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Volume 47, Number 2



Bucket Brigade Collectibles

By Anne Gilbert

America's firemen have a long and exciting history that dates before the American Revolution when they were volunteers. It wasn't until after the steam engine came into use in 1852 that fire fighters became paid professionals. Fortunately for historians and collectors many of their early artifacts have survived. Surprisingly, when they make a rare auction appearance prices are often affordable..

Collectors have had a long love affair with fire fighting memorabilia that includes everything from fire buckets, parade helmets and trumpets to daguerreotypes and sheet music daguerreotypes and even sheet music.

Their equipment is equally collectible and includes fire engines, hoses and carts.

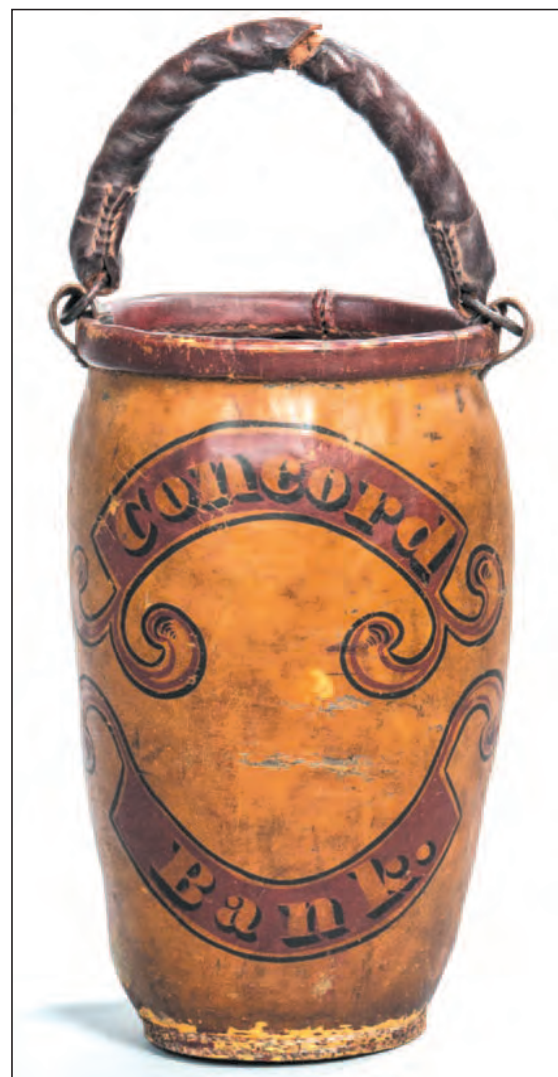
The earliest items available to collectors usually dates from the early 19th century. It was those fire-fighting methods that have left us our most interesting and valuable collectibles .

Consider the leather buckets once used to carry water from nearby water sources to the fires. In the Colonies leather buckets were made by the local cobblers that were the only means to carry water to the fire sites. They held about three gallons of water and were passed hand by hand by lines of sturdy male volunteers. When empty they were returned by another line of boys and women to be refilled.

The buckets were painted and gilded with bright colors and patriotic symbols and identified the fire company names and the date they were made. The most interesting have lavish illustrations.

By the mid-eighteenth century hand pumpers were in use. Fortunately over the decade's new developments, such as gooseneck fire engines were in use.

The invention of the steam engine and hose reel in the mid-19th century saw the end of the bucket



brigade. However, this early equipment was also painted and decorated. Ornate, iron hose holders are also important collectibles.

The yearly fire fighters parade was an important occasion in cities and towns around the country in the late 19th century. The special items worn and used at the events are now very collectible. Famous artists such as Thomas Sully and Joseph Johnson were commissioned to paint panel motifs on engine panels.

Presentation pieces awarded to fire departments include molded fire horns, brass nozzles, walking sticks, shields and signs. The dated and engraved horns and trumpets were usually of silver or silverplate.

Since the 1950s metal fire marks from the 1950s have been collected. Originally they were mounted on buildings to show that the buildings were covered by fire insurance. They were made of tin, brass, lead, cast iron, aluminum and zinc. Among the most interesting designs are those showing the early fire engines. The reproduction buckets can be recognized by flat leather strip handles.

PHOTOS: Antique leather fire bucket. Skinner Auctions; Antique metal fire marks. Skinner Auctions



Homestead Antique Mall Continues to Flourish

By Kim Ramer

Wow! Homestead Antique Mall has been open for 6 years! When we opened we had no idea that we would be voted best antique mall in Arvada year after year. We feel so blessed.

If you ask the owners Andy and Leanne they will tell you that they attribute their success to all the great customers, dealers and employees. Each employee has over 20 years experience in the antique industry. And, what makes that even better is that each one of them has their own different areas of expertise and that's a lot of knowledge in one place. Over the years our employees and dealers have become our family. We celebrate together, laugh together and hold each other up in the tough times as well.

Andy expresses his feelings this way, "The dealers, well, what can we say, Leanne and I feel that they are the best around. We have a wide variety of dealers with a wealth of knowledge of antiques and collectibles. It is great to have long-time dealers who have been in the business for years along side of dealers who are just starting out. We feel that it energizes all of us and we all learn from each other. We strive to be the store that has something for everyone."

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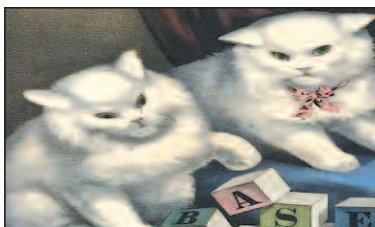
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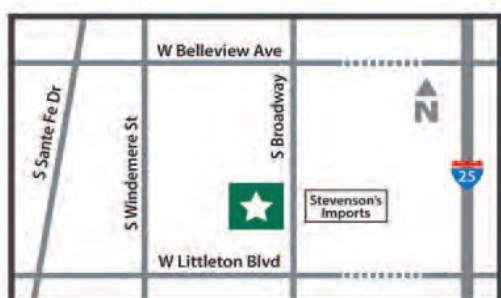
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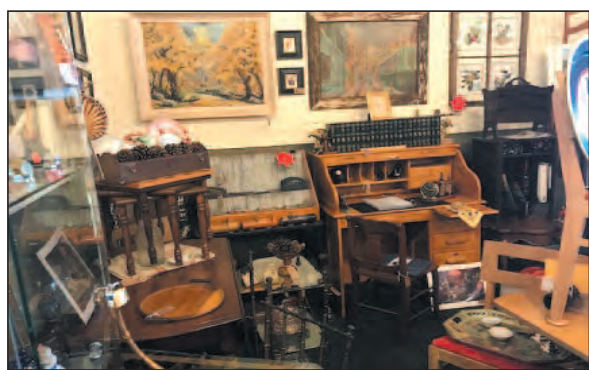
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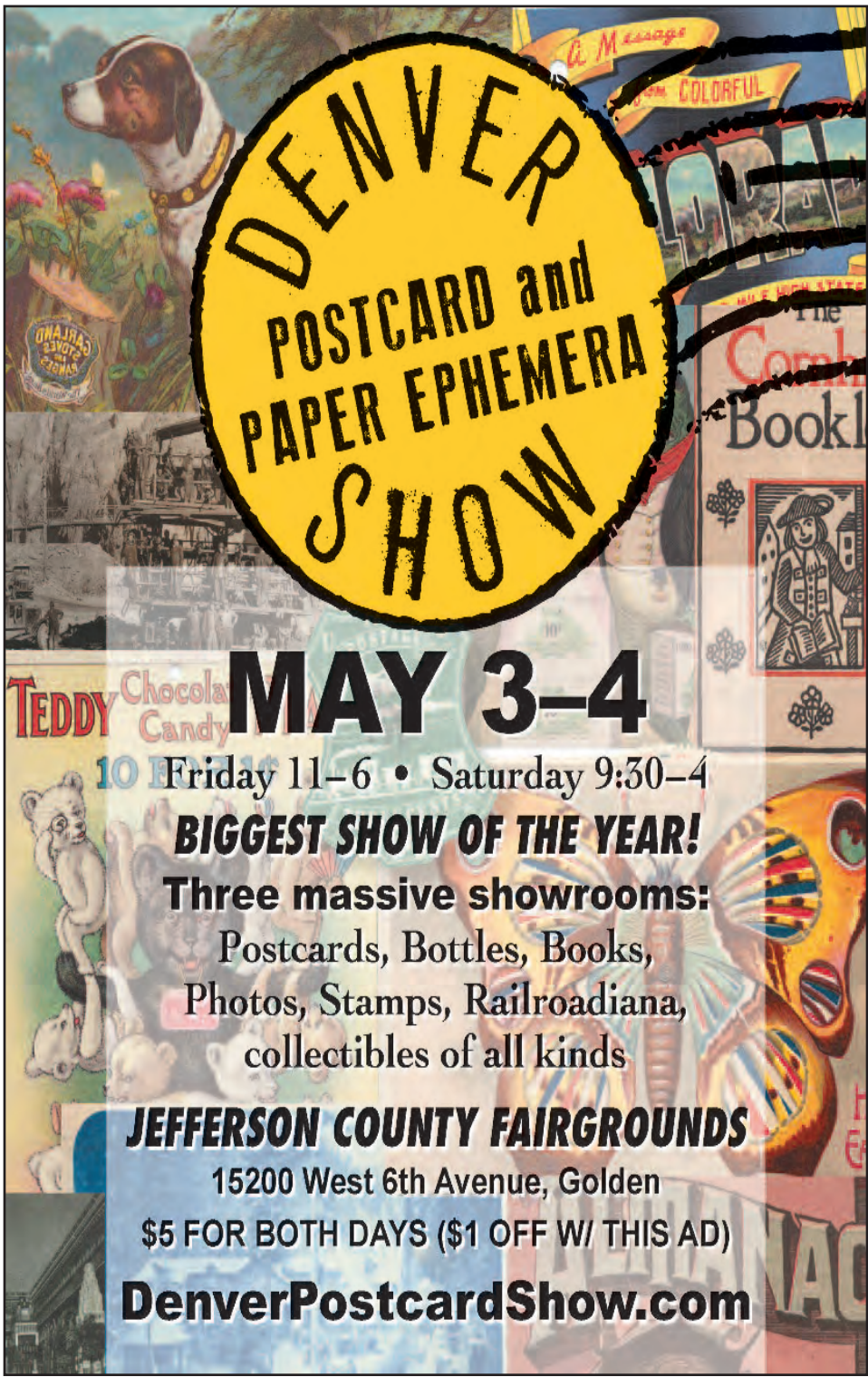


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SHOW CALENDAR

February Events

FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH: **TENTS EVENT** at **THE NEST** in Westminster, 7265 Lowell Blvd., 10-4, 10-50% Off inside store. Call 720-630-4203 for more information.

FEB. 6: **INTO THE WILD BLUE The Uniforms and Insignias of the Army and Air Forces of World War II** Discussion led by Michael Finney at 2:00 p.m. at Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More info, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

FEB. 16: **TIMBER DAN SPRING ANTIQUE AND COLLECTIBLE TOY SHOW AND SALE** Hours: Sat, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., First National Bank Exhibition Building, North Hall, Larimer County Fairgrounds ("The Ranch"), I-25 exit 259, Loveland, CO Admission \$4. For more info, contact: Jennie Votaw, 702-371-6776 or email jennievotaw@yahoo.com or visit website at <http://www.lovelandlionsclubs.org/sites/ToyShow.htm>.

FEB. 20: **MENUS** Discussion led by Stacy Stryker at 2:00 p.m. at Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More info, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

Upcoming Events

MAR. 6: **THE EMPEROR'S PORTRAITIST** Discussion led by C. Yves at 2:00 p.m. at Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More info, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

MAR. 8-10: **WORLD WIDE ANTIQUE AND VINTAGE SHOW** Denver Mart Expo Building, I-25 & 58th Ave., Get tickets at www.FINDYOURANTIQUE.com, Show hours Fri.-Sat. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Treasures from around the Globe.

MAR. 20: **COMPACTS** Discussion led by Christine King Walter at 2:00 p.m. at Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More info, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

APR. 3: **ANTIQUe MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS** Discussion led by Virgil Hughes at 2:00 p.m. at Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More info, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

APR. 17: **MARGARET DEVERE HALF DOLLS** Discussion led by Suzanne Wingfield at 2:00 p.m. at Brass Armadillo, 11301 West I-70, Wheat Ridge, CO. More info, or if you would be interested in doing a presentation in your area of expertise, call Dixie or Charlotte at 303-403-1677.

Auctions

FEBRUARY 2nd ANTIQUE ESTATE AUCTION, at Bruhns Auction Gallery, 50 W. Arizona Avenue, Denver, CO. See ad on page 3. For more information, call 303-744-6505 or email Tom at Bruhnsauction@aol.com.



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Those Fancy Valentines

By Robert Reed

If you love me
as I love you,
Then you will be
my sweetheart true.

— verse from fancy, heart-shaped 19th century Valentine.

Giving valentines to those dear to us has been a practice for centuries but it was the Victorians that made them so wonderfully fancy.

During the 17th century both men and women devoted hours of handiwork to preparing Valentine's Day messages of love. Images were hand-drawn or painted in water colors, carefully cut out, and pasted together often with bits of thread, lace, and silk.

Historians say the practice of sending attractive artwork valentines was popular first in England during the early 1700s and had become established in America by the 1740s.

A valentine composed of a series of hand-drawn puzzle images attached to a single sheet of paper, about six by eight inches in size was one displayed by a major east coast museum. It was signed T. Bailey and made around 1788.



By the 1790s pictorial writing paper was available to further embellish homemade valentines and frequently symbols of flowers, birds, or hearts were added as decorations as well. Plus, of course, a tender message or verse.

At the dawn of the 19th century the movement for valentine messages was toward even finer

examples of decoration. Scissors and pin pricks imitated delicate lace, and even crewelwork and embroidery were added by the ambitious admirer.

The Dobbs Company of England was providing fancy paper for such devoted uses as early as 1803. Eventually the company evolved into the commercial manufacture of valentines under such names as H. Dobbs and Company, Dobbs, Baily and Company, and later Dobbs, Kidd and Company.

Dobbs' valentines put heavy emphasis on flowers and cupids along with pressed silk and satin backings. Most were further enhanced with skillful hand painting. By the late 1830s firms in London were able to simulate lace from paper with hand operated presses and the layered lace look became available to the masses.

Widespread use of commercial valentines, for all of their striking appearance, did not develop in the United States until the beginning of the machine age in the 1840s. Meanwhile envelopes, although twice as expensive to mail, gradually became available and in some cases could be almost as elaborate as the valentines.

Clearly it was an era when "the most popular token of love was the valentine," according to Robert Etter the author of the book Tokens of Love. "Those fragile paper and satin concoctions surrounded by clouds of lace could make each postal delivery a crisis."

Appearing on the horizon in the latter 1840s were a number of American commercial firms which produced fancy valentines. Among them were Turner & Fisher of Philadelphia, Charles Mangus, Elton and Company, and T. W. Strong all of New York City. In later years they would be joined by P.J. Cozzens, the McLoughlin Brothers, J. Wrigley and more.

In 1848, Strong published the following newspaper advertisement:

"Valentines! Valentines! All varieties of Valentines, imported and domestic, humorous, witty, comic... in the most superb manner, without regard to expense. Also envelopes and Valentine Writers, and everything connected with Valentines, to suit all customers, prices varying from six cents to ten dollars; for sale wholesale and retail at Thomas W. Strong's..."

Shortly afterwards Esther Howland of Worcester, Massachusetts launched her own fancy valentine firm after being duly impressed with elaborate examples from England. Miss Howland used her own artistic skills but imported much of the lace paper from the British.

But the 1850s Howland had established a major operation in New England. She employed family, friends, and others to produce delightful valentines of paper lace with gilded backing and other creative touches. In later years Howland cards were stamped on the back with a red letter H or a white heart with a letter H centered in it. By the 1870s Howland had formed the prosperous New England Valentine Company and many cards were then marked accordingly. N.E.V. Co.

In the 1880s Howland sold her business to George C. Whitney, a former employee who had for many years manufactured similar valentines.

Elsewhere those who created valentines usually felt more was better. Besides lace and glimmering paper Victorians gushing with ingenuity were known to add ribbons, beads, tinsel, moss, pressed flowers, dried seaweed and assorted combinations to their tokens of love.

Major changes developed for popular valentines during the latter 19th century. For one thing they were big business, and sold in nearly every major store in America. For another they became industrialized, makers like Whitney and others turned to their own machines for die-cutting, embossing, and even paper lace thus nearly ending imports.

Soon however delicate lace was not enough. Louis Prang of Boston began offering beautifully lithographed valentines in color bearing reproductions of fine works of art. Prang, who published all manner of cards, moved valentines forward with color images of flowers, pretty girls and simple messages of love.

By the 1890s the full introduction of color-printing process known as chromolithography had turned the entire printing industry around. Now valentines and other greeting cards could be printed in brilliant and detailed color at a relatively low cost. The era of 'new' fancy Victorian valentines was in full bloom.

Many of the traditional printed valentines continued to delight the public well into the 1900s. Even fancy lace valentines were produced and widely sold during the first decades of the century. The Whitney company continue was still prospering when it was taken over in 1915 by the founder's son, Warren Whitney. It continued to be a major producer until the wartime paper shortages of the 1940s.

The turn of the century saw a few new twists added to already fancy valentines. Many were made with paper hon-



eycombs which could be unfolded or pulled out for further elegance.

Authors Dan and Pauline Campanelli describe pull outs of the early 1900s as incorporating, "a flat piece of lightweight cardboard, diecut in a delicate, lacy shape and printed in full color, with the lowest portion folded up."

"As this lowest part is carefully pulled down," they conclude in Romantic Valentines, "layers of printed diecuts attached to the card by paper hinges separate from one another and appear to stand by themselves."

All these things abounded in the Victorian era and give history some of its finest and most fancy valentines.

Recommended reading: Romantic Valentines, A Price Guide by Dan and Pauline Campanelli (L-W Book Sales)

Valentines With Values by Katherine Kreider (Schiffer Publishing).



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For President's Day: Presidential Collectibles

By Robert Reed

Starting with George Washington and later with Abraham Lincoln, the memorabilia of presidents has provided a significant source of collecting. It doesn't hurt either that President's Day honoring them all is an annual holiday.

For the traditionalists it should be noted that the federal Office of Personnel Management still calls the third Monday in February simply Washington's Birthday. However in recent decades it has generally become known as President's Day and even has that official status in many states.

Ultimately the holiday salutes all presidents, and hence calls attention to mementos that have memorialized them in the past.

"For every American president there's a trail of mementos," observed author Stan Gores some years ago. "At times, the path may be narrow and almost impossible to find. But the clues of history are there, linked by a huge array of artifacts that mirror the interesting lives of our chief executives."

Collecting presidential memorabilia "allows a smooth blending of the old and the comparatively inexpensive new, as presidents come and go in the White House," Gores noted in the volume, Presidential and Campaign Memorabilia.

Presidential collectibles are generally distinguished from campaign items in that they deal with memorabilia produced while the chief executive was in office, or at some point after leaving office.

Historians suggest that George Washington's birthday was first celebrated nationally in 1796, the last full year of his presidency. Interestingly under the 'modern' calendar Washington was born on February 22. However under an earlier calendar in effect in England and the American Colonies at the time of his birth, the date was February 11. Therefore, according to published accounts, some citizens celebrated on one date in 1796 and other citizens celebrated on another date.



Washington's birthday was a notable national event by the early 19th century. The celebrations included something called Birthnight Balls in many parts of the country. There were also gatherings for speech giving and elaborate receptions.

For Abraham Lincoln the celebration of his birthday generally followed the year after his 1865 assassination when Congress gathered for Memorial Address in February of 1866. "Lincoln's death had a profound impact on the public," according to Stuart Schneider author of the book Collecting Lincoln. "Lincoln was the first president to be assassinated in office. He had just presided over the country's bloodiest war and saw it to its conclusion. He was re-elected by a landslide and he was just about to guide America into a post war peace."

Thus Lincoln keepsakes were sought almost immediately after his death even though his birthday did not become a holiday until many years later.

The nation's Centennial celebration of 1876 saw a great deal of Washington related material and a much lesser amount of Lincoln items. Washington was depicted on china mugs, glass bread plates, and cups and saucers. Some of the pieces were plainly marked Centennial 1776-1876, but other pieces were not marked or otherwise identified.

During the 1880s there was an appreciation of occupants of the White House which included images of them on distinguished plates with gold trim. Both President Grover Cleveland and President Benjamin Harrison were so honored. Inaugural events were generating presidential souvenirs in the 1890s. Among them a Benjamin Harrison ribbon with the image and message "Our President" below a symbolic eagle and American flag. In 1893 the inauguration of Grover Cleveland and A. E. Stevenson provided a number of items. One of the most rare was a Public Comfort badge and ribbon made by Whitehead and Hoag. Accounts later said less than 150 ribbons for those particular volunteers were issues, and very few of them included the accompanying silver medal.

Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893 saw a wave of more Washington related items ranging from ceramic pitchers to silk bookmarks. There were also Exposition ribbons paying tribute to President Cleveland and other past presidents.

In 1903 striking Wedgwood plates pay tribute to President Theodore Roosevelt. One particular blue and white issue with a leaf-design border included quotes from a speech delivered that year in Syracuse, New York. Similar plates and other ceramics would become a standard for all presidents, particularly as inaugural items, in the decades that followed.



Lincoln memorabilia witnessed a major resurgence early in the 20th century with the official observance of the Lincoln Centennial in 1909. The fallen president was depicted on the penny coin for the first time that year. Moreover he was also depicted on pin back buttons, plates, plaques, and prints. In sheet music The Lincoln Centennial Grand March was published by E. T. Paull, and there were also books and badges.

The wide popularity of the Lincoln Centennial was probably demonstrated by the vast number of postcards featuring the president according to Schneider. There hundreds of them created by an assortment of publishers from the Centennial itself into the early 1920s. In 1923 President Warren Harding's Pacific Coast Tour warranted the issuance for color red, white and blue pin back buttons. Each button bore Harding's image surrounded by American flags.

By 1930s the nation saw its first, but short lived, President's Day. The event organized in part by the Hearst newspaper chain honored the birthday of President Franklin Roosevelt on April 30, 1933. There were first day covers on envelopes and postcards. In the state of Minnesota postcards were issued, "in appreciation of our leader's achievements in the hope of his continued health and success." The cards also noted that the state had three towns with the names Franklin, Delano, and Roosevelt. FDR's birthday continued to be celebrated by various groups during the 1930s but it was not given any official status.

During the decades that followed much of the 'in office' material relating to presidents revolved around the periodical inaugurals. Typically these included buttons, printed invitations, and various badges.

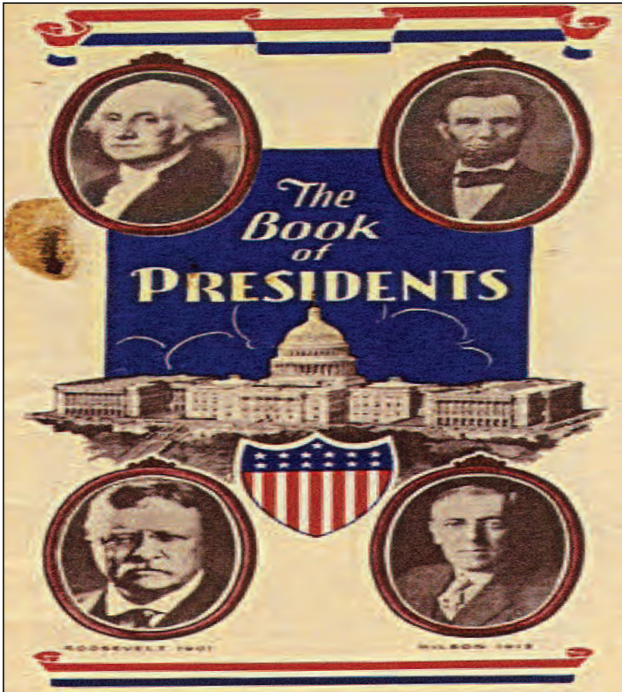
Congress enacted legislation in 1968 which related several federal holidays. It declared that Washington's birthday would be observed on the third Monday in February of each year whether it fell on the 22nd or not. The effect of the act was to provide the public with a three-day weekend instead of just an idle day in the middle of a winter month.

A few years later in 1971, President Richard Nixon signed a presidential proclamation declaring the original Washington holiday to be President's Day. Nixon declared it was "the first such three-day holiday set aside to honor all presidents, even myself."

Soon a problem arose when legal experts pointed out that apparently presidential proclamations do not supersede the rule of law, and therefore the legal holiday at the federal level remains Washington's Birthday. Nationally however President's Day has become a widely accepted term and many states now use that particular designation in their holiday statutes.

Unchanged by all this is the growing collector interest in presidential memorabilia.

"Thousands who already collect presidential mementos have found it to be a rewarding, satisfying, and intellectually stimulating hobby," commented author Gores many years ago. "But most of all, it's just plain fun."



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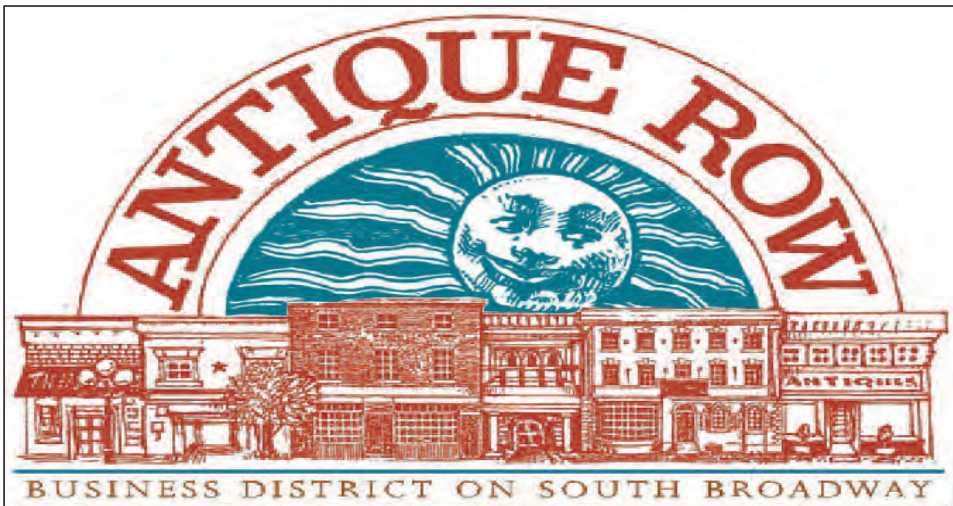
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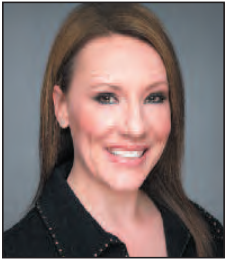
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Simon, Bradley, Billye, and Barbie

Recently, an eight-year-old boy named Simon came into my doll shop in Denver. He said that he was a Barbie Collector and that he knew a lot about the dolls. I asked him right away when Barbie was released to the world and he replied, "1959 at a Toy Fair in New York." Wow! Ok, Simon. Who is Barbie named after? "Barbara Milicent Roberts."



Rachel Hoffman

I was immediately impressed with Simon and asked my brother to bring in a bag of Barbie dolls that I had been waiting to give to a special person. Simon



sorted through the dolls and found several that he educated me about, including a rainbow-haired Hula Hair Barbie.

I promised the happy child that if he kept learning, kept looking, and kept dreaming, that his doll collecting would help him have a GREAT life. I told him of opportunities in the world for him. I told him there are Barbie Conventions with magical friends that share the same love he does. I said he could grow up and have a shop and travel the world. I told him of my good friend Bradley who has made a career in Barbie - and that he, too, can do amazing things just like him.

That next week, Barbie Expert Bradley Justice Yarbrough happened to travel to my shop for a special project with his best friend Billye Harris. Both are leaders in the doll field, and good friends of mine. They came armed with special Barbie gifts for Simon and spent the afternoon chatting with him and his family. Simon left that day with Barbie reference books, a special tote bag, and a limited edition doll with an outfit designed by Bradley. It was an incredibly special day for all of us.

When you meet a child interested in dolls, or ANYTHING that is cultural, MAKE IT MAGIC for them. We have an obligation and a duty to inspire younger generations. Just one special interaction from a person of power can propel a child forward through their entire life. Think back on your childhood. Did you have a teacher or a special mentor that changed the course of your life? I still have them and they have changed my life in more ways than I can write in an article. Children remember these special moments. They remember when you took the time to see them, speak to them, and validate their interests.

I'm incredibly happy that there are parents in the world who not only support their children's passions



but do things like bring them to doll shops to make them feel happy and supported. In this contemporary world, children like Simon are rare. He was interested in history, culture, and he had whimsy and a zest for learning. He expressed himself and was born with an inquisitive nature. I truly can't wait to see what he does in his life.

The stars are out, Simon. Shoot for them!

Rachel Hoffman is an Accredited Doll Appraiser with the International Society of Appraisers, President of Denver's Antique Row Association, and Co-Owner of Turn of the Century Antiques in Denver, Colorado.

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February, a Month for Celebration

By Myrl Prather

February is a month chock full of days for us to celebrate, one way or another. There is Valentine's Day, which is a happy day for all. Lovers of all sorts, sweethearts, friends, etc., remember each other with flowers, candy and beautiful cards on this romantic occasion.

Then, there are days honoring Presidents Washington and Lincoln, those important people who helped shape the destiny of our country. The Boy Scouts of America, one of the great organizations in our country, was founded on Feb. 8, 1910. Ash Wednesday, a special day for Christians, is generally celebrated sometime in the month.

The famous poet and a person worth honoring, Henry W. Longfellow, was born in February. And that day never to be forgotten, Feb. 20, 1962—the day Americans realized their dream of putting a man in orbit. And, of course, the day a little furry weather forecaster predicts our weather—Groundhog Day.

It's nice to have a reason to celebrate and join the rest of the nation in honoring important people in history, and remembering important events that happened to make our country and our lives better.

History of Groundhog Day

Groundhog Day: Check Phil's weather prediction! On February 2, Punxsutawney Phil, Pennsylvania's groundhog extraordinaire, will again stick his head out of his den. The nation awaits his verdict.

Groundhog Day is said to have its origins in ancient weather lore where the prognosticator was often a badger or a sacred bear. In the United States, its origin is said to come from a Pennsylvania German custom.

If Phil, peeking from his burrow, fails to see his shadow, winter will soon be over. If the sun happens to be shining and Phil sees his shadow, winter will continue for six more weeks.

The first trek to meet with Phil began in 1887. He has been emerging from his burrow in Pennsylvania ever since, always eager to greet his public.

Phil is private in many ways, but a

few rumors have circulated about him.

*He gets his longevity from drinking the "elixir of life" of which he takes one sip every summer during the Groundhog Picnic. This gives him seven more years of life.

* It is said he is named after King Philip, a famous Native American leader. In his more plebeian days, he was called Br'er Groundhog.

* He speaks only in Groundhogese, which luckily is a language understood by the President of the Inner Circle. The Inner Circle provides for Phil during the year, rather like a court provides for its king.

The city of Punxsutawney offers several days of celebration for those who gather from around the world to hear Phil's proclamation. The city offers food, music, carriage rides, magicians, crafts and games.



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Rare Ships Figureheads Set Sail

By Rosemary McKittrick

And there’s many a story that could be told
Of the fine figureheads that were chiseled of old
On the dreary sands they crumble today
From Terra del Fuego to Baffins Bay.
–19th century naval officer

The golden-haired figurehead in her white and green gown seems confident and casual about her ability to calm Neptune. Battling the wind she embodies the spirit of the sailing ship as she looks down over the waves. Soothing the sea gods, she makes sure the voyage will be safe.

Fair-maiden figureheads, mermaids, mariners, and even twin sisters imbued the bows of early sailing ships with an almost human personality. The ship’s character and quirkiness were well known to the sailors who sailed them.

Often the maiden’s arm in these guardian spirits was extended to carry a wand or a weapon. The other arm might rest upon her bosom holding a rose or bunch of flowers. Some figurehead carvings were amazingly inventive. Others came from pattern books. Quality varied.

Eyes sometimes glared. Arms, necks and chins might be simplistic. Carving could be delicate, crude or conventional. Changes in the design of ships also affected the size, shape, and position of a figurehead.

Almost always, figureheads outlived the massive oaken ships whose bows they graced. The ships may be long forgotten but the figureheads themselves live on in museums, private collections and antique shops. In many ways it’s like trying to study the human body by only looking at the head. The biggest parts are missing.

The names of many of the self-trained, figurehead carvers are also long gone. Carvers saw themselves as artisans more than artists.

Used for thousands of years, bow ornaments

have shown up on the earliest surviving Egyptian boats and rock drawings. Phoenician sailors also adorned the prows of their galleys with wooden likenesses.

Whether its ship’s figureheads, carousel animals or tiny toy creatures, whittling has always eased man’s anxiety and soothed his soul.

The golden period of sailing ships in the 19th century saw the height of bow decoration. Ships berthed at South Street, New York, in the 19th century picture giant hulls, rigging, and figurehead sculptures leaning over the wharf. Ships filled the harbor like cars filling a parking lot.

The design of a wooden ship’s bows determined whether the figurehead would be a full figure, half-length or only a bust. Sometimes only an ornament was used.

The figure might resemble the ship owner or his wife or children. Famous people like Davy Crockett and patriotic themes like the American eagle were also popular. Racial and gender stereotyping was plentiful.

Figureheads and other elaborate carvings adorned wooden sailing vessels until they disappeared with the slow but sure introduction of modern steam-powered steel ships.

Northeast Auctions in Portsmouth, New Hampshire featured a selection of vintage figureheads in its Portsmouth Summer Auction in 2007. Here are some current values.

Figureheads

American Indian Maiden: hair in braids wearing large pendant necklace; bust-length figurehead; 17 inches high; \$2,320.

Admiral Collingwood: hero of the Battle of Trafalgar; British; depicted in Naval uniform with decorations; circa 1830-1840; half-length figurehead; 44 inches high; \$20,880.



Golden Haired Woman Figurehead attributed to Louis Joubin, 1883; 73 inches high; sold for \$98,600. Photo courtesy of Northeast Auctions.


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Historical Autographs Cover Many Categories

By Anne Gilbert

The hunt for important autographs is ongoing. After all it is collecting history. Important people, places and events and related signatures cover every category imaginable from presidential documents, space travel to inventions and movie personalities. Surprisingly documents signed by President George Washington still turn up at auctions, far from their origins. A few months ago a document signed by an 18 year old George Washington, when he was a surveyor in Fairfax county, Virginia, was sold at O.A.K. auctions in Coral Gables, Florida. It fetched \$6,637.50.

Only a few decades ago important historical presidential signed documents could be purchased in the low thousands of dollars. And, there were only a few auction galleries selling them.

An interesting, relatively new category is space related. At Swann Auction Galleries in New York, a NASA photograph of astronaut Neil Armstrong, autographed by him, sold for \$2,500.

These days serious collectors are wary of faked signatures, one of the many perils and pitfalls in this collecting category.

CLUES: Among the many techniques used to fake authentic signatures are autopens, secretarial signatures, rubber stamps and preprints. As far back as the 1920s and 30s movie star photos with supposedly authentic signatures were mailed by the thousands to fans. Common sense tells you the “stars” wouldn’t have had the time. In fact they hired someone to do it. The same thing happened with political autographs.

Autopen signatures have been around for years and can do 300 signatures an hour. They are so authentic looking that it takes a specialist to tell the difference. One clue

is when parts of the letters appear shaky. This is caused by the vibrations of the Autopen when it writes.

Rubber stamped signatures can be recognized when too much ink makes smudges.

Another technique used is imprinted signatures.

Interest in collecting autographs usually begins in childhood with something as simple as collecting schoolmates signatures at graduation time. This is usually followed by collecting autographs of sports figures, movie stars and popular musicians.

Adults, depending on their interests collect documents

with signatures of historical figures, inventors and authors. The signatures can be on part of a document, photo, baseball, or sheet music. The list is endless.

Signed documents can turn up in unexpected places such as family scrapbooks and bibles.

PHOTO CAPTION: A c. 1750 document with George Washington signature when he was 18 years old, PHOTO CREDIT: O.A. k. AUCTIONS, Coral Gables, FL.

PHOTO CAPTION: Autographed photo of astronaut Neil Armstrong. PHOTO CREDIT: Swann Galleries, N.Y.



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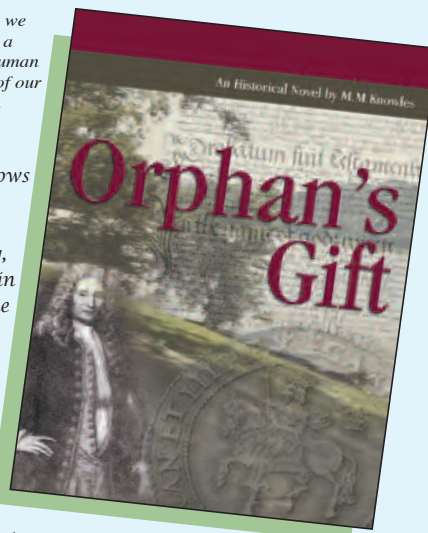


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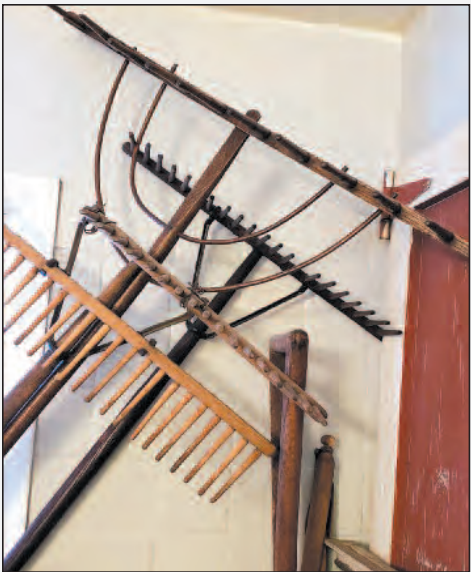
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Highs and Lows for Early Currier & Ives Lithos

By Anne Gilbert

Hard to believe, the Currier and Ives lithographs that come to shops and auctions, sometimes costing thousands of dollars, once could be had for a few cents. They were affordable to just about everyone. The January 30 auction held by The Old Print shop offered some early examples ranging in price from \$250 to over \$9,000.

When Nathaniel Currier, a lithographer, created what was probably the first illustrated newspaper “extra” in history, in 1840, depicting the fire aboard the steamboat Lexington, a new type of art was born. The “Extra Sun,” illustrating a realistic drawing of the tragedy that killed hundreds, was reprinted in newspapers across the country. At a time when photography was virtually unknown and reproductions of drawings a time consuming process, Currier began offering prints of important current events. In 1857 he joined forces with James Merritt Ives, a self-trained artist. For fifty years they produced an average of three or four new prints every week.

It was perfect timing. The rapidly growing middle and upper classes were looking for new ways to display their affluence. However, it was the middle and lower income classes where they found a ready market. By the time they closed their doors they had sold millions of prints in unlimited editions from over 7,000 titles.

Their prints covered a wide range of subjects from the Mexican and Civil Wars to clipper ships, sporting events and seasonal scenes of houses and landscapes.

Portraits were the most common subjects. They immortalized stage actresses, royalty, Presidents and politicians. Not often seen are prints made for children.

CLUES: In the 1920s, 30s, there was a resurgence of interest in collecting antiques from the 19th century, especially Currier and Ives prints. Despite the vast numbers of their prints produced, many hadn’t survived. The demand became greater than the supply. Restrikes (reproductions) of some of the most popular subjects were made. The originals were hand-painted.

Always examine the print out of the frame. Value is less if the print has been cut down to fit a frame.

It will be interesting to see the results of The Old Print Shop auction. Check it out on your cell or internet.

PHOTO CAPTION: (1) Currier and Ives litho “My Three White Kittens.” (The third white kitten is cut off in this photo.) Estimate \$450-\$500.

PHOTO CAPTION : (2) Currier and Ives litho “Early Winter.” Estimate \$7,500/ \$9,500.



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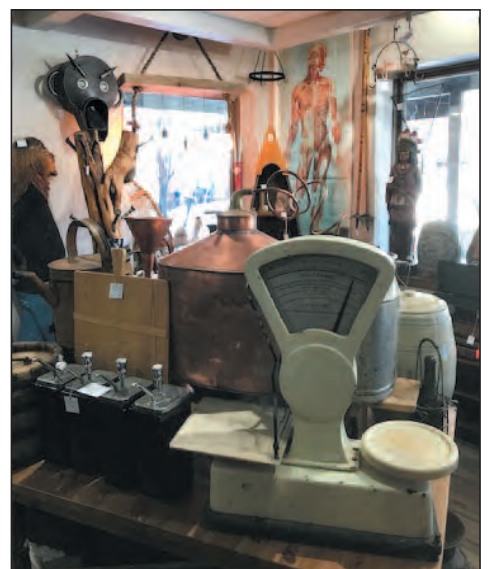
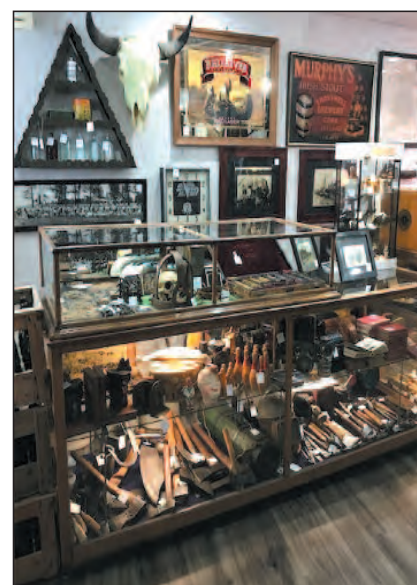
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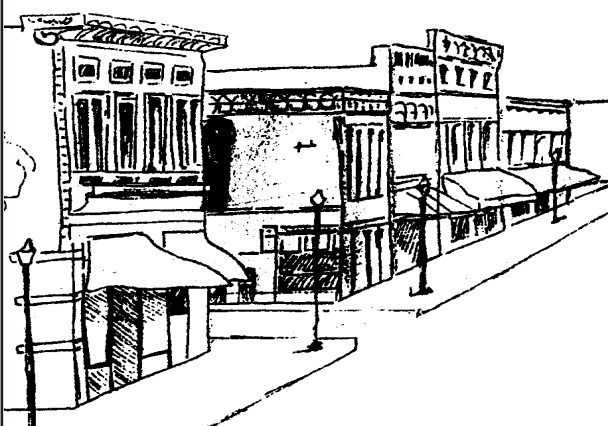
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Beating the Blahs

By Sandy Dale

The Christmas tree's gone, the decorations put away, the last of the holiday candy and frozen leftovers consumed. The sky is smoky gray and it's snowing bloody hell. What now? Ah, time for a trip to the Bahamas, right? I'm sure that would beat the winter blahs, but I'm not quite in the percent of folks that can do that. So...here's how I do it.

Exercise No. 1 - Meet Mother Nature Head On. I shovel a little path out to the sidewalk in front of my house where my neighbors (bless them) have shoveled a little path down the sidewalk to the coffee shop.

Exercise No. 2 - Force a Smile. I grab my favorite travel mug and Pinkie my trusty laptop and make my way to the Pour House (said coffee shop). I stand in line with the local folks waiting for our steamy mochas and Americanos and grumble about the weather - which we all secretly love. I'm old and I usually don't feel like smiling when it's cold and wet, but I find once my face cracks into a smile the easier the next few are.

Exercise No. 3 - I get a little work done while looking out the window periodically to see if the sun has come out yet. I might even hum a few bars of "Tomorrow." I often play my banjo on really dreadful days...it is nearly impossible to be grumpy while playing a banjo - or even listening to one.

Exercise No. 4 - Escape. I know I mentioned the Bahamas, but this is much cheaper. I have a stash of very old books (1880's to early 1900's). Of course, I found most of them here in lovely downtown Florence. Nearly every antique shop has them. You could pull out your Kindle, but it is just not the same as holding a very old hard back, cloth or leather bound book. The font is beautiful, the language seems almost foreign and the illustrations... the illustrations are wondrous. I read it.

Exercise No. 5 - I make the most of the "little holidays" like St. Brigid's Day, Groundhog Day (my personal favorite), and St. Valentine's Day, which has been seriously over-commercialized, but if you make your own cards - be creative, use some of those antique valentines you found in Florence and tell everyone you love them...



Rena Pryor

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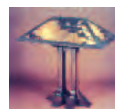


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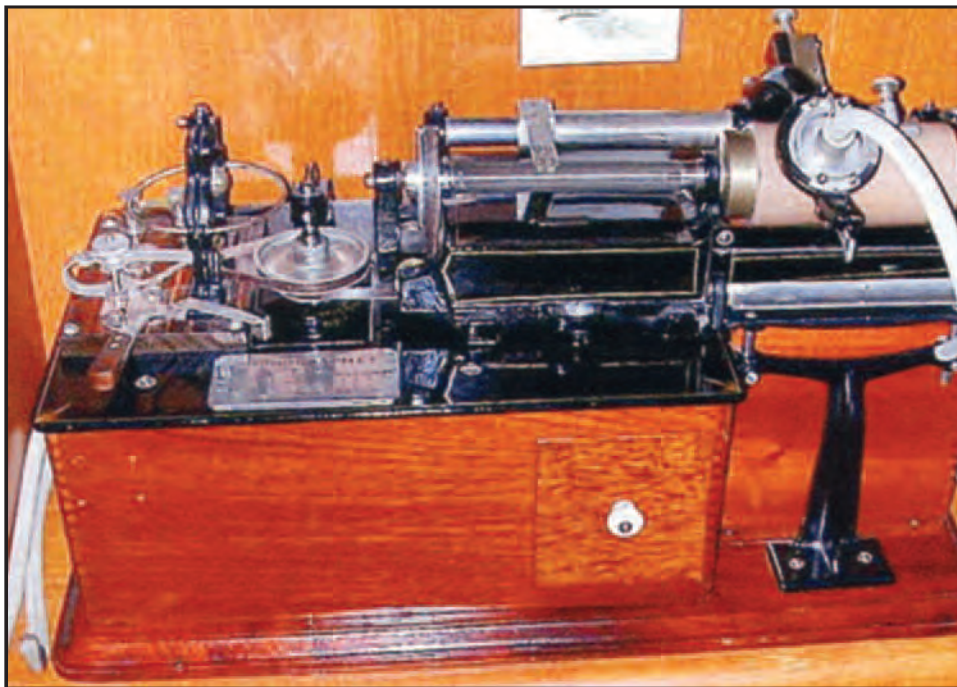
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CONTEST

January's What Is It?



Edison Class M Electric (1890)

We had no correct guesses for our January What Is It. We first became acquainted with this object in an article written by Maureen Timm for our publication. Here is what Maureen shared with us.

The first great invention developed by Edison in Menlo Park was the tin foil phonograph. While working to improve the efficiency of a telegraph transmitter, he noticed that the tape of the machine gave off a noise resembling spoken words when played at a high speed. This caused him to wonder if he could record a telephone message. He began experimenting with the diaphragm of a telephone receiver by attaching a needle to it. He reasoned that the needle could prick paper tape to record a message. His experiments led him to try a stylus on a tinfoil cylinder, which, to his great surprise, played back the short message he recorded, "Mary had a little lamb."

The word phonograph was the trade name for Edison's device, which played cylinders rather than discs. The machine had two needles: one for recording and one for playback. When you spoke into the mouthpiece, the sound vibrations of your voice would be indented onto the cylinder by the recording needle. This cylinder phonograph was the first machine that could record and reproduce sound created a sensation and brought Edison international fame.

August 12, 1877 is the date popularly given for Edison's completion of the model for the first phonograph. He toured the country with the tin foil phonograph, and was invited to the White House to demonstrate it to President Rutherford B. Hayes in April 1878.

In May 1889, the first "phonograph parlor" opened in San Francisco. Customers would sit at a desk where they

could speak through a tube, and order a selection for one nickel. Through a separate tube connected to a cylinder phonograph in the room below, the selection would then be played. By the mid-1890s, most American cities had at least one phonograph parlor.

By 1890, record manufacturers had begun using rudimentary duplication process to mass-produce their product. While the live performers recorded the master phonograph, up to ten tubes led to blank cylinders in other phonographs. Until this development, each record had to be custom-made. Before long, a more advanced pantograph-based process made it possible to simultaneously produce 150 copies of each record.

Businessman Jesse H. Lippincott assumed control of the phonograph companies by becoming sole licensee of the American Graphophone Company and by purchasing the Edison Phonograph Company from Edison. In an arrangement which eventually included most other phonograph makers as well, he formed the North American Phonograph Company on July 14, 1888.

Lippincott saw the potential use of the phonograph only in the business field and leased the phonographs as office dictating machines to various member companies which each had its own sales territory. Unfortunately, this business did not prove to be very profitable, receiving significant opposition from stenographers.

The Edison Concert Phonograph, which had a louder sound and a larger cylinder measuring 4.25" long and 5" in diameter, was introduced in 1899, retailing for \$125 and the large cylinders for \$4. The Concert Phonograph did not sell well, and prices for it and its cylinders and machines to play them on were widely mass-marketed and sold. The disc system gradually became more popular due to its cheaper price and better marketing by disc record companies. Edison ceased cylinder manufacture in the fall of 1929, and the history of disc and cylinder rivalry was concluded.

February's What Is It?



Send your answers to the What Is It contest, postmarked by Feb. 20, to *the Mountain States Collector*, P.O. Box 1003, Bailey, CO 80421. Three winners will be drawn. Winners will receive a year's subscription to *the Mountain States Collector*.

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