BIRTH of TRADE CARDS



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Before he started publishing baseball cards, L. Prang published other beautiful objects, like this calendar for the 1897 months of July, August and September. Online via the Library of Congress. Public Domain.

<u>Louis Prang</u> was born in the German town of <u>Breslau</u> (known today as <u>Wroclaw</u>, <u>Poland</u>) where his father taught him engraving and printing skills. In 1850, when Louis was twenty-six years old, he moved to America and settled in the <u>Roxbury section</u> of <u>Boston</u>.

Within six years, the recent German immigrant started his <u>own business</u>, employing his knowledge of <u>lithography</u> and printing to <u>create</u> (among other things) cards depicting scenes in Massachusetts, his adopted state.

By 1860, Prang was producing business advertisements using colored printing, and during the Civil War he created maps and <u>battle drawings</u>. As lithographic processes improved, skilled artists were able to create wonderful colored works such as these sea anemones from Ernst Haeckel's 1904 *Artforms of Nature*.

At a time when people used a small card to introduce themselves - called a <u>carte de visite</u> - Prang began to mass-produce small $\underline{\text{trade cards}}$ to introduce, or <u>advertise</u>, products. <u>Thread companies</u>, such as <u>Clark's</u>, were among the first businesses to use $\underline{\text{them}}$.

Prang also created beautiful <u>calendars</u> and "scrapbook" cards, depicting <u>scenes</u> of <u>nature</u> and patriotic themes, which companies used to tout their wares and consumers collected and placed in albums.

It was just a matter of time before advertising cards, featuring <u>heroes</u> and baseball players, were coupled with tobacco products.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BIRTH-of-TRADE-CARDS-Baseball-Cards

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BIRTH-of-TRADE-CARDS-Baseball-Cards

Media Stream



Poster Calendar for 1897

Library of Congress; Louis Rhead created this poster calendar which was published by L. Prang in 1896. Public Domain

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Louis Prang

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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View of Breslau

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

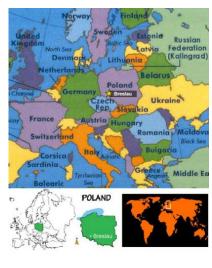
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View of Wroclaw

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Map of Europe

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Roxbury Section of Boston

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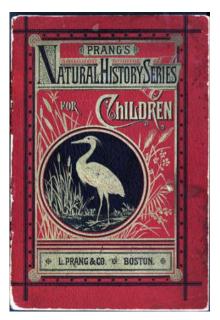


Boston Massachusetts Location Map

Image online, courtesy epodunk.com website.

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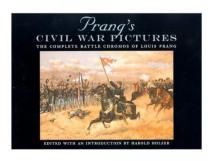
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Early Cards

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Battle Drawings by Louis Prang

Image online, courtesy the <u>amazon.com</u> website.

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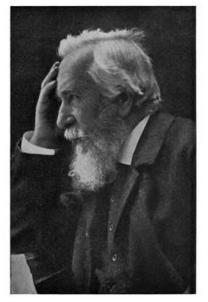


Sea Anemones by Ernst Haeckel

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Ernst Haeckel

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Calendars by Prang

Image online, courtesy the New York Public Library digital gallery.

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Clark's Trade Cards

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Ads on Prang's Cards

Image courtesy of The New York Public Library, Digital Gallery #487853. View this asset at:

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Albums of Prang's Images

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Beautiful Florals by Prang

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Prang's Civil War Images and Heroes

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Prang's Scenes From Nature

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