

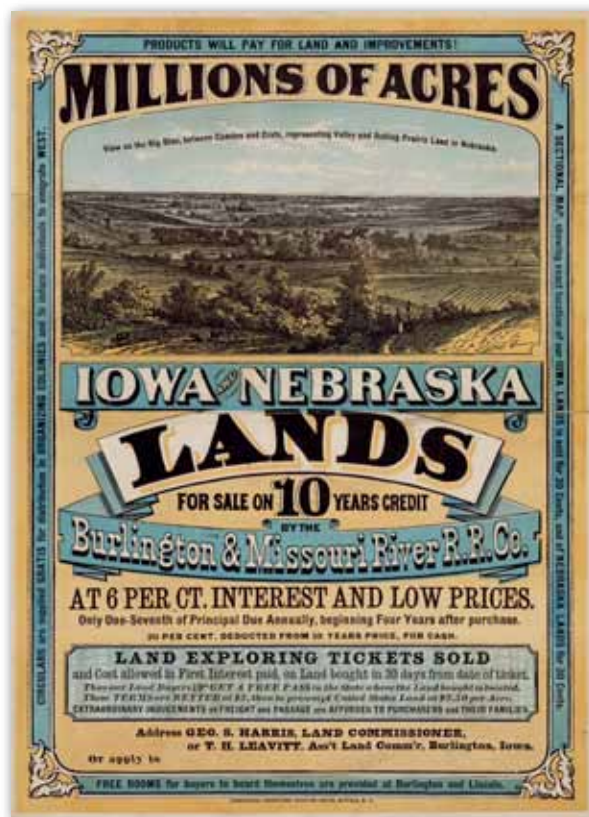
THE EPHEMERA JOURNAL

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1

SEPTEMBER 2012

The Persuaders: Early American Advertisers and Marketers

By WENDY A. WOLOSON



Broadside: (Left) Figure 1. William Smith, Abraham Lott. New Lands to be Sold, [1774]. Albany Institute of History and Art Library. (Right) Figure 2. Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Company. Millions of Acres. Iowa and Nebraska. Buffalo: Commercial Advertiser Printing House, [1872]. Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

We have all grown up awash in the world of advertising, and are ourselves products of generations of people who themselves had been influenced by advertising – it’s practically in our genes. But Americans before Madison Avenue were not quite as familiar

with and inured to promotional come-ons as we are today. The CHAVIC conference “Before Madison Avenue: Advertising in Early America” held at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, November 4-5, 2011, focused on a crucial time in

American history, when the language of promotion and puffery was just beginning to appear, and when people were only starting to become literate in it. By looking at the origins of modern advertising in America, we can better understand myriad things,

Continued on Page 4

In This Issue: Literary allusion advertising with Charles Dickens, Page 11 ~ Lewis Carroll, Page 15 ~ Arthur Conan Doyle, Page 20.

The Ephemera Journal

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Deadlines: April 1, August 1,
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Dear Members and Friends:

This has been a busy year for us. The new *Ephemera Journal* is a knock-out! Kudos to our new editor, Diane DeBlois who has taken Eric Johnson's marvelous work and run with it.

Our electronic presence keeps building and our web content grows apace. The Board has agreed that the Society should take an active role in National History Day and we are working toward that goal, slowly at first until we understand the ramifications.

The Board's mid-year meeting was in St. Louis the weekend of September 7-9, hosted by the St. Louis Mercantile Library.

We have started planning a very special annual meeting for 2013. It will focus on the relationship between ephemera and art, how they inform and inspire each other. An active committee is hard at work. If you have any particular ideas or would like to help in the process, please contact the Administrator. And in September 2013 we will jointly sponsor an important conference with The Library Company. Stay tuned through the eNews!

Congratulations to Board member Thomas A. Horrocks who, in July, became the new Director of Special Collections and the John Hay Library at Brown University. He left the position of Associate Director for Collections at Harvard's Houghton Library, but still lives in Cambridge.

And, congratulations to former Board member Matthew R. Isenburg who has been able to place his American premier photograph collection, intact, at the Archive of Modern Conflict. The sale means that this treasure of over 30,000 pieces (now housed at the AMC's Toronto location) will be cataloged for posterity.

In our next issue I will be saying my farewells as President, and four of our Board members are also retiring. Five nominees for the positions introduce themselves to you on page 3. Please vote, and welcome our new volunteers.

All best wishes,



Arthur H. Groten M.D.

In this issue...

The Center for American Visual Culture at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, sponsored a conference called "Before Madison Avenue: Advertising in Early America" in November 2011. I was particularly impressed with the keynote speech by Wendy Woloson, who explored the beginnings of persuasive advertising in America – which was rewritten for this issue. By the second half of the 19th century, advertisers on both sides of the English-speaking Atlantic took advantage of familiar figures from literature to persuade consumers. Three Canadian women – two collectors (Barbara Rusch and Dayna Nuhn) and a librarian (Peggy Perdue) – took up the challenge to interpret why Charles Dickens (and his fictional characters), Alice from Wonderland, and Sherlock Holmes were such advertising perennials.

—Diane DeBlois, editor

Please

VOTE!

Nominations for a 3-Year Term on the Board of Directors.

There are five candidates for five open slots on the Board of Directors. Four of the five candidates are first-time board members and the fifth is returning after a one term hiatus. We are asking for a vote in support of the entire slate. Candidate profiles and a ballot are contained here. The board elects its officers in January.

DAVID FREUND: I have long been a Society member, involved in collecting as well as thinking about ephemera. My article on personal visual albums appeared in the January issue. I also collect, have written about, and curated exhibitions of photo post cards. At Ramapo College, where I am currently Professor Emeritus, I chaired the Visual Arts for more than fifteen years, and headed the Arts and Lecture Committee, responsible for all college performances and exhibitions. For six years I was on the Board of the Society for Photographic Education, and for them chaired three national committees. It would be an honor and a pleasure to serve the Ephemera Society as a board member.



SHERYL JAEGER: I have been involved with ephemera for 25 years (collecting childhood memorabilia and paper with a secret), and a member of the Society since 1991. With partner Ralph Gallo, as Eclectibles, my personal and business mission is The Promotion and Preservation of Ephemera. Sheryl Jaeger Appraisal Services is an Affiliate of the Appraisers Association of America. Other memberships include the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, The Manuscript Society, The Ticknor Society, The American Papercutters Guild, the American Game and Puzzle Collectors, the National Valentine Collectors Association. I feel that my experience and interests provide a unique prospective and advocacy in advancing the mission of the Ephemera Society.



JEREMY ROWE: Though I am a relatively recent member, I have collected, researched, and written about historic photographs for 30 years. My research revolves around ephemera and its role in unveiling stories about our past, as primary source research materials that are equal in importance to, and that extend, traditional text resources. Ephemera are under recognized and appreciated historic documents that carry embedded information which, once identified and released, provide significant opportunities to expand knowledge. I am active in the Daguerreian Society and National Stereoscopic Association and feel there may be opportunities for collaboration among these and other collectors' organizations to expand the visibility of the importance of ephemera as historic resources.



JOHN G. SAYERS: I am a retired Canadian Chartered Accountant and long-time collector of ocean liner and other ephemera. I've served two previous terms on the Society's Board; am in my fourth year on the Council of The Ephemera Society (U.K.); and contribute regularly to publications and websites of each one. I often write about ephemera for publications in the U.S. and the U.K. as a strong promoter of the collection of ephemera, and of the sharing of collecting information among national Societies. Although the long-term impact of electronic media on the creation of ephemera causes me to shudder, I recognize the vital importance of the ESA website and other electronic media in popularizing ephemera and disseminating information.



DONALD ZALDIN: I practice law in Toronto, but ephemera is like a second career. I was co-founder and Vice-President of The Ephemera Society of Canada for 17 years, from its inception in 1987, and am now active in Sherlockian societies. I've often given presentations to promote ephemera and to highlight my own collections (Dionne Quintuplets, Arthur Conan Doyle/Sherlock Holmes, Elizabeth Barrett Browning) as well as those of other collectors (Currier & Ives, the bicycle, Lewis Carroll/Alice in Wonderland, The Hudson's Bay Company, the *Titanic*). I look forward to helping the ESA Board fulfill its mandate to serve the interests of its dealer, collector and institutional members, and to promoting new membership.



Ephemera Society of America Ballot Enclosed — 3 ways to vote!



Figure 3. James Peale. Zachariah Poulson, 1808. Oil painting on canvas. Library Company of Philadelphia.

including how emerging print technologies became so effective at informing the public about newly available goods, services, and market prices; how marketers increasingly and effectively incorporated visual images; how distribution networks helped deliver information and consumer goods to more remote markets; how advertisers adopted and then perfected a persuasive language of promotion; and how these systems together became integrated into the lived experiences of American consumers.

Indeed, we didn't really have a mature "consumer culture" to speak of until, arguably, the Civil War era (yet that is debatable). But the pump was being primed. These promotional mechanisms were well in place before that, changing the collective American mindset toward a consumptive outlook.

Becoming Consumers

The historical value of advertising is incalculable. As a crucial source of evidence, advertising chronicles essential aspects of people's daily lives, from the mundane to the monumental. Advertising tells us, for instance, what foods and products were available over time and in certain places, improvements in manufacturing technologies, the expansion of distribution networks, the evolution of print culture, aspects of business and economic history, and the rise of capitalism over time and place. Perhaps more importantly, if thought about from the broader perspective of the techniques and strategies used in

promotional appeals, advertising also tells us about the collective psyche, and provides us with a vernacular intellectual history. Effective advertising gets us to act, and is therefore both an agent and reflection of our motivations, which are often deep-seated and hidden even to us.

But have Americans always been such receptive subjects of persuasion, or is this a fairly new development? These are important questions that the study of advertising can help us answer. The fact that advertising became more sophisticated and more persuasive over time indicates that its creators increasingly recognized, acknowledged, and spoke to evolving consumer desire; at the same time, they were equally instrumental in generating those desires. By gaining a better understanding of how strategies of persuasion worked and how they changed over time, we can better understand the emergence of the modern American consumer.

Some basic questions revolve around the give and take between emerging modes of advertising and shifts in the cultural mindset at large. How did promoters change Americans' minds about such basic things as what to buy? And how much to pay? And from whom to purchase certain goods? And, importantly, how did



Figure 4. James Peale. Zachariah Poulson, 1808. [Detail].



Figure 5. F.O.C. Darley. "The Peddler," from John L. McConnel, *Western Characters* (New York: Redfield, 1853). Library Company of Philadelphia.

promotional efforts initially convince Americans that they *should* be consumers – that is, people who began purchasing goods they did not necessarily need, from people they did not necessarily know, and coming from places they had never heard of? Additionally, how did Americans at large consent to investing a great deal of time, energy, and financial resources in consumption itself and in consumption-related activities such as window-shopping, product research, and

budget balancing? These were monumental shifts in how people made sense of their world and how they ordered their time. Further, how did Americans also agree to increasingly define themselves and determine their estimation of others based on what goods they possessed – what they wore, what they ate, and how they furnished their homes?

When, exactly, did we turn into a consumer culture, and how did it happen? The era "Before Madison Avenue" is interesting and crucial, for these were the formative years that witnessed the rise of and eventual maturation of advertising and consumer culture. Of course, some Americans had been participating in consumer culture all along. Elites in the colonial and early Republic eras enjoyed the privileges of financial resources, access to skilled craftsmen, knowledge of fashions, and the desire to possess goods that would both increase their comfort and impress their peers. But it would be decades before consumption was truly democratized.

Persuasion

It is essential to distinguish between *advertising* and *persuasion*, because the difference between them helps us track when marketers turned from addressing a general public to their speaking to a *consuming* public. For this, some etymology is instructive. The word *advertise* dates from the early 15th century, and derives from the Latin *vertere* "to turn" and *ad* "toward," (*ad* + *vertere* = "to turn toward") a word which initially meant to warn. The meaning of the more modern term "advertising," in common use by the 18th century, was a "written statement calling attention to something," like a notice of a public sale. [Figure 1] In contrast, *persuasion* suggests something more nuanced: not simply getting one's attention, but to "urge strongly," to get people to do something (*per* meaning "very" and



Figure 6. R. L. Wolcott. *Wolcott's Instant Pain Annihilator* (New York: Endicott & Co., c.1863). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.



Figure 7. "Interior View of G. G. Evans' Great Gift Book Establishment," Frank Leslie's Illustrated, December 31, 1858. Collection of the author.

suadere meaning "urge"). [Figure 2] By turning *looking into urging* and *urging into action*, advertising became persuasive, and was thus a form of communication that not only spoke to Americans as consumers but also helped put them into the mindset of *being* consumers.

So when we think about the history of advertising, we should really be considering the history of American persuasion. To my mind, the most influential persuaders were the printers and publishers, the peddlers, the patent medicine purveyors, and the retail premium operators. But proselytizers, friends, neighbors, and even strangers could also be quite persuasive. Together, these people helped build a consumer culture that not only improved Americans' knowledge about new goods and services,

but also, importantly, marketed emotions – needs and desires – for such things.

Relatively sophisticated advertising and marketing strategies appeared well before the Civil War – much earlier than historians of advertising have typically thought. Although this, too, is a subject of debate – some would argue it took place in the 18th century while others are convinced that sophisticated advertising did not exist before the dawn of the 20th century. I tend to think it occurred in the 1830s and 1840s with the rise of a mass print culture most centrally, but also with particular economic, social, and cultural

transformations. Advertisements changed from being relatively straight-forward informational blurbs to something else entirely, often describing goods by their ethereal "essences" and qualities, emphasizing products'



Figure 8. Home Washing Machine and Wringer ([New York? 1869?]. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

desirability, novelty, and other seemingly magical and evanescent properties. Marketers also increasingly used advertising to convey qualities about the purchasers of their products based on status, self-perception, and emotions, playing on feelings of hope, anticipation, desire, and anxiety that created intimacies between person and product.

Persuaders motivated people to do certain things, to go see certain attractions, read certain texts, and purchase certain goods. But consumers had to be impelled to do so, and many of these activities involved spending money in new ways on new goods, and therefore these acts carried not only risk and uncertainty (and the inverse, hope and anticipation), but also necessitated a change in thinking. Just because goods became cheaper and more widely available did not necessarily mean people had to buy them, just as we are not moved to purchase every affordable thing offered to us. So, when considering the history of advertising, we really should be thinking about how persuasion – advertising being but one part – not only contributed to the rise of consumer culture by selling Americans more stuff, but also, how persuasive mechanisms worked to help change Americans’ conceptions of themselves and their attitudes about purchasing, so that they came to see themselves *as consumers*.

Printers and Publishers

I think a really fine starting point is this painting of newspaper publisher Zachariah Poulson by James Peale, from 1808. [Figure 3] Poulson took over ownership of *Claypoole’s American Daily Advertiser* and as *Poulson’s* the publication devoted at most three full columns of each issue to news. The rest was advertising. Typical of contemporary newspapers, it encapsulated the character of the life of a growing American city.

If we examine the painting more closely, we see that it not only captures the portrait of a man who devoted his life to early American advertising (and made a tidy living from it), but it also represents, however subtly, the multi-pronged aspects of persuasion which would appear in full force a few decades later. [Figure 4] If viewed from Poulson’s perspective (i.e., right side up), the newspaper in his hand shows advertisements of the sort found in typical issues of *The Daily Advertiser* – there are notices of ships’ voyages, announcements of new bathhouses, and lists of the latest goods available

for purchase. (The artist has also, cheekily, included an advertisement for his own services front and center – “James Peale No. 68 Lombard Street Paints Portraits in Oil and Miniature,” an ad that never actually appeared in the real publication.) Dated October 26, 1808, the newspaper shown here looks very much like, but is not identical to, the actual issue of the newspaper published on that day. For instance, we can see the caption “Calcutta goods,” an icon of a ship – one of the earliest and certainly most prevalent stock cuts in early American newspapers, and an ad for 4-4 Irish Linens.



Figure 9. Genesee Pure Food Co. Jell-O. America’s Best Family Dessert (1902). Collection of the author.

If we examine the painting even more closely, we can see a notice for George Crabbe’s *Poems*. As it happens, Poulson published a positive review of this very work in the (real) October 26 issue of his *Daily Advertiser*, praising Crabbe for his “genius and merit.” Fittingly, Poulson remarked that he was most happy to see again Crabbe’s poem “The Newspaper,” first published in 1785, which appeared in this new compilation and was met “with that kind of pleasure, which men experience on seeing an old friend after a long interval of absence.” Crabbe’s satirical poem describes every aspect of newspapers, from production to distribution to their diverse content, including “the arts” of puffery – exaggerations meant to elevate subjects or products. This is something P.T. Barnum, and American newspaper editors, would perfect by the mid-19th century.

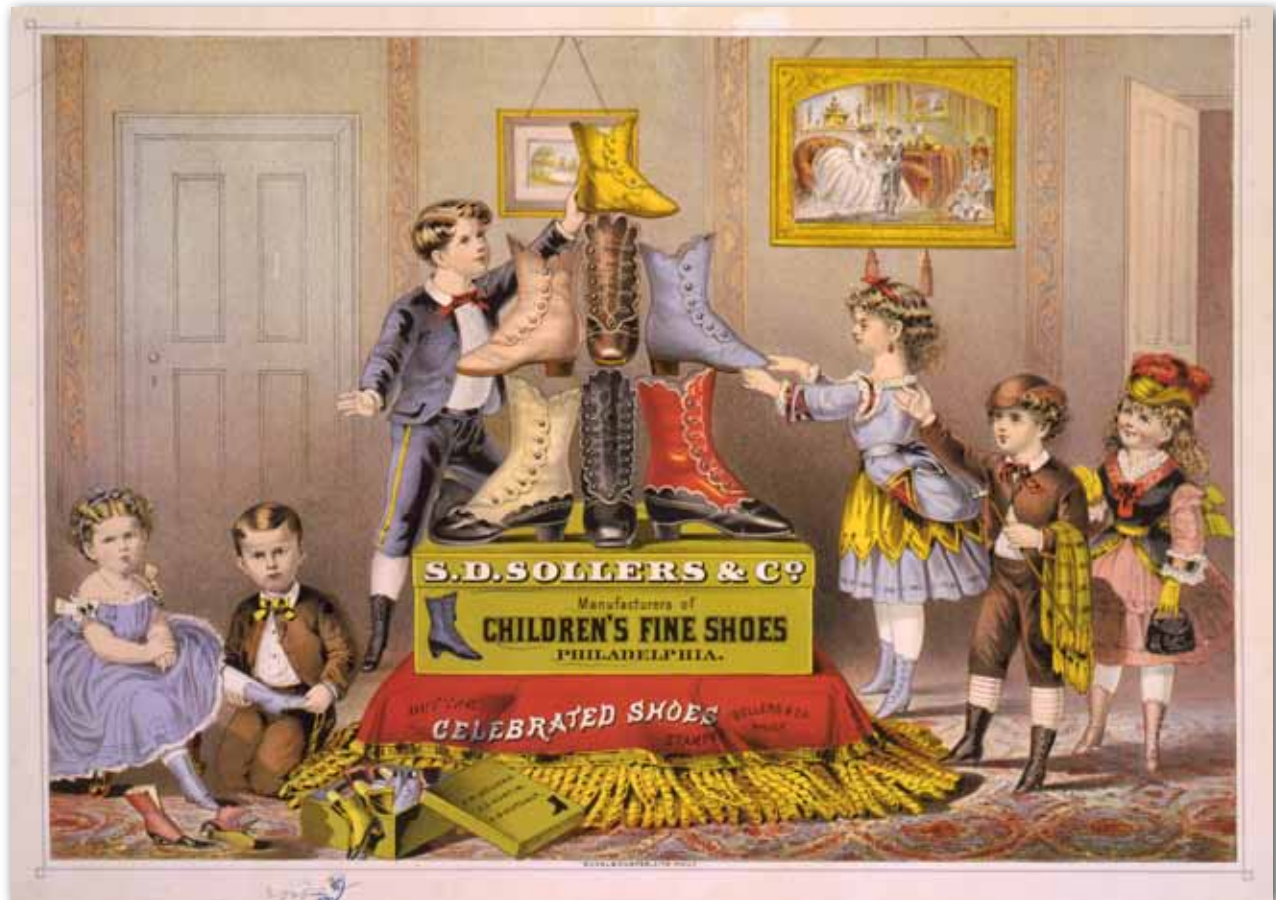


Figure 10. S.D. Sollers & Co. Celebrated Shoes (Philadelphia: Duval & Hunter, 1874). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Another aspect of persuasion is captured in this painting. The papers on Mr. Poulson's desk also include a manuscript draft of an announcement that appeared in *Poulson's* newspaper a week and a half later. It announced a program featuring "celebrity orator" James Ogilvie, who between 1808 and 1811 lectured across the country, speaking in at least 37 different locations (from Maine to Georgia and into Canada). Wearing a toga on stage, Ogilvie perfected the art of oratory, and was praised for his "ingenious performances" that often privileged style over substance but moved people nevertheless. Whether the painting intentionally made emerging modes of persuasion its subject or not, we cannot say. But it certainly does, referencing the many layers of persuasion that worked in and on a culture to influence and change popular tastes, attitudes, and behaviors, encompassing the printed, written, and spoken word alike.

Peddlers

Printers' words in text were reinforced in person by peddlers and itinerant artisans, who began traversing the American hinterlands in the 18th century. Peddlers induced the public – and especially women – to purchase goods they might not necessarily need, but which nevertheless embodied material connections to and representations of distant markets. [Figure 5] In their packs and carts peddlers carried

myriad petty luxuries, like mantle clocks, japanned tinware, gift books, painted portraits, and the capacious category of "Yankee notions." The peddler made distant commercial worlds literally materialize on people's thresholds, not merely exposing rural consumers to new goods, but also providing instruction about how to make sense of them. Peddlers helped consumers understand the function of new products, judge their relative quality, and grasp their meaning in a wider world. Middlemen, they operated through face-to-face interactions, akin to bartering with one's neighbors. Yet they also embodied the increasingly extended and anonymous world of commercial enterprise.

Patent Medicine Purveyors

Perhaps the most successful and certainly the most ubiquitous persuaders were the patent medicine purveyors. [Figure 6] They had been at work for centuries in Great Britain and enjoyed a large export market to America since the mid 1700s. Patent medicine sellers continued to deploy their aggressive advertising strategies in 19th-century America, expanding their reach so that patent medicine brands seemed to be everywhere – hawked at tent revivals, advertised in newspaper editorials, featured in almanacs, and painted on building exteriors. Recognizing the promotional power of packaging, makers of patent medicines also stamped their product names into the

surfaces of glass bottles that they wrapped with ornate labels and decorated tins with brightly-colored printed designs that could be easily seen on druggists' shelves.

What was more, patent medicine purveyors quite effectively exploited popular – and very real – anxieties about health and well-being at a time when formally-trained physicians were expensive and difficult to come by, and when women, in particular, were charged with caring for family members, hired hands, and even livestock. Patent medicine proprietors' efforts accomplished three particularly important things. First, they convinced consumers of the necessity to purchase their products in the first place, strongly suggesting that consumers likely suffered from any number of general or specific maladies, whether scrofula, worms, headaches, bad hair, cellulitis, rheumatism, or all of the above – efficiently cured by a “panacea.” Second, they persuaded a wary public that nostrums were effective rather than harmful. And finally, they induced people to become loyal customers of their own line of products amidst hundreds of competitors.

Retail Premium Operators

Retail premium operators adopted patent medicine marketing strategies, but in addition offered free prizes with purchases, long before Cracker Jack began doing the same thing. Offering incentives (or “inducements,” as they were also called), was a fairly novel marketing strategy that “rewarded” people for doing the right thing commercially, making correct purchasing decisions. Premium systems operated much like lotteries, bringing chance, hope, and aspiration together to induce people to acquire things they otherwise might not be able to afford and which they previously might not have even wanted.

Many mid-century entrepreneurs, such as traveling soap salesmen who offered prizes for bulk purchases, leveraged premium strategies to great effect. But perhaps the most successful were the operators of “gift book exchanges.” G.G. Evans, for instance, offered free prizes with every book he sold at his “gift book establishment.” By using this persuasive strategy, Evans was able to unload goods that were otherwise unsaleable. His stock of books were remainders that did not sell on the primary market. And the prizes he gave away were cheap electroplated pocket watches and costume jewelry. Evans himself remarked that only *some* of his customers were in it for the books: most wanted the prizes. “We think there is not much doubt,” he remarked, “that every individual who orders a book of us entertains, at least, a secret hope of securing a valuable present.” Similarly, competing gift book operator Albert Colby admitted that his jewelry prizes might sometimes be “slightly brassy,” but insisted that customers received their money’s worth in books. Premium operators leveraged other forms of persuasion as well, inculcating trust by showing pictures of their



Figure 11. Holmes, Booth & Hayden. The Great Bartholdi Statue, Liberty Enlightening the World. New York: Currier & Ives, c.1885. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

operations as solid, bank-like edifices; appropriating the familiar and trusted format of the newspaper as a key advertising format; and tapping into feelings about moral improvement, social striving, and economic success, producing full-color images of interiors that looked like well-stocked personal libraries populated with refined people busy shopping. [Figure 7]

Even though premiums were typically cheap, shoddy goods, people continued to be seduced by them. Why? Because, using the various techniques at their disposal (and innovating others), persuaders short-circuited the more rational parts of the brain, and spoke instead to consumers' emotions. In particular, they leveraged a burgeoning print culture that exploited the trust engendered by personal interactions, like hiring respected newspaper editors to “puff” certain products. They recreated the intimacy of personal correspondence by

mass-mailing letters printed using chromolithography that mimicked real handwriting. They exploited the anxieties created by an increasingly impersonal and image-conscious culture. And they appealed to novelty by using new fonts and formats and incorporating color printing, textured paper, and other devices to stimulate the senses.

By mid century, Americans were undeniably mass consumers. They desired new goods and they also came to see those goods as central to their own self worth, whether they used those things for themselves, or gave them to others. Marketers deployed the many persuasive tools available to them to induce people to bring objects into their homes, put things into their mouths, wear things on their bodies, and think about themselves as people who did all of the above, engaging freely in the wider marketplace of goods and ideas. [Figures 8-11]

Subsequent generations who grew up with cheap print, ready graphics, lavishly-appointed department stores, and consumer goods that had become more affordable and available in greater varieties, required still newer persuasive strategies. Advertisers and marketers continued to respond to the challenge, professionalizing themselves by the early 1860s. How to keep selling more stuff to new consuming groups, and more stuff to the old consuming groups who thought they had everything they needed, proved a constant challenge. In the post Civil War decades, sellers of novelty goods not only advertised directly to children but also manufactured new novelty goods that they pitched to adults, stoking the eternal flame of consumer desire.

Advertisements didn't motivate people to act, but the persuasion behind them *did* – not simply getting people's attention, but impelling them to act in a particular way. Effective modes of persuasion quickly jumped from the world of commerce to the world of ideas; similar techniques are evident on recruiting posters (Join the army!), election broadsides (Vote for this party!), carriers' addresses (Please give me money!), printed sermons (Have faith!), and more.

Persuasion did not merely impel people to do things they were already inclined to do. Perhaps more profoundly, persuasive efforts urged them to do things they might not have otherwise, and to even act against their own self-interest. Advertising was and is but one

element of the persuasion “complex.” By understanding advertising from the perspective of this broader lens, we can perhaps rewrite some of our understanding of the history of consumer culture and cultural literacy. Further, we can perhaps more clearly see its legacies, and better understand how something as bizarre as the SkyMall catalog, for example, filled as it is with a strange mix of gadgetry promising to solve problems ranging from pet incontinence to executive ennui, has any relevance to our lives today.

By the early 20th century Americans had been active and sophisticated consumers for nearly a century: Madison Avenue had only to catch up to them. People continued to be vulnerable to some persuasive arguments, but they had also learned the skills necessary to decode many advertising appeals, or to ignore them. These are skills we continue to use every day to evaluate the quality of goods and services offered to us. We may have access to more information today (Amazon rankings and online consumer reviews to name but two), and persuasive media have certainly changed, with viral marketing, robocalls, email blasts, and the like. But successful persuasion still targets those same, deep-seated impulses and emotions that early Americans also shared – our desire for novelty, our many persistent anxieties, and our sense of vanity. Not only can early American persuasion tell us a lot about the past, but it also certainly help us understand the present.

Wendy A. Woloson,

is an independent scholar and consulting historian living in Philadelphia, PA. Formerly Curator of Books at the Library Company of Philadelphia, she recently curated the exhibition “Capitalism by Gaslight: The Shadow Economies of 19th-Century America.” Her books include *Refined Tastes: Sugar, Consumers, and Confectionery in 19th-Century America* (1999) and *In Hock: Pawning in America from Independence through the Great Depression* (2012). Her current work on cheap goods can be found at: www.repositoryofusefulknowledge.com.



Speakers on the Fascinating Subjects of Ephemera

Event planners looking for experienced speakers on a variety of interesting and intriguing ephemera subjects will find an excellent roster of speakers available on the Society's website, www.ephemerasociety.org/resources/speakersbureau.html. On the same page is an application for being listed as a speaker.

JOIN THE SPEAKERS BUREAU

The Society invites members who enjoy speaking on ephemera subjects to join the Speakers Bureau and share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others.

Celebrating Dickens

BY BARBARA RUSCH

On February 7, 2012 the bicentenary of Dickens' birth was celebrated everywhere in the world his books are still read, that is to say, everywhere in the world. Much about his life remains a mystery, in part because ten years before his passing in 1870 he gathered his private papers into a pile and set them ablaze.

He might have preferred that memories of his tragic and chaotic childhood had been consigned to ashes. During the years of Dickens' life, 1812-1870, England underwent seismic shifts that are reflected in his novels - scientific discoveries greeted with enthusiasm, their cost in human terms a cause for horror and regret. Thus his work, as well as his life, is a maelstrom of contradictions: the reformer clinging to the old ways; the idealist who was often materialistic and prone to hypocrisy; an advocate of the emerging middle classes who was at times their severest critic; a champion of exploited women and the virtues of marriage who sought to end his own in the cruelest way.

The horrors of Dickens' father's stint in London's Marshalsea Debtors' Prison was matched by Charles' at Warren's Blacking Factory, affixing labels to pots of blacking. Yet his shame and disappointment found their way into his novels. His mother Elizabeth, who encouraged him to remain in the blacking factory even after his father's release, morphed into the socially inept character of Mrs. Nickleby, a demanding yet feckless maternal figure, while his father served as the model for Mr. Macawber.

The first time the name Charles Dickens appears in print was on a business card he created at the age of seventeen. [Figure 1] Having learned shorthand he was working at a law office and wished to apply for a position as a journalist, with the address 10 Norfolk Street where he and his family lived for a time following their arrival in London - just eight doors away from the infamous Cleveland Street Workhouse. Not surprisingly, the horrors of the workhouse figure prominently in such novels as *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol*. A shop directly across from the Dickens home was owned by a Mr. Sikes, the name of the brute who was to take Nancy's life in *Oliver Twist*.

Dickens' novels resonate with the grief and pain of vulnerable children and defenseless young adults. Like the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come, an accusing finger invariably points at a corrupt legal system, government indifference and a litany of heartless and ignorant edu-

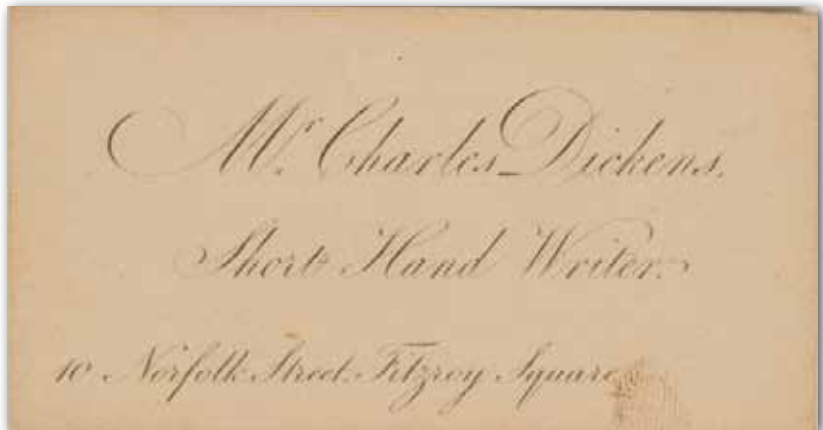


Figure 1. Dickens' 1829 business card, from the collection of Dan Calinescu.

cators. Numerous heart-wrenching scenes, from *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* to *Little Dorrit* exposed the seamy underbelly of the London poor and their grim lives as communities of desperate squalor, and helped mobilize public opinion toward a number of social reforms.

If Dickens' plots appear at times to be overly theatrical, it is most certainly by design. From earliest childhood Dickens was fascinated by the theatre. So moved was he by a performance of Grimaldi the clown and by his introduction to Shakespeare's plays, he began to build his own toy theatres, sometimes using firecrackers as dramatic effects. His novels were strongly influenced by Victorian melodrama and references to the theatre abound. Once his reputation as a novelist was assured, Dickens gave vent to his passion as an actor, playwright and director, appearing in numerous amateur productions. Some of these were written by his friend, novelist Wilkie Collins, with whom he appeared, along with other celebrities of the day, in benefit performances. [Figure 2]

It was at just such a theatrical presentation that his own personal drama came to be played out. He had married Catherine Hogarth in 1836 and they had ten children together, though he discovered early on that they were ill-matched, and he came to refer to her attributes as "not distinguished by closeness of reasoning or presence of mind." He grew ever closer to her younger sister, Mary, whose tragic deathbed scene he describes a year after his marriage in a letter to a friend. He wore her ring on his finger for the rest of his life. More significantly, Mary is reincarnated as Little Nell of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. [Figure 3]

In 1857, while rehearsing for a play written by Wilkie Collins entitled *The Frozen Deep*, Dickens met actress Ellen Ternan, who would become the love of his life. In

continued on page 12



Figure 2. December 28, 1867 playbill for the drama No Thoroughfare, by Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins (Barbara Rusch collection).

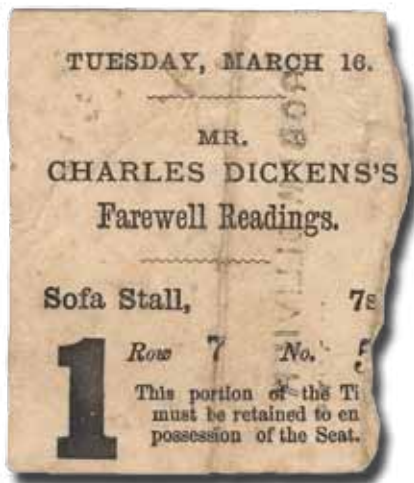


Figure 4. Ticket stub for the second round of Dickens' farewell readings, March 16, 1869. After a physical collapse, he actually gave a final, final round of readings in 1870 (Barbara Rusch collection).

Figure 3. Christmas card with a scene from The Old Curiosity Shop, copyright Raphael Tuck (Barbara Rusch collection).



Figure 5. A series of 2012 postage stamps for Great Britain, featuring characters from Dickens' novels (Barbara Rusch collection).



a cruel act of abandonment and rejection, similar to those from which he himself never recovered as a child, he sent Catherine away while he continued to reside in the matrimonial home with some of his children and Catherine's other sister Georgina who served as their housekeeper until Dickens' death. In a sense he proved to be no less heartless than many of the blackguards in his novels. He would have done well to have considered the merits of his own golden rule: "Never be mean to anything,

never be false, never be cruel." Even after his death, for a time the explosive details of his private life remained concealed and his public aura of respectability continued unblemished.

Dickens' stage acting gave way to dramatic readings from his own works. Beginning in 1858, English audiences thrilled to scenes reenacted from *A Christmas Carol* or Nancy's horrible death scene at the hands of Bill Sikes. So powerful were these performances that



Figure 6. A printed menu blank with Pickwickian scenes, with a March 19, 1884 dinner at Joseph Peabody's (Barbara Rusch collection).

audience members were known to have fainted away in their seats at the fiery rhetoric. So successful were they (and so lucrative) that Dickens took the readings, along with a specially constructed podium, to North America in 1867 where audiences were equally enthralled. Though an unequivocal triumph, there is little doubt that the physical and emotional toll the readings took on his health contributed to his early death. [Figure 4]

No one had the facility to compose masterful opening and closing lines like Dickens: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." "It is a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done. It is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages will show." "Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that." And of course, "As Tiny Tim observed, 'God bless Us, Every One.'"

Though Dickens' characters are often little more than caricatures, two-dimensional stereotypes invested with one-word descriptives – pompous, vicious, vulgar, buffoonish, miserly, tragic – they are so vividly portrayed that they fairly leap off the page, fully inflated and larger than life, to remain forever imbedded in the imaginations of generation of his readers. Like Dickens himself, they are both fragile and harsh, severely circumscribed by

the conventions of their time and by their own personal demons. Many of his characters, flawed as they are, were based on real-life people, though he invested them with such individuality that they are wholly original and in no way derivative. Almost two centuries after he first breathed life into Mr. Pickwick, Ebenezer Scrooge and Oliver Twist, they endure not just in the forefront of English literature, but as part of its folklore. [Figure 5]

Dickensian ephemera has taken many forms. Innumerable representations of his characters appeared in 19th- and early 20th-century commercial culture in the form of advertisements, especially those relating to food, such as menus and other promotional materials. [Figure 6] This is particularly appropriate as Dickens' many scenes of convivial festivities featuring a cornucopia of comestibles make his characters a natural choice for this kind of visual depiction. Images of a well-fed Mr. Pickwick and the overflowing abundance of the Ghost of Christmas Present lend themselves to all types of packaged food products. [Figure 7] "Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam."

What is of particular interest is that, as the first celebrity novelist, Dickens himself is also featured on advertising

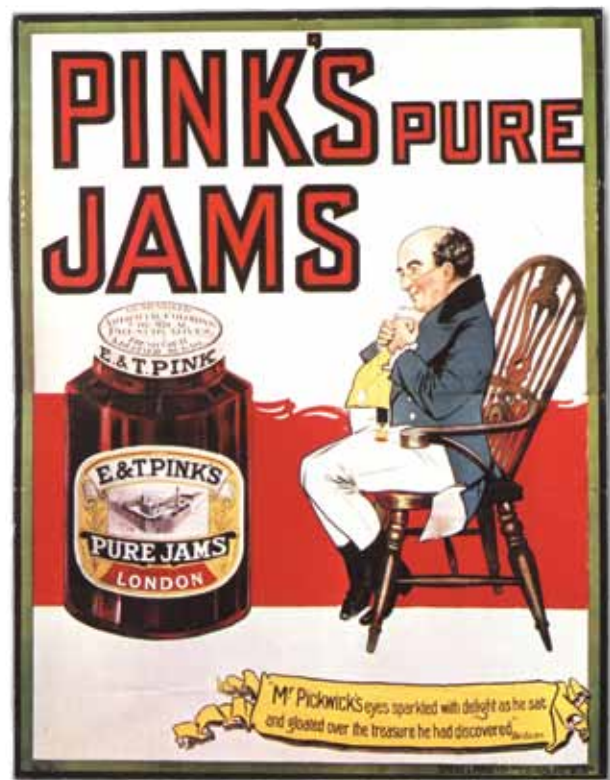


Figure 7. Jam made by E. & T. Pink of London promoted in an image using Mr. Pickwick, printed by Spiers & Pond.

ephemera, while the same cannot be said of such literary luminaries of his era as Lewis Carroll or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose likenesses were overlooked in favor of their superstar creations, Alice and Sherlock Holmes. In terms of recognition value, the image of Charles Dickens, seated at his desk, pen in hand, in the midst of the creative process, was as persuasive and prestigious an endorsement for writing implements as could be found anywhere in commercial culture. [Figure 8]

Occasionally Dickens-related ephemera has a surprising story to tell -with unexpected connections. William Gillette was the first to take Sherlock Holmes to the stage, where his play made him a celebrity in his own right for the next thirty years. Shortly after its debut in London in 1901 he received a note from a fan which read, "Nov. 14th, 1901, Dear Mr. Gillette, Would you be very kind & sign this photograph for me. I am simply longing to have your autograph & would be ever so grateful if you would do so. I went to see Sherlock Holmes the other day & loved it & hope to go again soon. I enclose an autograph of my grandfather's which I thought you would care to have. They are getting very rare & will soon be very hard to get. I do hope you will sign this photo for me. Yours truly, Olive Dickens." Accompanying the note is a cancelled cheque in the amount of 3



Figure 8. An image of Dickens at his writing desk promotes pens made by C. Brandauer & Co. (Barbara Rusch collection)

pounds, 14 shillings and sixpence and signed by Charles Dickens. The cheque bears the date May 23, 1870, just a little over two weeks before the great author's sudden death. Along with the unfinished draft of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, it was one of the last documents to which he was to put his hand. [Figure 9]

Much of Dickens' ongoing popularity rests in its nostalgic appeal. His novels are a period piece all aglow in the rose-colored warmth 21st-century readers have come to associate with the Victorian era. And yet, when they



Figure 9. Charles Dickens' check drawn on Messrs. Coutts & Co., May 23, 1870 just before his death (Barbara Rusch collection).

were written, they were meant to cast a longing, backward gaze to the innocence of the Regency period, before the Industrial Revolution created London's blackened and putrid back alleys and the desperation of so many of its citizens. Now his books evoke an idealized reflection of the very streets and rat-infested hovels he vilified. The horrors of one age sometimes serve as another's fond reminiscences, much as the terrifying figure of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come dissolves into Scrooge's innocuous bedpost. And yet, Dickens' novels are a triumph precisely because they present both ends of the spectrum associated with the age of Victoria – its terrors as well as its simple delights.

Barbara Rusch, is the

founder of the Ephemera Society of Canada and served as its only president and editor of its publication, *Ephemera Canada*, for over seventeen years. She is the

recipient of the Maurice Rickards Award and the Samuel Pepys Award. Barbara is listed in *Canadian Who's Who* as its only ephemerist, and writes, lectures and exhibits regularly on a variety of subjects related to the legacy of our printed heritage. This year Barbara received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her cultural contributions to Canada.



Alice in Ephemeraland

BY DAYNA NUHN

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland began as a story told on a golden afternoon, July 4, 1862. Charles Dodgson used the tale of Alice's adventures to entertain three sisters, Lorina, Alice and Edith Liddell, on a rowing trip up the Isis, a tributary of the Thames near Oxford. Alice begged Dodgson to write this particular story down for her and he did. *Alice's Adventures under Ground*, a ninety-page manuscript embellished with his own carefully drawn illustrations, was presented to Alice as an early Christmas gift, on November 26, 1864. During this same time, Dodgson was expanding the story from four chapters to twelve, almost doubling the word count, and taking out some of the "in jokes," with an eye to self-publishing. He hired John Tenniel, a political cartoonist for *Punch* magazine, to illustrate the book and Macmillan to publish it. In late 1865 the rechristened *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was in bookstores under Dodgson's pen name, Lewis Carroll. The book has never been out of print, with editions featuring new illustrations appearing regularly and numerous translations making it accessible around the globe. The sequel, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There*, was published in 1871.

Carrollians like to say that *Alice* is the third most quoted book after the Bible and Shakespeare. While that can't be proven, it is fair to say that Alice and her adventures have become part of popular culture. The poem "Jabberwocky" has been parodied over 200 times. Everyone has heard the phrase, "Curiouser and curiouser!" "mad as a hatter," or "grinning like a Cheshire Cat." Over the last 150 years, the *Alice* industry has grown exponentially, aided by the many television and movie

adaptations (the last being the Tim Burton production in 2010). *Wonderland* has become a theme brand inspiring restaurants (especially tea rooms), video games, tea pots, sheets, greeting cards, T-shirts, comic books, store window displays, art, music, plays, ballets, exhibitions, Mad Tea-Party events complete with flamingo croquet and crazy hat contests, dolls, Halloween costumes, fashion shoots for *Vogue*, games, puzzles, toys, stamps, and advertising campaigns. The list appears endless.

A few items of *Alice in Wonderland* merchandise appeared during Lewis Carroll's lifetime (1832-1898). One of these was "The Wonderland Postage-Stamp Case" [Figure 1], copyrighted in 1889. Carroll invented it because he was a prolific letter writer and found himself always searching for the correct denomination of stamp. The Stamp Case opens up to reveal 12 pockets with values from a half pence to 1 shilling, with two pockets

for the most popular, the one penny stamp. The case slides into a protective sleeve, a dual-piece design that allowed for two "pictorial surprises." The front of the sleeve shows Alice holding the Duchess's baby.

When you pull the stamp case out, you see Alice holding the pig. The back of the sleeve has the Cheshire Cat and the case has him fading to a grin. As

Carroll remarks, "If *that* doesn't surprise you, why, I suppose you wouldn't be surprised if your own Mother-in-law turned into a Gyroscope!" Carroll commissioned the illustration of Alice with the baby, as it does not appear in the book. Alice's dress is yellow and her stockings blue, the same as they appear in *The Nursery "Alice"*, Carroll's shorter, simpler version of *Wonderland* for younger readers.

A small booklet titled



Figure 1. Stamp Case, copyright 1889, with case and instruction booklet.

continued on page 16



Figure 2. Illustration from Punch magazine, December 4, 1907.

In 1907, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* went out of copyright. This is a significant date because it opened the gates to a flood of merchandise that is still being produced. Several publishers celebrated by hiring illustrators for new editions, the most famous being Arthur Rackham. Over its long history, *Punch* magazine published many cartoons and parodies in verse using characters and scenarios from *Wonderland*, especially if the current political situation seemed nonsensical. One cartoon [Figure 2], published in the December 4, 1907 issue, comments on these new editions. *Punch* obviously felt it was important to support its artist, Sir John Tenniel. The cartoon was titled "Tenniel's 'Alice' Reigns Supreme" and shows Queen Alice,

"Eight or Nine Wise Words About Letter Writing" was included with the Postage-Stamp Case. In its five short chapters, Carroll gives typically witty advice in a conversational style on stamp cases; how to begin, continue and end a letter; and how to create letter registers. It also contains a humorous sales pitch, "Since I have possessed a 'Wonderland Stamp-Case,' Life has been bright and peaceful, and I have used no other. I believe the Queen's laundress uses no other," parodying the testimonials popular on promotional materials of the day.

on her throne, surrounded by her Wonderland courtiers surveying the pretenders to her crown. At the bottom left, there are three 'Alices' as drawn by (from left to right) W.H. Walker, Charles Robinson, and Millicent Sowerby. Moving across are the White Rabbit, Alice, the Hatter, and the Duchess, all drawn by Arthur Rackham. The caption reads: "**Alice.** 'Who are these funny little people?' **Hatter.** 'Your Majesty, they are our imitators.' **Alice.** 'Curiouser and curiouser!'" The cartoon is clever and very pointed in its defense of



Figure 3. Playing cards from three decks 1908 to 1914, The American Bank Note Company, NY.



Figure 4. Uncut paper doll postcard, undated, with illustrations invoking Tenniel's.

Tenniel, whose *Alice* illustrations are still popular today.

Playing cards are a natural *Alice* tie-in: Lewis Carroll even invented an 1858 card game for two or more players called "Court Circular" that used an ordinary deck of playing cards. He also used cards as characters in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, from the King, Queen and Knave of Hearts to the executioner and the inept gardeners who had to paint the roses red. At the end of the book, the whole pack of cards rose up in the air and came flying down on Alice who declared, "Who cares for you? ... You're nothing but a pack of cards!" The three playing cards in Figure 3 are from decks manufactured by The American Bank Note Company which operated from 1908 to 1914, based in New York. These *Alice in Wonderland* decks were created around 1910, sold for 50 cents, and are high quality playing cards with a nice linen-like texture and gold edges. Each deck features different artists and scenes. The card on the left is the Mad Tea-Party, the middle one the scene in the Duchess's kitchen, and, in the right card, the King and Queen of Hearts argue about the execution of the Cheshire Cat, while the executioner awaits a decision.

The March Hare paper doll [Figure 4] is from a rare set of ten postcards bound together into a booklet titled, "Alice in Wonderland Paper Dolls." The set is a bit of a mystery with no information about the artist, publisher, or date, other than it is after 1907 and were designed with Tenniel's illustrations in mind.

Alice and the White Rabbit are pictured on a variation of a stock trade card [Figure 5] that was used for calendars and other forms of advertising. It was part of a series using fairy tale and other children's characters such as Santa Claus. Many of these had six or twelve line poems that could be used with the pictures. The short version of the poem for the *Alice in Wonderland* card covers the essentials of the story quite well,

*Quaint Alice trailed the rabbit, dressed
So strangely in a coat and vest,
And at the bottom of a hole,
Had many more adventures droll;
And when it all began to seem
Mixed up, discovered 'twas a dream.*



Figure 5. Stock advertising postcard, 1920s, illustration by Clara Miller Burd, printed by Knapp, NY.

This version of the card, used by Fralinger's, features salt water taffy boxes added to the trees and is printed as a standard postcard. Instead of the poem, it has a caption reading, "And the most wonderful thing Alice saw in that wonderful Wonderland was the forest of Salt Water Taffy trees." Each postcard has an alphabet letter on the back and if all 24 letters spelling "Fralinger's Salt Water Taffy" were collected, the customer won a five-pound box of taffy. The cards were printed by the Knapp Company of New York, and created by Clara Miller Burd, a popular children's book illustrator and portrait artist, who studied art in New York and Paris, and stained glass with Tiffany.

Once *Alice* entered popular culture, Alice appeared in numerous ad campaigns for a very wide range of products, particularly those aimed at children. But, adding the tie-in "land" to the end of a product name was especially common, such as: Alice in Laundryland, Dairyland, Insulationland, Motorland, or a score of others. One can see from the title of the article that the model works quite well. There are items that one thinks of as perfect for Alice to advertise like clothing for little girls or anything related to tea, but there are also products that seem quite a stretch, such as a 1960 Ryan Industries advertisement "Alice in the Wonderland of Cryogenics." I find myself shaking my head over copy such as, "No longer is CRYOGENICS a fantasy... nor do you need a rabbit's hole to reach a world of wonderment."

Archibald de Bear's 1926 Revue *R.S.V.P.* that played at the London Vaudeville Theatre in 1926 had a short ballet scene titled "Alice in Lumberland," choreographed by Clifford Pember with music by Norman O'Neill. The



Figure 7. 1942 valentine, printed in the U.S.



Figure 6. 1926 sheet music for the vaudeville revue *R.S.V.P.*

Alice has also been featured on valentines over the years, expressing sentiments such as: "I'll be in Wonderland if you will be my Valentine;" the Duchess's moral, "'Tis love, tis love that makes the world go round;" "Be my Queen of Hearts;" "I'm mad as a Hatter about you;" "Valentine you're my cup of tea;" and one with Tweedledee and Tweedledum that reads, "You're my perfect match." A 1942 American Valentine [Figure 7] shows a cute Alice in a red dress seated with a nattily attired Mock Turtle expressing the heartfelt greeting, "Be my Valentine and life will be a Wonderland."

Alice appears, holding the pig baby [Figure 8, top], on a tobacco card from John Player and Sons. The 1933 set of twenty-five, entitled "Characters From Fiction," has "Alice" drawn by H.M. Brock as card number 2. The reverse has a short outline of that chapter and a few biographical details of Dodgson/Carroll. A 1924 lithographed insert card, "Alice in Wonderland," [Figure 8, bottom] was enclosed at point of sale in containers of Bournville Cocoa, made by Cadbury. This card was number 3 in a series of twenty-five called "Fairy Tales." The front shows the Mad Tea-Party and the reverse has a quote from that chapter, designed to inspire a consumer to substitute cocoa for tea.

In 1932, Columbia University hosted an exhibition to commemorate the centenary of Lewis Carroll's birth. Alice Liddell Hargreaves, by then an eighty-year-old



Figure 8. 1933 tobacco card for Players cigarettes & 1924 insert card for Cadbury's Bournville Cocoa.

widow, was invited to New York to receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters, and became an instant celebrity, hounded by reporters and feted by Americans weary of the Great Depression. The centerpiece of the exhibition was the manuscript, *Alice's Adventures under Ground*. This trip to New York proved to be the last opportunity for the real-life Alice to see her Christmas present from Carroll of sixty-eight years earlier. In 1928, it had been purchased at auction for a then-record \$77,000 by the Philadelphia rare book collector and dealer, Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach. Although he offered the manuscript to the British Museum for what he paid for it and there were expressions of outrage in the London press over such a treasure leaving Britain's

shores, in the end the money couldn't be raised to buy it back. Rosenbach sold the slim volume to Eldridge R. Johnson, who lent the manuscript for the exhibition. A photo [Figure 9] taken by Acme Newspictures, New York, showing the precious volume in the display case, open to pages one and two, accompanied an article about the opening of the exhibit. While Johnson owned the manuscript, he took it with him on his yacht in a specially designed fireproof, floating safe. The manuscript was sold again after his death and was bought by a group of Americans and presented to the British people in gratitude for their efforts in WWII. It now resides in the British Library. But Alice lives, as we've seen, in Ephemeraland!

Dayna Nuhn, is founder and president of The Lewis Carroll Society of Canada and the editor of its newsletter, *White Rabbit Tales*. She takes great pleasure in collecting and exhibiting all things Alice, but especially ephemera. Other Carrollian collectors have affectionately nicknamed her ephemera-centric items as "The Collection of Flat Things." Alice@150 is a weekend conference planned for October 2015 in New York City to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the publication of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.



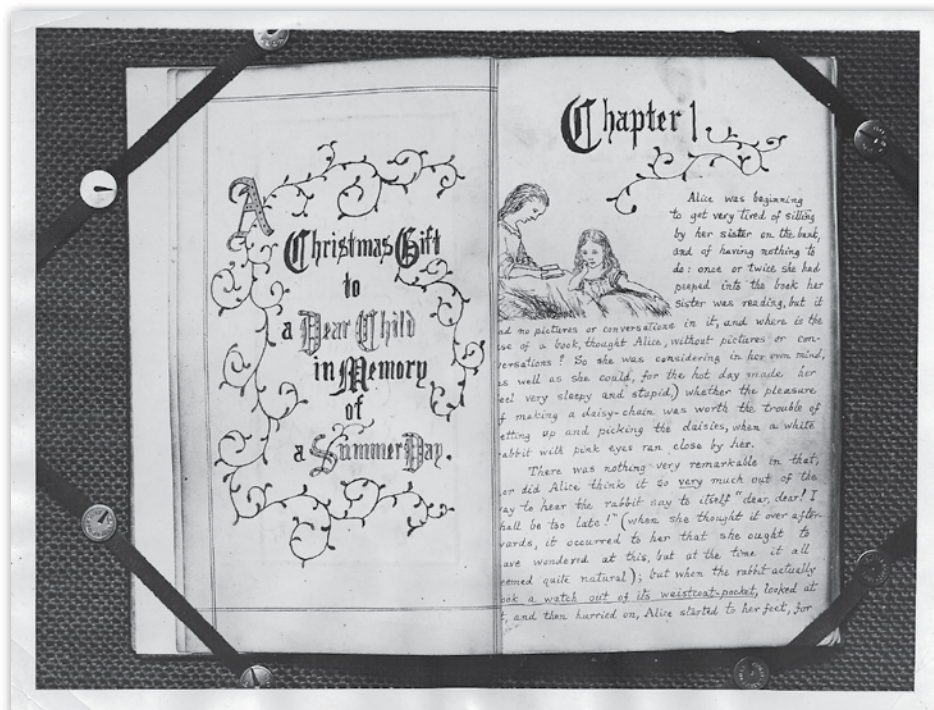


Figure 9. Manuscript owned by Alice Liddell Hargreaves on display at Columbia University 1932.

Sherlock Holmes's Adventures in Advertising

BY PEGGY PERDUE

Sherlock Holmes strides onto every scene with an air of assurance; his every utterance is quotable; he can be relied upon to solve problems and to save the day. These traits have made him an icon for the world, a hero to many, and an advertising executive's dream come true.

The Arthur Conan Doyle Collection at the Toronto Public Library holds a large number of letters from Arthur Conan Doyle to his *Strand* publisher Herbert Greenhough Smith. Among these is one which is pertinent to any discussion of the use of the Sherlock Holmes image in advertising.

48 Grand Parade, Eastbourne

My dear Smith,

I think I could sustain my copyright in the words "Sherlock Holmes" and I don't think they have been used as an advertisement up to now.

I look on the proposal as a purely business one without any sentiment and have asked Watt to chat it over with you. At first sight it looks to me like a matter which should concern the Black Cat & me, whereas you merely handle your own advertisement. But no doubt you will express your view to Watt.

The picture would never do. Holmes must preserve his dignity. He looks about five feet high, badly dressed, and with no brains or character, an actor out of a job.

Yours very truly,
A. Conan Doyle

The letter not only reveals something about Conan Doyle's business sense and his relationship with Smith, but also makes a clear statement about the author's views on the use of Sherlock Holmes in advertisements. He quite understandably wanted to avoid any unappealing or uncharacteristic representations of his lucrative literary character.

There seems to be no record of the proposed advertisement actually appearing in *The Black Cat*. Perhaps Conan Doyle did ultimately veto the project. If so, it was only a postponement of the inevitable. Sherlock Holmes and Sherlock-inspired look-alikes would ultimately appear in countless ads and marketing campaigns. If you have seen even a few of these, you do not have to skip ahead to the end of this article to find out if Holmes preserves his dignity; he does not emerge unscathed. One wonders what Sir Arthur, who balked at a five-foot-tall, badly dressed actor representing Holmes, would have thought of an inch-

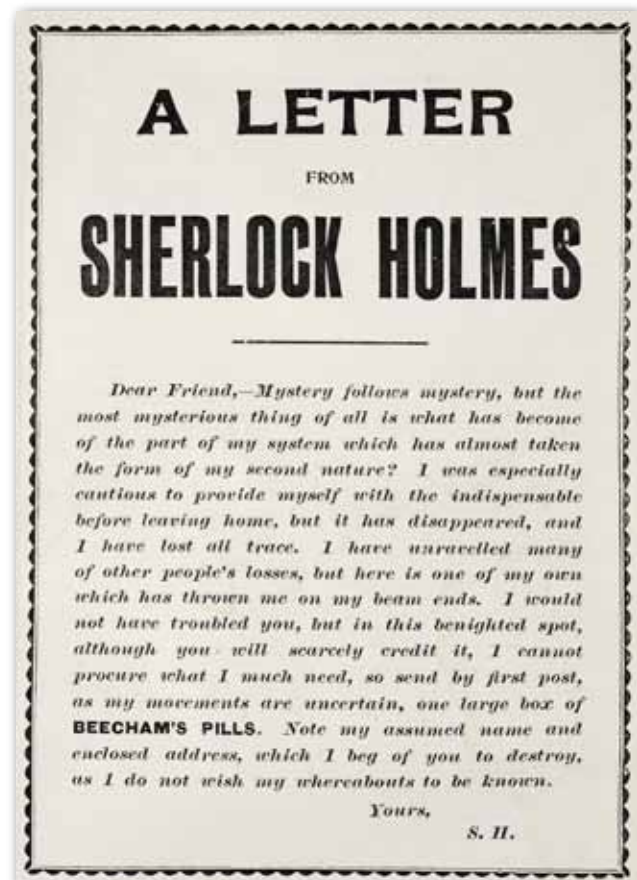


Figure 1. Advertisement in the *Strand* magazine, September 1901.

high Holmes climbing an enema bottle as he does in a 1974 ad for Tucks Saf-Tip. It does not bear thinking about, and there are others almost as bad. No blame goes to the Great Detective himself, of course. He has been subject to an onslaught of ad men over the years, and it is a wonder that he comes out of it as well as he does. In fact, as we shall see, it is not all bad. Many of the advertisements celebrate Holmes's skill and acumen, and are in their own way helping to keep him in the public eye. Over 400 international ads spanning more than a century have been consulted in order to learn something about what Sherlockian ads convey to the average consumer and, by extension, what Holmes himself signifies to the general public.

Sherlock Holmes In Advertising—The Early Years

It would be useful to know when Conan Doyle wrote the undated letter quoted above to help establish when

the practice of using Sherlock Holmes in advertisements began. An 1894 ad for Beecham's pills that appeared in *Tit-Bits Magazine* appears to be the earliest on record. This was not available among the periodical and ephemera holdings reviewed but another appeared in December 1895 issue of the same magazine. The 1895 ad did not feature an image of Holmes or any graphics at all, but consisted of a column of close text made to appear as if it was a regular section of the magazine - worth quoting in its entirety:

A Sherlock Holmes Dialogue with a Moral for Ladies

Watson: "Have you noticed, my dear Holmes, how charmingly Mrs. Beauty dresses now; how well her house is managed, and how full of pleasant talk she is? She used to be such a dowdy creature, you know."

Holmes: "Yes, I have observed."

Watson: "Her little dinners are now most excellent, and her home seems to be brighter and more charming than it used to be. And such lovely hats she wears! What is the reason?"

Holmes said not a word, but placing his hand in his overcoat pocket he pulled out No. 3 of 'Woman's Life,' and handed it to Watson, with a significant look as he turned over the pages.

"Ah," said Watson, "now I understand how it has all come about."

Sherlock Holmes, Watson, and Mrs. Beauty understood, as we wish all our lady readers to understand, that 'Woman's Life' is the best illustrated penny paper for the home ever published.

This is an extraordinary candidate for one of the first uses of Sherlock Holmes in marketing. It is just possible to imagine Watson saying his part in the dialogue, but what are we to make of the idea of the Great Detective carrying around a copy of *Women's Life* (a sister publication to *Tit-Bits*) in his overcoat pocket? Of all the things that Holmes might be used to sell, it seems odd that he, a man noted for his disinterest in women, would be considered an appropriate spokesperson for a women's magazine.

The next identifiable ad was one for Beecham's Pills that appeared in the *Strand* in September, 1901. [Figure 1] The ad was in the form of a letter from Holmes beseeching an unidentified friend to send him a large box of Beecham's pills because he had been thrown on his "beam ends" while working on a case. The ad appeared when *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was being published in serial installments, and it seems to be intentionally trying to give *Strand* readers the impression that Holmes was writing the letter from his hiding place on the moor.

One of the things that make tracking the career of Sherlock Holmes in advertising so fascinating is seeing

how much advertising itself has changed over the years. These early text-only ads required a lot of reading on the part of consumers, and clearly belong to a time of greater leisure and less media. However, it was not long before Holmes's portrait would be added to give visual appeal - the earliest found appeared in *Collier's* of January 9, 1904. [Figure 2] Holmes is represented in silhouette, which is an interesting early foreshadow of how famous that silhouette would become. The ad was for Mackintosh's toffee. Here again we have Holmes selling a product that one would not readily associate with his character.

It is hard to imagine our hero sucking on sweets through the night but, aside from this quibble, the ad is in many respects the quintessential Holmes advertisement.

The famous magnifying glass is in play as well as the profile. Holmes is represented as someone to be relied upon because he uses "careful deduction" and is a "solver of things difficult." He is also used to emphasize the British origins of the product in the minds of the magazine's American readers. All of these aspects of Holmes's public image would eventually be used again and again in later advertisements for a variety of products.

1904 was a busy year for Holmes ads in *Colliers*, and once the practice of including a picture of the detective had begun, it became almost obligatory. There were two ads in the September 24 issue alone. In

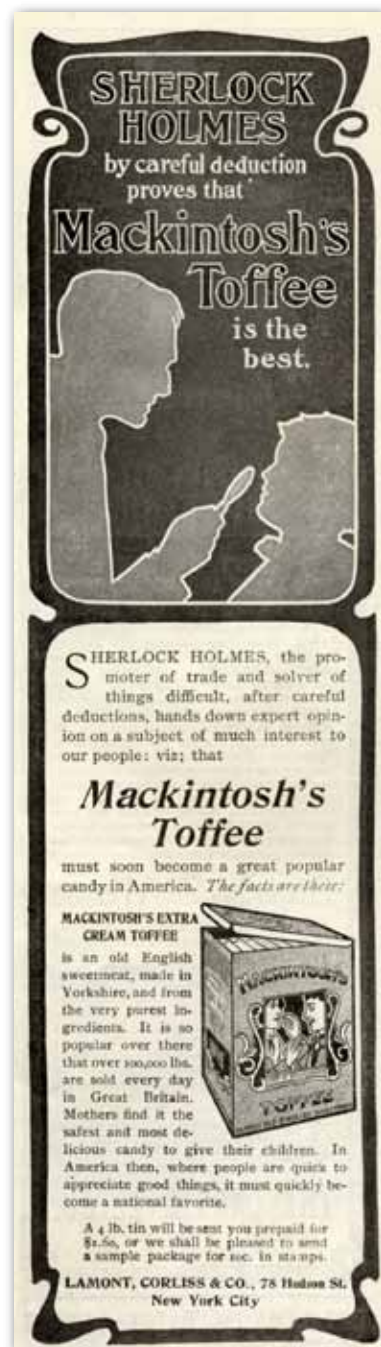


Figure 2. Advertisement in *Collier's* magazine, January 8, 1904.

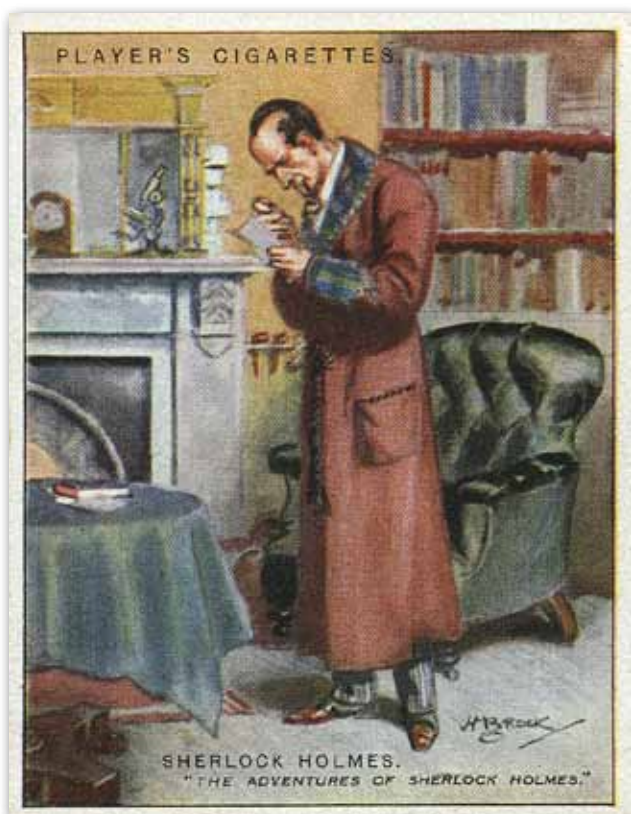


Figure 3. 1933, Players Cigarette card from “Characters in Fiction” series.

one, “Sheerluck Holmes” told readers about the wonders of Taylor Old Style Roofing Tin and, in another, of the Sleepless Watchman Safe. Both featured a portrait of Holmes. In the November 16, 1904 issue, Holmes’s name and image is used to sell *Woolson’s Economy Expense Book*. The copy is written as if by Watson: “Holmes and I were talking one evening in a practical way—very practical, philosophical and simple way—about the subject of domestic economy.” It then goes on to tell the reader how the advertised book will help them to save money and manage household finances. A pattern begins to emerge: Holmes is there to represent safety, reliability, good sense.

In the matter of product type, however, there seems to be no pattern at all. In this small sampling of early ads we see Holmes promoting pills, magazines, books, candy, safes and roofing materials. By the beginning of the 20th-century, advertisers had already become well aware that the image and reputation of Sherlock Holmes could be used to sell almost anything. Rather than a chronology, here is a look at some of the types of products promoted.

Tobacco Products

It makes sense to begin with a look at ads for tobacco products, because of all the things Holmes has been conscripted to sell, these are surely the most appropriate. After all, who has done more for the image of the wise

pipe smoker? The connection with Holmes and tobacco is iconic, so it is no surprise that Holmes has appeared in advertisements for several brands of cigarettes, including Sweet Caporal (1971), Doral (1972), Claridge (1981), and Peter Jackson (1982). He has also been used to promote pipe tobacco such as Gallaher’s Rich Dark Honeydew, Falk’s Serene Tobacco (1919), and Grand Cut (1954). Since there can be no smoke without fire, Holmes is also called on to give advice about Ronson Firebronze Flints (1952).

Cigarette cards, although not technically advertisements, should be mentioned in any discussion of how Holmes has been used to sell tobacco products. These cards were originally added to packs of cigarettes as package stiffeners, but soon became popular collectors’ items when manufacturers started issuing them in illustrated sets of themed cards. In its heyday these little bonus incentives provided an effective strategy for selling cigarettes, since smokers with collection mania might even consider switching brands if tempted by an intriguing card series. Sherlock Holmes was featured in Players Cigarettes’ “Characters in Fiction” series of 1933 [Figure 3], and was given two cards in the “Conan Doyle Characters” series created by Alexander Boguslavsky Ltd. for Turf cigarettes in 1923.

Health Care

Of the 400 ads consulted, thirty-one showed Holmes representing pharmaceuticals or health care services. Watson appears in several of these ads as well, but Holmes’s role as the wise advisor is so entrenched that it is always he, not Dr. Watson, who is represented as the one who possesses the medical knowledgeable.

Although many of the medical ads are as sober and dignified as you might expect, it must also be said that this category includes some of the most cringe-worthy Sherlockian ads. The one where a tiny Holmes climbs up an enema bottle has already been mentioned. There is a laxative ad (Effersyllium, 1983) as well, and the image of an incontinent Watson in the ad for Wescor Osmometers is hardly flattering either.

It has already been seen that a 1901 ad for Beechams Pills was one of the earliest Sherlockian ads. By the time a 1923 ad for the tonic “Phosferine” was produced, [Figure 4] companies had figured out that showing an image of Sherlock Holmes as played by a famous actor would make the ad even more eye-catching. The Phosferine ad featured Eille Norwood and assured the readers of *Girls’ Cinema* that this product could be used to treat “influenza, indigestion, maternity weakness, nerve shock, sciatica and brain fag,” among other ailments.

On the whole, Holmes is used to represent the all-important topic of good health because of his image as someone reliable, logical and trustworthy. These same traits translated Holmes into a spokesperson for products associated with safety, like bank vaults and

security systems. Holmes's reputation for intelligence and reliability is also why he often appears in advertisements for financial products and services (there were, for instance, twenty-nine advertisements related to financial institutions among the ads consulted).

Edibles and Potables

A consumer who relies on Holmes's advice has a smorgasbord of dining options among the Sherlockian advertisements. In breakfast options alone there's Carnation Quick Wheat (1944), Kellogg's Corn Flakes, or All-Bran, Granary Bakers in England (1986), "Baker Street English Muffins" from Ben's Bakery in Eastern Canada (1986), "Sherlock's Delight" [Figure 5] and "Watson's Dream" oranges (1930s), and Sunkist orange juice (1955). Holmes has represented at least two supermarket chains. He "takes the mystery out of food shopping" in his 1977 ads for Sloan's supermarket, and in Safeway's nutrition awareness program of 1984, flyers featuring a Holmesian sleuth teach shoppers "How to be a Sugar Detective." One wonders if he came to regret how keen he was to testify to the wholesomeness of Mackintosh's toffee.

The food ads are, for some reason, a good source for finding unusual models representing Sherlock Holmes. This category has the dubious honor of hosting a dog food ad in which a shaggy dog plays the Sherlock role and also one in which the Kool-Aid man dons a deerstalker to become a stylish study in scarlet sugar water. It is remarkable that the Holmes image remains largely recognizable in these extraordinary circumstances. There is nothing so valuable in marketing a product as a simple clear message that the public can instantly relate to. Sherlock Holmes, in all his guises, delivers a crystal-clear message of "detective" along with all the virtues and idiosyncrasies of his character. [Figure 6] This is surely a significant reason for Holmes's popularity on Madison Avenue.

Houses and Holmes

A fairly large percentage of the Sherlockian ads studied sold products related to real estate, home furnishings or home maintenance. Some of these take advantage of the opportunity to use a Holmes-homes pun, such as Sherlock Homes Real Estate (Alberta), Sherlock Homes Inspection (Michigan), Sherlock Homes Inspections of Oneida (New York), and Sherlock Homes Carpentry Service (Ontario). Other companies dispense with the play on words, but incorporate the name of Holmes's and Watson's own residence. Baker Street Home Inspection Services, Inc., is one such company that has operated in Toronto since the 1990s.

Holmes is a popular choice for selling real estate even when there is no direct reference to him in the company's name because of his reputation for finding things and solving problems. Holmes assures consumers that "Great

deals are not hard to find" in an ad for Regal Crest Homes (1991), and, in another, Holmes and Bennett Builders solve "the new home mystery." It is a bit odd that he is almost invariably pictured using his magnifying glass in these ads, as if one really needed a magnifying glass to spot a two-story house.

Holmes is also on hand to give advice about furnishings. His image has been used in ads for Ridpaths furniture (1976, "Play Sherlock Holmes—discover our winter sale of sofas and chairs"), Liverpool Bed Centre (1980s), Bebington Lighting, New Image Bedroom Design (1983), and even in one for Ronuk's furniture cream (1920s). Holmes has also helped homeowners to select appliances, including Whirlpool refrigerators (1985) and Esso Furnaces (1970). In these ads, we see Holmes in his usual roles as wise advisor and finder of good things, but the appeal may also be to invoke that

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December 22nd, 1923.

Figure 4. Advertisement in Girls' Cinema, 1923.

feeling of cozy, Victorian charm that is associated in so many readers' minds with Holmes's and Watson's home at 221B Baker Street, arguably the world's most famous fictional address.

Science and technology

In the reader's first glimpse of Sherlock Holmes, he is seen bending over a table in a chemical laboratory, working on an experiment. His character as a scientist is revealed even before we learn that he is a detective. There can be no doubt that if he had not turned his considerable talents to foiling criminals, he would have made his mark in the field of science and technology. Companies that sell scientific or technical products and services recognize this and have frequently used him for advertising - nearly all directed at specific target groups that comprehend their own particular technical jargon. For example, a 1973 ad in *Petroleum Review* for the Electricity Council of England and Wales begins like this:

Consider how you would heat high viscosity oils, my dear Watson. The storage and distribution of high-viscosity products, such as fuel oils, bitumen, petroleum waxes and so on, said Mr. Sherlock Holmes, involving heating plant—to keep them moving in tanks, pipelines, pumps ...

Some extreme examples of technical jargon can be found in a series of ads for Precision Monolithics, Incorporated, makers of linear semiconductors. They produced a series of pastiche ads in the early 1980s that had titles like “The Riddle of Sample-and-Hold Specifications,” “The Mystery of the Lying A/D Converter” and “The Curious Incident of the 11-bit 10-bit DAC.” The text of these ads is enough to make anyone without a degree in Computer Science feel like the most stereotypically befuddled of Watsons.

The great Victorian detective appears in ads for computer software companies such as Formtool (1986) and Kezai Sangyosha (2008). RTC Systems Inc.,

provider of System/38 Software Solutions, was humble in its homage to Sherlock Holmes (1985): “Only one expert ever provided more solutions that we do.” It is a sign of Holmes's evergreen appeal that he can represent these modern products without any apparent sense of anachronism - he could be connected with any product that is associated with accuracy, precision and attention to detail.

It Pays to Advertise

Nothing speaks so strongly for the appeal of using Sherlock Holmes as a useful marketing strategy as the fact that so many advertising agencies and sellers of advertising space have taken this path for selling their own products. In the matter of selling classifieds or marketing space in magazines and newspapers, Holmes has appeared in ads for the *Kingston Whig Standard* (1931), the *Milwaukee Journal* (1972), the *Birkenhead News* (1974), the *Miami Herald* (1978), the *Palo Alto Times* (1978), *Quill & Quire* (1979), *News Journal* (1979), *Homes and Lands of Santa Fe* (1984), the *San Francisco Tribune*, and the *Wirral Globe* (1987).

The challenge of advertising has attracted some very creative minds. If we accepted all the advertising pastiches as genuine cases of Sherlock Holmes, we would have such apocryphal tales as *The Case of the Shrinking Reject Rate* (Precision Monolithics), *The Case of the Missing Hourglass* (Lenscrafters), *The Case of DEC compatible memory* (Monolithic Systems), *The Case of the Disappearing Business Traveller* (BOAC), *A Case for Sherlock Holmes® protection* (Stassen Realtors), *The Mystery of Nutrition Analysis* (Albion Clinical Laboratories), *The Mystery of the Non-healing Wound* (E.R. Squibb), *The Mystery in the Taft Tap Room* (Taft Hotel), *The Adventure of the Conscientious Publisher* (Kingston-Whig Standard), and *The Hounds of the Basketballs* (Jon's Pizza), among many others.

Perhaps one of the reasons that the Holmes theme has been chosen so often for advertising is that it is fun for companies and ad agents to play with these variations



Figure 5. 1930s to 1950s orange crate label, Florida Grower Press, Tampa.



Figure 6. 1915 poster for the Postum Cereal Company.

on a familiar story. The main reason, however, must be simply because it works. If this strategy was not effective, we can be confident that someone would have noticed sometime between 1895 and the present day. We have seen ads from the early 20th century when Sherlock was still a new phenomenon and from recent times, when he has become so much a part of the culture that he sometimes serves as a catchall general concept of a detective. There are patriotic examples from the time of the two World Wars, and cynical ones that betray postmodern sensibilities. There are ads from times of prosperity and from times of economic woe. In spite of all this, there is consistency.

This consistency comes from the fact that the character and image of Sherlock Holmes is so clearly defined in popular culture. There is no better place to look for evidence of this than in commercial advertising. Because it must get its message across in only a few words and an image or two, what we see in these ads is a condensed version of Sherlock Holmes's public image.

What is this public image and why does it have such selling power? First of all there is Holmes's appearance. Every schoolchild now understands that a deerstalker cap is a "detective hat," and the Inverness cape, pipe, and magnifying glass complete the picture. From a

commercial perspective, the magnifying glass is the most important of all. It can be used to draw attention to some specific aspect of the ad's message, such as bargain prices or product quality.

Holmes's environment is also significant. He is British, which appeals both to proud Brits and to an international community of Anglophiles. He has a loyal friend in Dr. Watson and a cozy home at 221B Baker Street. These have pleasant associations for many consumers and presumably put them in the mood to buy.

Clothing and surroundings do not entirely make the man, however. There is consistency also in how Holmes's personal attributes are portrayed in advertising. One of the most important of these is his ability to discover things. The existence of the phrase "bargain-hunting" shows that we believe there is some skill involved in finding the best prices for things, and from there, it is a natural choice to show a detective like Sherlock Holmes on the job. Another important attribute is his intelligence. The use of the Holmes image can help to convince consumers that a certain product is the smart choice. Holmes's intelligence is notably of a logical and scientific nature, so he appeals to both makers of scientific products and to those who would like to appear science-based. Perhaps above all these things is his reputation for being trustworthy. Every Sherlock Holmes adventure has at its core the story of someone in trouble who seeks Holmes's help. It is not so much of a stretch for advertisers to suggest that someone who can help in a major crisis can also help with small things, like the choice of laundry soap. This may be an abuse of Holmes's reputation for trustworthiness and reliability, but it works all the same.

The combination of all these things makes for an advertising image of extraordinary power and versatility - one that can span the globe and jump generation gaps effortlessly. In the world of advertising, as in so many things, we see that there is no one like Sherlock Holmes.

Acknowledgments

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Peggy Perdue, is curator of the Toronto Public Library's Arthur Conan Doyle Collection. She has published numerous articles on Sherlock Holmes and his creator, and is invested in the Baker Street Irregulars as "Violet Westbury."



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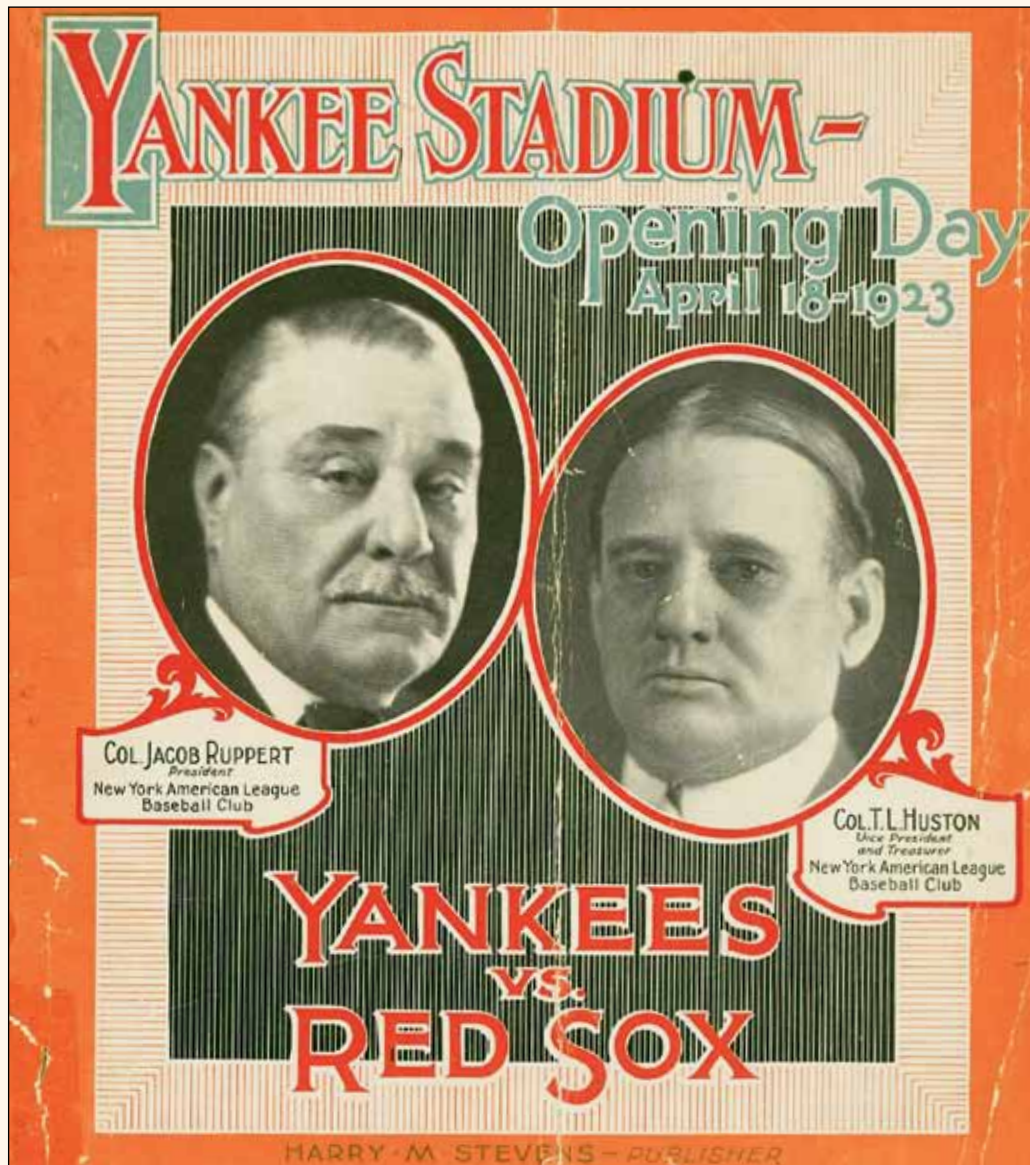


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