Jay T. Last Collection of Firefighting Prints and Ephemera: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Diann Benti.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.
Prints and Ephemera
The Huntington Library
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
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URL: http://www.huntington.org
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Overview of the Collection

Title: Jay T. Last Collection of Firefighting Prints and Ephemera

Dates (inclusive): 1826-1907

Collection Number: priJLC_FIRE

Collector: Last, Jay T.

Extent: approximately 200 items

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Abstract: The Jay T. Last Collection of Firefighting Prints and Ephemera contains more than 200 printed items that relate to firefighting and the activities and organizations of firemen in the United States from approximately 1820 to 1909. The collection consists of advertising and promotional materials, business records, and illustrations produced for or pertaining to firefighting organizations, related social or charitable events, and firefighting vehicles, equipment, and supplies.

Language: English.

Note: Finding aid last updated on December 17, 2018.

Access

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Preferred Citation

[Item title, Call number]. Jay T. Last Collection of Firefighting Prints and Ephemera, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

This collection forms part of the Jay T. Last Collection of Graphic Arts and Social History, which was donated to the Huntington Library by Jay T. Last in 2005 as a gift in progress. The bulk of the firefighting prints and ephemera were transferred to the Library between 2010 and 2012.

Background

The Jay T. Last Collection is an unparalleled archive of printed paper artifacts that documents American lithographic, social, and business history. The collection began in the early 1970s when physicist and Silicon Valley pioneer Jay Last moved to Southern California and started collecting citrus box labels he found at local flea markets and rummage sales. As his collection grew, Last realized that these labels conveyed important information about commercial printing, graphic design, and social history, and he expanded his collection to include other forms of American visual culture. Today this collection contains more than 200,000 lithographic prints, posters, and ephemera of mostly nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American origin and represents works by more than five hundred lithographic companies.

Scope and Content

The Jay T. Last Collection of Firefighting Prints and Ephemera contains more than 200 printed items that relate to firefighting and the activities and organizations of firemen in the United States from approximately 1820 to 1909. The collection consists of advertising and promotional materials, business records, and illustrations produced for or pertaining to firefighting organizations, related social or charitable events, and firefighting vehicles, equipment, and supplies.

Materials are arranged in two series: small-size items (11 x 14 inches or less) and large-size items (more than 11 x 14 inches). Small materials broadly at the series level; large-size items have been fully inventoried and all printers, artists, and publishers are indexed by name.

The collection has 40 large-size items comprised mainly of lithographic and engraved prints that include:

- Fire department membership and discharge certificates
• Depictions of fires and firefighters working to extinguish blazes
• Builders prints of fire engines and similar vehicles
• Images and advertisements pertaining to social and charitable events involving fire departments and related organizations

Small-size items in the collection number more than 160 and consist mainly of business documents and advertising and promotional ephemera such as printed booklets, trade cards, small programs, menus, tickets and invitations for charitable and social events such as balls, concerts, musters, and celebrations, business cards, lapel ribbons, book and periodical illustrations, membership certificates, and stationery with printed billheads and letterheads filled out in manuscript.

Note
The Jay T. Last Collection is a gift in progress. Container numbers may change as the collection expands.

The Huntington Library Historical Prints Collection contains six related items (priHHC_FIRE_0000008 - priHHC_FIRE_0000013) that are listed in the "Related Materials" section in Series II.

Arrangement
The collection is arranged broadly by size in two series:

Series I. Firefighting Prints and Ephemera (small size)
Series II. Firefighting Prints and Ephemera (large size)

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Genres
Billheads.
Business cards.
Business records.
Business records -- United States -- 19th century.
Chromolithographs.
Engravings.
Ephemera.
Ephemera -- United States -- 19th century.
Intaglio prints.
Leaflets (printed works).
Letterheads.
Lithographs.
Printed ephemera.
Prints.
Prints -- United States -- 19th century.
Promotional materials.
Relief prints.
Trade cards.
Views.

Subjects
Fire departments.
Fire departments -- United States.
Fire engines -- Pictorial works.
Fire extinction -- Equipment and supplies -- Pictorial works.
Fire fighters -- Pictorial works.
Fire stations -- Pictorial works.
Fires -- Pictorial works.
Fires -- United States.
Steam-engines -- Pictorial works.
Printer, Publisher, Artist Index

The following is a complete list of printers, publishers, and artists represented in the large-size items in this collection.

Amory, Thomas C. (Thomas Coffin), 1812-1889.
Armstrong, McLellan & Green.
Bachelder, John B. (John Badger), 1825-1894.
Bennett, W. J. (William James), 1787-1844.
Bloomfield, J. J.
Brooks Bank Note Co.
Bufford, John Henry, 1810-1870.
Calyo, Nicolino, 1799-1884.
Chas. H. Crosby & Co.
Clay, Cosack & Co.
Clover, Lewis Peter, 1790-
Crump Label Co.
Currier & Ives.
Disturnell, John, 1801-1877.
Dunston, G. H.
Eddy, Isaac, 1777-1847.
Endicott & Co. (New York, N.Y.)
F.M. Baker & Co.
Frizzell, S. S. (Samuel S.), 1843-1895.
Heiss, Geo. G.
Imbert’s Lithographic Office.
J.H. Bufford’s Lith.
Jones, J. R.
Kellogg, Jarvis Griggs, 1805-1873.
Ketterlinus, Eugene, 1824-1886.
L.H. Bradford & Co.
Mayer & Stetfield.
Mayer, Merkel & Ottmann.
Miller, Fred. J.
Miller, W. G. (Artist)
Morgan, William P., active 1811-1872.
N. Currier (Firm)
P.S. Duval & Co.
P.S. Duval & Son.
Pendleton’s Lithography.
Queen, Jas. (James), 1824-approximately 1877.
Richardson, W. J. (Engraver)
Rogers, E. (Edward), 1831 or 1832-
Rowland, H. E., 1848?-1911.
Salmon, Robert, 1775- approximately 1848.
Sarony, Major & Knapp Lith.
Schmidt Label & Litho. Co.
Searle, Frederick A.
Smith, John Rubens, 1775-1849.
Tappan, Ebenezer, 1815-1854.
Series I. Firefighting Prints and Ephemera (small size) approximately 1820-1909

Physical Description: approximately 160 items in 1 binder and 1 flat-top box

Scope and Content

This series contains more than 160 small-size printed items that pertain to firefighting and the activities and organizations of firemen in the United States from approximately 1820 to 1909. The items consist of business records and advertising and promotional materials produced for or pertaining to firefighting organizations, related social or charitable events, and firefighting vehicles, equipment, and supplies.

The entities represented in these materials include fire departments, engine and hose companies, relief funds, veterans’ associations, and firefighting vehicle, equipment, and supply manufacturers such as engine works and pump and hose manufacturers. Item types consist of printed booklets, trade cards, small programs, menus, tickets and invitations for charitable and social events such as balls, concerts, musters, and celebrations, business cards, lapel ribbons, book and periodical illustrations, membership certificates, and stationery with printed billheads and letterheads filled out in manuscript. Many of these items are decorated with images that include depictions of firefighters assembling for duty and responding to alarms, fighting fires, and rescuing victims; views of burning and damaged buildings, and ruins amid flames, rubble, and smoke; and images of firefighting vehicles and equipment including steam fire engines, manual fire engines, hook and ladder trucks, hose carriages, fire hydrants, hoses, ladders, preventers, axes, and speaking trumpets.

While most of the materials date from the second half of the 19th century, among the earliest items in the collection is a circa 1820 engraving of a fire pumper that advertises the Philadelphia firm of Sellers & Pennock Patent River Hose, Fire Bucket and Hydraulion Manufacturers. Also of note are four small lithographs of parade floats carrying New York City firefighters and fire engines that were printed by Anthony Imbert of New York City and published in 1826 as part of an appendix to the 1825 Memoir by Cadwallader D. Colden commemorating the New York celebration of the opening of the Erie Canal. Later items include an 1886 booklet for the Veteran Firemen’s Association annual ball held at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City, containing multiple pages of advertisements and illustrations for firefighting apparatus and related services interspersed with four images of historic New York City fires; and twelve color covers with images of “Young Wide Awake” in firefighting scenes from the Wide Awake Weekly dime-novel/penny-dreadful series that was published by Frank Tousey between 1906 and 1909.

Arrangement

Items smaller than 8 x 10 inches are housed in one binder.

Items that are between 8 x 10 inches and 11 x 14 inches in size are sleeved and arranged numerically by call number in one box, and select items have been fully cataloged. These items are described in the following format:

Title of print. Date
Artist(s) (when known). Printer(s). Publisher(s).

Binder 1

Firefighting Prints and Ephemera (8 x 10 inches or smaller in size)

Physical Description: approximately 140 items

Box 1

Firefighting Prints and Ephemera (between 8 x 10 inches and 11 x 14 inches in size)

Physical Description: approximately 20 items

Note

Select items in this box have been fully cataloged and are listed below.
Series I. Firefighting Prints and Ephemera (small size) approximately 1820-1909

priJLC_FIRE_001465  Ruins of the Merchant's Exchange N.Y. After the destructive conflagration of Decbr.. 16 & 17, 1835. approximately 1835

priJLC_FIRE_001466  View of the great conflagration of Dec. 16th and 17th 1835; from Coenties Slip. approximately 1836

priJLC_FIRE_001467  Grand Canal Celebration. : Fire department. 1826

priJLC_FIRE_001468  Grand Canal Celebration. : Fire department. 1826

priJLC_FIRE_001469  Eagle Fire Engine No. 13. as she appeared in the procession on the fourth of November 1825 at the Grand Canal celebration in the city of New York. 1826

priJLC_FIRE_001470  Fire department. 1826
Series II. Firefighting Prints and Ephemera (large size) 1826-1907

Physical Description: 40 items

Scope and Content

This series contains 40 large-size printed items related to firefighting and the activities and organizations of firemen in the United States between 1826 and 1907. The series is comprised mainly of lithographic and engraved prints including fire department membership and discharge certificates, depictions of fires and firefighters working to extinguish blazes, builder’s prints of fire engines and similar vehicles, and images and advertisements pertaining to social and charitable events involving fire departments and related organizations.

These items were produced for a variety of purposes including as illustrations in books, as promotional materials, as documentary and commemorative prints, and as certificates attesting to the service of firemen. They consist mainly of color-printed, hand-colored, and uncolored lithographs and engravings by American artists, printers, and publishers.

Many of these prints contain scenes of firefighters assembling for duty and responding to alarms, fighting fires, and rescuing victims; views of burning and damaged buildings and ruins; and images of firefighting vehicles and equipment including steam fire engines, manual fire engines, hook and ladder trucks, hose carriages, fire hydrants, hoses, ladders, preventers, axes, and speaking trumpets.

The items primarily pertain to the Northeastern United States, though the materials do include certificates for fire companies in Gold Hill, Nevada (1867), Albany, Oregon (1874), and Alameda, California (1893); a print of a manual fire engine used by the Pacific Engine Company of San Francisco, California (1851); and a view of the June 20, 1877, fire in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada.

The series features:

• Certificates that document membership in fire companies or benevolent societies, or the exemption or discharge of firemen from service. Most of these certificates are decorated with multiple vignettes including images of recent or historic fires fought by the company, as well as more generic scenes of firemen and equipment.

• Prints produced for firefighting vehicle builders and manufacturers, similar to railroad locomotive builder’s prints, that prominently feature views of steam and manual fire engines and often include the name of the fire company that purchased the engine.

• Items pertaining to parades, balls, and celebrations involving firefighters.

Arrangement

Items are arranged numerically by call number and described in the following format:

Title of print. Date

Artist(s) (when known) Printer(s) Publisher(s)

Related Material

Items in the Huntington Library Historical Prints collection:

priHHC_FIRE_0000008 The life of a fireman. The night alarm. - “Start her lively boys.” ©1854

Artists: Maurer, Louis, 1832-1932 Printers: Currier, Nathaniel, 1813-1888 Publishers: N. Currier (Firm) View online image.

priHHC_FIRE_0000009 The life of a fireman. The race. "Jump her boys, jump her!" ©1854

Artists: Maurer, Louis, 1832-1932 Publishers: Currier & Ives View online image.

priHHC_FIRE_0000010 The life of a fireman. The fire. "Now then with a will - shake her up boys!" ©1854

Artists: Maurer, Louis, 1832-1932 Printers: Currier, Nathaniel, 1813-1888 Publishers: N. Currier (Firm) View online image.

priHHC_FIRE_0000011 The life of a fireman. The ruins. “Take up.” - "Man your rope.” ©1854

Artists: Maurer, Louis, 1832-1932 Printers: Currier, Nathaniel, 1813-1888 Publishers: N. Currier (Firm) View online image.

priHHC_FIRE_0000012 The life of a fireman. The new era. Steam and muscle. ©1861


priHHC_FIRE_0000013 The life of a fireman. The metropolitan system. ©1866

Artists: Cameron, John, approximately 1828- Printers: Currier & Ives Publishers: Currier & Ives View online image.
Firemen's muster, Merrimack Square, Manchester, N.H. September 15th. 1859. ©1861

Firemen's promenade concert and ball. The Extinguisher and Batcheller Hose Companies will hold their first promenade concert and ball, in the town hall, North Brookfield, Thursday evening, Nov. 27th, 1879 ... 1879
Printers: Searle, Frederick A.

The great fire at St. John, N. B. June 20th 1877. ©1877
Printers: Currier & Ives

Printers: Brooks Bank Note Co.

Printers: Mayer, Merkel & Ottmann

Weccacoe Fire Compy. Instituted 1800, Incorporated 1833. approximately 1855
Artists: Heiss, Geo. G. Printers: Wagner & M'Guigan

"Our name is our motto" Good Will Steam Fire Co. No. 20, of Philadelphia. (certificate) approximately 1860
Printers: Ketterlinus, Eugene, 1824-1886

City of Boston : This certifies that Amasa Pray having served for seven successive years in the Fire Department of the City of Boston ... (certificate) ©1833, 1846

This is to certify that John G. Lubben. having served the time prescribed by the laws of the State of California in the Alameda Fire Department ... (certificate) 1893

This is to certify that Hiram Sweet is an honorary member of the Columbia Hose Co. of Philadelphia ... (certificate) approximately 1865
Artists: Queen, Jas. (James), 1824-approximately 18777 Printers: P.S. Duval & Co.
Certificate of life membership to the Philadelphia Association for the relief of disabled firemen. This is to certify that R.C. Du Comb ... (certificate) approximately 1869

Artists: Smith, John Rubens, 1775-1849

This may certify that Wm. H. Porter was admitted a member of the Firemen’s Benevolent Society of the city of Hartford ... (certificate) between 1841 and 1858

Artists: Kellogg, Jarvis Griggs, 1805-1873 ; Tappan, Ebenezer, 1815-1854 Printers: Kellogg, Jarvis Griggs, 1805-1873

This may certify that C.A. Andrews was admitted a member of the Firemen’s Benevolent Society of the city of Hartford ... (certificate) between 1841 and 1901


This is to certify that ... has pursuant to law ... a member of the fire department (certificate) between 1857 and 1863

Printers: Sarony, Major & Knapp Lith.

These are to certify that Arch. Montieth has been nominated and elected an active member of Albany Engine Co. No. 1. ... (certificate) ©1874, 1875

Publishers: Miller, Fred. J.

This is to certify that H. H. Flagg ... Gold Hill Fire Department ... (certificate) 1867

Cambridge Fire Department. This is to certify that William T. King is appointed a member of Engine Company No Five ... (certificate) 1879

Printers: J.H. Bufford’s Lith.

Organized July 13th 1885. This is to certify that W. H. Conron is an exempt member of the Deposit Fire Department of Deposit, New York ... (certificate) between 1885 and 1907

Printers: Dunston, G. H.

This is to certify that Charles M. Tainter has served as a Fireman in the city of Buffalo ... (certificate) between 1845 and 1857

Artists: Miller, W. G. (Artist) ; Richardson, W. J. (Engraver)

Exempt certificate. This is to certify that George H. Waite has served seven full years as an active member of Rescue Hook & Ladder Co. Watkins, NY Fire Department ... (certificate) ©1898, 1903

Publishers: Jones, J. R.
This is to certify that C. G. Carter has been a member of the Owego Fire Department ... (certificate) between 1883 and 1896


This certifies that ... is a member of ... Company; No. ... Fire Department .. (certificate) ©1877

Printers: Currier & Ives Publishers: Currier & Ives

This may certify that ... was admitted a member of the Firemen's Benevolent Society of the city of Hartford ... (certificate) approximately 184-


3rd. size steam fire engine built by the Silsby Manufacturing Co. Seneca Falls, N.Y. approximately 1871

Printers: Armstrong, McLellan & Green

Silsby Manufg. Co. Seneca Falls, N.Y. between 1868 and 1877

Printers: Clay, Cosack & Co.

Franklin Engine No. 3. : Brooklyn, L.I. approximately 185-

Printers: Endicott & Co. (New York, N.Y.)

Wm. Jeffers & Co. Builders of: end & side stroke engines. Pawtucket. R.I. approximately 185-


Built by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Co. Manchester, N.H. approximately 1861

Printers: Mayer & Stetfield

Annual ball of the Franklin Fire Co. at Horticultural Hall, on Monday evening, Oct. 5th 1868. 1868

Artists: Rogers, E. (Edward), 1831 or 1832-

Button fire engine works : Holroyd & Co. Proprietors Waterford, Saratoga Co., N.Y. between 1882 and 1891

Printers: Rowland, H. E., 1848?-1911

Rumsey's Blackville Fire Brigade : Rumsey & Co. Ltd manufacturers of pump-hand fire engines hook & ladder trucks etc. Seneca Falls, N.Y. approximately 188-

Printers: Crump Label Co.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item ID</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Artists</th>
<th>Publishers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>priJLC_FIRE_001501</td>
<td>View of the great fire in New-York, Decr. 16th &amp; 17th, 1835: as seen from the top of the bank of America. Cor. of Wall &amp; Wm. St. ©1836</td>
<td>Calyo, Nicolino, 1799-1884; Bennett, W. J. (William James), 1787-1844</td>
<td>Clover, Lewis Peter, 1790-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priJLC_FIRE_001502</td>
<td>View of the ruins after the great fire in New-York, Decr. 16th &amp; 17th, 1835. As seen from Exchange Place. ©1836</td>
<td>Calyo, Nicolino, 1799-1884; Bennett, W. J. (William James), 1787-1844</td>
<td>Clover, Lewis Peter, 1790-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priJLC_FIRE_001503</td>
<td>View of the great fire in New York, Decr. 16th &amp; 17th, 1835 as seen from the top of the Bank of America. Cor. of Wall &amp; Wm. St. ©1836</td>
<td>Calyo, Nicolino, 1799-1884; Bennett, W. J. (William James), 1787-1844</td>
<td>Clover, Lewis Peter, 1790-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priJLC_FIRE_001504</td>
<td>Hibernia Fire Engine Company, No. 1 of Philadelphia. Instituted 1752. Assembling for parade, October 5th. 1857. approximately 1857</td>
<td>Queen, Jas. (James), 1824-approximately 1877</td>
<td>P.S. Duval &amp; Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priJLC_FIRE_001505</td>
<td>Henneman &amp; Co. builders, Boston, Mass. approximately 1855</td>
<td></td>
<td>L.H. Bradford &amp; Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priJLC_FIRE_001506</td>
<td>Built by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. approximately 1870</td>
<td>Frizzell, S. S. (Samuel S.), 1843-1895</td>
<td>Chas. H. Crosby &amp; Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priJLC_FIRE_002476</td>
<td>Grand illuminated parade in honor of Hibernia Engine Company, No. 1, of Philadelphia, on the evening of Saturday, November 20, 1858, by Americus Engine Company, No. 6. ... 1858</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bloomfield, J. J.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priJLC_FIRE_002477</td>
<td>Niagara Falls Fire Department. State of New York. To all whom these presents shall come, ... do hereby appoint Walter C. Hulett a fireman in Fire Company No. 2 ... (certificate) 1852</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>