[KATHERINE OTT, SUSAN TUCKER, AND PATRICIA P. BUCKLER]

An Introduction to the History of Scrapbooks

JOHN DANZER is a remarkably productive man, but he is not sure if that is a good thing or a bad thing. Danzer, an artist and a designer of garden furniture, has been making scrapbooks for more than twenty years. His compiling system is efficient and systematic: he clips material and passes it to an assistant, who organizes it into albums. Danzer readily admits that his energy for clipping and saving is hard for even his friends to grasp. The scrap-covered walls of one of the rooms in his upstate New York house rival the wall of Joe Orton's London flat depicted in the film *Prick Up Your Ears* (1987) or John Forbes Nash Jr.'s garage hideaway in *A Beautiful Mind* (2001). Probably many contemporary scrapbook makers respond to scenes of cut scraps plastered across walls or overflowing bulletin boards with a mixture of horror, attraction, and self-recognition. For Danzer, his albums and their assemblage are invaluable both in his artistic process and in working with clients. Yet there is another, ineffable element to Danzer's scrapbook intensity that he shares with kindred souls dating back several centuries.

As do all things in this world, scrapbooks have a history. This anthology explores the history of scrapbook making—its origins, uses, changing forms, and purposes as well as the human agents behind the books themselves. The excess of fragments that burst the bindings and bulge the pages makes scrapbooks a pleasurable feast for both makers and consumers. Scrapbooks are one of the most enduring yet simultaneously changing cultural forms of the last two centuries, similar in their development to the pen or even the clavichord, the earliest musical keyboard instrument: the task and

function remain constant, while the form and structure alter under the influence of aesthetics and new materials. Despite the popularity of scrapbooks, placing them within historical traditions has never been undertaken until now.[1] This book examines scrapbooks and their makers, the artifacts saved within their covers, their readers, and U.S. culture. It does not explain how to make scrapbooks or improve assemblage techniques but instead explores the curious history of what others have done in the past and why these splendid examples of material and visual culture have such enduring appeal.

Selves in Books

The prolific Danzer and other scrapbook makers have countless forebears. In 1881, when Monte Grover, a Wyoming prostitute, pasted published poetry into her scrapbook, she followed a common practice of using clippings to construct an idealized life by isolating a set of values that she found around her. She preserved marks of her inner identity and her best self within a scrapbook (see Carol Bowers, in this volume). People today, more than one hundred years later, find their identities recorded and inscribed in bureaucratic files and data banks; their official human identities are found in X rays, birth certificates, driver's licenses, and DNA samples. But a scrapbook represents a construction of identity outside these formalized and authoritative records. It is the self that guides the scissors and assembles the scraps.[2]

At the same time, scrapbooks are not transparently autobiographical. Rather, a compiler often hopes that the mass assembling of individual examples will reveal the whole, as William Dorsey may have intended in compiling his monumental work of three hundred scrapbooks on people of color (see Susan Tucker, in this volume). Another compiler may use a scrapbook as a vehicle for encompassing information too diffuse to otherwise discern patterns. Ted Langstroth, a collector of all manner of printed material in the early twentieth century, gathered scraps into albums as a whale skims for krill along the surface of the ocean; he also acquired and reworked the albums of others.[3] Some makers create scrapbooks to contribute to their community, to provide a public service; such scrapbooks include the books on Mormon Church activities that have been donated over the years to the University of Utah library's special collections.

The scrapbooks of Charles Hemstreet, a professional scrapbook compiler of the 1930s, provide yet another cautionary note about inferring too much about the compiler's interior life, or autobiography, from examination of the work. Clients sent him clippings, which he organized into books, sometimes for fees as high as $21,000. His work included scrapbooks on the Wallis Simpson–Duke of Windsor romance and World War II cartoons about France published in the United States.[4]

For others, scrapbooks are an autobiographical form but with a twist. The compiler envisions himself or herself through the images positioned on the page.[5] Scrapbooks resemble a movie or a photograph in that they all capture "lived time"

in a material form. Yet scrapbooks leave far more to the imagination. The makers express themselves with every swipe of glue yet ultimately remain free, elusive, and hidden. The adolescent girl in her bedroom, the Gilded Age doctor in his study, the boy in front of the television—all are obscured from sight. The scrapbook, as a private stage setting, remains similarly obscured.[6]

While autobiographical in origin, scrapbooks are not confessional, as diaries are. Scrapbooks may be compared to anecdotes—they represent collections of personal materials and are understandable in the same way that such stories, as a specific literary genre, are understood. Real events do not present themselves as complete tales, so creating sustained narratives from scraps is difficult. Scrapbooks can be a method of resolving the conflicting claims between the real and the imaginary or remembered.[7] They preserve the pieces but without reliance on the chronology that situates entries in a diary. If flawed as reflections, scrapbooks can function as supplements to individual identity. For example, the maker may incorporate contradictions that cannot be expressed otherwise, substitutes for expressions of the self not allowed elsewhere.[8]

Gertrude Mace compiled a scrapbook (see Figure I.1) that preserved expressions of hope for her son. Ron Mace, who became an influential architect and a founder of Universal Design, contracted polio as a child and was hospitalized for several months in 1950. His mother compiled an album of all the get-well cards nine-year-old Ronnie received. The cards are full of hope, encouragement, and positive thinking; as a group, they embody a mother's prayers for a seriously ill child. Read against Mace's later achievements and the searing critiques of similar sentiments by the disability rights movement, the cards dramatically exemplify contemporary cultural exhortations to grin and bear it, to triumph over adversity.

Scrapbooks, then, are a material manifestation of memory—the memory of the compiler and the memory of the cultural moment in which they were made. Scrapbooks represent individual and group identity in cultures increasingly dependent on reading, visual literacy, and consumption of mass-produced goods. They display artifacts and ephemera that track the migration of ideas and commodities up and down the cultural hierarchy of capitalism. They hold historical accounts in print and images that tell how events and lives were understood and told to others, how individuality spars with the public and the commercial. At the same time, they are but partial, coded accounts—very small tellings of memory. Scrapbooks contain abundant hieroglyphics for the researchers who can decipher them, yet their often-enigmatic contents can stymie even the most patient scholar.[9]

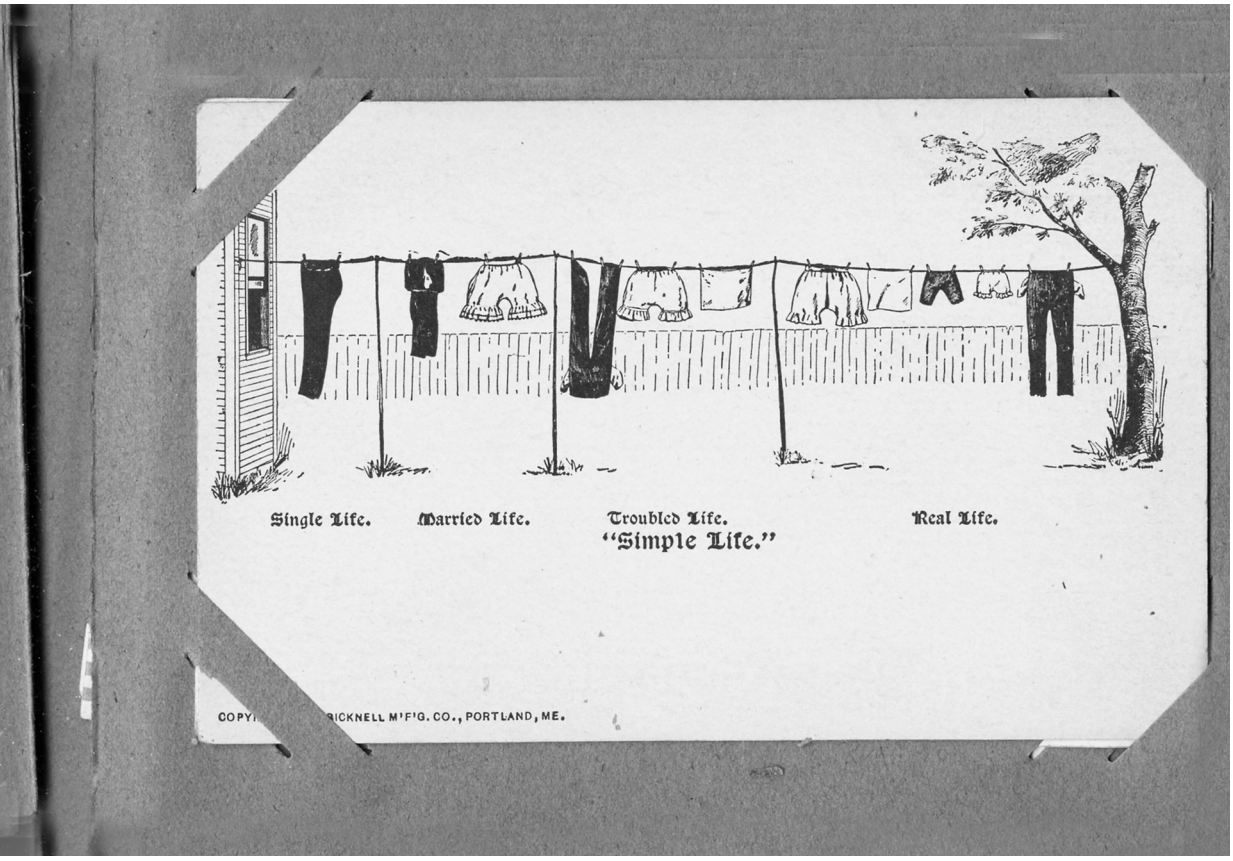
As with most things, scrapbooks hold different value for different people. Historians tend to judge each one individually, usually as part of biographical work and sometimes in isolation from historical and economic context. Anthropologists treat them as folk culture; art historians, as receptacles for prints and photographs. When scrapbooks are added to archives and libraries, they bring with them complex preservation problems.[10]

Figure I.1. *Page of get-well cards from the scrapbook of greeting cards kept by Ron Mace's mother. Mace, who was hospitalized with polio in the early 1950s, went on to become the founder of Universal Design.* (Courtesy Ronald Mace Collection, Division of Science, Medicine, and Society, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution)

Scrapbooks and albums share their origins with traditions of collecting, display, and exhibition and the development of print and book styles. The disparate ancestral strands snake their way into the modern scrapbook through the centuries and the histories of memory, education, libraries, publishing, art, and even home videos. Writings and images have been used to represent memory since the beginning of history, and often these were prized and collected. However, the time line for scrapbooks and albums begins in earnest with the elements of classical learning.

The Genealogy of Memory Keeping

To the early Greeks, places in the mind—*koinoi topoi*—were used as memory aids for recreating events, information, and knowledge. Once such topoi were committed to memory, a person could mentally revisit them to retrieve information,



comfort, or facts for debate. These topoi (the root of the word *topic)* thus performed a function similar to that of scrapbooks, which came much later, in that both relied on the retention of data—one in the mind, the other on the physical page. Topoi, like scrapbooks, were places in which to find things. Memory was essential to rhetoric, an idea taken up by Cicero and Quintilian. Quintilian's *Instituto Oratorio* (ca. AD 90) instructs students in ways to preserve and record memory.[11] One name for the tablet on which they might write was *album* (from the Latin word meaning "white," designating the tablet on which public records were inscribed). Medieval society enhanced this practice, expanding methods for keeping material markers of memory. Pilgrims collected devotional objects and souvenirs, sometimes attaching them to pages of Bibles and other religious texts.[12] Scribes produced emblem books, with bound pages of drawings accompanied by interpretations in verse of the complex allegorical images.

In Europe in the thirteenth century came the gradual introduction of paper and, two centuries later, the revolutionary art of printing. These, in turn, led to the next iteration of the album. In the early Renaissance, while the efforts of individuals to preserve thoughts for private learning continued, efforts to teach others

through the collection of images for more public use began. Giorgio Vasari (1511–74), who wrote about hundreds of artists in his *Lives of the Most Eminent Italian Architects, Painters, and Sculptors* (1551), advocated keeping works of art in albums, a method that influenced protomuseums and libraries.[13] Robert DeCandido has written about artists and collectors who preserved prints in this way. Such albums constituted the backbone of every collection, or "cabinet," of the period.[14]

The fledgling practice of compiling albums is also illustrated by Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), who kept his collection of bookplates in a scrapbook entitled "Vulgaria." Pepys also compiled two albums of ephemera on London and Westminster. Today, a large proportion of the twenty million prints in the Bibliothèque Nationale continues to be kept in this compiled manner.[15]

Such albums were often stored in a *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities—a specially constructed bureau, gallery, or room in which albums were displayed along with objects as diverse as stuffed monkeys, botanical specimens, statuary, jewelry, paintings, and varied exotica. The *Wunderkammer* and *Kunstkammer* were the earliest recognizable versions of the modern museum and figured significantly in traditions of assemblage and display, for in them wealthy elites amassed their cultural capital. The taste for cabinets originated in the seventeenth century and continued into the nineteenth, although in an attenuated, middle-class form. Similarly, the albums kept in the *Wunderkammer* evolved, over many generations, into scrapbooks, the equivalent of a poor family's cabinet of curiosities. These were the books created not so much to serve the memory as to enact rituals of consumption and the hoarding of treasure.[16] And where monarchs once commissioned works and wielded their patronage to control the works' content, scrapbooks were self-commissioned (and on occasion, commercial), giving the ego free reign.

In the era of the *Wunderkammer*, fragments of memory were also gathered into a kind of album or blank book called a commonplace book, in which elites and aspiring elites gathered words for speeches, writing, and conversation and displayed their learned acquisitions. The commonplace book was both a memory aid and a notebook for personal growth, the progeny of the early Greeks' places in the mind.[17] In 1642 Thomas Fuller explained that keeping a commonplace book could serve as an aid to memory and as a "way of preserving learning and putting it to effective use."[18] John Locke's *A New Method of Making Common-Place Books*, published posthumously in 1706, brought structure to the popular blank-book format by adding subject headings, places for references, and an index. According to Locke, excerpts should be short and contain an argument, written as a summary in the margin.[19] These self-made anthologies were kept by schoolboys and statesmen alike.

The twin practices of gathering and arranging textual fragments in notebooks became institutionalized in the curricula of schools. "Gathering and framing" occupied the time of such notable figures as Francis Bacon, Samuel Johnson, William Byrd II, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert Herrick.[20] Published versions of the commonplace

books of famous men abounded.[21] As printed matter became more accessible, personal commonplace books came to resemble scrapbooks, with clippings and artifacts tipped in and overlaid on one another.[22]

In the late eighteenth century, another variation in book format edged albums closer to modern scrapbooks. In 1775 James Granger published a biographical history of England designed with blank pages on which the owner could affix prints.[23] Granger and subsequent editors urged book owners to collect engravings to enhance the pages of their books. A Grangerized, or extra-illustrated book, came to mean a printed, bound book with illustrations, letters, autographs, or other materials added later—personalized, that is, by each owner. These combinations of printed book and manuscript reached the zenith of their popularity in the nineteenth century. Occasionally, the owner of a Grangerized book would tip in illustrations unrelated to the text, making for strange and interesting hybrid volumes.

Color Printing and Other New Technologies

The success of color-printing technologies in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries meant that the general public now had cheap and plentiful color images at their disposal. Printed ephemera for use in albums appeared in the early nineteenth century. First developed by the German Alois Senefelder, lithography took the world by storm and revolutionized styles of visual perception. Senefelder's work was followed by the successes of others in color printing, notably Godefroy Engelmann in Paris in the 1830s. Quickly thereafter, small color scraps—the leftover pieces from larger printing jobs—seemed too precious to be discarded and too valuable to be given away. Marketed first in Germany, these die-cut glossy printed paper images were salvaged by bakers who used them for wrapping special breads—Easter bread, for instance, wrapped in a paper showing a spring scene. From the late 1830s onward, collectors sought such chromolithographs. The fad of collecting them fueled the printing industry, and the fad of compiling them in a scrapbook or scrap album inspired another product.[24]

Color scraps, or chromos, found an enthusiastic market in the owners of blank friendship books, passed around among nineteenth-century Americans. A transformation of the Dutch and German *album amicorum* (almost always called by its Latin name) of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the friendship album was a place for inscribing autographs, poetry, prose, and wishes from friends. Pre–Civil War friendship albums were homemade and sewn together by the maker, a local bookbinder, or a stationer. The contents combined mass-produced sources and friends' words and autographs.[25]

Other printing inventions and improvements in engraving, letterpress, and lithography brought ever more paper collectibles. Throwaway printed paper artifacts—ticket stubs, advertising cards, candy wrappers, and more—became a part

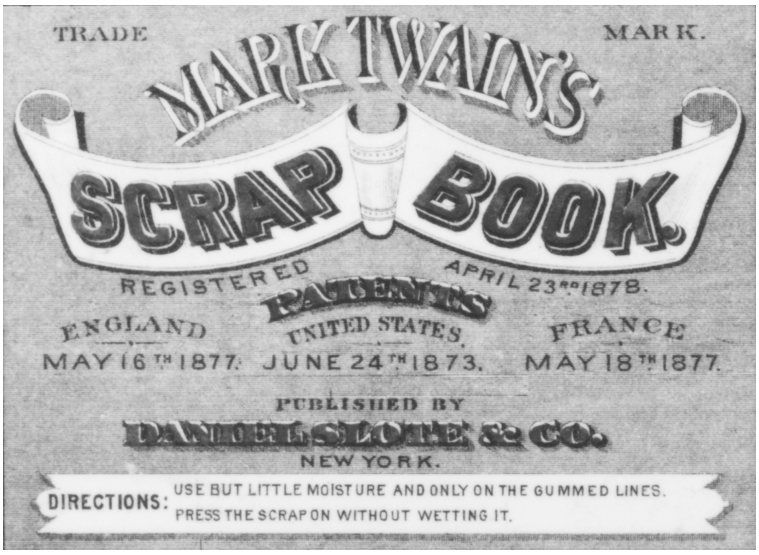


Figure I.2. *An example of a Mark Twain scrapbook album (late nineteenth century), showing Twain label.* (Courtesy American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming)

of everyday life. Books to hold such paper became the preoccupation of many young people and an inducement to free or inexpensive collecting.

By 1835 the use of scrapbooks was common enough to warrant a Hartford, Connecticut, publisher to issue for two years a periodical entitled *The Scrapbook,* which described the hobby of scrapbooks as keeping a blank book in which pictures, newspaper cuttings, and the like were pasted for safekeeping. Stationers sold sheets for enthusiasts to cut and paste, newspapers offered pages for clippings, and merchants offered trade cards. Holiday cards, such as valentines, were made from these various sources and pasted into such albums. Indeed, by the late 1860s cheap chromolithography made colored images available to every household and had found its way into practically every scrapbook or album.[26]

Commercial scrapbooks were marketed widely throughout the nineteenth century and included such titles as *Shipment's Common Sense Binder* (ca. 1825) and *The Ideal Patented Scrapbook* (ca. 1830). Always eager for a money-making scheme, Mark Twain patented a successful scrapbook in 1873 and subsequently marketed his scrapbooks through Daniel Slote of New York.[27] With characteristically inflated prose, Twain praised his album as the "only rational scrapbook the world has ever seen"[28] (see Figure I.2). A unique feature of Twain's design related to the method for attaching scraps to the page: the book came with pages already coated with mucilage. Other patentees claimed that their products had such improvements as gummed pages, interleaves, stronger bindings, and more durable and flexible photographic papers that made pictures much easier to manipulate.[29]

An Educational and a Moral Tool

The universal public education movement and its emphasis on order and repetition—two values embedded in the making of commonplace books—proved a boon for scrapbooks. Master educators encouraged teachers to keep their own anthologies of clippings and artwork for instruction. From the 1860s to the 1930s, the training of kindergarten teachers included making albums with geometric paper designs. Because textbooks were scarce, such homemade books were critical to many schools. Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century educators also promoted scrapbooks as a means of teaching art skills.[30] In 1873 the entrepreneur Louis Prang obliged with his introduction of chromo cards for children, marketing them as simple designs of "great sweetness" and "beautiful art bits." Similar art products flourished well into the twentieth century and supplied schoolchildren across the United States with inspirational and functional materials.[31]

Such practices were equally commended to parents, who were exhorted to use scrapbook making as a means of converting their children from feral creatures to good citizens.[32] Writing in the 1880s, E. W. Gurley stressed scrapbook creation in promoting family harmony and solving the problems of both idleness and unfocused reading. "Would it not be a pleasant picture of a farmer's family gathered around the fireside of a winter's evening overhauling a bundle of papers selected for this purpose?" he asked. Noting his own penchant for compiling, he attributed the desire for scrapbooks to the growth of newspapers, "from 2 in the times of Franklin to over 8000 in 1880." "We all read, but are we all well informed?" he asked and answered no. The problem could be solved if "we read for a purpose, look for something and keep it when found, and in no other form can it be so well preserved as in the pages of a good scrapbook."[33]

Each family member could make his or her own book—the father on farming, the mother on the home, the boys on horses or cattle, the girls on poetry or stories. Besides learning how to create domestic harmony and how to be good spouses, scrapbook makers were also improving their visual literacy and training the mind's eye. They practiced graphic design, interpreted advertising conventions, and absorbed such iconic cultural images as the U.S. flag, Uncle Sam, barefoot boys with fishing poles, Niagara Falls, and floral bouquets.[34]

Although ideally all family members were included in the scrapbook-making circle, much album making fell to the female gender. From the early nineteenth century to the present, girls and women were seen as the most frequent compilers. Todd Gernes has shown that girls and women came to be associated with friendship albums, for example, and Tamar Katriel and Thomas Farrel report that people who were shown a century-old scrapbook described its maker as a "she."[35] Compiling

scrapbooks of trade cards was also associated with girls (see Ellen Gruber Garvey, in this volume). In general, scrapbook and album making was considered a female activity, linked to traditional female concerns of holding families together and preserving nostalgic items.[36]

However, this may well be a misperception, a product of the language used to define male and female activity and the gender fault line between leisure and work.[37] A number of essays in this volume (those by Katherine Ott, Susan Tucker, and James Kelley) speak of albums and scrapbooks in the lives of men. When lab books, ledgers, and other professional scrapwork forms are included, the gender gap shrinks. In addition, a number of early antiquarians and learned men compiled scrapbooks as part of their life's work; collection, not publishing, was their goal. Charles Poulson, for example, saved every reproduced photograph and watercolor of Philadelphia he could find and then willed albums of these items to the Library Company on his death in 1866. Artists' scrapbooks are yet another large category of works that includes many examples by men.[38]

The Culture of Capitalism

Scrapbook and album making captured the culture of capitalism in the desires to possess objects and understand oneself through possessions. An 1872 book entitled *The Happy Nursery* urged that children be taught to value paper products as tokens of affection (see Meredith Eliassen, in this volume). Assembled into scrapbooks, these tokens spoke of all "the best and warmest" feelings learned within the home. And, of course, colorful trade cards became the bonus for purchasing a product.

The scrapbook reached maturity at the same time that industrial capitalism was reaching its first peak. The world of the late nineteenth century exploded with possibilities—consumer goods, mail-order catalogs, streetcars that could transport a person across communities and bring strangers to one's door, half-tone images of far-flung places and people. As caches for the booty of capitalism, scrapbooks fit seamlessly into the rituals of consumption and etiquette that helped new members of the middle class identify one another.[39] Scrapbooks supported consumers in the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century as they manipulated cutouts of furniture, packaged food, store-bought clothing, and other mass-produced items.[40] They fed dual, opposing impulses: one, to grab and hoard what one could before it moved out of reach; and two, to select the exact thing and discard the rest. Not surprisingly, the thousands of trade cards printed during the 1880s and 1890s ended up in scrapbooks and the rubbish pile.

Not only was scrapbook making a hobby recommended by the arbiters of middle-class taste; the album itself became a commercial product—a mass-produced object marketed, without irony or improbity, as unique and individualized. Homemade scrapbooks, although they never became extinct, were eventually marginalized by the

commercial gift-book trade.[41] Late-nineteenth-century ledger design branched out to accommodate buyers of commonplace books. These blank books, revised with headings and illustrations, made them a popular present for students. Still other publishers mass-marketed blank books with title pages and headings for religious and school prizes, debutantes, brides, and even death notices, to name but a few of the purposes for such books.[42]

The Photography Revolution

The coming-of-age of scrapbook albums also depended on popular acceptance of photography. The invention of photography in 1837 forever altered the making of scrapbooks and albums. Not only were there photographs to be entered into scrapbooks, but also the forms of scrapbooks themselves became more varied and abundant. The period 1850–1910 brought a variety of patented photograph albums alongside more polished versions of commonplace books and scrapbooks.[43] In the early 1850s, Louis Blanquart-Evard introduced albumen printing paper and assembled albums of photographs for his customers in France.[44]

In 1850 Mathew Brady issued *The Gallery of Illustrious Americans*, an album of twelve lithographic portraits based on photographs.[45] Available on a subscription basis, the portraits were an early version of today's pseudoscrapbooks, albums that offer an intimate view of a celebrity or show readers the lives of the rich and famous through photographs and imitation handwritten entries. Such books have thrived for a long time. Even a cursory library search will call up numerous titles, including *A Scrapbook Containing Photographic Portraits of British Notables* (1863), *A Sportsman's Scrapbook* (1928), *My Guidance Scrapbook: Vocations* (1931), *I Am a Woman Worker: A Scrapbook of Autobiographies* (1936), *Cecil Beaton's Scrapbook* (1937), *A Fox Hunter's Scrapbook* (1945), *Britain at Arms: A Scrapbook from Queen Anne to the Present* (1953), *The Marx Bros. Scrapbook*, by Groucho Marx (1973), *General Hospital: The Complete Scrapbook* (1995), and *Princess Diana—Forever in Our Hearts: A Scrapbook of Memories* (1997). Publications such as these carried the scrap ideology into homes around the world.

As publishers observed the substantial market for blank books, they considered how to adapt them to accommodate photographs. Studies by book conservators show that albums used for photograph mounting appeared as early as 1850. Richard Horton shows that a common, unstubbed blank book was first used in the United States for photographs in the 1850s, while Jane Rutherston found that the bulk of British patents for albums and scrapbooks dated from 1860 to 1900.[46] As early as 1861, photography journals had urged their readers to collect their multiplying *carte-de-visite* images into albums produced especially for this purpose. The *carte-de-visite* album had become an established institution by the 1870s, and albums for cabinet photographs were to remain popular until World War I.[47] Both Elizabeth Siegel and Sarah McNair Vosmeier echo in their essays in this volume an 1864 proclamation by *Godey's Lady's*

Book: "Photograph albums have become not only a luxury for the rich but a necessity for the people. The American family would be poor indeed who could not afford a photograph album." Rapidly joining the family Bible on the parlor table as proof of middle-class gentility, the photograph album quickly established its own conventions, its own rules for maintenance and domestic display, and practices that continue to shape collections of family pictures today. From the beginning the scrapbook and the album were interchangeable in function. Although scholars and conservators have devoted more attention to the photograph album, perhaps the more public of the two, many of these books were used also to hold scraps and other memorabilia.[48]

Albums for photographs alone appeared, but often photograph albums also contained at least some paper ephemera and handwritten notes. New paper and printing production technology increased the amount of paper products available for newspaper illustration and for photographs themselves. Publications such as *Frank Leslie's Illustrated News* and *Harper's Weekly* overflowed with images. In the late 1880s, when Kodak introduced the lighter-weight print papers and rolled film that ushered in the snapshot era, cutting reached new heights, and scrapbooks and photograph albums became more mixed in format.[49]

Private and Unique

Neither albums nor scrapbooks are exactly books. Certainly as a genre they are rarely found in lending libraries. Most often, scrapbooks are created and kept in private, for a limited few to see. They are eccentric and idiosyncratic, making them impossible to pick up and read as one would a published book. The meaning found in any particular scrapbook depends on the nimble skills of the reader.[50] Even when they are similar to books, with leaves and bindings, the content is different. Nor does the existence of innovations such as e-books matter a whit to the content of scrapbooks, although e-zines and blogs share many commonalities with scrapbooks. In form, many scrapbooks more closely resemble the junk drawer found in kitchens and desks. Some scrapbooks spend their entire existence unbound, in shoe boxes or other staging areas, awaiting the day when the gatherer will become a compiler.

Scrapbooks represent a mass-cultural form, but individually each is unique, authentic, and not easily reproducible. Walter Benjamin's classic essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" speaks to this point. The humble scrapbook's aura of authenticity lives on, even after its contents cease to make sense to the reader.[51] Consequently, scrapbooks are perhaps most similar to the artist's book, that one-of-a-kind creation with pages read as compound pictures.[52] The meaning of every selected image or object has an implied relationship to everything else in the volume. Keith Smith has described the process of comprehending artist's books: "Referral sets the order of viewing. Binding maintains the order. Turning pages reveals the order."[53] Above all, as with artist's books, the experience of reading a scrapbook is intensely

physical and sensual. The pages must be touched to be turned, and the turning creates movement between objects and amasses visual stimulation. Caring for, handling, and playing with scrapbooks activate the same emotions enjoyed in experiencing art.

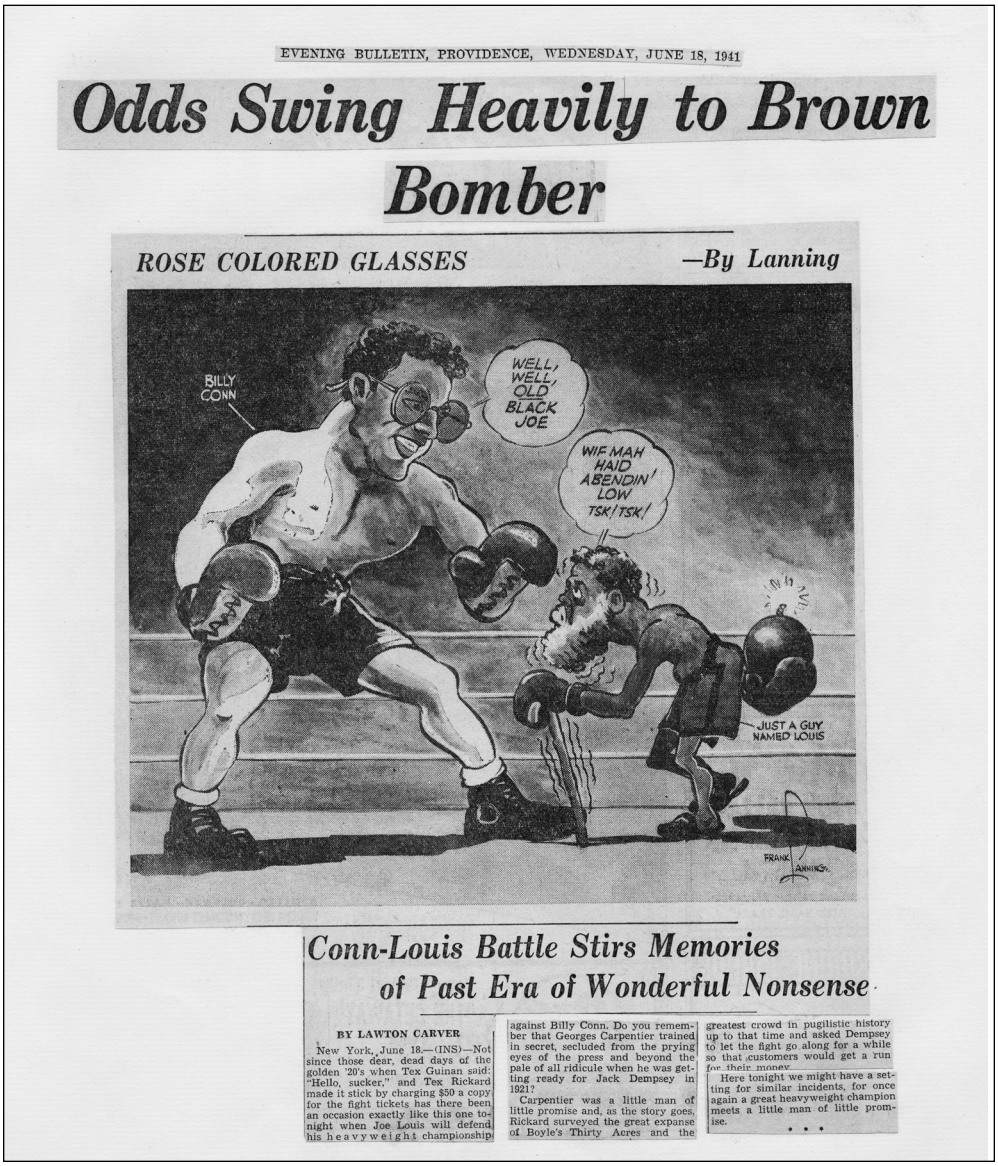
Other precursors and cousins to the modern scrapbook require further exploration of the unique within the mass produced. Sewing quilts from scraps of fabric is similar, although commonly associated with group work rather than that of individuals.[54] Mention of almanacs, catalogs, and fancy craft paper cutting, such as Chinese paper cuts, should also be included as of potential importance, as should the composition techniques of mosaics and stained-glass windows.[55]

Although it would be impossible to list the many types of scrapbooks, some of the most common ones are single-purpose albums, single-theme or single-topic albums, and single-material albums. Single-purpose albums might be created for a special celebration—a birth, a teaching portfolio, or a school project, for example. Single-theme or single-topic albums might concentrate on a private individual's life and times or the life of a celebrity, such as a movie star or sports hero. The scrapbooks Julian Black kept on the boxer Joe Louis fit into the category of the single-theme album, as do scrapbooks of photographs of flowers, bird species, or trips (see Figures I.3 and I.4); scrapbooks of favorite comic strips; and albums recording significant events such as wars, earthquakes, presidential elections, or world's fairs.[56] *The Simple Art of Scrapbooking* has tips for making thirty types of single-theme scrapbooks, including relatively recent concerns such as retirement.[57] Collections of stamps, postcards, trade cards, wine labels, or matchbooks are examples of single-material albums. The paper dollhouses Beverly Gordon writes about in this volume are probably in a class of their own.

Perhaps the most consulted scrapbooks in libraries and archives are those about the theater. These include single-format albums that focus on playbills, photographs, drawings, or ticket stubs, as well as albums devoted to one star, a particular theater, a performing company, or genre.[58] One of the most stunning examples of scrapbook extravagance is the three-album set of scrapbooks devoted to Diaghilev's Ballet Russe, compiled by his earliest London patron, Lady Ripon. These albums are oversized (28 by 22 inches) and, as a group, offer a visual tour of the productions that made the Ballet Russe the phenomenon it was. Although some of the photographs and prints might be found elsewhere, the compilation itself provides a singular overview and enables a viewer to experience the impact of the whole. Most significant, the three-volume set includes a series of pen-and-ink, pencil, and watercolor portrait sketches of Vaslav Nijinsky by Jean Cocteau.[59]

Rupture and Reassemblage

If the historical development of scrapbooks is clear, how then do we read these fragments as cultural artifacts? Scrapbooks are a pleasure to make and examine, but what guidance is there for those who want to analyze them and use them as evidence for



EVENING BULLETIN, PROVIDENCE, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 1941

Odds Swing Heavily to Brown Bomber

ROSE COLORED GLASSES —By Lanning

Conn-Louis Battle Stirs Memories of Past Era of Wonderful Nonsense

BY LAWTON CARVER

New York, June 18.—(INS)—Not since those dear, dead days of the golden '20's when Tex Guinan said: "Hello, sucker," and Tex Rickard made it stick by charging $50 a copy for the fight tickets has there been an occasion exactly like this one tonight when Joe Louis will defend his heavyweight championship against Billy Conn. Do you remember that Georges Carpentier trained in secret, secluded from the prying eyes of the press and beyond the pale of all ridicule when he was getting ready for Jack Dempsey in 1921?

Carpentier was a little man of little promise and, as the story goes, Rickard surveyed the great expanse of Boyle's Thirty Acres and the greatest crowd in pugilistic history up to that time and asked Dempsey to let the fight go along for a while so that customers would get a run for their money.

Here tonight we might have a setting for similar incidents, for once again a great heavyweight champion meets a little man of little promise.

• • •

Figure I.3. *Clippings with heavy racial overtones, from Joe Louis scrapbook, 1941.* (Courtesy Julian Black Scrapbooks of Joe Louis, 1935–44, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution)

understanding history? Numerous works analyze illustrated books and their expository images.[60] Certainly scrapbooks are rich in material culture, but they are not like published books and images. Published works are the product of many people, from the author, editor, and designer to the printer and marketer. Where does one begin with the unpublished, highly personal scrapbook?

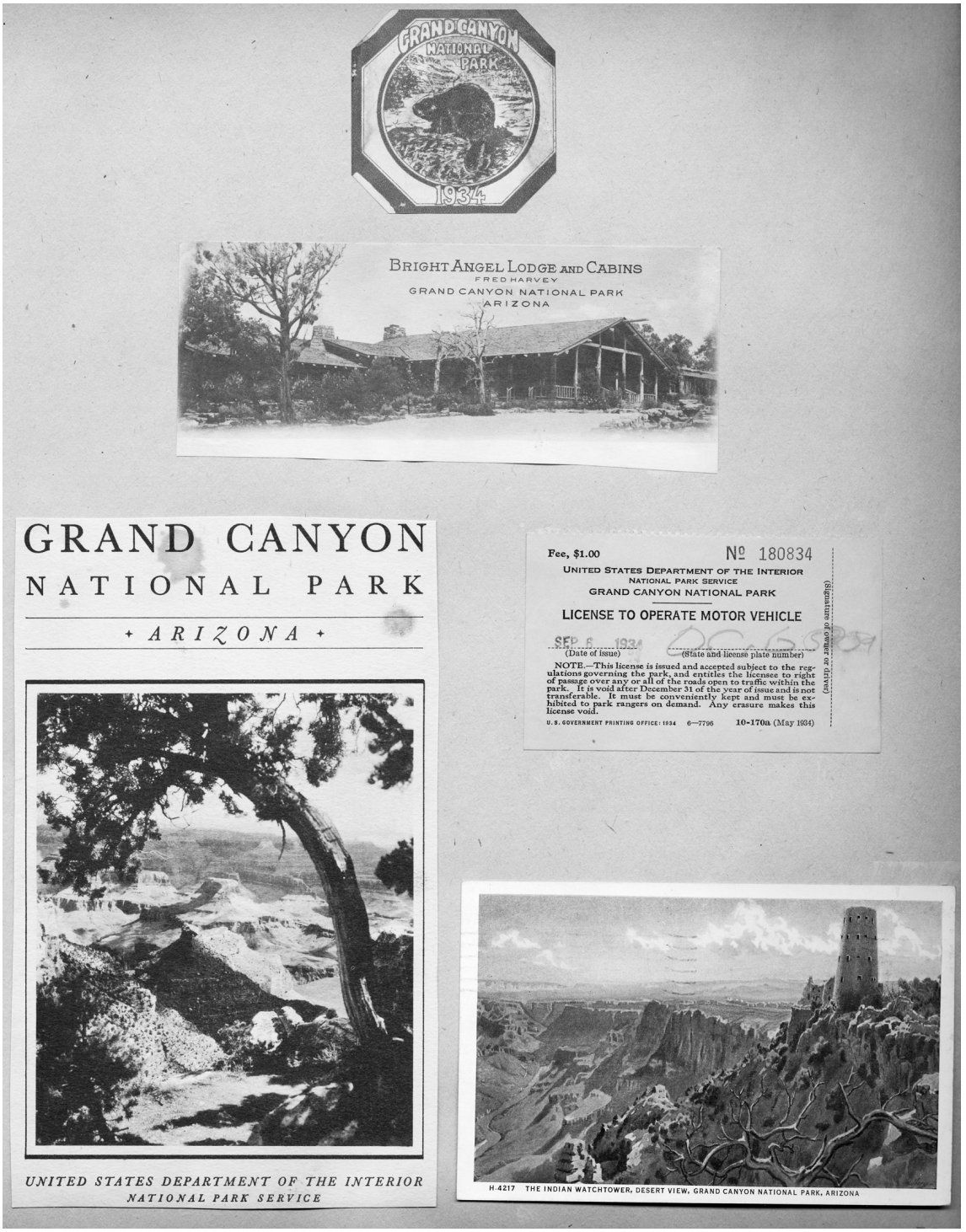


Figure I.4. *Page from a "Mrs. Kendrick's" motoring trip to the Grand Canyon and points west in the 1930s.* (Courtesy Scrapbook Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution)

As prime examples of material and visual culture, scrapbooks lend themselves to analysis with interdisciplinary tools. A material and visual culture approach examines the relationship between text or artifact and its social world. In this regard, if scrapbooks can be distilled to one overarching interpretive theme, it is that of rupture. Scrapbooks shuffle and recombine the coordinates of time, space, location, voice, and memory. What could be more emblematic of the fractured narratives of modernity than scrapbooks?

In museum-exhibition practice, one of the basic psychological truths is that the viewer usually believes that what he or she is looking at is natural, authentic, true. The problem is that everything gets its meaning from its context, which is partly supplied by the viewer and partly by the curator and designer. Everything in an exhibit has been removed from its primal environment and artificially reconstituted. The same rupture occurs in scrapbooks, which are, after all, assembled from scraps. Consequently, the first thing that the serious critic must do is let go of the notion that any part of what is under analysis is free of manipulation. As with objects in exhibitions, the contents of scrapbooks undergo double and triple readings: as themselves, as fragments on a page, and as objects related to whatever the viewer brings to them. Susan Pearce has looked at the rupture (although she does not use the term) that is the foundation of collecting. She divides collecting into three categories: systematics, the construction of a collection to represent an ideology; fetishism, the removal of the object from its historical and cultural context and its redefinition by the collector; and souvenir gathering, in which the object is prized for its power to carry the past into the future.[61]

Albums and scrapbooks present examples of all three categories, but above all they manipulate meaning through rupture and the reconstruction that follows. They shift from the real to the imaginary realm, often with no sign that any change has occurred. The contents fracture chronology; events that occurred weeks or decades apart seem, when placed side by side on a page, to happen simultaneously or in reverse order.[62] Displacement and rupture appealed to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century sensibilities. A hallmark of expositions of the era was the bricolage of cultures, cut from sites around the world and installed on the urban fairgrounds of Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and San Francisco (see Jennifer A. Jolly, in this volume).[63] In addition, the popular middle-class pastime of collecting—the single-minded hunt for objects of desire—helped turn rupture and reassemblage into a commonplace.[64] Reassemblage provided one way to turn fracture into harmony and create unity out of differences.

Collage: The Scrapbook's Art Form

Collage and its variant, montage, reached prominence during the time that scrapbooks first enjoyed great popularity. The common sense of Marcel Duchamp's generation that made understandable his controversial Ready-Mades, commonplace objects transformed into sculptures, also stoked the fragmentation of the visual world

of the early twentieth century. Repetition, mass reproduction, and appropriation of public materials for private interpretation punctuated the avant-garde art scene at the turn of the century. These tactics were grounded in mundane experience, not imposed by the scions of high culture. They sprang up from workers in industry and toilers in urban life.[65]

In the 1850s and 1860s, Hippolyte Bayard, Eugene Appert, Henry Peach Robinson, Oscar Rejlander, and others experimented with photomontage, a process that allowed twentieth-century artists to creatively manipulate images. By the early twentieth century, the informal and highly personal scrapbook had infiltrated the public domain in the form of collage, described by art historians as among the first truly modern art forms.[66] Amateur photographers used similar techniques to add to albums and scrapbooks. Scrapbook makers and artists grasped the idea of a fragmented world and expressed it through a scrap aesthetic. The arrangement of items in both collage art and scrapbooks functioned in much the same manner. As Diane Waldman notes in *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object*, collage has layers of meaning.[67] Both creative forms reflected the modernist characteristics of rupture and multifaceted interpretation. Scrapbooks relied on the assemblage of images borrowed from diverse origins, often discovered by chance and reconstituted to create an entirely new context and meaning.

The convergence of the dissimilar to produce meaningful association was of revolutionary significance. The collage technique consciously sought to cross boundaries among and between genres and media. High-art collage contrasted with the scrapbook's low-art collage, which contained the private side of identity, the nonpolitical and nonideological. The collage of the scrapbook more overtly juxtaposed the scraps of found or used objects with the memories of the compiler. The viewer must seek the hidden rhyme that connects the elements on the page.[68]

Montage, an assemblage form closely tied to scrapbooks and collage, is an "aesthetic practice of combination, repetition, and overlap."[69] Montage reached its golden era in the interwar years with cinema and photography. The juxtaposition of unexpected yet familiar images provided the visual syntax for montage. Yet, as with the history of collage, scrapbooks receive little recognition as the ubiquitous mass visual and material form that buoyed the public art of montage.[70] Melissa A. Johnson's discussion of Hannah Höch in this volume is a welcome corrective.

The rise of the middle class frames the era of the classic scrapbook. From the mid- to the late-nineteenth century, many forms of manufacturing consolidated into the blunt force of industrial capitalism. Commodity capitalism, a tributary of this ocean of power, swelled from factories into department stores and mail-order catalogs full of mass-produced consumer goods. The wages for many workers increased and stabilized enough to underwrite the dominance of a middle class of citizens. The ideology of the middle class included the obligation to consume and display goods. Yet the scrapbooks of these avaricious Victorian consumers prove that they were not passive or defenseless in the face of advertising and the proliferation of goods. Trade cards

were cut up to suit the compiler's needs—flowers or animals were removed, product identities snipped away—demonstrating that commerce was not a sacred cow.[71]

Scrapbooks existed at the crossroads of print culture and commodity capitalism. Seemingly without compunction, compilers ransacked commercial images and plundered paper products to suit themselves.[72] Compilers, through the continual action of separation and reconstitution, undermined the alienation that often characterized social relations under capitalism. Objects may have originated in the prevailing and impersonal marketplace, but individuals converted the unfamiliar into the familiar by cutting up the materials of capitalism and turning them into gifts to themselves. Compilers personalized their clippings and infused them with individual meaning outside the arena of market exchange.[73]

Consumer demand for visual material in the last third of the nineteenth century also brought a renaissance of printing and book design. Attention to the handicraft of bookmaking characterized the Arts and Crafts movement. William Morris and the Kelmscott style looked backward to early printed books and medieval and Gothic manuscripts for inspiration. Mass-marketed scrapbooks often borrowed the hand-sewn bindings, cloth pages, and embossed vine-and-castle imagery of this style.

Ephemeral Ephemera

One of the most challenging characteristics of scrapbooks is that they are ephemeral. In fact, they exemplify ephemera made from other ephemera. Ephemera is simply a form carrying graphic or prose information that was meant to survive only for the life span of an event, meeting, or brief period of relevance. The term *ephemera* encompasses a wide range of materials—conference agendas, menus, tickets, leaflets, bills and invoices, labels, calendars, greeting cards, score cards, trade cards, and coupons. Ephemera are created with their demise assumed.[74]

Most scrapbooks and their ephemeral content do not last and provide only a fleeting usefulness. They disintegrate and crumble. The leaves fall out. The enclosures drop off the page. Archivists, the most conscientious embalmers of primary materials, tend to neglect them because they are conservation nightmares. None of the solutions available will correct all the problems. Sometimes an archivist must destroy a scrapbook—take it apart—to save it.[75]

Ephemera are beloved by collectors but, curiously, spurned by many serious scholars. They are seldom studied or analyzed. Consequently, their value is not widely appreciated. Few scholars comprehend how to use ephemera as evidence.[76]

Ephemera have been called "raw, unedited history—the purest kind," as well as "the other half of history: the half without guile."[77] To some extent, ephemera do reveal culture makers with their guard down, in all their glorious and unrestrained excess: the brilliant crassness of popular culture, which both attracts and repels. But this characterization somewhat overstates the extent to which ephemera

are extracultural, less grounded in their historical context than, say, a novel or a film. It is certainly true that ephemera are among the least understood and most dismissed components of archival holdings. Even many of the early collectors of and writers on ephemera, the so-called friends of the genre, saw these mundane items meant for fifteen minutes of fame as emblematic of the decline of taste.[78]

The Stigma of Mass Culture

The stigma attached to mass culture led earlier students of ephemera into dead-end disquisitions on good and bad typography, bombastic language, and poor composition at the expense of serious analysis about why and how the styles developed and thrived. The collection, storage, and cataloging of ephemera remain often haphazard and arbitrary, and the professional literature, rather sparse. Some librarians, archivists, and museum professionals, as well as scholars, find scrapbook content more amusing than serious. Yet archivists, special collections librarians, and collectors also tend to be the stalwart protectors of scrapbooks. Scholars too are slowly starting to take an interest in ephemera and their use as more than an occasional book illustration or exhibition brochure.[79]

One of the biggest obstacles to using ephemera and scrapbooks as primary source material is that they usually arrive devoid of context, with no attribution, provenance, history, or biographical information. Ephemera just exist. There is seldom any listing of items within scrapbooks.[80] Apart from research libraries, few institutions have the reference tools necessary to support intensive research, such as city and company directories, dictionaries of engravers and artists, or books on iconography and symbols. If a university library has some of these resources, they are likely to be housed, unless they are available online, at scattered locations around the library system—in the business, art, or medical branches. All this makes it frustrating and fatiguing to try to argue *from* ephemera as well as with them. In addition, most library information access and indeed most academic scholarship rely on the written word as the point of departure and as the foundation for analysis. This tends to make interpretation of images, objects, and mass culture a poor and maligned cousin in the scholarship hierarchy.

Ephemera look the way they do partly because there are few editorial or administrative constraints on them. Producers have no jury or peer review to pass judgment on their taste or truthfulness, only a printer paid to get the product out. Consequently, ephemera often display more drama and hyperbole than do other kinds of primary sources. Yet ephemera have nobility. Their very transitoriness makes them all the more precious.

One of the great poets of the nineteenth century used ephemera in her writing process. Emily Dickinson scissored out images and texts from journals and mailed them to friends. She wrote her poems on household detritus—on the backs of bags, bills,

chocolate wrappers, and old shopping lists and along the margins of newspapers and flyers—and refused to publish them.[81] Her motivation for elevating ephemera may have been a perverse tactic to keep her poetry out of circulation. Or she may have been influenced by the prevalent bourgeois ethos of waste not, want not. Lydia Maria Child, in her popular 1832 book *The Frugal Housewife*, recommended that old letters be saved so that they could be written on again—on the back. Child prodded readers to gather up fragments of time as well as materials, to waste nothing.[82]

Another aspect of the life of ephemera has to do with their circulation through the market—their life cycle within capitalism.[83] Objects change categories many times during their existence. Materials once treasured are given away, become rubbish, or end up stored in a museum. Much of the content of scrapbooks, because it is incomprehensible, exists in a timeless limbo—significant but without value.[84]

The mundane nature of scrapbooks can also be read in a more subversive way. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau wrote at length about the manipulation and use of popular culture by those who consume it but do not control or make it. His analysis of the processes of consumption of culture by common people highlights such everyday activities as reading, talking, walking, and cooking, which he analyzed as creative tactics that people use to maintain control over their lives in the face of the power of the state and society.[85] De Certeau's "unrecognized producers, poets of their own acts," might easily include scrapbook makers.[86] They circumvent publishing, bypass copyrights, and freely cannibalize printed sources. Scrapbook makers avoid the external editing process that would squeeze their creations into narrative and prose forms acceptable to mass audiences. Instead, each album is a rogue and a renegade that both parries with and parallels popular forms.

Guy Debord takes a less positive view of such activities in *Society of the Spectacle*.[87] Debord places spectacle at the core of modern experience. Although he used a hatchetlike manifesto to deliver his argument, when viewed with memory books in mind, a sketchy scrapbook epistemology emerges. For Debord, modern society lacks quality because of the dominance of the commodity form. Life becomes an immense accumulation of spectacles: representations of events not directly experienced or lived. As a result, images are detached from context and eventually merge into a common stream of unreality, the heart of spectacle. Spectacle, then, defines relationships among people. It is a social relationship mediated by images, such as those material manifestations earnestly gathered into albums. In both de Certeau's and Debord's frameworks, scrapbooks mediate one's personal circumstances within capitalistic society. Debord's view of human endeavor is a sobering counter to de Certeau's. Yet both throw light on the link between scrapbook making's appeal and the ideological contexts that support the collection of ephemera.

Scrapbooks have been a central storehouse for U.S. memory. Yet, as David Lowenthal cautions in *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, we must not assume that the material before us reflects a timeless past—that our contemporary analysis perfectly captures past eras or that the material under analysis was once part of a static, undynamic

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