Item 27 - [EXPOSITIONS & WORLD’S FAIRS] Full set of all four admissions tickets for California’s often forgotten World’s Fair, the California Midwinter International Exposition held in 1894 at San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. San Francisco: Printed by Lith. H.S. Crocker, 1894.
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Regards, Kurt and Gail

Kurt and Gail Sanftleben
Montclair, VA 22025
Email: info@read-em-again.com
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1. [ABOLITION] [AFRICAN-AMERICANA] [DEWITT CLINTON] [POLITICS] [SLAVERY] [WOMEN] Deed of Manumission for a New York City woman’s slave, signed by Mayor Dewitt Clinton. Susannah Drake, James Sands, Dewitt Clinton, and P. C. Van Wyck. New York City: 1809.

This deed of manumission measures 8” x 9.75”. Slightly toned. Short (.25”) tear on right edge. In nice shape. The document reads:

By Dewitt Clinton Mayor of the City of New York and Pierre C Van Wyck Recorder of the said city.

It is hereby certified that pursuant to the Statute entitled An Act Concerning Slaves and Servants we have this day examined a certain Negro named Joseph Sands the property of Susannah Drake which said slave is about to be manumitted and he appearing to us to be under fifty years of age viz about Twenty five and of sufficient ability to provide for himself we do grant this Certificate.

Given under our hands the fifth day of January 1809

Dewitt Clinton
P C Van Wyck

Registered in the Office of Clerk of the City and County of New York in Lib. No 7 of Manumissions Page 110. This fifth day of January 1809. – T. Wootman / C Clerk

The Act Concerning Slaves and Services of 1801, reiterated, clarified, and revised similar acts that were passed in 1694, 1788, and 1790. With regard to manumission, it stated that:

Slaves under 50 years of age and able to support and maintain themselves, and so certified by the proper officers, might be manumitted by will or otherwise, without security being given for their support in case they should become unable to support themselves. The master was thus freed from all further liability on their account. (Paraphrased by Oscar R. Williams in Blacks and Colonial Legislation in the Middle Colonies.)

The 1800 Census identifies Susannah Drohe (sic), the head of a New York City household with one teenage boy and three young younger daughters, as owning one male slave, no doubt James Sands who was freed by this document. Susannah died in December of 1820.

Dewitt Clinton was an ardent abolitionist who served three terms as the mayor of New York City and was a major candidate for President of the United States in 1812. Although he lost the election to James Madison, he carried most of the Northeast. He later served as Governor of New York State from 1817 to 1822 and from 1825 to 1828, famously overseeing the construction of the Erie Canal.

Manumission documents signed by Clinton are rather scarce. At the time of listing, OCLC shows only one in an institutional collection at the New York State Library, and Rare Book Hub show only one other having been sold in an auction by the American Art Association in 1921.

SOLD Inv # 9561

This terrific anti-slavery propaganda envelope was “Engraved & Published by J. Valentine, Dundee” on greyish wove paper. On the left, it shows Britannia supported by a lion as the protector of a slave while a banner reading “God Hath Made of One Blood All Nations of Man” flies over head. On the right, a slave trader flogs a black man who is lashed to a pole, and another slave lies supine while a woman and child look on. Nearby, another trader holds a cord around the neck of a kneeling slave, and in the background a third trader has bound four black men to a log with neck chains. In distance, a group of slaves waits to be loaded on a slave ship.

The envelope is addressed to “E.D. Sweeney (student) / Meadville, Crawford Co / Pa”. and is postmarked with a blue Austinburg, Ohio circular handstamp. A combination manuscript/handstamp “due 5” rate mark is above the address. The cover is in nice shape. Some wear, soiling, and docketing on the reverse.

John Valentine, of Dundee Scotland, was a linen printer who in the early 1840s expanded his business to produce billheads, notices, and prints of local scenes. In the late 1840s, he met Elihu Burritt, a radical pacifist who had grown disillusioned with America and moved to England. Burritt had founded the League of Universal Brotherhood and sponsored stores selling free-labor produce and clothing made from free-labor cotton (i.e. goods that had absolutely no connection to slavery). He also convinced Valentine to produce propaganda envelopes that could be sold in both England and America that advocated for his pet causes: anti-slavery, temperance, world peace, and universal brotherhood. (For more information see the Encyclopedia of 19th Century Photography edited by Hannany, Rickard’s Encyclopedia of Ephemera, “U.S. Propaganda Covers” by David L. Jarrett in the November, 2008 issue of The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues and “Elihu Burritt” at Wikipedia.

This is the first state of Valentine’s second anti-slavery envelope with the imprints “Johnston & Hunter Edinr. & London” on the left and “Ackermann & Co London” on the right. (See pp 240-1 in British Pictorial Envelopes of the 19th Century by Bodily et. al.)

Austinburg, Ohio was a major stop on the Underground Railroad and the home of an ardent and early leader of the abolitionist movement, Betsy Mix Cowles. School records show that Edward D. Sweeney was a freshman at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, which was located in Crawford County, the home of John Brown’s tannery and another important stop on the Underground Railroad, however ‘conductors’ were exceptionally cautious in town as a large percentage of Allegheny’s students were from the South. (For more information see “The Underground Railroad’s Secret Operations in Crawford County” in the Crawford Messenger, 28 Feb 2016, and various Wikipedia articles.)

A very scarce propaganda envelope. At the time of listing, no others are for sale in the trade, and OCLC shows none held by institutions. Only six similar U.S.-used anti-slavery propaganda envelopes have appeared at auction in the last 32 years per the Stamp Auction Network and major philatelic auction records. Inflation-adjusted prices-realized have ranged from $506 to $4750 (depending upon condition and auction vagaries) with an average price of $2584.

SOLD Item # 9594
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #

3. [AFRICAN-AMERICANA] [BANKING & FINANCE] [CHURCH OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS] [MILITARY & WAR] [MORMONS] [PHILATELY] Humorous letter ridiculing the annual muster of a New York town’s militia with a postscript questioning the solvency of the Kirtland Safety Society Bank, which was controlled by John Smith and the Church of the Latter Day Saints. From Norman S. Stratton to Daniel Gregg. Waterford, New York to “Chillacothe” [sic], Ohio: October 11, 1837.

This stampless folded letter measures 15.5” x 12.75” unfolded. The cover bears a manuscript “25” rate mark and a circular Waterford, New York postmark in red. In nice shape. A transcript will be provided.

In this letter, Stratton derisively—but truthfully—recounts his experience in the Waterford militia’s annual General Muster day, which like was quite similar to annual militia musters throughout the northeast and in other areas far from conflict Indian tribes:

“The Proudest day in the annals of [Waterford] was ushered in by as bright a sun as ever shone on an honest people. According to previous orders a 9 O clock A M we all repaired to the place of rendezvous. ... Fall in Men! Fall in! Fall in! After we were put in line nearly as straight as the letter S Sergeant McCoy formed us into a company where we stood about half an hour waiting for the Capt & Music. At last we heard ye gods! Could it be imagination. ... No it was our own our only music our chosen band consisting of one fife and one snare drum. ... The order was given, the shrill notes of the fife accompanied by the occasional beating of the drum inspired our hearts with patriotic fervor. O could we there but have seen the enemy, the murderous British who once invaded our peaceful shores, we would have taught them a lesson that would have been long remembered. On we marched to the tune of “Yankee Doodle” until we reached the place of our destination. Ensign Eddy here gave up the command to the Captain who stepped forward a few paces, there drawing his huge knife from its scabbard shouted in a voice louder than the seven thunders of old Every Man give strict attention – Company Shoulder arms. Every Man bring his piece to his shoulder. Now thought I is the time to inspect the troop so casting eyes right eyes left I found the troop armed with the following implements of War viz – Muskets, Rifles, Fowling Pieces. Canes, Sticks, Umbrellas, Fishing Rods, Mop Sticks, Chair Posts, Hen Roosts, Whip Stalks, & Broom sticks &c &c &c ... After going through the usual manoeuvres, Capt Thomas again shouted Every Man give his attention I will now proceed to call the roll. ... In describing the farce of the morning I have been very brief but shall attempt in the description of the afternoon to entirely dispel the curtain that you may see the whole days proceeding. ... Our time of meeting was a 2 “PM”, the sun shone brighter than in the morning. Forbid O God that we should on such a day become the votaries of amalgamation but so it must be. ... there arrived at our place a black band from Albany Four in number. ... it was
immediately agreed upon that the said band should be engaged . . . and we marched through most of the principal streets of our city O! it was a sight to dwell upon to see us high minded soldiers of this great country under the heat of a sultry sun with scarce air enough to retain breath and inhaling the dust of the street at every step following a few back negroes with an innumerable host of boys hooting and laughing at us  had they known that we were the defenders of the country they might have been more civil. . . .”

A postscript reads,

“Please inform me how the Kirtland Safety Society Bank Bills go with you Thomas says they are rather a siberious currency.”

Gregg was a prosperous Ohio surveyor, land dealer, and businessman, who, no doubt, Stratton though would know if investing in the Kirtland Safety Society Bank would have been profitable. It would not. The Kirtland Safety Society Bank scandal played an important role in the history of the Church of the Latter-day Saints that accelerated its move to the West. At the time Mormon communities were concentrated in Kirtland, Ohio and Northwestern Missouri. Mormon leader Joseph Smith founded the quasi-bank in January of 1837, and by November, it had collapsed, ruining many of the Kirtland Mormons who believed that Smith had perpetrated a financial scam to enrich himself and fellow leaders of the church. During the acrimonious days that followed the bank’s collapse, many Mormons, including some leaders, left the church or were excommunicated. In the final days of the bank, possibly in an attempt to avert criminal charges, Smith publicly disavowed the bank as a speculative and counterfeit fraud:

“I am disposed to say a word relative to the bills of the Kirtland Safety Society Bank. I hereby warn them to beware of speculators, renegadoes [defectors] and gamblers, who are duping the unsuspecting and the unwary, by palming upon them, those bills, which are of no worth, here. . . . I know them to be detrimental to the best interests of society, as well as to the principles of religion.”

Smith’s statements didn’t help his case, and he fled from Kirtland with a posse in hot pursuit. Eventually, the Kirtland Mormon’s who remained loyal to Smith followed him to Missouri and eventually to Utah.

Although Kirtland Safety Society Bank notes were at the time worthless, today even small denomination bills frequently sell for upwards of $10,000 each. If Stratton had purchased a bundle, his heirs might be quite wealthy today.

SOLD Item # 9603

One-page manuscript document (7.75” x 9.75”) on the first page of an otherwise blank bifolium measuring 15.5” x 9.75 “ unfolded. The document is dated “the 23rd day of November A.D. 1842” and signed by six jurors in addition to the Justice of the Peace/Coroner. In nice shape.

The document reads in part:

“We the undersigned jurors summoned to hold an inquest over the body of Isabella Slave of William H. Long . . . have come unanimously to the opinion after careful examination of the body of the deceased, that she . . . came to her death by violence, and from every circumstance & the evidence that has come to our Knowledge are unanimously of opinion that the said marks of violence found upon the body . . . were inflicted by William H. Jones. . . .”

Court records reveal that there were three counts to the murder charge including one that stated:

“William H. Jones . . . with force and arms . . . feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought, an assault did make, and . . . feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, cruelly, barbarously and inhumanly beat and whipped, of which . . . the said Isabel . . . died. And so . . . did kill and murder, contrary to the statute, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Alabama.”

Jones was tried and convicted by a jury of his peers after which he was sentenced to ten years in the state prison. Jones appealed the conviction on several technicalities including one that claimed the statute against murdering a slave applied only to overseers and not owners. The Alabama Supreme Court found Jones appeals lacking and upheld the lower courts conviction.

Almost needless to say, few slave owners who killed their slaves were indicted, found guilty, and sentenced to time in prison. Alabama Supreme Court records show that on only five occasions it reviewed cases against masters or overseers for harming their slaves, only two of the convictions were upheld. In one case an owner was sentenced to ten years for shooting a female slave in the leg when she spurned his drunken advances. The other case was this one against Jones.

The prosecutor in this case was William M. Brooks. Brooks was the leader of Alabama’s secessionist movement and one of the principal founders of the Confederacy. During the Civil War, Brooks commanded the 3rd Infantry Regiment of Alabama; afterwards, he returned to practicing law in Selma and Birmingham.

Exceptionally scarce. At the time of listing, no other similar material is for sale in the trade. Once similar indictment is held at Louisiana State University. No similar items have been sold at auction, however the Rare Book Hub reports that in 2003, a Union soldier’s letter noted that while out foraging, he had found four slaves murdered by their owner at one plantation.

SOLD Item # 9595
This three-page report on the resolution of a debt and mortgage related to “several negroes” is datelined “Marion May 14th 1847 / The Mobile Bank vs John Howie, J.J. Watts & Allen Houston.” The report was sent as a stampless letter from Marion to Mobile. It bears a manuscript “5” rate mark and a circular, black Marion postmark dated May 15. In nice shape with some docketing and light wear.

It appears that in December 1844, Howie and Watts were served with a judgement of $1169.78, for a loan from The Mobile Branch Bank, and by the following year, it had been increased to $1548.91. Apparently, Howie was owed money by the estate of another man named Earley. The executor of the Earley estate obtained a loan with

“a mortgage of several negroes intended as a security for Earley’s liability for Howie. The deed was denied by Mr. Watts as intended to secure Earley – He had bought the negroes, & again sold them.

And . . . at least one lawsuit ensued. Attempts at reconciliation were suggested including that

“the Bank could obtain a deed of trust upon the negroes . . . and all litigation stopped.”

The second half of the report that discusses the resolution of the debt is even more confusing to my non-legal brain then the first, but I think the take-away is that the nonchalance in discussing the fate of “several negroes,” who are not even named, underscores the nature of chattel slavery without even trying. People were bought, sold, and traded just like cattle, land, furniture, precious metals, or any other property without any consideration of their humanity.

SOLD Item # 9600
6. [AFRICAN-AMERICAN] [LAW] [PHILATELY] [PLANK ROADS] [SLAVE TRADER] [SLAVERY] [TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL] A manuscript letter of petition from chairman of the Lincoln County Western Plank Road requesting the road’s attorney pursue a change in its charter to allow the arrest of slave-trading trespasser on the Sabbath.  C. C. Henderson to Mr. J. Lincolnton, North Carolina: 1854

This stampless folded letter, addressed to Joseph H. Wilson in Charlotte, measures approximately 16” x 8” unfolded. It is datelined “Lincolnton N.C. December 4th 1854” and bears a circular Lincolnton postmark, dated December 5 in black and a “PAID” handstamp in red. In nice shape.

This petition from Henderson, which also discusses funding bonds, specifically requests Wilson to determine

“If you can have inserted in the amendment of our Plank Road Charter a clause to allow us to arrest a man on the Sabbath day for trespassing on our Road, I think we had better have it down, as a man may trespass on our road on Sunday and before Monday morning he may be out of the State; for instance a Negroe Trader came along on yesterday (Sunday) and laid himself liable to the Penalty of $5.00, but as it was Sunday I could do nothing with him in a civil action as I understand ours to be for the Penalty. Please examine into the matter and make provisions for such reason and also insert a clause to swear our Tollgatherers and make it Perjury where they do not make a faithful return of all Tolls collected.”

It is easy to wonder if the trespasser’s occupation as a “Negroe Trader” played a role in Henderson’s request. Although some revisionist historians differ, it was long believed that although very wealthy, civic-minded slave traders were held in high regard, less wealthy travelling slave traders were often treated as outcasts in the South.

Plank roads were used in many places; however, they were especially popular and important in North Carolina where most other roads were unreliable, especially in bad weather. To make roads suitable for wagon use year-round, plank roads were surfaced with thick lumber at a significant expense. To pay for the effort and to provide investors with a moderate profit, tolls were charged.

Henderson, the owner of a large tannery that manufactured shoes and harnesses, was one of the most prosperous merchants in western North Carolina. He was a significant investor in regional railroads, and in 1850 led a group of men in planning the construction of the Western Plank Road from Rozelle’s Ferry on the Catawba to Newton, which was incorporated the following year. (The segment from Lincolnton to Newton was never completed. The road was 12 to 22 feet wide and toll booths were scattered along the route. Tolls ranged from 5 cents for pedestrians to 25 cents for a two-horse wagon. As of 2020, there is still an Old Plank Road in Lincoln County, much of it and North Carolina Route 73 are the same.)

For more information about this and other North Carolina plank roads see DePriest’s “Old Plank Road, a piece of our history” in the Charlotte Observer, May 13, 2007 and Sherrill’s History of Lincoln County, North Carolina.

A nice first-hand testament to mid-19th-Century road construction and the traveling slave trade.

$750  Inv # 9511

This two-page appraisal measures 7.75” x 12.75”. It bears three horizontal file folds. In nice shape.

When evaluated by a panel of four appraisers, the 13 slaves identified in this document were valued between $0 and $1,650 each. Their names were: Bass, Matilda, Woodson, Mary, Elijah, Jess, Bass, Sarah Francis, Old Elijah, Old Jess, Old Rachel, Lucy, and Betsy. The four “valueless” slaves were Old Jess, Old Rachel, Lucy, and Betsy.

Henrietta’s Clarke’s will was first presented for execution in probate court on July 23, 1859 and all of her “real, personal and mixed” property was scheduled to be evenly divided between her four children. It appears that later, perhaps after the division of property was under way, the estate received unpaid bills due to creditors. To meet these debts, the family requested permission from the court “to sell some of the negroes belonging to said estate.” This appraisal, dated nearly six months after the will was filed, is likely related to the “necessary” slave sale referenced in court documents.

Outside of Henrietta’s will and associated documents, available through Alabama, Wills and Probate Records, 1753-1999 online at Ancestry.com, Clarke family documents are scarce at best. However, a 1860 Slave Schedule available at the Census Office shows 42 slaves were owned by Robert Clarke of Woodville (now Uniontown), Perry County, Alabama.

“Valueless” slaves are not often found on slave sales or appraisal documents. It is probable that the family members selected the 13 slaves to be sold by name, expecting each to have at least some value. However, the appraisal panel, which was likely appointed by the court, saw things differently.

When slaves became too old or ill to work on a plantation, they were not freed or turned-out to fend for themselves. They continued to receive the same type of shelter, food, and clothing they did when they were productive. Often, they were used to watch slave children while their parents worked in the fields, assist the household slave staff performing light work, or even in some cases caring for ill or injured slaves if the plantation had a sick house. (See “When slaves became too old to work or disabled. . ..” online at Quora.com and Follett’s The Sugar Masters. . ..)

An unusual and uncommon appraisal of named slaves done for a female slave-holder’s estate that includes a number of “valueless” slaves.
Advertising Envelope for a pair of Richmond slave traders along with a proof copy of a $20 banknote from a slave traders bank they helped found. William H. Betts and E. J. Gregory. Richmond, Virginia: 1860-1861.

This unused U. S. postal stationery envelope displays an embossed oval advertisement on the rear flap that reads, “Betts & Gregory / Auctioneers / For the Sale of Negroes / Franklin St. / Richmond, Va.” The buff-colored envelope with the double-line POD/US watermark (Scott Wmk 1) envelope, probably Scott #27 is missing its front panel with the stamped 3-cent indicia. It has minor stains and light soiling. There is light docketing that with photoshop manipulation appears to read, “Clay / Receiving / Billable Vouchers”.

Richmond slave traders, William H. Betts and E. J. Gregory became partners in May of 1860, forming an auction company, “Betts & Gregory” which was located on Franklin Street in the heart of Shockoe Bottom, Richmond’s bustling 30-block slave-trading district. It is unclear when the firm ceased operation, although public records show that it began having financial problems after the election of President Lincoln in November, when Richmond slave prices dropped by as much a 50%. That said, the traders apparently recovered, at least for a while, as it was still advertising in Southern newspapers as late as September of 1861.

The $20 banknote proof was intended to be issued by the [Slave] Traders Bank of the City of Richmond, Virginia. It features a portrait of Henry Clay and vignettes of slave picking cotton and a well-to-do lady at her spinning wheel with what appears to be a factory, perhaps a cotton mill, from the city’s Manchester Industrial District in the background.

The Traders Bank was founded in February of 1860 by Hector Davis and thirteen other slave traders, including William H. Betts. An earlier issue of the same design was printed in black ink. This issue was printed, but never issued, probably just before the bank closed, perhaps at the time Richmond was captured by the Union Army. It is listed in Haxby’s Standard Catalog of U. S. Obsolete Bank Notes as VA-195-G6. (Reprint sets of five Traders Bank bills in this same green color were also printed on cardstock.)

Traders Bank Notes are often obtainable, and a few libraries hold Betts & Gregory slave sale documents. However, advertising envelopes from any slave trading firm are rare. At the time of listing, OCLC shows none in institutional collections. A similar postally-used entire envelope from another Richmond slave trader sold at a 2019 Harmer-Schau Auction for $6,900. Although missing its front panel, this desirable and presentable slave trader advertising envelope is priced accordingly.

SOLD  Inv # 9559
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #


Four of twelve vignettes from Henry Louis Stephens’ album card set *Journey of a Slave from the Plantation to the Battlefield*. Each measures approximately 2.5” x 3.75”. All have been neatly trimmed-to-shape, and all have scrapbook paper remnants on their reverse.

The four vignettes in this lot are #3 “The Sale.”, #4 “The Parting ‘Buy us too.’”, #5 “The Lash.”, and #6 “Blow for Blow.”

The entire set of cards begins with images of a slave working “In the Cotton Field” and dancing joyously during “The Christmas Week” celebration. The four images in this lot follow. Then the set continues with three cards showing the slave, now escaped, hiding “In the Swamp’ before crossing a river to become “Free” and then falling on his knees before a Union soldier who tells him to “Stand Up a Man!” The next two images the former slave as a soldier attacking a Confederate redoubt shouting “Make Way for Liberty!” and “Victory” as he is mortally wounded grasping a U.S. Flag. The final card titled, “He Died for Me” shows Lady Liberty holding a laurel wreath over his dead body.

H. L. Stephens was a noted book and magazine illustrator from Philadelphia, most remembered for his 1851 set of caricatures, *The Comic Natural History of the Human Race*, which featured the heads of famous Americans attached to the bodies of mammals, fish, birds, and insects. In addition to providing illustrations for some editions of Dickens, Stowe, and Twain, Stephens also illustrated children’s books for Hurd & Houghton including the *Death and Burial of Poor Cock Robin, The Five Little Pigs, Old Mother Hubbard, and The Frog He Would a Wooing Go*. During the Civil War, Stephens illustrated Union Army recruiting posters for Philadelphia. (See Timothy G. Young’s *Drawn to Enchant: Original Children’s Book Art* in the Betsy Beinecke Shirley Collection.)

Cards from this set are extremely scarce. At the time of listing, no other cards or trimmed ‘scraps’ from it are for sale in the trade. The Rare Book Hub shows none having ever been sold at auction. OCLC shows only one institutional example, a full-set held by the Library of Congress, however, sets are also held by Harvard and the Library Company of Philadelphia.

**SOLD**

Item # 9597
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #


This three-page letter dated “March 22d / Camp Banks Baton Rouge”, is on stationery featuring a mule-cart loaded with cotton and driven by a slave walking alongside as two other slaves ride on top. Titled “Away Down South in Dixie”, the last line from the South’s rousing anthem. No envelope. Transcript included.

The letter describes how a detached Union Brigade foraged for food while on a forced march without supply train.

“I . . . just begin to know what a soldier has to endure on a march. I had pretty good luck on the march up. I had fallen behind the regt and was marching with the last Co when the Major stopped his horse and took my knapsack . . . and a corporal took my gun which rested me a great deal after this Dr Lynde put me on a baggage wagon and I got along without throwing away my blanket coat or anything else as many did. When we halted . . . at the plantation . . . the order was to use the rails for firewood and then the boys took after the sheep pigs and so much meat you seldom see on short notice one would come in with a yoke of oxen another with a sheep across his shoulder on co killed a very large hog and confiscated a cart to fetch in on. The cavalry drove in about 25 or 30 head of cattle 10 of which were killed for supper and &c. I made me a cup of beef soup or broth it was good . . ..

After we had all got what we wanted we turned out at rollcall and loaded our guns put our ammunition where we could get it at a moment’s notice and went to sleep. I waked up several times and the cannonade at the Fort could be heard distinctly. In the morning we were turned out in good season and ordered to march back across the pontoon at which place we camped on a “bayou” and dipped into the sugar and molasses all were pleased.”

The letter was, in fact, written way down south by a soldier assigned to the 116th New York Infantry (identified using the online American Civil War Database). While General Ulysses Grant was besieging Vicksburg upriver, General Nathaniel Banks was ordered to capture the Confederate stronghold of Port Hudson and subsequently move north to support Grant. After his first attack failed, Banks—more of a political than military general—turned his attention to administrative matters in New Orleans and initiated a siege to reduce Port Hudson much to the chagrin of Union leaders, especially Admiral Farragut who was vociferously eager to lead his naval task force up-river to join the fray at Vicksburg.

Sensing he needed to take some type of positive action, Banks dispatched Colonel Theodor W. Parmele and the 116th and 147th New York Infantry Regiments along with elements from the 2nd Rhode Island Cavalry to make contact with the navy at W.D. Winter’s plantation, several miles below Port Hudson on the west bank of the Mississippi. Their mission was, however, too little too late as a frustrated Admiral Farragut had already fought his way past Port Hudson while General Banks dithered in New Orleans.

Norris was wounded two months later at Port Hudson before the siege ended.

SOLD Item # 9591
11. [ALCOHOLISM] [BASEBALL] [CARTOONS] [GAMES & SPORTS] [HOLIDAYS] [HUMOR] [VALENTINES] 

This valentine measures 7.5” x 9.5”. Complete, but with foxing, creases, and a short marginal tear. (The faults are hard to see in the image, but trust me, they are there).

It is titled “Old Rye Club” and features a colorful, illustration of a drunk baseball player using a whiskey bottle for a bat. Beneath the illustration, a verse that reads:

“B. B. Innings.
The leering of your fishy eye
Most clearly indicates Old Rye,
With which upon the baseball ground
Such sots as you are often found:
Ay, there you stand upon the field
And for a club a bottle wields.”

Far from their romantic counterparts, mockingly cruel, sarcastic valentines were especially popular in the last half of the 19th century and sent with every intention to be hurtful. These valentines, which were sold for sale at stationers and convenience stores for a penny (or less) a piece were especially popular among the working class and available in a myriad of combinations to abuse spinsters, drunks, blowhards, neighbors, business associates, store clerks, unwanted suitors, etc. with insults of homeliness, poor hygiene, surliness, stupidity, alcoholism, greed, and a host of other undesirable traits and conditions. The ugliness of their intent almost insured that of the thousands sent, most would be thrown out with the trash rather than saved as a St. Valentine’s Day memento.

The comic valentines created by John McLoughlin and one of his company’s cartoonists, Charles Howard, were especially popular and (as noted by the American Antiquarian Society) made with an intentionally crude appearance in contrast with the firm’s “elegant, richly-colored children’s books, almanacs, games, and blocks” that intentionally “magnifies the meaness of the message.

Although the relatively young sport of baseball was incredibly popular in the last half of the 19th century, baseball players were, to put it mildly, looked down upon by the middle and upper classes. Even William Hulbert, one of the founders of the National League, referred to players as simpletons, sinful, superhuman brats, and worthless scalawags. “Character deficiencies,” especially violence and drunkenness, “were the scourge of the 19th century ballplaying fraternity.” This valentine may specifically allude to Mike Burke, a Cincinnati shortstop who, in 1878 [sic 1879], once came to the ballpark so roaring drunk he assaulted his captain [actually both the team’s secretary, Con Howe, and its player-manager, Cal McVay].” (See Melhville’s Early Baseball and the Rise of the National League and the Heffrons’ The Local Boys: Hometown Players for the Cincinnati Reds.)

Baseball-related vinegar valentines are rare, and this one addressing the game’s number one 19th century concern, is especially telling of the contempt in which baseball players were held. At the time of listing, there are no baseball-related vinegar valentines for sale in the trade or held by any institution per OCLC. Neither has any other example been sold at auction per Rare Book Hub and Worthpoint.

SOLD Inv #9568
12. [AMERICAN INDIANS] [CRIME & PUNISHMENT] [LAW] [MARITIME] [MILITARY & WAR] [PHILATELY] [SEMINOLE] An important archive relating to the short, tragic life of a Seminole Wars naval hero, who though brave, tactically and strategically astute, and technologically innovative, was also self-centered, ethically-challenged, and greedily ostentatious. John T. McLaughlin. Various locations: 1842-1847.

This archive consists of 36 letters (all but two to McLaughlin) and two documents. All have original postal markings. Some have splits beginning along mailing folds; one is in two parts. Annotated contents list included.

In 1839, Lt. J. T. McLaughlin took charge of a new three-ship Florida Expedition to protect settlers during the Seminole Wars. Recognizing this as an atypical naval mission, he developed the navy’s first riverine tactics using canoes to take the fight into the heart of the Everglades, forcing the Seminole into small, hidden defensive groups and preventing their launching of coordinated attacks. Further, realizing the Everglades were less impenetrable than imagined, he conducted the first transit across southern Florida by white men. However, McLaughlin was also a self-promoter. Although only a lieutenant, he fashioned himself an acting-Captain and flew an unauthorized commander’s pennant. Worse, McLaughlin lived ostentatiously, drinking fine wines from crystal and filling his stateroom with luxury furnishings. In time, newspaper articles appeared alleging his misuse of funds, collusion with local merchants, embezzlement of food, mistreatment of marines, etc. When they reached Congress, the House issued a scathing rebuke claiming McLaughlin had engaged in criminal behavior, and McLaughlin assembled allies to refute the charges, which forced Congress to request a full investigation by the Navy. The Navy found that although McLaughlin’s expenditures were excessive and extravagant, he was not guilty of any serious criminality. He was exonerated of all but two minor charges. About half of the items in this archive relate to these allegations including invoices for fine wines and furnishings, expressions of support from subordinates, a tit-for-tat offer of testimony in exchange for a service-related favor, and the identification of two men who had likely been the secret instigators of press allegations.

Most of the other letters relate to McLaughlin’s innovative, but unethical, construction of a state-of-the-art ship. McLaughlin, another naval officer, and McLaughlin’s civilian brother, Matt, used naval influence and the officers’ duty time to plan and build the vessel. Ultimately, they were successful, and Matt McLaughlin became owner of the cutter Hunter, which he leased to the Navy during the Mexican War where it was commanded by Lieutenant J. T. McLaughlin. Unfortunately, the ship was destroyed during a nor’easter while towing a captured blockade runner, after which McLaughlin soon died, probably from related injuries and illness. These letters discuss the feasibility of an “iron” ship, untested high speed boilers, John Ericsson’s cutting-edge double-screw propellers (to include the disaster on the USS Princeton for which McLaughlin was present), and McLaughlin’s attempt to secure payment for the loss of the Hunter and its prize. The final item is a bank letter to McLaughlin’s widow repossessing her home because McLaughlin had defaulted on a large loan probably used to fund construction of the Hunter.

A unique and important collection that sheds considerable light on a naval hero of the Seminole Wars and his controversies. Nothing similar in the trade, in auction records, nor held by institutions.
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #

13. [AMERICAN INDIANS] [EDUCATION] [KALAPUYA] [MILITARY & WAR] Colorful half-tone picture postcard featuring the Chemawa Indian Training School. San Francisco: Published by Edward H. Mitchel, circa 1907-1915.

This colorful postcard features a photo-reproduction view of the young uniformed male students from Chemawa Indian Training School standing under its entrance gate with the institution’s main building in the background. Unused. In nice shape with two minor scuffs on the reverse from where it was apparently mounted in an album. The postcard has a divided back and no white border, both indicators that it was printed between 1907 and 1915.

The Chemawa boarding school opened in Oregon in 1880 under the command of General O. O. Howard, the former commissioner of the Freedman’s Bureau and the founder of Howard University in Washington, D.C. Howard had his secretary, Lieutenant Melville Wilkensen, and eight Puyallup Indian youths begin construction on land leased from Pacific University. Howard was then in command of the U.S. Army’s Department of the Columbia and responsible for regional Indian affairs. In its early years and lasting through the early part of the 20th century, Chemawa followed the pattern for Indian schools that was first established at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. Native American parents were pressured, and in some cases forced, to all the Bureau of Indian Affairs to enroll their children at boarding schools often hundreds of miles away from home. There, they were forced to abandon their tribal languages, dress, and traditions while being totally immersed in white, Christian culture. Infractions or resistance was met with punishment. By the 1940s, at Chemawa the draconian restrictions had been relaxed and students were free, although not encouraged, to speak their native language, braid their hair, wear jewelry with tribal motifs, and perform traditional drumming, singing, and dancing. The Bureau of Indian Affairs still operates the institution today as a four-year high school, where Indian culture is an important part of both the curriculum and extra-curriculum.

While the school initially served only members of the Kalpuya People, by the time of this postcard, students from any tribe could attend, and many did including its most famous alumnus, Spade Cooley, a three-quarters-white Cherokee from Oklahoma, who became the King of Western Swing (sorry, Bob Wills fans) and in one of the biggest scandals of the 1960s, murdered his wife in an alcohol-fueled rage after she taunted him by claiming to have had an affair with Roy Rogers in the early 1950s. Cooley was born in 1910, so it is possible he is one of the younger boys pictured on this card.

SOLD Item # 9605
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #

14. [AMERICAN REVOLUTION] [BEN FRANKLIN] [COFFEE] [ESPIONAGE] [MILITARY & WAR] [PHILATELY] [SMUGGLING] Letter sent by a Maryland patriot to the future Deputy Quartermaster of the Continental Army—via the renegade “Constitutional Post” to avoid detection by Parliamentary Post agents—requesting that he smuggle two casks of gunpowder to the Eastern Shore under the noses of the officers of the Crown. Sent by Jonathan Worth of Georgetown, Maryland to John Mitchell of Philadelphia: November 6, 1775.

This two-page stampless folded letter measures 13” x 8” unfolded. It is datelined “Kent County, November 6th 1775”. It is annotated “p Post” and bears a “G Town” postmark as well as two faint manuscript marks: a Philadelphia “1/s” (one shilling) in the upper left and “2” (two dwt or pennyweight) above the address. (Lot 145 of Matthew Bennet Auction 290 notes that these are the correct Constitutional Post markings for mail to Philadelphia from Georgetown, an Eastern Shore town within 100 miles of the city). Transcript will be provided.

Worth’s letter reads in part:

“We are in a miserable defensless State in this part of the Country in regard to not having Gun Powder. We have not only the force of Brittain to Dread but have the most allarming accounts – from some of the lower Counties - of Several Companies there, raising for the King – doe not know how soon, we may have Occasion to march out – in order to stop so dangerous an Insurrection. I should be Extremely glad if you can procure me one or two casks of Good Powder, to be as a Safeguard, in Case of nesessaty; for a part of the militia, to which I belong – if it is not to be had otherway, - Should esteem it a favour, if you will please to try to get it from your Committee – doe suppose they would spare, so small a Quantity on Such an Occasion – if it can be had, please to put the 2 casks in a Large Cask and put the Coffee in on the top of it – in order that it may Come Safe to hand as Some of the officers of the Crown might perhaps meet with it on the way.”

The Constitutional Post was a revolutionary postal service established by Rhode Island patriot William Goddard as an alternative to the British Parliamentary Post that had long-serviced the American Colonies. Not only did many patriots see the fees charged by the Parliamentary Post as another British tax, mail sent through that system was not private. British officials could intercept, open, and read the contents of any letter. Goddard began his post in 1774, and in July 1775 it was officially sanctioned by the Second Continental Congress which appointed—to Goddard’s chagrin—Benjamin Franklin to be its postmaster. Franklin served as the postmaster until November 7th, the day after this letter was mailed, so it is possible—perhaps likely—that the “1/s” rate mark is in his hand. This letter was transported overland, as by this time, the Parliamentary Post—because of non-use—had dismissed its postriders. (See Siegel Auction #1154, Walske Blockade Run Mail, Lot #2306”.)
Jonathan Worth bought his family’s 200-acre Princeton, New Jersey farm from his father in 1771 and soon after moved to Maryland and established a second estate at Georgetown on the Eastern Shore. (The Battle of Princeton was later fought on the Worth family farm in New Jersey.)

John Mitchell, a native of Ireland, had been a West Indies merchant before emigrating to Pennsylvania in about 1750 where he eventually established a trading firm on Philadelphia’s Front Street between Market and Chestnut in partnership with his brother, Randal, and another merchant, Thomas Braswell. Mitchell signed the Non-Importation Agreements of 1765 and 1769, which eventually led to Boston’s Sons of Liberty famous Tea Party protest. In 1774, he joined the Light Horse of the City of Philadelphia (one of the first revolutionary military militias and still an active National Guard unit today) and became a member of Philadelphia’s First Committee of Observations, the city’s revolutionary shadow government. (This is the committee referenced by Worth in his letter.) During the Revolution, Mitchell commanded several ships in the Pennsylvania Navy and received a Colonel’s commission when he was appointed Deputy Quartermaster General of the Continental Army. Following the war, Mitchell served as the U.S. Consul at Santiago de Cuba and eventually settled in South Carolina where he served as a Notary Public, Justice of the Peace, and Quorum Unis Magistrate for criminal cases until his death in 1826.


An exceptionally rare Revolutionary War letter sent by a worried Maryland patriot to an important Philadelphia revolutionary leader and future Deputy Quartermaster General of the Continental Army, via the renegade Constitutional Post, asking Philadelphia’s safety committee to smuggle a shipment of gunpowder to an Eastern Shore militia. At the time of listing, nothing similar is currently for sale in the trade. Rare Book Hub shows only two auction results for letters with somewhat similar contents, and only a few Constitutional Post covers—without such fascinating content—have sold at auction over the past ten years. OCLC shows two somewhat similar institutional holdings. In addition, John Mitchell’s business papers are at the Pennsylvania State Archives, and the Library of Congress holds one request form sent to him regarding the provision of food and rum for an armed vessel.

SOLD Inv # 9578
15. [AVIATION] [CIVIL SERVICE] [MILITARY & WAR] [WOMEN] World War I diary by a young, wide-eyed independent woman who left her home in Iowa for a Civil Service job in Washington, DC. Cora Lorenz. Washington, DC: 1917-1918.

This diary measures 3¾” x 6” is completely filled with entries (some with small drawings) made between 30 Aug 1917 and 12 May 1918, except for five pages in the rear, three of which document a problem she had with a supervisor and two listing Christmas gifts. The pages are soundly bound together. Half of the spine cover is missing, and the cover is barely attached. The rear cover is creased, and the rear fixed endpaper torn. Otherwise, in nice shape.

Her writing is concise, informative, and entertaining. Although suffering through bouts of loneliness, job anxiety, and severe cramping, it’s clear that Cora is proud of her work and immensely enjoying life in Washington. After arriving in DC, she first boarded with an Italian matron, whom she could barely understand. Although her meals were sufficient, they made the house “smell,” and she fought a never-ending battle with bed bugs that invaded her room. Eventually, Cora found another boarding house (“homelike, I feel more like living”) with American food to her liking, “My we had a good meal tonight mashed potatoes, steak, corn fritters, and chocolate pudding.”

It appears she worked as an acquisitions clerk in the Navy Yard mostly organizing and filing specification sheets and blueprints related to military contracts. She especially liked working with aviation files and developed an appreciation for airplanes and pilots as her diary contains a number of entries mentioning to airplanes and describing air shows.

While in town, Cora took advantage of lectures and shows and visited most of the tourist highlights and described her visits to all of them including the Washington Monument (her heart went “pittapat” when she saw the Iowa presentation stone), the Smithsonian, Corcoran Art Gallery, Ford’s Theater, house where Lincoln died, Rock Creek Park, Great Falls, the Botanical Garden and many more. She was fascinated by the Capitol and thrilled to see the Supreme Court in action. She took some time getting used to the big city (hating the pollution and occasionally getting lost) and found the “strange faces” (Italians, Spanish, Chinese, etc.) fascinating and the large numbers of “coons” and “darkies” surprising.

Some of her entries include:

Sep 12, 1917 – “[Attended] a ‘Spanish’ evening where there 8 gentlemen and 9 ladies . . . all so courteous and gallant. I have never perceived an evening like it.”

Sep 26, 1917 – “Saw an aeroplane right close . . . Italian Caponine.”
Oct 13, 1917 – “I went to hear Susa’s band made up of 250 boys of the Navy-they came from Great Lakes training station and the music was beautiful. . . . The whole block and street . . . was a mass of people 10 or 15,000. . . . The market house was filled with darkies.”

Oct 23, 1917 – “You can only get two lbs of sugar now . . . Federal Officers . . . discovered 150 carloads in a Buffalo warehouse.”

Nov 9, 1917 – “Tonight we listened to Dr. Vorosabun a Russian who was in the Navy on the Baltic sea on a large vessel which he said was a good target for submarines he says the nations are all alike in deeds of cruelty. . . .”

Dec 9, 1917 – “I went to a mass meeting of the Suffragist. Dudley Field Malone was the speaker about 100 of the pickets who had been in prison were on the stage.”

Dec 22, 1917 – “Going to N.Y. . . . Having a new experience. The station is black with negroes. . . .”

Dec 24, 1917 – “went to Chinatown passed Mulberry street where the Italians sleep on the street in warm weather. Passed down the Bowery . . . a very poor street but some of the wealthiest Jews have their shops down there and the best diamonds in the world. . . .”

Jan. 2, 1918 – “Went to ‘Intolerance’ Didn’t like it as well as ‘Birth of a Nation’.”

Jan 21, 1918 – “Night of the Navy Yard Rally at last. . . . A pledge of loyalty was signed 9000 . . . to present to President Wilson. . . . Billy Sunday offered prayer – I laughed with others. The crowd applauded time and time again so that he had to reappear before the program could go on. . . .”

Jan 26, 1918 – “were not allowed to pass out . . . until we were vaccinated how I hated to have it done. We were taken to the men’s toilet. The man vaccinated me without sterilizing the place and when I told him he had it washed over”

Feb 4, 1918 – “My the coons in this town get me. I stand on platform car with coons to the left, right, front, back, on top & on my toes!”

Feb 28, 1918 – “I then went to the Capitol was in the house about 20 minutes. They didn’t impress me as a learned bunch at all. . . .”

Mar. 24, 1918 – “I went to the flying field. My it was the time of my life. Saw an airplane at close range. . . . Lt. Flachaire (a French ace) did the ‘falling leaf’ ‘banking’ spiral dive loop the loop. . . . Two hydroplanes circled with him. . . . I picked out the parts as I had learned much of them in Spec. Sec. ‘landing gears’ propellers, struts, wings, rudder, fuselage, cockpit. . . .”

Apr 26, 1918 – “This has been one great day-I’ve see a mammoth parade on Pennsylvania Ave then to the Ellipse where Ruth Law (a record-setting early female aviator) was landing. We saw her flying for 15 mins Her seat is out on two beams with out protection the fuselage gives other aviators. We went over [and] saw her ‘bank’ and ‘loop’ and nosedive. . . . She autographed the bonds she sold.”

A terrific first-hand record of Washington DC during the First World War seen through the wide-eyes of a young midwestern woman who had set out on her own to participate in the war effort.

SOLD
Inv # 9519
16. [BAKUMATSU] [MARITIME] [PERRY EXPEDITION] [PHILATELY] [RIVERBOATS & STEAMSHIPS] Letter send from a young petty officer assuring his brother that he was going not going to renege on his commitment to work for the Purser of Commodore Perry’s flagship, the USS Mississippi, on its voyage to Japan to force the Shogunate to open the country to foreign trade and allow the resupply of American whaling vessels.  B. Roberts to J. Edwin Roberts.  New York Navy Yard to Church Hill, Maryland: 1852.

This stampless letter is dated “Navy Yard . New York / May 10. 1852”, franked with a strip of three 1-cent Franklin stamps (Scott #7, Type II - no balls on the bottom scrolls), and cancelled with New York postmarks dated May 11.

In this response to a query from his brother that undoubtedly questioned the wisdom of going on a potentially dangerous voyage, Roberts answered:

“I am well satisfied with your good intentions but I have made up my mind to make this cruise any how. . .I have been doing business for two months for Purser William Speiden, and I find him to be a gentleman and a man who knows his business, and a man who understands his business is a man that pleases me. The Mississippi will go into Commission tomorrow, but it is not known yet when she will proceed on her cruise. . . When this cruise shall end, if I live, I will endeavor to remain on shore.”

There was a reason for Robert’s melodramatic “if I live” statement. During the Bakumatsu (the final days of the Edo period when the Tokugawa shogunate was dying), it was dangerous for foreign vessels to enter Japanese harbors. Foreign ships were routinely refused entrance and in some instances—as in the case of the an unarmed American merchant vessel—attacked for coming close, and Perry’s expedition was specifically charged by Secretary of State Daniel Webster to use force if necessary to open Japanese harbors to commercial trade, even if only for the resupply of coal for American ships cruising in the Pacific.

The day this letter was mailed, the Mississippi was sent to Boston to tow the disabled USS Princeton to Baltimore for repair. Then before she could embark on her voyage to Japan, Commodore Perry was first ordered to investigate reports of British harassment of American fishing vessels in the North Atlantic. Upon her return, the Mississippi anchored off the Annapolis, Maryland until, with Perry on board—she led the eight-ship task force around the Cape of Good Hope and onto Japan.

William Speiden was considered to be one of the best pursers in the Navy, and for this voyage, he managed to get his son, William Speiden Jr., assigned to the ship as his primary assistant. This nepotic appointment was historically fortunate, as William Jr. maintained one of the most complete, detailed, and well-illustrated logs of any maritime voyage. His original two-volume journal is maintained at the Library of Congress, and abridged versions are still in print today.

An important letter expressing the concerned confidence of a young seaman about to embark as a crewmember on one of the world’s most famous voyages. Made all the more interesting by the use of strip of three scarce stamps for postage.

SOLD  Inv # 9579

This cover is franked with a target-cancelled 3-cent stamp (Scott #65) and addressed – perhaps in Barnum’s hand – to Worcester, Massachusetts.

The text reads, “P. T. Barnum’s Broadway / American Museum and Menagerie / & Dan Castello’s Mammoth Circus / W. C. Coup, General Manager. / Dan. Castello, Circus Manager” and is embellished with a crocodile, snake, guitar-playing bear, seal, and other oddities.”

In the morning of 3 March 1868, a fire at 53-year-old P. T. Barnum’s New York Museum forced him into retirement after thirty-three years in the entertainment business. About two years later, he was contacted by two circus-men, William C. Coup and Dan Castello, who were interested in capitalizing upon his name to promote their profitable new circus.

Coup, a one-time ticket-taker for Barnum’s travelling menagerie, and Castello, who had recently sold his share as the co-owner of a travelling circus, had purchased 8 of the remaining Bactrian camels from the U. S. Army’s abandoned Camel Corps experiment and used them to form the basis of their new show, “Dan Castello’s Great Circus & Egyptian Caravan” which also contained 42 horses and fourteen wagons. Barnum initially refused the team’s offer, insisting he was retired, but Coup was insistent, and eventually overcame Barnum’s reluctance with a promise to “come home with a fortune at the end of the season.”

Barnum was a hands-off investor, who allowed Coup and Castello to run the show, although he insisted that include his son-in-law as an assistant treasurer to protect his interests. The first public notice of Barnum’s involvement was in February of 1871, and with Barnum’s investment Coup and Castello acquired enough exotic animals to fill 30 cages and 100 wagons. Barnum also chipped in to provide sideshow acts from his old friends including a giant, bearded-lady, armless girl, and sleeping woman.

The show opened in Brooklyn in April of 1871 under two gigantic tents, and the New York Times reported, “Brooklyn can congratulate herself on having witnessed the earliest exhibition of Mr. Barnum’s Combination Museum, Menagerie, and Circus” and the show soon acquired the sobriquet “The Greatest Show on Earth.” Coup and Castello left the partnership in 1875 to establish a Centennial Circus for the celebration of 1876. Barnum continued running his circus alone until he took on a new partner in 1881, James Anthony Bailey whose business and promotional acumen took the renamed “Barnum and Bailey’s Greatest Show on Earth” to levels previously unimagined by Coup, Castello, and probably even Barnum.

One of only two reported. An addressed (in the same hand), but unfranked and uncancelled tattered envelope sold at a 2010 Leslie Hindman auction along with a separate Barnum note for $488. This exact cover sold for $900 at a Siegel Auction in 2013. Hindman states that these envelopes were printed by George Wood, a Barnum associate who operated “Wood’s Museum and Menagerie” in New York City.

SOLD Inv # 9564
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #

18. [CIRCUS & WILD WEST SHOWS] [PHILATELY] Advertising envelope for Burr Robbins’ Great Menagerie, Roman Hippodrome and Egyptian Caravan sent shortly after the circus arrived at its winter quarters with a letter from Robbins about improvements including a Dung House and sheep pen. Burr Robbins. From Janesville, Wisconsin to Paw Paw, Michigan: 1875

The letter is datelined “Janesville Wis Oct 30 1875” and written on the circus’s illustrated letterhead featuring a portrait of Burr Robbins. The advertising envelope features a large illustration of the circus on tour under three big top tents with wagons and crowds in the foreground. A banner above reads, “Burr Robbins’ Great Menagerie Roman Hippodrome and Egyptian Caravan” and text in the lower left corner reading “Acknowledged to be the Finest Show in America. It is franked with a three-cent Washington stamp (Scott #2070 canceled by a circular Janesville, Wisconsin postmark.

In this letter to a lawyer at his hometown in Paw Paw, Michigan, Robbins discusses his desires regarding rental payments and a barn, Dung House, manure heap, and sheep pen. It was written just two weeks after his circus returned to its winter quarters at Janesville, Wisconsin after financially successful, but difficult touring year.

For the 1875 season, Robbins’s parade was a half-mile in length. It was led by a ten-horse band wagon decorated with gilt lions and serpents as well colorful landscapes paneled on the sides. that at the time was the most magnificent of any American circus. Next came an amazing tableau car with lavish gilt engravings, mirrors and paintings with a huge living lion displayed on top; it was drawn by elephants, camels, and horses. Each of the following 25 wagons displayed richly colored paintings of biblical scenes mounted on both sides.

Unfortunately, during its 24 weeks on the road, the show was beset by 65 days of rain, two snowstorms, and two tornados. Much of the tentage was destroyed and 40 horses, a zebra, leopard, sacred ox, two bears, reindeer, elk, seven steenbok, two wolves, five monkeys, an ape, seven cockatoos and parrots, one silver pheasant, an antelope, three boa constrictors and two crocodiles were killed in the storms. The loss totaled over $12,000. So, upon arrival at Janesville, Robbins not only quickly went to improving old shops and buildings while building new ones, he also set teams to work repairing road equipment and replenishing his menagerie.

Rogers continued to operate his show until 1888 when he retired after 18 years in the business as one of the most successful circus impresarios of his era. For more information see “The Burr Robbins Circus” in Bandwagon, Nov-Dec 1969.

SOLD  Item # 9589
A pair of Buffalo Bill Cody illustrated advertising envelopes, one publicizing "Buffalo Bill's Own Book, Story of the Wild West and Camp Fire Chats, the other, his Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World. Col. William F. Cody. 1888 and 1895.

The cover promoting Cody’s book, Story of the Wild West and Camp Fire Chats, features a portrait of dapper Cody. It is franked with a three-cent green Washington stamp (Scott #213) postmarked with a Philadelphia duplex handstamp dated July 18, 1888.

The cover advertising Cody’s Wild West features portraits of both Cody and the show’s Vice-President, Nate Salsbury under bold, ornate text proclaiming “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World.” It is franked with a two-cent carmine Washington stamp (Scott #250) postmarked with a Boston flag cancellation dated June 12, 1895.

Both are in nice shape with some light edge toning; top backflap removed from the envelope advertising “Buffalo Bill’s Own Book.”

Cody’s book, his second autobiography, which was released immediately following his show’s triumphant first tour of Great Britain, touted itself as “A Full and Complete History of the Renowned Pioneer Quartette, Boone, Crockett, Carson, and Buffalo Bill Replete with Graphic Descriptions of Wildlife and Thrilling Adventures by Famous Heroes of the Frontier . . . including a description of Buffalo Bill’s Conquest of England with his Wild West Exhibition. . . .”

In 1893, Cody expanded and renamed his western show to become Buffalo Bill’s Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World. In addition to his successful western acts featuring the Army, cowboys, and American Indians, he added horse-riding bands of Turks, gauchos, Arabs, Mongols, and Georgians replete with their colorful traditional costumes. Together they engaged in races, feats of skills and sideshows. He also featured famous westerners including Sitting Bull, Calamity Jane, and sharpshooters Annie Oakley and Frank Butler. His cast staged mammoth re-enactments in each show including, Pony Express rides, wagon train attacks, stagecoach robberies, and Custer’s Last Stand. About this time, the economy soured and Cody need to raise cash to keep his Wild West afloat, he was tricked into selling it to the owners of the Sells Floto Circus, after which he became little more than a figurehead employee until it went bankrupt in 1913.

SOLD Inv # 9571
This album measures approximately 7.5” x 13”. It contains 166 pages of which 36 are filled with manuscript poetry, prose, and lyrics. Newspaper clippings are affixed to another four or five pages, and there are about 50 additional clippings laid-in along with six manuscript notes or letters. The pages show some wear. The rear cover is missing, and the front cover is loose but still attached. The owner’s name is barely distinguishable on the front cover. The contents are in nice shape.

Seven of the thirty-or-so manuscript entries are Confederate or “Lost Cause” poems or lyrics: Lee at the Battle of the Wilderness, Dead Jackson, Hurrah (for the Southern Confederate States), Wounded and Healed, March of the Deathless Dead, Southern Chant of Defiance, and Old Blandford Church where a number of plaques honoring Confederate forces who fought at Petersburg, Virginia (“The Crater”) were located. Two others champion Virginia: “Virginia” (a re-write of John Greenleaf Whittier’s “New England” stanza from Moll Pitcher) and Virginia’s Girls.

Seven of the clippings are related to the Confederacy: The Paean of the Coffinless Dead (with a heading from the Richmond Whig), Virginia’s Dead, The Confederate Dead at Hollywood (with a Richmond by-line), Miss Winnie Davis, In Memoriam. Dedicated to Confederate Money, Confederate Money, and He Wore the Gray: A Colored Man Who Honors the Brave Confederate Dead.

Two clippings are related to Virginia’s favorite literary genius, Edgar Allen Poe (one about his favorite poem and the other a defense of his reputation). Another is about the testing of a revolutionary new naval gun in Norfolk.

Also, of interest is a laid-in, signed letter to Alice which she purported to be from the popular British female author, Ouida. It is accompanied by a long clipping about Ouida.

The remainder of the handwritten entries and newspaper clippings are related to love, aging, death, romance, women, first aid, household & business tips, humor, etc.

On-line public records show that an Alice H. Rogers lived in Richmond on Mill Street between 1885 and 1891, perhaps much longer, and Botetourt Country records report a grave for Alice H. Rogers in Buchanan, Virginia.

Unusual. At the time of listing, nothing similar is for sale in the trade. Nothing similar has been sold at auction per Rare Book Hub. OCLC shows two similar albums are held by institutions.

SOLD  Inv # 9524

This three-page summary of the proceedings of a Confederate Army Court Martial is dated “28th July 1863.” The document is in nice shape. Transcript provided. Images in this listing not included.

The proceedings document the trial of Isham Stone, a Private in the 50th North Carolina Infantry, who had been “absent without certification” for nine months after being discharged from an army hospital at Petersburg, Virginia. Stone pleaded guilty, and was sentence to what today would be considered cruel and unusual punishment:

“And the Court do therefore sentence the said prvt Isham Stone Co “B” 50th Regt N.C.T. to be bucked and gaged four hours each day for twenty days, with a stick ¾ of an inch in diameter, two hours in the morning and two in the evening and be compelled to walk the Guard line around the camp before the sentinels at the point of a bayonet with a “Barrel Shirt” on, for five days, two hours in the morning and two in the evening of each day, and be closely confined during the execution of the sentence.”

Bucking and Gagging was a tortuous punishment. A soldier was forced to sit on the ground and bring his knees up to touch his chest. His arms would be wrapped around his legs and tied together with his ankles. Then a rough rod would be inserted under his knees and over his arms. The pain was excruciating. Finally, the soldier was gagged, usually with a stick or bar forced between his jaws like a horse’s bit and tied tightly behind his neck. This was done both to cause more pain and to partially muffle his screaming. Upon release, any movement of the legs was almost as painful as being bound, so to stagger around a camp’s perimeter in a “barrel shirt” at bayonet point must have been equally agonizing. This punishment was usually reserved for deserters who were not sentenced to execution, and it made a vivid impression of other members of the unit. (A less painful version was used for less serious offenses during the Mexican War; see p 394, Dolph’s Sound Off! Soldiers Songs.) Barrel shirts are exactly what they sound like. A prisoner would have a large heavy barrel with lowered over his head and onto his shoulders.

Manuscript records kept by Confederate court martial boards are decidedly uncommon, and ones imposing bucking and gagging and barrel shirts are rare. At the time of listing, other than this example none are for sale in the trade or have appeared at auction per the Rare Book Hub and Worthpoint. OCLC shows none held by institutions.

$1,000 Item # 9592

The archive contains over 40 items including:

- 12 pencil sketches, some on letterhead,
- 2 hand-colored pencil sketches,
- 6 pin-prick transfer patterns,
- 2 partially colored tri-fold screen mock-ups, and
- 19 b/w 8” x 10” photographs of completed screens and panels

Although it’s unclear when George Thompson began selling fine decorative leather screens and wall panels, he was already a master craftsman at the time he was featured in the May 1903 issue of The House Beautiful. Until the 1920s, his company created luxury leather wall panels, doors, tabletops, and screens based on both original designs and historic pieces in a variety of styles including Venetian, Flemish, Florentine, Spanish, Anglo-Japanese, Chinoiserie, Queen Anne, Chippendale, and William & Mary.

Contemporary advertisements in architectural and building catalogs and magazines touted that his creations had been installed in the Hotel Belmont, Hotel Regis, the Flower Memorial Library, the Harry Fisk residence, the Director’s Room of the State Bank at Albany, and the dining rooms and libraries of some of the finest New York residences (Fisk, Rice, Delafield, Clark).

The paper items in this archive were all actually used in designing and creating Thompson’s works and show wear and soiling commensurate with the that work. Ten of the photographs bear project numbers ranging from 4039 to 7001. About 2/3s are linen-backed, and a few have dimensions annotated on the reverse.

At the time of listing, there are two other lots of Thompson materials for sale in the trade, however both appear to consist primarily of watercolor designs and mock-ups used for sales and marketing, as opposed to these items which were used to create the works. Rare Book Hub shows that another lot of Thompson material was sold at a 2010 Swann Galleries auction. No Thompson materials are held by institutions per OCLC.

SOLD Item # 9602

This ciphering book measures 8” x 13”. It contains 86 pages of text written on thick laid paper. The leaves were once simply bound by a cord or string, which is no longer present. It has no cover. The first leaf is present but has become detached and edge-worn. The ink script is dark and legible; page headings are large and ornate. The last two pages of the book proudly record:

“Tuesday the 24th day of April 1788, I Samuel Rex hired myself to Mathew Irwin Esq. to serve him in his office for the Time of One Year at 60 Dollars p Annum in specie special. ... Received in the Recording Office in cash in presents since the 26th day of April 1788.” (The pages also include records of payments received from Irwin who was the Recorder of Deeds and Master of Records for Philadelphia City and County.)

Ciphering books were prepared as the basic mathematical training of relatively well-off American students, usually boys. Most contain examples of Addition, Subtraction, Compound Multiplication, etc. In addition to providing mathematical basics, boys venturing into business or specialized trades needed advanced or specialized training in mathematics.

In this case, Samuel’s book includes more complex subjects such as Compound Fellowship (accounting for principle and profit when trading partners contributed unequal funds over different periods of time), advanced Currency Exchange with various European countries, Conjoined Proportion (assigning value to different products purchased as a lot but in different quantities and at different individual prices), Allegation Medial and Alternate (calculating the value of a blended product with components of different qualities and prices), Arithmetical and Geometrical Progression, Permutation, Roots (Square, Cube, Biquadrate, and Sursolid), etc.

After serving in the Philadelphia deed and record office, Samuel struck out on his one and settled in Lancaster County at Heidelberg (later Schaefferstown) where he initially managed a store for Lewis Kreider until opening his own mercantile in 1790. He was later joined by relatives, and the Rex Family became prominent in the community. Samuel sold his store to his brother in 1807 but remained in town as a leader in community business, legal, and religious affairs. A large archive of Rex Family business records is held by the Winterthur Library. For more information about the Rexes of Schaefferstown, see Wenger’s Delivering the Goods: The Country Storekeeper and Inland Commerce in the Md-Atlantic.

18th-century American ciphering books are scarce as the overwhelming majority of extant examples date from the mid-1820s to the mid-1850s. Complex ciphering books, like this one, are less common as well. For more information about ciphering books, see Ashley K. Doer’s master’s thesis: Cipher Books in the Southern Historical Collection. University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, 2006.

We have other ciphering books in stock. Please enquire.

SOLD  Inv # 9576
25. [ENGINEERING] [RAILROADS] [RIVERS & RIVERBOATS] [SURVEYING] [TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL] [WESTWARD EXPANSION] Journals and photograph album documenting an early 20th century surveyor’s work on eight different railroad and river system projects. Alfred A. Appling. Various locations: 1902-1907.

There are three items in this lot: a journal kept from April 1903 through December 1904; an album with photographs taken between 1902 and 1907, and a small pocket diary used in 1907. The journal (7” x 8.5”) is legible and includes a number of news clippings; it has a sound binding and worn cover. The photograph album (11” x 7.25”) holds around 130 captioned and glued-in photographs ranging in approximate size from 3” x 3’ to 5” x 7”. About ten pages are loose, and the cover has some minor wear. The small one-year pocket diary for 1907 measures 2.75” x 5.75”.

Appling’s journal and photograph album both begin in earnest in April 1903 while he was a low-level supervisor, jack-of-all-trades, and surveyor-in-training at Pennsylvania Railroad’s Linwood Yards at Cincinnati, Ohio while simultaneously taking correspondence courses for a college degree. He next began work with a Corps of Engineers Ohio River surveying project later that year in August. Appling’s journal reflects that between December 1903 and August, 1904, he spent most of his time as a full-time student, probably at the University of Cincinnati, until he secured a job with the Big Four (Cleveland Cincinnati Chicago and St. Louis Railroad) in Illinois. After his journal ends, it is still possible to track Appling’s career through the captioned photographs in his album. Over the next three years, he worked in succession for the Chicago, Quincy & Burlington Railroad at Wind River Canyon and the Powder River Basin in Wyoming, the Chicago, Northwestern Railroad in Wisconsin, the Illinois Central Railroad in Tennessee, and the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad in Mississippi.

The photographs in Appling’s album provide an exceptional window into the field-life of a railroad surveyor showing small town life, surveying equipment and teams, track gangs, immigrant labor, locomotives, riverboats, bridges, handcars, train wrecks, desert camps and tent cities, wagon trains and freighters, log cabins, bunk furnishings, wildlife, livestock pens, lumbering operations, hoists and other machinery, mile markers, railroad offices, “A little Nigger cabin”, and more.

A unique and extremely detailed first-hand visual and textual record of railroad field work in the early years of the 20th-century.

SOLD  Inv # 9528

This album measures about 7¾" x 10 ¼“ and contains over 65 photographs ranging in size from 3½“ x 2½“ to 5¼“ x 3¼“. All have been glued to the pages. There are no captions, however some of the photos show company names on the equipment. A slip of paper laid-in to the album identifies one of the subjects in a photo as “Daniel Sullivan / Postmaster, Ilion, N.Y.” Some of the images are a little over-exposed. Light wear to the album. In nice shape.

About 60 of the photographs show in-progress construction work including workers, boats, cranes, and dredges working in concert to either extend or widen the canal. Several of the photographs show equipment from Pearson & Son, Inc. of New York City. Six additional photographs in the rear of the album show a freight train wreck, perhaps related to the project.

“At 1903, the New York State legislature authorized construction of the ‘New York State Barge Canal’ as the ‘improvement of the Erie, the Oswego, the Champlain and Cayuga and Seneca Canals.’ In 1905, construction . . . began; it was completed in 1918, a cost of $96.7 million [and] opened to through traffic May 15, 1918.” (See Wikipedia.) “Ilion Terminal, located on the Erie Canal, is a component of the nationally significant New York State Barge Canal. It is one of several terminals constructed along the Barge Canal to provide points for freight transfer.” (From the Library of Congress photography collection). In 1909, that company was awarded contracts totaling over $5.7 million for work on this project and may have received more awards in other years. (See the Annual Report, Superintendent of Public Works on the Canal of the State, 1909.)

A terrific first-hand visual record of improvements made to the Erie Canal.

Scarce. At the time of listing, no similar items are in the trade. There are no auction records listed at the Rare Book Hub. Although OCLC shows no similar vernacular albums held by institution, there is an official NY State Engineer photograph album of the project at the Buffalo History Museum.

$500 Inv # 9529
These four admission tickets each measure approximately 2¼ “ x 4”. All have red serial numbers and were good for admission for the duration of the fair, January through July 1894. Each represents a different era of California and pairs different vignettes with colorful emblems: 1768-1822 (Spanish rule) – Father Junipero Serra with a California State Seal, 1822-1846 (Mexican rule) – Alta California Ranchero/Californio with a Mexican Republic spread-winged eagle devouring a snake, 1846-1849 (Gold Rush) – James Marshall with the California State Flag, and 1850-1894 (Statehood) – California State Seal and the California State Capitol. All are in nice shape.

In 1892, President Benjamin Harrison appointed Michael H. de Young, a San Francisco newspaperman, as a national commissioner of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. De Young realized that such a fair could be a terrific stimulus for California, which was then mired in a severe depression. By the next summer, de Young had convinced San Francisco officials to provide Golden Gate Park as a venue and obtained Congressional approval to hold a world’s fair, which he named the California Midwinter International Exposition.

Within the fair’s 200 acres were 120 structures including four principle attractions: The Fine Arts Building, the Agriculture and Horticulture Building, the Mechanical Arts Building, and the Manufacturers and Liberal Arts building. Over two million people attended. The fair also included a number of rides and exhibits including Daniel Boone’s Wild West Show and The Mining Camp. The Mining Camp was by far the most popular exhibit at the fair, but it has come under recent criticism for disregarding people of color and its theme-song that fondly recounted a time when African-Americans and Chinese were denied citizenship.

Another popular exhibit that also raises the hackles of some was The Gum Gum Girls. Young women selling chewing gum while dressed in blue peacoat-style blouses with matching hats, black stockings, and scandalously short mid-calf-length skirts and patrolled the fair in pairs targeting sales pitches at unattached men with whom they unabashedly flirted.

There were also several “ethnographic” exhibits at the fair including an African village that created considerable cognitive dissonance for Frederick Douglas. Although the village and its people were imported intact from Dahomey, Douglas railed against it as an attempt to dehumanize “the Negro as a repulsive savage.” Yet, on the other hand, he found favor with its realistic demonstrations of Dahomian dances and ceremonies. So, too, were some Japanese-Americans offended by the Japanese Tea Garden’s jinrikisha rides. While they agreed it was normal for Japanese men to pull the carts in Japan, they found the practice to be demeaning in the United States. After an Anti-Jinrikisha Society announced it would murder any Japanese man who pulled a cart at the fair, exposition organizers solved the problem by hiring Germans to dress in Japanese costumes and darken their complexions with makeup.

Few of these tickets have survived. At the time of listing, there are no others for sale in the trade. Very infrequently, single tickets have appeared on eBay, and the Rare Book Hub shows no auction records for single tickets and only one sale of a set of four. OCLC lists individual tickets held at two institutions.

SOLD  Item # 9601

This vibrant exposition cover features an all-over U.S. flag design with an Exposition Buffalo Head seal superimposed over the starry canton. It is franked with two 1-cent exposition stamps (Scott #294) that have been canceled with a Pan American Exposition Barry machine slogan postmark.

The exposition ran from May to November 1901.

A nice patriotic souvenir cover.

SOLD Item # 9599

29. [EXPOSITIONS & WORLD’S FAIRS] [PHILATELY] Large souvenir weekly program designed to be mailed from the Hudson-Fulton Celebration. Sent to Navigationmeister A. Richter und Frau. Stapleton, Staten Island, New York to Altona o/d Elbe, Germany. 7 October 1909.

This colorful souvenir program measure 11” square unfolded. Some wear, soiling, and an opening thin.

The front contains 11 panels. The center panel provides space for writing a message. Other panels feature Hendrick Hudson and Robert Fulton, The Half Moon Sailing Up the Hudson, The Landing of Hendrick Hudson - 1609, First Trip of the Clermont – August 17, 1807, The First Settlement of America, Old Dutch Colony of New Amsterdam, West Point 1790, Battery and Castle Garden 1807, Statue of Liberty New York Harbor, and at top, the Dutch Lion rampant on a shield of red, white, and blue supported by a gold eagle.

The reverse has a panel to be addressed and franked for mailing. It additionally contains the “Program of Events” for the week of Saturday, September 25 to Saturday October 2 and a New York City Parade on October 9 October 9. (The celebration was held in greater New York City until the 2nd; for the following week, events were held at up-river locations.) In addition to the Program, there are smaller sections discussing the Lines of Parades, Official Reviewing Stands, Beacon Fires, Evening Receptions, Upper Hudson Celebrations, Public View of the Half Moon and Clermont, and Airships.

Unused programs appear at auctions several times each year, however postally used examples are much less common, and examples sent to overseas locations are decidedly uncommon.

A few faults, but an unusual destination, so priced accordingly

SOLD Item # 9598
30. [FOOD] [MARITIME] [MENUS] [PHILATELY] [STEAMSHIPS] [TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL] Unusual foldout postcard that opens into a menu for an Alaskan steamship. Signed Jno. H. A. Onboard the SS Admiral Rogers, Chatham Sound, Canada (just south of Ketchikan, Alaska): 1923.

This foldout postcard measures 11” x 7” when opened into a four-page menu. It is franked with U.S. two-cent Washington stamp (Scott # 554) which has been cancelled by a duplex Seattle & Skagway R.P.O. postmark. An Alaska poster stamp is affixed in the upper left corner. In nice shape with some minor wear. The writing is faint but legible.

The menu cover features an illustration of Parliament Buildings in Victoria, British Columbia with a small logo for “The Admiral Line / P.S.S. Co. (Pacific Steamship Company)” in the lower-left corner. The menu opens to display four small portraits of the passenger crew: a white hostess and chef and a black porter and waiter.

The menu is titled, “On Board S. S. Admiral Rogers, F. Lanstrom, Commander / Chatham Sound / Luncheon” and features: King Salmon, pork spare ribs, corned beef, sirloin steak, prime rib, roast port, leg of mutton, ox tongue, and kippered cod along with pea soup, garden salad, and assorted relishes, vegetables, pastries, desserts, cheeses, and beverages.

The message notes, “We are homeward bound. Left Sitka this morning . . . several stops to make taking on canned salmon. We load it at rate of $5,000 per hour. Put on $18,000 this morning at one cannery . . . May be in Seattle Monday, but expect to drive home Tuesday. It rains up here most of the time, but does not spoil the trip . . . most relaxing . . . most delightful. Having a great time.”

At the time, the Pacific Steamship Company was the dominant line providing service from the contiguous 48 states to Alaska from Seattle, Washington, and its “Admiral” ships transported both passengers and cargo. In 1921, the company was awarded a post office contract to improve mail to and from Alaska by providing scheduled service between Seattle and Skagway via Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau, and Haines. Each of its ships contained a mail rooms and postal clerks. Mail posted onboard received the Seattle & Skagway RPO postmark (Towles X-19-C).

An uncommon Alaskan steamship company foldout menu postcard bearing a rather scarce inland passage postmark. Although Towles suggests this postmark is common, that appears not to be the case. As of 2020 very few letters or cards bearing it have appeared in philatelic or eBay auctions per the Stamp Auction Network and Worthpoint.

SOLD Item # 9586
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #

31. [GOLD & GOLD RUSHES] [PHILATELY] [TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL] [WOMEN] Long, detailed, an entertaining letter sent en route by a strong-willed woman who led her family, which was incapacitated with cholera and/or dysentery, on a journey from Potosi, Missouri to the gold mines of North Carolina. Lucy Wiatt to Julia Webber. Jersey City, New Jersey to Potosi, Missouri: 1851.

This three-page stampless letter measures 15¾” x 12¼” unfolded. It is datelined “Jersey City Jun 4th 1851.” It bears a red hand-stamped “10” rate marking and a circular Jersey City postmark dated June 9th. The letter is in nice shape. A transcript will be provided.

In this well written letter, Lucy Wiatt describes the difficulty in traveling across half the country by riverboat, canal boat, lake steamer, and railroad while leading her husband and children (including one who was near blind) who had become incapacitated by what was believed to be cholera while on a Mississippi riverboat at the start of their journey. From other online sources, including census records and several family letters, it is clear that the family was heading east to the gold fields of North Carolina, just as almost all other gold-seekers—her brother-in-law—were westward bound for California. The content is so full of fascinating observations that it’s difficult to select excerpts:

“We got on to St. Louis. & got off on the Lucy Bertram in good time. We did pretty well as far as pleasant passengers . . . went, but I found the cholera was aboard, & Frank, myself, and both children had it, or something that would have been certain, if we had died of it. Nearly every body had it on board, & one man died. Julia & I got over it directly, but Ellen & Frank are still ailing. Frank particularly. I was quite alarmed yesterday for fear he would prove real cholera but the bottle of pain killer is sufficient I believe. We all took dreadful colds the day we left the Lucy Bertram, for the informal canal boat. . . . There were 2 canal boats . . . that left that day, & there was such a rush in the morning, that I determined to wait at Lasalle & take the 5 o clock boat [for] I saw about 150 people packed into about as much space as would scarcely allow turning around. . . . This is no exaggeration. [I can] never admire Illinois for all along the whole way, the country was overflowed . . . the water way up in the town & up to the roofs of houses. I have seen families in the upper story of the houses . . . so pitiful, the water within a few inches . . . & still rising. I felt so bad I was anxious to get away from there.

When we got within 4 miles of Chicago a steam towboat took us up to . . . where the fine lake boats were waiting & just such a rush, such a jamming & squeezing you never saw. I took my seat along with hundreds of others on the wharf who were attending to getting their baggage on board. . . . While I kept my eye on our baggage & the children, I was taking items of the folks there & the fact is, from there till now, & I have noticed them all the time. I don’t like the Yankees as well as when I left home. . . . You would be surprised to see such gangs of women and children travelling. One thing I must say of my own children here. They have been the best little creatures you ever saw, since I left home Julia has been no trouble, & tho dreadful bad off with the cold & her bowels too, she never complains, although knocked up any time of the night & put off with every sort of thing. She says she dont like travelling at all at all & no wonder. As to poor little Nell, although right poorly off & nearly blind, she is actually less trouble than when at home – Tho I have to take her to the peggy 20 times a day. . . .”
However, it is a terrible thing, this of traveling – how I do dislike it, & O the trouble, anxiety, & vexation attending it. . . . The eternal change & bustle of this, is killing. First a steamboat, then a canal boat, then the cars, then a like boat, then the cars, then the lake again, & then the cars - & turned out in the rain at daylight, or at dark or at midnight as we were last night to attend to wife children & baggage, hunt a hack & dray & hotel & maybe the rain pouring down. You must wait sometimes half an hour for your name to be called to get your things, & one minutes delay will cause you great vexation.

But here we are now at N York. . . . We started with 2 trunks, a big box, 2 carpet bags, parasol, & little chair - & here they all are yet . . .I took charge of the chair & little things myself & whenever they would object to putting the chair in the cars, I would . . . slip it in the salon for I was determined . . . .

We are now in Jersey City this side of the river & N York spread out in all its glory right before us. There is the steeple of Trinity Church towering far above every other in the city. & both sides of the river is covered with vessels of every description. The masts so numerous it looks like what an old Virginy negro would call a “deadening” (a stand of trees killed by girdling so they could be more easily removed). Jersey City is a fine place too. It is really part of N York. We are at the American Hotel, an elegant house too, & right near where the cars leave for Philadelphia our next place of destination. . . .

Tomorrow I can get a chance to see the city a little & maybe get that new bonnet & dress. . . . Frank wants me to do my shopping in Baltimore as he dislikes the Yankees too much to give them a picayune, he is ultra Southern now . . . since the trip. We have had a cold disagreeable time since we left. I am worse of with a cold than I remember to have been for years. I can scarcely see or hear & cannot smell at all. I look worse than any stewed witch you ever saw. Frank & the children look as badly as I do. Poor Frank in particular although almost sick outright, he keeps up the best spirits. . . .

O by the way, when you write, tell me some of John Wiatt and his movements. I am afraid from accounts that he has not improved in either manners or morals since his California speculations. I wish I could have seen him. I expect you would like me to write a small dissertation on the fashions &c. Now this is almost impossible. Everybody wears the precisely the same sort of dresses, bonnets, &c you see at Potosi & not a whit finer either. I have seen plenty of bonnets just like your new one, & the most uniformity I see is in black visites & white shawls. I cant tell which predominates dresses made exactly like all of your old ones. Every color on earth worn. & every body has an indispensable neck ribbon. . . . But I must finish or I shall get the blues thinking of you all. . . . Your affectionate sister. Lucy J Wiatt

From Census records and several other letters written by her, Frank, and her father—that at various times have been posted online—it is clear the family was so Frank could work in the North Carolina gold mines. (It is never mentioned, Frank may have been a miner in Potosi, which was the hub of the richest lead and zinc mines in the country. Regardless, the family settled in Monroe, North Carolina where Franked worked at the Lewis and Wyatt mines. After serving in Civil War as an officer in the 48th North Carolina Regiment, Frank returned to Monroe, where he was elected mayor. The 1870 census shows him as an attorney, and the 1880 census shows Lucy as a widow living in Los Angeles, California with several of her children. (For more information about the Wiatts, see ancestry.com, the “Roster of Company A, 48th North Carolina Troops” online at roots.web, and “1852-54: Julia Webber’s Letters” online at Spared & Shared.

SOLD Item # 9588
32. [GOLD & GOLD RUSHES] [LAW] [MINING] Letter from a gold prospector who served as the “judical chair” for a mining camp. W. B. Osceola, [probably Nevada]: 1880.

This letter is in nice shape, with short splits starting along a couple of the mailing folds. It has no accompanying envelope. A transcript will be included.

In the letter, W. B. reports to his mother that although he had found gold, it was not enough to keep him from moving on:

“I sent you a small piece of gold... I will send you more soon. So whenever I send you a paper you look for gold. I would like to send you a hansom one, however I will do my best under existing circumstances... The Camp is still dull, Altho I am doing very well... however Mother when warmer weather arrives I must hunt better diggings... I shan’t forget you if I ever strike anything good.”

He also describes his last day as head of his camp’s miner’s court and his relationship with the local Indian tribe, (probably Utes):

“Someone gave whiskey to the Indians who are camped but a short distance from me. Those who did not drink were exposed to the abuse of the drunken ones. They made a great noise all night. One of them came to my cabin and made complaint. I told him I would be the Judge in the morning and have the guilty parties punished. I did as I promised and that was the last of it. The present incumbent of the Judicial Chair is not fit for the position. He is very fond of the juice himself. The Indians are in a starving condition and have been all winter. They are constantly coming to me for food. There should certainly be something done for them. There maine dependence is the pine-nut crop which was a complete failure this year. Winter has been very severe It as been as low as 22 below zero, which makes it still harder on them.”

W.B.’s reference to serving as a Judicial Chair is related to his camp’s miners’ court. These courts administered any camp rules, protected claims, and addressed crimes. They were chaired by Judges or Judicial Chairs elected by the camp at large. Proceedings were informal, and there was seldom a dedicated court room. In some camps, 12-man juries were employed, and at others, anyone who happened-by during a court session was allowed to vote on the verdict. Since camps had no jails, if convicted of a serious crime, the guilty party faced one of three verdicts: whipping, banishment, or hanging.

Although there was minor gold mining near Osceola, Colorado, the mining district of Osceola, Nevada was larger and more productive. Scattered gold lodes were first discovered there in 1872, and in 1877, after rich placer gold was discovered, a gold rush began in earnest. Over three hundred claims were established and the town of Osceola grew to well over 1,500 people; it had several stores, a butcher, a blacksmith, a Chinese restaurant, and was served by two stages that connected it with the larger town of Ward about 50 miles away. During its boom, about two million dollars’ worth of gold (in today’s money) was uncovered including a 24-pound nugget.

Nevada goldmining letters appear to be far less common than those from California, and letters from miners’ court judges are very scarce. At the time of listing, there are no miners’ court letters for sale in the trade and none listed at OCLC or the Rare Book Hub, however one institution holds a court docket from a miners’ court in Colorado.
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #

33. INSANITY) [LAW] [PHILATELY] [PRISONS] [SOCIAL REFORM] A detailed letter from a guard at East Cambridge Jail (which was made infamous by Dorothea Dix nine years before) describing the inmates’ Independence Day celebration and the imminent hangings of two of the most notorious 19th-century Massachusetts murderers. G. Patch. East Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1850.

This three-page stampless folded letter measures 15.5” x 9.5” unfolded. It is datelined “East Cambridge July 7th/50”. The front panel bears a circular East Cambridge postmark dated 8 July and a black “5” postal rate handstamp. It was sent by G. Patch to his brother, Andrew Patch, in Canaan, New Hampshire. Transcript included.

East Cambridge Jail received considerable ill-favored press in 1841 after a newly-hired Sunday School teacher, Dorothea Dix, was outraged by the conditions she found there, especially for insane female inmates. Subsequently, Dix became an aggressive, vociferous, and national advocate for the humane treatment of the mentally ill.

By 1850, the 11-cell “Jail” had expanded to include a “House of Corrections [with] Hospital . . . work-shops and chapel [and] two separate buildings for the insane, one for males and the other for females.” (See the Cambridge Chronicle, 1 March 1849.) It also, had apparently become a much more humane institution, as Patch’s letter describing Independence Day festivities attests:

“We had a great time here, we let all the prisoners out in the yard and let them . . . have balls to play with. Some of them could play on a violin so I let them have mine and Mayhew let them have his flutes they had music and dancing for a little while some of them would turn heels over head some walk on their hands and most all kinds of tricks that you could think of. M. Sherman [the warden] bought half a box of lemons and made them some lemonade and give them roast pig stuffed for dinner.”

Patch also discusses the upcoming hangings of Daniel Pearson, who had cut the throats of his wife and twin daughters, and Harvard Professor John Webster, who had brutally slain, dismembered, attempted to dissolve in acid, and finally partially cremated a wealthy Boston businessman, George Parkman.

“I expect that we shall have a great time here the 26th this month Pearson will be hung between the hours of 8 and 11 in the forenoon, Professor Webster will know this week whether he will be hung or not he has made a confession and owns that he killed Parkman how he done it and what he done it with there is not the least doubt but that he will be hung. “

Patch goes on to discuss other family matters and local news to include noting that “the small Pox is pretty thick in the city.”

The Webster trial rocked Boston at the time and was significant because it was one of the first, if not the SOLD Inv # 9572
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #

34. [INVENTIONS] [PHILATELY] [WASHING MACHINES] [WOMEN] Lot of advertising materials related to the first all-in-one washing machine, the T. Horton Western Washing Machine, issued while the then current management of the company was engaged in a trademark infringement lawsuit with its founder who had moved on to another business. Bluffton, Indiana: 1879.

This lot consists of an illustrated 8-panel leporello (accordion-fold) brochure and a letter on illustrated letterhead, both enclosed in an illustrated advertising envelope. The brochure was printed in 1875, and the letter is dated 1879. The envelope is franked with a 3-cent green Washington stamp (Scott Type A46) and cancelled with a circular Bluffton postmark and small cork handstamp. All in nice shape; some postal soiling to the envelope, which is missing the tip of its upper right corner.

The letter head features illustrations of the washing machine and two types of hand planters. The brochure contains those two images, in larger scale, plus two additional images showing the internal washing machine components.

Sometime around 1871, Dr. Theodore Horton supplied the initial capital to establish a partnership with William K. Vandergriff and Rachel V. Blastone under the name of the T. Horton Manufacturing Company. Its first products, for which it held the patent, were “hand corn planters.” The planters were very popular and with its earnings, the following year the company purchased a patent to an all-in-one washing machine it named “The Improved Western Washing Machine. The washing machine, which became an even more popular product than the corn planter, was a major time-and-labor-saver for housewives and advertisements proclaimed that “In short, The long-dreaded horrors of washday are dispelled, and pleasant recreation takes their place.” Horton sold the company to his partners in 1879 and moved on to New York and formed another manufacturing firm, which he also named the T. Horton Manufacturing Company. He retained ownership of the original building in Indiana, which he rented back to the company, as well as interest in sales of both its corn planters and washing machines. He did not, however, agree that the original company could continue to operate as the T. Horton Company or to promote its products. After a series of legal disputes, the courts decided that only Horton could retain and use the company name, T. Horton Manufacturing Company, but that the original company could continue to market its hand-planters and washing machines as “Horton” products. For more information, see Price’s American Trade-mark Cases Decided by the Courts of the United States, and Wonning’s A Year of Indiana History - Book 1.

Rather scarce; at the time of listing, OCLC shows only four Horton brochures or catalogs are held by institutions; none hold any Horton letters or illustrated advertising envelopes.

SOLD Inv # 9533
For additional or larger images, click on the first image or Inv #

35. [MARITIME] [PHILATELY] [RIVERS & RIVERBOATS] [STEAMSHIPS] [TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL]
Letter from a young man to his mother describing his travels on the Mississippi River and plan to return East by the Ohio. Thomas C. Awery, Jr. Steamer “Mt Vernon“ Mississippi River: June 7, 1847.

Two-page stampless letter datelined “Steamer ‘Mt Vernon’ / Mississippi River June 7 1847.” The letter bears a manuscript “Cairo, Ill. June / 8” postmark and a manuscript “10” rate marking. In nice shape. Transcript included.

In this letter, Awery informs his mother that he is on the way home and describes his trip.

“I last wrote you from Natchez which place I left on the night of 31st May for St Louis in the Steamer “Missouri” called the finest boat on the Mrs Hippy River. I found her an exceedingly comfortable boat, though differing very much from our Eastern boats, having very comfortable Staterooms and a most excellent table fully equal to any hotel in the country. I arrived in St Louis on Thursday night (4th visit) remained there a little more than two days and left at three o’clock yesterday for Cincinnati. We go down the Mississippi to Cairo (at the junction of the two rivers) and there turn up the Ohio to Cincinnati where we expect to arrive sometime on the 9th or 10th. I shall stop one day in Cincinnati and from there go to Pittsburgh or Wheeling in another boat which I hope will be better than the Mt Vernon which is a second rate boat though a safe one. From Cincinnati we reach Pittsburgh in about 3 days (Wheeling in two days) and from either of these places get to Baltimore in two days so that I shall be in Baltimore by the 15th and get from there home in two days. I had a very pleasant time in St Louis. . . . We are now about 4 hours above Cairo – near a place called “Cape Girardeau” – where I shall try to drop this in the Post Office. . . .”

Apparently, Awery was not able to drop his letter at the Cape Girardeau, Missouri post office, as it was postmarked in Cairo, Illinois.

The steamer Missouri, often referred to as “The Big Missouri” was, in fact, one of the most luxurious riverboats on the Mississippi. At the time it was also the largest, a fact celebrated by Mark Twain in the second chapter of Tom Sawyer as Tom prepares to hoodwink his first sucker, Ben Rogers, into whitewashing Aunt Polly’s fence:

“Ben Rogers hove in sight presently. . . . Ben’s gait was the hop-skip-and-jump—proof enough that his heart was light and his anticipations high. He was eating an apple, and giving a long, melodious whoop, at intervals, followed by a deep-toned ding-dong-dong, ding-dong-dong, for he was personating a steamboat. As he drew near, he slackened speed, took the middle of the street, leaned far over to starboard and rounded to ponderously and with laborious pomp and circumstance—for he was personating the Big Missouri, and considered himself to be drawing nine feet of water. He was boat and captain and engine-bells combined, so he had to imagine himself standing on his own hurricane-deck giving the orders and executing them”

A fine first-hand assessment of travel on one of the most sumptuous antebellum American riverboats.

$300 Inv # 9584

This folded mail-order broad sheet measures approximately 15.5” x 10” unfolded. One page lists a variety of quack medicines available for wholesale purchase and the second page is a “Circular” filled with ‘small print’ that defines terms of sale and provides selling tips including the use of Louden Almanacs and Show Cards. The folded broadsheet has been franked with a relatively scarce 3-cent orange-brown Washington stamp (Scott 10A with recut vertical lines) canceled by a circular blue Philadelphia postmark. Splits along some of the folds of one page of the broadsheet have been repaired on the reverse using paper tape. Otherwise in nice shape with some minor docketing.

Among the products offered for sale are:
- Indian Expectorant
- Oriental Hair Tonic
- Female Elixir
- Compound Carminative Balsam
- Compound Tonic Vermifuge
- Indian Sanative Pills
- All-Healing Salve
- Cherokee Liniment

Advertising items for Louden medicines are rather scarce. At the time of listing, no similar mail order wholesale advertisements are available for sale in the trade, and neither OCLC nor Rare Book Hub identify any institutional holdings or auction sales. However, Louden almanacs are a little less scarce; they are held by ten institutions and occasionally turn up for sale on eBay.

SOLD Inv # 9534

Large octagonal die-cut sheet that measures about 10¾” x 10¾” when opened. Printed on both sides with 14 birds-eye views of American cities, accompanied by one view of a building from each (Albany, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, Louisville, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Portland, St. Louis, Washington); all in bronze. Two-panels of the octagon feature red roses and leaves in color. Includes the original envelope, also printed in bronze, featuring an image of the specially constructed fair building surrounded by the text, “The Union rose: East and West.” Unposted, and all in nice shape.

Sanitary Fairs were civilian-organized bazaars and expositions that raised funds for the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) which was a private relief agency created by federal legislation to support the treatment and hospitalization of sick and wounded soldiers. The Union Rose (see Weiss NW-155) was sold to raise money at the Great North Western Sanitary Fair, the last major sanitary fair of the war. It opened on 30 May 1865 and ran through 24 June. Its centerpiece, Union Hall, and an assortment of other buildings were built near the lake front. Highlights of the even were visits by Generals Grant and Sherman, and the fair raised over $270,000 for sick and wounded soldiers.

Charles Magnus was a New York City printing entrepreneur who produced beautiful color lithographs of city views, song sheets, maps and patriotic illustrations for stationery and envelopes throughout the Civil War. His most complex Union patriotic designs were three different folding “Rose” die-cuts: the Rose of Washington, the Rose of Baltimore, and the Union Rose.

A nice example of a very scarce Civil War patriotic, that appears sporadically in philatelic auctions or in catalog sales over the past 20 years where prices have ranged from $400 to $1,100.

SOLD Inv # 5970
38, [MEDICINE & NURSING] [QUACKERY] Broadsheet advertising Carl Baunscheidt’s Life-Awakener (Lebenswecker) or “Artificial Leech” that was used to drive toxic oils into the body by piercing the skin with needles. J. C. Reisner. Lebanon, Pennsylvania: 1866.

This two-page broadsheet measures 20” x 14.5”. Two storage folds. Light toning.

The device consisted of a rod with dozens of sharp needles which were dipped into an irritating “oleum” and then driven into the skin creating blood blisters.

The advertisement describes Baunscheidt’s theory behind the Lebenswecker as well as his inspiration:

“The ‘Lebenswecker’ . . . imitates Nature . . . more than any other healing-art. . . There are certain poisons . . . that would destroy and kill every human life if there were not ways and means provided through which they can be removed. . . It is known that most diseases . . . are accompanied by an eruption . . . to conduct the poisonous matters from the inner organs to the skin [by blood] circulating through the organism [which] creates various pains. . . To all these pains, man would not be subjected, if these poisons had been extracted from the blood and nervous system. . .

The ‘Lebenswecker’ contains in itself far more healing power than all illegible receipts in the law of physic, or all the mixtures of the apothecary shop. . . Its effects are warming, animating and relieving; it causes irritation and governs circulation of the blood. . .

The discovery of [this] “Dematiobiokon,” as it may be properly called [occurred when Dr. Baunscheidt suffered] rheumatic pain in one of his hands. . . During the day he took a nap, . . . when a swarm of gnats . . . settled on his diseased hand and commenced piercing it with all pleasure. When he awoke the gnats . . . went off and to his great astonishment and comfort, the pain of his hand went with them. . . For the poisonous matter which could not evaporate, the gnats opened a way by piercing the skin. . . And now, thought he, I will [put] together a set of sharp needles; will pierce through the skin and see if I can take out those rheumatic pains. But to his astonishment, he has since taken out of the human body, the pains of almost all curable diseases.”

The Lebenswecker proved to be an exceptionally popular medical device that remained in use throughout German-speaking Europe and America until around 1900, in part because it could be used by anyone, not only physicians. Diseases and conditions that were claimed to have been cured by Baunsheidtism included whooping cough, baldness, toothaches, and mental disorders. J. C. Reisner, an Evangelical minister, was the first person in Lebanon county to use and sell homeopathic cures, prescribing them for friends, neighbors, and others as early as 1835. For more information see King’s History of Homeopathy. . . and Evan’s Baunscheidt’s Lebenswecker: the 19th-Century “Life-Awakener”, both on-line.

Perhaps now unique. At the time of listing, no similar advertisements are for sale in the trade or have been listed at auction per Rare Book Hub. Neither are any listed as part of institutional collections by OCLC. Actual life-awakeners are held by several museums, and occasionally appear for sale on eBay.

SOLD   Inv # 9536
This leather wallet-like diary measures 3¼” x 6” and contains over 180 pages of daily entries, usually two per page. Sanborn’s writing is legible. The binding is sound, and the cover and pages are clean with light wear. Sanborn has written her name on the front free endpaper: “C. F. Sanborn. / Sanitarium. / Battle Creek, / Dec. 25. Mich.” In nice shape.

The Sanitarium known colloquially as The San, combined aspects of a European spa, a hydrotherapy institution, a hospital, and an expensive resort. In 1876, after becoming director of the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital known as the Western Health Reform Institute, John Harvey Kellogg (assisted by his brother and future cereal tycoon, W. K. Kellogg, renamed the facility the Battle Creek Sanitarium. Although Kellogg focused his efforts on attracting the wealthy and famous, he also treated the poor who could not afford other hospitals, as well as staff members. Kellogg’s treatments were based on his theory of “biologic living” tempered by Adventist principles and focused on hydrotherapy (baths and water-treatments of all kinds, including hot, cold, and yogurt enemas) supplemented by light (especially solar), heat, and electric treatments. Additionally, physical exercise, open-air exposure, and prescriptive diets (like toasted wheat and corn flakes invented by W. K.) were incorporated. The most bizarre treatments, tortuous actually, were reserved for men, women, and children that Kellogg believed needed to be cured of masturbation. (None are mentioned in this diary.)

A two-year nursing school was an integral part of the huge sanitarium complex, and, for the most part, students cared for patients during the day and attended classes at night. In this diary, Sanborn writes about attending classes and lectures as well as caring for patients, e.g., wheeling chairs, changing rooms, giving baths (Russian, Turkish, Electric, etc.), providing electricity treatments, and more. However, the overarching theme is her exhaustion from endless work and study. A few of Sanborn’s entries include:

“Am very tired tonight. Fannie’s had a fever tonight I took her over to the bath room & treated her and put her to bed. Am afraid she is going to be sick. . . . We had two operations this afternoon. I have Mrs. Stephenson to nurse. Am very tired. Mrs. C is doing nicely. . . . “I treated my patients this forenoon. I [then] went to school & . . . Mrs. Foy . . . sent me to nurse Mr. W. Kellogg’s little boy who has pneumonia. . . . Mrs. B. completely electrified me this eve. . . . “I gave the electric bathes today. . . . I gave 4 Turkish baths . . . and when I was done, I gave electricity this P.M. . . . I listened to Mr. Ford (a patient) relate his experience in Libby prison (as a Union POW during the Civil War) this eve. . . . I was on duty all day in the bath room was very busy. . . . I was busy with Mrs B. all night. She suffered all night. I staid with her all day and about done up this eve. She had morphine this eve to make her sleep. . . . Poor little Keith Kellogg (W. K. Kellogg’s son) died with Diphtheria this P.M.”

An enlightening first-hand account of life at J. H. Kellogg’s famous Battle Creek Sanitarium by a busy nursing student.

SOLD

Inv # 9537
40. [MILITARY & WAR] [RAILROADS] [TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL] Set of five 1861 Civil War Michigan Central Rail Road passes for soldiers of the 1st Michigan Infantry Regiment including one issued to a private who was wounded at The First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas). Various soldiers and issuing officials. Detroit, Michigan: August to October 1861.

Three of the five passes measure about 3¼” x 2”. All are printed on yellow cardstock. Two passes are generic and printed for “One soldier Co. ___ Reg’t”. The three other passes required a name to be filled in the “Pass” blank. Four are dated between 16 August and 18 October; one is undated. All of the passes have punch cancellations. Four of the cards are in nice shape with light wear and soiling. One pass is soiled, creased, and edge-worn. Three passes were issued for travel from Detroit to Ann Arbor. One was issued for travel from Ann Arbor to Jackson, and one was issued for travel from Ann Arbor to Chelsea. Some are signed by a regimental officer. All are in manuscript or print by J. H. Foutain, the Quartermaster of the Military Force of Michigan. All are enclosed in a small envelope with docketing that reads “Comp. Mrs Florence S. Babbitt Dep Pres. of Womens Relief Corps – Aux of the Grand Army of the Republic – April 28th 1905 – Passes issued to the first Mich Infantry”.

The 1st Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment was organized at Fort Wayne, Detroit and mustered into federal service for three months service at the beginning of the war. It was among the first reach the Capitol, and President Lincoln is said to have exclaimed, “Thank God for Michigan” upon its arrival. In July, the regiment fought at Bull Run where four enlisted men were killed. Four officers and 33 enlisted men were wounded; and 65 enlisted men went missing. Three officers were mortally wounded and captured. The Regimental commander was wounded while leading several charges for which he received the Medal of Honor. Following the battle, the unit was mustered out of service. While this was occurring a second unit, the 1st Michigan Infantry Regiment was organized and pledged to three years of service.

Two of these passes are marked “& return” and punched twice, so it is probable that these men returned to fight with the second 1st Michigan Infantry Regiment. One of the passes is issued to a sergeant identified as a 1st Regt Recruiting Officer, so it is likely that he remained in Michigan, at least for a while, to recruit enlistees there. One pass has only one punch, so it is likely that soldier had his fill of war and chose not to reenlist. The last pass, the one for travel to Jackson, is issued to “Private Briggs 1st Rg & Wounded”. Briggs had his leg amputated from a wound suffered at Bull Run and returned home to Jackson, Michigan where he apparently remained until he died two years later in 1863.

Florence Babbitt, from Ypsilanti, was very active in the Grand Army of the Republic’s Women’s Relief Corps. She served as the President of the Michigan Corps (chapter) and represented the state at the WRC’s 1905 Annual Convention in Denver where she was elected to its Executive Board. It’s unclear to whom she presented these passes with her ‘compliments’.

Civil War era railroad passes are scarce and passes issued to soldiers even scarcer. This group of passes issued to soldiers, including a wounded soldier, returning from the first important battle of the war are likely to be unique. At the time of listing, nothing similar is for sale in the trade or held by institutions per OCLC. Neither are there records at Rare Book Hub or Worthpoint of any having been sold at auction.

SOLD Item # 9593

This four-page letter is written on patriotic stationery a knight in armor standing on a rock emblazoned “Pennsylvania”, the Pennsylvania Coat of Arms, the U.S. flag, and the word “Union” spell-out in stars. It is datelined “Sept. 29th 61”, and Matheny provides his mailing address as “Camp Senally Care of Coll Jackson 9 Regt RPC [Pennsylvania Reserve Corp]”. The are several spots of light foxing. No envelope. A transcript will be provided.

In this letter, Matheny boasts:

“gen Mclelland took munson hill yesterday with munson hill is a bout three miles from our camp and was strongley fortified and was heald by the rebles this was done by strdedgey for an open fight it would be hard to take and with great loss of life it is supposed that the reason that they did not carry on the war with more energy than they did was that the expected to whip them with out the loss of life today they are hauling large canon towards the river I dont know where they are going with them but is gess their will be a fight soon for we are under marshing orders with in 2 days coocked rashiones and to holde our selves in rediness and all of our brigade”.

In actuality, the ‘capture’ of Munson’s Hill proved to be a major embarrassment for McClellan and the Union Army. After the First Battle of Bull Run (Manassas), the Union army retreated quickly back towards Washington DC and Confederate forces occupied Munson’s Hill near Falls Church which had commanding views of Bailey’s Crossroads and the Capitol. Soon, a giant Confederate flew above the hill and huge cannons could be seen pointing toward Washington DC, and Confederate sharpshooters could pick-off Union soldiers below. On the night of the 28 September, the Confederate force withdrew from Fall’s Church and relocated to Centreville. The next day when Union forces occupied Munson’s Hill, they found the fearsome cannons to be nothing more than “Quaker Guns”, that is, felled trees that had been stripped of their branches and painted black. The press, both domestic and international, had a field day ridiculing the Union Army and its leaders noting that they were kept at bay for two months by a bunch of logs. Lyricists had as much fun as the press, and satirical sheet music soon appeared, titled The Bold Engineer, "Munson's Hill, and The Battle of the Stove-Pipes.

The 9th Pennsylvania Reserve Regiment was organized at Pittsburg in July 1861 and immediately deployed to Washington, D.C. where it was mustered into United States service on July 27 and attached to 3rd Brigade, McCall’s Pennsylvania Reserves Division, Army of the Potomac. After its initial bivouacking at Capitol Hill in Washington, it moved to Tennallytown, Md., in August, and assumed picket duty at Great Falls in early September.

First-hand documentation of one of the biggest sources of ridicule for the Union Army during the entire war.

SOLD Item # 9590
42. [MILITARY & WAR] [NUMISMATICS] [OBsolete CURRENCY] [RAILROADS] [TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL] Complete set of eight Civil War currency bills issued by The Mississippi Central Railroad Company. Holly Springs, Mississippi: January 1st, 1862.

All eight bills (5, 10, 25, 50, & 75 cents and 1, 2, & 3 dollars) feature one of two different illustrations of a classic 4-4-0 locomotive pulling passenger cars on their fronts; the reverses are blank. The bills are in nice shape with decent margins. All are complete with the exception of the tiny tip of the 5-cent bill. Light wear and soiling.

In 1852, the Mississippi Central Railroad was chartered by the State of Mississippi to build a railroad from Canton, Mississippi to Grand Junction, Tennessee. It was financed by wealthy cotton planters and passed through the towns of Grenada, Water Valley, Oxford, and Holly Springs. Its first train, a passenger train, ran from Holly Springs to Oxford in 1857. In January of 1860, the final leg of track on this 26-mile-long shortline was laid completing a railroad system that linked the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. In 1862, during the Civil War, General Ulysses S. Grant unsuccessfully attempted to capture the railroad during the Union Army’s Vicksburg campaign.

Before 1837, banks within the United States could only be chartered by specific acts of state legislatures, however that year, the State of Michigan approved legislation allowing for automatic bank charters if an organization could meet a set of basic requirements. In 1838, New York passed a similar law and other states quickly followed suit. In addition to accepting deposits, paying interest, and making loans, these private organizations were allowed to issue currency, and by 1860, municipalities, private banks, railroads, construction companies, stores, restaurants, churches and even individuals had printed an estimated 8,000 different types of banknotes by 1860. This “free banking era” ended after many private banks went bust during the Panic of 1866.

SOLD  Inv # 9540
43. [MILITARY & WAR] [PHILATELY] [VIRGINIANA] Letter from Union Corporal camped General Lee’s plantation on the Pamunkey River describing a massive Union encampment as well as recounting the Battle of Williamsburg. Edson Emery. On the Bank of Pamunkey Creek, Virginia: May 14, 1862.

This exceptional four-page letter is accompanied by its original mailing envelope, franked with a three-cent Washington stamp (Scott #65) and postmarked at Old Point Comfort on 15 May 1862. Transcript provided.

Emery describes General McClellan’s encampment following the Battle of Williamsburg and the capture of Norfolk, as the Union and Confederate armies converged on Richmond. Emery’s unit, 2nd Vermont Regiment, bivouacked at White House Plantation, once the home of George and Martha Washington and owned by General Lee owned at this time.

“Am now about 15 miles above West Point on the Pamunkey Creek. . . . Last night we camped at a place called Perham’s Landing. . . . We have to skirmish every foot of ground & we are close by the Rebel works. We expected a fight today but hardly think we shall. We may tomorrow & we may at any moment. They are fortified from here to Richmond & I suppose they will contest every inch of ground. . . . Last night there was about 50,000 men camped in one piece of wheat of nearly 200 acres. Fine looking wheat it was but it got awfully trod down . . . most of the Whites have fled & the Darkies left though the Rebels took several thousands to work on their fortifications. Some have run away & tell us a good deal of news. You ought to see this army as it is now camped in this field between 40 & 50 thousand men—artillery, cavalry, & forage teams. It makes a grand scene. . . .

The fight at Williamsburg was a hard fight. Our loss was about 2,000 in killed & wounded—more of a battle than I supposed at the time. We was within a hundred rods of the fight & expected to walk in every moment. All day we stood in line, knapsacks on, & it rained terribly all day & all night. We lay on our arms all night wet as rats & cold & they threw shell pretty close, I tell you. Some burst within a rod of us. We expected to renew the fight in the morning but they left. . . . [Our] cavalry had a fight . . . & killed about 30 Rebels. We lost about 15 men. Skirmishes are quite frequent & some are pretty sharp. There is not much sport in this business. I think the Rebellion will get its death blow not many miles from here. . . . If there is a general engagement, it will be the greatest battle ever fought in this country. We see Gen. McClellan almost every day. This army is a perfect machine. Everything works as it should. The Signal Corps is a fine thing. The Left Wing knows exactly what the right are doing. The General 5 miles off knows what is wanted. This is done by flags of different colors. Men placed on high ground some places can signal 2 miles at once. There is also men to put up the telegraph as fast as we move . . . so an order can be given & the men in five minutes will be under arms. . . . We are encamped on the Rebel Gen. Lee’s Plantation of about 1,000 acres.”

Military records show that Emery was later wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness and promoted to Sergeant before the end of the war.

A fine description of the condition of and optimism within the Union Army before McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign ground to halt and he was fired by President Lincoln.

This four-page letter is datelined “In the ‘Trenches’ near Chattanooga Town, Sept 25/63”. A 3-cent rose Washington stamp (Scott #65) is tied to the envelope with a target cancel. The envelope bears a double-circle Nashville postmark dated October 1, 1863. Both are in nice shape; half of the envelope’s sealing flap was removed when opened. Transcript included.

In this letter, Harman—the First Sergeant of Company I, 93rd Ohio Volunteer infantry—writes to a female penpal, describing his company’s actions during the Battle of Chickamauga, which concluded only five days before.

“Last Saturday and Sunday we had another terrible fight. Our Company – “I” – lost just have the number, in killed and wounded on Saturday that it too into the fight. On Sunday we lost but one man out of the company – killed.

This regiment charged upon a rebel Battery on Saturday Evening taking one section – two pieces – We killed every one of their horses and wounded all their artillery men, save two. Our loss was terrible. With superior numbers they soon drove us from our position. On Sunday the casualties were fearful on both sides, but on our no so heavy as we were protected by “breast works” which we erected during the night. In several successive charges we mowed them down like grass, but after all our desperate fighting we were compelled to leave the field partly in their possession. The fight was not renewed on the following day. Skirmishing is still kept up this being the seventh day. This Brigade Since the beginning of the fight lost three-eighths of the number of which they took into the fight.”

The action of the 93rd Ohio was one of the bright spots in the Union Army’s defeat at Chickamauga. Harman also describes the dangers of picket duty, which his regiment was performing at Chattanooga since it withdrew from the battlefield at Chickamauga.

“I must in this letter be very brief as there is no telling at what moment or hour a general engagement may take place. Firing on the picket line is going on all hours in the day and night. Occasionally brisk cannonading takes place. And besides we get but very little rest; Having been on the march ever since the 30th of August. Rebel Sharpshooters annoy our pickets very much and make it a regular practice of picking men off their post. Occasionally our pickets get a sight of them in some tree and dislodge them, bringing them head-foremost to the ground. . . . Yesterday the Sharp-Shooters killed and wounded fifteen of this Brig.”

Harman was later promoted to 1st Lieutenant and wounded while serving at Nashville. He survived the war and was mustered out on 8 June 1865.

A well-written letter with considerable information about a significant action within one of the major battles of the American Civil War.

SOLD  Inv # 9573
45. [MILITARY & WAR] [RELIGION] [VIRGINIANA] Letter from a civilian Christian Commission clergyman following the Union Army’s Bristoe Campaign to his Sunday School students in Massachusetts. P. B. [Perley Bacon] Davis. Rooms of the Christian Commission, Culpeper, Virginia: February [1864].

Eight-page letter. Undated, but written while the Union Army was in winter quarters at Culpeper following General Meade’s Bristoe Campaign that drove General Lee’s army south over the Rapidan River from their Rappahannock Station bridgehead. In nice shape. A transcript will be provided.

In this letter Davis explains to his former students that he is ministering to Union soldiers and has seen “a great many things which seem odd indeed. Some things are very pleasant & some are very sad. I see a great many soldiers who are very good men & some are very wicked. I hear a great deal of profanity & find many men who seem to have no regard at all for the Sabbath day. In fact, if you were here you would hardly know when the Sabbath day comes.”

He reports that on one occasion “just as we had assembled in church, an order came for everyone to be packed & ready to leave at a moment’s warning. There was fighting a few miles off & we could hear the roar of the cannons. It was thought the rebels might come in upon us & that we should have to run to get out of their way. They did not come however & in the evening the streets were full of our soldiers who were coming back from the fight. They said they made the rebels run back over the river a little faster than they came. It was an interesting sight to see thousands of soldiers going & coming, some on foot, some on horse, & large guns drawn by six or eight horses.”

As part of his duties, Davis ministered to soldiers at “Pony Mountain [and] Signal Hill [where] from the top . . . I could see numerous rebel encampments. . . . with the naked eye & with the glass, which an officer kindly lent me, I could see them very clearly and the men & horses around them. It was an imposing sight. For miles around the country was dotted with tents. On our side were Union troops and the other side rebel, & the Rapidan river ran between them. The next day I . . . I saw eleven rebel deserters who had come over the previous night. I had a long talk with them & they told me the plans they had formed to get away.”

And, he also notes that “A part of my duty here is to visit the Hospitals where the sick soldiers are. Some of them have been very sick & several have died. The Hospital is a poor place to be sick in. I am sure you would think so if you could go with me through the wards. Several cases here have interested me very much. One was a Drummer boy from Maryland. He was only 13 years old & had flaxen hair & light blue eyes. He was taken sick & had to be brought to the hospital. He said he was tired of war & wished he could go home. . . . He wanted a pair of stockings & . . . how his eyes sparkled when I carried them to him.”

Public records show that Davis served with the Christian Commission—a volunteer Protestant organization that provided support to the exceedingly small Army Chaplain’s Corps—as early as 1863. An excellent firsthand account of the Civil War in Virginia from an unusual source.

SOLD Inv # 5962

This four-page letter between sisters consolidates information received from their brother and a friend who were serving aboard Union steamships transporting fresh troops and wounded soldiers along the Rappahannock River following the Battle of the Wilderness at Spotsylvania, Virginia as General Grant continued his war of attrition against the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. In nice shape. Transcript included.

The letter reads in part:

“I have received two letters from Gene since I wrote home, one from Washington dated 15th and when he wrote he said they were going to Alexandria to coal up, and another dated 26th... In his last he said they were going to take a regiment of soldiers to Port Royal for Grant, 600 strong. Poor fellows I don’t see for the life of me where they will all stow themselves. It is almost up to Fredericksburg distance about 200 miles from Alexandria, and when he wrote he was on watch, time 1 o’clock A.M. they were expecting them every moment... they did not come that night... nor all of the next day and he could not see any signs of there starting. He wrote that two or three steamers had started loaded with drunken soldiers and did not know but what the “Mount” would be next... Gene wrote that there are any quantity of torpedoes up the Rappahannock river and the Steamer Eagle, Capt. Bender, was blown up and every soul on her was lost or killed this past week. [He] said that while deeply regretting the loss of the ‘Eagle’ hoped the ‘D. H. Mount’ would escape a like fate. I feel awful anxious about them now... He says he wishes we could only be there and see the activity that prevails. The river is full of boats going & coming all hours of the day and night some on this errand and some on that and to see those loaded with soldiers bound towards Grant & those coming back loaded with sick and wounded heroes, victims of base cruel, and designing politicians. What a terrible record God will have against these double distilled murderers.

He says night & day, week days and Sundays are all the same there. Sometimes I think Gene will get so hardened that he will forget that he has a Heavenly Father...”

SOLD Inv # 9541
47. [MUSIC, OPERA, & THEATER] [PHILATELY] A defensive letter from a young American in Italy to his father, justifying his decision to abandon college and study opera in Naples. Gustavus Hall. Napoli, [Two Sicilies] to Boston: 1859.

This one-page folded letter is dated “Napoli Dec 3. 1859”. It bears manuscript “per Liverpool” and postal rate markings and several Italian, French, and U.S. postmarks suggesting it traveled from Naples, through Marseille, Paris, and Liverpool before arriving in Boston. It also bears a red rectangular “Br Service” handstamp as required by the United State-France Convention of 1857 indicating that it was carried at the expense of the French via Great Britain.” (See The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues, Aug 1998.)

In this letter, Gustavus defensively informs his father that he has decided to become a professional opera singer.

“I wrote to you weeks ago giving you my reasons why I could not enter the college! I now wish to explain what I am doing. I have got Maestro Scafarti (sic) & I have also a master of the Italian language & I have placed myself at the disposition of the Rogers Bros & Co. . . . As it is now, I draw checks upon them for my master of music & Italian for my house & piano rent & receive about $1.75 per week for my meals & no other money. . . . I am, Thank the Lord at work at last! . . . You can ask Mr. Bendclari about Safarti (sic) I think he is acquainted with him! I sent you per U.S. Steamer Wabash to New York & per Adam’s Ex to Boston an Opera for Mr. Harwood – at Chickerings – I received it & sent it in such a hurry that I had no time to write any not to go inside of it!”

Domenico Scafati was a prominent Italian opera teacher, who trained under the celebrated castrato, Girolamo Crescentini, and in turn instructed a number of hopeful English performers at his studio in Naples and later Milan.

Gustavus Hall went on to a long and successful career as a baritone, performing with the famous Parepa Rosa English Opera Company during its U.S. tour in the late 1860s, and later as a member of the Max Strakosch Italian Opera Company of New York, Clara Louise Kellogg’s revolutionary American-based English-language grand opera troop, the Comley & Barton Opera Company (apparently a comic opera “Pinafore troupe”), and the Emma Juch Grand English Opera Company that toured throughout the United States and Mexico. Newspaper advertisements show that Hall continued to sing professionally until 1914.

At the time of listing, nothing similar is for sale in the trade, recorded in auction results at the Rare Book Hub, nor held by institutions per OCLC.

SOLD Inv # 9566
38. [OIL] [PHILATELY] [STAGECOACH] [TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL] Letter on Casper and Rongis Stage Line stationery sent by an early and important Wyoming oil prospector from the middle of nowhere via one of the lines stagecoaches. Iver Johnson. “14 miles from any body”, Wyoming: 1892.

Three-page letter on illustrated stagecoach stationery with matching mailing envelope. The letter is dated “At camp 14 miles from any body Wyo., Jan 6th 1892.” The cover is franked with a 2-cent Washington stamp (Scott # 219D) canceled by a 7 January Casper postmark. In nice shape. In this letter, Johnson gives his wife complex instructions for moving money between banks, workers, and creditors. Transcript included.

“As the stage will soon go past here, I take the opportunity of sending out a few lines . . . sent Dft on you for one hundred Dollars and I wish you deposit with The First National Bank Cheyenne one hundred Dollars more for C.H. King & Co . . . have the Bank sign a telegram. . . . When that is done you have Emile or Clarance to get a Dft on Omaha for one hundred more which you can send to me by mail. . . . This will make three hundred Dollars . . . but you can give warrant to Clarance . . . in fact I wrote you to turn all checks over to them so what money we have to use these we will allow them interest on. . . . If Clarance or Emile get the Dft for your they can get it in there own name & sign it over to my order. Warren or Clarance will tell how that is done correctly . . . please let me know if that soda money have been paid. I have had worked done on all Soda Lakes, so they cant play any schemes on that. I wrote you from Casper what deal I have made with Mr Iba, which presumes will make them stop & think what to do next. . . . I have the Buffalo Coat on most of the time. . . .”

When he wrote this letter, Johnson—a Norwegian immigrant—was no doubt prospecting for oil fields in Natrona County, Wyoming. By 1892, Johnson—a prominent pioneer merchant—owned a network of dry goods and grocery stores in Wyoming with his partner, E.J. Baker. He was also an oil prospector who in 1882, along with Territorial Geologist Samuel Aughey, was the first to discover oil 40 miles north of Casper in the Salt Creek district, the most prolific oil field in Wyoming. He next discovered another major oil field near Lander, about 150 miles west of Casper. In 1892, when this letter was written, Johnson was searching for oil—which he would find—near Teapot Rock (of the infamous Teapot Dome Scandal). This letter was written during one of Johnson’s explorations while prospecting along the Casper and Rongis Stage Line.

The Casper and Rongis Stage Line never reached Rongis (now a ghost town near Rock Spring). Rather, the line—also known as the Bessemer-Casper Stage Line, ran one coach per day to Lander, about 140 miles to the west, and two per day to Casper, about 20 miles to the north. The line was owned by William Clark with his son, John and headquartered in Bessemer, where the Clarks also owned the Searight House, “the best hotel in Central Wyoming, with accommodations unsurpassed.”

For more information about Johnson and the Wyoming oil fields see the online collections at the Niobara County Library, Natrona County: Towms at roots.web, Wyoming Tales and Trails, and WyoHistory.com.

SOLD Inv # 9582
49. [OPALOTYPE] [PHOTOGRAPHY] [VIRGINIANA] An archive of materials related to a prominent Pennsylvania-Virginia family including a photographic opalotype portrait on ‘milk glass’ of a young Virginia socialite, Anna Louise Ferguson (later Mrs. William T. C. Rogers. Unidentified photographer. Belmont Farm, Leesburg, Virginia: 1900-1915.

This archive is of items related to Ferguson and his family.

An unframed 1860 debating team oval plaque is 12” x 14”. It is titled “Addisonian Contestants March 8, 1860 / Allegheny City College” and filled with calligraphic scrollwork. Each of its four oval albumin photographs measure 2.5” x 3.5” of the “Debater, Essayest (J. S. Ferguson), Delaimer, and Orator”. The photographs have faded; there is a crease at the top, and it is lightly soiled and toned.

A circa 1900 opalotype (milk glass photograph) a young Anna Louise Ferguson (daughter of J. S. Ferguson) roughly cut into a 2” x 3” oval is attached to a metal hanger and has a neatly-cut protective glass cover. Its frame is missing. The opalotype is in nice shape with an accompanying note reads, “Mrs. Wm Rogers . . . who many years ago restored Belmont for a summer home.”

14 of the 20 scrapbook pages range from 1883 to 1914 and contain articles, clippings, and obituaries about John Scott Ferguson. The six remaining pages contain obituaries and clippings about the death of his son, Edwin G. Ferguson, in 1903 at the age of 38 from complications resulting from rheumatic heart disease. The disbound pages have some minor soiling and edgewear.

The circa 1903 engraving of Edwin G. Ferguson is 8” x 11” and has some light soiling and edgewear. One of the circa 1914 engravings of John Scott Ferguson measures 7” x 10”. The other measures 9.5” x 12.5”. Both are in nice shape.

The black leatherette memorial book contains 51 pages of testaments to John Scott Ferguson by members of the Pennsylvania Bar.

Ferguson was one of the most prominent lawyers in Pennsylvania. Although residing primarily in Pittsburgh, he also used the somewhat worse-for-wear Belmont Plantation near Leesburg, Virginia as a summer home. His daughter, Anna Louise Rogers (nee Ferguson), did much to restore its elegance. Her daughter, Nancy Graham Rogers, graduated from Agnes Scott College and became a prominent virologist who helped develop a typhus vaccine during World War Two. The Belmont mansion house was built in 1799 by Ludwell Lee, the son Richard Henry Lee, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Today, it is the center of an e golf course community. Belmont Country Club.

The opalotype process, invented in the 1850s, essentially used negatives to expose glass plates that had been sensitized with collodion and silver gelatin like sheets of photographic paper. The process resulted in images that were similar in appearance to ivory miniatures.

A nice collection with relatively scarce opalotype photograph. A collection of papers related to Nancy Graham Rogers is maintained by the Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg, Virginia.

$250 Inv # 9543
This detailed three-page stampless letter measures 10” x 16” unfolded and is datelined Wilmington December 26th, 1838. It bears a Wilmington postmark also dated December 26 and a manuscript “25” rate mark, the cost to deliver a letter over 400 miles. In nice shape. Transcript will be provided.

This letter recounts the final segment of Physick’s trip from his Mt. Ararat plantation just north of Havre de Grace to Wilmington, North Carolina. Physick probably began his travel by steamboat to Washington, where he switched to stagecoach and traveled south on the Old King’s Highway, skirting low land marshes including the Great Dismal, White Oak, and Angola Swamps. At Enfield, North Carolina he would have taken the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road as far as the lines were laid and finished his journey by stagecoach. During the trip, Physick survived two stagecoach accidents, one train crash, and a horrendous dinner served in a North Carolina ordinary, i.e. a type of traveler’s rest stop notorious for their filth, unpalatable meals, and rude service. For more information, see *The Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road Company* by James Burke, *Travelling South...* by John David Cox, and “Stagecoaches” online at NCpedia.)

Short excerpts from the letter include:

“I left off my narrative at the place where the stage upset... after sending for a Physician to set the drivers shoulder... we started forward... there was no alternative... the Road was getting worse [and] before we had gone 3 miles our stage was poised on two wheels the driver however gave the horses the whip and we righted [losing] a swingletree which was broken in two. [The driver] procured an axe and some fire then got a rail and... made one... the Road was nothing but mud and water and the night very dark – we went on at a slow pace... and at the dawn of day... had 22 miles to go to breakfast where arrived at half past Eleven Oclock – The Road runs through a low flat Swampy Country and many times the Wheels were into the hub [with no] way of avoiding it - The Coaches were made very strong but as strong as they were the coupling... broak and we had to splice it the best way we could [to make it] to the Rail Road... and just as we were seated the Engine was knocked off the track by another running against it... Ten miles more brought us to our Dining establishment and such another dinner I never wish to see... imagine the dirtiest table cloth you ever beheld... 6 Tumblers for 30 people... so dirty you would be afraid to touch them. Knives and forks... besmeared with dirt looked as though they had been in use for 8 or 10 years without being washed and plaits the same with the exception of some that I suppose the Dog had licked and one old Broken Pitcher to hold water... We had a turkey... that all the cooks in Chistendom could not tell how it was cooked... fat Pork cooked in conformity with the turkey and a mess made out of the leavings of the day before... Our fare from the time we left Washington had been bad enough but this beat anything I ever met with...”

A wonderful, detailed description of the most civilized method of travel in the early 19th century.
Please let us know if you would like to receive our electronic catalogs of diaries, letters, ephemera, postal history, photographs, and sometimes even books.

We hope you’ll be able to visit us at these upcoming 2020 shows. They haven’t been canceled yet.

Brooklyn Antiquarian Book Fair – Brooklyn, NY – 17-18 October
Boston Book and Ephemera Show – Boston, MA – 31 October
CHICAGOPEX 2020 – Itasca, IL – 20-22 November