

Winterthur Library

An Introduction to Resources



Advertising

Winterthur Library's collection of advertising materials is wide-ranging and allows for myriad interpretations. While primarily developed from the consumer's point of view, the collection also includes material geared to the technical aspects of advertising production. The collection has important eighteenth-century British and American items, although its greatest strength is nineteenth-century American material.

Trade Cards

Trade cards, also called shop bills or tradesmen's cards, were introduced in the seventeenth century to supplement the hanging street sign. In the eighteenth century, copper-plate-engraved cards were often illustrated with tradesmen's wares. Lithography and photoreproduction techniques led to the ornate and colorful mass-produced cards of the late nineteenth century, a popular collectible of Victorian women.



Trade card for Raphaëlle and Rembrandt Peale, 1793–96. Downs Collection, Winterthur Library.

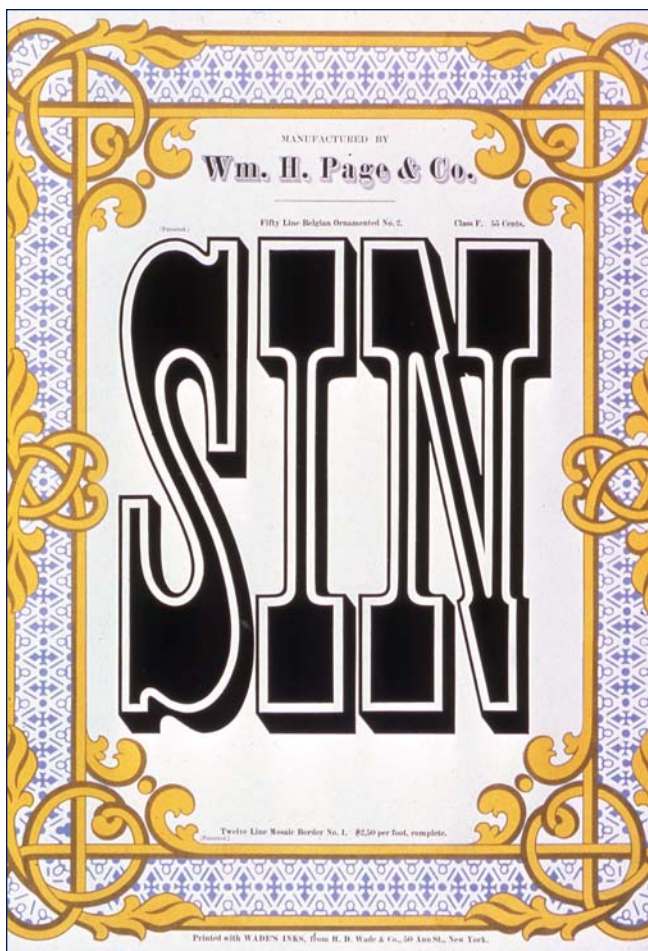
Among the many early examples in the Winterthur collection are the finely decorated card dated 1768 of Gilbert Deblois, owner of a Boston dry goods store, and the card of Raphaëlle and Rembrandt Peale, Philadelphia portrait painters. The Thelma Mendsen Collection, a group of scrapbooks containing thousands of trade and advertising cards produced in the late nineteenth century and organized by product type, assembles a wide range of images and printing techniques.



French Peddler's trade catalogue, ca. 1806–13. Downs Collection, Winterthur Library.

Trade Catalogues

The trade catalogues in the Winterthur Library, created for both the wholesale and retail markets, focus primarily on products for the domestic environment. The collection of English metalwork catalogues dating from the eighteenth century is unrivaled. Of special interest are the catalogues for seeds and medicinals produced by the Shaker religious communities and the group of trade catalogues produced specifically for use at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. The manuscript known popularly as the French Peddler's Catalogue was used by an unknown salesman in the early years of the nineteenth century. The two volumes contain hundreds of bril-



Wm. H. Page and Company, *Specimens of Chromatic Wood Type Borders* (Greenville, Conn., 1874). Printed Book Collection, Winterthur Library.

liantly colored watercolors of hats, canes, pistols, and many other items for the well-to-do customer of the Napoleonic era.

Ad Production

Winterthur Library's collection of material aimed at producers of advertisements includes items for printers, designers, and display artists. Type specimen books, trade catalogues of ad cuts, and trade advice books on topics such as show-card painting, glass etching, and window display are included. Among the earliest documents are the 1764 *Les Caracteres de l'Imprimerie* by Fournier and L. Johnson's *Specimen of Printing Types and Ornaments of 1844*. Wm. H. Page and Company's 1874 *Specimens of Chromatic Wood Type Borders* contains elaborate letters and borders in imaginative combinations. The 1892 manuscript diary of John Young Taylor, a traveling salesman, includes advertising cuts for retail merchants and describes the daily life of an early ad man.

Advertisements

Thousands of ads, broadsides, labels, and billheads can be found in the collection. They range from eighteenth-century broadsides announcing the arrival of imported goods to ornate advertising posters for nineteenth-century musical performances. Many include illustrations of products or representations of factories or store interiors. Work produced by such well-known lithographers as Louis Prang and Charles Magnus are highlights of the collection.

Advertising Ephemera

Paper dolls, games, and toys used as advertising or included in product packaging are another subcategory of the collection. Highlights include a group of forty paper dolls for Lyon's Coffee featuring Palmer Cox's Brownies and the Strawbridge and Clothier Game, a board game designed for the Philadelphia department store. Also included are menus, tickets, and programs.

Additional Resources

Many examples of early advertisements can be found in city and business directories. Some, like Geo. P. Rowell and Company's *American Newspaper Directory* published in 1893 and the *American Advertiser* of 1849, were specifically geared to the professional advertiser. Other city directories include both lists of merchants and craftsmen and trade card-size ads. Winterthur Library has many directories in both printed and microform formats. The Prime File, located in the Visual Resources Collection, includes transcriptions of thousands of craftsmen's ads from eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century newspapers.



Winterthur Library is located in the Crowninshield Research Building, accessible from the main entrance to Winterthur Museum & Country Estate.

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–4:30 pm

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