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The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator and Historian

Maurice Rickards

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#15676605 in Books 2000Format: ImportOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 #File Name: 0712346791416 pages | File size: 54.Mb

Maurice Rickards : The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator and Historian before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator and Historian:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This book is the fullest encyclopedia ever. The subject ...By P B IllingworthThis book is the fullest encyclopedia ever. The subject matter is very well explained. This is a must for those immersed in the subject matter.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A must for small collectionsBy RobertaI purchased this volume because I was writing a research article on government grey-literature and ephemera. This volume is a fantastic reference for any manager of a collection containing archival or museum items.Living in the southern hemisphere the postage was as much as the book but I do not regret paying the cost for one minute.The vendor was excellent.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An introduction, and a thorough schooling, in a world you're forgettingBy (((Marco Buendia)))According to the Introduction, this book is the precipitation of the life work of Maurice Rickards, who died in 1998 without living to see its publication. He was, appropriately enough,

Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Ephemera Studies at Reading in the UK. The book appears to have been aimed primarily at collectors, but it clearly transcends that audience. It really serves as a general introduction to printed matter in the English-speaking world, and, to a lesser degree, elsewhere. Britain is the focal region. It's precisely the sort of stuff that libraries would *not* have collected*, nor archives, with their typical focus on particular institutions. This is a spectacular illustrated assortment of the documents that a literate society churned out in the course of exercising its intellect, commercial undertakings, folk-culture and varied sentimentality. The scope in time is generally the Industrial Revolution till many of the functions were superseded by other media, i.e. mostly pre-radio. Now the Internet is eliminating just about all of this stuff, except in the collector bins, and I now see signs that perhaps even the antique value these documents have leaves the insanely electronically mediated cold. Too much time with the e-tablets. Some of the documents dealt with here: birth certificates, chemist's labels (i.e. pharmacists', identifying the preparations made by the pharmacist in-house, as opposed to pre-prepared and branded drugs), cut-out toys (doll figures, outfits and what-not printed in color on cardboard, to be scissored out), free frank (the right to mail materials free of specific charge, going back to the time of Oliver Cromwell), letterheads, news bills (describing the content of early newspapers), oaths (with, specially, their written or printed relics), parking tickets, passports, public apologies (handbills "at various periods ... widely accepted as a form of restitution for offense"), removal cards (i.e. change-of-address cards), sale notices, seed packets, slave paper, stoy theatres (children's versions of popular plays), warrants ("a document of authority", i.e. this term was used for many kinds of attestations of legal acts and authorities), waybills (listing the itinerary of a traveler, or, more commonly, data relating to freight carriage), writing tablets. There are clear black-and-white illustrations of some of the documents, every two or three pages or so. There are a few color plates in the center of the book. But the main value is the very clear text, adequately descriptive and rich in historical information and historical sense. *It's no longer collected by the Zero Public Library in Zero, Mississippi, either. It hit the dumpster with an alarming report early this morning.

First published in 2001. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor Francis, an informa company.

From Booklist Aimed at curators, collectors, and historians, this 550-entry alphabetically organized encyclopedia treats manuscript and printed ephemera from early ABC books (circa 1500) to e-mail, as well as more generic items like Form and Poster that cover a broad time span. Baggage sticker, Carte-de-visite, Menu, Seed packet, and Timetable are among the other materials covered. Emphasis is on ephemera in English. Each entry contains a clear description of the type of document or printed matter, covers its use at the time it was current, and treats its utility for the ephemera collector. Cross-references are noted in small capitals in the body of each article, sometimes preceded by see, sometimes not, but providing useful informational webbing in all cases. See also references are given at the foot of articles along with references to applicable print works (both English and foreign language), societies, and collections. Numerous clear black-and-white reproductions serve to extend the text, as does a section of color plates. Articles vary in length from a paragraph or two (e.g., Place card, Riddle book) to nine pages (e.g., Armed forces papers, the various kinds of paperwork generated by the military), with the weighting being appropriate. All of the articles in each alphabetical section are listed on the first page of the section. Guide words and an index provide additional points of entry. A list of ephemera collections and societies and a topically arranged bibliography follow the entries. Clearly written and cleanly presented, this survey is more comprehensive than *Collecting Printed Ephemera* (Abbeville, 1988) and provides useful information for those in need of a historical context for a printed document. Recommended for academic and large public libraries, especially those housing special collections that might include this type of material.

REVWR Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved ... "this work presents an accessible overview of information on ephemera and guides readers to additional sources for more information. Readable entries, black-and-white illustrations, color plates, a bibliography, and a comprehensive index make this a solid reference work." - "Choice ..." "useful information for those in need of a historical context for a printed document. Recommended for academic and large public libraries." - Booklist/RBB, March 2001 "An outstanding source.... This is truly a source to be consulted by collectors or anyone looking for a glimpse of the past." - American Libraries, May 2001 "This unique title is recommended for most public and academic reference collections: tracking down information on this sort of trivia can be very challenging, and Rickard's book could be a welcome ace-in-the-hole sort of resource." - Library Journal ... "opens the door to this world of fugitive miscellany, its substantial entries exposing and explicating the details of life in the past in a fascinating way." - Copley News Service

EPHEMERA IS THE PLURAL FORM OF THE GREEK WORD EPHEMERON (EPI = ON, ABOUT, ROUND; HEMERA = DAY). LITERALLY, IT REFERS TO SOMETHING THAT LASTS THROUGH THE DAY, OR, AS MAURICE RICKARDS PROPOSED, THE MINOR TRANSIENT DOCUMENTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE, ALTHOUGH NOT EVERY ITEM OF EPHEMERA CAN BE REGARDED AS TRANSIENT OR EVEN MINOR. COLLECTIVELY THE MANY ENTRIES IN THIS FORMIDABLE NEW REFERENCE WORK PROVIDE A BETTER DEFINITION OF EPHEMERA, SINCE THEY INCLUDE MANUSCRIPT AND PRINTED MATTER (SPORTS PROGRAMS, ENVELOPES, VISITING CARDS, BALLOTS), RECORDS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT (NEWSPAPERS,

CIGARETTE CARDS, SEED PACKETS, RATION PAPERS), ITEMS DESIGNED TO BE THROWN AWAY (BUS TICKETS, PAPER BAGS, FRUIT LABELS), AND TO BE KEPT (BOOKMARKS, PLAYING CARDS, BOARD GAMES). THIS LAVISHLY ILLUSTRATED LANDMARK VOLUME IS INTENDED FOR SOCIAL HISTORIANS AS WELL AS COLLECTORS OF EPHEMERA WHO TAKE A BROADER VIEW THAN THEIR OWN SPECIALIST FIELD.