

ADVERTISING TO THE ELITE: THE ROLE OF INNOVATION OF FINE ART IN  
ADVERTISING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADVERTISING INDUSTRY

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## Introduction

In 1892, American railroad companies were beginning to use colored fine art posters and brochures as tools to attract elite travelers to their luxury passenger lines. Railroad companies were sending artists to paint landscapes of the territories their lines traversed in order to advertise the splendors of vacationing in the American West via their lines. The railroad companies used the visual impact of fine art as a powerful weapon in their media advertising arsenal of posters, booklets, newspaper (which were not printed in color) and magazine ads, and even art collections. It was not only railroads, however, that used this type of art to attract customers. A decade and a half later, luxury automobile companies also used fine art in their advertising campaigns. Yet, advertising history has not explored whether, and if so how, there was a connection in the use of high art in these two branches of the transportation industry.

This study explores the intersection of the developments in the growing advertising, railroad, and automotive sectors of the U.S. economy. It examines the latter two sectors' advertising to the elite by focusing on how industries that targeted the luxury market used fine art to emphasize and underscore the exceptionalism of that high-end market compared with the mass market. It does so by looking at the transition from using art as a decorative component unrelated to the product to using art specifically designed to advertise a product or experience. In the literature, advertising history has been delineated rather narrowly as the history of advertising to the mass consumer or as the history of

advertising a specific type of product. This work broadens the focus in advertising history to show that luxury advertisers, as a sub-category of advertisers, developed particular advertising strategies, which recognized and exploited the relationship between their respective service or product, and a consciously selected audience for their respective advertisements. It shows that high art became a differentiating characteristic of advertising strategies aimed at the social elite market. This work also proposes the need for adding a specific timeline for the development of luxury advertising to the broad, more generally known outline of advertising history.

The examples of two distinct industries that targeted high-end consumers on which the analysis in this work rests emerged from an initial interest in Pierce-Arrow advertisements. The impact of the beauty of the artwork, combined with the depiction of the cars in the ads, raised the question whether Pierce-Arrow advertisements were typical or extraordinary for the time period (1890s to 1915). In order to answer that question, I looked for examples of another mode of transportation with a comparable lifestyle advertising focus. I chose the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad company, also known as the AT&SF or the Santa Fe (spelled without an accent), because around the turn of the twentieth century, its ads depicting the experience of observing the natural beauty of the United States from the luxury of the train also targeted a prosperous audience.

The focus is on the years 1890 to 1915 as this period saw considerable growth and significant change not only in the advertising industry but also the

railroad and automobile industries, each developing into a large American enterprise with far-reaching influence on the United States economy and American culture in the 1920s and the years beyond.<sup>1</sup> The end date of 1915 was also chosen due to the changes that happened in the advertising industry as a result of the World War I era. Those developments are beyond the scope of this study.

The decision of examining mostly magazine advertisements was due to the use of magazines as the primary medium of Pierce-Arrow's advertising agency for its campaign, which was to a large degree a reflection of the constraints posed by the complicated and costly processes required to reproduce color images in print. As the Santa Fe did not use as much magazine advertising prior to 1900, the examples for the railroad company are mostly limited to comparable color images in brochures and calendars, although the Santa Fe also used other media for their advertisements.

The magazines that published Pierce-Arrow and Santa Fe ads and provided the examples for analysis include *Country Life in America*, *The Theatre*, *The World's Work Press*, *Life*, *McClure's*, *Munsey's*, and *Cosmopolitan*. The ability to print color images was fairly new at the turn of the century and advertisers that used color illustrations, which were more expensive to print than black-and-white images, took advantage of the outstanding quality of color compared with the more common black-and-white drawings or reproductions of photographs. This advantage appealed to Pierce-Arrow and the Santa Fe because of their target audience. Reproducing photographs during this time



period was even more expensive, due to the cost of studio time, than using color illustrations and, therefore; agencies tended to favor illustrations over photographs. In the mid-1880s, Frederick Ives developed the half-tone process and in 1886 the Hoe rotary art press was introduced. These two innovations, combined with the falling price of paper, allowed illustrations and photographs to be printed much more cheaply than ever before.<sup>2</sup> By 1897, the *New York Tribune* became the first publication to print half-tone images on a daily basis.<sup>3</sup>

In this study, the terms fine art and high art—referring to art produced for its beauty—are used as synonyms. The description of “the elite” consumer in this study is not in terms of socioeconomic class, but in terms of buying power as reflected solely in relation to the ability to purchase a luxury car or an American Southwest sightseeing adventure.<sup>4</sup> For instance, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average hourly wage for a manufacturing worker in 1909 was \$0.21.<sup>5</sup> The Pierce Runabout, one of the smallest and least expensive Pierce-Arrow models, cost between \$3,050 and \$3,750 depending on horsepower and whether it was the two- or three-passenger version. These prices put the purchase of a Pierce-Arrow out of the realm of possibility for most American consumers.<sup>6</sup>

The team of the Santa Fe and its marketing men, Charles Allard Higgins and William H. Simpson, provides one of the earliest examples of a railroad company utilizing fine art to appeal to elite consumers. AT&SF became one of the first railroads to use artwork to shape its corporate image and, by the late 1890s, the Santa Fe included \$250,000 in its annual budget to pay for

advertising, a figure for advertising matched only by the Southern Pacific, another early adopter of fine art for its advertising.<sup>7</sup> The early beginning of Santa Fe's use of high art in advertising and its commitment to advertising as a strategy for growing its business make the Santa Fe a good example to study the patterns of luxury advertising development in the railroad sector.

In comparison with the railroad companies, the Pierce-Arrow Motor Company and its advertising agency, Calkins & Holden, offer the best case for illustrating the pattern of elite advertising for luxury automobiles.<sup>8</sup> The decision to focus on Pierce-Arrow was based on its pioneering role in two areas. Pierce-Arrow advertisements are recognized by advertising historians as some of the earliest examples of "atmosphere" advertising and high art used in auto ads and its advertising was managed by the industry-leading ad agency, Calkins & Holden. Co-founder Earnest Elmo Calkins pushed the envelope in the general advertising industry, as well as in luxury automobile ads, and publicized his views on advertising in two books, thereby providing a significant record for studying the role of the very specialized form of advertising that targeted potential buyers of luxury automobiles.

Analyzing the similarities and differences between Calkins's 1905 book, *Modern Advertising*, co-authored with his agency partner Ralph Holden, and Calkins's 1915 publication, *The Business of Advertising*, provides a contemporary perspective on both the operations of advertising firms and the pace of change in the advertising industry at the beginning of the twentieth century. When Calkins initially wrote *The Business of Advertising*, he meant to

simply revise *Modern Advertising* for a new decade. However, as the book's reviewer in *Printers' Ink* noted, Calkins found that "a mere touching up, a rephrasing here or an amplification there, would not do. He had to write a new book...[and] as a new contribution, therefore, 'The Business of Advertising' takes its place in the fast growing literature on the subject."<sup>9</sup> In the foreword to *The Business of Advertising*, Calkins wrote that great changes in the practice of advertising had necessitated the revision. He commented, "The advertising that is being done in this year of 1915 is far more interesting than the advertising of ten years ago. Also it is much harder to do."<sup>10</sup> These books are early examples of advertising industry textbooks and, as such, provide a distinctive perspective on how the men involved in the advertising industry saw, and chose to present, themselves and their profession.

Other writings throw light on the development of the advertising industry in the early years of the twentieth century. Calkins's 1946 autobiography, "*And Hearing Not—*" offers insight into his introduction to the advertising business and how he and Ralph Holden pioneered new advertising techniques and practices. The articles and advertisements from the advertising trade journal, *Printers' Ink*, provide additional insight into the advertising world from 1890 to 1915. Founded in 1888 by ad man George Rowell and with an approximate circulation of 20,000 per issue in 1900, *Printers' Ink* was a weekly publication intended for advertisers, agencies, and copywriters that was widely read throughout the advertising industry.<sup>11</sup>

For the case study of Pierce-Arrow, Harry W. Ilaria's *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics* CD-ROM-based advertisement collection, featuring 350 Pierce-Arrow ads, provides all of the materials for analysis in this study. The collection features the magazine advertisements that Calkins & Holden published for Pierce-Arrow beginning at the start of the campaign in the fall of 1907. Selection criteria for the ads that were chosen here were based on an examination of the ads that Calkins & Holden created for Pierce-Arrow. After narrowing the collection to the color advertisements that were published between 1907 and 1915, examination of the remaining ads revealed that they largely fit into five thematic categories—country settings, urban settings, sport settings, adverse weather settings, and travel settings. Representative advertisements were chosen from each of these categories based on the combination of certain features: identifiable artist and magazine name and date, image quality, popularity (i.e. the number of times an ad appeared in the collection in different magazines), and adherence to the “atmosphere” style.

Michael E. Zega and John E. Gruber's *Travel by Train: The American Railroad Poster, 1870-1950* and Zega's article “Advertising the Southwest Santa Fe” provide the Santa Fe images for analysis. Most images were selected from the Santa Fe's brochures, calendars, and chromolithographs. As the Santa Fe's luxury advertising campaign started earlier and since magazines differed in form from those published later, it used less consistent, less innovative magazine advertising; instead, its advertising innovations appeared more consistently in booklets and calendars. I conducted a search of the digitized versions of the

magazines from the 1890s and early 1900s that have survived and, while the digitized versions often omit the advertising section, enough ads were included that it is clear that there were few ads of the Santa Fe in those earlier magazines. The effect of the limited options for certain kinds of ads in the earlier magazines was underscored by the evidence that, a decade later, when printing technologies had improved, Santa Fe placed many more ads in this medium. Both the Santa Fe campaign and Calkins & Holden's Pierce-Arrow campaign engaged some artists who were very well known and some unknown artists. Artists ranged from J.M.W. Turner, who produced an iconic image of a train, to graphic artists whose names were not known then and are not known now.

Since this inquiry focuses on the elite in the sense of buying power and since that power was largely in the hands of white males, issues of gender and race cannot be considered here due to a lack of records other than advertisements that might illuminate any decision-making by women or non-whites in buying cars. Views of class, gender, and race were evident in the images as reflections of the presumed lifestyle of the elite targeted in the ads, but the intent of the ads themselves was to capture almost exclusively the imagination of white males as buyers and often also as drivers.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fine art and commercial design were intertwined. Shifts in technology in the early time period created new opportunities for the mass print media. With advanced printing techniques, improvements in photography, and the rapid development of the American mass consumer market came a differentiation of the advertising

market. The case of Calkins's Pierce-Arrow ads shows new types of specialization that occurred because of the differentiation in the market. Pierce-Arrow ads targeted the rich—the luxury market. Calkins was a pioneer in a fairly new form of advertising that the advertising industry called “atmosphere” advertising. It was a form of advertising that relied on evocative images about a product that appealed to a consumer's emotions.

“Atmosphere” advertisements featured “opulent art and striking layouts, striving for an impression of effortless high quality and class” and giving “an impression of honesty and clean ethics.”<sup>12</sup> Calkins's belief in the appeal of fine art in advertising was fundamental to charting a new direction for advertising that is well demonstrated in the ads for luxury automobiles. Instead of featuring static images of just the automobile, Pierce-Arrow ads showed scenes with owners using their vehicles. Often the cars were not even in the foreground of the ad. Calkins demonstrated to Pierce-Arrow owners what they could *do* with their cars and how the cars would seamlessly fit into and affirm their lifestyle. Images of Pierce-Arrows taking their owners out shopping, or to sporting events, or to the theatre not only indicated that the Pierce-Arrow could be depended on as reliable transportation, but also that this was a car that demonstrated conspicuous consumption and fit into the elite lifestyle. Using full-page, brightly colored, well-drawn illustrations to catch a magazine reader's eye made Pierce-Arrow ads stand out from other automobile ads and set Pierce-Arrow apart from its competitors. The fine art in the ads made the ads as elite as the cars they were advertising and as elite as the potential buyers the ads were attempting to attract.

Calkins struggled, however, to convince the advertising world and the fine art world that they should work together. Efforts to combine fine arts and commercial art education provide another example of this struggle. Schools like the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) attempted to integrate their curricula for fine art and applied arts. In the 1880s, the SAIC had essentially run a fine art institute during the day and then an applied arts school in the evenings and on weekends. In “Before the New Bauhaus: From Industrial Drawing to Art and Design Education in Chicago,” Barbara Jaffee explains that after the United States was embarrassed “over the poor reception of its applied arts at the Paris Exposition of 1889, educational leaders in Chicago and elsewhere began to advocate the ‘industrial value’ of traditional esthetics.”<sup>13</sup> Efforts to fully integrate the curriculum lasted into the twentieth century and resulted in numerous new directors. While some success was achieved—by the 1918-1919 school year, SAIC offered a three-school system with the Lower and Middle Schools combining skills taught for fine and industrial art while the Upper School maintained a traditional fine art school structure—full integration was never completed. By 1921, changes in the board of directors signaled the beginning of formal divisions at the school, with the establishment of various fine art and industrial art departments throughout the 1920s, well after the time period under consideration here.<sup>14</sup>

Calkins faced similar difficulties in his own efforts to bring together the disciplines of commercial art and fine arts. He wanted to use high art in his advertisements, and campaigned tirelessly to convince artists to do work in

advertising and to convince agencies to use traditional artists. However, he met resistance at every turn. From 1908 to 1911, Calkins organized the Art in Advertising exhibitions in an attempt to show the high level of artwork being done in advertising by famous artists. At the first show in 1908, he had trouble convincing top artists to submit their work, and the show was largely ignored and critically panned when it was reviewed. Calkins resorted to publishing his own review declaring the show a success. The following years of the exhibition had as little success as the first year, with artists declining to participate and advertisers finding the art submitted too artsy without actually selling the product shown.<sup>15</sup>

Calkins's struggle to bring the fine arts into his commercial art typified the tensions in the art community at this time. While Calkins was not the only person working to combine the disciplines, his case provides an example of what integration could achieve and how it could push commercial design, and in particular advertising, forward. It also shows the lack of awareness that existed between advertising in different business sectors, as the integration of fine art and advertising had existed in the railroads since the 1890s. The Santa Fe hired many of its artists from the Art Institute, yet the divide between the railroad and automobile sectors and the narrow focus each had on its own business prevented Calkins from benefitting from the railroad companies' example. In the available public or published comments from Calkins and the Santa Fe, there is no evidence that they engaged with the other industry. While Calkins's worked on advertising for the Lakawanna Railroad early in his career, he omitted that



experience in his later explanations of his work and there is no other evidence in his writings of his knowledge or influence by the advertising of the railroad industry.

While many historians have written on the subject of advertising history, and some have examined railroad and automotive advertising, little attention has been paid to the role of art in luxury ads. Advertising historians have treated luxury advertising as part of advertising in general. When they address advertising to the elite buyer, it is usually part of an examination of another advertising category, such as in automobile advertising histories. In 1929, Frank Presbrey, one of the earliest advertising historians, spent barely a page on the subject of luxury ads. Michael Zega addressed the Santa Fe's use of high art in its passenger line advertising in his article "Advertising the Southwest Santa Fe," (2001), while historians Pamela Walker Laird and Rob Schorman addressed luxury automobile advertising in their respective articles, "The Car without a Single Weakness: Early Automobile Advertising" (1996) and "'This Astounding Car for \$1,500': The Year Automobile Advertising Came of Age." Zega, focused more on how the Santa Fe developed its advertising art program, but his article could have been enriched with an examination of how the Santa Fe's art became a distinctive component of luxury advertising.

For her part, Laird could have included that art was used in automobile advertising before the 1920s and that luxury automobile advertising was distinct from the larger category of auto advertising. She noted, "contemporary advertising trendsetters were to be found in two quite different sectors: high-

volume producers of relatively inexpensive, brand-name consumer goods made using continuous process systems, such as soap, processed foods and drinks, cigarettes, medicines, threads, and magazines; and firms operated by individuals who set the advertising pace with what P.T. Barnum called an 'instinct' for showmanship."<sup>16</sup> She finds that automobile advertising did not break out of its mold of copy-heavy ads proclaiming a car's technological advancements until 1923 when Edward S. Jordan of the eponymous Jordan Motor Car Company published ads in the *Saturday Evening Post* that featured dynamic images and exciting copy depicting people using Jordan's cars for sports and adventures.<sup>17</sup> She says that the art used by Pierce-Arrow over a decade earlier than the Jordan ads appealed only to class elitism, instead of looking at the Pierce-Arrow campaign as one that acknowledged its audience and that was successfully crafted to use art to appeal to the company's elite clientele.<sup>18</sup>

Robert Schorman argued in "This Astounding Car for \$1,500" that historians have the chronology of automobile advertising wrong, that historians have argued that "reason-why" advertising preceded "atmosphere" advertising when, in reality, "atmosphere" (and its associated artwork) and "reason-why" advertising co-existed in the early 1900s.<sup>19</sup> He argued that advertising innovators like Claude Hopkins and Earnest Elmo Calkins "advanced beyond the jingoistic claims of the 'reason-why' and 'atmosphere' fundamentalists to develop a set of creative practices that were to put a distinctive stamp on the advertising business for years to come."<sup>20</sup> Yet, while he was arguing for a reframing of the timeline of auto advertising, he could also have considered whether there were

any differences between advertising to the elite buyer or to the consumer who made up the mass market.

What advertising historians like Laird and Schorman could include in their narrative is that these artistic innovations suggest a distinct timeline for luxury advertising, particularly “atmosphere” advertising, and that the companies using these innovations were doing so because they were looking for a new way to appeal to an elite audience with buying power. Laird and Schorman could also add that these types of artistic innovations existed in other forms of transportation advertising. Laird pointed out that early automobile companies took their advertising cues from the carriage industry instead of the bicycle industry. The bicycle industry was known for its poster art, but the carriage industry avoided evoking speed or motion or artwork that would seem to associate its products with the negative reputation of the patent medicine industry.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, Schorman argued that the Pierce-Arrow ads were “descended directly from the ‘poster craze’ of the 1890s,... [when magazine publishers energetically competed to promote their latest issues by distributing art posters to newsstands and bookstores.] Poster artists did not seek photographic realism but worked with stylized and abstracted shapes, which automatically placed them at odds with literal-minded ‘reason-why’ advertising.”<sup>22</sup> Michael Zega and John Gruber showed in *Travel by Train* that, similar to bicycle advertising, poster art styles of advertising remained popular in railroad advertising into the early 1900s. Schorman argued that Calkins was an early proponent of using highly-regarded artists to illustrate automobile ads, but, in reality, in the 1890s the railroad

companies were already hiring artists to work directly for them to produce advertising art to make their ads stand out.<sup>23</sup>

Schorman and Laird could also examine why automotive companies and automobile advertisers did not look to other, more established, forms of transportation advertising to guide the creation of auto advertising. Was there an unconscious influence? Even if Laird's explanation that the association of poster advertising with patent medicine was the reason that the automotive industry avoided any connection with poster art, the use of this style of art was an accepted practice in railroad advertising. If it was acceptable for the railroad companies, why was it not acceptable for the new automotive ads? There were almost 200,000 miles of railroad track across the United States at the turn of the twentieth century; one would assume the railroad's reputation was strong enough to be copied by the nascent automobile industry.<sup>24</sup> When Calkins discussed his inspiration for using top artists on his campaigns, he mentioned European poster art and European artists, such as Turner and his iconic 1844 train image, but did not mention other American industries that were using high art in their advertising.<sup>25</sup> He mentioned that his packaging ideas for products came from what he had seen in Germany and that designs in America had room to grow, but nothing about other American industries.<sup>26</sup>

In order to correct the focus of the conventional advertising history, this study examines examples of advertising to elite railroad passengers and luxury car buyers. And so, to fully understand the development of the timeline that luxury advertisers followed in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth

centuries, it is necessary to gain some familiarity of the world in which ad men operated and how the professionalization of the advertising industry came about. This study explores how a small group of advertising men created a sophisticated marketing tool for a specific lifestyle expression—in this case, the luxury lifestyle of the upper classes. Therefore, in the first chapter, “Advertising and High Art,” I examine advertisers with a national audience in general from 1890 to 1915. The analysis focuses on the development of the national advertising industry into a profession and the state of the ad business in these decades.<sup>27</sup> This chapter will also detail how national advertising firms operated and how patterns in advertising elite products to elite customers emerged and changed in those years.

In the second chapter, “The Case of Santa Fe Railroad Advertisements,” I analyze the advertising patterns of the luxury railroad business. Here I study the origins of fine art in railroad advertising, the types of advertisements used, and their influence on future advertisements. The third chapter, “The Case of Pierce-Arrow Advertisements,” studies the developments in the luxury automobile advertising business. Analyses of luxury car ads show how Calkins & Holden designed its Pierce-Arrow advertisements and used high art to position its clients’ cars as elite goods that were an integral part of an elite lifestyle. This work concludes that while advertisers in separate industries were not necessarily aware of the campaigns used in other sectors, the development of their advertisements followed similar timelines with staggered starting points. These advertisements prepared the American public to be receptive to the heavy use of

similar advertising styles and strategies in World War I and in the 1920s. It also concludes that the innovations of these advertisers led to the development of a new art standard in the advertising industry. The examples of the luxury railroad and luxury automobile business sectors provide insight into the development of a luxury advertising style that could subsequently be seen in other luxury markets as well.

I propose that luxury advertising had its own timeline, one that influenced mass advertising through its early adoption of original, high art. Each industry reinvented its own ad style for elite buyers because the buyers came to advertising through ties in their own areas—that each industry’s focus was too specific and therefore too narrow to see what was going on in other business sectors. However, even without the influence of advertising trends in other sectors, luxury advertisers developed similar styles of advertising to the elite. This study examines how and why those similar styles developed independently of each other and how they affected the advertising industry and advertising styles of the future thereby demonstrating the need for an addition to the timeline of advertising history.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the growth of the American economy and the advertising industry in this time period, see James D. Norris, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society, 1865 – 1920* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 1-26.

<sup>2</sup> Norris, *Advertising and Society*, 34-35. Half-tones are reproductions of images using various sizes of gray and color ink dots. The rotary press replaced

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the flat-bed press and as Norris says, “was not only faster, but even more important, it was much less expensive to operate and did ten times the work of the old flat-bed press.”

<sup>3</sup> Robert L. Craig, “Fact, Public Opinion, and Persuasion: The Rise of the Visual in Journalism and Advertising,” in *Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography*, ed. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 45.

<sup>4</sup> In this study, I use the term “class” to refer to a material culture that requires a certain level of economic income and wealth. The upper classes, then, were the ones for whom the purchase of luxury items was common. The middle classes typically could not afford the same level of materialism, but could afford the occasional luxury purchase, such as a sightseeing train trip.

<sup>5</sup> Fisk, Donald M, "American Labor in the 20th Century," *Compensation and Working Conditions* 6, no. 3 (Fall, 2001): 4.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/210958222?accountid=7398> (accessed August 20, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> This information is from a Pierce-Arrow ad for an exhibit in New York at the Madison Square Garden Show January 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1909. Hank W. Illaria, *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics*, CD-ROM (HI-Tech Software, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Michael E. Zega, “Advertising the Southwest,” *Journal of the Southwest* 43, no. 3 (2001): 284.

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<sup>8</sup> Throughout this study, “Calkins & Holden” is used to refer to the agency named after E.E. Calkins and Ralph Holden. “Calkins and Holden” is used when I am referring to the men themselves.

<sup>9</sup> “1915 Contrasted With 1905 in Advertising,” *Printers’ Ink* 90 (March 25, 1915): 92. The author accessed *Printers’ Ink* both in printed form and digitally via the Hathi Trust Digital Library. *Printers’ Ink* citations with a URL and an access date were accessed electronically and those without a URL or access date were accessed in print format.

<sup>10</sup> Earnest Elmo Calkins, *The Business of Advertising* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1915), vii-viii.

<sup>11</sup> Norris, *Advertising and Society*, 42.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York: Vintage, 1985), 70.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Jaffee, “Before the New Bauhaus: From Industrial Drawing to Art and Design Education in Chicago,” *Design Issues* 21, no. 1 (2005): 44.

<sup>14</sup> Jaffee, 43-45, 49, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Michelle Bogart, *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 50-51; 208.

<sup>16</sup> Pamela Walker Laird, “The Car without a Single Weakness: Early Automobile Advertising,” *Technology and Culture* 37, no. 4 (1996): 802.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 807.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 801.



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<sup>19</sup> Rob Schorman, “This Astounding Car for \$1,500”: The Year Automobile Advertising Came of Age,” *Enterprise & Society* 11, no. 3 (2010): 474, 486.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 475.

<sup>21</sup> Laird, “The Car without a Single Weakness,” 802.

<sup>22</sup> Schorman, 493.

<sup>23</sup> Zega, 283.

<sup>24</sup> Norris, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 68.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-70.

<sup>27</sup> The term “profession” is used to refer to the advertising industry beginning to required specialized training, with a goal of a career in the industry.

## **Chapter 1 Advertising and High Art**

The automobile and advertising industries each experienced a period of rapid development at the turn of the twentieth century. Print media in national publications like *Life*, *Country Life in America*, and *Munsey's* regularly featured advertising for the new automobile. Copy-heavy, "reason-why" ads with hand-drawn, line illustrations or woodcut images were placed in printed publications by automobile manufacturers' ad agencies or ad divisions. Concurrently, automobile advertisements also featured reduced text and larger and more prominently placed illustrations. The image-focused "atmosphere" ads were often accompanied by a few lines of text, but frequently presented the product through the illustration alone. Automobile manufacturers utilized print advertisements to attract customers to their products and to convince buyers to purchase their cars over those of their competitors. Copy-heavy, "reason-why" ads battled for attention with artfully illustrated "atmosphere" ads.

General advertisers (often known simply as "advertisers") were the companies or manufacturers that produced products they wished to sell. While many companies had in-house advertising departments to market their products and create their advertising plans, there was a growing tendency at the turn of the century to hire outside agencies to create and manage national advertising campaigns.<sup>1</sup> The interest here is the rise of specialized agencies that were responsible for the complete planning of advertising campaigns.

Advertising in the United States began to develop into an industry in the second half of the nineteenth century. From the turn of the century to 1915, the advertising world was transitioning into a profession. In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, advertising was largely the pursuit of an emerging professional class of white men. With many of advertising's roots being in patent medicine, the movements to discredit such products in the first few years of the twentieth century and the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act in June 1906 exposed the tarnished reputation of advertising.<sup>2</sup> At the turn of the century, American advertising was dominated by the advertisement of common consumer goods.<sup>3</sup> The advertising industry had risen from a group of men who built their businesses on the strength and reputation of their personalities, but it was struggling to define itself as a "legitimate" profession characterized by the acquisition and mastery of a certain set of skills.

Earnest Elmo Calkins was one of several advertising men who were pioneers of professional advertising.<sup>4</sup> Born in 1868 in Galesburg, Illinois, Calkins was mostly deaf by the age of fourteen due to a bout of the measles when he was a child. Calkins edited a newsmagazine while he attended Knox College, and received a letter from *Printers' Ink* founder and editor George Rowell asking him to promote the famous advertising trade journal in an editorial in return for a free subscription. Doing so turned Calkins's attention to advertising, and he used the ideas he read about in *Printers' Ink* to organize the advertising office of the *Galesburg Mail*, where he worked during his summers off from college. Following his graduation in 1891, Calkins moved to New York and after a failed

job attempt that included moving back to Illinois for a time, he took a job at Charles Austin Bates' advertising agency in 1897 before starting his own agency in 1902 with fellow Bates employee Ralph Holden. Calkins & Holden claimed to distinguish itself from other agencies by being a "full-service" agency and by offering its clients copywriting, ad design, space brokerage, and media selection.<sup>5</sup>

In the last decades of the 1800s, the American consumer market expanded. The completion of the transcontinental railroad with the placement of the golden spike in May of 1869 and the subsequent growth of the railroad networks made quick access to markets across the nation a reality. The increased ease of transportation, combined with population growth and a shift from rural to urban living, expanded the size of the consumer market. National literacy rates rose from 80 percent in 1870 to 94 percent in 1920, which also greatly increased the number of consumers that advertisements could entice to buy products.<sup>6</sup>

Men in the advertising industry prior to 1900 worked largely as what historian Daniel Pope calls "space brokers." They acted as liaisons between publishers and advertisers to place ads written by the advertiser in space that a publishing medium had available to sell. The most popular publishing media were newspapers and magazines. In New York City, a large advertising firm might employ seven men at most, including the proprietor, an estimator, a bookkeeper, a checking clerk, and an office boy. Their offices, often just one room, would generally be located near the offices of the newspapers which sold

advertising space, and the men who worked there often had a background in journalism.<sup>7</sup>

By the early years of the twentieth century, advertising agencies had switched from their role as space brokers to creating advertisements. Technological innovations joined with growing demands on the time of manufacturers to cause advertisers to seek agencies to handle all of their advertising needs, from planning a campaign to placing the advertisements in appropriate media.

In the mid 1880s, the printing of images by publications increased due to advances in printing images combined with the falling price of paper.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, companies were beginning to create brands for their products to appeal to a national market. The investment manufacturers made in their branded products led them to believe that the quality of the advertisement had to match the quality of the product they were selling and that the needs of the broad national market had to be carefully considered in each ad. Slowly, from the 1890s into the early 1900s, manufacturers stopped writing their own advertisements and hired agencies to plan campaigns for them.<sup>9</sup>

Calkins's two books that described the industry provide an example for the changes seen in the general advertising world—in the advertising men and advertising agencies—in the first and second decades of the twentieth century. Calkins's description of the ideal advertising man, or manager, changed from his and Ralph Holden's 1905 publication of *Modern Advertising* to Calkins's 1915 solo publication of *The Business of Advertising*.<sup>10</sup> In 1905, the advertising

manager often worked for an advertiser rather than for an agency.<sup>11</sup> The successful advertising man needed to be both creative and skilled in business. He also needed to be able to understand the business position and perspectives of the advertisers who engaged his agency to promote their products.

Once the manager and his employees developed ads, an agency was used to place the ads in advertising mediums (a publication, like a newspaper or a magazine, or a sign or poster that carried advertisements). While at least somewhat talented in business and advertising, the ad man of 1905 also needed to be a good, perhaps instinctive, judge of human nature. He had to have an ability to determine what types of campaigns would appeal to potential consumers of each product he advertised; he had to be extremely familiar with each advertising medium and its costs, circulation, and audience; he had to know the various stages of creating and printing an ad, including mechanical processes like electro typing and lithographing; and he had to know the product itself. Calkins and Holden noted,

It would be necessary for the successful advertising manager to know, first, the exact possibilities of the product, to know just how much was being sold and how distributed; the price to the jobber and to the consumer; the number of traveling men and the territory each covered; the number of companies manufacturing a similar or competing article, and the exact output of their factories. He would study every bit of advertising used by competitors; he would be personally acquainted with every traveling man and would know the exact resources of his trade, as well as the standing of the house itself in the trade.<sup>12</sup>

The advertising man in 1905 had to be something of a jack-of-all trade in the advertising industry. Once the advertisements were developed, an advertising agency assisted the advertising manager in placing the ads in national media.

By 1915, Calkins described the advertising process as one comprised of “Sellers of Space,” or, the advertising media; “Sellers of Advertising,” or, advertising agents and those who offered their services to the advertiser; and “Buyers of Advertising,” that is, the advertisers themselves. The “Sellers of Advertising” comprised advertising agencies like J. Walter Thompson or Calkins & Holden. Calkins presented these agencies as complete campaign planners. The advertising man by this time worked in one of a number of departments in the agency. The fact that Calkins could categorize the industry in this manner shows one way that the business of advertising had changed since 1905. His description of the increasingly higher standards manufacturers expected of ad men and the results they demanded for their investment in advertising helps explain why these changes took place in the ten years between *Modern Advertising* and *The Business of Advertising*.<sup>13</sup> Agencies had to grow in size and organization to meet these changing standards.

During this second decade of the twentieth century, men who worked in advertising were a largely homogenous group. They were generally from middle-class, midwestern or northeastern, Protestant families. About half had attended college and nearly a quarter held bachelor’s degrees. They were generally young, with a median age of forty, and almost none were foreign-born. The offices of the advertising agencies where they worked in New York City had moved from locations near newspaper headquarters to buildings on Madison Square. Agencies had grown in size as well. N.W. Ayer and Son, one of the first large agencies, had, for example, grown from 163 employees in 1900 to 298

employees in 1910 and it reached 496 employees by 1920. In 1898, Lord & Thompson billed under a million dollars but their yearly billings in the 1920s sometimes exceeded \$40,000,000.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the changed role of the advertising agency, its employees possessed largely the same skills as they had at the turn of the century—now distributed among several men instead of just one man. The way that the Santa Fe Railroad created its own advertisements in-house compared to the way the Pierce-Arrow Motor Company hired Calkins & Holden to create an ad campaign typifies the shift from advertisers creating their own advertisements that were then placed by a small agency, to a larger, more diverse and yet more specialized agency that managed the entire process for an advertiser. Effectively, the ideal advertising man had not changed much, but the advertising agency had. Between 1890 and 1915, small space broker agencies, that did nothing more than place advertising in printed mediums for a commission, still existed (and were numerous). By end of the time period, however, the “complete” advertising agencies had grown and become more dominant in the field. Many agencies that began with one or two men in a single room handling all of the duties of copy, art, buying, selling, “client-getting,” and bookkeeping grew into agencies that had eight or more departments with individual specialties. According to historian Stephen Fox, the J. Walter Thompson agency is credited with creating the first account executive position. As the Thompson agency took on more and more clients, it needed more organization and therefore created a



position to manage accounts. An account executive was “one man who spent all his time superintending only a given number of accounts.”<sup>15</sup>

And so by 1915 Calkins described the agency as generally consisting of the “the business-getter,” the “plan man,” the copy department, the art department, typographical department, the “rate man,” and the checking department. The descriptively named “business-getter” was responsible for soliciting business for the agency from present and prospective advertisers, and the agency often maintained business-getters in several cities. In larger agencies that employed several business-getters, they also assisted with inquiries to the agency from outside sources and explained the business the agency offered. The “plan man,” or “investigating department,” conducted the inquiries into the advertisers and their products. The plan man determined the potential success of the product itself, the existence and quality of any branding or trademarking for the product, the distribution of the product, and the state of the manufacturing facilities. This information was used by the agency to form an advertising plan for the product. The plan typically included proposed advertising mediums, like newspapers, magazines, streetcar cards, or billboards (also known as bill postings), mailings, materials like “branded” blotters and pens, and sales materials for traveling salesmen to use. It also detailed the size of the advertising space, the tone used in the copy, and whether or not to use illustrations.<sup>16</sup>

Once the plan was completed, the copy department prepared the text for the advertisements based on the ideas dictated in the plan. If illustrations were

to be used, the art department began to do the same with the designs for the ad. The typography department then combined the copy with the illustrations and printed proofs that were sent to mediums with orders prepared by the “rate man.” The final step was for the collection of the printed advertisements sent back to the agency from the mediums to be handed to the checking department to make sure that the publication carrying the ads followed the agency’s orders. While each department did its own specialty work, the departments were inter-reliant and in the course of creating an ad campaign, work might go back and forth between departments before the campaign was completed.<sup>17</sup>

The organized and compartmentalized yet interrelated advertising agency that Calkins described in *The Business of Advertising* demonstrated another instance of how much the advertising business had grown between 1905 and 1915. During that decade, agencies reorganized with employees who specialized in specific areas of advertising and who could work together to create successful campaigns, in contrast to the jack-of-all trades ad men. One account manager described his interdependent relationship with his sales manager. He said that “the sales manager is my right-hand man and I like to feel and believe I am justified in feeling that I am his.... If either he or I were worried over who was going to get the credit for the ideas we frequently thresh out in conference, our confidence in one another would soon be clouded.... In all our consultations there is one consideration that is paramount and only one. That is the question, “Will it sell the goods?”<sup>18</sup>

In order to produce the best advertisements possible, Calkins advocated hiring the best artists to work in or with the art department. By the 1910s, full-time copywriters were employed in every copy department and many, like Claude Hopkins, specialized in a certain style of copy. Calkins believed that the illustrations in an advertisement should be considered as carefully as the copy, and encouraged advertisers and agencies to hire professional artists. In a December 9, 1908, column in *Printers' Ink* he argued:

I believe that in making an advertising design effective it is not necessary to make it mediocre or repulsive. In writing the copy it has been found that the best English produces the best copy. The more forcibly you can convey the particular message you have in mind, the better the advertising, and "forcibly" means clearly, impressively and convincingly. The kind of English written by Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Joseph Addison, Robert Louis Stevenson and Arthur Brisbane is the kind of English used in good advertising. If this is true of the copy part of the ad, why should it not be true of the design part? Why is it not better advertising to use well-drawn pictures and designs by artists capable of expressing an idea in a picture instead of the so-called commercial work with its lifeless figures that do not express the idea either in pose or in facial expression?<sup>19</sup>

Despite Calkins's promotion of hiring professional artists for ad illustrations, it could be difficult to find artists to hire. Many artists disdained advertising illustration as commercial art and Calkins had trouble locating artists to satisfy his requirements.<sup>20</sup>

As the advertising industry grew, its reputation with the American public became a concern. Professionalizing the advertising industry was a struggle that lasted throughout the early years of the business, but it was a particular focus from 1900 to 1915. Advertising's roots in patent medicine and space brokerage had left the industry with a tarnished reputation. In the late nineteenth century,

even advertising men called each other charlatans. While a sense of business competition at least partially explains this disparagement, the advertising industry attracted its share of dishonest men looking to make easy money. Historian Daniel Pope cites advertising agent Charles Austin Bates as saying, “it is a notorious fact that there has been so much trickery and dishonesty in the advertising business that a man engaged in it sometimes feels embarrassed when he is asked what business he is in.” It is no surprise, then, that advertising men insisted that advertising was a profession. Pope also refers to a 1902 *Printers’ Ink* article that contends “writing, even the writing of advertisements, is as much a profession as that of medicine or theology.”<sup>21</sup>

In *Modern Advertising*, Calkins and Holden offered advice on professionalizing advertising, but admitted that “advertising is at present an art; it has not yet reached its place as an exact science,” thus showing that while ad men wanted to be seen as on par with the elevated reputation of doctors and lawyers, they were not yet there.<sup>22</sup> A *Printers’ Ink* article written by Calkins in 1908 argued against the manufacturers’ practice of soliciting quotes from ad agencies for the cheapest advertisements by saying that one would not hire a doctor because he offered the cheapest rates. One would hire a doctor who offered the best treatment for an ailment. He defended hiring a professional advertising agent as a similar endeavor and advocated hiring an agency because it offered the best plan, not the cheapest rates.<sup>23</sup> Calkins argued the case for the advertising professional again in *The Business of Advertising*, saying that advertising men had changed from “mere hucksters in space to professional

men, whose advice, based upon experience and study, now has the same weight with the manufacturers who employ their services as the advice of an expert chemist, an experienced electrician or a specialist lawyer.”<sup>24</sup> Calkins was able to call ad men professionals in 1915, which indicates that, although advertising was still struggling to professionalize, advertising had begun to dissociate itself from its disreputable roots.

To professionalize the advertising industry, advertising men, particularly within the larger advertising firms, attempted to distance themselves from patent medicine advertisements; to control the honesty of advertisements through the rise of the truth-in-advertising movement; and to turn advertising from an art into a science through market research, collection of statistics, and the application of psychology to advertisements. Into the early years of the twentieth century, patent medicine advertising accounts were still held by some of the larger advertising firms, like N.W. Ayer and Son, and *Printers' Ink* still praised patent medicine companies and their advertisements.<sup>25</sup> In 1901, the editor of *Printers' Ink* lauded a letter from a patent medicine company, the Penn Drug Company, seeking investors for its products. The editor called the letter “one of the most attractive appeals he has ever perused.”<sup>26</sup> However, it was becoming more and more common for advertising agencies to drop their patent medicine clients.

In 1905, Calkins and Holden presented a mixed view of patent advertising. In the second chapter of *Modern Advertising*, they applauded early ad agents of patent medicine as men who were “thorough, brave and patient, and got results which are envied today.”<sup>27</sup> However, they also dismissed patent advertising

stating that “the advertising of proprietary remedies does not stand on the same high plane as the advertising of commercial articles and, possibly, never will.”<sup>28</sup> By 1915, Calkins described patent medicine advertising as “objectionable or dishonest publicity.”<sup>29</sup> Clearly, attitudes within the advertising industry toward patent medicine were changing from praise to disdain. Historian Jackson Lears suggests that the popularity of patent medicines had been due to the helplessness of medical doctors and the low investment costs for patent medicine purveyors, but also due to a persistence of magical thinking by the American people—they wanted to believe in miracle cures for their ailments.<sup>30</sup> This helps explain why it took years for advertising agencies to close their patent medicine accounts.

The partially successful truth-in-advertising movement of the second decade of the century underscores advertising men’s efforts to professionalize their business. The movement began in 1911 at the first meeting of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America. The clubs proposed to promote the passage of state laws regulating false claims and misleading copy in advertisements. For the most part, large, national advertisers were spared the rigors of the movement.<sup>31</sup> Vigilance workers stated their intentions to handle all cases with equal vigor, regardless of the size or power of the accused, but cases against national advertisers were handled quietly. While national in focus, most complaints were local and were handled by local clubs. The success of the movement was limited by its narrow focus. As Daniel Pope points out, “Advertising’s leaders decried outright falsehoods even as they developed new

methods of promotion that relied on a rhetoric in which truth and falsity were often secondary or irrelevant concerns.”<sup>32</sup> National advertisers and advertising agencies did benefit from the movement, however, as it polished their reputations.<sup>33</sup> The effort advertising men, agencies, and clubs made to prove that their advertisements could be trusted shows another way by which the advertising industry was attempting to provide itself with a trustworthy national standing.

Ad agency N.W. Ayer and Son made the first rudimentary attempt at marketing research in 1879 when a manufacturer demanded the agency find out where its products were being sold.<sup>34</sup> However, it was not until the turn of the century that the idea of jobs dedicated to marketing research and statistics gathering began to take hold. In 1900, ad man Albert Lasker developed a “record of results” department for Lord and Thomas while he was on the road as a salesman for the agency. Lord and Thomas required that their clients submit reports on the number of responses they received to their ads so that the department could file the results on a card for each medium carrying their ads and track the success of each medium.<sup>35</sup> In 1903, the J. Walter Thompson Company began systematically soliciting consumer reactions to full-page ads they placed in a number of magazines. They asked for readers to respond to the agency with information on their reactions to specific ads and received over 30,000 responses.<sup>36</sup> As early as 1901, *Printers’ Ink* featured articles about advertising agents’ attempts to gather statistics on their industry. The Agate Club of Chicago proposed a plan to use U.S. Census Bureau data to compile statistics

on the number of general advertisers in existence and to create an advertising statistics bureau.<sup>37</sup> In 1905, Calkins and Holden advised ad men on how to turn advertising from an art into a science by measuring the effectiveness of an agency's advertisements; and by 1910 most large advertising firms were beginning to include market studies in their ad campaigns.<sup>38</sup>

In *Modern Advertising* (1905), Calkins and Holden advised several methods of measuring the effectiveness of ads. Their suggestions included that agencies offer consumers "something desirable" if they sent in box fronts or labels so that agencies could count the number of products an advertisement sold or that agencies include a "key" or code in an ad that was specific to each medium so that the agency could track which media were the most successful when customers sent in inquiries. They also suggested that customers fill out a preprinted coupon or form and return it in return for some item to be mailed to the consumer so that the agency could gather information on the reader's state of residence, age, and occupation and that agencies gather test groups of consumers together to look at trademarks cut out and posted on a wall to see if they could identify a product by its trademark alone.<sup>39</sup>

By the 1915 publication of *The Business of Advertising*, Calkins advised that market studies should be part of the process of creating an advertising campaign. Advertising agents had learned to investigate before launching a product and had changed their services to include a study of sales problems for each client. Calkins believed that a successful ad campaign could only be planned once the agent completely understood the product, its competitors, its



competitors' ad campaigns, the manufacturing process, any previous ad campaigns run by the company independently or with another agency, the financial concerns of the advertiser's company, and the prospect for success of the product if it was a new one. Only when these items were understood could a campaign that suited the needs of the advertiser and their product be designed.<sup>40</sup>

The evolution of Calkins's writing from advising how to get basic statistics to insisting on a scientific investigation before beginning to plan an ad campaign shows the progress ad men were making in their effort to control the outcome of their endeavors.

In *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, historian Susan Strasser tells the story of the invention and launch of Proctor and Gamble's (P&G) new cottonseed oil-based vegetable shortening, Crisco. It provides an example of the professional type of campaigns that Calkins supported, although it is not from the luxury market.

Calkins actually referenced the launch of "an entirely new cooking ingredient, such as a vegetable lard" in *The Business of Advertising* as an example of how to use market research to plan an ad campaign for a new product.<sup>41</sup> However, Strasser's description provides more detail on the development of the product and the campaign.

The Crisco product was developed to secure P&G's supply of cottonseed oil, which it used to make soap. In 1905, P&G tasked its laboratories to create a product with this in mind. When the scientists finished development in 1910, they had a vegetable shortening ready to patent. In order to convince the American public to use Crisco instead of lard, Stanley Resor and Helen Lansdowne, of the

J. Walter Thompson advertising agency's Cincinnati office, prepared their campaign by first conducting a series of product test campaigns to determine the best advertising strategy. Samples were given to university researchers for product and recipe testing, "Crisco teas" were held at Cincinnati women's clubs, and local businesses like the Queen City Club were persuaded to use Crisco in their recipes.<sup>42</sup>

After further developing the product based on feedback from these tests, Lansdowne and Resor tested seven or eight different sales plans, including newspaper advertising and streetcar ads, and then sent samples of Crisco and its forthcoming advertisements to grocers nationwide. The product was launched nationally in 1912 and for the first several years after launch, Proctor and Gamble sent teams around the country for several months each year to conduct demonstrations and "cooking schools" in various cities, often asking their teams to downplay the importance of the use of Crisco in these schools, so that the women who attended would feel they had learned something instead of merely attended a promotion.<sup>43</sup> The Crisco launch shows the scientific approach that Calkins advocated for use in the advertising industry. Its use of test markets, test plans, and product feedback also showcases the type of professionalism that Calkins encouraged in the advertising industry.

Psychologists became interested in advertising in this time period. Walter Dill Scott, a psychologist at Northwestern University (and later at the University of Chicago), first discussed his interest in the psychology of advertising at the annual dinner of the Agate Club in 1901. He advised that advertising should

appeal to consumers' emotions, not their reason, and that an advertisement that failed to create the desire to buy was a wasted effort. Scott's lecture inspired advertising agent John Lee Mahin, who was at the dinner, to publish twenty-six articles on the professor's theories of the psychology of advertising. Scott also used Mahin's articles to write and publish *The Theory and Practice of Advertising* in 1903, which he followed with *The Psychology of Advertising* in 1908.<sup>44</sup> Calkins and Holden quoted Professor Scott at length in *Modern Advertising*, concluding that psychology, combined with the use of statistics collected in marketing studies, "illustrates the attempt of the advertiser to leave off groping in the dark. He turns to psychology on one hand to learn, if he can, how the human mind is impressed by certain kinds of advertising, and to statistics on the other hand to see if his deductions are correct."<sup>45</sup> Calkins returned to the subject in *The Business of Advertising* to update his readers on the most recent publications in the field of advertising psychology and to advise the advertising agent about how the theory of advertising could apply to its practice. Calkins's continued interest in the psychology of advertising and the growth of the field with works by professors Hugo Munsterberg and Frank Alvah Parsons indicates that professionals outside of advertising began to take the industry seriously and that men in the advertising industry believed that these studies could help them professionalize their craft.<sup>46</sup>

While developments to professionalize the advertising business were made between 1900 and 1915, styles of advertisements were also changing. The pursuit of the most effective forms of ads combined with varying needs,

budgets, and products of advertisers to produce different styles of advertising. Prior to the first ad agencies in the middle of the nineteenth century, advertisements resembled announcements. Similar in style to today's classified ads, they were small, text-based ads that announced news from a company or private party.<sup>47</sup> As manufactured goods standardized, manufacturers found they needed to inform the public about why their product was superior to a competitor's. To do so, they wrote advertisements that relied on superlatives to make their product stand out from the crowd.<sup>48</sup>

The first great change to this style of advertising came with the first full-time copywriter. In 1880, John Wannamaker hired copywriter John E. Powers to write copy for his department store's ads. Powers' style of writing was straightforward and usually included a description of the item being sold, what it was used for, and why it was better than its competitors. He avoided catchy sayings and hard-selling copy, favoring a "talking style of writing" that was accessible to everyone who might read his ad.<sup>49</sup> Although his advertisements were for a department store, Powers's approach quickly spread throughout the larger advertising industry and became known as the "Powers style." Advertising men like Calkins, Claude Hopkins, John E. Kennedy, and Charles Austin Bates, all of whom became well known in later years for their work in subsequent ad styles, adopted this style to sell consumer goods like Bissell Carpet Sweepers, beer, and hair tonics.<sup>50</sup> The "Powers style" remained popular until newer styles evolved and became more prominent in the 1890s and early 1900s.

Around the turn of the century, character- and verse-based advertisements became popular. They usually featured a clever rhyme or verse, sometimes combined with an illustrated character, to publicize the company and the product they were selling. The before-after approach of this style attempted to convince consumers that using a certain product could change their lives in the same way it changed the lives of the ad's characters.<sup>51</sup> Sapolio's "Spotless Town" campaign was one famous example of this type of advertising. Sapolio was a household cleaning soap made by manufacturer Enoch Morgan's Sons whose ad campaigns were handled by an advertising manager named Artemas Ward. In 1900 Ward instructed one of his artists, James K. Fraser, to develop a new plan for advertising Sapolio. Fraser created a campaign centered on a fictional town in the Netherlands whose citizens used Sapolio to keep their town and homes spotlessly clean. Fraser's verses and illustrations first appeared on streetcar ads before branching out to include toys, books, cartoons, and plays. Consumers anxiously waited for Sapolio to release new ads with jingles such as:

This is the maid of fair renown  
Who scrubs the floors of Spotless Town.  
To find a speck when she is through  
Would take a pair of specs or two,  
And her employ isn't slow,  
For she employs SAPOLIO.<sup>52</sup>

While campaigns like "Spotless Town" were wildly popular with the public, advertising agencies saw them as somewhat dangerous. Consumers remembered the character and the rhyme better than they remembered the products the advertisements sold. People could recite the rhymes or recognize the characters, but a strong connection to the product was lacking.<sup>53</sup>

*Modern Advertising* and *The Business of Advertising* reflected this changing attitude to character- and verse-based advertisements. In *Modern Advertising*, Calkins and Holden described this style of advertisement as a “recent trend” or “vogue” in the advertising industry. They justified the use of jingles and verse as good memory aids, similar to ones used throughout history to help people memorize important facts, and said it was logical that an advertiser would look to these advertising devices to make sure his product was remembered by consumers. Calkins and Holden did caution that this style of advertising should make the reader buy the product, not just create catchy rhymes.<sup>54</sup> Calkins and Holden lauded this style of advertisement in 1905. The publication of *Modern Advertising* was only a few years removed from two of their agency’s largest campaigns, the Phoebe Snow ads for Lackawanna Railroad and the Sunny Jim ads for Force breakfast cereal, both of which were seen as famous examples of this style of advertising alongside Sapolio’s “Spotless Town.”<sup>55</sup>

By the time *The Business of Advertising* was published in 1915, Calkins had clearly changed course and advised his readers against using this style of advertisement. He stated simply that “clever advertisements, the kind you note and quote and hand about—the ‘Phoebe Snows,’ ‘Spotless Towns’ and ‘Sunny Jims’—are not necessarily good, and are quite frequently bad.” He continued and said that the only acceptable clever advertisements were those that sold goods. This is the only mention Calkins makes of this style of advertisement. His lack of attention to character advertising speaks loudly against the style.<sup>56</sup>

This is perhaps because Calkins & Holden's Phoebe Snow and Sunny Jim campaigns had left his agency with a reputation as a "‘pretty picture’ agency producing stylish, attractive copy that might not work."<sup>57</sup> Whether Calkins was simply trying to distance himself and his agency from the style or whether he truly believed the style did not work, he was clearly no longer promoting character- and verse-based advertisements.

With the waning popularity of verse- and character-based ads came two new styles that remained prevalent throughout the early 1900s and 1910s. "Reason-why" advertising and "atmosphere" advertising developed as responses to the character-based ads. "Reason-why" advertising was a development of the "Powers style" of advertising. Like ads done in the "Powers style", "reason-why" advertisements appealed to a consumer's reason. The ads were copy-heavy and featured little illustration—there would be a simple drawing or a photograph of the product if there were any illustration. The style's descriptive name fit its logic-based ads perfectly. Historian Rob Schorman states, "a successful advertisement depended on giving customers direct, specific, practical reasons why they ought to purchase a particular article, and then explaining that rationale with details, logic, and forcefulness that compelled readers to act."

In one of early advertising's most famous stories, the "reason-why" style's "creation myth" began in 1904 when copywriter John E. Kennedy met with Albert Lasker, an executive at the Lord & Thomas ad agency. The bold and self-confident Kennedy secured a meeting with Lasker by sending him a note in his Lord & Thomas office saying that Kennedy could tell Lasker what "real

advertising” was if Lasker would grant Kennedy a meeting. Intrigued, Lasker met with Kennedy, and Kennedy boiled his argument down to a simple phrase. Advertising was, he said, “salesmanship in print.” Kennedy elaborated on this comment, convincing Lasker that salesmanship could be put into print by telling people the reason why they should buy a certain product. Lasker was convinced and hired Kennedy. While Kennedy worked at Lord & Thomas for only about two years, his ideas spread throughout the advertising industry.<sup>58</sup>

Claude Hopkins, another copywriter, also wrote in the “reason-why” style. Shy, hardworking, and passionate about advertising, Hopkins succeeded Kennedy at Lord & Thomas in April of 1908. Hopkins was famous for taking the “reason-why” style one step further than Kennedy had. He not only used logic to appeal to a consumer, but he also analyzed the most effective ways to make ads memorable to customers. One of Hopkins’s most notable campaigns, for the automobile company Chalmers-Detroit, began in the summer of 1908. Hopkins’s Chalmers ads incorporated not only the typical hard-facts based argument for a customer to buy a Chalmers car, but also human-interest stories about the Chalmers’ engineer, cautions of a restricted parts supply to create an urgency to buy, and comparisons to “exotic foreign cars” to create a feeling of high-class exclusivity. He repeated this combination on many of his ad campaigns, building his reputation as the premier “reason-why” ad man.<sup>59</sup> Lord & Thomas was not afraid to use his fame to promote the agency and attract new clients. It advertised the agency in *Printers’ Ink* as practicing “safe advertising” and stated that with the unrivaled Claude Hopkins as the head of its copy department,



clients could rely on his expertise from his many great successes to oversee their own new accounts and on his ability to distinguish between the impossible and the possible to make sure their advertising paid.<sup>60</sup>

In *Modern Advertising*, Calkins and Holden recommended “reason-why’s” simple advertising style for use in magazine ads, stating “plain type advertising stands out especially well in magazines where there are many ‘fancier’ illustration advertisements.” However, by the publication of *Business of Advertising*, Calkins acknowledged while “reason-why” advertising had its place, he also promoted a different style of advertising, one which was the complete opposite of “reason-why” advertising and one which came to be one of the Calkins & Holden agency’s defining styles. He used the example of Tiffany to explain the new style, stating that advertising could create or use an existing “atmosphere” surrounding a brand to elevate a company’s products above those of their competitors. Calkins argued that, “the Tiffany atmosphere has been gained by years of conscientious service, and gives to its products a preeminence which, while valuable to the house, and legitimate, and utterly fair to the purchaser, still gives to the Tiffany goods a credit that is not warranted by the difference between Tiffany’s silver and the silver of other equally high-grade houses. The object of most advertisers is to obtain this result.”<sup>61</sup>

“Atmosphere” advertising co-existed with “reason-why” advertising, but instead of appealing to a consumer’s sense of logic to sell a product, “atmosphere” ads appealed to a consumer’s emotions. As Calkins’s description of the aura surrounding the Tiffany brand implies, “atmosphere” ads suggested to

customers what they should desire to buy. Calkins & Holden became known for its work in this type of advertising, running successful “atmosphere”-based campaigns for Arrow collars and Pierce-Arrow automobiles.<sup>62</sup> Calkins recognized that this style was well suited to luxury cars in particular when he chose to use it in his campaign for Pierce-Arrow beginning in the fall of 1907. Using the “atmosphere” style for Pierce-Arrow allowed Calkins and the manufacturer to highlight the luxury experience and lifestyle the purchaser of a Pierce-Arrow enjoyed and gave the company an advantage over its rivals in the luxury automobile market.<sup>63</sup> The style of “atmosphere” ads was in clear contrast to the logic-driven, “reason-why” ads.

“Reason-why” and “atmosphere” ads battled for prominence in the ad industry of the 1900s and 1910s. Susan Strasser offers an example of a 1909 contest run by toothpaste manufacturer Colgate to ask people to vote on whether they preferred Colgate’s “reason-why”-based ads or their “atmosphere”-based ads. Sixty thousand people entered the contest, but when Colgate released the results, they reported that the answers were almost equally divided.<sup>64</sup> Both styles, in fact, remained prominent in the ad industry through World War I.

By the end of the 1900s, the advertising industry had become a professional institution. Advertising men had developed from multi-taskers who relied on their personalities and their ability to read human nature to sell products into men who planned and worked on complex campaigns. Agencies grew from small, one-room operations into large, organized businesses. Advertising theory supplemented the use of hard-won statistics to guide advertising decisions with

the use of psychology and intense investigations to plan advertising campaigns. The reputation of advertising had increasing success in leaving its patent medicine roots behind. Ad styles changed from using catchy but often ineffective character-based rhymes to using hard logic or suggestive atmosphere to sell goods.

This examination of *Modern Advertising*, *The Business of Advertising*, and *Printers' Ink* demonstrates that the advertising industry had gone through a period of great change between 1890 and 1915. These changes affected luxury advertising and especially the use of art in railroad and automobile advertising during this era in that luxury railroad and automobile ads were developed in an innovative style that did not fit in either category, but instead set a trend unique to their particular segments of the advertising market. The use of art and its evocation of the experience of an elite lifestyle proved not only effective in targeting an audience of very rich railroad passengers and automobile buyers, but modeled more generally how powerfully art in advertising could be employed and subsequently adapted and adopted by other areas of advertising.

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<sup>1</sup> Retail advertising, both for local retail storeowners and for department stores, and mail-order advertising were large advertising segments after the turn of the century, but they are not the focus of this study.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 196. The phrase “patent medicine” is a term used to describe proprietary drugs sold to consumers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The term is generally a misnomer, as the formulas used to create the

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drugs were usually closely guarded secrets instead of legally patented formulas. However, the phrase was widely recognized in the advertising industry, so it will be used throughout this work. Daniel Pope, "Advertising as a Consumer Issue: An Historical Overview," *Journal of Social Issues* 47, no. 1 (1991): 43.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on advertising to the American mass market, see Susan Strasser's *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> A few women worked in the advertising industry in the years covered in this study, but most advertising employees were men. Therefore, I will use the term "advertising men" throughout the work to indicate employees in the advertising industry. In addition to Earnest Elmo Calkins, other pioneering professional advertising men include Albert Lasker, John E. Powers, and Claude Hopkins.

<sup>5</sup> Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 308-9; Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York: Vintage, 1985), 41-48. Lears and Fox offer slightly different accounts of when Calkins moved to New York permanently, but they agree that by the time he took the job with Bates, Calkins was living solely in New York City.

<sup>6</sup> James D. Norris, *Advertising and the Transformation of American Society, 1865 – 1920* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 1-12.

<sup>7</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 119-20.

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<sup>8</sup> See Norris, *Advertising and Society*, 35, and Robert L. Craig, “Fact, Public Opinion, and Persuasion: The Rise of the Visual in Journalism and Advertising,” in *Picturing the Past: Media, History, and Photography*, eds. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 133-39. For more information on the rise of the branded product and its effect on the development of advertisements and on the consumer mass market, see Strasser’s *Satisfaction Guaranteed*.

<sup>10</sup> Calkins often interchanged the phrases “advertising man” and “advertising manager.”

<sup>11</sup> Pope describes the advertising world of the previous generation, in the 1890s, as one of confusion. There were advertising agents and agencies, but there were also many advertisers who used their own in-house advertising departments, just like those Calkins and Holden described in 1905. In addition, there were many who preferred to purchase ready-made advertisements. Some of this confusion still existed after the turn of the century and was reflected in Calkins’s descriptions. See Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 150.

<sup>12</sup> Earnest Elmo Calkins and Ralph Holden, *Modern Advertising* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1905), 144-54 (quotation on 152-53). Calkins defines the jobber as “a more or less mechanical unit, who buys goods in quantity from different manufacturers and sells them through his own traveling salesmen as they are demanded by the dealer.” Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 104.

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<sup>13</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 17, viii.

<sup>14</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 176-79. After World War I, most agencies moved again to offices on Madison Avenue. Pope bases his data for agency employee backgrounds on studies of employment lists at advertising agencies.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York: Vintage, 1985), 31.

<sup>16</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 53-57.

<sup>17</sup> Calkins offered a detailed description of the departments an effective advertising agency needed in *The Business of Advertising*, 53-57. He also included an example of an ad campaign, complete with illustrated advertisements, ready to be presented to the advertiser. See pages 216-41.

<sup>18</sup> "The Advertising Manager and His House," *Printers' Ink* 90 (January 7, 1915): 3-13.

<sup>19</sup> Earnest Elmo Calkins, "Kicks and Halfpence," *Printers' Ink* 65 (December 9, 1908): 12-13, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805795;seq=1204;view=1up;num=12> (accessed April 5, 2013).

<sup>20</sup> Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 43. For more information on the tensions between art and advertising, see art historian Michelle Bogart's book *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). In it, she presents a thorough study of the tensions between commercial artists and proponents of "high art" throughout the twentieth century.

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<sup>21</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 125-27, 174.

<sup>22</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Earnest Elmo Calkins, "Kicks and Halfpence," *Printers' Ink* 65 (October 7, 1908): 16-20,

[http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805795;seq=772;view=1up;](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805795;seq=772;view=1up;num=16)

num=16 (accessed April 5, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 98.

<sup>25</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 193-95. Sociologist Michael Schudson points out that a full quarter of N.W. Ayer and Son's business came from patent medicine advertising clients in the agency's first decade of business. Michael Schudson, *Advertising, the Uneasy Persuasion: Its Dubious Impact on American Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 162.

<sup>26</sup> "A Circle in Oshkosh," *Printers' Ink* 36 (July 31, 1901): 27-29,

[http://babel.hathitrust.](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805688;seq=273;view=1up;num=27)

[org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805688;seq=273;view=1up;num=27](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805688;seq=273;view=1up;num=27) (accessed April

5, 2013). The July 3, 1901, issue of *Printers' Ink* also published an article titled

"Medical Methods" advising on the best ways to advertise patent medicines,

including using testimonials, and proper placement and size. New England

Grocer, "Medical Methods," *Printers' Ink* 36 (July 3, 1901): 6,

[http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805688;seq=12;view=1up;num=](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805688;seq=12;view=1up;num=6)

6 (accessed April 5, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 14.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

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<sup>29</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 43. For more information on the balancing act that agencies performed during the waning years of patent medicine advertising by trying to maintain their lucrative patent medicine accounts without damaging their reputations, see page 98.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-5.

<sup>32</sup> Pope, "Advertising as a Consumer Issue," 46.

<sup>33</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 213-17. For a more in-depth discussion of the truth-in-advertising movement, see pages 202-26 and Pope's updated discussion of the movement in his article, "Advertising as a Consumer Issue," 45-47.

<sup>34</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 141.

<sup>35</sup> Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 60-1.

<sup>36</sup> Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 211.

<sup>37</sup> "Advertising Statistics," *Printers' Ink* 36 (July 10, 1901): 38, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805688;seq=108;view=1up;num=38> (accessed April 5, 2013).

<sup>38</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 261-62; Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 141. For an in-depth analysis of how the developing complexity of the consumer mass market led advertising agencies to conduct increasingly more sophisticated market research, see Susan Strasser's *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, 146-61.

<sup>39</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 263-70.



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<sup>40</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 184-91, 199-201.

<sup>41</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 99-100. Calkins never mentioned the Crisco brand name in his description, but it is clear from the details he included about the “liquid vegetable lard” that he was describing the Crisco campaign.

<sup>42</sup> Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, 1-5.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 148; Norris, *Advertising and Society*, 44.

<sup>45</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 278-84.

<sup>46</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 89.

<sup>47</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 234.

<sup>48</sup> Norris, *Advertising and Society*, 22-26.

<sup>49</sup> Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 26.

<sup>50</sup> Norris, *Advertising and Society*, 43-44.

<sup>51</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 273-74.

<sup>52</sup> Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 23, 45-46.

<sup>53</sup> Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 236.

<sup>54</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 317, 321-26.

<sup>55</sup> Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 46-47. Fox also mentions that Calkins & Holden took over Force’s Sunny Jim campaign a few months after the manufacturer launched the ads in March of 1902. Calkins wrote the Phoebe Snow jingles at the request of Lackawanna’s advertising manager, Wendell P. Colton.

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<sup>56</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 248. Calkins makes no mention of his involvement in the “Sunny Jim” or “Phoebe Snow” campaigns in either *Modern Advertising* or *The Business of Advertising*.

<sup>57</sup> Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 48.

<sup>58</sup> Rob Schorman, “This Astounding Car for \$1,500”: The Year Automobile Advertising Came of Age,” *Enterprise & Society* 11, no. 3 (2010): 471-73; Fox *Mirror Makers*, 49-52. For more information on the similarities between the “Powers style” and “reason-why”, see Fox, *Mirror Makers*, 51, and Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 239. For other accounts of the meeting between Lasker and Kennedy and the beginnings of “reason-why” advertising, see Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 199, and Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 237-38.

<sup>59</sup> Schorman, “This Astounding Car,” 475-81. For more information on Claude Hopkins, see Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 52-56.

<sup>60</sup> “Safe Advertising,” *Printers’ Ink* 64 (July 22, 1908): 28-29, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066805795;seq=208;view=1up;num=28> (accessed April 18, 2013).

<sup>61</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 307-8; Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 205, 250-53.

<sup>62</sup> Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 70.

<sup>63</sup> Pamela Walker Laird, “The Car without a Single Weakness: Early Automobile Advertising,” *Technology and Culture* 37, no. 4 (1996): 801.

<sup>64</sup> Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, 159.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Case of Santa Fe Railroad Advertisements**

Historians with a focus on advertising have looked at automobile and railroad advertising as distinct branches of advertising history, but not as one particular kind of advertising category; they have looked at the specifics of each branch, but not at the umbrella under which the ads fall. When advertising to the elite is the focus and becomes the filter for this particular group, railroad and automobile advertising campaigns appear in a different light with the effect of changing the timeline of advertising history. This study concentrates on luxury advertising that used high art to attract consumers and proposes an addition to the timeline in the development of advertising as an industry. The phasing of luxury advertising might vary at different times, depending on the focus of the items or experiences, but overall there is a very strong association between the item or experience that is advertised and the elite audience to whom such advertisements are directed.

Railroad advertising history, especially that of the Santa Fe, has been well researched. However, historians' focus has been on twentieth-century Santa Fe ads and their artwork. The origins of this advertising era were rooted in work created the late nineteenth century. Some of the earliest use of high art in railroad advertising, even in American luxury advertising in general, was done by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, both before and after the depression of 1893. Most railroads used the same rail cars, so the Santa Fe and its competitors differentiated themselves from by advertising their scenery—destinations and sights to be seen along their routes. The Santa Fe's route

followed part of the old Santa Fe trail (hence the name of the railroad) and ventured close to the Grand Canyon.<sup>1</sup> In 1892, Santa Fe advertising executives were among the early railroad advertisers to use art—art that was specifically created for the Santa Fe to feature their products and experiences as opposed to art created for another reason and repurposed for advertising—to attract passengers. They employed trained artists such as Thomas Moran to paint the Grand Canyon and other spectacular sights. Combining these paintings, turned into chromolithographs, with illustrated brochures written by Santa Fe clerk Charles Allard Higgins, allowed potential passengers to anticipate the views of natural beauty if they chose the Santa Fe Railroad as their transportation to the American West. As Los Angeles expanded, it became a high-end vacation destination for wealthy passengers that they could reach on a scenic route in lavish comfort throughout their journey.

The Santa Fe began using high art to attract railroad passengers in the 1890s. At that time the American middle class was beginning to emerge as a buying force and, therefore, the Santa Fe's advertising for passengers targeted both the economic elite and the new middle class. For the purposes of this study, it is the Santa Fe's targeting of both the economic elite and new middle class, setting a target of a broader socioeconomic class, that is of value.

Early efforts at luxury goods advertising came from organ and pianoforte manufacturers in the early nineteenth century, with advertisements for these goods appearing in newspapers in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. In the 1850s, the Estey Organ was the first to be consistently advertised through

regular newspaper advertising and the company was later one of the first to advertise in magazines.<sup>2</sup>

And so, prior to the 1880s, the Santa Fe's operations were focused on hauling freight, not passengers and certainly not luxury passengers. The temperature in the cars was poorly regulated and passengers were either hot or cold depending on where they sat in the car. Crossing from car to car was difficult due to open platforms between the cars, the lighting was dim oil lighting, and passenger benches were low-backed and uncomfortable. The first sleeper cars were not introduced until 1876.<sup>3</sup> However, when the Santa Fe introduced through service to California in 1885, they developed a "hard-sell passenger campaign" and slashed their passenger fares to compete with the Southern Pacific.<sup>4</sup>

With this "hard-sell campaign" came a change in the Santa Fe's advertising style. Pamela Walker Laird points out the many major businesses of the nineteenth century, the railroads included, "had little impact on consumer-directed advertising practices," since they mostly sold to other businesses or sold their products through wholesalers. According to Laird, prior to innovations in the Santa Fe campaign of the 1890s, the railroads advertised mostly their rates and timetables and followed advertising conventions set by other advertisers.<sup>5</sup> In *Printers' Ink's* collection of its articles written during the early years of the advertising industry, *Fifty Years, 1888-1938*, the editors state that the railroads' "copy...was inclined to be on the dull and windy side," which supports Laird's assertion that the railroads did little to break advertising conventions.<sup>6</sup>

In his history of the development of advertising, Frank Presbrey, who worked for the Santa Fe in the late 1800s, argued the Santa Fe's early use of newspaper and magazine advertising were innovations of the 1880s. He says, "It was among the very first of the railroads to recognize the advantages of magazine and newspaper advertising, and it is a safe assertion that, from 1880 to date, if the question should suddenly be asked the average man to name a big railroad advertiser he would name the Santa Fe, whose exquisite color pictures of the Grand Canyon have done so much to help the 'See America First' movement'."<sup>7</sup>

The Santa Fe's early use of magazine and newspaper advertising in the 1880s put the railroad on the path that led to the innovations of its 1892 campaign. This passenger campaign was one of the earliest examples of a railroad breaking the traditional railroad-advertising mold. Laird points out that the campaign's use of "artists' romantic renditions of the area and its people, under the direction of an advertising specialist" was a pioneering move in railroad advertising.<sup>8</sup>

Using high art illustrations in advertising was relatively new. The English had pioneered using illustrations by famous artists in the late 1880s. As Frank Presbrey related, the *Illustrated London News* bought a painting called "Bubbles" from artist Sir John Millais that depicted his grandson blowing bubbles.<sup>9</sup> The painting was then purchased by the managing director of A. & F. Pears and used to advertise Pears's Soap. Other artists like Stacey Marks were also persuaded to permit the use of their paintings in advertisements. While the illustrations often

lacked a sales point, they opened the door for advertisers to use high art in their ads.<sup>10</sup>

The Santa Fe took this utilization of art one step further. It found employing artists to create art specifically to advertise for its products and experiences was more effective than obtaining previously existing art from independent artists. In 1892, the Santa Fe launched the beginning of a series of illustrated booklets to increase the passenger traffic on the railroad. The Santa Fe's illustrated advertising campaigns grew out of these advertising booklets.

C.A. Higgins, the Santa Fe's chief clerk, the man behind the Santa Fe's successful illustrated booklets, and a proponent of bringing artists to the Southwest to paint the scenery that passengers could view and visit on the Santa Fe's trains, was a Massachusetts schoolteacher before he joined the Santa Fe at its Boston headquarters in 1881. He started as the private secretary to William Barstow Strong, the railroad's president. Strong had recently been promoted to direct the Santa Fe's expansion to the Pacific, and Higgins joined him, travelling with Strong and the board of directors and by himself, in Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. This was as far as the Santa Fe's lines extended at the time, and Higgins helped introduce investors, writers, artists, officials, and scientists to the area. These travels helped spark his interest in southwestern imagery and Indian culture.

Higgins transferred to Chicago when Strong was forced to resign in 1889, becoming the chief clerk under the passenger traffic manager, William F. White.<sup>11</sup> In this position Higgins began writing booklets and taking artists west to paint.

His success in this endeavor is evident in the fact that one of his early booklets, *To California and Back*, published in April of 1893 (and which had a production run of more than 200,000 copies by 1900), was named a “classic of railroad literature” by *Printers’ Ink* and was recommended by the *New York Times Book Review*, among others.<sup>12</sup>

In 1892 the Santa Fe began promoting Southern California as a vacation spot. Thomas Moran was one of the first artists that traveled west with Charles Higgins to paint (and in the case of some artists, photograph) the scenery along the Santa Fe’s route.<sup>13</sup> Moran’s *The Grand Cañon of the Colorado* was a lithograph the Santa Fe used “as sales incentive for special excursion tickets and even subscribers to the *Los Angeles Times*.”<sup>14</sup> It pictures the Grand Canyon on



Figure 1 *The Grand Cañon of the Colorado*, 1892, by Thomas Moran. The Santa Fe used copies of this lithograph as sales incentive for tickets to the Grand Canyon.

a slightly cloudy day, with some wispy clouds rising around rock formations to the left of the painting. The foreground is framed by rocky outcroppings and greenery on the left and all the way up the right side of the image, as if the viewer is standing on the outcropping looking out over the canyon. The lithograph captures the canyon’s beautiful red and earth-toned color striations in the varying



levels of sunshine that a partly sunny day at the canyon produces. Some of the colors, especially in the background, are well lit, while deeper parts of the canyon reflect the lower light that reaches the depths of the canyons as well as color variations due to cloud cover. There are no people or animals pictured; the lithograph simply captures the natural untouched beauty of the Grand Canyon. As the Grand Canyon at this time was a vacation destination only the wealthy could afford to reach, fine lithographs like this one by Thomas Moran were used to attract their attention and invite the elite and adventurous traveler to a part of America few Americans had seen.

In 1892 the Santa Fe launched its first “true luxury train,” the *California Limited*, to capitalize on the success of Higgins’s descriptive, illustrated advertising brochures highlighting the beauty and the culture of the West. The inaugural run of the *California Limited* left Chicago November 27, 1892, heading for Los Angeles and San Diego. The luxury train featured a southwestern and Indian motif with a color palette of southwestern toned blues, browns, and oranges and included a lounge car with a library with leather chairs. The depression in 1893 reduced the *California Limited’s* traffic so much that it was discontinued on May 3, 1896, but it was revived the following year and ran for the next fifty years. The revived *California Limited* featured Pintsch gas lighting and included a dining car, a smoking and buffet car, three Pullman sleeping cars. Historian Keith L. Bryant, Jr. says, “At Cajon Pass a uniformed young boy, Fay Blackburn, greeted the train, which paused long enough for him to present each lady passenger a bouquet of roses, violets and carnations and each gentleman

an alligator wallet.”<sup>15</sup> The Santa Fe’s passenger traffic rose 600% between 1897 and 1917 and the number of passengers went from 3,536,968 to 14,200,421. Bryant maintains that this increase in passenger traffic was due to both the population increase in the Southwest and the “vigorous promotional efforts” of



Figure 2 Cover art untitled, 1899, by J.T. McCutcheon. C.A. Higgins and Robert Spurrier Ellison’s cover selection for the annual booklet *To California and Back* for the Santa Fe Railway.

the Santa Fe.<sup>16</sup>

Higgins wrote numerous illustrated booklets as promotional literature for the Santa Fe. He developed three of the booklets in 1892 and as part of the process of writing them, Higgins insisted on traveling west with his artists, who he found in a variety of places, including one Chicago newspaper artist who he found at a local exhibit and others who he found through his involvement with the Chicago Palette & Chisel Club.<sup>17</sup> Artists John Tinney McCutcheon, Thomas Moran, and W.H. Jackson all accompanied Higgins on various trips west in 1892.<sup>18</sup> Higgins's first booklets featured paintings on the cover that depict the southwestern scenery through which the Santa Fe's trains travelled. Inside the booklet, he wrote about attractions that passengers could see from their train cars and at stops along the trip. This booklet cover, from the 1899 booklet, features an illustration by J.T. McCutcheon showing well-dressed ladies and gentlemen standing next to the pale blue ocean watching some swimmers. California's beautiful golden hills and snow tipped mountains can be seen in the background, showing travelers the beauty and recreation that awaited them at the end of their trip. At the beginning of the 1899 booklet, Higgins explained he did not have the space to treat all the topics he wished and then wrote: "With this apology to the Great West the book is tendered. It is in no sense a guide-book, but explicitly an attempt to present the merits of a relatively few selected typical features for the consideration of those who weigh the high opportunities of travel."<sup>19</sup> Higgins made a point to update his booklets to feature some different and new attractions. Interspersed among the descriptive narrative were ink

drawings by the artist who painted the painting for the cover of the booklet. Illustrations, like this one from the 1914 version that shows a coach full of tourists on a tour taking in the southwestern scenery, depicted natural land features along the route, building attractions, and scenes from Native American life.<sup>20</sup> The

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Figure 3 “The Enchanted Mesa,” 1914, artist unknown. One of C.A. Higgins and Robert Spurrier Ellison’s illustration selections for the annual booklet *To California over the Santa Fe Trail* for the Santa Fe Railway.

Santa Fe’s advertising men particularly focused on scenes from native American life in their advertising; it came to be their signature style in the twentieth century, allowing consumers to identify a Santa Fe ad from among the other richly

illustrated ads of other railroads as the advertising style grew more popular. The Santa Fe was one of the first to recognize this signature style as a marketing strategy.<sup>21</sup>

The Santa Fe did experience financial trouble during the economic crisis of 1893 and as a consequence not only their luxury business but all of their business experienced a decline. A series of questionable business decisions combined with the timing of the economic panic of 1893 led the Santa Fe into receivership on December 23, 1893.<sup>22</sup> The railroad was sold, and was chartered as the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company on December 12, 1895 with Edward P. Ripley as the new president. According to L.L. Waters, a business professor who wrote a study of the Santa Fe for the University of Kansas Press in 1950, "The interlude of dark days was gone, never to return. The Santa Fe waxed rich in public esteem as receivership faded in the distance."<sup>23</sup>

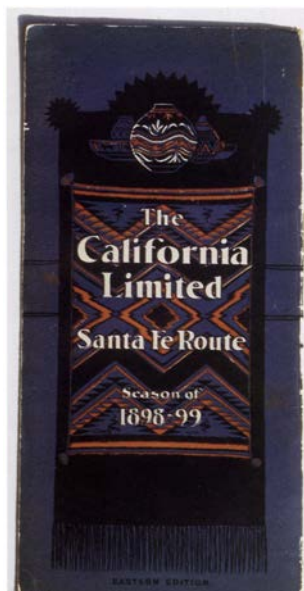


Figure 4 Untitled, 1898, by Curtis Gandy. This version of the advertisement was used as the cover of the annual Santa Fe booklet for 1898-99.

By October of 1898, the first booklet, calendar, and some magazine ads in a campaign designed to promote the new Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe's *California Limited* Chicago-to-Los Angeles train over the Southern Pacific's competing train began to appear. They were based on illustrations by Chicago artist Curtis Gandy, who Higgins (who survived the bankruptcy) sent to paint the Pueblo Indians in the summer of 1898.<sup>24</sup> The first ad, which appeared on the annual booklet, depicted a Navajo blanket on a blue and black background. The orange, blue, and black geometric designs of the blanket stand out on a background of black. The black acts as an outline for the blanket, with long tassels at the bottom of the outline and sunburst shaped cutouts at the top right, left, and center of the background. In the black, outlined by the center sunburst and above the blanket, are depictions of three pots and two bowls painted in the same black, blue, and orange and featuring animal silhouettes, geometric, and wave designs. The black outline is then surrounded by the blue cover of the booklet (this version of the advertisement was used as the cover of the annual booklet for 1898-99), with two sets of two thin black parallel lines running horizontally behind the image about halfway down the cover. In the middle of the blanket, white lettering says "The California Limited Santa Fe Route Season of 1898-99" and at the bottom beneath the blanket fringe black letters read "Eastern Edition."<sup>25</sup> Gandy's simple yet bold art work was visually striking and drew the reader's attention to the advertisement at the same time that it reminded the wealthy traveler of the exotic sights a trip west on the Santa Fe offered.

Another Gandy illustration from the same campaign shows a Native American child seated in the right foreground of the black and white illustration. The child is holding a bow in his left hand with a feather dangling out of his hair and is naked except for a decorative band on his upper left arm and a decorative



Figure 3.

Figure 5 Untitled, 1898, by Curtis Gandy. From his trip to paint the Pueblo Indians in the summer of 1898.

and is naked except for a decorative band on his upper left arm and a decorative scarf or painting around his neck and shoulders. He is leaning slightly back to look up at a group of katsina dolls peering back at him over the top left of a block of text. The text reads “The California Limited” in larger, bold type at the top, and underneath in smaller text it reads “2 ¾ days Chicago to Los Angeles Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays Through Pullmans, dining car, buffet smoking car with barber shop, and ladies observation car: all electric lighted.” It tells potential passengers that there are connecting lines to New York and Boston that take 4 days total and also where they can purchase tickets.<sup>26</sup> The use of black and white in the image allows the artist’s detailed rendering of the katsina dolls’ geometrically decorated clothing, headpieces, and body paint to contrast with the

clean and simple block of text, attracting the reader's eye and emphasizing the cultural experiences the Santa Fe offered its passengers.

In September of 1898, Chicago artist Elbridge Ayer Burbank sent Higgins a set of Native American portraits that he had painted on a visit to the Southwest in 1897-8. The images were already popular in Chicago's art world, and Higgins decided to use them to fill two "Aztec" Calendars, one for the last six months of 1899 and one for the first six months of 1900. This illustration, labeled "Zy-You Wah. Moqui." in red in the upper left corner, and marked in the lower right corner as painted in Arizona in 1898, shows a Pueblo child with heavy bangs and



Figure 6 "Zy-You Wah. Moqui," 1898, by Elbridge Ayer Burbank. This illustration was used as the April illustration in Santa Fe's "Aztec" calendar for the first six months of 1900.

colorful feathers in her hair wearing a headpiece with a painted design on it. The child is wearing traditional dress consisting of a black tunic with leather stitching or braiding and fringe hanging off her right shoulder and a brown belt and buckle around her waist. Black cuffs surround each wrist as she holds a colorfully



painted wooden toy topped with feathers in each hand. She is wearing multiple white leather, orange bead, and silver metalwork necklaces. The design behind her features geometric shapes in green, yellow, black, and orange. Underneath the image, the calendar gives the dates for April 1900 and then says, in small print, “ Pueblo children are affectionately treated, and lead as merry a life as any children under the sun. This child is clad in ceremonial costume.”<sup>27</sup> Like the other paintings featured in Santa Fe advertisements, this image tantalizes the potential passenger to buy a ticket and experience the diversity of the American Southwest compared to the East, West, and the Midwest.

Higgins died suddenly in 1900 of typhoid pneumonia, and his assistant, William H. Simpson, succeeded him. According to Michael Zega, Simpson “pioneered the use of design as a competitive tool.”<sup>28</sup> Simpson was responsible for the Santa Fe’s entreatings wealthy Americans to “First, See America,” referring to the elite’s habit to vacation in Europe. He used commissioned paintings (as opposed to the posters used by the Santa Fe’s rivals) to reinforce the appeal of California and the Southwest by romanticizing the landscape and its native people. He said, “We believe in pictures, for our road furnishes inexhaustible material for them.”<sup>29</sup> Continuing in the tradition of Higgins’s use of Moran’s lithographs in 1892, Simpson used lithographs such as the 1903 lithograph version of Frank Sauerwein’s 1901 painting, *First Santa Fe Train Crossing Plains*. In the lithograph, a group of Native American men are on horseback in the foreground of the picture and they are turned looking back and pointing at a small, indistinct train with smoke trailing behind it that is off in the distance,

toward the horizon. The blue sky dominates the top half of the lithograph, and the dry ground is interspersed with small scrubby plants.<sup>30</sup> The image romanticizes the experience of seeing the Native Americans first hand and imagines what their encounters with “modern civilization” must have been like.

When comparing the development of elite advertising by the Santa Fe to elite advertising by Pierce Arrow, patterns become visible that suggest they were



Figure 7 *First Santa Fe Train Crossing Plains*, 1903, by Frank Sauerwein.

This is a 1903 lithograph version of Frank Sauerwein’s original 1901 painting by the same name. William H. Simpson, Higgin’s successor, used lithographs like this one that romanticized the landscape and the native people of California and the Southwest, to convince wealthy Americans to “First, See America.”

more similar than they realized. The Santa Fe used high art to attract passengers to a seldom travelled area of the country that it hoped to use to increase their reach and revenue. The Santa Fe printed brochures, sent its own advertising men with the artists to the areas it wished to highlight, created a luxury train to that area for those passengers to travel on, and used its illustrated brochures to highlight both the natural and the luxury attractions that could be seen from and by its line.

Because they were among the early railroads to use their advertising in this way and because they used their high-end advertising to attract high-end passengers to their high-end train, the Santa Fe promoters/advertisers set themselves apart from mass advertisers. They were not the first business to use high art in their advertisements. However, they were one of the first to use high art in their advertisements that did not just paint a pretty picture to draw a consumer's eye to an ad where the painting had little to do with the experience. They used high art to advertise something you could actually visit on the Santa Fe Railroad, a product or experience they could offer through their service. It was not just about making people interested enough to read the print of your ad, but about showing them what they could see and do if they rode the Santa Fe's trains. This use of fine art was far beyond what the few other advertisers using high art were doing during this time period. The ad men at the Santa Fe were ahead of their time.

The use of expensive-to-produce ads and expensive printing methods like color lithography were another way that the Santa Fe's advertising set itself apart from mass marketing. While it did produce the more common newspaper ads, the brochures and eventual magazine ads targeted a smaller, more select group of consumers. The Santa Fe's luxury advertising set it apart from mass-consumer-oriented advertising for a reason. *Printers' Ink* points out that many railroad booklets "...were truly fine examples of the printing art. They educated the public to expect artistic literature and speeded the general improvement of printed work of other advertisers."<sup>31</sup> The Santa Fe's decision to use high art,

costly production methods, and specific ad placements was tied the railroad's perceived audience. Who makes and produces the ads is parallel to the audience the Santa Fe is addressing; the cost of production and the cost of purchase are only options when the cost of a passenger's ticket justifies (and covers) the increased spending on advertising. This of course assumes that the Santa Fe could afford to invest in the luxury advertising and the luxury trains. However, when the railroad's ad men began using these strategies, especially after the sale at the end of 1895, the Santa Fe's advertising budget was \$250,000 per year, making it one of the top ten to fifteen national brands in terms of advertising budget.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keith L. Bryant, *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway*, (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 9-10.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising*. (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran & company, Inc., 1929), 404.

<sup>3</sup> Bryant, *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway*, 326-330.

<sup>4</sup> Michael E. Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," *Journal of the Southwest*, 43, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 283.

<sup>5</sup> Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing*. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Fifty Years, 1888-1938*. (New York: Printers' Ink Pub. Co., 1938), 26.

<sup>7</sup> Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising*, 430-1.

<sup>8</sup> Laird, *Advertising Progress*, 41, 82.

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<sup>9</sup> Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising*, 98.

<sup>10</sup> *Fifty Years*, 84. The editors of *Printers' Ink* are presumably referring to English artist Henry Stacy Marks who was most famous for his paintings of birds.

<sup>11</sup> Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," 285.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 284, 286.

<sup>14</sup> Michael E. Zega and John E. Gruber, *Travel by Train: The American Railroad Poster, 1870-1950*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 9. The described lithograph is also on this page. Where images are thumbnail sized, I made use of the full size images for analysis but due to copyright issues cannot reproduce them full size.

<sup>15</sup> Bryant, *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway*, 327-28.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 329-330.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 286, 292.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>19</sup> C. A. Higgins and Robert Spurrier Ellison, *To California and Back*. "One hundred and thirtieth thousand." (Chicago: Passenger department, Santa Fé route, 1899), 6,

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081812244;view=1up;seq=60>

(accessed December 2014). The cover image included in this chapter is from this version of the booklet.

<sup>20</sup> C. A. Higgins and Robert Spurrier Ellison, *To California Over the Santa Fe Trail*. [374th thousand, rev. ed.] (Chicago: Passenger Department, Santa Fe,

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1914), 50,

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081812244;view=1up;seq=60>

(accessed August 20, 2015). The illustrators for this booklet were listed as J.T.

McCutcheon, Carl N. Werntz, John W. Norton, and James Allen McCracken.

The artist for this particular image is not identified.

<sup>21</sup> Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," 283.

<sup>22</sup> L.L. Waters, *Steel Trails to Santa Fe*. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1950), 208.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 216-17. For a more detailed account of the Santa Fe's descent into receivership and sale, see, 193-217.

<sup>24</sup> Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," 288.

<sup>25</sup> The image described can be found in Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," 289.

<sup>26</sup> The image described can be found in Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," 290.

<sup>27</sup> Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," 294. The image can be found on page 295.

<sup>28</sup> Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," 299.

<sup>29</sup> Zega and Gruber, *Travel by Train*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> The image described can be found in Zega and Gruber, *Travel by Train*, 26.

<sup>31</sup> *Fifty Years*, 26.

<sup>32</sup> Zega, "Advertising the Southwest," 284

### **Chapter 3**

#### **The Case of Pierce-Arrow Advertisements**

The advertising for Pierce-Arrow was in many ways similar to Santa Fe's advertising aimed at passengers. While there was no direct connection between the two, the use of high art to attract elite customers to Pierce-Arrow's automobiles mirrored the Santa Fe's use of high art to attract passengers to travel via their luxury trains. Santa Fe first utilized art to attract a small group of Americans that could afford luxury rail travel but then grew to apply it to attract an increasing number of middle- and upper-class travelers as it broadened its rail service and sought more customers. Pierce-Arrow's use of art did not help increase its market but helped eliminate the competition from other luxury automobile manufacturers. These two examples of using advertising innovatively prepared the country for art, compared with graphic designs or decorations, as a means to sell products in the 1920s. These two examples were not interdependent, but laid the foundations for later audiences to expect visually stunning ads. Targeted audiences were conditioned to see as well as to react to the emotional pull of art. This development was evident later when Calkins and Holden were recognized for their pioneering role in using art in advertising.

As a company, Pierce-Arrow employed an ad agency to create its advertising campaigns. The firm it employed was Calkins & Holden, who created and managed Pierce-Arrow's iconic luxury advertising campaign that debuted in the fall of 1907. The decision to use an agency was in large part due to the decade in which Pierce-Arrow began the campaign, which had already seen the rise and establishment of the ad agency. Calkins & Holden created a campaign

for Pierce-Arrow that utilized the new “atmosphere” style, which relied on images rather than text to sell a product.

As a style, “atmosphere” advertising was characterized by its large, rich illustrations. “Atmosphere” advertising brought high art and Pierce-Arrow cars together, and Pierce-Arrow’s ad agency paired the two. Calkins & Holden began its innovative “atmosphere” campaign for Pierce-Arrow in 1907. It utilized the “atmosphere” style not only to sell the product, but also to set a series of scenes that sold the lifestyle and experience that came with owning a Pierce-Arrow. The illustrations shown showcase the versatility of the Pierce-Arrow in helping create that lifestyle, with image including the depiction of experiences in country and urban settings, during sporting excursions, and in pleasant as well as adverse weather conditions. The advertisements appeared in a number of different kinds of magazines with a broad readership, some of whom we are still familiar with, others we do not immediately recognize.

The image below, with the illustration by Edward Penfield, is believed to be the first in the campaign to be printed.<sup>1</sup> Typical of the genre, it features presumably rich Pierce-Arrow owners out for an evening at the theater, being picked up by their chauffeur driving Pierce-Arrow’s Great Arrow model.<sup>2</sup> The women, sumptuously dressed in jewels and furs, are assisted into their car by the doorman; men in top hats can be seen just behind them. In the background across the street, two horse-drawn carriages pull up to another building, underlining the exclusivity and prestige that owning a Pierce-Arrow offers—and how fashionable it was. The lack of pricing, feature, or technical information is a



sharp departure from typical automobile advertising of the era, including earlier Pierce-Arrow ads.

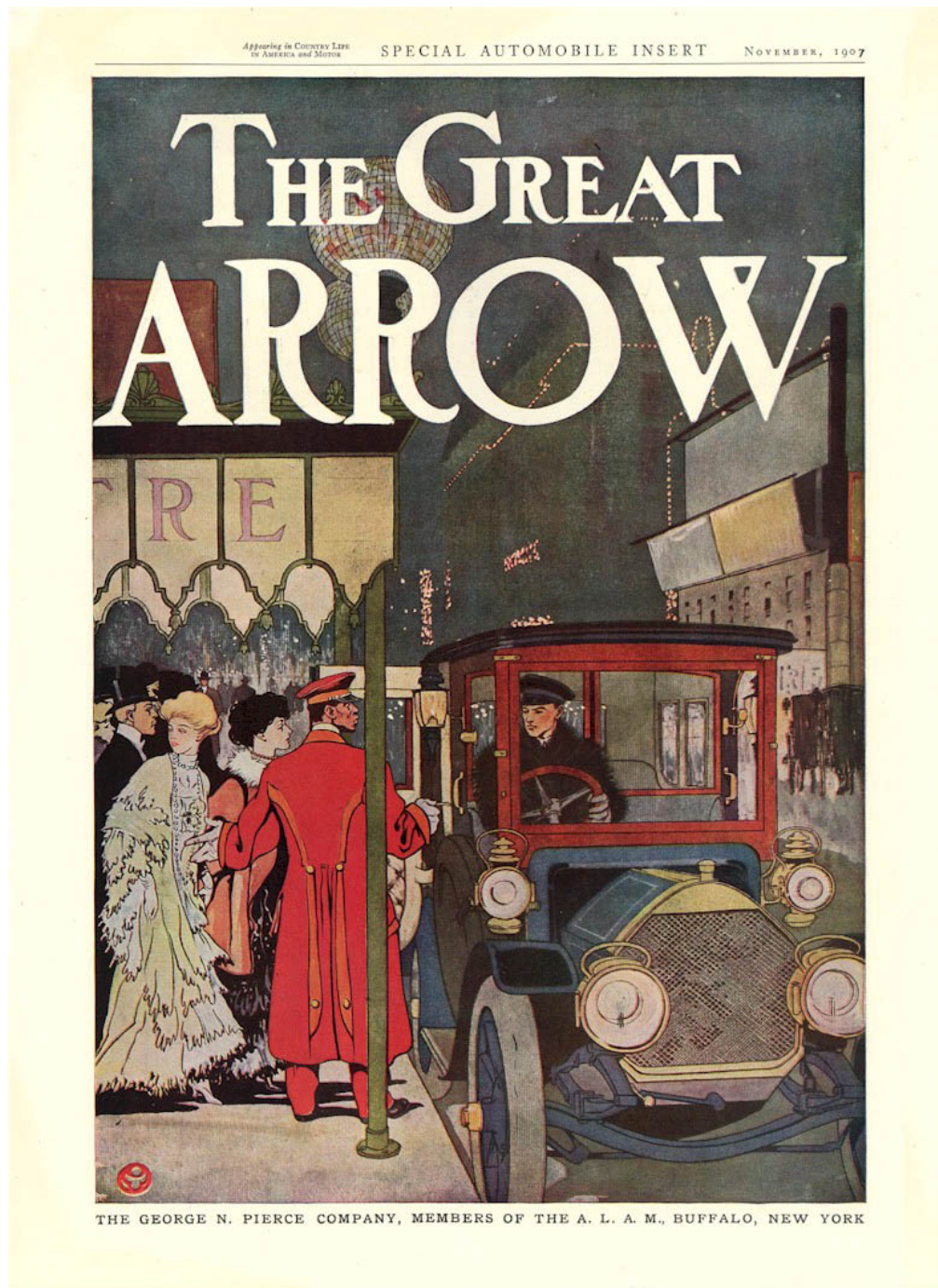
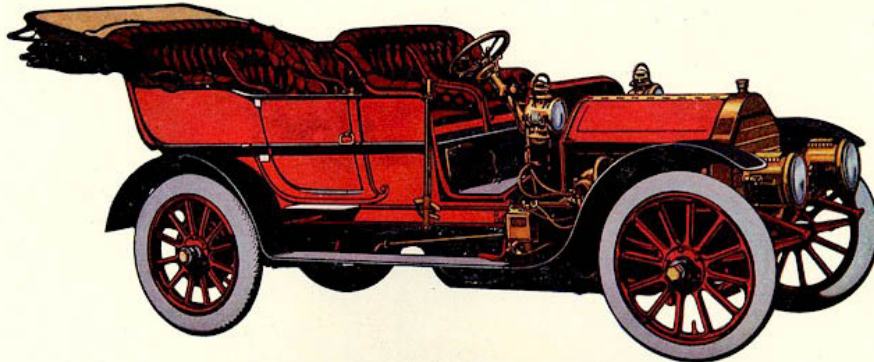


Figure 8 Untitled, 1907, by Edward Penfield. This ad was the first ad in Calkins & Holden's Pierce-Arrow campaign. This version of the ad is from a special insert for *Country Life in America* and *Motor* from November 1907. The red symbol in the bottom left corner is Penfield's method of signing his illustrations.

This ad is a particular contrast to the popular “reason-why” style of advertising, with its paragraphs of technical and specification information and its



This illustration shows a very comfortable car—the Pierce Great Arrow 40-45 horse-power seven-passenger touring car. The two extra seats in the tonneau are just as comfortable as the other seats. They revolve like an office chair or a parlor car seat so as to add to the sociability of the party in the tonneau. Price \$5,000. Cape top extra.

## “The Factory Behind the Pierce Great Arrow”

The completion of the new factory in which Great Arrow cars will now be made marks an epoch in motor car building. This is the most complete factory devoted to the construction of automobiles in the world, and in some respects the most complete factory of any kind in the world. It has been planned to enable good workmen to do their best work. It will enable us to build a great many Great Arrows as carefully as in the old factory in the past we have built a few. It is a factory that multiplies the efficiency of the best selected corps of workmen in the automobile world. We have spent the years that have passed in producing an American car for American conditions so carefully made that it would cover the greatest amount of mileage with the least number of adjustments, and now we have built a factory capable of keeping up the standard of the cars.

The new Great Arrow Factory is but two miles off the main line from New York to Buffalo. Every owner of an automobile and everyone interested in automobile construction is invited to visit this model plant.

**The George N. Pierce Company**  
Buffalo, N. Y.

Members of Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers

**PIERCE DEALERS**

J. W. Maguire Co.....	247 Boylston St., Boston, Mass.	Western Auto Co.....	498 Washington Blvd., St. Louis, Mo.
Harolds Motor Car Co.....	Broadway, 25th-26th Sts., New York, N. Y.	Palace Auto Co.....	1405 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.
H. Paulman & Co.....	1429 Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.	The Cook & Standard Co.....	203 and F Sts., Washington, D. C.
Banker Bros. Co.....	Baum and Beaver Sts., Pittsburgh, Pa.	Southern Auto Co.....	M. Royal and Maryland Aves., Baltimore, Md.
Ford-Hughes Motor Car Co.....	201 N. Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa.	Central Auto Station Co.....	28 Kenne Ave., Pittsfield, Mass.
Bills Motor Car Co.....	118 Halcyon St., Newark, N. J.	E. R. Clark Auto Co.....	417 Lyman St., Springfield, Mass.
Bush & Shields.....	933 South Main St., Los Angeles, Cal.	Minor Garage Co.....	High and Allyn Sts., Hartford, Conn.
Mobile Carriage Co.....	494 Geough St., San Francisco, Cal.	Wilson & Co.....	197 Craig St., West, Montreal, Canada
Broadway Auto Co.....	Malison St., Seattle, Wash.	Wilson & Co.....	141 Bank St., Ottawa, Canada
Tom Bostwick.....	184 California St., Denver, Colo.	Automobile & Supply Co., Ltd.....	74 Temperance St., Toronto, Ont.
C. F. Joy Auto Co.....	101 Minnesota St., St. Paul, Minn.	Hilbard Auto Co.....	119 Wisconsin St., Milwaukee, Wis.
Pierce Automobile Co.....	777 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.	H. S. Auto Co.....	11 Plymouth Ave., Rochester, N. Y.
E. P. Schneider.....	35 Jefferson Ave., Detroit, Mich.	Urea Motor Car Co.....	Ulton, N. Y.
Metropolitan Motor Car Co.....	1841 Euclid Ave., N. E., Cleveland, O.	Troy Auto Exchange.....	37 Fourth St., Troy, N. Y.
D. F. Williams Value Co.....	69 Broadway, Cincinnati, O.	Standard Motor Car Co.....	125 Scranton, Pa.
The Zeeb-Stevens Co.....	518 Third Ave., Louisville, Ky.	A. E. Lambert.....	Timsville, Pa.

Figure 9 Untitled, 1906, artist unknown. A typical “reason-why” ad from December 1906’s *Country Life in America*.

often bold proclamations of price and only one, often black and white, drawing or woodcut image of the vehicle. Like many of their automotive company brethren, Pierce-Arrow used “reason-why” ads before their popular “atmosphere” campaign. In a typical example from December 1906’s *Country Life in America*, (Figure 9), a color image of a Pierce Great Arrow touring car is placed above a paragraph touting the features of Pierce-Arrow’s brand new factory. The ad details the factory’s increased production capacity while specifying that the increased capacity will maintain the standard of Pierce-Arrow cars that its spent the last years producing. Saying the completion of the factory “marks an epoch in motor car building,” the ad also invites “every owner of an automobile and everyone interested in automobile construction” to visit the “model plant.”<sup>3</sup> The caption under the image also includes the price, horsepower, details of the revolving seats in the tonneau, and a list of Pierce dealers.

While the illustration in this ad is in color, it is a static image of the vehicle, showing the right flank. The car is red with black and brass details and its top is folded down. Between the illustration and the copy, the ad appeals to a consumer’s rational side, with facts about the car and the factory listed so a potential buyer can make a fact-based buying decision. If there is any emotional appeal in this advertisement, as in “atmosphere” ads, it is an appeal to patriotism—the copy on the factory carefully points out this is an American car made in America for the American condition. The appeal of luxury, adventure, and class present in the “atmosphere” campaign is missing—and is not intended

in the first place. This example shows what a departure Calkins & Holden's "atmosphere"-focused campaign was from previous advertising styles.

In contrast, the first ad of the "atmosphere" campaign shows customers a Pierce-Arrow in a scene of a night at the theatre in fancy dress in the bustle of a big city. The artwork shows customers an image of a life-style they may already enjoy or long to attain, which can be enhanced by owning a Pierce-Arrow.

Calkins & Holden's wished to create an atmosphere around Pierce-Arrows that set them apart from ordinary cars. Calkins said "The far-sighted manufacturers of the Pierce-Arrow car foresaw that mechanical excellence would be approached ultimately by all cars, and that as soon as this had been attained, people would demand finish, beauty and luxury; that the car which had a reputation for these things would have a slight advantage over other cars equally good mechanically...So the keynote of the advertising was style, smartness, comfort, luxury."<sup>4</sup> Calkins & Holden's Pierce-Arrow ads aimed to build this reputation for Pierce-Arrow cars.

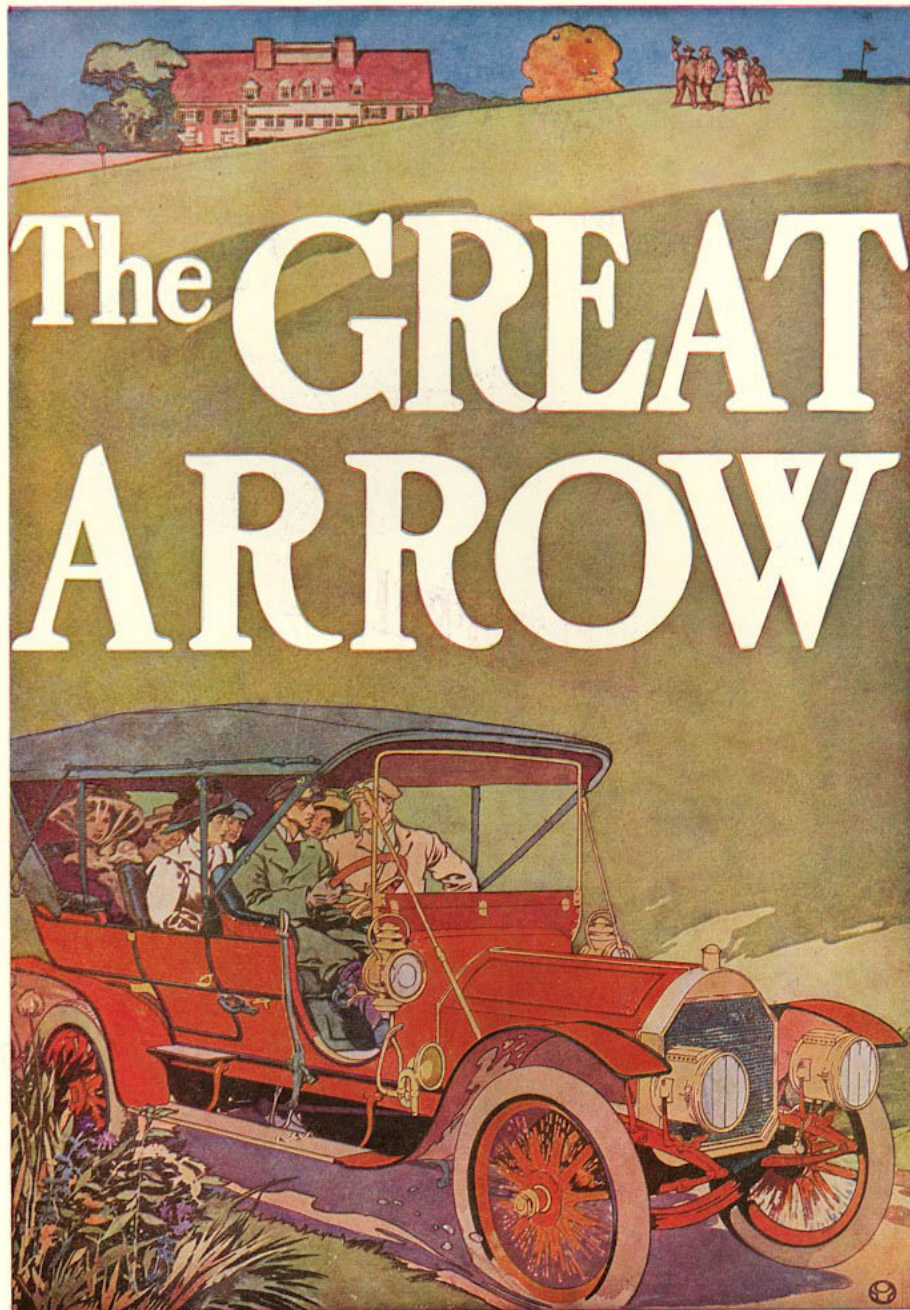
In using "atmosphere" advertising for this campaign, Calkins & Holden led the public to apply a different method of decision-making when considering buying a Pierce-Arrow vehicle. Calkins said that if they had used mechanical comparisons, the public's decision would be based on mechanical preferences.<sup>5</sup>

Of his chosen style, "atmosphere," he detailed:

The interesting thing from the point of view of the creation of advertising is the way in which this class atmosphere was conveyed by the advertising—not so much by what was actually said, as by what it implied, and especially by the use of illustrations of superior quality reflecting the fashionable world in which the Pierce-Arrow Car lived, moved and had its being. Not only was

good designing used, but color was also added, and the whole thing worked up into a series of advertisements utterly unlike any other automotive advertising, and as distinct in style as a painting by Sargent, or a bust by Rodin.<sup>6</sup>

Calkins's comments about how these ads reflected the fashionable world of the Pierce-Arrow get straight to the point of why Calkins & Holden chose this style for its ads. Showing the Pierce-Arrow as an integrated component of the luxury-filled world in which its potential buyers lived allowed them to see the car fitting seamlessly into their existence. This made the Pierce-Arrow stand out from other mechanically sound and luxurious options. While Calkins & Holden were not the first to use it, this ad style was new and strikingly different from other car ads. Using superior illustrations of scenes familiar to elite buyers allowed Calkins & Holden to target its luxury consumer in a manner that appealed to his sense of class and high quality, and which gave the product the attributes of fashion and refinement as well. Calkins thought this style, with its superior art and quality gave Pierce-Arrow ads an edge to win over luxury buyers for the manufacturer's product. Jackson Lears supports this, saying "atmosphere" was "the incorporation of fantasy into the emerging distribution system."<sup>7</sup> Although Lears was speaking about the connection advertising had to early ad pioneers like P.T. Barnum and "carnavalesque" ads, his point about the incorporation of fantasy gets to the heart of "atmosphere" advertising—it painted an image of a pleased fantasy world that wealthy buyers could access, or perhaps enhance, by purchasing a Pierce-Arrow.



THE GEORGE N. PIERCE COMPANY, MEMBERS OF THE A. L. A. M., BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Figure 10 Untitled, 1907, by Edward Penfield. Another Edward Penfield illustration from the December 1907 *Country Life in America*. His distinctive mark can be seen in the bottom right corner of the image.

Subsequent ads from Calkins & Holden's "atmosphere" campaign for

Pierce-Arrow offered variations on the theme of the first ad, showing the Pierce-Arrow centrally in action in various upper-class pursuits. This 1907 example of Pierce-Arrow owners leaving a golf club appeared in the magazine *Country Life in America* (Figure 10).<sup>8</sup> The ad is another Edward Penfield illustration with the words “The Great Arrow” boldly featured across the image. The only other text is small and below the artwork, identifying the manufacturers, their association with the A.L.A.M. and its location in Buffalo, New York. Again, Calkins & Holden allow Penfield’s work to sell the car for them.

The illustration features a red Pierce-Arrow touring car with a black top and brass details in the left foreground of the ad. Seven men and women, clearly portrayed as gentlemen and ladies, are passing by or leaving a golf club. The clubhouse can be seen in the back left behind a green hill. Five golfers can be seen standing on the hill in the top right watching the car go by. The gentlemen driving and in the front seat are wearing driving coats and hats and the ladies and gentlemen in the rear two seats appear to be in driving coats and hats as well. The image gives the reader the impression of a group of wealthy people out for a Sunday drive. It evokes feelings and thoughts of leisure and class all through the image.

In the next example from *The Theatre* in 1910, which features an urban setting with a female Pierce-Arrow owner, the trappings of luxury are prominently featured and the car’s wealthy owner is only shown by her gloved hand.<sup>9</sup> A black Pierce-Arrow with brass fittings and red interior panels is driven by a white chauffeur in a red and black uniform. A black doorman in a black uniform with



Figure 11 Untitled, 1910, by Gil Spear. This illustration is from *The Theatre* in 1910. The text in the bottom left corner reads “[*Shopping with the Pierce-Arrow*].”

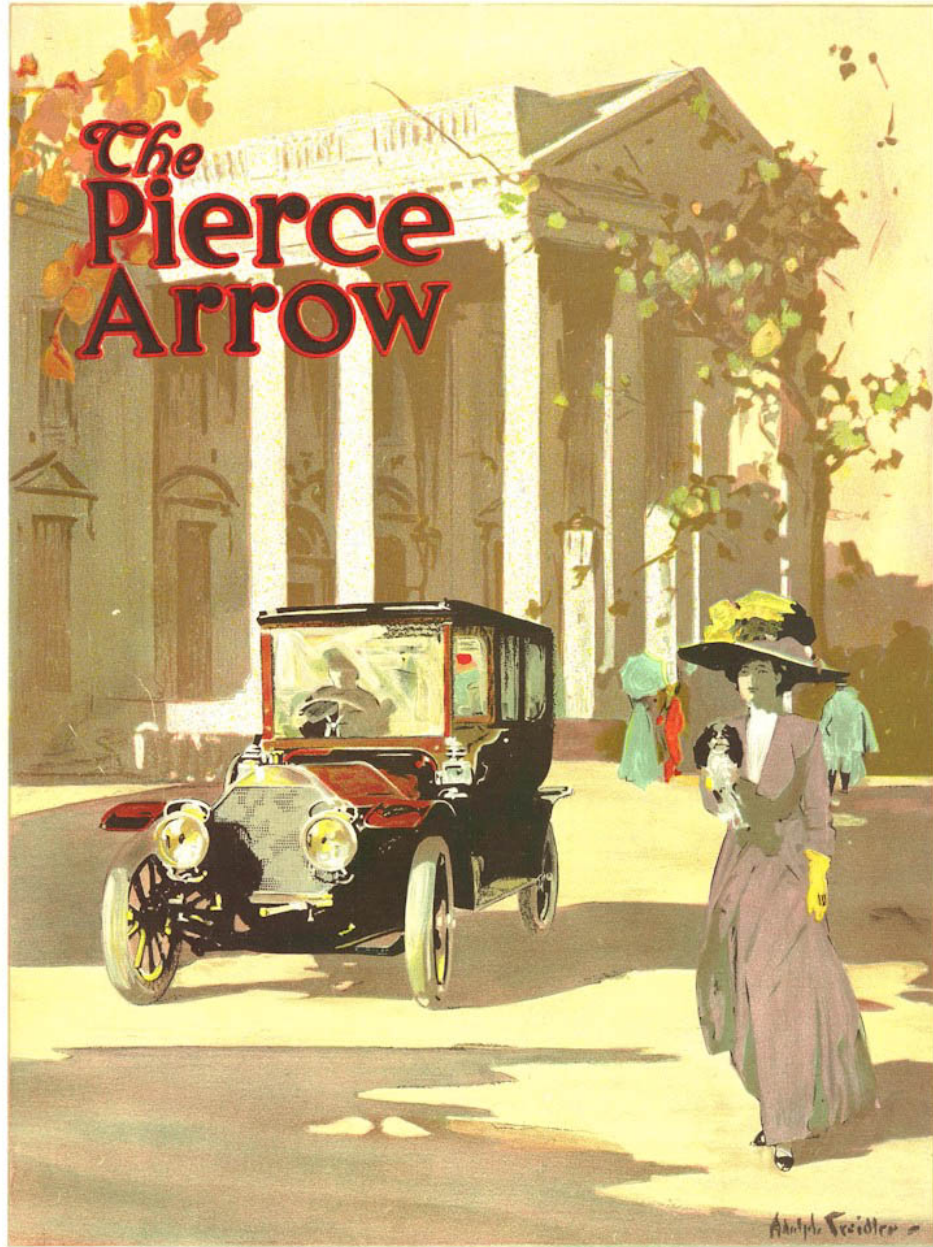
two red chevrons on the sleeve, gloves, the hint of a red stripe on the pants,



spats, and a top hat, holds the door to the Pierce-Arrow open. The lady reaches out from inside the car with an elbow-length gloved hand to tip the blond bell-hop for bringing her large yellow and white striped hatbox to her. The boy is wearing a light green uniform with yellow stripes on the sleeve and pants, a red and black striped waistcoat, and white gloves. The only text on this ad by Gil Spear is “The Pierce Arrow” printed in red across the image three quarters of the way down the ad.

The image is simple, with no background detail, which makes the bold coloring of the image stand out to the viewer’s eye. The position of the woman’s hand while she tips the bell hop is elegant. The surroundings—the chauffeur, bell hop, doorman, and large hatbox—omit the background “clutter” of buildings and passersby and give the impression of wealth and a life of pampered luxury. She is a woman who can afford the best and surrounds herself with it. The ad implies that only the best will do for this gentlewoman and that is why her family owns a Pierce-Arrow. Calkins & Holden use the “atmosphere” style to let the vehicles and its implied “typical circumstances of use” sell the cars to the prospective buyers perusing the magazine.

This 1909 ad by Adolph Treidler uses the subject of the artwork and minimal text to sell the vehicle.<sup>10</sup> The text consists of two sentences stating that every 1910 Pierce-Arrow has a six-cylinder engine with such smooth power it is a luxury in harmony with the equipment found on the Pierce-Arrow. The illustration shows a chauffeured black and red Pierce-Arrow pulling away from a very large mansion fronted by a portico. There is a woman in a mauve dress with a black



**EVERY** Pierce Arrow Car for 1910 is six cylinder. Experience shows that only the smooth operation of the six-cylinder engine gives that real luxury of power which harmonizes with the other equipments of the Pierce Arrow.

THE PIERCE-ARROW MOTOR CAR CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

Members Association Licensed Automobile Manufacturers

THE THEATRE, SEPTEMBER 1909

Figure 12 Untitled, 1909, Adolph Treidler. This Adolph Treidler-illustrated ad appeared in *The Theatre*, *Country Life in America*, and *Life*. The illustration was used again in 1913 for an un-captioned ad in *Country Life in America*. The caption to this version of the ad reads, "Every Pierce Arrow Car for 1910 is six cylinder. Experience shows that only the smooth operation of the six-cylinder engine gives that real luxury of power which harmonizes with the other equipments of the Pierce Arrow." In the very bottom left of the ad very faint text reads "The Theatre, September 1909."

and yellow hat and yellow gloves, carrying a small black and white dog, walking

slightly ahead and to the side of the vehicle while several people, including a woman in light blue with a parasol, stand talking in the background. The words “The Pierce Arrow” are in black and red print at the top left of the image.

To the quick glance of the modern eye, the image seems to show a Pierce-Arrow pulling away from a luxurious mansion after dropping its wealthy owners off. Upon closer inspection, the Pierce-Arrow is pulling away from the North Portico of the White House. Readers at the time would know that President Taft had recently selected the Pierce-Arrow as the “first official presidential limousine.”<sup>11</sup> While the ad makes no mention of Treidler’s use of the White House, his image underscores the prestige and height of esteem the Pierce-Arrow had reached. If the Pierce-Arrow was good enough for the nation’s president, surely it was good for enhancing the car owner’s image as well.

The airy nature and large fluffy clouds of the country setting in this 1910 ad give a more literal interpretation of the “atmosphere” style of advertising.<sup>12</sup> The Pierce-Arrow in the image is a touring model with its top down, dimly lit in the left foreground of the illustration. A gentleman with a coat, hat, and scarf is driving with a lady wearing a hat with a veil and a coat sitting next to him in the front seat. Another lady and gentleman sit in the back. The three passengers have their heads turned toward the horizon, admiring rolling hills with a small town nestled in a valley. The sky dominates two thirds of the image, which is lit to highlight the large, fluffy clouds that soar over the hills. The illustration invokes the awe of a beautiful sky at sunset, seen on a leisurely drive with friends. While the Pierce-Arrow is in the foreground, the sense of the image and the lighting

used by the artist downplays the importance of the Pierce-Arrow in the shot. This



Figure 13 Untitled, 1910, by Dorwin Teague. This 1910 ad with an illustration by Dorwin Teague appeared in the March 3, 1910 edition of *Life* and in the February 1910 *Country Life in America*.

is typical of the Calkins & Holden Pierce-Arrow campaign, where the car is incidental to the story told in the ad, letting the ad imply what the owner can do in

a Pierce-Arrow.<sup>13</sup> The image is subtle and striking at the same time, capturing the viewer's attention through the power of art and imagination.

The Edward Penfield illustrated advertisement from the March 1910 *Country Life in America* shows the Pierce-Arrow car and its owners in a sporting setting (Figure 14). Two gentlemen are pictured either leaving for or returning from playing a tennis match, with one gentleman dressed in a driving coat, driving gloves, and a hat with driving goggles sitting in the car holding the steering wheel and the other gentleman in cream slacks and a green shirt and tie leaning against the vehicle holding a tennis racquet. The exterior of the car is red with brass details and white tires while the interior is done in deep red upholstery. The only background is the green grass on which the vehicle stopped, showing that this car can be driven at least somewhat off the road when needed.

The text at the bottom reminds the reader that the Pierce-Arrow does not compromise on efficiency or luxury: "The six-cylinder idea is no more a rightful adjunct of the Pierce-Arrow Car than are a hundred other sound ideas of car construction that we have adopted after a thorough trying out. Luxury means efficiency always." That this vehicle is being used for a sporting activity is only shown through the detail of the gentleman holding the tennis racquet, yet it is all that is needed to remind the potential buyer that this car can be used in yet another situation frequently encountered in a Pierce-Arrow owner's life.

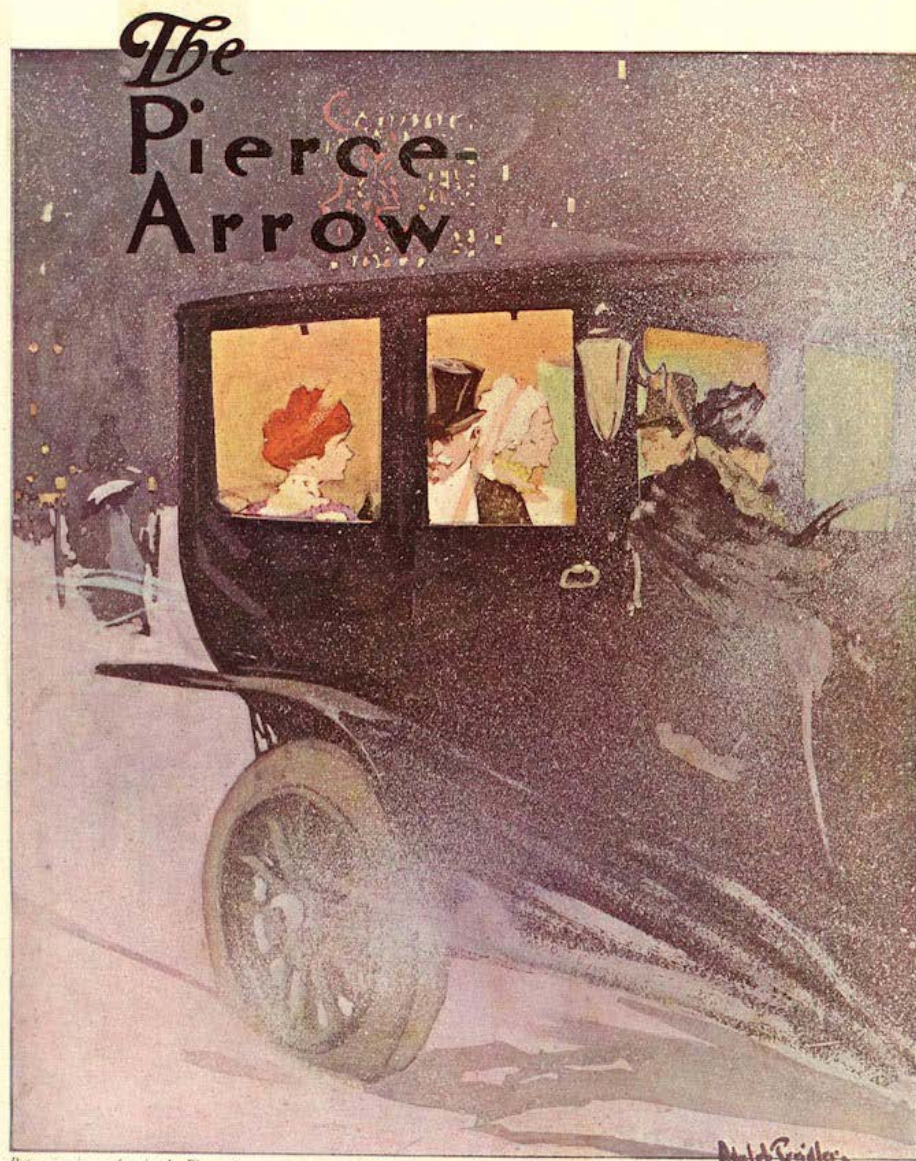
# The Pierce Arrow



**T**HE six-cylinder idea is no more a rightful adjunct of the Pierce-Arrow Car than are a hundred other sound ideas of car construction that we have adopted after a thorough trying out. Luxury means efficiency always.

THE PIERCE-ARROW MOTOR CAR COMPANY, BUFFALO, N. Y.  
Licensed under Selden Patent

Figure 14 Untitled, 1910, by Edward Penfield. This Penfield illustrated advertisement is from the March 1910 *Country Life in America*. Penfield's mark can be seen in the bottom right of the image. It is captioned, "The six-cylinder idea is no more a rightful adjunct of the Pierce-Arrow Car than are a hundred other sound ideas of car construction that we have adopted after a thorough trying out. Luxury means efficiency always."



*Returning in comfort in the Pierce-Arrow.*

**T**HE flexibility of the Pierce-Arrow Car—the ease of control in traffic—makes it a real luxury for shopping, calling, theatre and opera. No amount of luxurious appointments will make a luxurious car, unless it is built around a perfect engine. The Pierce-Arrow is rightly built and perfectly appointed.

THE PIERCE-ARROW MOTOR CAR COMPANY, BUFFALO, N. Y. Licensed under the Selden Patent

THE WORLD'S WORK PRESS, NEW YORK

Figure 15 Untitled, 1910, by Adolph Treidler. This ad is a 1910 Adolph Treidler illustrated ad from *The World's Work Press*. Underneath and to the left of the image it says, "Returning in comfort in the Pierce-Arrow." The caption for the ad reads, "The flexibility of the Pierce-Arrow Car—the ease of control in traffic—makes it a real luxury for shopping, calling, theatre and opera. No amount of luxurious appointments will make a luxurious car, unless it is build around a perfect engine. The Pierce-Arrow is rightly built and perfectly appointed."

The snow covered roads in the 1910 Adolph Treidler illustrated ad from *The World's Work Press* shows the ease with which the Pierce-Arrow handles driving in the snow (Figure 15).<sup>14</sup> A black Pierce-Arrow, driven by a chauffeur, whisks two elegantly dressed couples on a night out. The passengers are shown traveling in comfort and style while the vehicle ably handles the adverse weather conditions. City lights and the back of a horse drawn carriage can be vaguely made out in the background of the picture. Combined with the attire of the passengers—the male passengers are wearing tails and top hats while the ladies wear a hat and a tiara—these details imply that the couples were out on the town. The text at the bottom of the ad advertises the importance of choosing the right engine when manufacturing a luxury car and underlines the Pierce-Arrow's ability to handle all traffic conditions so that its owners are able to attend the opera, theatre, and social calls, and go shopping uninterrupted by weather. The potential owner is reassured that the Pierce-Arrow can handle any conditions it might encounter.

These example ads from Calkins & Holden's "atmosphere" campaign for Pierce-Arrow show how fine illustration was used to advertise to luxury buyers. Calkins & Holden allowed the high art to speak for the car, with the artists' use of technique, coloring, and subject matter creating an image that appealed to luxury car buyers and spoke to their world and their lifestyle. They saw the Pierce-Arrow fitting into their world, appealing to their emotional side since, as Calkins noted, many cars offered similar technical specifications.



In the October 26, 1911, edition of *Printers' Ink*, the editors printed a discussion among car manufacturing men on the use of “atmosphere” ads in car advertising—specifically referencing Pierce-Arrow’s advertisements. They proposed a scenario stating that “the Pierce-Arrow automobile had forged rapidly to the front ranks solely by reason of its “atmosphere” advertising.”<sup>15</sup> Eight gentlemen wrote responses to this sentiment and their opinions varied from disliking the use of “atmosphere” advertising to using it themselves. The consensus of these industry men, however, was that “atmosphere” advertising really only worked, and certainly worked best, for established national car companies selling luxury automobiles—companies in situations exactly like Pierce-Arrow. J.W. Gilson, assistant secretary for the Mitchell-Lewis Motor Company in Racine, Wisconsin said, “The Pierce-Arrow style, we must admit, is perfectly good for their type and price of car. It reaches undoubtedly the people who have the money to pay such prices. We seriously question, however, as to whether this same style of advertising would reach the people who buy the medium-priced cars such as we are manufacturing....”<sup>16</sup> C. A. Emise, the manager for the Department of Advertising for the Lozier Motor Company in Detroit, summed it best when he said of the \$5,000 car owner, “...as the mechanical excellence is a matter of course, he is led to buy the car which will give him the maximum of luxury, comfort, style and elegance—a car, the possession of which will give him the same standing with his fellow motorists as does the possession of gems of art, sculpture and literature with people of wealth, culture and refinement. In this connection, ‘atmosphere’ advertising is

valuable.”<sup>17</sup> These comments show that Calkins was not alone in seeing that art and the “atmosphere” style could effectively sell luxury automobiles for a luxury lifestyle.

Notwithstanding the success of this campaign, convincing artists to produce the type of high quality advertising art needed in “atmosphere” ads was a long-term struggle for Calkins. Calkins wanted fine artists, as opposed to commercial artists, to work on his campaign not only for their quality of work but also to reflect the quality that his campaign was selling to Pierce-Arrow customers. However, the perceived stigma of working on advertising art kept Calkins from being able to recruit the artists he desired to work on his campaigns. Calkins struggled with this for years. For a non-commercial artist producing advertising art, the constraints of the field could be seen as cramping their creativity. In early advertisements using high art, like the Pear’s Soap *Bubbles* ad featuring artwork by Sir John Millais, the advertiser “repurposed” previously existing art. Santa Fe commissioned many of its artists to paint scenery and scenes from Native American life, giving them some free rein. For an artist commissioned to produce art for a specific ad, there were limits to size, shape, and proportion, requirements that the illustration show surroundings of a certain “good taste and refinement,” requirements for the image to be “eye-catching” and “individual,” and in a style that could “bear reproduction and withstand the shortcomings of rapid press work on indifferent paper.”<sup>18</sup> These restrictions could not have made it any easier to recruit artists.

The main problem in hiring fine artists, however, was convincing the artists that creating pieces for advertisements was actually art. Creating art to sell a product, as opposed to simply for beauty or to convey a message, or to reach the public through magazine cover art was seen by the artists as compromising their vision, or, literally, “selling out.”<sup>19</sup> Calkins said, “Real artists scorned business, and business reciprocated. There were then two classes—artists and commercial artists and the twain never met. To make a picture for a pill or soap was a highbrow joke. We had difficulty persuading men of the first rank to make designs for us, and even then it was not possible to secure the range, versatility and imagination at the command of every art director today.”<sup>20</sup> Calkins fought throughout his career to have commercial art seen as part of the fine art world.<sup>21</sup> One of the ways he tried to achieve that recognition was through the 1908 Art in Advertising exhibition, which he organized. He hoped to attract submissions that would show that high quality work was being done in advertising art, and that the artists doing it were famous for their work in other areas. However, the submissions he received did not live up to his vision. He had to convince top illustrators to submit, reluctantly, their work and most of the work was cover art—not advertisements. Calkins was able to spin the submissions in a favorable light, but little notice was paid to the exhibition and Calkins’s work to find acceptance for advertising art in the broader art world continued with similar shows held in 1909 and 1910, again with little of the results Calkins was trying to achieve.<sup>22</sup>

Calkins also fought for regard for advertising art through his agency's work. When he and Ralph Holden founded their advertising agency, Calkins hired a staff of experienced designers to complete his vision of "spare, tasteful, but compelling compositions" and also tried to recruit "name" illustrators from magazine illustration to work on his advertisements.<sup>23</sup> In time, Calkins succeeded in commissioning art from illustrators like Maxfield Parrish, N.C. Wyeth, Louis Fancher, Walter Dorwin Teague, and Joseph C. Leyendecker for ads for his Arrow Collar Man and Pierce-Arrow campaigns.<sup>24</sup> He remarked "I think it safe to say that these men were introduced to advertising by C&H, that they raised the standard of commercial artistic presentation, and were the pioneers, the vanguard, of the great number of the well-trained men now available."<sup>25</sup> Calkins aimed to have his agency create advertisements that did not rely on text or on images that were explicit interpretations of copy or the product. Calkins believed that first and foremost, an ad should grab attention; "to stop and hold the eye of someone turning the pages of a magazine or newspaper."<sup>26</sup> Advertisements from Calkins & Holden used art to capture a viewer's attention so the ad could communicate, subtly, the message the manufacturer wish to convey.<sup>27</sup> The "atmosphere"-style campaign for Pierce-Arrow was a good example of this. Calkins eventually gained recognition for his work in promoting advertising art and creating striking campaigns. Calkins & Holden were honored with awards from the Art Directors Club several times, after the awards began in 1921.<sup>28</sup>

While Calkins certainly targeted the elite in his Pierce-Arrow campaign, he did not see advertising to the elite as a completely separate category from advertising broadly. He and Holden laid out their advice for advertising to elite buyers in *Modern Advertising*. When advertising to wealthy Americans like the Astors or the Morgans, Calkins and Holden said it paid to keep in mind that they are surrounded by “at least a thousand people who have more or less to do with the things which Mr. Morgan buys....”<sup>29</sup> All of these people influenced the wealthy buyers’ buying habits and so advertisements should target the people in their lives too and be placed where they will see the ads as well. That is to say, luxury products should still be advertised in mass-circulation in order to reach the people who were connected to the elite customers’ lives. While the purchase of many items, like supplies, were not decided by the heads of households, larger purchases, like automobiles, represent a more complex decision-making process that included more than the actual owner. Calkins pointed out that the chauffeur was likely to be involved in the decision of which (luxury) automobile to purchase.<sup>30</sup>

Calkins’s advice explains the placement of his ads for the Pierce-Arrow campaign. Pierce-Arrow ads appeared in specialty magazines like *The Theatre*, but also appeared in publications with mass circulations like *Life*. Pierce-Arrow ads were seen by far more consumers than their targeted luxury buyers and while these ads were designed to appeal to the wealthy owner, this widespread campaign helped raise brand awareness for the company with people who influenced many aspects of the wealthy buyer’s life. They also helped Calkins

set a fashion trend and influence consumer taste toward good quality and craftsmanship. He gave consumers a vision of how they wanted to see themselves. The ads thus helped ensure the Pierce-Arrow would be the elite consumer's first choice for a luxury automobile.

While Calkins struggled to convince fine illustrators to work on advertisements, railroad advertisers like the Santa Fe had already begun using fine art in their advertisements in the 1890s. Calkins had worked on railroad advertising for the Lackawanna Railroad around 1900 and so would have been familiar with at least some railroad advertising. Yet neither in his autobiography, nor in *Modern Advertising*, nor in *The Business of Advertising* did he mention the art used in railroad advertising as an influence for his use of high art in campaigns like Pierce-Arrow's. Perhaps the answer to this lack of connection lay in the ways particular industries worked and who auto manufacturers and auto advertisers looked to for the antecedents of auto advertising. Pamela Walker Laird theorizes that auto advertising grew out of carriage advertising, as many auto manufacturers grew out of carriage makers. Carriage advertisements did not seek to interest their consumers with information on the "speed of motion" of their products or to picture passengers. This might explain why it took so long for car ads to feature these attributes and why there was little or no connection between the advertising styles that two different branches of the transportation industry had used previously.

Another explanation may be that the use of poster art in advertising in the late 1800s was an influence on the "atmosphere" style and Calkins's use of art in

advertising. But there was no developmental connection between poster art and the decision of Calkins to use “atmosphere” style in the increase of sales of high-end luxury products and Calkins writes of no connection. As previously shown in chapter 1, there was a negative reaction to poster art that Calkins did not want associated with the products he was advertising. He had to find a different method of creating visually evocative advertising and the “atmosphere” style suited his needs.

Using the “atmosphere” style, Calkins set a stage for his campaign that categorized a certain level of experience and lifestyle and this is reflected in his efforts to employ fine artists as opposed to commercial artists. Through the Pierce-Arrow campaign he perfected a technique—utilizing fine art in advertising—that he adjusted from the way art had been used in ads to his new, particular way, of using it in the “atmosphere” style. In order to do that convincingly he, like Higgins at the Santa Fe, had to obtain new art rather than repurpose pre-existing art. However, since Calkins’s Pierce-Arrow ads staged a scene to entice a particular American audience, it was more difficult for him to recruit the artists he desired. It was comparatively easy to get established artists to paint Santa Fe’s chosen scenery (they could sell it later and the style was the same as they were already painting) as opposed to getting the same level of artists to let Calkins dictate what they had to draw to create the scene that Calkins envisioned. Like the Santa Fe, Calkins was pioneering a new way of using art to advertise new products to particular audiences. His work took

products audiences and advertisers were familiar with, but he redesigned their presentation to fit his purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> Rob Schorman, "'This Astounding Car for \$1,500': The Year Automobile Advertising Came of Age," *Enterprise & Society* 11, no. 3 (2010): 492. This version of the ad is from a special insert for *Country Life in America* and *Motor* from November 1907. Hank W. Illaria, *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics*, CD-ROM (HI-Tech Software, 2006). In many of the "atmosphere" style Pierce-Arrow ads small text can be seen above and/or below the main ad illustration. Most of this text contains the name and date and page number of the magazine, the car manufacturer's name and location, and text saying that Pierce-Arrow was a "Member of the A.L.A.M". (A.L.A.M. stands for the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers.) This text is not mentioned in each ad analysis unless it contains additional, significant information.

<sup>2</sup> All of the images feature right-hand drive Pierce-Arrows. Prior to the invention of the automobile, right-hand drive was common in the United States. Drivers drove and sat on the right side of their vehicles to be able to see the edge of the road, commonly lined with deep ditches. As automobiles became more common, early auto manufacturers continued the tradition of making vehicles right-hand drive. Left-hand drive cars did not become common until 1915. See M. G. Lay's *Ways of the World: A History of the World's Roads and the Vehicles That Used Them* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 200-1.



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<sup>3</sup> The ad is from *Country Life in America's* December 1906 issue. Hank W. Illaria, *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics*, CD-ROM (HI-Tech Software, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Earnest Elmo Calkins, *The Business of Advertising* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1915), 205-7.

<sup>5</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 205-7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>7</sup> Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 213.

<sup>8</sup> The ad is from *Country Life in America's* December 1907 issue. Illaria, *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics*.

<sup>9</sup> The ad is from *The Theatre*, September 1910. Illaria, *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics*.

<sup>10</sup> The ad is from *The Theatre*, September 1909 issue. Illaria, *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics*.

<sup>11</sup> Schorman, "This Astounding Car," 497.

<sup>12</sup> The ad is from *Life's* March 3, 1910 issue. Illaria, *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics*.

<sup>13</sup> Schorman, "This Astounding Car," 505-506.

<sup>14</sup> This ad is from *The World's Work Press's* 1910 issue. Illaria, *Automobile Ads: Pre-War Classics*.

<sup>15</sup> "Does 'Atmosphere' Advertising Make Good? An interesting assembly of views by important automobile advertisers—Discussion occasioned by alleged

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success attending Pierce-Arrow atmosphere copy.” *Printers’ Ink* 77 (October 26, 1911): 48,

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101066806009;view=1up;seq=374>

(accessed January 29, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> “Does ‘Atmosphere’ Advertising Make Good?” 52. The Mitchell-Lewis Motor Company was based in Racine, Wisconsin from 1903 until Nash Motors Co. purchased it in 1923. *The American Car Since 1775* (New York: L. Scott Bailey, 1971), 322.

<sup>17</sup> “Does ‘Atmosphere’ Advertising Make Good?” 56. The Lozier Motor Company was a luxury automobile company based in Detroit. Their “Big Six” model sold for \$5,000 in 1913. Clymer, Floyd, *Treasury of Early American Automobiles: 1877-1825* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1950) 111.

<sup>18</sup> Calkins, *The Business of Advertising*, 214.

<sup>19</sup> Michelle R. Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 49. Fox also discusses this on page 43 of *The Mirror Makers*.

<sup>20</sup> Earnest Elmo Calkins, “*And Hearing Not—*” (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946) 234.

<sup>21</sup> Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art*, 49.

<sup>22</sup> Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art*, 50, 51. Calkins mentions this exhibition briefly in “*And Hearing Not—*” but does not discuss the problems he had with it. See “*And Hearing Not—*,” 172.

<sup>23</sup> Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art*, 208.

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<sup>24</sup> Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art*, 208 and Calkins, “and hearing not—,” 207.

<sup>25</sup> Calkins, “And Hearing Not—,” 207.

<sup>26</sup> Fox, *The Mirror Makers*, 43.

<sup>27</sup> Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art*, 211.

<sup>28</sup> Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art*, 210.

<sup>29</sup> Earnest Elmo Calkins and Ralph Holden, *Modern Advertising* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1905), 288.

<sup>30</sup> Calkins and Holden, *Modern Advertising*, 288.

## Conclusion

Luxury advertising in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century began using high art to appeal to America's elite consumers. As advertising grew into an increasingly influential industry, the men, women, and companies that chose to advertise high-end products and experiences and that created those advertisements developed new ad styles, new ways of conducting their businesses, and new theories to attract elite consumers to their products. Within this time, the advertising industry in the US grew, with one agency, Lord & Thomas, growing from billing under one million dollars in 1898 to billing over 40 million dollars a year in the 1920s.<sup>1</sup> This growth led the American buying elite to expect more sophisticated ads from an increasing range of luxury products and services.

At the beginning of the 1890s, the advertising agency was almost unheard of and most advertising, whether for luxury or mass-market goods, was done in-house by the manufacturer. For the Santa Fe Railroad, advertising their new luxury trains in the 1890s led them to use original, fine art to show potential travelers the new scenery and experiences they would encounter when they rode the Santa Fe through the southwest. The Santa Fe's advertising men sent artists to the lands its railroad traveled through so its art could show passengers that the Santa Fe could introduce them to parts of America passengers had likely never seen before. The Santa Fe was one of the first companies to use original art to advertise its product, not just to attract a customer's eye to its ads, but to show specifically what its product or experience had to offer consumers.

By 1920, specialized agencies led all levels of the advertising industry. When Calkins & Holden's Pierce-Arrow campaign debuted in 1907, consumers were more familiar with art being used to advertise—except in the automobile industry. Calkins & Holden was one of the first agencies to help bring fine art to car advertising through its campaign for Pierce-Arrow, a luxury automobile brand. Its ads showed elite car buyers how useful and versatile a Pierce-Arrow was while fitting seamlessly into the sumptuous and luxury lifestyle of Pierce-Arrow's customer. This tactic was a bold new direction in the world of text-heavy car ads and helped the Pierce-Arrow stand out in the crowded realm of early luxury car manufacturers. These ads were also innovative in the advertising industry for the way they used high art to place the product into a scene in which customers could imagine themselves fitting.

These two companies' advertising strategies were two lines of comparable development with parallel tracks but different phasing. Earnest Elmo Calkins did not realize, or at least did not acknowledge, the precedent set by the advertising of the Santa Fe when he created the Pierce-Arrow campaign. Calkins developed his theories of luxury advertising through campaigns like Pierce-Arrow, but his style was not beholden to the existing example of the Santa Fe. Further examination suggests, however, that the parallels are evident. Both companies were among the first in their industry to use high art in their ads—to turn to art at a time and in an industry where using art to advertise a product or experience was uncommon. Both companies used their art-based ads to appeal to luxury consumers. Both became famous for the bold, unique, and evocative images in

their ads. Both companies used the art in their ads to show their products' specifics, not just focus a consumer's attention on their ads without any context for their products. Santa Fe's ads showcased the scenery passengers would see if they chose to ride on the *California Limited* while Calkins & Holden's ads featured scenes showing off the Pierce-Arrow's luxury and its versatility.

While advertising had been around for years, advertising as an industry began to take off in the late 1800s. Art in advertising began in the 1880s in Britain when Thomas A. Barratt, managing director of A. & F. Pears (the manufacturer of Pears' Soap) obtained permission to use a painting called "Bubbles" from artist Sir John Millais in an advertisement.<sup>2</sup> At this point in advertising history, much art in advertising was either created independently and then used in advertising with permission, resulting in much advertising art that had nothing to do with the company whose product or experience it was selling, or used to advertise patent medicine, resulting in a taint on the advertising industry as patent medicine practitioner's practices were debunked. As an artistic advertising pioneer, the Santa Fe's practice of sending artists to the Southwest to paint the scenery along its southwestern mainline (or in the vicinity of its mainline) opened new doors for realistic art in advertising. The Santa Fe used the original artwork these artists created to sell tickets on their luxury lines, like the *California Limited*, to middle- and upper-class passengers. By advertising the experience it had to offer these passengers, the Santa Fe was part of a group of companies creating advertising in-house, going its own way

and helping familiarize mainstream consumers with art being used to sell, even if the art was targeting a different group of consumers.

By 1907, when Pierce-Arrow hired Calkins & Holden to create a new advertising campaign for its luxury cars, advertising had grown into a much larger industry, with numerous agencies competing for business from companies with all types of products and experiences to sell. Many advertising men now worked at agencies in specialized positions. The advertising industry was professionalizing and turning from small, one- or two-man operations into corporations. Agencies analyzed advertising trends and used psychological theories to design advertising campaigns that targeted consumers in ways they thought were specifically beneficial to their clients.

The most popular advertising styles had evolved as well, as advertisers' understanding of what would convince a consumer to buy evolved. Brief, John Powers' "talking style" ads of the 1880s and 1890s gave way to catchy character- and verse-based advertisements in the late 1890s and around 1900 like Sapolio's "Spotless Town" campaign. This style lost popularity with advertisers as advertising men and their clients realized that consumers remembered the character and verse better than the product being sold. The early 1900s and 1910s saw the "reason-why" style and the "atmosphere" style become popular with advertisers, as they competed to use hard facts or an emotional pull to sell products to the consumer. Proponents of each style fiercely defended their way of designing ads, but each style had its uses depending on the product and the target audience.

At this time, the luxury car business had many manufacturers competing for a small percentage of the buying population, and each company needed to stand out from the crowd to convince consumers to buy its product over its competitors. Calkins & Holden's use of the art-heavy "atmosphere" advertising style for its Pierce-Arrow campaign helped the auto company do just that. With car advertising greatly dominated by text-heavy ads and static artistic images, Calkins & Holden used beautifully rendered artistic works to show consumers how their large, luxurious automobiles could handle every situation from the formal to the sporty to country driving. Calkins placed these ads in media that would be seen by both elite consumers and the working and middle class Americans in their lives who influenced their buying decisions. In getting these ads to those who could influence a purchase, Calkins exposed a large swath of the American buying public to these ads, further exposing them to the use of high art to advertise products. At the time, debate raged in the advertising and automobile industries on the effectiveness of Calkins & Holden's work to influence consumers to commit to a purchase, but the style became increasingly popular with automobile advertisers and in the 1920s Calkins & Holden frequently won awards at the Art Director's Club exhibits, as the advertising world began to recognize its innovative work on this side of advertising.<sup>3</sup>

A side effect of Calkins targeting both elite consumers and the people in their lives who could influence their purchases was that the ads contributed to the development of non-elite consumers' desire to have the luxury products depicted in the ads. The middle class was growing during this time period and even if



consumers could not afford to live like the upper class, they might aspire to own one or two of the items they saw advertised. The distinction between mass advertising and luxury advertising did not disappear, but the ads shared the luxury lifestyle and helped set an aspirational lifestyle bar that was hard for most American consumers to reach. This aspirational lifestyle contributed to the desire to acquire consumer goods as a mark of social status while maintaining divisions between the classes when consumers could not afford to acquire those goods. Even if consumers could not afford a Pierce-Arrow, when the manufacturing of cars made them affordable, most people went out and bought one. This division—and the market of imitation goods that accompanied it—continues to this day. It is why consumers can still easily find and purchase fake Rolexes and knockoff Coach handbags. It is why mass consumer car companies like Kia and Hyundai borrow design cues from luxury car manufacturers like Mercedes and Jaguar. These ads helped create a situation where luxury goods manufacturers set the standard for what consumer tastes should be.

Calkins's work also contributed to the professionalization process that the advertising industry was undergoing. Advertising was a highly specialized industry and Calkins's innovations in the way art was used in advertisements made him a pioneer in the field. His efforts to change the way art was utilized and perceived in advertising started the industry down the road to the art in advertising practices of the 1920s.

I believe that further study will show that the advertising work of companies like the Santa Fe and Calkins & Holden for Pierce-Arrow influenced

other companies' advertising styles, especially in the transportation industry. The turn of the twentieth century was also the era of the super luxurious transatlantic ocean liners, whose artistic luxury advertising, I think, will show similar patterns to those seen in Santa Fe and Pierce-Arrow's ads. Advertising for the great expositions of the era and the rebirth of the Olympics may also prove fruitful areas of study for the use of high art in luxury advertising. These all had luxury products or experiences to offer rich consumers and using art to advertise the super—ultimate—experiences they offered wealthy Americans offered a glimpse of what made these things desirable. Also, analyses of the portrayal of class, gender, and race in these areas of advertising would make for a promising study in their own right.

As advertising grew and evolved as a profession, the art-focused styles used by Santa Fe and Pierce-Arrow became some of the most popular advertising styles. The fact that Calkins & Holden was recognized for its pioneering work in using art in advertising in the 1920s after all the struggles Calkins faced with his Art in Advertising exhibitions and with getting his illustrated ads recognized in the early 1900s shows how the advertising industry had evolved to appreciate this style. Santa Fe became even more famous for its art-based advertising, publishing annual calendars filled with its Native American art for decades and publishing art-heavy magazine ads and posters for its Chief and Super Chief trains until passenger service was suspended in 1971.<sup>4</sup> Pierce-Arrow continued its beautifully illustrated ads through the 1920s and into the 1930s, selling its luxury cars to the wealthy, Hollywood stars, presidents, and

royalty. However, the company could not survive the depression and closed its doors in 1938.

These two pioneering ad campaigns laid the foundation for advertising in the 1920s, and beyond, when ads dominated by large, artistic designs began to dominate mass consumer advertising. The Santa Fe and Pierce-Arrow campaigns advertised products and experiences through evocative images that made mass consumers expect this type of advertising. As early proponents of using art to advertise an expensive product or experience, and as companies whose advertising was seen by the masses even when they were not advertising to them, they helped familiarize Americans of all classes with a style of advertising that let the product speak for itself. In a time period filled with wordy, copy-based ads, advertisers utilized new printing technologies to push advertising forward. They helped develop art-based styles that taught the American consumer that it was okay to respond to products emotionally and to make purchases based on emotional decisions—and not just rational decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 176-79.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & company, Inc., 1929), 98.

<sup>3</sup> Michelle R. Bogart, *Artists, Advertising and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 210.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on Santa Fe's advertising posters in the 1920s and beyond, see Michael E. Zega and John E. Gruber, *Travel by Train: The American Railroad Poster, 1870-1950* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

## Appendix: Listing of Figures

### Chapter 2:

Figure 1: *The Grand Cañon of the Colorado*, 1892, by Thomas Moran. The Santa Fe used copies of this lithograph as sales incentive for tickets to the Grand Canyon.

Figure 2: Cover art untitled, 1899, by J.T. McCutcheon. C.A. Higgins and Robert Spurrier Ellison's cover selection for the annual booklet *To California and Back* for the Santa Fe Railway.

Figure 3: "The Enchanted Mesa," 1914, artist unknown. C.A. Higgins and Robert Spurrier Ellison's illustration selection for the annual booklet *To California over the Santa Fe Trail* for the Santa Fe Railway.

Figure 4: Untitled, 1898, by Curtis Gandy. This version of the advertisement was used as the cover of the annual Santa Fe booklet for 1898-99.

Figure 5: Untitled, 1898, by Curtis Gandy. From his trip to paint the Pueblo Indians in the summer of 1898.

Figure 6: "Zy-You Wah. Moqui," 1898, by Elbridge Ayer Burbank. This illustration was used as the April illustration in Santa Fe's "Aztec" calendar for the first six months of 1900.

Figure 7: *First Santa Fe Train Crossing Plains*, 1903, by Frank Sauerwein. This is a 1903 lithograph version of Frank Sauerwein's original 1901 painting by the same name. William H. Simpson, Higgin's successor, used lithographs like this one that romanticized the landscape and the native people of California and the Southwest, to convince wealthy Americans to "First, See America."

### Chapter 3:

Figure 8: Untitled, 1907, by Edward Penfield. This ad was the first ad in Calkins & Holden's Pierce-Arrow campaign. This version of the ad is from a special insert for *Country Life in America* and *Motor* from November 1907. The red symbol in the bottom left corner is Penfield's method of signing his illustrations.

Figure 9: Untitled, 1906, artist unknown. A typical "reason-why" ad from December 1906's *Country Life in America*.

Figure 10: Untitled, 1907, by Edward Penfield. Another Edward Penfield illustration from the December 1907 *Country Life in America*. His distinctive mark can be seen in the bottom right corner of the image.

Figure 11: Untitled, 1910, by Gil Spear. This illustration is from *The Theatre* in 1910. The text in the bottom left corner reads “[*Shopping with the Pierce-Arrow*].”

Figure 12: Untitled, 1909, Adolph Treidler. This Adolph Treidler-illustrated ad appeared in *The Theatre*, *Country Life in America*, and *Life*. The illustration was used again in 1913 for an un-captioned ad in *Country Life in America*. The caption to this version of the ad reads, “Every Pierce Arrow Car for 1910 is six cylinder. Experience shows that only the smooth operation of the six-cylinder engine gives that real luxury of power which harmonizes with the other equipments of the Pierce Arrow.” In the very bottom left of the ad very faint text reads “The Theatre, September 1909.”

Figure 13: Untitled, 1910, by Dorwin Teague. This 1910 ad with an illustration by Dorwin Teague appeared in the March 3, 1910 edition of *Life* and in the February 1910 *Country Life in America*.

Figure 14: Untitled, 1910, by Edward Penfield. This Penfield illustrated advertisement is from the March 1910 *Country Life in America*. Penfield’s mark can be seen in the bottom right of the image. It is captioned, “The six-cylinder idea is no more a rightful adjunct of the Pierce-Arrow Car than are a hundred other sound ideas of car construction that we have adopted after a thorough trying out. Luxury means efficiency always.”

Figure 15: Untitled, 1910, by Adolph Treidler. This ad is a 1910 Adolph Treidler illustrated ad from *The World’s Work Press*. Underneath and to the left of the image it says, “Returning in comfort in the Pierce-Arrow.” The caption for the ad reads, “The flexibility of the Pierce-Arrow Car—the ease of control in traffic—makes it a real luxury for shopping, calling, theatre and opera. No amount of luxurious appointments will make a luxurious car, unless it is build around a perfect engine. The Pierce-Arrow is rightly built and perfectly appointed.”

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