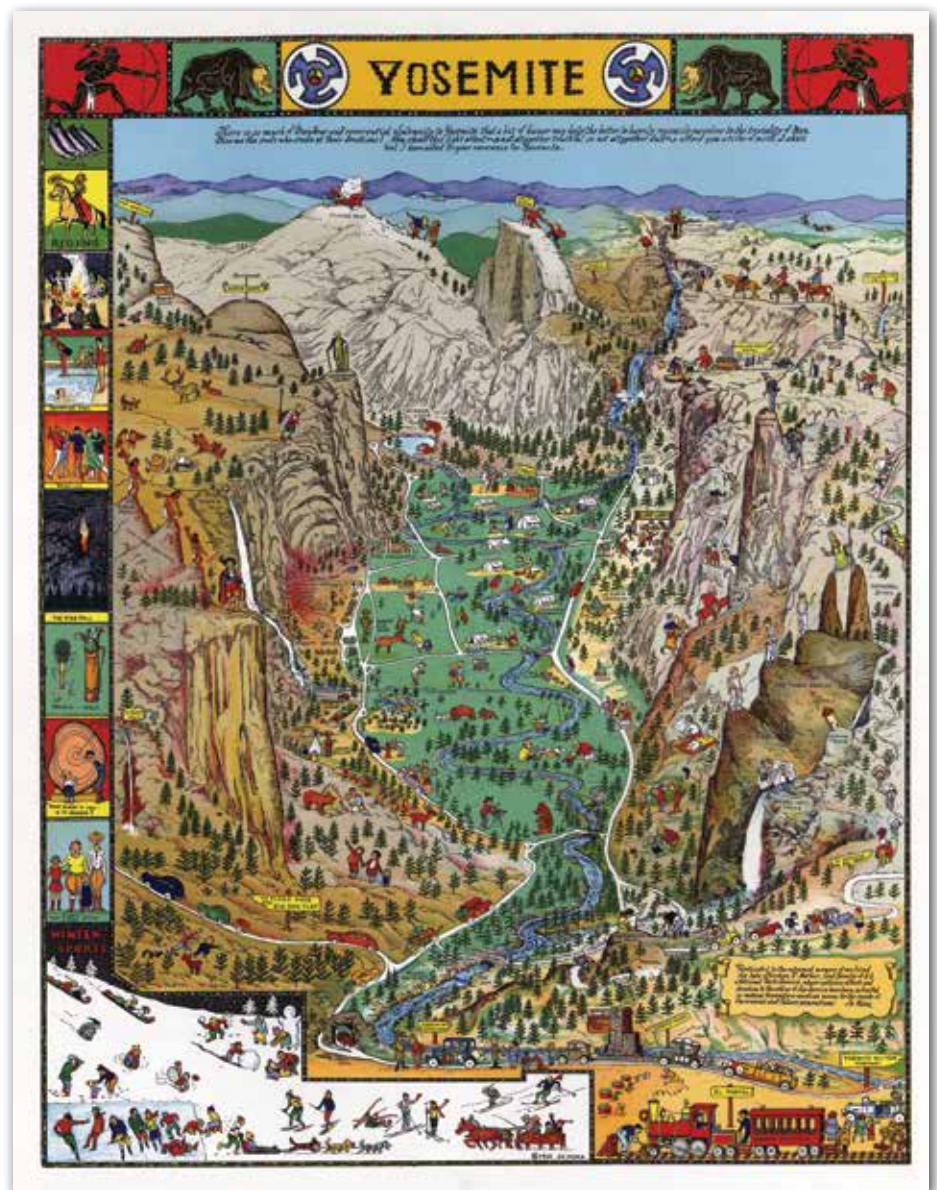
The artistic career of Jo Mora was extensive. As one of those rare persons whose entire income is based on his creative abilities, Mora mastered a wide range of media to create his artwork. His many pieces included bronze sculpture, decorative architectural work, delicate gouache paintings of Hopi katsina figures, and delightful illustrations for children's books, which he also wrote. Jo Mora was a multi-talented artist. (Figure 1 – Page 5)

Born in Uruguay to a father of Catalan descent and a mother who was French, Jo and his brother Luis both took after their father Domingo, a classical sculptor. The family moved to the east coast of the United States when Jo was a young boy, following work opportunities for Domingo. Jo finished grade school and attended art school but largely learned his artistic skills from his father. Jo's mother, and his wife and son after her, had the foresight to preserve Jo's creative output, which we are now able to enjoy.

Jo's first income came from illustrating articles in the *Boston Herald* newspaper (Figure 2 – Page 5). This work led to numerous book illustrating projects from publishers who re-issued classic volumes for new audiences.

In 1903, Jo illustrated a wall calendar, most likely the first piece of his that can be considered stand-alone ephemera (Figure 3 – Page 6).

When Jo traveled west, he encountered what he feared were the waning times of American indigenous cultures, specifically



1931 pictorial map of Yosemite by Jo Mora, dedicated to the late Stephen T. Mather, first director of the National Park Service, and incorporating scenes of the Mora family's vacationing, including their "first view."

Continued on Page 5

The Ephemera Journal

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of America

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Members and Friends

What a difference a quarter makes. We started this year with lots of expectations, but with a lot of uncertainties. At the beginning of February, we hosted our virtual conference with two more fine presenters, one based in San Francisco, the other in New York. Barbara Loe directed it from Florida while I introduced the program from Perth, Western Australia, where the afternoon event took place from 3am to 5am local time! The wonders of the Web!

Our physical conference took place in our favored venue in Old Greenwich CT, and was well attended by over 90 attendees. The topic *From Here to There; the Ephemera of Travel* elicited a variety of very interesting presentations: Travel Posters I Would Love to Own; On the Road: Travel Ephemera in the Margolies Collection; African American Baseball; Taking the Waters: Healing Springs and Medical Tourism; To the North: the Arctic Regions in Ephemera; Travel & Tourism in Southern Appalachia; Wish You Were Here; and Dudley P. Flanders 1874 "Trip through Arizona."

Student presentations on Thursday afternoon are the promising addition to our conferences. We had three students — two from Brown University and one from Harvard University — present on various topics. The ESA is very excited about this and is looking towards funding to promote this among young scholars.

One of the great things about our conferences in addition to the lectures is the venue where they are presented. The amphitheater at the hotel is the perfect setting for the lectures, and the hall was full and engaged. After the conference, the hall hosted our annual charity auction. What a blast that was, with Alexandra Nelson of Swann Auction Galleries running the highly entertaining and long-standing fundraiser. Thank you to all donors, bidders, and contributors who helped raise \$10,000 for the ESA.

Our new fair promoters, Rare Books Los Angeles (RBLA), ran another successful ephemera fair, with over 70 dealers and just under 500 hundred attendees. Over the weekend, I encountered many satisfied dealers and customers and viewed pieces of ephemera I've never seen before. One of the great advantages of this fair is the relaxed atmosphere at which the plethora of institutional customers can browse and chat with the vendors.

As usual, there were a number of last minute hiccups that included our keynote conference presenter being unable to physically attend. Once again we were saved by the Web!

At our Saturday evening gala, the Maurice Rickards Award for Lifetime Contributions to Ephemera was presented to not one but two esteemed colleagues. Both Dick Sheaff and Bruce Shyer are great ephemerists and stalwarts of the ESA. See the following page for more information on their awards.

Before I go I want to give a shout out about Henry Voigt, a premier collector of menus and another longtime stalwart of the ESA. He has an exhibit running April 26 to July 29 at The Grolier Club, New York City, "A Century of Dining Out. The American Story in Menus, 1841-1941."

David

David Lilburne, President

2023 Maurice Rickards Award

By Diane DeBlois

The highest award given by The Ephemera Society of America is the Maurice Rickards medal, named for the founder of The Ephemera Society in Great Britain, who created *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera* and whose collection is now a research archive at the University of Reading. The 2023 recipients are Bruce Shyer and Richard Dana Sheaff, both former presidents of our society and both formidable ephemera collectors who generously share their collections and knowledge. At the annual banquet, the medals were bestowed by Nancy Rosin to Bruce, who had served as her vice-president, specifically

honoring his extraordinarily painstakingly arranged exhibits of ephemera at venues on both coasts; and by Glenn Mason to Dick, emphasizing the benefits of friendship within the society and honoring Dick's informational web site. Former Rickards medalists welcomed the new honorees: Barbara Fahs Charles (1986); Barbara Rusch (1989); Valerie Jackson Harris (2003); Diane DeBlois & Robert Dalton Harris (2008); José Rodriguez (2014); and Nancy Rosin (2017).



Pictured left to right: Bruce Shyer and Dick Sheaff

Bruce Shyer

Bruce Shyer is a retired attorney who practiced civil litigation as a partner in downtown San Francisco. He began to collect in earnest about fifty years ago — attracted to bookselling history and its ephemera. William Frost Mobley became an early and thoughtful mentor to Bruce on ephemera matters. Over the course of many years, with the prodding and friendly competition of George Fox and Jonathan Bulkley, Bruce voraciously sought graphic trade cards. The Bruce Shyer Collection of Trade Cards and Selected Ephemera, 3,765 lots, was sold over six auctions beginning in March 2000. Bruce wrote in the introduction to the first catalog: “I consider myself primarily a ‘graphic’ collector rather than a ‘subject’ collector. That is, I am drawn to the overall design (image, juxtaposition of images, typography, balance, color selection etc. of the card).”

Bruce continued to collect and formed new ‘graphic’ collections of Art Nouveau and Art Deco ephemera. Beginning in 1991, he created public exhibitions of his ephemera collections, several at the Book Club of California and at the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco where he has been a member since 1986 and served as the Printer's Devil.

Bruce's exhibitions on behalf of ESA at several ABAA antiquarian book fairs in Northern and Southern California and at ESA conferences in Greenwich, Connecticut have included: Native American advertising images, Easter egg dye ephemera, Cuban travel ephemera, bookselling ephemera, Art Deco ephemera, Art Nouveau ephemera, outdoor life ephemera, circus ephemera and, most recently, animals in advertisements. His exhibition style is unusual in two ways: 1) more is always better 2) most of the ephemera “stands” or is presented vertically, not flat. These book fair exhibits have

Continued on next page

In this Issue...

Our lead article by **Peter Hiller** honors the artist Jo Mora, who generated eye-catching ephemera as well as other works. Similarly, **David Bossert** focuses on the artist Bill Layne, whose work appears on ephemera, sometimes without attribution. Both authors have spent many years in the same worlds as their subjects.

Peter Hiller was also one of the presenters at our virtual conference in January of this year; the other was **John Sayers** who reprises some of his ocean liner information but with a focus on women.

A highlight of the Society's midyear meeting and tours in Oregon was a special presentation by **Anne Bahde** designed to show how special collection librarians — and other educators — could use ephemera. With just one fairly common trade card she introduced several avenues of research.

Bill Moskoff's essay on a Stalinist propaganda film (itself ephemeral) reads as a troubling prequel to the Russian readiness for war. It also serves as an introduction to “Conflict” — the theme of our 2024 conference.

—Diane DeBlois, editor

served to educate attendees about the vast array of ephemera (styles, subjects, shapes, eras, typography etc.), and the visual and learning impact of a collection and also enticed viewers to join the Society. Bruce is a life member of the Society and has served for the longest continuous period on its Board of Directors: fourteen years, culminating with his productive term as president ending in 2018.

Bruce's January 2022 article in *The Ephemera Journal* drew a parallel to the arrival of Art Nouveau and the reemergence of the California International Antiquarian Book Fair following the pandemic. He also composed the text for conference keepsakes: 2013 Art & Commerce; 2014 Food & Drink Table to Table; 2015 The Sporting Life; 2018 Let Me Entertain You.

Maurice Rickards, in an unpublished 1977 essay, *The Study of Ephemera*, wrote: "An implicit component of every item of ephemera is the reader over our shoulder - the eyes for which the item first appeared; the living glance that scanned the paper even as we ourselves now scan it" This sense of the past view joining the present is what Bruce finds compelling about collecting ephemera and why he is at present greatly honored to join past recipients of an award named for Rickards.

Dick Sheaff

Richard Dana Sheaff received a degree in Biology from Dartmouth in 1966. Over the next decade he served in the Army Reserve and held several different jobs continuing his education. In 1977 he received an MFA in Visual Communication and Design from Syracuse University - starting Dick on his path to become one of the giants of ephemera.

Dick has had a very distinguished career as a consultant to many corporations and institutions for a variety of communication services, including, of course, graphic design. He served as a design consultant to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee for 25 years beginning in 1983. As such, he was responsible for the design or art direction of hundreds of issued U.S. postage stamps and many more that were not

finalized. In 2014, *Linn's Stamp News* announced that Dick had donated his collection of United States stamp design artwork and proofs to the National Postal Museum. Many of Dick's stamp designs were inspired by his personal interest in ephemera, printing, photography, and collecting bottles and other historical objects and material.

Dick Sheaff has been a member of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, the American Philatelic Society, the American Revenue Association, the Collectors Club of New York, the Society of Printers, and various regional museums and historical societies. Dick is one of the earliest members of the Ephemera Society of America, serving on the Board several different times, including his most recent term where he served as president from 2019-2021. Under his leadership, the first phase of the ESA's website make-over was completed, in time to become a major element of the Society's pivot during COVID. He was also responsible for the majority of those educational, informative, and visually entertaining articles on the website that have introduced ephemera to the general public and helped satisfy the thirst of our members to see and learn more about ephemera.

Perhaps his greatest gift to the world of ephemera is the website he developed for all to enjoy — without cost! *Sheaff-ephemera.com* presents thousands of pieces of ephemera in full color, with an introductory essay about each of the featured categories.

Although major portions of Dick's massive ephemera collection now reside with Letterpress Archives in San Francisco, links to his own website and blogs are available through the ESA website, ensuring that the ongoing educational value of his collecting and research remains available to all.

In addition to the medal, ESA members could honor Dick best by following his example and regularly submitting blogs and exhibits of our personal collections of ephemera to the ESA website. We would be acknowledging Dick's contributions and furthering his desire to see ephemera appreciated and enjoyed by our membership and the general public.



Previous and current Rickards medalists (l to r): Barbara Rusch (1989), Robert Dalton Harris and Diane DeBlois (2008), Valerie Jackson Harris (2003), José Rodriguez (2014), Barbara Fahs Charles (1986), Bruce Shyer (2023), Nancy Rosin (2017), and Dick Sheaff (2023). David Lilburne, ESA President, is wearing the Samuel Pepys Medal which was presented to the Ephemera Society of America in 2015.



Figure 1: Jo Mora's artistic ideas were often translated into different media. Here are a postcard of the plaster model for a sculpture and an illustration of the same "Cinch Binder" in his book, *Trail Dust and Saddle Leather*.

the Hopi and Navajo. Almost three years in Arizona yielded volumes of serious art depicting these cultures. In 1907, with no steady stream of income, Jo sought work from his publishers in Boston, leading to a series of Sunday cartoons for the *Boston Herald*. (Figure 4)

Jo moved to the San Francisco Bay area and was constantly looking for work, busy filling commissions, and dreaming up his own ideas, particularly for sculptures, all with the intent of feeding, clothing, and sheltering his growing family. (Figure 5) Gaining membership in the Bohemian Club led to new income opportunities as other club members commissioned or worked on projects with him.

Jo's months in training for WWI would be an exception to his constant creativity. The training was vigorous and time consuming. After the war, Jo moved his family to the area surrounding Carmel, California, again to pursue work. Here they spent the rest of their lives. (Figure 6)

Bohemian Club friendships with Tirey L. Ford, author of *Dawn and the Dons: The Romance of Monterey*, and with Samuel F. B. Morse, President of the Del Monte Hotel corporation, who supported the Ford publication, provided Jo with another illustrating opportunity. (Figure 7)

At the suggestion of Jo Jr. who was in many ways his father's business manager, Jo would go on to create several poster-size illustrated maps or "cartes," in full color, for the family to sell. These cartes maintained their popularity and, at 50 cents each, were affordable

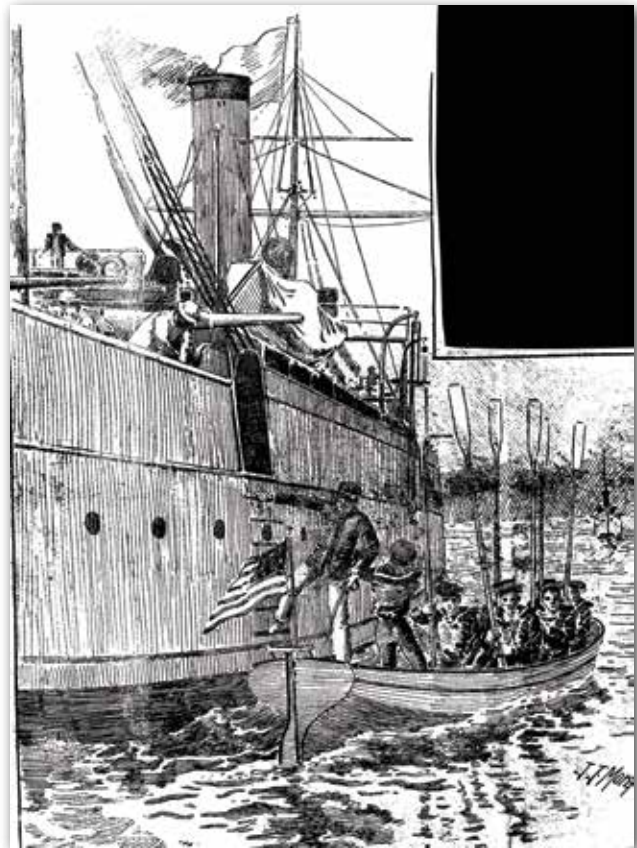


Figure 2. When a story required visuals, the *Boston Herald* editor would send Jo to the scene of the news to draw the story. This on-the-spot illustrating was a demanding endeavor both artistically and logistically - getting to the story, understanding the scope of the situation, depicting it accurately, and getting the material back to the office in time for printing.



Figure 3. In a drawing style similar to his newspaper work and book illustrations, Jo drew the visuals for this football-themed monthly calendar with what became his signature: anthropomorphic animals.



Figure 4. Animaldom appeared as a full-page cartoon in the Boston Herald, and syndicated newspapers, each Sunday for a year, thus providing a new income stream. Jo not only drew the illustrations but also wrote the stories.

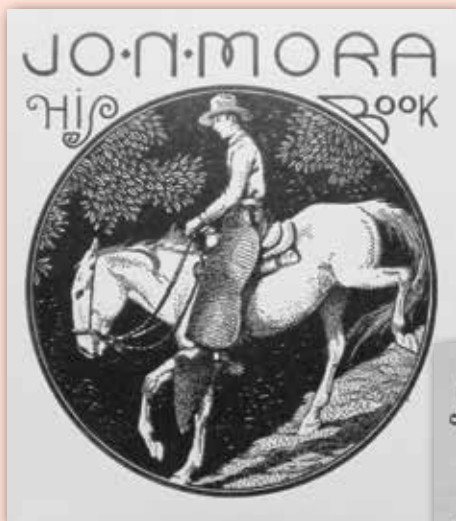


Figure 5a & 5b. Jo was a very attentive father. It is evident from conversations with his son that Jo always made an effort to treat his children, Jo Jr. and Patty, equally, creating something for each of them at the same time. These two bookplates reflect the interests and personality of each child and have been found in books actually belonging to the children.



Figure 6. If you were lucky enough to be on the Mora family mailing list, December would bring a newly designed Christmas card. One can only envy those who saved theirs; they are now a rare collector's item.

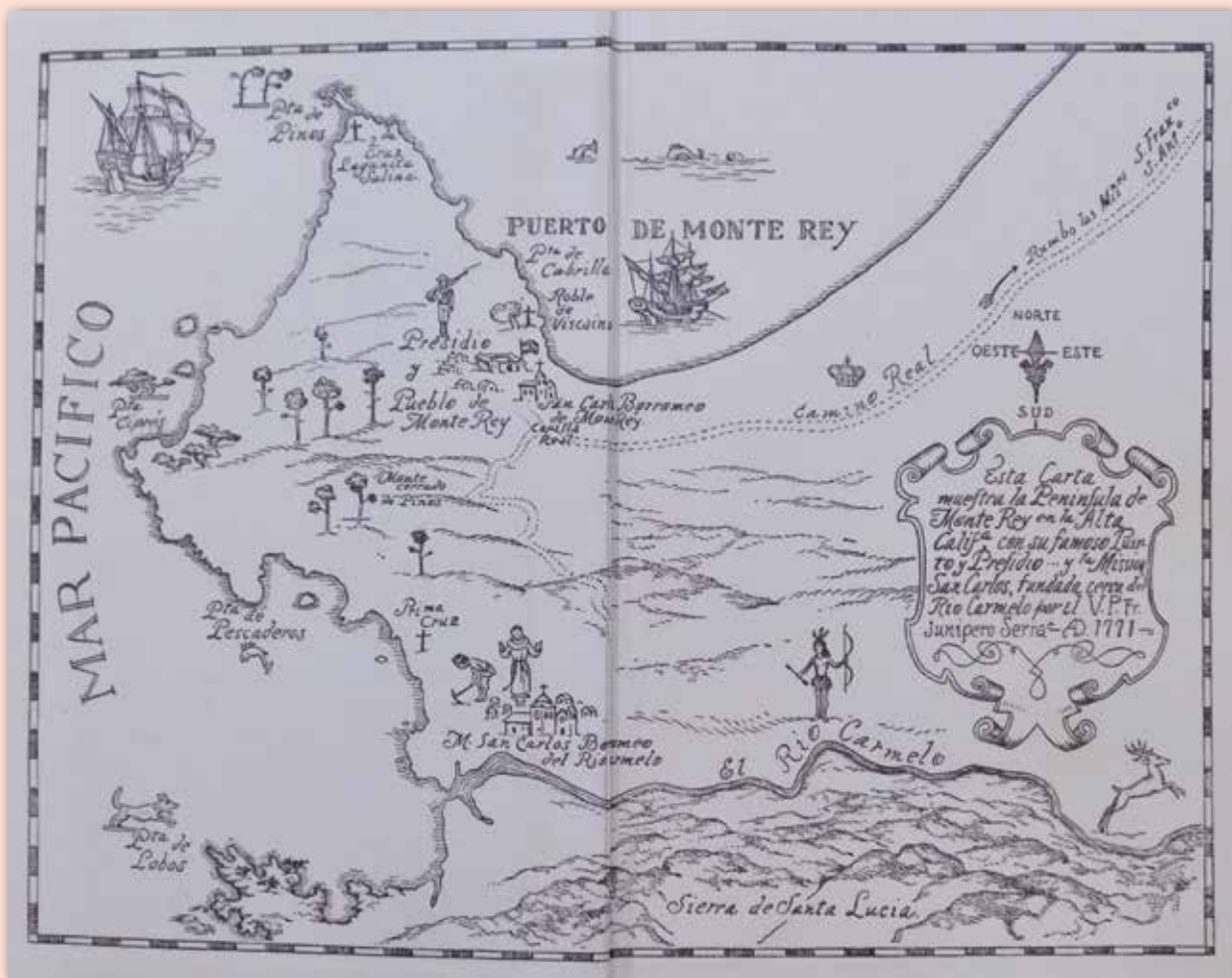


Figure 7. The most recognizable Mora art work were his maps, or cartes, as he referred to them. Created in a pictorial style, these humorous and information-filled posters were popular from the time Jo started designing and selling them. Historian Steve Harris observed that the endpapers in the book, *Dawn and the Dons*, featuring a map of the Monterey Peninsula, was the first published and commercial use of one of Jo's cartes.



Figure 8. Jo in his studio at the beginning of the process of creating the cartes with pencil on tracing paper, then black ink application, color additions, and finally printing.



Figure 9. The Yosemite carte (see full image page 1), now owned by the Yosemite Conservancy, stands out for two reasons. Jo created this carte in 1931, after having first been to the park in 1903 and later with his family in the 1920s. Based on his journals, now in the Jo Mora Collection of the Monterey History and Art Association, Jo included several delightful vignettes of his own visits to the park. In *Winter Sports* we see Jo, perhaps with his own family, getting their first view of the park alongside a drawing of Jo and his 1903 traveling companion "Honey" Williams, first arriving to the park in their Studebaker wagon, pulled by mules, Tom and Jerry.



Figure 10a & 10b. A clever promoter, Morse commissioned Jo to create a series of twelve black ink drawings, with text by Mora, that told the history of Monterey County. These images would be published in advertisements, monthly for a year, in east coast magazines like Fortune, enticing tourists to come to the Hotel Del Monte. Also used as menu covers, the designs were so popular that all twelve drawings were offered in booklet form to interested visitors and were also used in brochures. Jo's art and design also illustrated cocktail recipes concocted by famous guests, published in a hotel booklet with humorous descriptions.

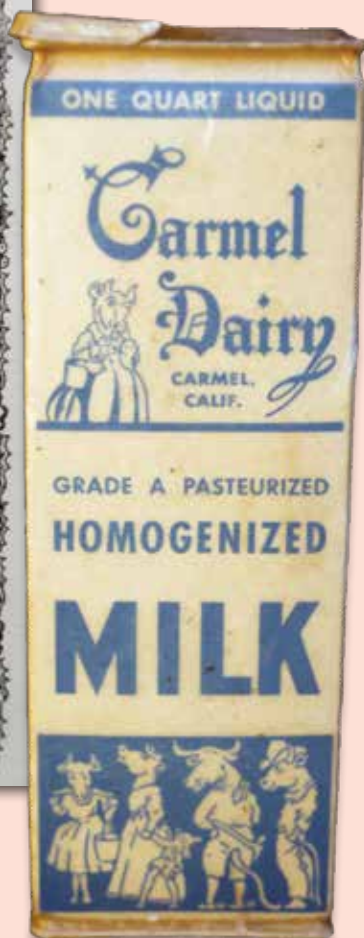


Figure 11a & 11b. A Jo Mora milk carton design and Christmas card for Earl Graff and the Carmel Dairy.

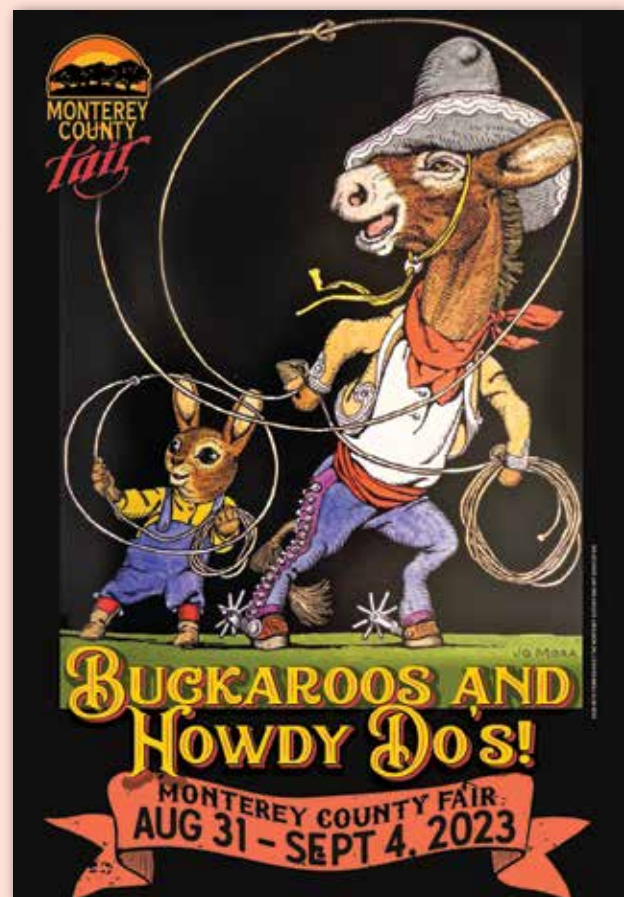


Figure 13. The Monterey County Fair has used different works of art by Jo Mora in their publicity and branding visuals six times over recent years.



Figure 12a & 12b. Jo Mora design for a souvenir passenger log in 1932 for the Panama Mail steamship; and a carte for the Grace Line in 1933.

enough to keep food on the Mora table even through the Great Depression. (Figures 8 & 9)

Morse hired Jo to create two cartes of the Monterey Peninsula and several items featuring the Hotel Del Monte. (Figure 10) As local friendships blossomed, Jo got other commissions. - The Mora family often went shark fishing with “Pop” Ernest whose restaurant popularized abalone, and Joe designed the menus. Jo’s friendship with Earl Graff, owner of the Carmel Dairy, was particularly beneficial. He bartered murals for the shop interior, designs for calendars, milk cartons, and Christmas cards for his family’s milk, eggs, cheese, and ice cream. (Figure 11)

The Mora family loved to travel, completing two significant voyages, one around the world and a second through the Western Hemisphere, both by steamship. As funds were never bountiful, Jo managed to again barter his artistic talents for passage for himself and his family. One 1932 trip inspired the publication of a “blank” travel journal with Jo’s written prompts and illustrations that passengers could fill in at their leisure. At first, Jo Jr. oversaw the log’s publication and distribution. Eventually, the cruise lines ‘bought out’ the log to give away to its passengers. The 1933

carte created for Grace Lines also served as a barter piece. The painting shown in Figure 12 is a thank you gift to the president of the shipping line who made the arrangements possible.

Jo Mora died in 1947, but his work continues to be published. Initially, Jo Jr. sold his father’s work. It was subsequently handled by the Jo Mora Trust. Now the Monterey History and Art Association holds the license to Jo Mora’s wonderful images. (Figure 13 – previous page)

Jo Mora lived a remarkable and creative life, often bartering his work to support his family and also bring excitement into their lives. It is delightful that one can still discover the results of his artistic efforts within the world of ephemera.

Peter Hiller is the Jo Mora Collection Curator for the Monterey Historical and Art Association. He is author of *The Life and Times of Jo Mora, Iconic Artist of the American West*, Layton UT, Gibbs Smith 2021.



Ephemera's Invitation

BY ANNE BAHDE

Each quarter, the Special Collections and Archives Research Center (SCARC) at Oregon State University Libraries hosts visiting classes from a broad range of disciplines. For the teaching librarian or archivist in an academic library, every term can be a challenging, shifting kaleidoscope of visiting classes from diverse topical areas. To prepare for these class sessions, we consider our collections through multiple lenses, assessing their potential to serve students of literature, agriculture, sociology, chemistry, botany, graphic design, and dozens of other subjects.

The students who come to learn in SCARC have diverse personal and academic backgrounds. To maximize the potential for transformational learning with unique collections, I seek to select materials that appeal to broad audiences and accomplish the goals of the short class session in ways that are efficient, concise, and coherent. Students in visiting classes use materials to hone skills related to conceptualizing research questions, understanding the role of the primary source within research, critically analyzing

primary sources, finding and accessing original materials, and using and incorporating primary sources into their own work.

Whatever the class topic, I try to include a few items of printed ephemera in every session I teach. A piece of visually attractive, intellectually intriguing ephemera can do more to pique the curiosity and interest of the average student than most other source types. The viewer of ephemera does not have to wade through the complex content of meeting minutes, for example, or decipher the unfamiliar cursive of a manuscript. Ephemera can offer a low investment threshold. A visually compelling item might pull a viewer in with a glance, while also inviting them to dwell with the item for a moment and explore. A piece of printed ephemera can often be absorbed easily (or at least looks as if it could be), while still welcoming and inspiring further exploration.

When selecting materials for classes, I seek those with many potential connection points; that is, items possessing a variety of features to attract a similar variety of viewers. Pieces of ephemera often offer this, and I never have to look very hard. For example, we can unpack the layers of potential connection in the trade card in Figure 1. The front image shows a child on a bed with a doll, holding a cylindrical item, with the caption “une bonne boule.” The business advertised in the top left hand corner is J. G. Durner and Co.’s Post Office Candy Store at the corner of 5th and Morrison in Portland, Oregon. Mr. Durner has helpfully included a list of fire alarm boxes on the back of his card, potentially transforming it from a throwaway bit of advertising to a useful item to be kept in one’s wallet and used at a critical moment.

At first glance, this item might catch the interest of those interested in the history of childhood, of fashion, of play, of advertising, of trade and commerce, postal history, local Portland history, or even food history and the history of candy and sweets. Any one of those connection points might draw a viewer in for a closer look, which in turn may begin to suggest the many research questions and deductions that



Figure 1. Front and back of a trade card, printer unknown.

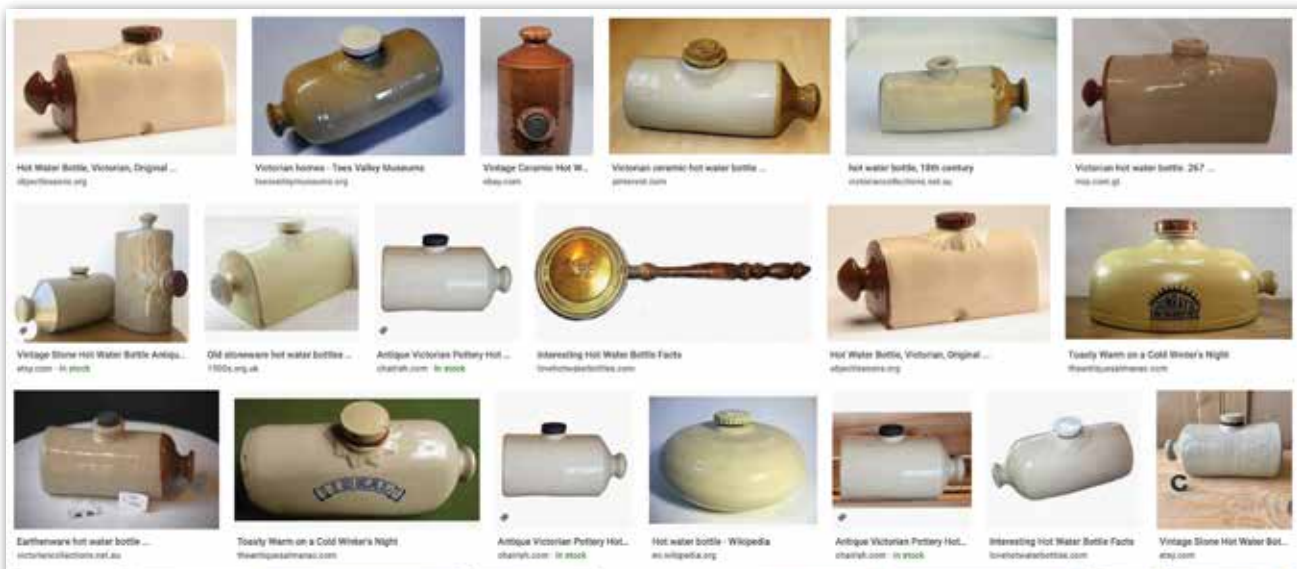


Figure 2. Image search results for an object similar to the one in the trade card image.

this single piece of paper can support. One item can become an object lesson, teaching intertwined, pan-disciplinary concepts in primary source literacy.

In this encounter, students can begin to attune their close examination skills and senses of inquiry: Does this scene reference a common idiom at the time, or a domestic setting recognizable to the original viewers? What is the history of pairing candy with a post office? Was that a common pairing, and if so, why? Why would the tradesman choose this image for his card? What does it have to do with candy? Is the child playing a game?

With a laptop at the ready, the educator is primed for subtle modeled lessons in query building and flexible searching techniques. A quick trip to Google Translate tells us “une bonne boule” is French for “a good ball,” and the child’s game becomes a bit more in focus for our distant eyes, a bit more contextualized. We might ask together, unpacking the image further, why would this distinctly cylindrical item be considered “a good ball?” Perhaps it has something to do with this cloud-like “o” in the background. Might that be steam? I can think out loud while typing in keywords to an image search: what **canister**-shaped item in the **Victorian** era might be available to a child in **bed** and set off **steam**? The results for these keywords yield nothing immediately relevant to this image; but, if we change steam to **hot water**, our search results mirror the unfamiliar object the child is holding—a hot water bottle (Figure 2).

Prompting students to observe physical and material elements, such as the gilded background and bright colors, can lead to further rumination together on the details of its production, how it was made, by whom, and for what purpose. We can talk about the history of trade cards, and speculate how someone in Portland might have encountered it at the time of its production. A Google search for “**une bonne boule**” + **french** + **Victorian** + **card** results in this hit from Attic Paper Vintage Ads & Ephemera (atticpaper.com), which shows us it is part of a French set of cards, each with a gilded background and featuring a small child on a bed, and all with a lighthearted sense of play—making

a good match for a candy store (Figure 3). Seeing the card in a commercial setting via the seller’s website can introduce students to the rare book and ephemera trade, of which

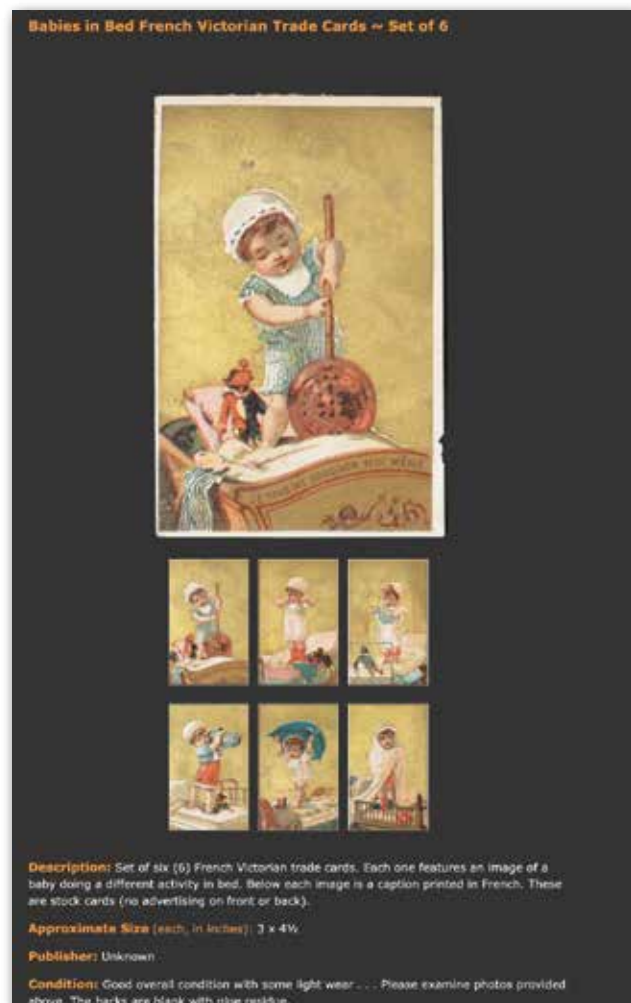


Figure 3. Screen capture, courtesy of Attic Paper Vintage Ads & Ephemera.

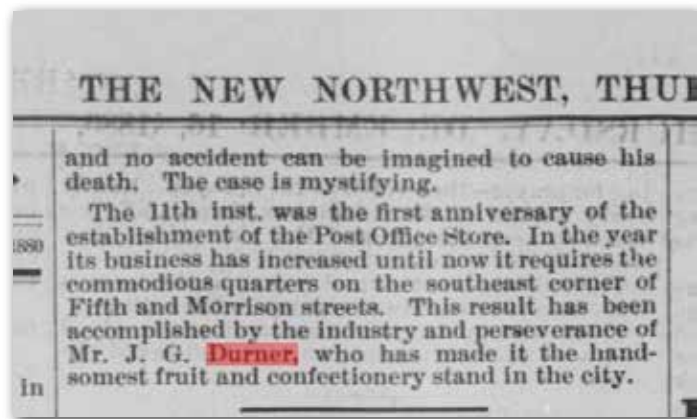


Figure 4. Digital clips from *The West Shore* (left) and *The New Northwest* of 1880.

many are wholly unaware. This then opens up thoughts and discussion about where the item in front of us came from, and who might have been involved in saving and caring for it during its travel through time.

When a primary source offers this variety of jumping-off points, it becomes easy to extend the learning experience and show the fun of linking the source to other physical and digitized sources in order to answer its questions. I ask students, “Where else do you think Durner would have advertised?” To answer, I turn to a search in *Historic Oregon Newspapers* (Durner near candy near post office limited to Portland by year span), which gives us several bits of interesting information about Mr. Durner. We spot him in the magazine *The West Shore*, selling imported French candies—a link, perhaps, to his French trade card. And in *The New Northwest* of December 1880, we can see that he is praised for his “industry and perseverance” in expanding the Post Office Store, making it the “handsomest fruit and confectionery stand in the city” (Figure 4). Browsing the advertisements in these pages allows us to pause further and take in the bustle of the growing city unfolding in sources around us.

Turning the digital pages of this publication, we also happen upon hateful anti-immigrant propaganda, specifically towards those of Chinese descent living in Oregon. J. G. Durner’s candy store advertisement is textually embedded within racist rhetoric, prompting questions on how this merchant may have lived among his Chinese neighbors in Old Town. This contemporary publication’s sharp immediacy provides an opportunity for students to encounter and confront the state’s racist origins and long history of discrimination and exclusion. A visit to the Oregon Encyclopedia’s entry on “Chinese Americans in Oregon” by Douglas Lee can further contextualize the experience via other primary and secondary sources. A search for “Portland Chinese” in the Archives West database leads us to a list of archival collections in Northwest institutions that help tell this story. To deepen this search example, we can point out that only one collection among the top ten search results was actually created by Chinese people, and most of the rest were created by white men. A visit to the page of Portland’s Chinatown Museum touches on how this history is living on in our times.

One of the primary goals of a simple search demonstration is to show how searches in different free and paid settings can yield surprising results. A search of Ancestry.com using the library’s paid subscription locates Durner in the 1881 Portland directory. Browsing through these pages fills in more detail about his clientele in the city, as well as his potential motivation for including the locations of fire alarm boxes on his trade card (Figure 5). An observant viewer might further note that within the city directory, the Anglicized names of Chinese residents are set in italic, an entirely unnecessary paratextual othering providing further evidence of the anti-Chinese sentiment that would be codified in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and that would persist for generations to come.

A free Google search for 1881 Portland Oregon directory yields an image of the front cover, which was missing from our previous encounter with this item in the digitized Ancestry.com version (Figure 6). This image, from the PBA Galleries website, shows us that Mr. Durner bought the coveted top spot on the front of the directory that year, pushing his Post Office Candy Store to the forefront of directory users’ consciousness.

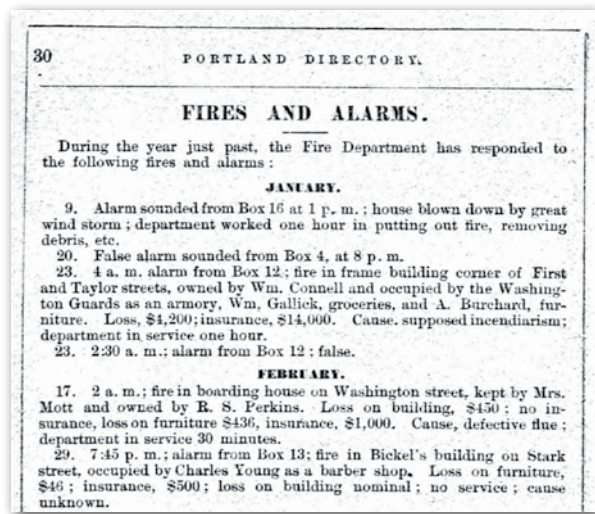


Figure 5. A clip from page 30 of the 1881 Portland Directory listing fire alarm responses from the previous year. References to the box numbers link to the useful information on the back of the trade card.

Finding Mr. Durner on the front cover of the Portland directory at the time shows us his dealings in a way the other sources do not. From our brief results in Historic Oregon Newspapers, we see that Durner's store is absent after 1883. Perhaps this prime spot was too much an outlay of funds for a newly established enterprise? This starts to be a rather interesting story, spreading in several different directions.

We'll stop with Mr. Durner there. But the pull of those unanswered questions tempts us like Mr. Durner's French sweets. In just one encounter, and with a few minutes of questioning and searching, our students have been exposed to numerous foundational concepts in primary source literacy. This is ephemera's lovely efficiency. While exploring free and paid resources relevant to a variety of disciplines, we have built out historical context, identified possible locations for sources, and honed search techniques and navigation skills. Our senses for materiality have been activated, and we have given thought to the item's creation and intended use. We have explored historical empathy, found evidence of power relationships in the documentary record, and seen how this power can ripple through the various sources of a time. We have noticed gaps in the historical record, considered the impact of these gaps on research processes and scholarship, and touched on how sources may be mediated through the ages. We have practiced assessing how a primary source can meet research needs and have begun to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent research narrative.

Most importantly, though, these simple moments of observation and demonstration introduce the idea that anyone can be a researcher using primary sources. Regardless of what detail about the item initially caught their interest, students can now imagine the possibility of seeking answers to questions from their own perspectives. This encounter can help them project themselves more quickly into the role of questioner, researcher, pursuer, and thinker. They may not have entered the classroom with this conception of themselves, but their brush with the richness of ephemera has, ideally, empowered them to feel the pull of seeking within their own worlds.

As collectors, dealers, educators, librarians, and archivists, we know that being able to triangulate and follow a story through multiple sources is the fun part, the payoff of historical work. We may also know the reward of identifying the archival silences in items and of working to help those stories be voiced and told. But students (especially students in business or chemistry or other disciplines that may not naturally emphasize historical approaches) often do not know about this fun or this prize. A piece of ephemera they feel some connection to can make them think about the reward, bringing out so many possibilities with just a little effort.

Our task is to recognize learning potential, show that potential, and invite further exploration, and we are aided in that task by collectors and people of passion who have recognized the pull of ephemera, seen its value, and saved it. Societies such as the Ephemera Society of America, which have broad, pan-disciplinary appeal across those points of connection and layers, give room to students, to

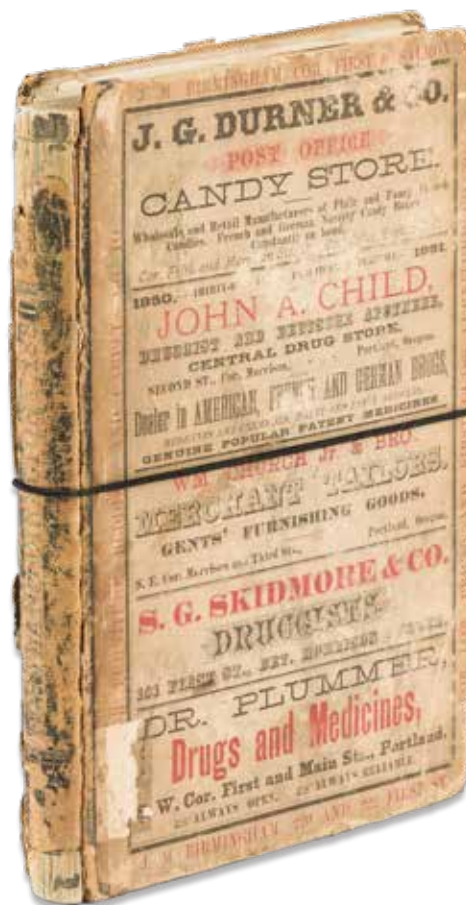


Figure 6. Portland Directory of 1881, showing the printed front cover with five two-color advertising banners, the top-most for Durner's Post Office Candy Store. Courtesy of PBA Galleries.

general appreciators, and to any others who feel that tug of inquiry. Thank you for being our partners in educating with ephemera, in bringing appreciation and exposure to its magic, and in expanding its appeal to anyone who might also feel that magnetic pull. We are proud to count ourselves in your company for this task, and thank you for the inspiration you bring to our work.

Anne Bahde is Rare Books and History of Science Librarian at Oregon State University Library. Her co-edited book *Using Primary Sources: Hands-On Instructional Exercises* won the Center for Research Libraries' Primary Source Award for Research in 2016. This article is adapted from remarks given at Oregon State University's Special Collections and Archives Research Center on the occasion of the Ephemera Society's visit during their October 2022 mid-year meeting in Portland, Oregon.



Bill Layne, more than a Disney Background Painter

BY DAVID A. BOSSERT

Rabbit holes seem to lurk in ephemera collecting. Not long ago, I found an advertising ink blotter for the Keystone Burial Vault Company that had a cartoon illustration of an anthropomorphic duck. The image had a somewhat familiar feel to it—a Disneyesque quality if you will. It was signed “Bill Layne,” which sent me on a research excursion, dropping the work I was supposed to be doing at the time.

My feeling was spot on. Layne was in fact a background artist for the Walt Disney Studios during several years in the 1940s before embarking on a robust free-lance commercial art career. He returned to the Walt Disney Studios in 1958 to paint backgrounds on Disney’s *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and all the subsequent features through *Robin Hood* (1973) including the Winnie the Pooh featurettes that eventually became *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* (1977).¹

It is important to know that many of the Disney Studios’ artists engaged in free-lance work for no other reason than to make extra money. Often the free-lance jobs paid much better than the salaried positions at the studios. The free-lance work also offered a change of pace and style from working on a feature film, which often could last several years depending on one’s discipline. Free-lance jobs gave the artists satisfaction of seeing their artwork produced in a final form such as a calendar, ink blotter, or other ephemera.

I speak from experience in that I did an enormous amount of freelance work during my 32-year career at Walt Disney Animation Studios. The unspoken cardinal rule was not to work on anything that was competitive to the Studio. In other words, don’t work on another studio’s animated feature if you were working on a Disney animated feature film. That was easy for me as much of the free-lance was for non-competitive commercials, television shows, documentary, or education films.

William “Bill” Layne was born on March 25, 1911, in Berkeley, California. After graduating High School, he received his art training at California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. From there, Layne moved to Chicago where he began his commercial art career in a display studio.² Three years later, he moved to Los Angeles where he started his first stint working at the Walt Disney Studios as a background painter. Layne was uncredited on Disney’s *Make Mine Music* (1946) – see Figure 2.

When Layne left the Walt Disney Studios he did numerous illustrations on advertising ink blotters, particularly for Brown & Bigelow, one of the largest publishers of calendars and other promotional products.

Brown & Bigelow began an annual tradition in 1925 by publishing a calendar for the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). This first BSA calendar featured illustrations by Norman Rockwell. Brown & Bigelow went on to publish a variety of calendars including many with illustrations

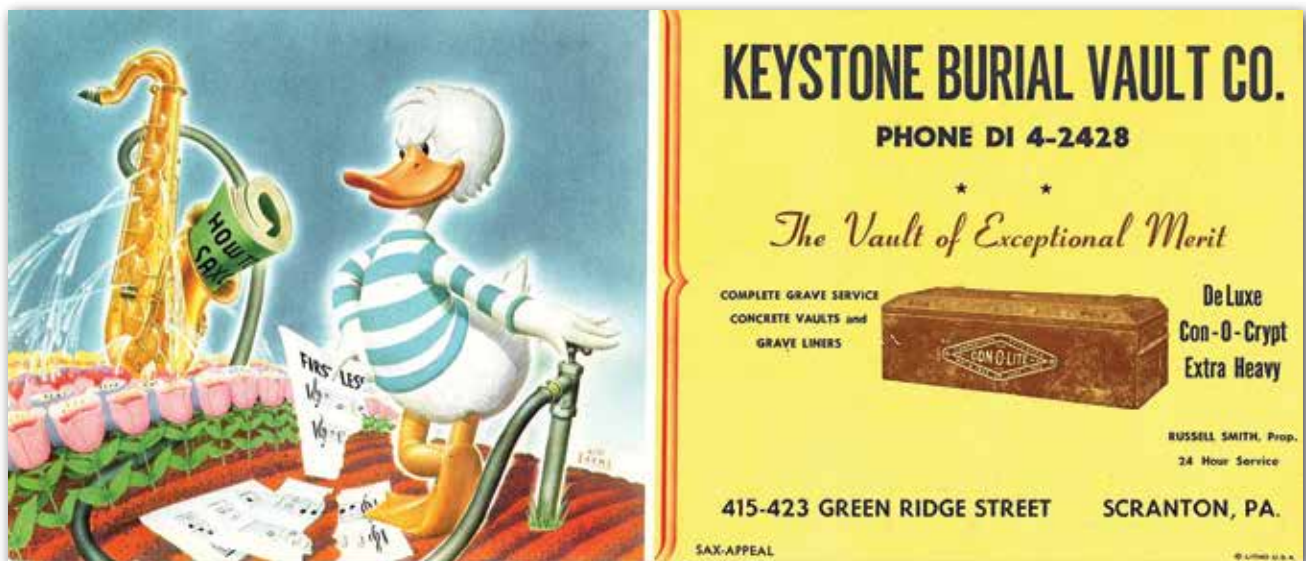


Figure 1. One in a series of advertising ink blotter for KEYSTONE BURIAL VAULT CO. titled SAX-APPEAL that featured a cartoony illustration by Bill Layne. Note the dimensional duck character that has a Disneyesque quality reminiscent of Donald Duck with an angry expression. The whole series features anthropomorphic animals doing rather cheery activities considering the product being promoted. [Courtesy Private Collection]



Figure 2. Film poster for Walt Disney's Make Mine Music (1946). [Courtesy Heritage Auctions, HA.com]

painted by Bill Layne that featured pin-up girls and fantasy creatures like mermaids, elves, and gnomes³. (Figure 3) Layne himself, estimated that he painted more than 650 illustrations for calendars alone and many more for ink blotters, puzzles, and other commercial purposes from the late 1940s through the 1950s. Even after he rejoined Disney as a background artist on *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), Layne continued doing freelance illustrations throughout the rest of his career.

A popular series of paintings Layne created was inspired by *The Martins and the Coys* sequence from Disney's *Make Mine Music* (1946). The Disney version featured the popular radio vocal group The King's Men who sing about the ubiquitous Hatfield's and McCoy's feud. The feud is eventually broken up when Grace Martin and Henry Coy, two young people representing each family, fall in love.⁴ (Figure 4)

The Martins and the Coys Disney sequence featured characters inspired by Paul Webb's darker more unglamorous *Mountain Boys* series of cartoons for *Esquire* magazine. Layne took his version of *The Martins and the Coys* to a funny and more tantalizing place that made light of hillbilly life. His central female character was likely inspired by Al Capp's Daisy Mae Scragg, from the comic strip *Li'l Abner*. These Brown & Bigelow calendars

featuring *The Martins and the Coys*, licensed from Disney, capitalized on the hillbilly humor craze of that period.

A series of elf characters doing carpentry and construction work were also very popular images created by Layne in the 1950s. (Figure 5) His elves and the settings he created all display action and movement that allow the viewer to use their imagination to envision the scenes coming alive. Layne's characters have an intrinsic appeal to them, which is one of the hallmarks that made Disney's animated characters so popular. Many of these elf calendars were used as marketing and promotion for businesses, especially in the home and building trades.

Layne clearly incorporated his knowledge of animation gained at Disney to add the sense of dynamic motion in the tableaux he painted. The use of motion lines, characters in mid-action, and the use of props and effects such as sawdust flying off a buzzsaw or a button popping off clothing all contributed to bringing the scenes to life. He applied many of the 12 Principles of Animation to his illustrations including staging, solid drawing, exaggeration, and of course appeal.⁵

Appeal is often a quality that a viewer feels more than they can explain. It is best described as a combination of pleasing design that simply and effectively communicates the essence of the image or scene and its charm, which is the power to evoke a magical quality that resonates with



Figure 3. A pin-up girl illustration by Bill Layne from a Brown & Bigelow calendar in the 1950s. Notice how Layne creates movement with his subject by strategically adding motion lines complemented by a button popping off the lady's shorts. The clean silhouette of the subject matter adds to the appeal of the image. [Courtesy Private Collection]

continued on page 16



Figure 4. Painting by Bill Layne in gouache on board, titled *Hats Blocked to Fit Your Head*, for a 1950s Brown & Bigelow Calendar that depicts the Martins and the Coys from the feature film *Make Mine Music* (1946). Note the Daisy Mae Scragg look-like female character admiring herself in the mirror. Layne was noted for his pin-up girl images. [Courtesy Heritage Auctions, HA.com]

the viewer. Layne's illustrations check all those boxes. His illustrations, whether on an ink blotter, puzzle, calendar, or in a book are delightful to view for their whimsical characters and enchanted environments. (Figures 7 & 8)

By the time Layne left Disney in 1973, he was the head of the background department. By then, he wanted to pursue "serious" easel painting at his home in Studio City, California. Layne was known for his "distinctive way of handling his... paintings, taking advantage of the inner light and individual qualities of the subjects" he was painting. His fine art paintings and illustrations collectively show his

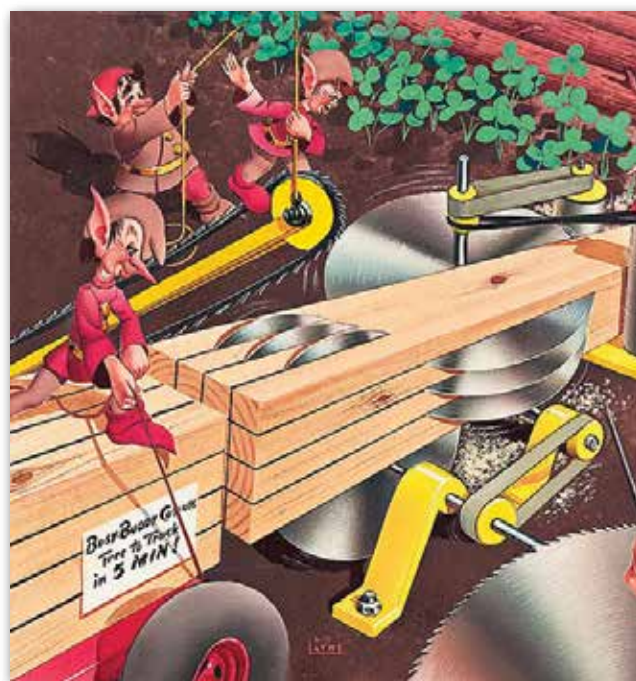


Figure 5. One of Bill Layne's popular elf illustrations for a Brown & Bigelow calendar in 1956. His characters use manual labor to power the circular saws in these construction related scenes. [Courtesy Private Collection]

technical skill as well as his range of styles, mediums, and techniques. (Figure 9)

Layne had several closed showings of his artwork while he worked at the Disney Studios and his few public shows in later years were limited to the De Vaux Gallery in Carmel and the Copenhagen Gallery in Solvang, both in California. His original paintings are collectable and do come up in auctions on a somewhat regular basis. It is also reasonably easy to acquire ephemera bearing Layne's delightful illustrations whether it is advertising ink blotters, calendars, or other ephemera.

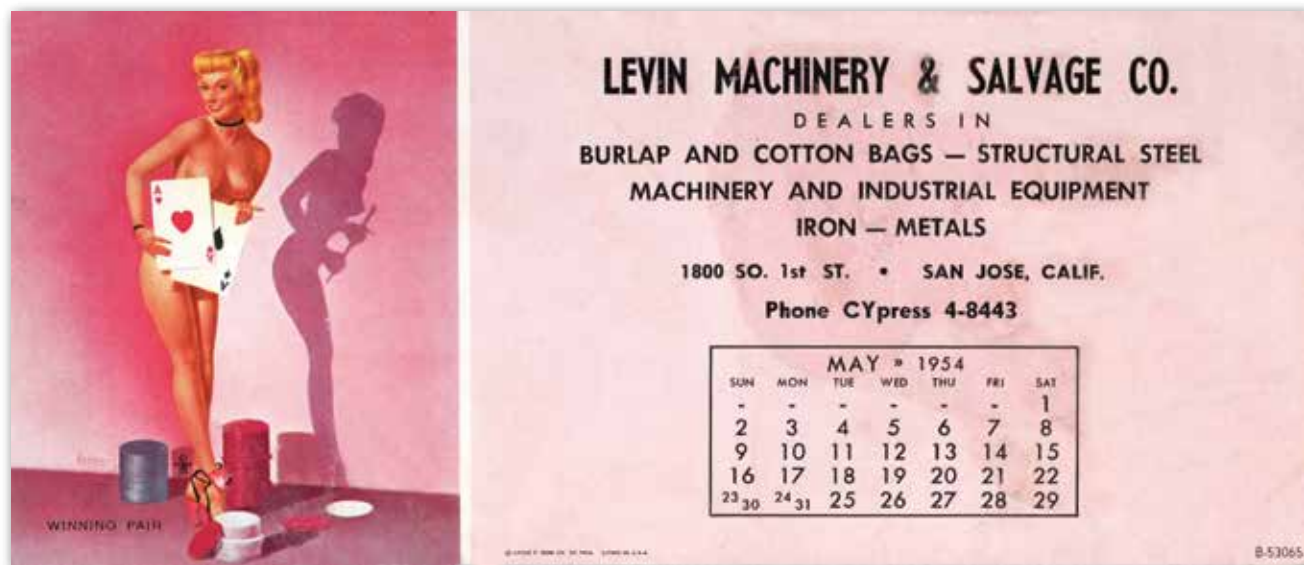
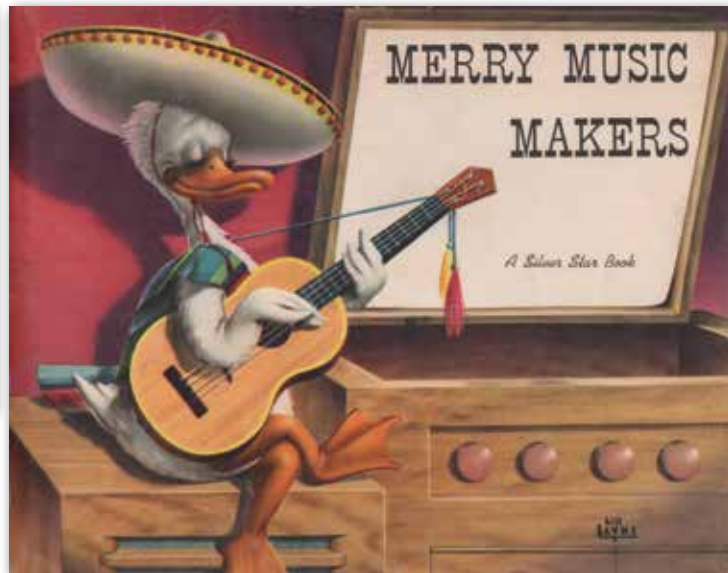
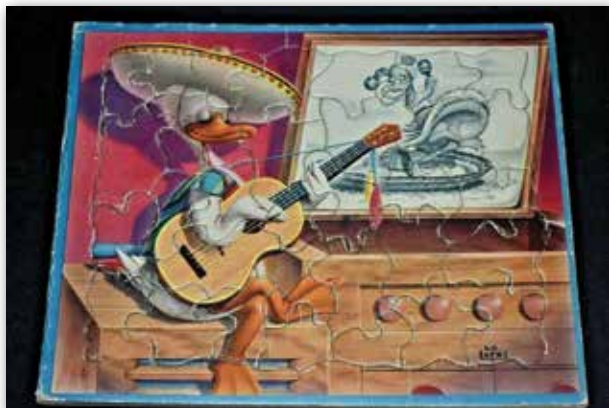


Figure 6. An advertising ink blotter for the LEVIN MACHINERY & SALVAGE CO. featuring one of Bill Layne's pin-up girls from 1954. The painting shows his command of the human figure along with excellent staging and visual appeal. [Courtesy Private Collection]



Figures 7 and 8. A Bill Layne illustration of a Duck playing a guitar printed on a cardboard puzzle. This same illustration, slightly modified, also appeared on the cover of the children's book *Merry Music Makers* by Elizabeth Sherman in 1952. The duck character is very reminiscent of the *KEYSTONE BURIAL VAULT CO.* ink blotter in Figure 1. [Courtesy Private Collection]

That brings me back full circle to those original Keystone Burial Vault Company ink blotters that caught my eye. It is a facet of ephemera collecting that I truly enjoy—the discoveries when you least expect them. Those advertising ink blotters with Bill Layne's illustrations led me to his calendar art, puzzles, and book illustrations. All of that helped in my research to expose the ephemera art of a talented and unsung Disney Animation, commercial, and fine artist.

Endnotes

- ¹ Bill Layne (1911-2005), IMDb, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0493546/>
- ² askArt, Facts About Bill Layne, https://www.askart.com/artist/Bill_Layne/123731/Bill_Layne.aspx
- ³ Bill Layne, *The Martins and the Coys* (1950s), Howardlowery.com
- ⁴ Bill Layne Make Mine Music-related "Hillbilly" Calendar Paintings Group of 2 (Disney Productions/Brown & Bigelow, 1950s, Heritage Auctions, HA.com)
- ⁵ Thomas, Frank; Ollie Johnston. *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation*. Hyperion. pp. 47-69. ISBN 9780786860708.



Figure 9. *Ocean Crashing Waves* in oil on a 9" X 12" Masonite board by Bill Layne is one of many seascapes he painted in his later years while pursuing "serious" easel painting in his home studio. [Courtesy Private Collection]



Figure 10. One of Bill Layne's mermaid illustrations titled *Pearl Garden*, painted in gouache on board for a Brown & Bigelow Calendar in the 1950s. Courtesy Private Collection

David A. Bossert is an award-winning artist, filmmaker, and author. He is a 32-year veteran of The Walt Disney Company, where he contributed his talents to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), *The Lion King* (1994), *Fantasia/2000* (1999) among many others. As an inventor, he was awarded a U.S. Patent in 2018 for his invention, Parallax Based Monoscopic Rendering. In 2020, he received an additional U.S. Patent for Varying Display Content Based on Viewpoint. He continues to explore transformative, immersive experiences in book publishing.



Women and a Century of Cruises

By JOHN G. SAYERS

In 2008 when Cunard's wonderful *Queen Elizabeth 2* was retired after some 40 years of faithful service, my wife Judith and I sailed from Southampton on one of the QE2 Farewell Voyages, coddled in one of her best penthouse suites to relive the elegance of the past century of ocean liner glamor before it was too late. Last year, when a direction sign from Southampton's Ocean Terminal came up for auction in the U.K., we were able to secure this final fond memory (Figure 1). That's one bookend to this story. Let's begin 100 years earlier.

If you have any connection with the travel industry, you will know 'fam tours' [familiarization tours] provided to travel agents to promote a particular destination or service. Pictured is a hardcover souvenir of a very early 'fam tour' – one day of wining and dining, sailing out of New York in 1872 – to promote the Anchor Line (Figure 2). It's outside of our hundred-year window, but it wasn't offered to the general public. And how it eventually got to Sotheran's Book Store, just off Piccadilly in London, I will never know.

The father of ocean cruises was Frank C. Clark, an American travel entrepreneur (see my article about the unsung Mr. Clark, a true cruise pioneer, in *Ephemera Journal* Vol. 24 No. 1). I want to begin the century with his cruise to the Mediterranean and the Orient in 1908.

To foster exclusivity, the passenger list (Figure 3) is headed as a list of 'Members' of Clark's lengthy trip. Those aboard included 27 passengers shown as 'Reverend'. An affluent clergy? No, they had probably been encouraged by the Clark organization to recruit 15 – perhaps 20 – members of their congregations to make the tour so that they could get a promised free passage.

I'm sure that Frank Clark was always searching for his next great cruise. When the American Navy circled the globe to 'show the flag' in many countries in a 1907-1909 sailing, Clark would have realized that he could offer an Around the World Cruise in 1909 (Figure 4),

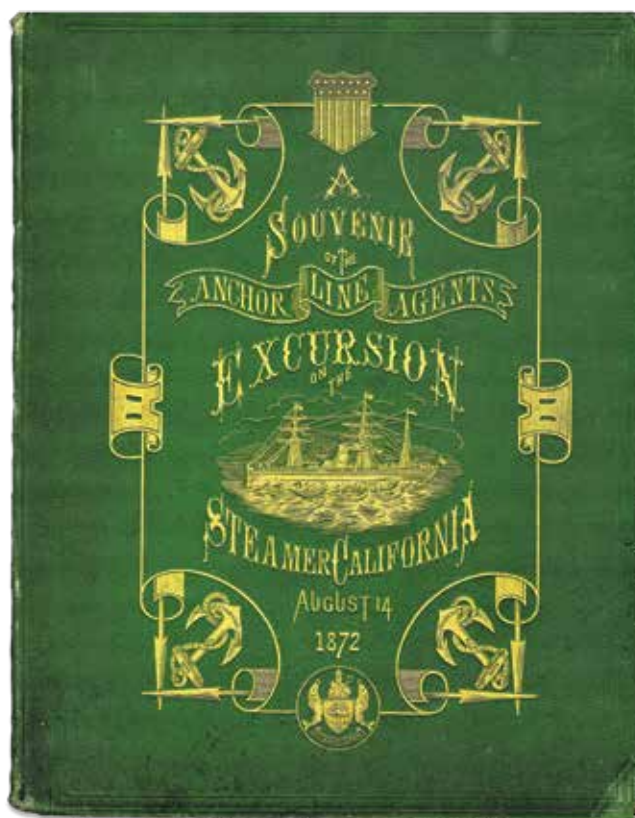


Figure 2. Souvenir of the 1872 Anchor Line Agents Excursion on the Steamer California.

capitalizing on the globe-girdling publicity garnered by the Navy.

At the end of the trip, passengers were given prestigious certificates attesting to their membership in a fictitious club designated as The Girdlers; women, as well as men, were entitled to become 'Members'.

Annual Women's Day has just passed, and I would like to honor it by focusing on some of the challenges

that women faced as they cruised across the oceans of the world, whether on a three-month world cruise or just a week's trip across the Atlantic. Shipping lines knew that women wanted to travel, and the challenge was to suggest that they could travel in pairs and meet handsome ship's officers (Figure 5) and affluent male passengers, and, as with this stylish young lady in 1913, (Figure 6) they could travel alone.

Note that she is carrying two of her own bags, so clearly not wealthy,



Figure 1. Direction sign to Cunard's Queen Elizabeth II, from Southampton's Ocean Terminal.

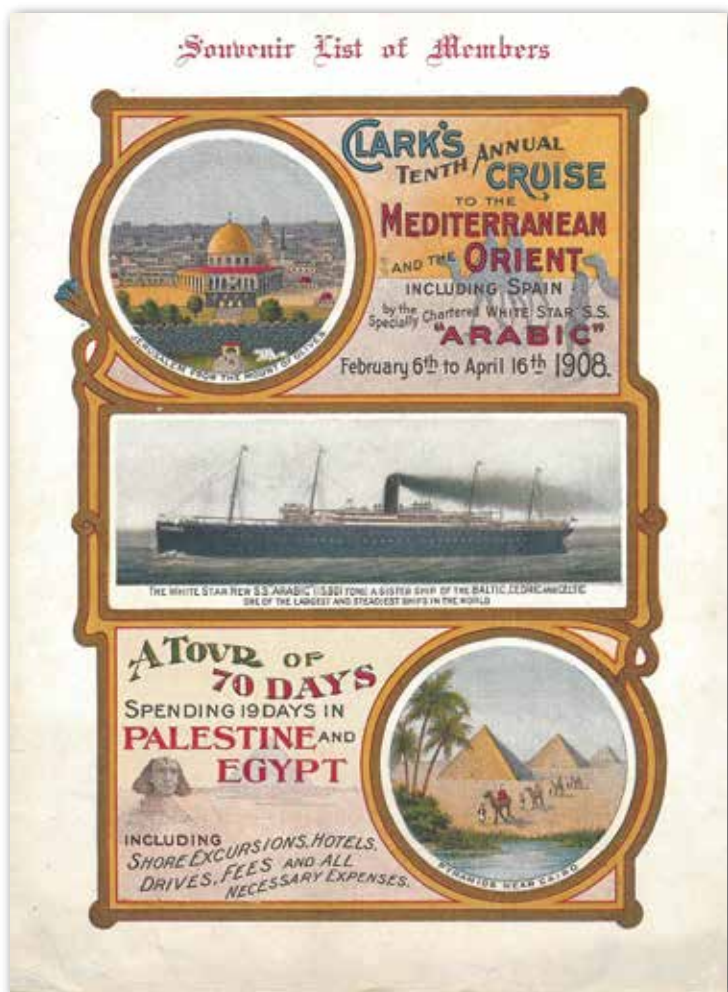


Figure 3. Cover of the souvenir list of passengers aboard White Star's SS Arabic in 1908.

implying that you didn't have to be a rich woman to travel by sea.

Resources such as hairdressers were available onboard, and one is described on the back of this image (Figure 7). The woman enthuses about the wonderful gifts and treats that this entrepreneurial hairdresser carries in stock, specifically:

This man has a wonderful Shop, sweets to gold brooches, etc. Fancy dresses, shoes, everything in fact & a great man to gossip. Very funny. Too hot to write more.

The gentleman on the left is presumably her husband, present to prevent any imagined 'hanky-panky' or to curtail her buying habits for gold brooches and fancy dresses, or, perhaps stereotypically, to pay for the cost and a tip if it hadn't been charged to his onboard account (she would likely not have had her own account).

Women on their own could become very lonely, and the woman on the right-hand side of a poignant image from the Dollar Line in the 1930s, surrounded by

passengers in pairs and groups, displays a rather lonely figure. (Figure 8) It's a long trip across the Pacific Ocean, and readers who recall the film *An Affair to Remember* – a real 'tear jerker' – will recall the story that romance could happen on even a short transatlantic trip.

But there are also handsome and sometimes predatory officers (Figure 9) to distract the lonely woman passenger, and the message on this photograph, referring to 'catching a cold' as a euphemism for becoming pregnant, implies that 'Elvie' could have succumbed to the charms of a handsome ship's officer.

In another archive, from a lonely Pacific crossing on the Dollar Line in the 1930s, a woman passenger has retained a sheaf of messages from an officer pursuing her, including his hand-drawn map of how to reach the radio room. It was a place where they could have an uninterrupted assignation during the hour when the bribed radio operator had vacated his post. (Figure 10). The archive even includes a brief pencilled note about a meeting in New York in future. Clearly, a woman traveler could find 'companionship' if she chose to do so but might have had an ongoing battle to rebuff advances to which she did not want to respond.

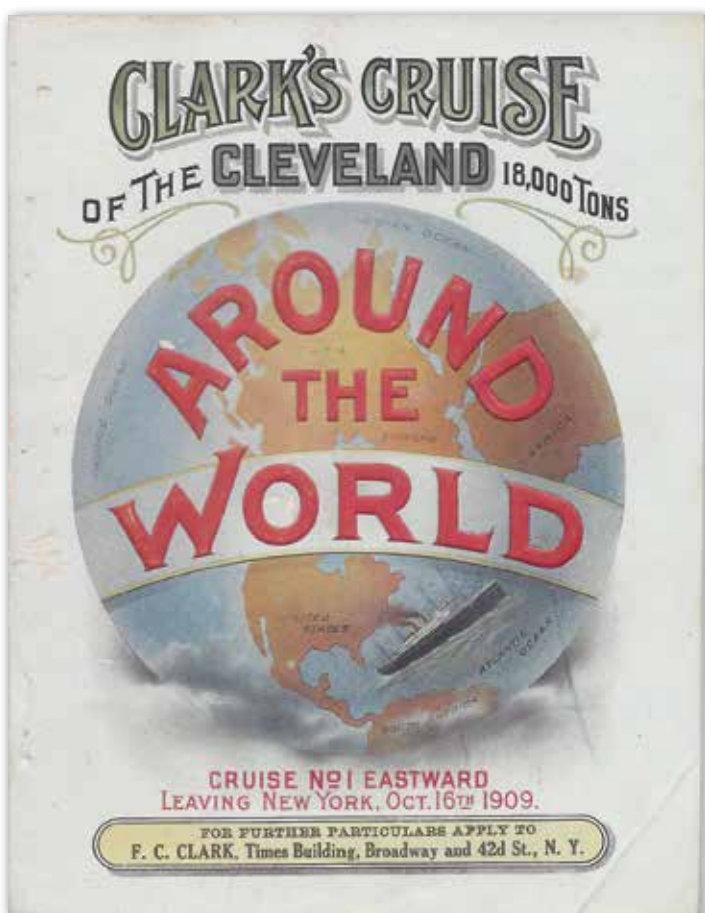


Figure 4. Cover of the booklet describing an Around the World cruise on the SS Cleveland, organized by Frank C. Clark in 1909.

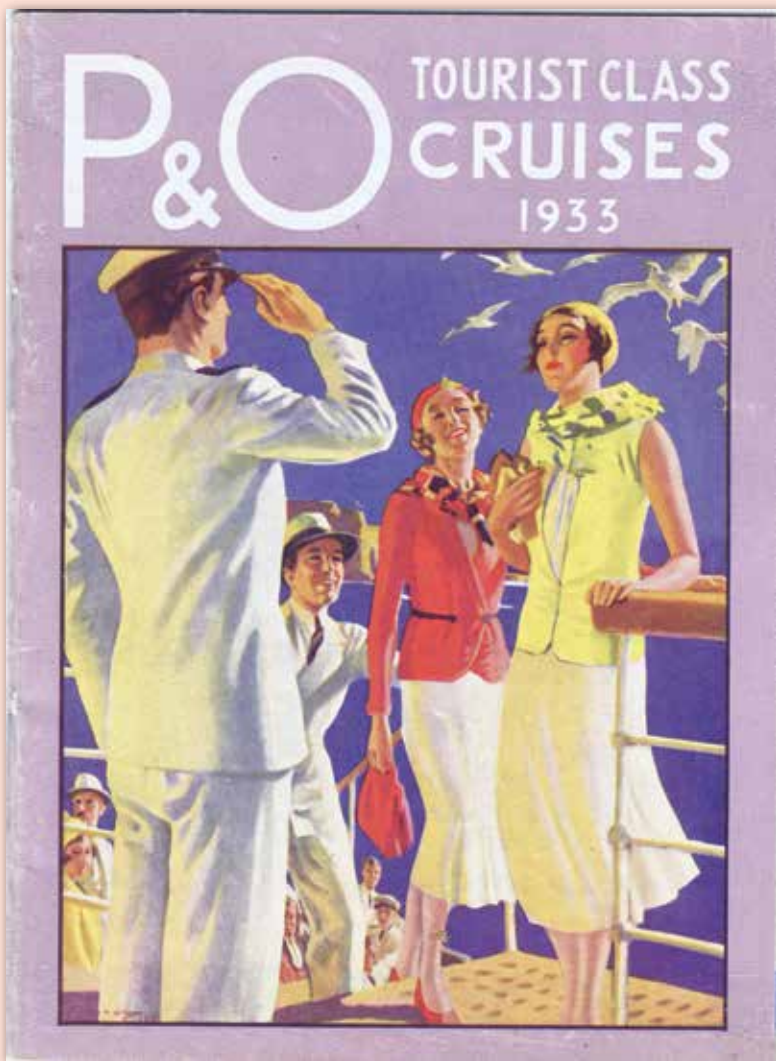


Figure 5. Cover to the booklet describing Pacific & Orient Tourist Class Cruises for 1933.



Figure 7. Photo postcard of the Hair Dressing Saloon on board the Royal Mail Ship Orsova 1909.



Figure 6. Timetable and description of the 1913 sailings to Europe from New York of the North German Lloyd line.



Figure 8. Promenade deck postcard view of the Dollar Line in the 1930s.



Figure 9. Photo postcard of officers on the SS Aorangi out of London.

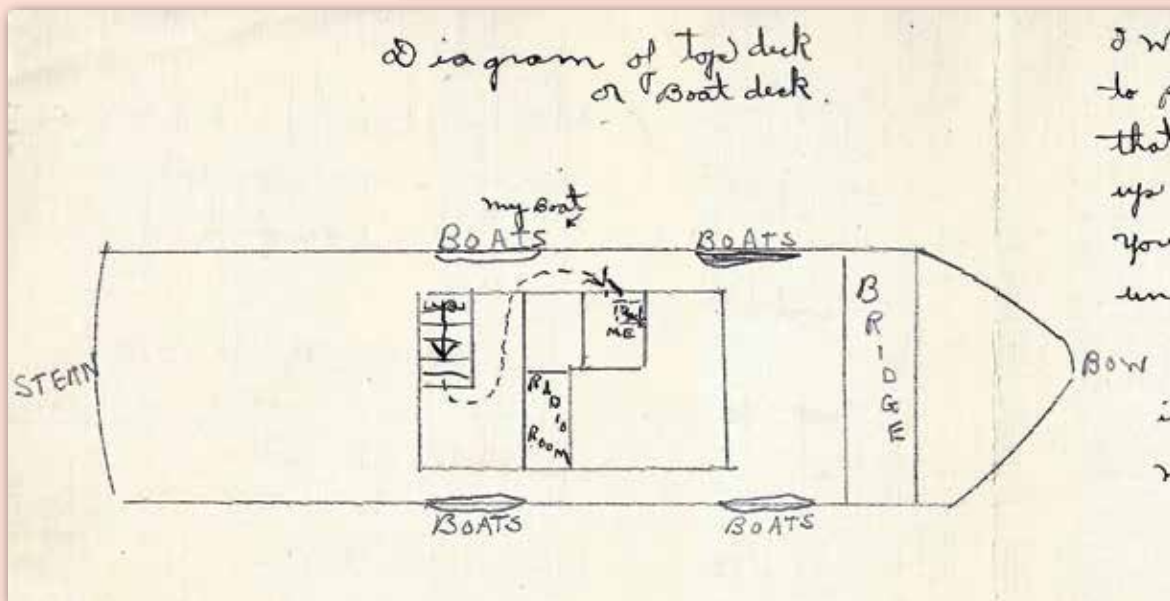


Figure 10. Diagram of how to find the private liaison room that a 1930s ship's mate arranged with the radio operator, so that he could entertain a female passenger.



Figure 11. Promotional photograph of the Skaal (Welcome) Bar on the Pacific & Orient liner Strathaird in the 1960s.

When looking for company, one of the most popular places to socialize was in the ship's bar. (Figure 11) This shipping line promotional photo shows lots of 'social interaction' as the cocktails flowed and a romantic band strolled through the room. Social equality now, but for many years there was no possibility of male and female interaction in one specific, restricted facility.

That forbidden facility, described variously in terms such as a 'male bastion' or an 'exclusive male preserve,' was the Smoking Room, the place where men congregated to smoke, drink, gamble, and (presumably)

discuss world affairs and politics. And that restriction lasted well into the 1930s.

A women wrote in anger on the back of this 1928 image of the First Class Smoking Room on Canadian Pacific's *Empress of France* (Figure 12) that access was restricted to males, and women were only allowed to sit on the balcony. She probably didn't realize it, but twenty years earlier, even that would have been an impossibility. And with the proscription of smoking on board, the irony is that this one-time 'bastion' no longer exists.

Women traveling on board ship or otherwise have fewer impediments: ephemera of the past tells us where we have been and how we have progressed. We can hope the ephemera of the future will document further progress along the continuum.



Figure 12. 1928 photograph of the First Class Smoking Room of the Canadian Pacific Ship Empress of France.

John Sayers is Treasurer of the Ephemera Society of America, and the author of *Secrets of the Great Ocean Liners*, published in 2021 by the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, where John's collection is now housed.



If War Comes Tomorrow: *A Stalinist Propaganda Film*

BY WILLIAM VELVEL MOSKOFF & CAROL GAYLE

In February 1938, the Soviet government released a one-hour propaganda film that depicted the nation and its army, surprised by a sneak attack from abroad, uniting as one and leaping into action to turn back the invasion and defeat the enemy. The film, *If War Comes Tomorrow* (*Esli zaftra voina*), was accompanied by a riveting martial musical score. It was billed as a documentary, and its subtitle was “A Battle Film Based on Newsreel Material,” but it was not an account of real wars at all. Its actual purpose was to psychologically mobilize the Soviet people by demonstrating that they always had to be ready to go to war. The Red Army was a pillar of this readiness to fight, but only because it was supported by the direct and conscious participation of the Soviet people.

The film must have been made in the latter part of 1937, at the height of the Great Terror, Stalin’s brutal purges of the Soviet Communist Party and most major institutions of Soviet life. The result was an atmosphere of fear in what seemed like “a time of looming war.”¹

Government propaganda sought to focus the fear on enemies, both warlike enemies abroad and real and imagined enemies at home, including those who did not actively support Stalin.

If War Comes Tomorrow gave no hint of the fear or domestic conflicts playing out in 1937 in the army and the larger society. As a propaganda film, its function was to mobilize the public and prepare it to defend the country. It was short enough to be shown at agitprop (political propaganda) meetings and other political gatherings. The film is intentionally general. The opening title card says, “In 19...., on that evening, in the capital of the Soviet Union,” suggesting these events could happen at any moment. The film generalizes the enemy forces, presenting them as a mash-up of various enemies – they are primarily German, they speak in German and their insignia resembles the swastika, but they salute in the Polish fashion, and their uniforms have elements of French and British as well as German uniforms.



Figure 1. 1935 Photo Postcard of Josef Stalin and Kliment Voroshilov.

It is reported that “real army units and military equipment were involved in producing the film,”² suggesting that the movie had the support of military leaders, including Commissar of Defense Voroshilov and likely of Stalin himself (the two men were close friends – Figure 1). Considerable cinematic resources were devoted to creating this propaganda statement, including a host of major Soviet directors and movie technicians. The credits list Yefim Lvovich Dzigan as the overall head of the movie’s “production brigade.” He was the principal director and lead script writer. In 1936, Dzigan had directed *The Sailors of Kronstadt* (*My iz Kronshadt*), a full-length film made to be shown in theaters for which he won the Order of Lenin. It was a war drama about the confrontation during the civil war between the anti-Bolshevik forces of Admiral Nikolai Yudenich and the revolutionary sailors of the Baltic Fleet. That Dzigan was chosen to take charge of *If War Comes Tomorrow* suggests he was regarded by the regime as a successful and reliable filmmaker.³

The score of the movie was derived from a memorable martial song, especially written for the film (Figure 2). The music was composed by the Pokrass brothers, Daniil and Dmitry, who often collaborated. Dmitry was the more famous of the two, composing popular music and scores for the theater and films. He was honored in 1975

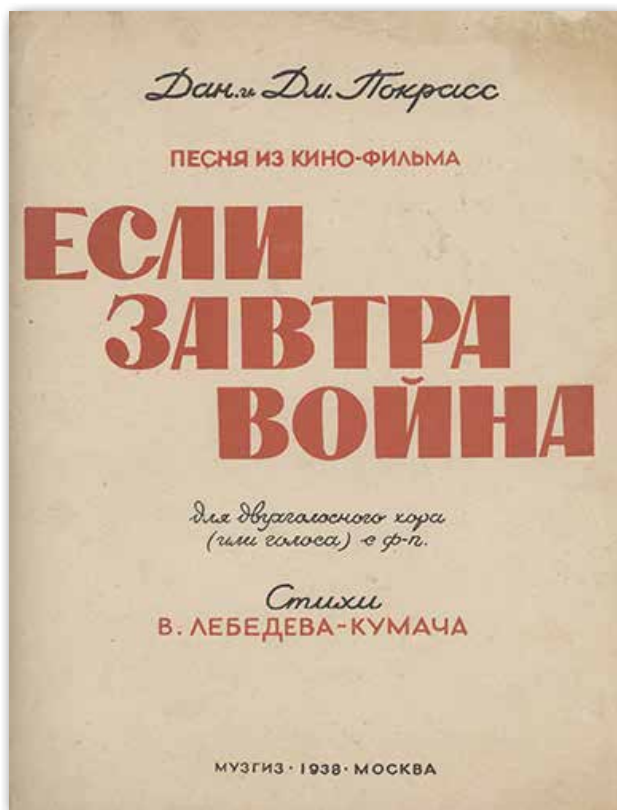


Figure 2. Cover to the 1938 musical score. “Dan[ui]l and Dm[itry] Pokrass / Song from the Movie / If War Comes Tomorrow / For Two-Part Choir (or Voice) with Piano / Lyrics V. Lebedeva-Kumacha / Muzgiz [The State Music Publisher] 1938 Moscow.”



Figure 3. Postcard issued around the same time as the 1938 film, with images of two of the actors portraying Soviet military men, and with all the words. The refrain: “On the land, in the sky, and on the sea / Our melody is strong and resolute. / If war comes tomorrow, if the campaign starts tomorrow, / Be prepared for the campaign today!” The verses: “If tomorrow war comes, if the enemy attacks / If the forces of darkness come, / Like one person, the entire Soviet people / Shall rise for the free Motherland. / If tomorrow war comes, the country will be in turmoil / From Kronstadt and to Vladivostok. / The country will be in turmoil, great and mighty / And we shall cruelly beat the enemy. / The planes will fly, the machine guns will shoot / The mighty tanks will roar, / And the warships will sail, and the infantry will advance, / And the armored vehicles will be on the move. / Arise, people, be prepared for the campaign! / Drummers, beat ever louder! / Musicians forward! Singers forward! / Let our victorious song break forth!”

as a People’s Artist of the USSR. The lyrics were written by V.I. Lebedev-Kumach, a poet, satirist, and a writer of a number of patriotic songs.

The song *If War Comes Tomorrow* is still well-known among Russians today and is periodically recorded by Russian musical groups. The lyrics present the nation as inspired by a sense of its power, confident that it will be victorious if war were to come. Again and again, the song stresses the need to be prepared today for tomorrow’s war. The lyrics were revised during World War II, with verbs put in the past tense⁴ (Figure 3).

As the film begins, it is evening in Moscow and the atmosphere is filled with fun. People are strolling arm-

in-arm. There are fireworks, dancing, and rides on steamboats. We see the night lights of the city from the banks of the Moscow River. A loudspeaker blares the news that something big has been built and that tickets are on sale for flights from Moscow to the U.S. via the North Pole. The scene cuts to two old men who are obviously friends, bragging about their progeny. One of them has three sons who are in the army, all of them serving in the same tank, the so-called Tank of the Mileev brothers.

Suddenly, the tenor of the film changes. On the other side of the border, fascist aggressors are gathering in darkness to invade the Soviet Union. They claim that a great military force is arrayed against the Soviet Union. In the invaders' camp the language is German, and there appear to be many tanks all displaying an insignia that closely resembles a swastika. The commanding general says: "We have been given the great honor of being the first to enter the territory of the Bolsheviks." (Figure 4) Saying "Long live our race," the general arrogantly tells his men they are about to march on Moscow. The enemy tanks are turned against the Soviet Union. (The enemy tanks in the movie are in fact all Soviet tanks, with an ersatz swastika painted on the side.) We see enemy soldiers marching. The dark of the night masks much activity, but searchlights reveal enemy planes about to take off, infantry on the march, cavalry riding, and tanks rolling. The Soviet Union is attacked—without warning or provocation.

But wait! Just as suddenly, here comes the Soviet cavalry, tanks, and artillery to fight the enemy. A Soviet border outpost is overrun, and an outmanned guard dies heroically defending his post. But his death inspires his comrades. They charge the enemy shouting, "remember



Figure 4. A still from the film - the scene where the enemy commander, a Soviet actor, boastfully says: "We have been given the great honor to be the first to enter the territory of the Bolsheviks."



Figure 5. A still from the film, with the Soviet actor Serafim Kozminskiy as a Soviet pilot.

our comrade!" Civilian women take an active role in the fighting, represented by the wife of the outpost's leader who joins in the battle and shoots an enemy officer. Radio operators and telegraphers rapidly send messages to the Kremlin. The enemy is soon on the run. There are cavalry charges, with Soviet soldiers waving their swords in the air as they ride swiftly into battle. Soviet Tupelov TB-3s bombers join the fray and strike at the invaders (Figure 5).

The battle becomes a vehicle to demonstrate that all the peoples of the Soviet Union are invested in defeating the enemy—here come volunteers from Uzbekistan, Georgians on horseback, Cossack fighters from the Kuban and the Don, others "from the fields of Ukraine and the factories in the Donbass." Appearances of Stalin and Voroshilov punctuate the film. In the last several minutes of the film, the captured enemy commander watches in wonder as wave after wave of Soviet military personnel and weaponry pass by. First come the cavalry and horse-drawn artillery, then multiple columns of tanks and armored vehicles, followed by wave after wave of planes, and then we see screen after screen flooded with endless rows of men from the various branches of the Soviet armed forces. At the end, a title card asserts: "Nowhere in the whole world is there a force that could crush this country, and always and everywhere Stalin is with us, and our own Marshal Voroshilov is walking our land."

The idea that defending the nation is the responsibility of all citizens is embodied in the postcard in Figure 6. This is a small version of a propaganda poster based on the movie, designed by Soviet artist Victor Koretsky. A worker stands poised with a rifle, ready to defend the nation. Looming large behind him is the red flag, the symbol of the revolutionary movement and the Soviet Union. Almost hidden, and behind the flag, is an endless number of citizens armed and ready to defend the nation.

continued on page 26



Figure 6. Postcard version of a propaganda poster for the movie.

If War Comes Tomorrow was released in the United States on July 14, 1938, five months after it opened in the Soviet Union and was reviewed by the *Daily Worker*, the newspaper of the Communist Party USA. Advertisements show the film was distributed by Amkino (American Cinema)⁵ (Figure 7). After offering a highly sympathetic summary of the film, the *Daily Worker* reviewer admitted that: "The lack of dramatic continuity makes for a certain monotony. After all, one horseman looks pretty much like another, and there are lots of horsemen in this picture."⁶

Indeed, those horsemen, the cavalry, play a major role in *If War Comes Tomorrow*, creating a subtext that highlights it as an essential military arm providing support to the proponents of the cavalry in debates on modernization of the Soviet military: the film speaks in glowing terms of the traditionalist Voroshilov but makes absolutely no reference to Tukhachevsky, one of the strongest proponents of modernization and mechanization (Figure 8). The filmmakers went out of their way to highlight the cavalry. Moreover, when the cavalry appears, the music rises in triumph. It is a bit like an American western movie; when the cavalry rides in, you know that all will be well.

In the end, the main purpose of *If War Comes Tomorrow* was to prepare the population psychologically for the possibility of war. But the film was a one-dimensional exercise in triumphalism that had nothing to do with Soviet



Figure 7. July 13, 1938, Ad in the *Daily Worker*.



Figure 8. Photograph, March 1920, the Revolutionary Military Council of the 1st Cavalry Army. From left to right, the third individual in the row of seated personages is Kliment Voroshilov and on his left is Semyon Budyonny.

preparedness. It was not anchored in either fact or human struggle and pain. Historians James von Geldern and Richard Stites are right when they call the movie a work of “self-congratulatory bravura.”⁷ It might be argued that the movie’s vainglorious insistence on the power and preparedness of the Soviet army and the Soviet people obscured the genuine need to strengthen the country and its military and thus contributed to the country’s disastrous lack of preparation when German forces did in fact invade without warning on June 22, 1941.

Endnotes

- ¹ Peter Whitewood, *The Red Army and the Great Terror: Stalin’s Purge of the Soviet Military*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015: 3.
- ² Alexander Fedorov, “Efim Dzigan: Pseudo-classic of the Soviet Union,” *Mediaobrazovanie* 2020, 60 (4): 592.
- ³ Today Dzigan’s work is often dismissed as mediocre. See Fedorov’s article cited in Note 4.
- ⁴ James von Geldern and Richard Stites, eds., *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Movies, Plays, and Folklore, 1917-1953*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995: 316.
- ⁵ Amkino was a company set up by the USSR in 1927 that was shut down in early 1940. In the 1920s, the silent films made by great Soviet directors, such as Eisenstein or Pudovkin,

began to receive worldwide attention. To cash in on this popularity, Amkino was created to make money and spread propaganda. But Soviet talkies were considerably less popular and business declined sharply in the 1930s, hence the shut-down of Amkino.

- ⁶ Erv Shepard, “Soviet Documentary at Cameo; ‘Algiers’, Fair,” *Daily Worker*, July 16, 1938: 7.

- ⁷ von Geldern and Stites: 316-317.



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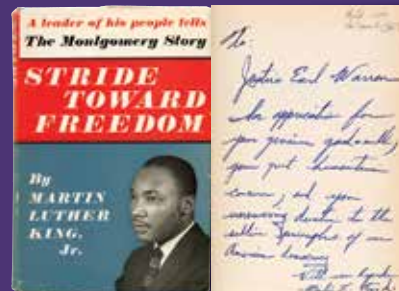
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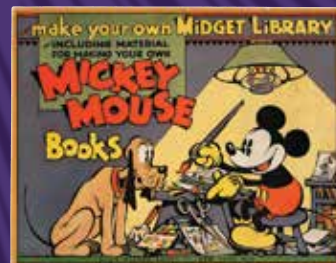
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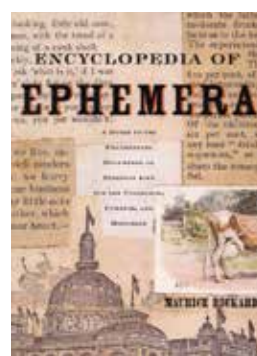
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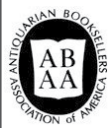
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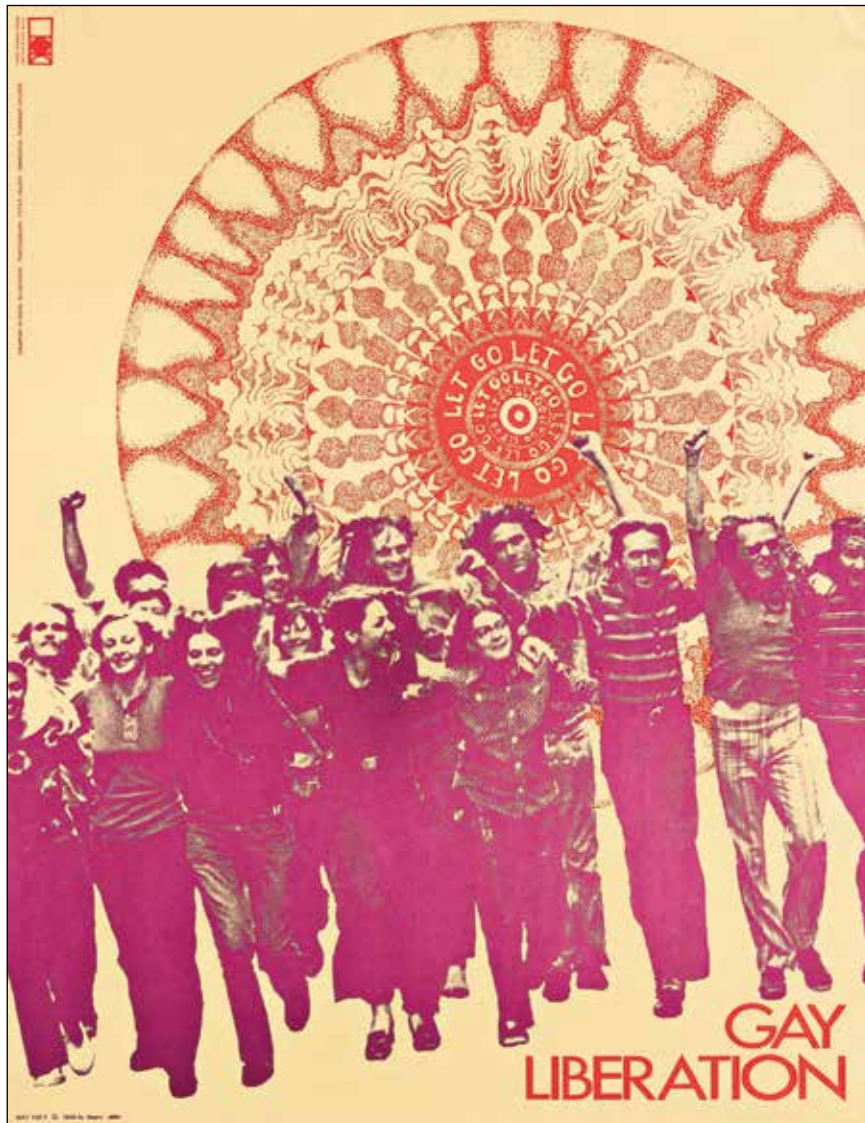
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Su Negrin, Peter Hujar & Suzanne Bevier, *Gay Liberation*, offset lithograph poster, Times Change Press, 1970. At auction August 2023.



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