

AMERICAN TREASURES

THE DUKE'S PLAN OF NEW YORK

This manuscript map is a lavish trophy of the English capture of Manhattan from the Dutch in 1664, showing the town surrounded by English ships and with English flags flying from several buildings. Legally Dutch, the New Amsterdam had become dominated by British merchants. In March 1664, Charles II gifted New Amsterdam to his brother, James, the Duke of York who promptly sent a fleet to claim his property. The town was renamed New York and this map, probably based on a 1661 Dutch survey, was intended to be presented to the Duke. Rediscovered among the Library's collections in 1858 by the librarian of the New-York Historical Society, it was given the name the 'Duke's Plan'.

Maps K.Top.121.35.

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BAY PSALM BOOK

The early Puritan settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Company were unhappy with the existing translations of the Psalms and began their own version. In 1640, the 'Bay Psalm Book', the first book printed in British North America emerged from the press at Cambridge, Massachusetts. The first edition probably consisted of 1,700 copies at a time when the colony consisted of just 2,500 families. Eleven are copies are extant. Two copies of the second, 1647 edition are known, one of which is shown here. The book is a testament to the importance that the early colonists placed on the Scriptures and the printed word.

The Whole Book of Psalmes... Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1647. C.36.a.7

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THE FIRST AMERICAN BIBLE

This is the first Bible to be printed in British America. It is in the native Massachusetts language and known as the 'Indian Bible'. In 1844, the American Statesman Edward Everett found this copy for the collector Thomas Grenville, noting, in the language of the day, that, 'it is a work of very considerable literary curiosity. A translation of the entire scriptures, made by one man, performing the laborious duties of a parish clergyman in an infant colony, into a barbarous and difficult language, which he began to study at the age of forty two years, is no ordinary achievement. It is a subject of painful reflection, that the dialect should have so completely passed away, - with those who spoke it, - in two centuries'.

Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God Naneeswe Nukkone Testament kah wonk Wusku Testament.
Cambridge, 1663. G. 12176.

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NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

The costs of running the British North American colonies grew considerably during the Seven Years War (1756-63), and in 1765, Parliament passed the Stamp Act, requiring all printed materials to use watermarked, or 'stamped', paper which was taxed. Proofs of the stamps are shown here. Many colonists, angered at what they took to be 'taxation without representation', boycotted stamped paper or attacked and intimidated British officials. Many ports refused to accept British goods. In March 1766, Parliament repealed the Act, but asserted its right to tax the colonies. In America, the affair left a lasting sense of grievance against British rule, and helped to form a sense of American patriotism.

Board of Inland Revenue Stamping Department Archive, 1

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DANGEROUS AND ILL-DESIGNING MEN...

In August 1775, the patience of George III and his ministers expired after news of the battles of Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill reached Britain. Rejecting the 'Olive Branch Petition' endorsed by the Continental Congress, this manuscript draft of the Proclamation declared that the colonies were in open rebellion and were 'levying war against Us, Our Crown & Dignity'. It brought to an end any hopes of a peaceful reconciliation and is regarded as officially marking the beginning of the War of Independence. The Proclamation was issued in London on 23 August 1777. It obliged all loyal subjects to assist in 'the Suppression of such Rebellion, and to disclose and make known all traitorous Conspiracies'.

Add. MS. 34412, f.345

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THE CENTRE OF THE UNION

David Steuart Erskine, the political reformer and 11th earl of Buchan was one of the more prominent British supporters of the American Revolution. A friend of Benjamin Franklin, he also corresponded with George Washington. With this letter of April 1793, Washington took ‘the liberty of sending [Buchan] the Plan of the new City, situated about the centre of the union.’ Washington chose the exact site of the new capital city on the Potomac, with an eye to its commercial potential. On 17 November 1800, the city of Washington D.C. became the capital of the United States.

Add. MS. 12099, ff.29v, 30v

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EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

The American Civil War (1861-1865) was fought over many things, but one of the dominant issues was slavery. By the summer of 1863, Abraham Lincoln began to link the abolitionist cause with the preservation of the Union. The large Proclamation shown here, which was printed as a souvenir of the Great Chicago Sanitary Fair, commemorates the President's final decision in January 1863 to liberate all slaves in Confederate territories. It is signed by Lincoln and his two secretaries of State. Slavery remained legal in union-controlled territory, but was finally abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.

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THE TERRIBLE REALITY AND EARNESTNESS OF WAR

Gardner, a Scot, worked for the photographer Matthew Brady and was dispatched in 1861 to document the Civil War. The laborious wet-plate photographic process made it too difficult and dangerous to photograph battles but he recorded the aftermath of one of the bloodiest days in American history at Antietam in September 1862 when McClellan's Army of the Potomac faced Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. His photographs of the carnage were exhibited at Brady's New York gallery but Brady took the credit for them. Gardner resigned and set up his own studio. Some of Brady's photographers joined him and together they continued to document the encampments, soldiers and battle fields of the war.

Alexander Gardner, *Photographic Sketch Book of the War*. Washington, [1865]. 2 volumes. 1784.a.13

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CONFEDERATE POSTAGE STAMP DIE

The die shown here was used to make printing blocks for Confederacy postage stamps during the American Civil War. The early Confederacy stamps were produced using a lithographic process and tended to be of poor quality, so a die to make printing blocks and printing plate was ordered from London. The set of stamps was made in London before the printing plate was sent to Richmond, Virginia, where the 5 cent stamp on display was issued.

United States Confederate States: 1862 5 cents, the die for postage stamps and an example of the issued stamp in blue. Philatelic Collections

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AN AMERICAN BARD

This 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* (1) was the first incarnation of Walt Whitman's life-work. One of only a few hundred copies, it was privately printed, with additional pages set by the poet himself. It features Whitman's first version of 'Song of Myself', which he would re-work in successive editions of *Leaves*. The 1855 volume also includes the epochal preface in which Whitman outlines his vision of the pioneering 'poets of the kosmos'. Also shown here (2) is the 'Author's Edition' (1882), self-published after the Commonwealth of Massachusetts suggested that the work should be withdrawn from publication for obscenity. It is signed by Whitman on the otherwise anonymous title page.

1. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*. Brooklyn, NY, 1855. C.58.g.4
2. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*. Camden, New Jersey, 1882. 11686.e.48

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THE MARBLE FAUN

Although sales of Nathaniel Hawthorne's first novel, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) were brisk, he had to support a growing family. In 1852, Hawthorne wrote a biography of Franklin Pierce, a college classmate, for his presidential campaign. On Pierce's election Hawthorne was rewarded with a plum position as a Consular Official in Liverpool, where he lived for four years. The post enabled him to save enough money to visit Italy in 1857, leading to the composition of *The Marble Faun*, his curious and mysterious Romance of expatriate life in Italy. The manuscript shown here was written in Redcar, Yorkshire in 1859.

1) Manuscript of 'The Marble Faun', 1859. Add. MS. 44890

2) Letter as Consular Official, Liverpool, 1854. Add. MS. 41178, f.26

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EXPLODING LIKE SPIDERS ACROSS THE STARS...

Kerouac's first attempts at writing *On the Road* began in November 1948. The version eventually published in 1957 was chiefly composed in three weeks in 1951 in his New York loft, written on a single roll of teletype paper. The novel is, among other things, a celebration of America's open spaces and of the spontaneous American personality expressing itself through jazz, marijuana, cross-country travel, sex, and confessional conversations. Although most critics disliked and misunderstood the book at the time of its release, *On the Road* has had a lasting influence on the direction of literature and popular culture over the last fifty years.

Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*. New York, 1957.

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IT'S THE CREME DE LA CRUMB!

Robert Crumb, the creator of Mr Normal, Fritz the Cat and 'Keep on Truckin', is widely regarded as the most prominent artist to emerge from the 'Underground Comix' scene of the 1960s and '70s. Sometimes accused of sexism, racism or anti-Americanism, Crumb, who now lives in France, has produced a subversive, vibrant and often crude body of work. The inventiveness, powerful honesty, and black humour expands the artistic range of the comic-book form and offers a riposte to mainstream America. Crumb has added a drawing and inscription to this edition of one of his more well-known volumes, *Carload O'Comics*, and forms part of a larger collection of Crumb materials donated to the British Library.

R. *Crumb's Carload O'Comics*. Northampton, Mass and New York, 1996.

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THE PRINCE AND THE SHOWGIRL

This telegram, dated 1956, was sent by the newly-married Arthur Miller and Marilyn Monroe to Terence Rattigan during the tortuous production of Marilyn Monroe Production's only film, an adaptation of Rattigan's play, *The Sleeping Prince*. Shot in London, Sir Laurence Olivier directed and starred alongside Monroe in the film, which saw her playing a second-rate actress staying in a boarding house in Brixton who is chosen to entertain Olivier's Regent of Carpathia. Eventually released in 1957 as *The Prince and the Showgirl*, the film disappointed at the box office. Monroe's performance, however, was praised and she received several awards and nominations.

Add. MS. 74371 C, f.279

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BROOKLYN BRIDGE: A LOVE SONG

Designer binder Donald Glaister pays tribute to the Brooklyn Bridge, which has inspired numerous writers, photographers and artists, from Hart Crane and Walker Evans to Joseph Stella. Glaister's first complete book consists of 14 sanded aluminium leaves attached to paper hinges. Five openings show various views of the bridge in acrylic paint, and alternating between these openings are nine abstract studies in which Glaister explores its structure using a combination of wire, aluminium tape, laminated polyester film and sand. None of these materials are normally associated with making books, but they are perfectly in keeping with the subject. The book opens with a poem by Glaister in celebration of the bridge.

Donald Glaister, *Brooklyn Bridge: a love song*. [Cleveland, Ohio], 2002. Edition of 60.

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A COUPLE OF WAYS OF DOING SOMETHING

The daguerreotype is a unique image formed in the camera on a silver-plated copper plate. Although superseded by other processes by the late 1850s, its remarkable qualities of sharpness and an almost 3-D sense of depth, have led to a revival of interest in it in recent years. The artist Chuck Close began using the daguerreotype process in 1999. Over the next two years he photographed both himself and various friends, including composer Philip Glass, for this portfolio. The daguerreotypes were then scanned and printed digitally. Each of the 20 hyperrealist portraits is accompanied by a 'praise poem' by New York poet Bob Holman, which seeks to reflect the personality of its subject.

A Couple of Ways of Doing Something. Poems by Bob Holman, Photographs by Chuck Close. Paris, New York, 2003. Acquisition funded by the American Trust for the British Library.