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The Scrapbook in American Life

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Scrapbooks bring pleasure in both the making and consuming - and are one of the most enduring cultural forms. This book explores the history of scrapbook-making, its origins, uses, changing forms, as well as the human agents behind the books themselves.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This academic but delightful volume explores the myriad ways 19th- and 20th-century Americans scrapbooked, turning photographs, magazine ads, love notes and recipes into albums that fashioned identities and preserved memories. Fifteen historians, librarians and literary critics contribute essays examining scrapbooks by an African-American musician, a Depression-era teen, a Wild West prostitute, South Carolina plantation ladies and countless children (including the young Willa Cather). In the 19th century, teachers and parents embraced scrapbooking as a wholesome pastime that would teach children to be frugal and productive. Scrapbooking wasn't an exclusively female pursuit. Ott argues that men often scrapbooked as part of their professional lives and examines male physicians' scrapbooks. The history of this hobby is bound up with the march of consumer capitalism; making scrapbooks was a way to refine and display one's taste, and mass-produced scrapbooks were the products of an industrial economy. The 65 b&w images scattered throughout are a visual feast: a prostitute's business card, newspaper photos of FDR, late-19th-century advertising cards, paper dolls, postcards, awards, Singer sewing machine ads, Bible cards. Scholars and scrapbookers alike will enjoy these slices of social history. (*June*)

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From [Booklist](#)

A wondrous, captivating book on a unique topic: the history of scrapbooking in the U.S. Obviously, this is not a how-to guide for the casual crafter; instead, it is a book requiring time for in-depth reading. Its audience, then, is dedicated crafters who want to go beyond simply the practice of their scrapbooking hobby, or even readers who don't maintain scrapbooks themselves but are interested in how these artifacts speak of American social life. In terms of format, this is a collection of essays by a wide range of writers. They approach an equally wide range of subject matter, including women using scrapbooks to pass down medical remedies in their families, the childhood scrapbook kept by famous writer Willa Cather, and the scrapbook of German artist Hannah Hoch and its inferences to German culture between the world wars. Ultimately, scrapbooks are seen here as one of two kinds: learning tools and information distributors or private reflectors of "self," of one's own interests and special activities. *Brad Hooper*

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Review

"This is not a how-to but a 'why' book; a serious, systematic investigation of the history of an enduring tradition." *Library Journal* "delightful...The 65 b&w images scattered throughout are a visual feast: a prostitute's business card, newspaper photos of FDR, late-19th-century advertising cards, paper dolls, postcards, awards, Singer sewing machine ads, Bible cards. Scholars and scrapbookers alike will enjoy these slices of social history." *Publishers Weekly* "This compilation is very important because it brings so many different topics and approaches together... It provides insights into ways in which scholars might be able to use scrapbooks as important historical documents." *Georgia Barnhill, American Antiquarian Society* A wondrous, captivating book on a unique topic: the history of scrapbooking in the U.S...it is a book requiring time for in-depth reading." *Booklist* "[T]he book shows that the ephemera of daily life people choose to preserve, and how they preserve it, are appropriate topics of study for historians of material culture, specialists in American literature, and indeed anyone interested in how people make meaning, memory, and identity out of transient events and materials...Highly recommended." *Choice* "This is a useful collection...The essays provide a backdrop that illuminates continuities and divergences in scrapbooking past and present." *Journal of Folklore* "The Scrapbook in American Life is a welcome addition to the research on

collections people keep." The Journal of American History "The Scrapbook in American Life explains how and why our ancestors pursued this enduring hobby...you'll enjoy this look into an old-fashioned hobby doubly so if you're lucky enough to have your ancestor's scrapbook." Family Tree Magazine "The work begins with an excellent historical introduction...While many of the essays included in The Scrapbook in American Life could stand alone as interesting works on various historical aspects of the scrapbooking tradition, together they provide the first methodical and wide-ranging examination of a widespread but often ignored aspect of material culture. At a minimum, this work will draw scholars' attention to these individual and social constructions of material culture." H-Net Reviews "An eclectic and electrifying anthology of social history...It's a collection that serves as a testament to the ways in which individuals throughout history have captured the essence of their culture for themselves as well as for curious, kindred souls." The Courier-Journal "Compilers of The Scrapbook in American Life, known researchers in American history and culture, make an important effort to place the scrapbook within the historic tradition. They preface the volume with an introduction to the theory of the genre, which reveals deep, as well as extensive, research and analysis and considers the scrapbook as a separate domain of American culture studies. This vision of the scrapbook reveals interesting interconnections...collections of ephemera, short-lived by definition, prove to be surprisingly enduring and offer unique opportunities for visualizing epochs of the past, of which all articles in The Scrapbook in American Life are bright evidence." American Studies "Scrapbook compilers are as different as what they created, and this is one of the important messages of The Scrapbook in American Life... It is a welcome addition to the literature of a number of areas of study." Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clara Palmer:

What do you concerning book? It is not important along? Or just adding material when you want something to explain what your own problem? How about your time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to try and do others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? All people has many questions above. The doctor has to answer that question due to the fact just their can do in which. It said that about publication. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on guardería until university need this specific The Scrapbook in American Life to read.

Willis Newby:

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Diane Merryman:

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Susan Frame:

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