

*The Publication Of American Values And The Formation Of "Nation,"  
1870-1915.*

My collection encompasses American guidebooks and material from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I have always been interested in guidebooks and information manuals on a range of subjects; they are practical, didactic and, as historical objects, convey information about a time and place in history. I began studying U.S. history and culture and an American Studies major at Yale, and took a particular interest in the period between the Civil War and World War I.

The books in my collection espouse an idealization of values and morals, or essentially the formation of what it meant and in many ways, still means, to be an American. The books encouraged an experience—an engagement to the country—with land in the West and through participation in activities. Guidebooks aim to construct the best individual and the best experience; they show individuals how to teach or educate themselves. I collect these books because I love American history and because the books' intentions—although evolved from over a hundred years ago—still apply to how we conceive of our role and character as American citizens today. Some of the advice, whether from a travel guide to Montana, or the Girl Scout's Handbook, is just as valid today in the process of seeking a meaningful life.

Although some books in this collection may seem incongruous with the others, it's because I love the seemingly unrelated influences in history. During this time period, different cultural and social movements informed each other, creating an interrelated web

that reflected American growth and ranged from the land, itself, to the values people wanted to it to symbolize. For instance, domestic architecture was exceptionally important during this period, as architects believed that the idea of “home,” and the values it imparted – stability, order and civilization, especially in the context of the less populated, barren West – were essential to American character. Further, the American West is the subject of many of my books; guidebooks for curious travellers and “look books” with images and maps of the United States comprise some of the selections. However, the idea of the West was so pervasive that it encompassed other aspects of American culture beyond just symbolizing a “region.” It represented the expansion and optimistic unification of a country broken – geographically and ideologically – after the Civil War. Patriotism abounded during this period, and many of the activities in which Americans participated related in some way to bolstering and furthering this cause, from the Girl Scouts of America, to A.G Spalding’s vehement defense of baseball’s American origins (see Spalding’s *America’s National Game* below).

History presents valuable lessons, which often reemerge and inform the present. I wrote my undergraduate senior essay on how the Northern Pacific Railroad Company represented Native Americans within its various publications (such as guidebooks for settlers) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. I spent a significant amount of time researching this material, which urged Americans to settle in the west, often at the expense of Native American tribes and their land. One of the tribes affected by the railroad’s construction

was the Lakota Sioux, who are now located in southern South Dakota. And just last month, by rather fortuitous circumstances, I found myself on this very reservation in rural South Dakota, volunteering and shadowing at the Rosebud Indian Hospital as a Johns Hopkins student. I am engaged in a new field—hoping to go to medical school—and yet I did not wander far from where I had come as a history student.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Camp, Walter. *American Football*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891.  
(Reproduction Copy). I came across Camp's publication of the rules of "American Football" when I was a freshman in college, and it was one of the first books that prompted my interest in American cultural studies. Although I don't enjoy that women are absent from this narrative, and so many of the time period, it is still so relevant to studying conceptions of American character in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Camp believed that football, and athletics in general, paralleled the rugged challenges facing pioneers in the West. Further, the embossed cover of the original book (from 1891) features two eagles clutching footballs between their claws, and is one of many overt references to patriotic themes (just as was the case in Spalding's American baseball book).
- 2) Gardner, E.C. *Homes and How to Make Them*. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1874. In addition to providing practical information, such as building with different kind of brick, this series of letters between the architect and his acquaintances yield advice on the value of the "home."
- 3) Hoxie, W.J. *How Girls Can Help their Country, Handbook for the Girls Scouts*. Girl Scouts of the USA, 1972.  
This handbook—originally published for the Girl Scouts in 1912—provided young women with rules and advice, among which was the first promise in the Girl Scout's creed: "To do my duty to God and to my Country." A Girl Scout was also loyal, first "to the president, to her country, and to her officers." These values fit squarely into the time period leading up to World War I.
- 4) *Boy Scouts of America Handbook*. New York: Doubleday Page and Company, 1970 (reprint of 1911 edition). This is an interesting read to compare to the Girl Scout handbook.

- 5) James, George Wharton. *Our American Wonderlands*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1915. This is the latest guidebook in my collection, from 1915, which I find interesting in comparison to the other guidebooks. Those books of the late 1800s aimed to share the natural beauties of the United States, which the authors believed would bolster patriotism in Americans as the divisions of the Civil War healed. Similarly, the author of this guidebook—published at the beginning of World War I— wanted to make sure that Americans fighting in Europe, if asked by the Europeans about their own country, would be able to share the “scenic glories of our Western World [which] far surpass in variety and marvel anything Europe has to offer.”
  
- 6) Johnson, Clifton. *New England and Its Neighbors*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902. This book is part of a series called “America’s Highways and Byways,” which the author uses to describe an interest in the “rural aspects of national life.” I like this book because of its travelogue style.
  
- 7) Prescott, Lawrence F. *The Great Campaign of 1896: Parties, Leaders and Issues. A Complete Handbook of Political Information, Voter's Guide and Instructor*. Loyal Publishing Co. 1896. I don’t have a particular interest in the 1896 presidential race. Rather, I like this voter’s guide in the sense that it’s another form of a guidebook. It reflects the sentiment of the period, that one had an obligation as a citizen to be informed in making a selection for President.
  
- 7) Smythe, William E. *The Conquest of Arid America*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1905 (original edition, 1899). A severe draught in the Great Plains in 1890 influenced Smythe to advocate for irrigation methods. Smyth was founder of the National Irrigation Movement and, as chairman of the Irrigation Congress under President Roosevelt, reclaimed large portions of arid land, which was essential for making parts of the West habitable.
  
- 9) Spalding, A.G. *America's National Game*. First Edition. New York: American Sports Publishing Co., 1911. This is perhaps my favorite book. A gold-embossed image on the blue, front cover depicts Uncle Sam playing baseball. Spalding wrote this first official history of baseball to prove that the game had purely American origins. It was part of other contemporaneous movements that sought to claim or create uniquely American traditions.
  
- 10) Sweetser, M.F. and Moses King. *King's Handbook of the United States*. Buffalo, New York: Osgood, Mcllvaine & Co. 1891. This is perhaps my favorite book. The

Moses King Corporation published handbooks about the United States and U.S. cities from the 1880s to about 1900. This particular edition has a beautiful embossing of the U.S. Capitol building on the front and extensive colorful maps on the inside. Its almost endearing how tightly packed it is with information; to me, it reinforces how they thought *everything* one needed to know about the U.S. was contained in this small volume.

- 11) Townsend, Malcolm. *U.S. An Index to the United States of America: Historical, Geographical and Political. A Handbook of Reference Combining the "Curious" in U.S. History*. Boston: D Lothrop Company, 1890. This is another extensive guidebook that includes the usual sections on geography, history, and political structure of the United States, as well as twenty five pages about currency and other miscellaneous information, like the a section documenting important events in U.S. history that occurred on Fridays. It also exposes itself to the blatant racism and inequalities prevalent within the country at the time, with sections describing "Negros" and American Indians.
- 12) Turner, Frederick Jackson. Introduction by Martin Ridge. *History, Frontier and Section*. University of New Mexico Press, 1993. Three of Turner's essays on the American West including his well-known "Frontier Thesis" (originally from 1893). It is an essential read for acquiring a preliminary understanding of what the West meant for American expansion.
- 13) Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Character and Influence of the Indian Trade in Wisconsin: A Study of the Trading Post As an Institution*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977. Originally published in 1891 by The Johns Hopkins University Press, this essay was Turner's dissertation at Hopkins, from which he received his PhD in History. It preceded his "Frontier Thesis," and is thus interesting to draw connections between the works.
- 14) Twombly, Robert. *Frederick Law Olmsted: Essential Texts*. W.W. Norton, 2010. Frederick Law Olmsted's work in landscape architecture and planning, although seemingly unrelated to the other material here, is important for understanding the integration of cities and the open landscape – as was the attraction of the west – in the latter half of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among many projects, Olmsted designed Central Park. Architectural and city planning took off in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as people sought order in the chaos of cities. I have always enjoyed reading works about these planners and architects, whose work contributed greatly to America's developing landscape.

- 15) Thayer, William M. *Marvels of the New West*. Norwich, CT: The Henry Bill Publishing Company, 1887. This book is a favorite. It contains several hundred illustrations and maps about the different regions of the West. Although I haven't been able to find much secondary information about it, the book speaks for itself in its breadth and illustrations.
- 16) Watson, Gaylord. *Handbook of the United States of America and Guide to Emigration. Furnishing All the Necessary Information Concerning the Country, for the Settler, the Business Man, the Merchant, the Farmer, the Importer and the Professional Man*. New York: Gaylord Watson, 1881. My favorite parts of this book are the sections "Advice to those Seeking New Homes" (p 101) and "The West: Who Should Migrate Thither" (p 115). The former dispenses advice, state by state, about the qualities of individuals who should settle and prosper in each region.
- 17) Whiting, Lillian. *The Land of Enchantment*. Boston: Little Brown, and Company, November 1906. I love books that pull from contemporaries in other fields, in which paths cross between science, literature and history. Here, the author dedicated her book to John Wesley Powell, who "significantly advancing the progress of the country" with his well-known surveys documenting the western U.S. in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Quotes from Ralph Waldo Emerson, Robert Browning, and Emily Dickinson precede the chapters.
- 18) Williams, J. David. *America Illustrated*. Boston: DeWolfe, Fiske & Company, 1883. In the very first line of the preface, the author gets right after it and correlates American exceptionalism to the country's natural beauty. Includes dozens of illustrations and accompanying commentary on various geographic marvels and western landscapes.

#### SECONDARY MATERIAL

- 19) Cronon, William, Jay Gitlin and George Miles. *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993. An anthology of essays covering various topics elucidating on the West.
- 20) Hayes, Derek. *Historical Atlas of the American West, with Original Maps*. University of California Press, 2009. I love maps because they're both an historical document and image. They explain more than just geography, but how people and ideas migrate and intermingle. This book is wonderful because it tells a story through various kinds of maps, and from different periods, to project a

narrative of different people and communities as the western United States formed.

#### WISH LIST

- 1) Bryant, William Cullen. *Picturesque America, Or the Land We Live In*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1872. I first learned about this book when I came across a piece of it; I found an old woodcut print—a single page from the book—in a used bookstore in Boston last fall. The illustration, titled “Emigrants Crossing the Plains,” reminded me of my own great, great grandparents, who had done that very thing many years ago (albeit by slightly different means). This book is one of the most significant of the “landscape” books because it was one of the first to print illustrations of the United States—everything from cities, to natural wonders in the west that people had never before seen with their own eyes—and widely distribute them to the American public.
  
- 2) Winser, H.J. *The Great Northwest: A Guidebook and Itinerary for the Use of Tourists and Travelers Over the Lines of the Northern Pacific Railroad*. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1883. I used the book while researching the Northern Pacific Railroad, and would love to someday own it.

Note: Many of the books I have, I’ve come across in bookstores, or after researching another topic, which is why I don’t have many on my “wish” list. Often, one book leads me to another book. For example, recently I was reading about the history of the *New York Evening Post* when I learned that its editor, William Cullen Bryant (also the romantic poet), edited the *Picturesque America* book I’ve mentioned above, prompting me to look for it.