



## AMERICAN HISTORY

### July Anniversaries

#### July 4

Independence Day

25th Anniversary of NASA's Pathfinder space probe landing on the surface of Mars (1997)

#### July 8

Liberty Bell tolls to announce Declaration of Independence (1776)

#### July 16

77th Anniversary of the first atomic test at Trinity, New Mexico (1945)

#### July 20

Apollo 11 astronaut Neil Armstrong takes historic first steps on the moon (1969)

#### July 26

Congress establishes U.S. Post Office (1775)



## Patriotic Holidays Made Wonderful Postcards

By Robert Reed

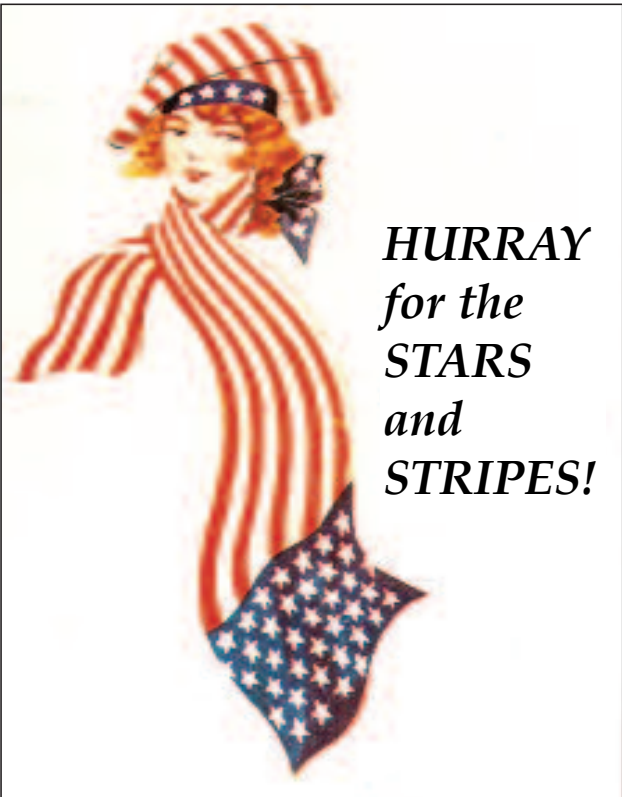
Displays of patriotism abounded in the United States long before the most timely arrival of holiday postcards on the American scene early in the 20th century. Yet the robust stars and stripes and all those related images just never looked better than they did in print on illustrated postcards.

Within ten years of the 'new' century citizens were busy buying and mailing patriotic postcards of all types. Sometimes the images were of children decked out in clothing of red, white, and blue. Others featured lovely women in fashionable dresses, and soldiers in crisp military uniforms. Almost everyone of the patriotic postcards included a brightly-colored American flag to help set the stirring scene.

Looking back in 1973, a leading publication on antiques and collectibles noted that as then this special group of postcards were known as "patriotics" among collectors. They were to be distinguished in part by their attention to such holidays as Decoration/Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Independence Day. Such cards of the immediate past, said the Antiques Journal, "depicted American customs and ways of life. Children were shown dressed in Buster Brown costumes or sailor attire....winsome girls wore long tresses" and mothers wore flowing dresses with picturesque hats and "bowed slippers" in Gibson girl style. Moreover there was Miss Liberty, an attraction on many of the patriotic postcards, nearly always clad in white but often with a further touch of red and blue.

If the striking images were not heartfelt enough, there was usually a message as well such as "when can their glory fade," or "my country tis of thee."

As with other holiday postcards, a number of artists contributed their skills to the cause of patriotism. One of the most significant was Ellen Clapsaddle with sketches of children and adults all proclaiming the glory of American-



Patriotic glamor Postcard from Philco Publishing, World War I era.

ism. In time her postcard illustrations saluted everything from the veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic to the Fourth of July itself. Most adored were those of children holding or waving U.S. Flags. Another strong contributor was C. Chapman whose Memorial Day illustrations were especially impressive.

Among the leading publishers of patriotic postcards one of the most significant was the legendary Raphael Tuck Company (later Tuck and Sons) which literally had a worldwide audience.

Tuck tended to single out American heroes of the past including General U.S. Grant. Typical Tuck published cards of patriotism also ranged from happy children to white-bearded veterans of the Civil War. Tuck, and a few other publishers, liked the patriotic holidays well

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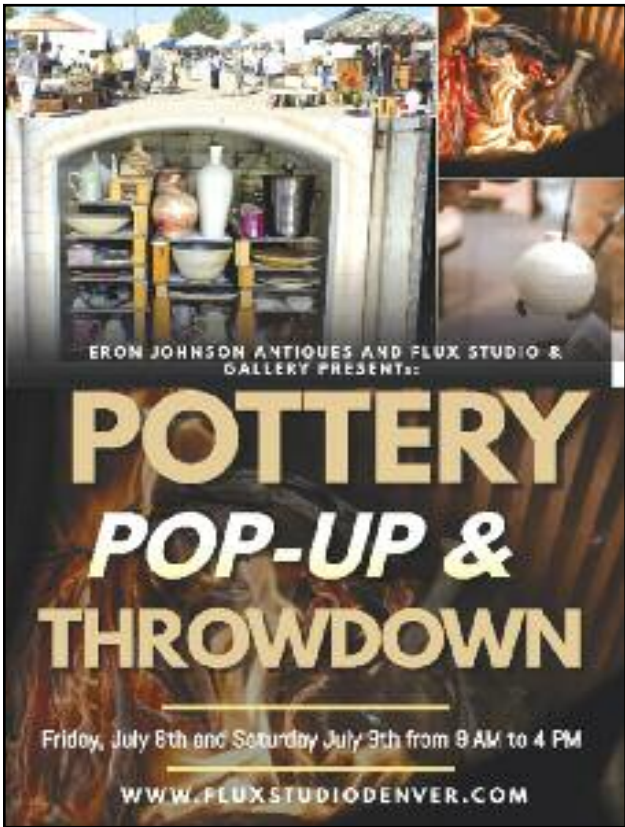
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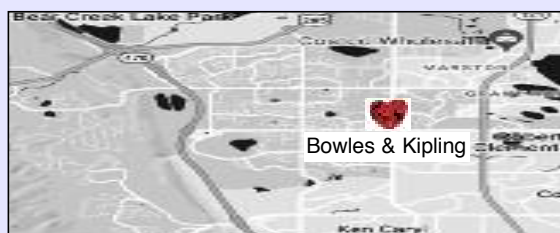
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# Auction/Show Calendar July '22

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JULY 2: **OLD CROWS' ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW**, 12-3 p.m. (First Saturday of Every Month) 10081 West Bowles Avenue, Littleton. Get estimates on your favorite treasures. Talk to experts about your antiques, art, vintage and collectibles. Limit 1 item per person. Call 303-973-8648 for more information.

JULY 8 & 9: **DENVER POSTCARD & PAPER SHOW**, Friday 11-6, Saturday 9:30 to 4. at the Holiday Inn Lakewood, 7390 W. Hampden Ave., Lakewood, Colorado, \$5 admission - good for both days. More info, [www.denverpostcardshow.com](http://www.denverpostcardshow.com) or [camobley@ephemeranet.com](mailto:camobley@ephemeranet.com).

JULY 9: **LITTLETON CAR SHOW** 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., weather permitting, at

Old Crows Antique Mall, 10081 West Bowles Avenue, Littleton. Featuring vintage and collectible vehicles. Last month there were over 70 vehicles. An event that is fun for the whole family. Call 303-973-8648 for more info.

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The event is **FREE**, and taking place on Friday, July 8th, and Saturday, July 9th from 9 AM to 4 PM

Join for two days of art, music, local eats and drinks, and community.



## DENVER



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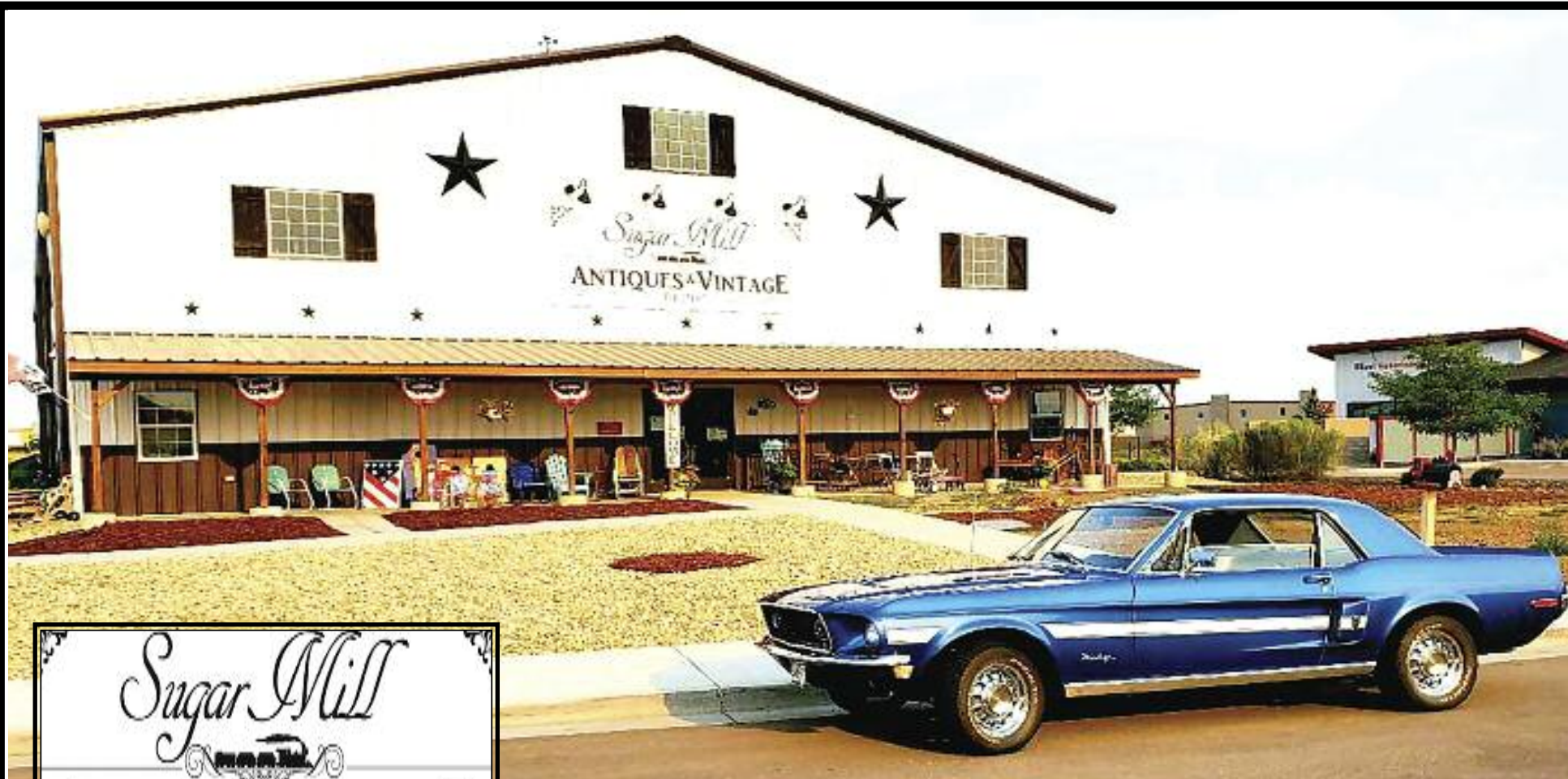
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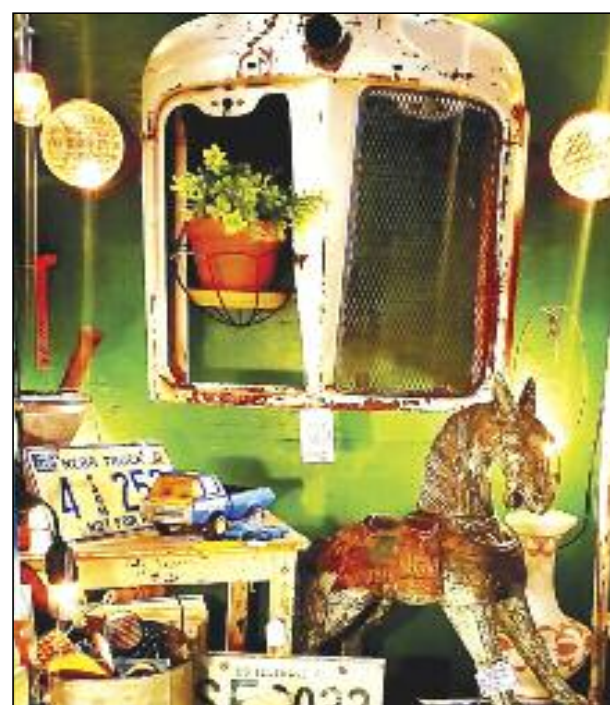
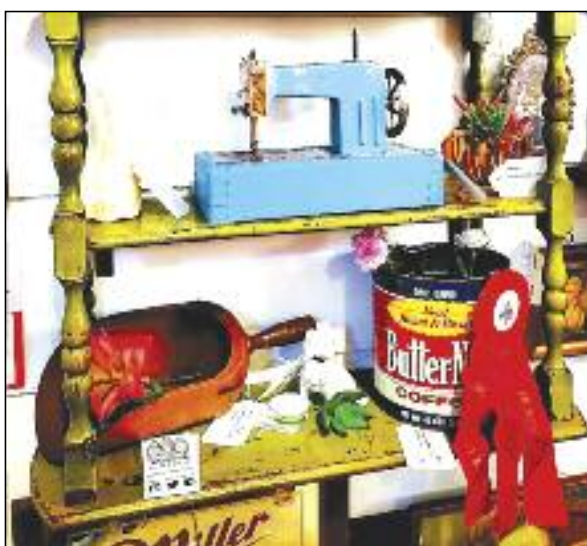
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# Patriotic Holidays Made Wonderful Postcards

*Continued from page 1*

enough to issue a number of series of postcards featuring historic or contemporary aspects of the events as they were viewed in the early 1900s.

The Raphael Tuck Company for all of its worldly appeal (offices in New York, Berlin, and London) could not seem to solve the dilemma whether to regard May 30 as Decoration Day or Memorial Day. Actually Tuck and many other postcard publishers of the early 20th century used both designations at virtually the same time. Some issues were simply marked Decoration Day while others heralded Memorial Day instead.

Most accounts indicate Decoration Day came first, linking it to a time during and immediately after the Civil War when southern women reportedly decorated the graves of both Confederate and Union soldiers. A few other accounts disagree on the origins of the event, but at any rate it was made official in 1868 when U.S. Army commander general John A. Logan decreed such a day:

"The day, for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, or hamlet church yard in the land...it is the purpose of the commander-in-chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope that it will be kept from year-to-year while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of the departed."

By the early 1900s the legal holiday was mostly designated as Memorial Day and it was observed by law in most northern states. A Confederate Memorial Day was also legally observed in a number of states, while a few instead observed the birthday of Confederate president Jefferson Davis.

Despite the legal references, the confusion over the holiday's official name continued. In 1917 author J. Walker McSpadden offered that the popular name of Decoration Day was "the better designation for this holiday. A Memorial Day could be kept without flowers; a decoration day cannot, and this is the day we offer flowers

to our soldiers dead."

McSpadden may have had a good point, but later generations put aside the Decoration Day title almost entirely for the slightly newer indication of Memorial Day which likely indicates the American public's tendency to celebrate the event more with parades and speeches rather than visiting graveyards.

Flag Day had quite a different origin. As previously mentioned the American flag was a favorite subject of the United States postcard market from the beginning and that feeling, and its connected patriotism, just escalated immediately prior to World War I.

The first official Flag Day was proclaimed in 1917 by President Woodrow Wilson who specified it would be observed on June 30 of each year. Legend at the time said that seamstress Betsy Ross had helped direct the design of the American flag when General George Washington visited her at 239 Arch Street in Philadelphia. Washington and others, as the story goes, felt a sixpoint star would be best on the flag while Ross held a five-point star would be less 'English' and therefore more American. Early postcards not only often featured the flag, but sometimes also called attention to the "Birthplace of Old Glory" at the Betsy Ross house in Philadelphia.

By the time of the World War in the 1940s there was great fervor of American patriotism and correspondingly the renewed use of the flag on numerous postcards. Today collections of such cards tend to expand to include the entire half century of their reign.

Accordingly Independence Day was a big attraction for celebrations and for holiday postcards during the first quarter of the



*Lady Liberty and flag on patriotic postcard from early 20th century.*

20th century.

Typically Independence Day or Fourth of July postcard themes dealt with firecrackers exploding or at least about to set off and exploded. Sometimes they depicted colorful Uncle Sam, and sometimes they just featured children having fun on the Glorious Fourth. Certainly the postcard publishers of that era did not view children handling fireworks with the alarm that would be present today. Not only were fireworks quite legal a century ago, but they were quite abundant and readily distributed to youngsters.

Early in the 20th century postcards were used to celebrate virtually all of America's major holidays. Thousands of bright and colorful designs were created by the finest printers of the United States and Europe. Now, nearly a century later, these vintage patriotic postcards and other classic holiday postcards are considered highly collectible.

More than 600 full-color examples are presented in the book *Vintage Postcards for the Holidays*. The book details the postcards and the holidays they represented including Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas (traditional and Santa issues), and New Year's Day.

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# U.S. Post Office Here Before We Were Even a Country

*To forge a nation, the founders needed an efficient communications network*  
**By Winifred Gallagher**

“The postal service is one of the oldest federal agencies,” says Daniel Piazza, a curator of philately at the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum. “Maybe for that reason, we tend to take it for granted. But we have always relied on it, whether for news from home, prescription medications or e-commerce.” Levi Mandel

From 1753 to 1774, as he oversaw Britain’s colonial mail service, Benjamin Franklin improved a primitive courier system connecting the 13 fragmented colonies into a more efficient organization that sped deliveries between Philadelphia and New York City to a mere 33 hours. Franklin’s travels along the post roads would inspire his revolutionary vision for how a new nation could thrive independent of Britain. But not even he imagined the pivotal role that the post would play in creating the Republic.

By the early 1770s, Franklin’s fellow patriots had organized underground networks, the Committees of Correspondence and then the Constitutional Post, that enabled the founders to talk treason under the British radar. In 1775, before the Declaration of Independence was even signed, the Continental Congress turned the Constitutional Post into the Post Office of the United States, whose operations became the first—and for many citizens, the most consequential—function of the new government itself.

James Madison and others saw how the post could support this fledgling democracy by informing the electorate, and in 1792 devised a Robin Hood scheme whereby high-priced postage for letters, then sent mostly by businessmen and lawyers, subsidized the delivery of cheap, uncensored newspapers. This policy helped spark America’s lively, disputatious political culture and made it a communications superpower with remarkable speed.

When Alexis de Tocqueville toured the young country, in 1831, the United States boasted twice as many post offices as Britain and five times as many as France. The astonished political philosopher wrote of hurtling through the Michigan frontier in a crude wagon simply called “the mail” and pausing at “huts” where the driver would toss down a bundle of newspapers and letters before hastening along his route. “We pursued our way at full gallop, leaving the inhabitants of the neighboring log houses to send for their share of the treasure.”



## Pony Up

Back when the railroads only went as far west as Missouri, the Pony Express, honored in this 1904 painting, helped cover the missing ground for about a year and a half. Mounted carriers famously sped mail the 1,800 miles from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, in just ten days.

## All Aboard

This is one of the earliest depictions of a train on a postage stamp, says the Postal Museum's Daniel Piazza.



It was issued in 1869, the same year the transcontinental railroad was completed, opening a new era in communication as well as expansion.

## Rural Free Delivery: A Lifeline



An early instance (circa 1910) of a Rural Free Delivery carrier using an automobile to reach the addresses on his far-flung route. “As the frontier moved westward, the Post Office followed, connecting scattered settlements and territories to the rest of the country and the world,” says Piazza.

## Dog Days of Winter

During winter in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, couriers used dog sleds to deliver mail to Americans in the Alaska Territory. Ed Biederman used this sled



to deliver mail across his 160-mile route between Circle and Eagle, Alaska, until he retired in 1935 after a nasty case of frostbite. “The Post Office connected Americans as the nation grew in territory and population throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries,” says Lynn Heidelbaugh, a curator in the history department of the National Postal Museum.

## Making Bank

This box, one of the models that tinsmith Charles Boyer produced in Marengo, Illinois, in the early 20th century, helped rural and frontier carriers fulfill their duty as a kind of traveling post office. Boyer’s ads promised carriers that his boxes would “add dignity to your position” and “make your work easier” by holding up to 500 stamps and 35 money orders. This one belonged to John Goudy, a rural letter carrier from Steuben County, Indiana. When



the government launched the Postal Savings System in 1911, all Americans suddenly had access to banking services. “Customers as young as ten years old could hold accounts and had options to accrue savings stamps, certificates of deposit and interest-bearing bonds,” says Heidelbaugh. “The service enabled people, many of whom were without access to banks, to keep their money securely with a federal institution.”

## ‘Neither Snow Nor Rain....’

The Postal Service’s unofficial motto, “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds,” has been associated with the Service since the New York



City Post Office on 8th Avenue opened in 1914. The phrase comes from the Greek historian Herodotus, describing Persian couriers in the Greek and Persian wars (500-449 BCE). “Despite the dedication to duty, notable disruptions have occurred in the wake of major natural disasters like hurricanes and wildfires,” says Heidelbaugh. The National Postal Museum’s collections include mailbox remnants from the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, California, and from the tornado that struck Greensburg, Kansas, in 2007. “The U.S. Postal Service strives to return to operations as soon as possible by getting mail with funds, medicine and supplies into the hands of customers and helping communities recover,” Heidelbaugh says.

## How the Post Office Created America

Winifred Gallagher presents the history of the post office as America’s own story, told from a fresh perspective over more than two centuries. Gallagher argues that now, more than ever before, the imperiled post office deserves this effort, because just as the founders anticipated, it created forward-looking, communication-oriented, idea-driven America.

By the 1840s, though, the post faced a crisis. Average citizens, fed up with high prices—sending a letter more than 150 miles cost around 20 cents, or roughly \$6 today—were turning to cheaper private carriers, almost putting the Post Office out of business. In response, Congress converted the post into a public service that no longer had to break even, and in 1845 slashed letter postage to 5 to ten cents, depending on distance.

The post continued to subsidize the nation’s transportation infrastructure. In the East, railroads replaced mounted couriers and stagecoaches. To connect the coasts, the department first financed steamships to carry the mail through the Isthmus of Panama. Then it invested in stagecoaches, which sped the mail from Missouri and Tennessee, where the railroads stopped, to California, enabling vital communications during the gold rush. In 1869, the great transcontinental railroad was completed. The mail was a lifeline connecting Western settlers with loved ones back home.

When the Civil War split America, Montgomery Blair, President Lincoln’s postmaster general, used the savings from suspending service in the Confederacy to upgrade the Union’s mail system. He expanded the Railway Mail Service, authorized the first money orders and began deliveries to urban residences, while the post became the first major institution to employ large numbers of women and African Americans.

The innovations that followed included Rural Free Delivery (1896) and Parcel Post (1913), which brought rural residents into the mainstream. At a time when banks largely ignored the needs of average citizens, the Postal Savings System (1911) provided basic financial services. As World War I engulfed Europe, the Post Office recognized the value of air transport and almost alone supported the aviation industry until the late 1920s.

The boom after World War II doubled the volume of mail even as the cash-starved department racked up big deficits and faced a fiscal crisis recalling that of the 1840s. Alarmed, Congress in 1970 remade the department into the United States Postal Service, a government-business hybrid that has received no tax dollars since 1982 but nonetheless remains subject to congressional oversight. The 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act then saddled the service with tens of billions of dollars of debt by requiring that it prefund its retirees’ health benefits.

While the post is once again the subject of controversy, it’s still the federal service that Americans rate most highly, according to a 2019 Gallup poll. Apparently unaware that much of the USPS’s business is now parcel delivery, which boosted revenue by \$1.3 billion from 2018 to 2019, Jerry Seinfeld recently joked that he couldn’t fathom how a “system based on licking, walking and a random number of pennies” is struggling. Yet in 2020, with Americans isolated by Covid-19, countless folks depend on a system that supplies every address with critical materials, including stimulus checks, ballots and, perhaps soon, medical tests.

*Winifred Gallagher is a journalist and the author of many books, including How the Post Office Created America: A History.*

*All pictures are from the National Postal Museum.*



# Antique Phonographs Traced to Edison

By Maureen Timm

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.



Edison "Home" Nickel Plated Phonograph

record and re-re-record their songs. Reportedly, the medium's first major African-American star, George Washington Johnson, was obliged to perform his "The Laughing Song" more than fifty times in a day, at twenty cents per rendition. (The average price of a single cylinder in the mid-1890s was about fifty cents.)

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.

### EDISON'S PHONOGRAPH DOLL

Meanwhile, the Edison Factory produced talking dolls in 1890 for the Edison Phonograph Toy Manufacturing Co. The dolls contained tiny wax cylinders. Edison's relationship with the company ended in March of 1891, and the dolls are very rare today.

Edison's Talking Doll was an historic step in phonograph history - the first phonograph marketed for home entertainment, with a pre-recorded cylinder.

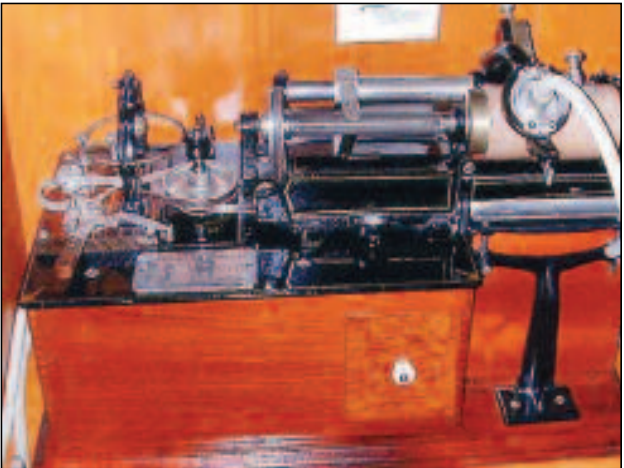
The original price was \$10 with a simple chemise and \$20-\$25 with full dress. This was a huge sum for the time, equal to about two week's salary for the average person. The phonograph inside the body of the doll was tiny, with a small horn pointing up toward holes in the doll's chest.

The Edison Phonograph Works also produced musical cylinders for coin-slot phonographs which some of the subsidiary companies had started to use. These proto-"jukeboxes" were a development which pointed to the future of phonographs as entertainment machines.

In the fall of 1890, Lippincott fell ill and lost control of the North American Phonograph Co. to Edison, who was its principal creditor. Edison changed the policy of rentals to outright sales of the machines, but changed little else.

Edison increased the entertainment offerings on his cylinders, which by 1892 were made of a wax known among collectors today as "brown wax." Although called by this name, the cylinders could range in color from off-white to light tan to dark brown. An announcement at the beginning of the cylinder would typically indicate the title, artist, and company.

In January 1896, he starred the National Phonograph Company which would manufacture phono-



Edison Class M Electric (1890)

graphs for home entertainment use. Within three years, branches of the company were located in Europe. Under the aegis of the company, he announced the Spring Motor Phonograph in 1896, followed by the Edison Home Phonograph, and he began the commercial issue of cylinders under the new company's label.

A year later, the Edison Standard Phonograph was manufactured and then exhibited in the press in 1898. This was the first phonograph to carry the Edison trademark design.

Prices for the phonographs had significantly diminished from its early days of \$150 (in 1891) down to \$20 for the Standard model and \$7.50 for a model known as the Gem, introduced in 1899.

Standard-sized cylinders, which tended to be 4.25" long and 2.1875" in diameter, were 50 cents each and typically played at 120 r.p.m. A variety of selections were featured on the cylinders, including marches, sentimental ballads, negro songs, hymns, comic monologues and descriptive specialties, which offered sound reenactments of events.

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 were dramatically reduced. Their production ceased in 1912.

A process for mass-producing duplicate wax cylinders was put into effect in 1901. The cylinders were molded, rather than engraved by a stylus, and a harder wax was used. The process was referred to as Gold Moulded, because of a gold vapor given off by gold electrodes used in the process. Sub-masters were created from the gold master, and the cylinders were made from these molds. From a single mold 120 to 150 cylinders could be produced every day. The new wax used was black in color, and the cylinders were initially called New High Speed Hard Wax Moulded Records until the name was changed to Gold Moulded. By mid-1904, the savings in mass duplication was reflected in the price for cylinders which had been lowered to 35 cents each. Beveled ends were made on the cylinders to accommodate titles.

The Edison business phonograph finally became a dictating system. Three machines were used: the executive dictating machine, the secretarial machine for transcribing, and a shaving machine used to recycle used cylinders. This system can be seen in the Edison advertising film, "The Stenographer's Friend," filmed in 1910. An improved machine, the Ediphone, was introduced in 1916 and steadily grew in sales after World War I and into the 1920s.

In 1913 Edison announced the manufacture of the Edison Disc Phonograph. The Edison Company did not desert its faithful cylinder customers, however, and continued to make Blue Amberol cylinders until the demise of the company in 1929.

From the mid-1890s until the early 1920s both phonograph cylinder and disc recording 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.

### OLDEST SURVIVING RECORDINGS

1) Frank Lambert's lead cylinder recording of an experimental talking clock is thought to be both the oldest surviving sound recording and the oldest surviving playable recording.

2) A recording of a speech by Lord Stanley at the 1888 Toronto Agricultural Fair.

3) A recording of Handel's choral music from June 29, 1888 at The Crystal Palace in London (the oldest surviving musical recording) These last two sound recordings survived because they were re-recorded onto later formats.



Edison's Talking Doll. When phonograph is installed in the doll the tiny horn points up to holes in the chest.

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.

However, as demand for certain records grew, popular artists still needed to re-

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# Decoys at Auction

By Rosemary McKittrick

Humans are more easily fooled by decoys than birds are. That's the old joke among decoy collectors. The work of master carver Elmer Crowell (1862-1951) just might be the exception. His work is housed in the collection of the Shelburne Museum.

Some say Crowell was the best carver ever. Maybe it was his passion for hunting. Maybe it was purely instinctive.

Whatever the reason, Crowell carved decoys that were so true to life they seemed like they were breathing. He was a master not only of carving and paint but also shading. He captured the subtleties. Prolific, versatile and consistent, that was Elmer Crowell.

As a young man he worked as a market gunner and cranberry farmer in Cape Cod, Mass. He carved a few decoys early on but when he hunted himself he preferred using live decoys. That is, tame birds tethered so they fool their wild relatives.

Life changed for Crowell in 1900. He went to work for Dr. John C. Phillips, a wealthy Boston physician, managing his hunting camp at Wenham Lake, north of Boston. Crowell worked for Phillips for almost ten years. During that time he sold a number of amazing one-of-a kind decoys and decorative carvings to Phillips and his friends.

He began carving decoys full-time in 1912 with miniature song and shorebirds. Crowell worked in a small shop outside his home in East Harwich, Mass. With help from his son Cleon (1891-1961), he also carved decorative pieces and miniatures.

Rheumatism forced his retirement in 1943.

Decoys may have started out as utilitarian objects but they've ended up as works of art. Just ask collectors. Decoys have also been around a lot longer than you might expect.



Feeding Dust Jacket Style Plover; raised shoulder carving; strong original paint; washed down Westport River on Cape Cod in the hurricane of 1939; circa 1890s. Sold for \$260,000 at a 2007 spring auction. Photo courtesy of Guyette & Schmidt.

In 1924 archeologists unearthed 11 ancient working decoys that were 1,000 years old, in the Humboldt Range of western Nevada. Native Americans made decoys by weaving reeds into the shape of a duck and also by mounting the feathery bird skin onto a frame.

Even though wild fowl have been hunted all over the world since prehistoric times, it appears the Native Americans were the first to use artificial decoys to lure birds.

In terms of value, excellent condition with no repairs or restoration is the most desirable. Condition of the paint is one of the most reliable guides to the age

and worth of a decoy.

Old decoys were often given a new coat of paint every so often. Therefore, many layers of cracked paint suggest a vintage decoy. Collectors are also rarely interested in repainting old decoys. The original paint even when it's scratched and faded is the best.

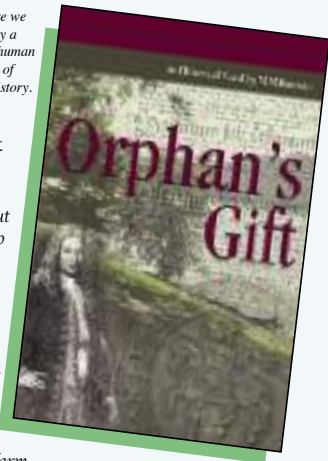
Identifying decoy carvers is also difficult because carvers rarely signed their decoys. Crowell helpfully stamped his oval brand on the base of his work. In fact, names stamped on old decoys may well turn out to be the decoy's owner, not the maker.

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Orphan's Gift is a fascinating story of an American family, a genealogical quest, written by three sisters with a passion for history and writing. M.M. Knowles is the pen name for sisters Mary Elizabeth Sikora, Margaret Rose DeStefano and Sally Ruth Gronauer.



Orphan's Gift is co-written by Margaret (Peggy) DeStefano, Mountain States Collector's Managing Editor. She and her sisters Mary Sikora and Sally Gronauer have captured the spirit of their Prather line of ancestors. The past has come to life in this historical novel. The book is a great example of taking your family genealogical research to a new level.

"Writing this book has been a fun and often surprising journey. Now that we have finished our first project together, my sisters and I are already fast at work on our second book in what we hope will be a series of historical novels," Peggy DeStefano explains.

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## CIVIL WAR BOOK

The subtitle of the book is "A Biblical Version of the American Civil War." Whether to distinguish it from, or to draw it closer to The Bible, one might suspect Joseph DeStefano is wanting to reclaim our attention with circumstances and characters of bygone, perhaps nobler times. But, as he makes clear in his preface, it is the times we are living in, "Now, in 2020," with their own potential of nobility, and of ruin, that makes his effort seem "especially relevant" to him. He writes:

"I take up the spiritual content of our worst national crisis to date in an attempt to inspire us to ask and answer old questions anew — within ourselves."

And, indeed, the first speech of Abraham Lincoln, only a few pages into the first part, might just as well have been written yesterday as 160 years ago. And so it is with the words and actions of Jefferson Davis, of Grant and Lee, of Sherman, Forrest, and Frederick Douglass, and of all the rest. In *The*

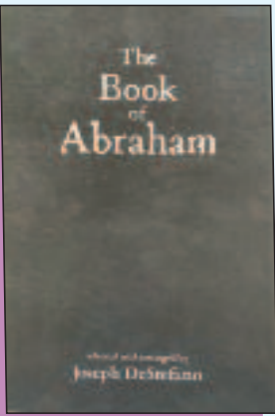
*Book of Abraham*, the crystalline prose of Bruce Catton, the breathtaking stories of Shelby Foote, together with the research of Joshua Wolf Shenk, James McPherson, and Ibram X. Kendi, are interfused with extractions of *The Old Testament*, and of other ancient works, and with poetry, oratory and song of more modern authors and actors — interfused, that is, with inspiration available to all our current creeds.

Answering old questions anew, himself, DeStefano is obviously only interested in that which has proved timeless. He offers it all as "A Gift," for us to wonder at its startling power, yes, but more to help us recognize the challenge of its continuing pertinence. This book believes in us — in what we are now: both what we have been and what we can be."

*The Book of Abraham's* author Joseph DeStefano is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He teaches high school English in Littleton, Colorado where he lives with his wife and children.

You can order your copy of *The Book of Abraham* through Amazon. You can use this link:

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# Souvenir Pottery: Plates, Pitchers and Figures

By Robert Reed

From lovely plates and delicate pitchers to decorative trinket boxes and figural animals, souvenir pottery was proudly displayed in American homes for decades.

Today many of the more interesting pieces, such as a plate honoring the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition or a ceramic dog labeled Wheatland, Wyo., are the subject of renewed interest among the current generation of collectors.

America's "golden age" of souvenir pottery began in the 1890s and extended through the 1930s. While numerous items were also produced in the years that followed, production costs and public demand generally reversed positions.

Ironically the country's first true romance with souvenir pottery was not linked to tourism, but rather the simple appeal of interesting scenes.

Early in the 19th century England's Josiah Wedgwood was successfully producing wares for the American market which depicted scenes of the Revolutionary War and historical sites.

By the 1820s the entire Staffordshire pottery district of England was busy applying both European and American scenes or "views" to their distinctive pottery. Blue and white transfers produced striking images for buyers who would not likely visit the actual sites themselves.

Landscapes and modes of transportation were sometimes featured, but a major focus was on specific buildings and other structures of note. Typically such views appeared on plates or serving dishes, but they could also be found on mugs, spittoons,

pitchers, creamers, trinket boxes, and even chamber pots.

Most images were of a deep blue at first in the earlier 1820s but gradually new and improved light blues were used over the next two decades. Still later, in the second half of the 19th century, potters were able to add multiple colors to a basic transfer for an even more striking image.

By the 1850s such unique souvenir pottery was being proudly displayed in the homes of America's more affluent people. The range of selected topics varied widely from the harbor of New York City to the hamlet of Vevay, Ind. The scene of the "town" of Pittsburgh could be found along side another which highlighted the Deaf and Dumb Asylum of Hartford, Conn.

For some educated Americans it might be relatively easy to recognize buildings of New York's Crystal Palace if not, perhaps, the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo, Ill. However for the makers of such pottery in England it could be much more of a problem.

"If most (souvenir pottery) were copied from paintings or from portfolios of prints, all were equally strange to the Staffordshire potter," noted Los Angeles County Museum curator Gregor Wilcox in "The Concise Encyclopedia of American Antiques." The potter therefore could be forgiven, "if sometimes he mixed the tiles printed on his views."

One of the first major connections between souvenir pottery and a specific event came with the Centennial celebration of 1876 in Philadelphia. A number of that city's own buildings appeared on items distributed to those who attended the event includ-



Souvenir pottery dog with Wheatland, Wyo., paper label.



Presidential platter souvenir pottery marked La Francaise Porcelain, early 1900s; 14 inches. (Gene Harris Auction Center.)

Continued on page 12

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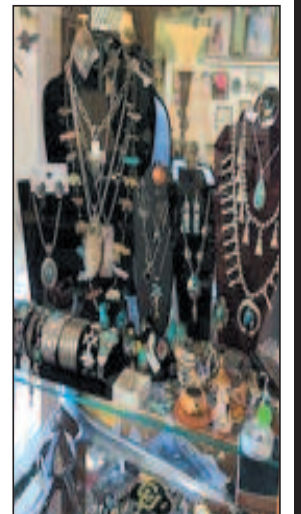
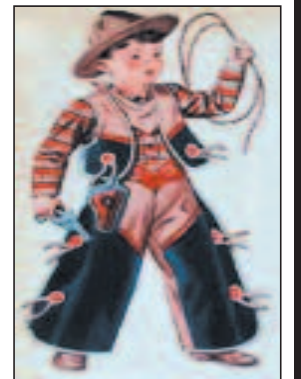
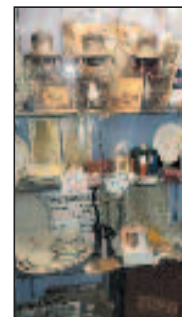
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# Souvenir Pottery: Plates, Pitchers and Figures

Continued from page 11  
ing Independence Hall.

Those pottery souvenirs with historical views were particularly popular at that special event. "Mementos of colonial and revolutionary days were discovered as if seen for the first time at the Centennial Exhibition....by people in great numbers," observes Wilcox.

By the time the Columbian Exposition arrived in 1893 Americans were totally fascinated with all manner of illustrated souvenir pottery.

That same year the Jones, McDuffee, and Stratton Importing Company of Boston contracted the ever familiar Wedgewood company to produced a series of plates with scenes from the Boston area. In the years that followed the Boston company would commission more than 300 different views on souvenir plates.

Of course, Wedgewood produced a vast number of other scenic plates with American locations in the late 19th century. Souvenir plates and similar pottery also came from the Williams Adams Company, Frank Beardmore and Company, British Anchor Pottery Company, W.T. Copeland and Sons, Royal

Doulton, Edwin Knowles China, D.E. McNicol Pottery, Royal Staffordshire Pottery, F. Winkle Company and many others.

Major events of the new 20th century, including the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, naturally lent themselves to great assortments of souvenir pottery. One of the most popular items at that St. Louis event was a simple souvenir cup and saucer.

A few years later visitors to the nation's capitol in Washington could find a presidential platter which featured the White House and 10 presidents including William McKinley. On the reverse the platter was marked "La Francaise Porcelain."

Elsewhere in the country during the early 1900s items were as diverse as a pottery Old Oaken Bucket in Scituate, Maine, or a Mayflower Arriving advertising tile for a Boston company celebrating its 100th birthday which sold over 12,000 copies.

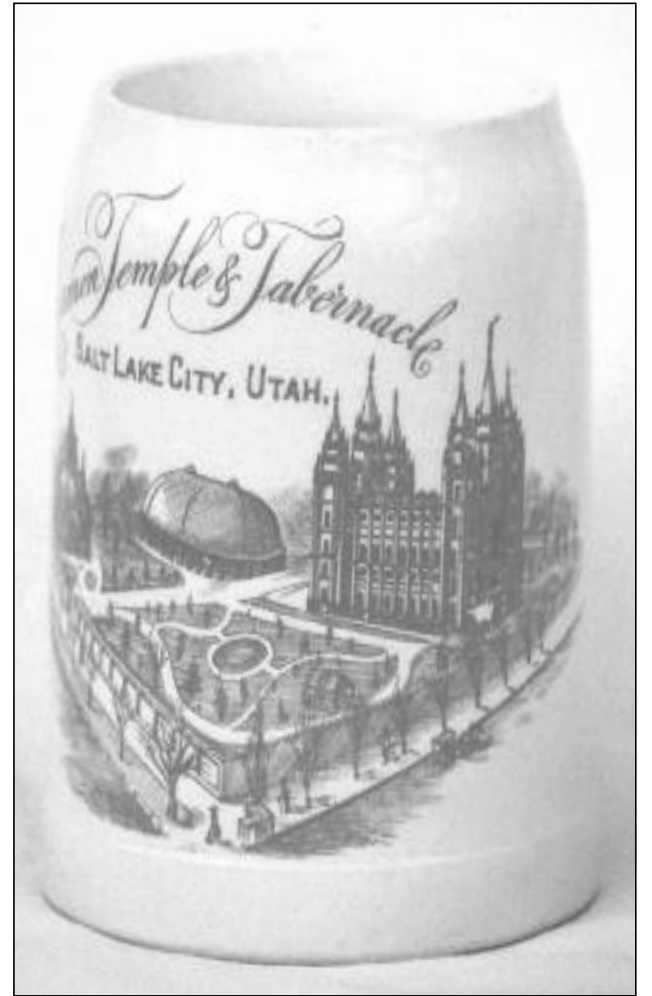
A good example of the diversity of such souvenir pottery early in the 20th century came from an eastern newspaper advertisement. It offered a full line of souvenirs including, "toothpick holders, pin trays, ash trays, vases, baskets, cups, saucers, creamers, and boxes." All items were 25 cents each.

By the 1920s "patriotic and preservation groups were restoring and maintaining historic sites" throughout the United States according to Arene Burgess, author of engaging book, "A Collector's Guide to Souvenir Plates." "The souvenir stand became an intrinsic part of almost every tourist attraction."

During the Roaring Twenties and the decade which followed, travelers could find a blue and white plate with floral border promoting Mechanic Island or something depicting the Women's League Building at the University of Michigan. They could pick-up a pitcher depicting the fabled House of Seven Gables or a clearly marked ashtray from Moose Jaw in Canada.

The 1939 World's Fair in New York City was the site of an amazing array of souvenir pottery ranging from various sized teapots and pitchers to hand-painted plates depicting the skyline of the Big Apple.

Certainly a great deal of souvenir pottery was produced in later years, especially plates which could be proudly propped up on cupboard shelves or hung on dining room walls. However the variety and quality seldom rivaled that which had been produced in such great numbers during its golden age.



Souvenir mug of Mormon Temple and Tabernacle, Utah, ca. 1890s, Albert Pick Co.

Today souvenir pottery in unique forms such as animal figurals and structures are highly prized, along with images of buildings and other construction which no longer exists.

## Recommended reading:

"Collector's Guide to Souvenir China" by Laurence Williams (Schiffer Publishing).

"A Collector's Guide to Souvenir Plates" by Arene Burgess (Schiffer Publishing).



The Government Building souvenir pottery pitcher, ca. 1860s. Height 9.25 inches. (Gene Harris Auction Center.)

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The Hotel De Paris Museum™, a site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is owned and operated by The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Colorado. The Museum is located in Georgetown, Colorado, just west of Denver off Interstate 70.

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(Opinions of the writers contained herein are not necessarily the opinions of the publishers.)

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# Hotel de Paris Celebrates Bastille Day July 9

**Bastille Day, Saturday, July 9th, 4pm to 9pm  
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Louis Dupuy's Hotel de Paris is the most unique and complete parcel of early Colorado history. A Site of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Website Link: <http://www.hoteldeparismuseum.org>

Bastille Day is a holiday celebrating the storming of the Bastille—a military fortress and prison—on July 14, 1789, in a violent uprising that helped usher in the French Revolution. Besides holding gunpowder and other supplies valuable to revolutionaries, the Bastille also symbolized the callous tyranny of the French monarchy, especially King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette.

The Bastille was built in the 1300s during the Hundred Years' War against the English, the Bastille was designed to protect the eastern entrance to the city of Paris. The formidable stone building's massive defenses included 100-foot-high walls and a wide moat, plus more than 80 regular soldiers and 30 Swiss mercenaries standing guard.

As a prison, it held political dissidents (such as the writer and philosopher Voltaire), many of whom were locked away without a trial by order of the king. By 1789, however, it was scheduled for demolition, to be replaced by a public square.

Despite inheriting tremendous debts from his predecessor, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette continued to spend extravagantly. By the late 1780s, France's government stood on the brink of economic disaster.

To make matters worse, widespread crop failures in 1788 brought about a nationwide famine. Bread prices rose so high that, at their peak, the average worker spent about 88 percent of

his wages on just that one staple.

Unemployment was likewise a problem, which the populace blamed in part on newly reduced customs duties between France and Britain. Following a harsh winter, violent food riots began breaking out across France at bakeries, granaries and other food storage facilities.

In an attempt to resolve the crisis, Louis XVI summoned the long-dormant Estates-General, a national assembly divided by social class into three orders: clergy (First Estate), nobility (Second Estate) and commoners (Third Estate).

Though it represented about 98 percent of the population, the Third Estate could still be outvoted by its two counterparts. As a result of this inequality, its deputies immediately started clamoring for a greater voice. After making no initial headway, they then declared themselves to be a new body called the National Assembly.

The story preceding the storming of the Bastille is long and represents a brutal time when many lost their lives. In the aftermath of the storming of the Bastille, the prison fortress was systematically dismantled until almost nothing remained of it. A de facto prisoner from October 1789 onward, Louis XVI was sent to the guillotine a few years later—Marie Antoinette's beheading followed shortly thereafter.

Much like the Fourth of July in America, Bastille Day—known in France as la Fête nationale or le 14 juillet (14 July)—is a public holiday in France, celebrated by nationwide festivities including fireworks, parades and parties.

Attendees will see France's tricolor flag, hear the French motto Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité ("liberty, equality and fraternity") and break into singing La Marseillaise—all popular symbols of France that had their origins in the heady days of the French Revolution.

In one of the world's oldest annual military parades, French troops have marched each year since Bastille Day of 1880 along the Champs-Élysées in Paris before French government officials and world leaders.



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Washington, DC—The National Endowment for the Arts and Blue Star Families are pleased to announce the museums across America that will be participating in the Blue Star Museums program this summer, from May 21, 2022—Armed Forces Day—to September 5, 2022—Labor Day. This year's list once again includes museums from all 50 states, District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Find the complete list of participating museums at [arts.gov/bluestarmuseums](https://arts.gov/bluestarmuseums).

See Admission-Free days at the Hotel de Paris to the right.

The following events at the Hotel de Paris Museum that welcome blue star families:

- Friday, July 1st, 10:00 am, FREE ADMISSION: Blue Star Museums (07.2022) in Georgetown
- This August, August 1st, 10:00 am, FREE ADMISSION: Blue Star Museum (08.2022) in Georgetown
- This September, September 1st, 10:00 am, FREE ADMISSION: Blue Star Museum (09.2022) in Georgetown

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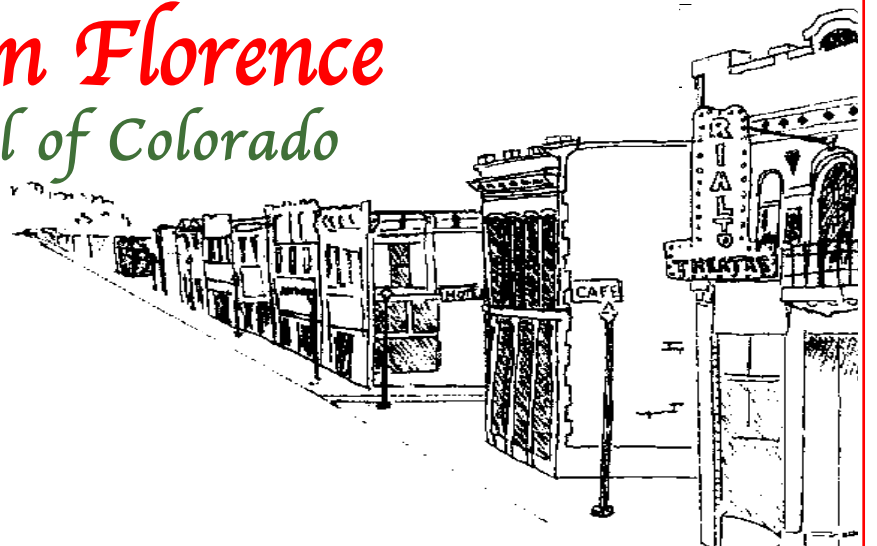
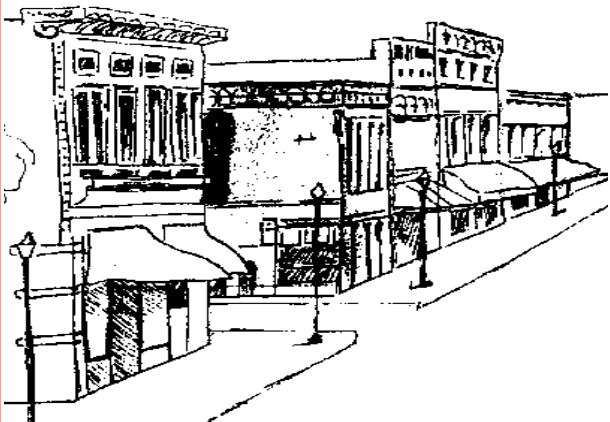
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## Happy Birthday, America!

By Sandy Dale

Since this is the 200th anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail and the 150th anniversary of the platting of Florence, I thought I'd give you a brief history lesson. (If you found history dull in school, I hope this changes your mind a bit.)

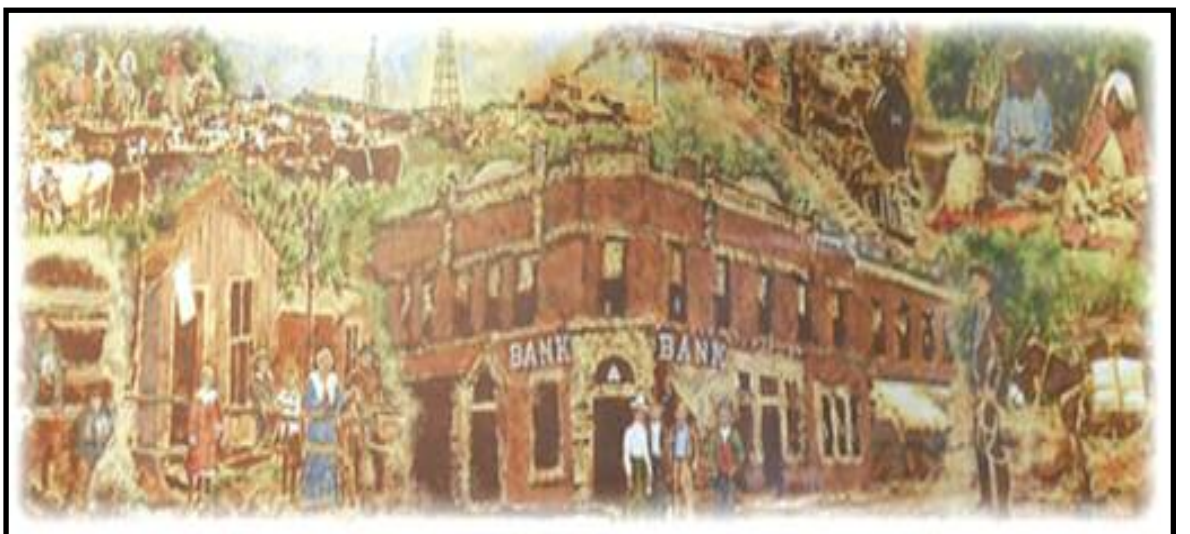
From 1822 to 1880 many, many folks came west on the Santa Fe Trail to what was then, New Spain or Mexico and is now Colorado and New Mexico. The trip by oxen and wagon, mule, horse and on foot was dramatic and traumatic. Between the irritated Indians and Mexicans, rattlesnakes and cholera, etc. it is a wonder anyone made it.

They kept coming and coming on the Trail along the Arkansas River. When they saw the Rockies looming in the distance, many must have said, "okay, that's enough" and settled in what is now southeast Colorado. Not to mention the fact they discovered a beautiful valley. At certain times of the year, the land appeared lush and green especially after a rainy season or a heavy snow melt in the spring. It seemed like the ideal place to live. So they spread out to the foothills and settled, building trading posts (or forts, as they were called)

and villages. Still plagued by Mexican and Indian attacks, they stood what they considered to be "their" ground. Mexican, Indian, White or Whatever, stood for what they believed to be "right." There were many brave heroes who believed whatever side they were on was the right one. Exciting, right?

Then along came the railroad. That is a long and exciting tale in itself. By the 1880's, gold had been discovered in Victor and Cripple Creek and a whole bunch of energetic, creative entrepreneurs came to Florence. They doggedly raised money to build their dream of the Florence & Cripple Creek Railroad to bring this gold to the many smelters in Florence. This boosted the need for the oil and coal prevalent around Florence. Then there was the need for merchants of all trades. Fremont county was already an agricultural and ranching area, so the boom began. Then there is the story of the railroad wars and the miners' strikes...

I have definitely run out of room here to cover the excitement of the past. You'll have to google it or read some of the great books about southeast Colorado where you'll find Florence.



*The Making of Florence, a mural by Sandy Dale on loan from the Florence Pioneer Museum*



Rena Pryor



Larry Nelson & Friends 719-338-1628



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## CONTEST

# June's What Is It?

Our June What Is It is Evel Knievel's stunt cycle issued by Ideal Toy Co., all plastic. We had no correct guesses for our June What Is It. Certainly you remember Evel Knievel. If Evel Knievel could be considered a legend of the 1970s, then the toys created in his name clearly were legendary. Knievel became America's number one daredevil during that decade and at the same time evoked more than \$300 million worth of toys and related merchandise. Some experts go as far as to say that the motorcycle maniac almost single-handedly managed to jump-start the stalled

toy industry of that time. The Ideal Toy Corporation certainly sold tens of thousands of action figures, stunt cycles and similar Evel Knievel items. But that's not counting all the rest from alarm clocks and belt buckles to walkie talkies and waste paper baskets. Before the "era of Evel" had ended there would also be bicycles, radios, watches and even pinball machines bearing his colorful and controversial likeness. See if you can identify July's What Is It. If you do, you will win a year's subscription to *the Mountain States Collector*. Good luck!

**JULY 2: OLD CROWS' ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW**, 12-3 p.m. (First Saturday of Every Month) 10081 West Bowles Avenue, Littleton. Get estimates on your favorite treasures. Talk to experts about your antiques, art, vintage and collectibles. Limit 1 item per person. Call 303-973-8648 for more information.

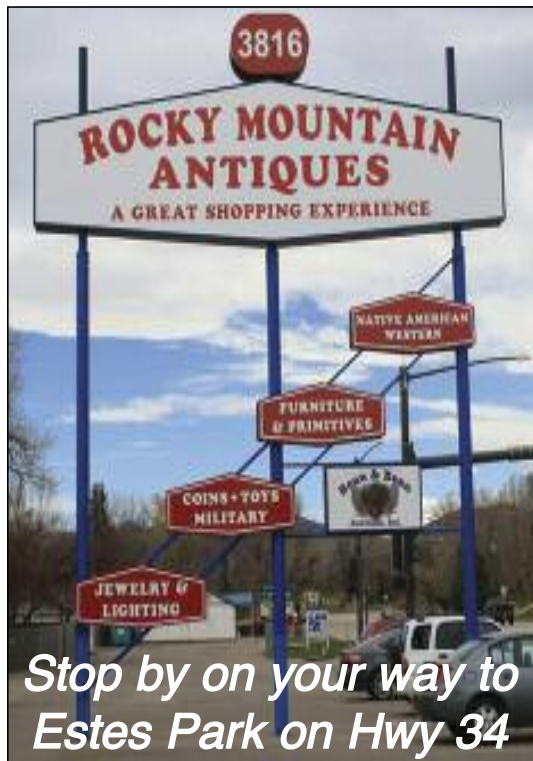
Old Crows Antique Mall is featuring a great new service. On the first Saturday of every month, owners Timmy and Joseph Crawford are inviting customers to bring in their treasured antiques and talk about them with appraisers and experts. The items can include antiques, art, vintage and collectibles. The experts will give estimates of the value and condition of your item. The limit is one item per person. The service will go from 12 to 3 p.m. on the first Saturday of each month.



# July's What Is It?

What were these boxes used for? Send your answers to the What Is It contest, postmarked by July 20, to *the Mountain States Collector*, P.O. Box 1003, Bailey, CO 80421. At least three winners will be drawn. Winners will receive a year's subscription to *the Mountain States Collector*.

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