

for...
SHOW CARD
ARTISTS
SIGN WRITERS
SCREEN PROCESS
ARTISTS
WINDOW DISPLAY
MANAGERS
POSTER ARTISTS
LETTERERS
STUDENTS

BOOK THREE
PRICE \$1

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n.c.
Martin's
IDEAS

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martin's ideas

THE need seems to be for a book on really modern display cards and work generally associated with them, to cover the entire field, appeal to the beginner, even serve as a text book, as a reference work to those interested in the theoretical side of layout and kindred matters, yet be a practical bench manual for the veteran.

Because of the success of the first two books in this series, I have been encouraged again to collect between the covers of another compact book the most valuable and interesting ideas for the trade that I could lay my hands on.

The endeavor has been to provide a fixed idea for use in every emergency. Some may call this mechanical, or opposed to the creative, which is turning our eyes inward to the efforts of our own minds; and may say that stock, ready-cut layouts curb a workman's self-expression in developing his own ideas.

So many bench letterers are thus mechanically-minded, skilled, yes!—but their efforts and results unwittingly contrary to underlying laws of design. These layouts, then, will be a means of helping such ones to understand basic principles, to originate in time better arrangements of their own. And this book is formulated on the theory that the average, rank-and-file workman can lay out, can get ready to execute a card better with some such mechanical aid, or idea-book, than without it.

Whether you wish to follow this path cut through the brush, or to start in the swamp and build your own road, depends on you, individually. Originality is very fine, but why not take advantage of help you have here at hand? Why waste years, perhaps, fighting difficulties, trying to open up a trail through the jungle?



It is admitted that there is some

danger in too literal dependence on such a manual as this. The best service it can render the beginner is not to act as a prop for him to lean on, or as crutches, but rather to teach him to stand upon his own feet, to make him learn to walk for himself. The true student will not always remain a slavish imitator, a wooden copyist, but will try, experiment, and originate on his own hook. This book shows him how, gives actual examples; it is then up to him to go on with that knowledge.

Several years have been spent industriously working at material which has accumulated in my hands; laboring for a long time underground, as it were, digging and laying foundations; then fitting the multitudinous ideas and correlated facts and examples into compact usable shape. Now, as I write, I feel the satisfaction of the builder who hammers away a little on the roof, doing up the last few odd jobs that may have been left incomplete. It is a work that seemingly cobbled together, has grown up naturally.

So let the bewildered beginner study and enjoy what is here presented him, sticking to these safe, sound layouts until sure he is well grounded in the fundamental principles. When he feels well trained, then let him act for himself, tossing the lettering book, layout schemes, all precedents, out of the window—if he wishes.

THE AUTHOR

martin's ideas

THE function of display cards is to attract, so why not *attractively*? Virtuosity in the use of decoration and ornament, pictorials on the card so captivating as to rob the product of attention, the employment of freak background mediums such as velour cloth, burnished copper, beveled sand-blasted plate glass shapes, are not required. Cards that are actually different, alive and full of pep, nothing if not eye-catchers, may be created through simplicity, made vivid perhaps by the use of abstract decoration, through the dramatizing power of arrangement and design, through *layout!*

The modern person of today, it is said, has his life ordered to the tempo of the streets; the art galleries are being forsaken; beauty is going to the billboards. It is claimed that in commercial art the easel picture is dying, the poster coming to the front; so also the "postery" type of display card with uncommon dramatic note is displacing the tedium of years of traditional commonplaceness. The uncustomary, unusual card treatment of color "spotting", of layout contour or silhouette, of lettering that leaps to the eye—in short, postery, *dramatized*—is preeminently the treatment that today makes the most effective appeal. It is, I predict, the coming type of card that will be demanded in the future.

Postery display cards that have an instantaneous appeal through unusual color or striking shape, with a staccato word or two, a "telegram" sort of effect, so that the message may be got in a momentary flash—are best. Billboard advertisers, I am told, figure they have about three seconds or less to deliver their salient points to the passing traffic. Neither do people stop,

stand and study cards. Watch a man pause before a clothing store display; he looks the whole window full of suits over carefully, then perhaps glances at the card with just the flicker of an eyelash. You must catch him in that flicker.

The reader sees the card as words; we see it as an arrangement of line and mass, tone and color—a picture-poster effect with lettering. Display that is poster-like in its appeal may give a vigor to the presentation; line movement may give energy; proper massing, give weight—perhaps sometimes even the use of masses of the most vivid color, raw primaries predominating. Such a type of card may be a real opportunity to do a striking thing in a striking way. In this high-speed age, in this day of helter-skelter and mad rush, the display card must flash its message quickly, must create an impression in the flick of an eye.

If a striking cut-out or a mount, full of vigor and color, will catch the casual passer's interest and insure reading, it is worth the time and slight extra bit of expense; if a huge exclamation mark—a "shout" or a "screamer", as the printer calls it—if this is needed to make a loud enough splash, use it. If a bull's-eye circle be featured, repeating, echoing throughout the window, throughout the store the lettering message placed on it, without strain on the optics, well and good.

Yet the purpose, the place, the product, must each be carefully considered. Not always is the livid, the spectacular, that bubbles, crackles, boils, necessary. High-voltage cards may in every way be refined, may have a sparkling, colorful effect, yet may have dignity and character, may be in every way suggestive of a high-quality product without having to resort to downright acrobatic advertising.



Plate 71—Each of these a distinct layout idea.

Martin's Ideas

REPEAT: To gain attention by mere tricks, or to startle the beholder, to try and show him how unusual you may be, may gain his attention, but does not always convince. Better specialized training than too much modernistic straining; the latter often defeats its own purpose. Amid all the elbowing and jostling and effort to be heard above the crowd, the card with simple layout, with simple treatment, with simple lines, will always be in style. The plain hand-lettered card may often be found to outsell the elaborate lithographic-type, "shock-method" creation in high color. A pertinent, though extreme, example of this that may be cited, is that of a national chain of cigar stores with their colorful window paste-ups, occasionally furnishing the dealer with an unadorned white strip bearing a special announcement of some sort, lettered in plain black, with little more finish than if done with a small shoe blacking dauber. The reason for the success of this is simple; the hand-lettered card or streamer seemed a personal message of the merchant. The more elaborate, fussily-finished, slicked-up creations lacked this personal touch. The real selling power often lies in the commonplace, everyday, bread-and-butter type of card.

Other distinctive types beside the postery, dramatized type, must be recognized as having a place each in its way. A "cockeyed" layout sort of thing may not be amiss in selling a sensational motion picture, but we would look askance upon such antics in marketing a very expensive automobile or article of jewelry. Formal, balanced, almost down-the-center layouts are generally considered best for high priced merchandise, such as automobiles, or such as high grade institutions, as banks and business houses would employ.

Daintiness, an essential attribute of lingerie and other women's undergarments, demands another type of treatment. Then again the department store may need still another entirely dissimilar from the two foregoing; in this latter case, incidentally, the display man may have a fine opportunity to develop a distinctive style of his own, in which he may become very proficient.

The workman in the general card shop, however, must be able to use a different style almost for each customer. Nor can he have any hidebound layout scheme or treatment to which all copy may be fitted; rather, he must train himself somewhat along all methods, all treatments; this promotes a versatility and the ability to change styles quickly.

Generally the all-around shop man will win with the stronger type of advertising—"action advertising", it may almost be called. The creamy smoothness of design suitable for highest class "ultra" trade, may undoubtedly be pretty, but for the average merchant in these times blending too much in monotone—in popular parlance, having no "kick"—may lack eye interest and advertising value.

The threadbare expression "that he who runs may read" must now be altered to "that he who flies may read!" The workman may very profitably put stronger accent into his work in order to make it more effective and interesting, and to put the selling features over with a greater appeal. This does not require any great exhibit of craft dexterity, but simply a workmanlike piece of work, not overcrowded with crude-yelling lettering, but rather, some swanky little idea, outstanding, original.

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Plate 72—Up-to-the-minute card layouts.

martin's ideas

Just what is a display card? The different answers to this might be interesting. Let me give you, however, still another definition; one to frame and keep hung always on the walls of your mind: A display card is a large hand-lettered advertisement in color.

Remember this definition!

When you are tempted to follow the line of least resistance and make a "sign card" with a smashing big price; when you are moved to play that sick, lazy trick of a couple of words in script on every upper left corner, under the mistaken notion that thus display cards are always made; when you feel urged to make pseudo-modernistic efforts that viewed later with a clear eye are revealed as comic, nay tragic; when you feel impelled to show off with something pretty-pretty, or in slapstick style, or to perform revolutionary, fantastic stunt acrobatics of layout, remember my definition!

One "eminent authority" in our field of work states that there is no design to display cards; another, that balance is almost unknown, used only possibly one time in a hundred or more. The absurdity, the preposterousness of such statements! It's all design, all balance! Remember, reader, that a large proportion of advertisements, of cards modernistic, are bad, and not to be blindly followed. In sound modernism good layout principles still prevail. There must be good design, good balance, good color spotting, attention-compelling tone values.

Suppose we take a sheet of sketch paper, and in various positions or groups produce a sort of balanced arrangement of grayed masses, almost a design, one not displeasing to the eye, even though crude it may be. Next with roughly made letters, merely "ABCD" or any others—meaning noth-

ing—sketched in, bring about a more finished design or "layout."

Now to take some thought or some message and letter it in a still more finished manner in place of the random "ABC's", the layout becomes, presto! a selling instrument—all through the power of design, of balance. Without design it is nothing—alphabet letters that any child may make; with it a means to "move the hearts and minds of men." You fashion a pie, you build a house, you make a garden plot, you lay out a card—all with principles of design.

The card stock may be regarded as the background against which our scaffolding of design is to be built. For the benefit of the novice, it will be explained that by design, decoration is never meant; but design in this case means arrangement of masses, the carrying out of basic line movement; in short, the card layout as a whole—call it a design, a layout, or a composition, as you will. This should be such as to be disposed of at a glance so that the eye seeks the copy immediately.

The first test of a good layout is that it be able to bear the cold analysis of black and white—that its black and white spotting masses be clearly distinguishable if reduced to a thumb-nail sketch and executed with a fine crow-quill pen. If the layout be so weak that it must depend on color or other dodges to "snap it up," if it has no definite, clean-cut design, as a selling instrument the card will be a shot in the dark, a pure gamble that may "click", and may not. But if it be first, perfect as a black and white layout, with a sound foundational, fundamental character and the right tonal values, then—in color it will be strong indeed!

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Plate 73—"Landscape" cards with modern layouts.

MARTIN'S IDEAS

Now as to the problem of building or actually constructing the layout. What to feature? It is simple. Think of lettering your card copy as you would talk it. You would not emphasize or shout every word; talk it through to yourself and underscore as you go. In the words of Kipling:

"... what and where and when
And how and why and who."

To this might also be added, "how much". But we can't feature all of these points, of course. Think then, of what the merchant is trying especially to put over. Is it the word "shoes"? No! Would there be any reason in such a feature word why the passerby should read on further with the window full of shoes as it is? None at all. What is it, then? "Final Cut", or "Comfort", or "Exceptional Savings" in those shoes. The headline should tell—sell! Regard it in this light, and so proceed, unless forced by the merchant to do otherwise. (As an argument this is undoubtedly sound, it cannot be questioned; but how generally the practice will ever be adopted is a question. The writer in his examples has used both—deferring to the more popular accepted notion of display but also as often using the more truly correct.)

You may first wish to make, with charcoal or very soft pencil, a few tentative strokes or quick scaffolding of light lines to assist the eye in forming a silhouette shape of the copy or in constructing a line of movement.

Then check off your individual lettering lines by dots down the center of the card, just the height wished for each line; and rule; last, pencil in the copy. My own method, contrary to others, is to make a few rough strokes or passes with the pencil, to guide me with the copy blocks or line of movement desired, pencil in my copy first,

then rule. This has always worked best with me; it may not with you.

When the job is finished, or even before lettering, if time permits, view the card through a reducing glass. This is very much like a magnifying glass except that it has a concave surface so that objects viewed through it look smaller, thus you get the effect that you would if you saw the card from the curb edge of the sidewalk actually in place in the window.

If such a reducing glass be kept at the bench, it will be found a most valuable adjunct to your training. After finishing the card, or even while it is in state of progress, lay it flat on the floor at your feet and "size it up" through the glass. I repeat again: at this stage of your development, and even later, this little glass should be one of your most frequently used card shop accessories. Figuratively speaking, there should be a law requiring every card man to have a reducing glass constantly by him, on the bench, within hands reach.

A card should not be finally judged by the brilliant light on the bench top. Set it in the half light almost under the bench to judge if it still be outstanding. Then, after the job has gone out and the merchant has perhaps put it in the window, go by that same evening and look at it yet again, critically. So, develop your self.

Send to Bert Daily, Dayton, Ohio, for color card of Scotch Cellulose Tape—colored tapes—great aids in producing modern effects. Also send to Dick Blick, Galesburg, Ill., for folder of "Lusterfoil" in colors—silver, gold, green, orchid, Oriental copper, Hot stuff for display artists! The tape comes in 72 yard rolls, 1/2 inch wide; Lusterfoil in 25 foot rolls, 25 inches wide. This latter is not a cheap metallic paper, but on an extra heavy base.



Plate 74—A group of tall, narrow cards.

martin's ideas

SOME few years ago there were no good ready-mixed water color golds for card bench use, satisfactory enough for lettering; today there are several that are perfect, a delight to work with and "a joy forever." It is best to sample around, and find one to suit you. Keep covered, and always stir well when to be used.

If you must make, here are directions. There is a difference of opinion. Experiment for yourself as to the best method. Some say never use pale gold lining bronze (the old standby) as it is ground with paraffine, is "greasy", and does not mix well with muscilage or water; but to go to a printer and get "Extra Brilliant Gold"; add a little LePage's glue to a very small bit of water, then your bronze, last of all pure muscilage. The Illinois Bronze Powder Co., I believe, have this as "Bleich-gold Extra Brilliant No. 1200"; one may mix with it printers' Pale Lemon Gold or other gold. Try putting a very small quantity of yellow card bench water color in it for opacity. I do not advise this latter, however.

For silver, get "Extra Brilliant" silver. A small amount of white card bench color works fine with this, but oxidizes the silver and makes it gray if one uses too much. Don't use white if you want it bright. One dealer has "Silverlus Paste"—for cardboard, glass wood, cloth. Quarter pound cans 50c; half pound cans 75c (liquid is extra.)

Others say take pale gold lining bronze (never let the dealer sell you a coarse brilliant bronze, for it will clot up and not cover), cut the greasiness with a few drops of alcohol (too much will turn it black), then mix to a very thick *stiff* paste free from bubbles, with good gum arabic muscilage (never glue, as glue is "goeey" to letter with and most likely will cause it to spoil). Be sure it is all thoroughly saturated, before gradually adding a wee bit of

water, testing samples when dry with art gum to see if it adheres properly.

Still others use japan gold size with a little japan yellow in it to give it a body, so one can see the lettering plainly as he works. Touch the lettering brush or quill into turpentine occasionally if it becomes clogged. In about twenty minutes or so the size should be tacky enough to dust the bronze on with a tuft of cotton. After setting a bit, rub it down with the cotton to burnish it. This applies also to aluminum striping bronze.

A bit of gold, rightly used, is a "life saver"; I would be lost without it on the bench. Sometimes the addition of gold is just the touch needed to pull a color scheme out of the common class. Be sure it is not inappropriate, however. Suppose the card background to be in a brilliant corn—a light yellow-orange; you want a high class effect, yet snappy; a gold edge and inset hairline does the trick. Again, a maroon card with lettering of turquoise, light orange and light green; trim as before with gold—as rules, inset line or display outline.

For the display man or cardman wishing to put a change of style and character into his work, he may strike a new note by using the colored bronzes, copper, green, and others. There is something about them that intrigues the eye, more than do the conventional gold and silver striping bronzes. For the student I list the colors: lemon, orange, fire, copper, crimson, light green, apple green, sky blue, blue green, marine blue, light blue and peacock blue. Please consider that these notes are not given perfunctorily, but rather with an aim to remind you of some trick you may have overlooked.

(Thinking out loud . . . Some day I'm going to quit scratching about for new Ideas in layout, and really buckle down and learn to letter!)



Plate 75—Modern "Abstract Form" cards.

martin's ideas

At various times men in our craft have pleaded that the outdated and misnomers "show-cards" and "card writer" be displaced by some terms more expressive and more dignified, offering as suggestion that "window display cards" and "commercial letterer" be substituted.

Card "writing" may be correct, as differentiated from sign painting, its parent, and we in the work understand that in this sense "writing" means the immediate execution, without preliminary sketches, by the use of certain tools or flat brushes. But when you are asked "Just what is your line of business?" and you must answer "Card writer", get the look of puzzlement with which you are regarded. It often requires much attendant explanation, which in itself smacks of apology, to forestall the impression that you are one of those fellows who write fancy script name cards on the street corners for so much a card.

"Show cards"—cards for *shows!* No, my dictionary defines a show card as "an advertising placard or tradesman's announcement." Another one at hand, though recently published, ignores the expression altogether. Robert Ruxtion, in "Printed Salesmanship," collected from the dictionary these definitions of the little word "show."

"SHOW: To cause to be *seen*; to *guide*; to *convince*; to cause to be *accepted* by the judgment; to make *evident* by logical procedure; to *prove*; to *demonstrate*." Note that all these meanings reflect the qualities of a salesman; shall we then call them *sales-cards*? No, that still seems to be a bit

misleading. Why not designate the card writer as a "commercial letterer" or "lettering artist", or more specifically, a *display card artist*? In other lines of business, the real estate men have made the switch to "realtor", the undertakers have dignified themselves as "morticians", and plumbers have become "sanitary engineers", the old term "window dresser" or "trimmer" has given place to "window display manager."

SOME studios who do this work insist on calling themselves artists; while others, old-line shops, never mention show cards but everything, even down to price tickets, comes under the blanket classification of "signs"; some old-timers think it great to say "sho' cards" (how I could choke the guy that invented that!); still others take the middle ground and as far as possible use the term "posters"; again one says—and rightly, too, I think—and has it incorporated in the firm name, "display cards". Is not this plain common sense?

We have probably all of us—myself most of all—wished that such a change might be made. In fact in 1930, in a manuscript sent to "Signs of the Times" (and rejected) the change—in almost the identical words as given above—was proposed; I had hoped to be the first to sponsor it, but they soon after began to use the term, probably as suggested in the rejected manuscript. I was pleased that they did; would be more glad to use it exclusively here, but find it wiser to cater to some slight degree to the old popular usage. Pride of profession we need. And as individuals then let us if possible make the definite change.

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Plate 76—Spring and Fall opening; Easter ideas.

martin's ideas

THE merchant comes in and wants to know—in fact his very first words are “How cheap can you make me a card about this size?” As if he were buying his advertising by the square yard! You inquire the copy, type of card wanted, etc., and quote him a dollar and a quarter. “Ouch!” He exclaims, almost with tears in his eyes, that he hadn’t expected to pay over a dollar; that he can get it done for that (of course we know too, that he can find some “sucker” who will gladly do it at that price), in fact he even names your nearest competitor perhaps as being the “most reasonable” sign man in town, but that he wants you to do it.

He holds out the shimmering mirage that he has six more just like it that he wants done next week, and that he simply can’t and won’t pay over a dollar each. He protests that he doesn’t require anything “fancy”; plain stuff, “just so they can read it—it’ll only be in the window for a day or so.” You know that old gag—for he really keeps it in three weeks or maybe more.

Now what! The eternal problem once more. Why not say, “Oh, well, if that’s all you want I’ll make that for you free! Wait a minute.” And you step back into the shop and get a piece of a shoe box lid or grocery pasteboard carton roughly torn off, a bottle of cheap liquid shoe polish (well watered!) a blacking dawber and proceed to execute (yes, that’s the word—“execute”) a monstrosity with no margins, S’s and N’s turned backward and wavering as if it had been done left handed or with a corkscrew.

Have you the nerve to try this stunt once? (No—but do have such “before and after” demonstration examples to show.) You’ll either “convert” him or else lose a customer who would be good

for very, very little profit anyway. Explain that such a “sign” fills his specifications, but that if he really wants respectable, clean-cut advertising attractively styled to his window, individually made to order—that he must pay for it, must pay, in other words, for skill of hand and for advertising brains.

Do you remember the slogan used some time back by the shoe repairmen, that ran about like this? “Buying shoe repair is something like buying a railroad ticket; the more you pay the farther you go.” You don’t buy a railroad ticket by the yard (even though it sometimes may seem so!)—nor do you try to see how cheap you can get it. You know that to get to a certain place, you must pay a certain price, more or less—according to the grade of travel accommodations you desire.

You protest. “If I don’t take the job at a dollar, he’ll walk out and go over to my competitor, and leave me here doing nothing and gnawing my fingernails. After all, there is so little expense on that job, and I should take it at the price just to keep the wheels turning.” Yes, there’s something to that, but not enough. What about overhead,—the overhead wheels are still turning. If you don’t make some sort of profit on this job, if you don’t make this dollar carry its share of overhead, some other dollar later must carry double. Remember that. Keep your nerve!

Let it be a slogan that you never do cheap, knockout work, only the best snappy stuff, and you’ll likely get credit for all good work in your neighborhood. Others find it so. If you yourself can’t always identify other card-writers’ work, how then can the Average Merchant?



Plate 77—Christmas layouts for your use.

martin's ideas

WHEN the merchant asks—How much will it cost? Say: How much do you want to put into it? I can work up, or down to your price; do you want a \$1.50 card or a \$2.00 card? A sale campaign may figure up in the studio man's head—\$46, he throws in \$4 for contingencies, and says: Now for \$50 I'll give you a \$50 job. Make it for \$45, says the merchant—Alright, you answer: but you'll only get a \$45 job.

Does he want \$1.25 quality at a 50c price? Can't be done if you would continue in business! Tell him however, that you can give him a 50c job—boiler-works grade, knocked out, slapped out, sign-type. Bue he doesn't want any such stuff—of course not! Then proceed to visualize to him what you can produce for \$1.25.

He threatens to go over to your competitor. Why not just go over to your competitor that evening and say, "Howdy, Bill! I see you just got one of my regular customers—doing the job I quote at \$1.25 for a dollar. I'll tell you what let's do. Let's get together—you give me a list of your customers and the prices you charge them; I'll give you a list of mine. Then I'll go around and undercut and get every one of yours if I can, and you do the same with mine. We'll both be satisfied—swap customers—get new trade—of course, we'll be doing business at lower prices, but. . ." Silly, isn't it?

Who benefits by silly price-cutting? The merchant, and no one else. Refuse to come down to the price-cutter's level; the merchant knows you cannot quote suicidal prices and continue in business. He can hardly be blamed for buying where he can buy best, but if it be a "bum" job he receives, he will

eventually return to you with more respect than before.

Who is to blame for price cutting? The studio man himself and no one else. I have witnessed "wars" among the local barbers where hair cutting dropped to 19 cents, 16 cents; between shoe repair men when half soles were done for 35 cents; among cleaners and pressers when a suit was done for 20 cents; among grocers when bread and cabbage were literally given away; have seen milk cut to 2 cents a quart retail! So have you. Who was to blame—the public, the consumers? No. Naturally they bought where they could buy the cheapest. It was the producers, the retailers, the workmen. Just so in our own business. We alone are to blame for the low prices.

Apply business-like methods to display card work; know what your work costs you to produce and sell it at a proper margin of profit. If it be at all possible in your locality, don't have a set price—simply charge *the right price* as computed on a time basis; let them take it or leave it. There should not be that eternal argument each time; if there is, you have miseducated your trade, or it is a cheap, undesirable trade. "Cheap?" you query. Yes, for firms even on Michigan Boulevard, Chicago—the sort of establishments that have a grille of bronze built in all around just inside the plate glass, and that require a whole beautiful window to display one mannequin with a single fur coat—will generally pinch a penny when it comes to a display card. I know this to be a positive fact—they have repeatedly done so in our own studio. "Cheap trade" is right.

(Errata—Plate 78: the engraver got his separation rules wrong; "Next Trip" should overlap "Sister's Room"; "Sister's Room" should overlap "New Suit".)



Plate 78—More Christmas card layouts.

martin's ideas

WITH all the talks these days, of mergers and combines in every line of big business, as well as in our parent industry sign painting, we in this specialized line of work—always heretofore a matter of small individual shops—we, I say, are caused to wonder. Moreover, certain rumors in the air intensify our feeling.

Will mergers, will chain store requirements, card printing machines, silk screen process and other influences, crowd out the small card shop? To some degree perhaps, yes, in the far future, but not for many years. The day of the small shop is not over; as a matter of fact, there probably never was a better opportunity for intelligent industrious workmen to find an opening for their abilities than in the small, one-man shop. Mergers and consolidations, mechanical processes, as the machines and silk screen, ready cutout letters, etc. have dealt the rank and file many a body blow, but there is still a place in the sun for the craftsman with skill of hand and brain, there is still a job for the small shop man who will put real quality and advertising value into his work. The small shop is always with us!

If you have a real knowledge of your work or craft—something which other people can't get on without—in short, are a *master*—the world will come to you, will wear that "beaten path" to your door, no matter how small your shop is. It *has* to come to you; you have become a necessity, not a mere fellow who sits on a stool and letters A-B-C all day long in the sign department of some corporation. The sound product of an honest artist, and trained fingers doing the will of a creative brain will never be displaced by automatic lettering machines, or patented

process quantity production, or be swallowed up by mergers; never fear.

MEN of long experience in the business say and prove with fact and figures that, for the present, at least, the small shop, or the shop with only helper and boy is really the most profitable in the long run. One of the country's greatest advertising authorities, a highly successful man himself, makes the statement that the most efficient business may be the one-man business. (I will explain that this may also mean the one-man *controlled* business.) He asserts that there is too much talk, discussion, and joint management, too much fear of individual responsibility, too much time wasted in the large organization. The one man is not seeking to sidestep blame, no dilly-dally with him; he goes ahead and gets things done. If the proprietor of such a shop is able to get along without hiring help he is fortunate in more ways than one. For he thus gets a chance to develop himself; he thus has the full pleasure of doing a thing himself, in his own way, without hindrance or dictation by someone over him. So his business may offer larger returns from the money invested, quicker returns, and certainly a more varied experience.

There is however, I admit, another side to this. He has often so many details to look after that he may miss the broader aspect of the business. There are so many little things requiring attention that he may never seem to get time to plan out the bigger money-making methods. If a man is a good organizer and manager he may overcome this difficulty.

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Plate 79—Radio panels, paper signs and shapes.

martin's ideas

THE small shop man should endeavor first of all to be a thorough business man. Harry Brush-pusher bought out a small shop. He was telling me enthusiastically about it—"Only fifty bucks for the shop, complete with stock and—radio!" The rent was less than \$20 a month, and he was sure he could manage that; one simply couldn't lose, he insisted; a great opportunity. It couldn't have been worth much and probably was dear at any price, but—enthusiasm and inexperience are often blind.

So he bought it, and sat down with a copy of "Snappy Stories" to listen to the radio and to wait for business. The reason for the cheap price was soon made plain. There were a few persistent collectors, but of other business men none. What very little did trickle in never came back a second time. One shouldn't thus start in business for himself merely because he knows how to letter a bit with brush and pen. He should first of all be a business man. Furthermore it should be taken into consideration that the fellows who fail in this business would probably fail in any other; so don't entirely blame our trade for the frequent failures in it. (. . . Let me pause an instant just here. Business? I hear some courteous reader protest; what is this mysterious thing "business" you mention so often: it has a hard School-of-Commerce or LaSalle-Extension-University sound. Courteous reader, all I know about business, and I ask the printer to set this in italics, is—to keep faith with the customer and to do good work.)

There is an ancient saying that very aptly expresses the application in my illustration: "For which of you, intending to build . . . sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish?" Likewise the let-

tering man should first sit down and figure out all these things: rent, light, possibly heat, materials of all kinds, including cardboard, brushes and paint, commissions (if solicitor be hired), delivery boy, and so on—every possible contingency. Many an honest, able workman has gone on the financial rocks for lack of this foresight.

The man just starting in should realize right at the outset, that it is not a "game", but a serious business, nay, even a profession. He should endeavor, I repeat, to operate on sound business principles, know his costs, do a first-class job always, and ask a fair profit. One can't build up a solid business foundation on slam-bang, shoddy work, at cheap cut prices, ignoring overhead and such fixed factors, keeping no books, ordering materials in dribble quantities. Such an one's door will soon be found locked, and just another "mechanic" will be going the rounds trying to get back onto a regular job.

So many—far too many—small shops are run on a more or less haphazard plan, or rather lack of plan, instead of being on a sound business basis. The one man shop may have a smooth-running, money-making system—if it be carefully planned out. I fully realize that with the small shop it may be hard to get the exact time on the cost sheet, what with waiting on the customer one minute, answering the telephone the next, then cutting the stock for the job, still another interruption or two, and finally getting to letter the cards. But what is meant is that one should never knowingly take a job that does not show a profit. Demand prices that will allow you a living wage.

• • •

today -- Sound study at the bench tomorrow. But memory, like muscles, must be developed

Begin now! These Ideas will stir the originality lying dormant within you...

Plate 80—18 Dollar Day card layout ideas.

martin's ideas

In running the one man shop, don't attempt to do work for which you are not fitted; if you do take it, cooperate with some other shop which can better handle it. Turn such work over to them, and they may reciprocate in turn by sending you the type of work you specialize in. Try not to regard them as competitors, rather—as someone has aptly put it—*contemporaries*. It's this way: you specialize, no doubt, along a certain line of work or class of trade, they along another; could you not, then, cooperate to a certain extent? But as contemporaries, not as competitors, with the consequent underbidding and constant "scrapping."

In some cases it may even be better to consolidate with your competitor, and to pool your equipment, capital, energy and ideas, instead of working thirteen hours daily to make a meager living when you are not a completely experienced, full-rounded workman.

In certain cases only, mind you. Don't take this suggestion as a loophole inviting you to give up too easily. But there are little one-man shops (you yourself may know one) whose owners work from twelve to sixteen hours a day, but are not making in profits nearly as much as they could in a larger organization, free from worry and responsibility. Again, in another small shop, not uncommon either, the owner is regularly clearing around \$150 a week. (Not so bad for a card writer, eh?) Consider yourself, consider your field, consider everything carefully and then decide which course you should take.

One of the worst things in our business is this matter of unfair competition and cutting prices. Some one with two dollars and fifty cents capital starts

a "peach basket" business, as the saying is—opens a "bedroom studio," and straightway begins to compete with reputable established shops, with this destructive price slashing. Anything to get the job—afraid of losing a dollar. Such a man is a fool. He is ruining the trade; is pulling down about his ears the whole structure so carefully built up by others. Too late he discovers he has chosen the wrong method.

There is no need to follow such practice. Even with the big "do-everything-shops" in the locality, there is plenty of room for all; don't try to crowd each other off the limb. There should be opportunity for the small shop with a specialty. Take as one of your slogans: "Have something that no one else has got!" Try for the uncommon types of display and see if you can't soon *make room* for yourself.

The big shop may not be so merrily making money as may appear on the surface. The overhead in the big shop, unless very carefully watched, often grows into terrible proportions. The small shop man is not only the owner, but also the manager, office man and bookkeeper (evenings, perhaps), salesman, and workman. In all these jobs he collects but one salary, and that perhaps not on an eight hour basis, either. If his management is as right as can be, and he can't then seem to make a respectable salary, he might as well quit, and go to work in the big shop for another.

The excuses that it's knockout work—good enough for the price—not appreciated, etc., are poor alibis. By doing each job just as well as you can—in the time allotted to do it, of course—you advance yourself. Be self-critical, and always work toward a higher standard.



Plate 81—"Sales series" layouts of various sorts.

martin's ideas

NOVELTY cardstocks or backgrounds: These may be wisely used or badly abused. The lettering message should be kept clear—hence mounted panels of lettering on such backgrounds are generally advisable. There are many modern designs available in wall paper—imitation leathers or woods (as bird's-eye maple, etc.) floral designs, stripes, and others, that may be mounted on wallboard, and on these, in turn, panels for the lettering mounted.

One cardshop proprietor, a very mediocre letterer, started quite a fad among his merchant trade, by the use of large upright wallboard panels coated and then stippled with one or two stipples, the second being generally gold; this shop-prepared background surmounted by a beveled panel of buff or other pale cardboard which bore the lettering. His customers soon came to demand this style almost to the exclusion of others. At certain seasons as at Easter and Valentine's he used the added distinction of gold lettering.

SOME of the mat-board houses offer some beautiful novelty background effects on regular weight cardboard. Then again certain of these "fancified, prettified," two-stippled cardstocks are not always practical for direct lettering, but as stated before, are fine if mounts are used on them.

The writer at one time bought \$25 worth of a special "leather" finish cover paper—assorted shades—from a wholesale paper house, which proved, even in the small shop and in a very ordinary neighborhood, a splendid investment. There were three weights offered, at different prices; the medium weight was chosen, which was just heavy enough not to curl when water color was used on it. This stock was of a nature that it was most suitable for lettering just as it was, except that it required mount-

ing on some contrasting or harmonizing under-panel of proper rigidity. Such mounts may be "tipped" in two spots at the top, with glue, to the wallboard or other panel; or, frankly fastened with two tiny glass push pins to the under card, allowing liberal margin to show all around. The lower edge of the mount (if cover paper) may be deckled or shaved off thin and irregular with a razor blade.

The alert, aggressive cardman should be up on the new card stocks being produced, and should study the various matboard sample folders, but not put too much dependence on these doggy backgrounds. Many fellows peg along, kidding themselves that they are "some pumpkins," when really about the only redeeming feature of their work is found in the quality of the manufactured, ready-made stock they use. They seem to have little desire to seriously apply themselves beyond the necessity of barely getting by. Pursuit of pleasure and a thousand and one things take up much of their time. The possibilities of the cardboard should not be ignored, but neither should too great dependence be put upon it.

Many of the "newest sensations" like sand-blasted shapes of plate glass with polished bevel edges, which ran such a vogue for a while, prove far-fetched and foolish. When these first appeared one customer of our studio ordered several especially made, which cost him \$15 each, so fragile that the delivery man broke one in carefully wrapping it up to deliver it after it had been lettered!

Every card in your daily work is a problem, is a challenge to you; to lay it out well, efficiently, speedily,—to put on your colors in well formed letters—it should be a source of real satisfaction.



Plate 82—Modernistic hanging card shapes.

martin's ideas

WHEN the merchant, a jeweler, we will say, has called for something special in a small shape cut-out, or a card, loaded perhaps with copy, and the price for executing has run rather "steep," work your psychology tricks on him to prepare his mind for the bill. It is worth your price, perhaps even more, but he, not knowing the labor it entails, cannot realize it.

Keep large sheets of tissue paper, or wide w.d.h. rolls of this, and carefully cover the face of the card with one or two sheets of this tissue before enclosing in the heavy kraft wrapping paper. (This tissue is also useful between cards.) As the merchant unfolds the wrapper he notes the care taken to preserve the pristine freshness of the card. He reasons that if the artist regards so highly his creation as to enfold it with white pearly tissue, he can at least give it the care that is its due. Its value straightway is raised in his inner consciousness.

Or, the delivery man may have instructions to refuse to allow the merchant to even open it, reserving that right for himself. Let him remove the wrappings so *very* carefully; and screening the face of the design from the face of the merchant as many moments as he can in order to further raise his expectations, he very deliberately opens out the easel, locks it, and holding the card just so, sets it on the showcase, and steps back, as if with professional pride. This scheme is very successful in camouflaging added charges. Send a small bit of art gum along, with instructions for the merchant to use immediately on finger marks or dust smudges. Service, salesmanship, call it what you will—it works!

Even further: with these shapes, these extra nice cards, suggest to the merchant customer that he lay them

away carefully in large empty cardboard boxes (suit boxes are good) for another year; give him art gum to clean and freshen them up. You'll never lose anything by this; he feels you have his interest at heart. A subtle sort of salesmanship perhaps it is—this sincere desire to help the merchant, this seeing his problems through his eyes, agreeing with him, and helping him to plan his advertising profitably. It means that he becomes more inclined to agree with *you*, and to use your services; it means more business, less danger from competition; it means more success, more profits.

ON a preceding page I spoke of novelty backgrounds.

Several years ago a writer in a display magazine came forth with a severe arraignment of the rank and file of cardwriters whom he accused of possessing dead or torpid brain cells; his attack was calculated to make us feel like thirty cents! He laid the lash on, unmercifully, right and left. The live man, he explained, hunted out new materials on which to work. He, as display manager in his store, had gone to great expense to procure large sheets of burnished and patterned copper, these sheets designed to hang by chains. Often since then, I have wondered what the junk man gave him later for those same sheets? Also what is he using now—birchbark, cork, slabs of concrete? Very, very foolish. These waves of novelty pass over and we come back to sanity, card backgrounds and paint.

Remember that incomparable poster artist, told by his drawing master at common school (special art training he had none): "Give it up, Hohlwein, you will never be any good." That to Ludwig Hohlwein . . . !



Plate 83—Shape suggestions adaptable to your needs.

martin's ideas

An undoubtedly good advertising investment is the use of gummed stickers bearing your name and address and a slogan or other matter. It doesn't matter if you do put your "imprint"—your name—on the front face of the card (you *should* always) use this sticker also. These may be procured from the large city label concerns in the East or Middle West, in size as small as 1x1 inches, at prices that are absurdly low. The white sticker with red or blue border rules and dark blue lettering shows up on the dark gray of the mat board in fine shape. Paste it just above the easel, where it will be seen and a reminder when a new card is to be ordered—for business cards and phone numbers become misplaced.

The little stickers may read "Another good job from . . . (your name, phone and address)"; "Remember where you got it! . . ."; "Step to the phone and call. . ."; "So proud we put our name on it! . . ." The small sticker will pay for itself hundreds of times over; the writer used in addition a larger size for half and full sheets and up. These may be about 1½x2½ inches, with such copy: "JONES Sales cards. Not mere cardboard and paint, but real talking *salesmen* in your windows. The most inexpensive advertising campaign. Phone A. B. Jones, 715 Green St., Anywhere."

As I remember now, the smaller sticker in one color only (which is just as good almost, as two colors), costs around 75c for 3000. If the larger sticker only is ordered—for smaller card use, a snip across it with the bench scissors will eliminate part of the copy so that it does not look overlarge for the card. Make the cut just under "Real talking *salesmen* in your windows," and *lap* there. This sticker scheme is wonderful publicity for you. I have told scores of fellows about this

by word of mouth, that it pays, that I know it PAYS; and they look at me as if I were goofy, or just talking through my hat; what I say just bounces right off the side of their heads, and doesn't even penetrate the ear drum. Easels on every card, stickers on the back, a neat and artistic imprint on the front, *heavy* matboard always—these things are a good advertising and bring repeat business.

For in our trade it doesn't pay to be bashful, or the "shrinking violet" type; when you do a good job, I repeat, put your name on it, both behind and before, if you can. Your name on a card is an indication that you are proud of it, and can do as well for the next-door merchant who may happen to see it. As I heard a sign painter once say: "Every card, every sign that goes out of this shop must have our imprint on it. That imprint *must* be put on it—and neatly—even if it takes as long to do as the job itself."

There are, however, ways of abusing this sticker advertising. One young studio proprietor uses a four-inch square type, printed on cheap highly colored stock, in heavy absurd design. He has the nerve—the "crust"—to go by a store after a display is installed and seeing one of his cut-out card shapes near the window glass, to whip out one of these large gummed address labels and paste it to the window just outside!

As a last word, if you insist that you cannot afford to be buying what you may regard as "high-priced" stickers, at least get blank gummed paper from your printer, have him cut generous sized labels and sign *by hand* with your imprint, so that it shows up against the dark gray of the matboard back. Or, stamp neatly with a rubber stamp.



Plate 84—Variety of modern cutout shape cards.

martin's ideas

It would be wise to paint the walls of the card studio a very pale cream—neither a glaring white, nor on the other hand, too rich a cream, as the latter will seriously affect the rendering of certain colors unless it be a daylight shop, or one with the bench directly by the window. The reason for this is scientific—not aesthetic. A laundry's patrons were complaining that many of the clothes were not as white as formerly; it was disclosed that recent repainting with the wrong color had hindered the workers in the inspectors' department from detecting such matters. Again in a factory a chill seemed to be in the air when the walls were changed from cream to a pale blue, the change necessitating several degrees higher temperature in heating.

White paint reflects only 50 to 60% of the light that strikes it, but a tint of lemon-yellow reflects 71% (orange reflects 33%, emerald green 24%, cerulean blue 11%). A knowledge of this matter of light reflection should be valuable in refinishing a studio. 90% of lemon with 10% of blue (forming a yellow-green) and paled with white, is fine for wall and ceiling paint. Or a ceiling tint of lemon-yellow or an orangey tint, is really lighter than white. Wood trims may be orange tints or the walls may be so treated. It is generally best to have the floors and up three feet or more on the sides dark so that there will be no glare from below up into the eyes. Or, the shop walls may be painted buff, the ceiling cream, orange for the bench woodwork, the bench tops a light brown about like masonite in color.

There is a little one man print shop in Tampa (Fla.), whose proprietor has painted his two job presses, his paper cutter, etc. white—yes, WHITE—pure white enamel. You should see them—clean and spotless as a dish (you know

the average, oily, dingy printing press). His walls are a light yellow trimmed with white. Needless to add—he himself is a clean, methodical man in every way, his work very exceptional.

The shop work room should, theoretically be refinished and repainted once a year. Never let it get dingy. When the walls have become discolored, or the old finished paint thereon has turned darker, there will be noticed less perfect illumination and reflection; the workmen will go slower because they do not see so clearly; there will be less efficiency. Undoubtedly better and faster work can be done in a well lighted place. So spruce and paint up the dark dingy shop and make it a more pleasant, inviting, cheerful place in which to work. Keep the shop bright.

The next several pages show cutout paper work, or window "paste-ups". May be very effective if color is wisely chosen, not raw and overdone, and—if lettering is kept clean cut and simple. A bit of freedom is alright, but a theatrical style requires a lot of eye work, is too hard on the optical apparatus.

Personally I do not care for the heavy white poster paper generally sold to the trade; it cracks too easily, is too opaque, and too hard to handle. The *white drug bond* is the only paper to use, in my opinion. One man can handle it easily, any length (the writer has handled a 60-foot length alone!); it lies flat on the bench, has no annoying curl or "snap back" so characteristic of the heavier papers; is thin enough to be most effective under night lighting conditions, and to work a second or more copies over the original pattern. This white drug bond is really a high grade wrapping paper and may be bought in any width. *Accept no other!*

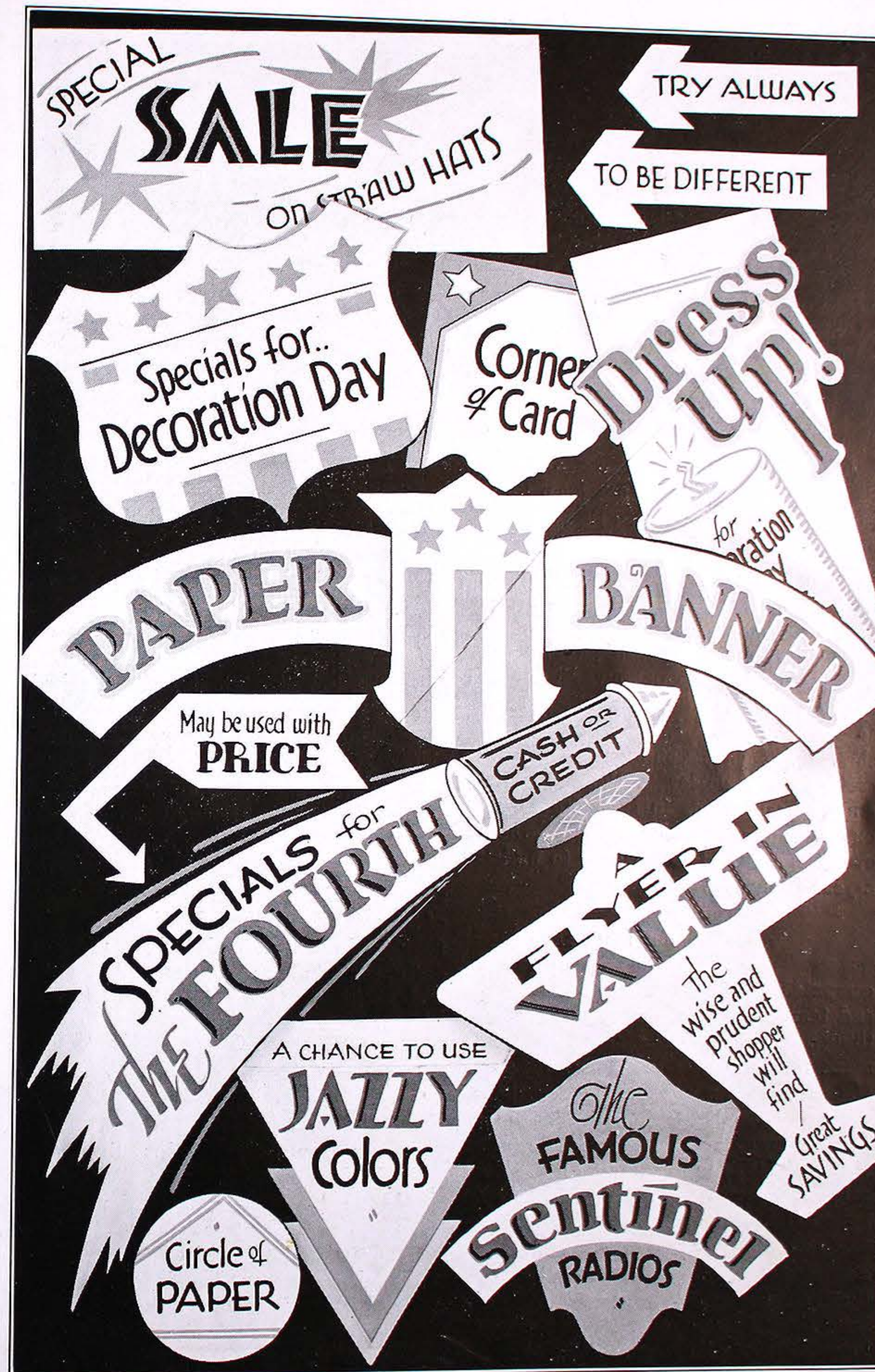


Plate 85—Ideas for patriotic occasions; etc.

martin's ideas

MODERN business requires modern methods. Minutes saved in the shop, at the bench, mean money in the pocket. Look about you and see where you can better working conditions in the shop, where you can cut corners. Clean up the useless junk under the tables or benches; get rid of everything unnecessary. There should be few materials idling around waiting months for a job; get them down off your shelves and into the window displays of your customers. The old notion that "if you keep a snake's skin seven years you'll find a use for it" has been itself relegated, in these modern times, to the scrap heap.

These things that are gathering dust, if they must be saved for distant future use,—may be enclosed in neat wrapping paper to prevent further soiling, and labeled, and so put away on storage shelves. The modern method is to erect, if possible, commodious steel shelving, bought second-hand—to save cost—from a dealer in these fixtures, and to keep things in such order that one may know every minute where everything is and just where to find it a year from now.

You may save yourself hours—if computed in a year's time—of wear and tear, scrambling about looking for things. Ever lose the shears? How much time must be lost in shops, this United States over, looking for those shears! Or in trying to locate a "handy" rag, or stir sticks; or scraping out lid tops to mix a wee bit of color in! How the statistician would be appalled if he once began to figure it!

You can't afford to take a minute or a minute and a half to wait or hunt for that elusive yard stick—have three, have six. Two pairs of shears; several large chunks of art gum (the 45 cent size—for they are the most economical

and are cut in half for use); have a dozen sharpened pencils with orders to the shop boy to keep them *sharp*, or you'll break his back; chalk, charcoal, three chamois skins, plenty of light—in short, *two* of each of the often wanted, easily lost articles.

Those delivery boys! Speed personified some of them are—not! One young hopeful rested up between deliveries and his reading Western Story magazines and writing movie "fan" notes to his favorite screen hero, by sleeping (this is an actual incident) in the swivel chair in the cubby hole office with his feet on the desk and a newspaper over his face to keep off the flies as he slumbered—and as we toiled outside in the shop over our ABC's. Make a list and put it up to remind him—a list of things to be looked after daily: A rag or cloth should be tacked to each bench in handy position, plenty of palettes kept cut from scrap, the trash cans emptied regularly, lid tops kept clean in a small wooden box, dirty water changed for the workmen, empty quart color jars soaked in a pail of water and washed clean to hold an assortment of dry colors, and a quantity of stir sticks prepared, of course the floor to be swept and lightly mopped daily, the windows likewise daily shined and polished. Keep him busy!

• • •
From all over the world they're looking for fresh Ideas!

H. Pearson, Sattsjobaden, Sweden.
Ted Kawaguchi, Honolulu, Hawaii.
(Miss) J. G. Harris, Halifax
Julio Jara, Monterey, Mexico.
Andrew Moir, Aberdeen, Scotland.
T. W. Stevenson, Dutch West Indies
Lu Liston, Juneau, Alaska.
Albert Jones, Salford, England.
Manuel Alvarez, Havana, Cuba.
W. J. Smith, Adelaide, Australia.



Plate 86—Paper shapes for shrewd, profit-minded merchants.

Martin's Ideas

MERCHANTS, because of being over-solicited, often act as if the very sight of a cardman coming in with a batch of samples, irritates them. One must carry forward his solicitation quietly, patiently, constructively. Much, very much depends on the way you go about this.

In a story in the "Saturday Evening Post" long ago my eye met this paragraph which illustrates my thought:

"... Smedley said nothing (in answer). How many mice would be caught if every time a cat saw a hole, it leaped at it and fell to with howls and clawing? No, sit patiently outside, and the mouse—or the client—will eventually come out." Watchful waiting, in other words.

On starting my shop a boy had been hired—a bright, alert fellow he was, who took a lively interest in the little business, but thinking, perhaps, that his boss was dead on his feet. He could not see in my forced calm exterior how busy I was in my brain workshop—how frantic almost. He'd say, "Didja see So-and-So yet? You orter get a job of work there. Lemme take one of your business cards in to him." I was watching that merchant—watching him like a cat stalking a mouse; I had my own method of approaching him, and knew—*knew* that eventually, with my persistent publicity, that when he became dissatisfied with the other shops, he would come in—and he did! Watchful waiting, planning, underground digging, will bring results.

Is there any business except display card work in which one can make a start with less capital—any which requires as little investment? One of my lettering acquaintances started in business with hardly a dime. His flat rent was costing him \$85 a month, he had a family, and they all had to eat—every

day. So he *had* to make it go, right from the start. He "stalled off" the landlord for a month's rent on his shop; on getting an order, he would literally run "like sixty" and procure a single sheet of cardboard on credit, make the job and deliver it, collect, pay for the first stock, and so on. A wretched system, but it shows what can be done. Incidentally later, when finances were better, this same young man was so improvident—showed such lack of foresight and thrift—that he would let a paper streamer job wait while he sent out an empty milk bottle by the delivery boy to the paint dealer's for five cents worth of "turps"!

That one of the greatest of all Americans, old Ben Franklin, an astute business man himself, said, "Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee." It was said long ago, but is true and workable yet today; good advice, if well followed. When clothes looked rusty and shoe soles were cracking, my little shop's wants had first consideration. Before stock got low it was replenished; what we thought of as at all needed was promptly got; a little advertising appropriation was regularly laid aside. And the time came when the business, so carefully nurtured, showed a nice profit that permitted better clothes and many new shoes. Keep your shop and your shop will keep you.

My aim is to jam each book so full of Ideas they'll keep you busy picking among them till I can issue another. Nothing warmed-over; brand-new, right-up-to-the-minute stuff. Some catchy stuff as well as basic fundamentals. Outsmart the other fellow with *new* IDEAS! Give yourself a post-graduate "course" in show card writing. You beginners will enjoy mastering the many angles of the trade in this interesting new way.



Plate 87—Another assortment of paper sign ideas.

martin's ideas

THE "religion" of our business should be to *keep the prices up!* John Ruskin, that master artist it was, who many years ago said: "There is scarcely anything in this world that some man cannot make a little cheaper, and the buyers, who consider Price only, are this man's lawful prey."

Cheap? Again, it was William McKinley who said: "I do not prize the word cheap. It is not a word of hope, or a word of cheer. It is not a word of inspiration. It is the badge of poverty, the signal of distress. Cheap merchandise means cheap men and cheap men a cheap country."

Why are prices cut? The claim is made by some, that these small so-called one-man shops (such a shop may have a helper) are the cause of cut prices. My observation is that the big studios are the worst offenders of all. Business may have slacked up, and because of their heavy overhead and payroll due they get panicky and give "confidential discounts."

Suppose we do admit the blame is on the free-lancer and the small shops. Our trade is unfortunately one in which most any ambitious but half-baked young tyro with a smattering of lettering knowledge and often no capital at all can start into business. About all he needs, he feels, is several brushes and jars of paint and a few sheets of cardboard. He makes a desperate, blood-thirsty effort to gain a foothold in a locality by cutting prices. Later, when a better workman, and experience has been gained, after this wrong start, attempt may be made to raise prices, but customers balk and threaten to leave. There may also be minor reasons—one being just plain ignorance.

The "bedroom studio" price cutter

sort of chap has been compared to the peddler of other wares, who has no overhead, no rent expenses, no business residence or phone. It is true; while you—you are trying to maintain an accredited shop where you may always be found in times of emergency; to keep your promises and turn out a standard quality.

Forget the cut-price hound—if you can; ignore him. Simply go your own even way, turning out the very best quality of work, and eventually you may build up a business proof against competition such as price cutters. Sincerely cooperate with the merchant in working out his ideas, and you may so gain his confidence that these sharp-pencil boys (the price-cutters) will simply get nowhere at all with your accounts.

Know your business. What are your costs? Material, overhead and profit Far too many fellows figure their own labor at most anything they can get for it, overhead is largely disregarded and . . . so it goes. Is it any wonder that they go under so often? *Know your business.* And don't let some small-souled merchant dictate to you what he chooses to pay for his job. Walk out on him; hang up on him. Keep your own self respect. It took you years, perhaps, to learn your trade—now charge a fair price for your ability and brains. Again I say—cutting *prices* generally means cutting *profits*. Far better let your competitor get the order than be forced to handle it at a loss.

It is regretted that there is no space to give explanations and details of color . . . for the present get color from "1000 Show Card Layouts"; in the future, great things are planned.



Plate 88—Cutout shapes for hanging in window.

martin's ideas

DON'T worry about competition. Some one says that competition may become largely a state of mind—this trying to figure out how the other fellow gets all the work he does, and all that sort of thing. Why not, instead of sitting down and moaning about it, place the blame right on your own doorstep where it belongs and just admit that the other man must be a better solicitor, a better workman, or a more wide awake and up-and-coming business man in every way? To reiterate a thought previously expressed: it is a contest of brains, and the best brains will win!

Competition should be a sort of game. No football team—at least none worthy of the name—would get mad because they were licked on a fair-fought field. No! rather, they would go back home grittily determined to put up a better brand of football next season and win.

Lettering men—in display work, or sign work, or the poster field—have much in common, and all groups should work together to common ends. Each group, and each group within a group, should compete with all the power they can command, but at the same time should hold strictly to the rules of fair play and good sportsmanship. Thus the whole industry may prosper and we shall all benefit by attaining a higher standard of quality and efficiency.

Competition is good for business provided we accept the challenge, using it as a stimulus to spur us into action. But don't grovel and fight with your competitors down in the mud—they are too apt to gouge out your eyes. It's a school-boyish practice—price-cutting; don't indulge in it. "Quality is worth its price."

One should endeavor, rather, to get personally acquainted with the other fellow, the chap down the street. He may be a really fine man; at least is earnestly trying to make a living same as you. There should be no need to fight and stab each other in the back with price cutting. Call on him, but not in a snooping way. Tell him you mean to be a clean competitor and not knock him. (It is really the best policy to never knock a competitor nor even mention his name unless absolutely necessary); explain that you don't wish to slash prices; try to agree on an approximate scale of prices and promise to uphold them.

"Not so fast", you say. "Why should I go and play into my competitor's hands? He's out for business—out for my blood. I'm out for his. What good will discussing things do?" That's rather a narrow view to take. The wise man makes up his mind to try to live with his competitors, rather than try to put them out of business with cut prices. He knows the knife might slip and that he would only cut his own throat. You want to lick your competitor; you want to win new customers. Cut prices, then? The merchant laughs to himself and benefits.

When visiting cardwriters get together, it's not long till the topics of brushes and color come up. "What brushes . . . ?" Everyone has individual preferences as to these, like the matter of fishing rods, or sign kits . . . Personally, I have long preferred and used Bert Daily's best brand "Perfect Stroke" red sables; but am also the proud possessor of a complete set of Dick Blick's beautiful "Master Stroke" brushes. Neither pay me a cent for printing this here, nor can I be bribed to give "free puffs"; it's merely a sincere word for tools I know to be good and worthy.



Plate 89—Pull them in with these!

martin's ideas

THE theatrical poster field is a line of work that is fascinating to many. As with other poster publicity we are out to sell "merchandise"—in this case theatre tickets; we are striving to create a desire—a curiosity—to see the play. Advertising sense here again is needed. Make no mistake about that. It is not alone the laying on of color, the seeing it take form before your eyes; not alone pretty girl heads and such overworked small-town stuff, but real showmanship in the lobby.

For the lobby is the *showcase*. We are to exploit the picture in some manner. We must know our class of customers, what the public will react to, and not plaster and crowd the place with small detail and copy; rather, the point to be desired is that "he who runs may read." The lobby public will not pause long enough to catch detail, therefore one must subordinate unimportant features.

Theatrical posters may be divided into many classes or types: simple types versus unusual or novel; conventional versus modernistic; posters for legitimate plays, moving pictures, burlesque or musical comedy, drama, melodrama, farce, revue and vaudeville. (Other amusement posters may include those for circus, dance hall, skating rink, concerts, fairs and carnivals.)

Very briefly we will consider specifically one type of position in this field—that of moving picture "house artist." Many in this work have positions that require long, irregular hours sometimes; without proper help they are loaded down with a burden of duties that become toilsome and tedious. Often after one has worked up a set of posters in advance, and hopes to get a breathing spell, the picture is apt to be "pulled" or cancelled, necessitating an entire

change. One's sweat has all gone for nothing, seemingly; then comes the temptation to "slap out the stuff", which is a bad state to get into. Late hours are thus often unavoidable. It is no snap; there is lots of grief in the work, yet again I say, it is fascinating, and once one gets it in the blood, there is no keeping away from it in spite of some few unpleasant drawbacks. All phases of display card work, likewise, have more or less of these, anyway.

On the following page are described the house artist's requirements,—but first, many have inquired about poster books. Yes, there are books to be had, and good ones; some of them cost considerable—five dollars, and running as high as fifteen dollars apiece. One young theatrical artist of my acquaintance spent \$75 at one time on poster books; I confidently expect to see him rise in time in his profession with these stepping stones. One would be wise to examine such books first to see if practical for his purpose; in ordering a fifteen-dollar-class book, if possible have an understanding that it may be sent C. O. D., returnable after examination if unsuitable; in other words to purchase very carefully and not allow the name alone to sell it to you.

The writer has always made it a practice to include, without charge, cardboard easels on every sized card from quarter sheets up. (This in addition to using the heaviest, best mat-board only.) And, it may be added, has he'd much trade thereby. It's these little unrequired bits of *service* that the merchant notices, and that all go together to build up goodwill. The cost is so very trifling on the individual job, the returns so great in every way. The card stands up like a real salesman in the window wherever the merchant chooses to shift it.



Plate 90—Panel ideas by Du Vall of definite value.

martin's ideas

THE average moving picture theatre requirements may be thus defined. Presuming, of course, that one is a passable artist, he should be able to draw a head or figure without the projector. For the ability to sketch a true likeness is valuable in such difficulties as when the "stills" photos or pressbook black-and-white illustrations are found to be too large to fit in the projector. With this ability one has the edge on the ordinary run-of-the-mine artist, who has little fundamental illustrative training.

The artist needs to have in addition to an encyclopedical head, a "morgue" of ideas, much of it in color, to suggest variety and guard against sameness and staleness. He must *know* his color, be quick at layout, and be a fairly good letterer, with perhaps six alphabets at his fingers' ends.

He must be familiar with all mediums; must be able to handle the cutting machine, projector, airbrush—a handy man even, with the saw and hammer, when special "shadow boxes" or stunts are required. Most theatre managers will turn over the entire lobby display to the artist, so that this also becomes one of his duties. He soon learns how many posters are needed regularly on each show, and just what copy is best and necessary to "sell" the picture.

In the average lobby there will probably be six "3-sheet" posters (37½ x 78½ in.), four on the current show, two on the coming show; four "1-sheets" (28x42); a shadow box needing two approximately 2x8 ft. or 3x8 ft. wallboard panels, two program cards, about 14x44 inches (splitting a double-full), but this size is often cut down for the actual card by constructing special mats using masks or decorative effects.

There will be stage cards to letter (if it's a combination house), possibly ten to fourteen of these—five to seven pairs in other words; fifty or more street car cards, if these are used (for the outside front or rear ends of the cars)—which should be silk screen processed; one or two 1x12½ ft. paper streamers on coming attractions; window tie-up cards (ballyhoo stuff "tying-in" the merchandise of various lines with the show, thus giving a free card to the merchant and getting publicity for "the house").

Often there is special work to be got out, as "Silence" cards, hanging signs to be placed around the marquee edge (these being clear-shellacked or sprayed with lacquer against possible rain). The larger regular marquee signs will be about 2x6 feet, lettered both sides. Sometimes large special cut-out shapes to hold stills are used about the lobby, and "last but not least", many other special stunts, as building complete false fronts, or about the box office only, and so on and what not.

It's a gay life and a lively one!

•••

Often a color laid over another has a tendency to chip, crack or scale off. Keep a flat piece of soap handy and use it occasionally as a palette, and the likelihood of flaking will be lessened.

Suppose you are lettering a white display over ultramarine blue coated wallboard (this blue is one of the chief offenders), and wish the caps in orange; to avoid trouble letter all in white, then go back over the caps with thin orange. There are two advantages in this: you thus get a brilliant, *luminous* orange—as the white shines through the thin color, and furthermore you avoid the chipping. Often some bit of other color (black perhaps) added to the blue when coating will prevent this.



Plate 91—Card writers! Study the lettering, the layouts.

martin's ideas

LOU JONES, poster artist of Nashville, Tennessee, gives me permission to use the following extracts (and condensation) from an article by him on poster color treatment in the "Motion Picture Herald" of some time back.

"Not so many years ago, when motion picture exhibition was considerably less complicated than it is today, the poster (even after it had graduated from the lithograph) merely had to be vivid—perhaps lurid is the proper word. The guiding rule was *plenty of color*, and it didn't much concern itself with color moods or color harmonies. Today . . . the change has gone far from its carnival character of the past.

" . . . The modern theatre lobby should, by all means, have posters that are full of color, and 'shout' to the passerby. But you must *place* your colors right, because the best poster in the world, in a bad color scheme, is very unattractive, while, on the other hand, an ordinary poster done in rich, lively colors *is* very attractive. I have seen some very good color schemes and, on close observation, found the poster far from perfect; but the average passerby does not notice every detail and the strong color attracts him.

"Your posters must have 'box-office appeal,' and strong colors will give them that appeal provided there is harmony with the contrast. Always give a variety in your lobby from week to week in color schemes and arrangements. Always try to use *practically every color* on a poster, never forgetting light-yellow and red-orange—the two colors that liven up any poster, any time.

"All of the colors have different moods to convey and vary as to their power of attraction. Green, blue and violet, the cool colors, are less powerful in attraction. Red, orange and yellow, the warm colors, are more powerful, stimulating, cheering and exciting.

"The warm colors are more aggressive for poster work because stronger and more attractive. The warm colors should be used considerably in the winter, because they give the theatre front a warm, cheerful look and make the front seen more inviting to the passerby. The cool colors more in the summer, as they convey the idea to the patron of a cool comfortable theatre.

"On certain types of pictures use certain colors. For example, on a Western type of picture use browns, reds, and orange, while on mystery pictures use greens, blues and dark purples to convey the weird, mysterious effect.

"Always avoid using strong reds and oranges or yellows on a feminine star, as it takes all of the loveliness, charm and sex appeal away . . . but lavender or magenta (lightened with white) are more effective. Don't forget lavenders and purples are passionate colors and best only on feminine stars, unless used with several other colors in a combination of colors on a head. Of course there are a few exceptions to every rule.

"Much care should be taken in selecting the colors to be used in the backgrounds, as they mean much in bringing out the pictorial elements. It should tie in with the whole poster and *help* convey the basic idea of the picture. Some backgrounds are so overdone that they overpower the illustration, thus killing the effect of the whole poster.

"Lettering, head and background should all harmonize in color, and if the star head means more than the title of the picture feature the head in stronger colors than the title and lettering.

"All of these things should be taken into consideration by the poster artist, and by watching these things in his posters, he can make them much more effective."



Plate 92—Study the technique of this master craftsman.

martin's ideas

ARTHUR DU VALL kindly consented to do the theatrical work in this book of "IDEAS", and on extremely short notice, which was hardly fair. Of him, Herb Simpson, his co-worker, gives me this thumbnail sketch (I quote literally):

"DuVall enjoys the distinction of being the most admired theatrical poster craftsman in the business. Is famous for his canvasses on film's stars. Duke Wellington used his famous oil of Joan Crawford to illustrate oil technique in his book "Poster Art." While oil is his choice as favorite medium, is a skillful worker in all other mediums excepting airbrush, which he heartily dislikes. Has worked intermittently at various allied crafts—having been commercial artist, designer, sketch artist, illustrator, etc.

"He has spent at least 15 years in—or in close touch with—the sign and display game. In spite of his amazing ability refuses to recognize temperament and has a highly humorous side which crops up in comic cartoons and sly illustrations. Can letter expertly—exactly—and swiftly when called upon, but prefers pictorial tasks. Has an index memory which permits him to remember techniques and poses indefinitely.

"His color routines are usually the very simplest—being confined mostly to monochromatic versions. So perfected is his feeling for color tones that he often will start a poster with yellow for his darkest hue and graduate through four shades to cream. (Try it sometime for something exciting to do.) When he does launch into color his works are vivid and tonally correct. He has no use for abortive color schemes such as green faces with magenta lips, but prefers to linger within a reasonable spectrum limit.

"Incidentally, DuVall has never had any art school training, but has proven

the old theory of 'Practice attains perfection.' He is the first to scoff at the idea of inborn talent. While he uses the projector consistently, he can turn out the same perfection with a 'free hand' sketch. Every illustration on his page of panels (Plate 90) was sketched naturally. He is equally at home on large or small jobs, and enjoys a 20 foot head or a minute crowquill pen sketch. He tops his exacting ability with a sure swiftness gained in the overloaded studios of various theatres in different cities where he has plied his craft."

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Color schemes for the theatre posters (Plates 91 and 92): "Beery." Head in black shades, with magenta, red orange, and yellow features with cream highlight. Cap in blues and white. Ground in dark blue. Word in cream with orange shade to block. Inset lines in yellow-orange and white.

"Pert Kelton." Tam in blue, hair in reddish brown and orange. Face starts with brown, then tan, three flesh colored shades warmed with tan. Panel behind face in yellow green. Panel below in purple with cream and green lettering.

"Crosby." Face and figure in black and greys. Band in orange with yellow circle. Lettering in dark blue, black and orange.

"Joe Brown." Dark areas in tan, through to flesh color with straw hat natural. Lettering rose and turquoise blue on black ground; circle in vermilion with light tan letters.

"Hepburn." Dark areas in dark red to vermilion, lightened to pinkish shade; with black and light green background. Lettering on peach stripe in white.

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Plate 93—Snappy, modern pictorial cards.

martin's ideas

HERB SIMPSON has here given us two pages of pictorial display cards (Plates 93 and 94). As were the theatrical examples, specially fresh made, but pushed out like lightning because of rush of local work; you know how it is in the "card biz"—today and right away, bang it out hard and fast! "Stiff", says Simpson: "you should have given me more time." (I ask the reader—are they stiff!)

"World of Gifts." Seafoam card; picture in black with red cap. Panel is emerald green with white letters, flitter stripes. Small lettering dark green.

"Fall." Buff stock; tan tree; lettering in red brown.

"Spring Fashion." Turquoise blue card; bird in pale blue, rose, white, yellow; display in rose; small copy in cream.

"Gifts." Black stock. Display in greys to simulate metal letter. "Modern" in green, rules in light red, small lettering white.

"Plate Lunch." White card; maroon lettering, peach stripes. Figure red and black; panel peach with maroon price.

"Calloway." White stock again. Face in brown, tan, etc. Lettering in blues, rules in light green.

"Dollar Day." The figure is black on a white card, with black price on the orange circle or bull's-eye. Display panels are emerald green with yellow letters. The lettering on the card itself is dark green.

"Bow Tie." Black with severe greys and white, except tie which is in color.

"Yule." Gold card; figure brown; display outlined black, with peach-orange highlight, rules turquoise.

"Bonnet." White card; pen illustration with turquoise blues for circle and shades; lettering in blue green with ornamentation in orange and emerald green.

"Navy." Light blue stock; navy blue panel. Figure and clouds in white; rules turquoise; lettering white, with display in pale turquoise.

"Hosiery." Silver stock; red bands. Santas in white; lettering display white, smaller copy pale green.

"Vacation Time." Yellow card; silhouette and display magenta with white outline; lettering dark blue; panel is blue with yellow wording.

"Dad's Day." Orange card; figure in black, squares in yellow and dark blue. Panel is black with white letters, other lettering black.

... These are "Herb's" own color notes, and to some may not seem to agree with the "rule" and the book, but I want to say that I've walked down the street in Evansville, and Simpson's cards *stand out*—have the "kick"! I personally may favor more simplicity of letter, you may choke on a lower case letter in a line of caps, but this practical old-timer knows his stuff, and don't you forget it. Thank you, Mr. Simpson!

Even the tyro can achieve a good effect with trick layout and bizarre lettering, but may lose out when simplicity and speed are called for. When you're loaded down it's a pleasure to be able to "come out from under"; the more work—the more profit, eh? "So", says Simpson: "I'm for the simple balanced straight layout. Today, with price the only daily factor, one must be able to go swiftly—yet pleasantly." Again: "Don't know that I ever studied a complete alphabet in my life; copied words—got the spirit of the letter, unconsciously it helped to mold and individualize, personalize my style. I've always thought alphabets a waste notion and motion. Copying painstakingly and identically of letter forms . . . just try for a smooth lettering effect and don't fuss with alphabets."



Plate 94—Pagefull of pictorial ideas for card use.

martin's ideas

POSTER projectors unlike stereopticons which employ transparent slides, project matter printed on opaque surfaces upon a screen; the image size governed by moving the machine nearer to or farther from the surface on which the drawing is to be made. An arrangement of mirrors and lenses in the machine projects the drawing or photograph same size or in larger proportion than the original. The artist only has to trace along the projected lines. Posters for theatre lobby displays and similar purposes are often thus enlarged for reproduction.

Even though a "dub" at pictorial work, with the "magic black box" of a projector, one may enjoy a reputation of being an all-around artist. Even large studios employing many good artists do not attempt to get along without this valuable accessory; one pictorial concern has twenty artists working at once, with four projectors in constant use.

The value of a "morgue" has been stressed elsewhere; that, undoubtedly is necessary. Now to enlarge or project the chosen subject. The method years ago—and still practical for the student or beginner on shoe-string capital—was to cover the small sketch to be enlarged with squares and the other area the enlargement requires with the same number of squares, copying by hand, square by square; this is tedious and slow. Some theatrical artists still use this method, however, working from standard size "stills"—photos; to avoid drawing on the picture they use transparent celluloid—or auto window celluloid—with accurately spaced lines scored across it.

The beginner should at least be able to afford a pantagraph—the enlarging and reducing instrument. Avoid the cheaper, inferior ones; get a good instrument that will last. Instructions

by the manufacturer are sent with each one sold; see the sign supply catalogues for these. But the operator cannot depend too much on the pantagraph; he must know somewhat about drawing, however stealing from the whole cloth. This instrument has another limitation, that it is generally made to enlarge only up to eight times, while with the projector, a small sketch which may have been made to submit to the customer, and has received his okeh, may be instantly enlarged often as many as 24 times its size—no matter how intricate the detail.

The best projectors may have some objectional features; often a picture must be projected part by part. Some require that the picture be cut into sections and placed within the machine; while with others the machine may be set down right on the large drawing. Originals as large as six or seven inches long by five or six inches high are most practical; if larger they must be projected by sections.

The prices on projectors vary; you may pay according to your purse or the requirements you demand. One of the best poster artists and display service men in Chicago whose work has been nationally recognized, long used only a boy's magic lantern! To give the other extreme: some of the projectors in use by large pictorial poster companies cost from \$600 to \$1,000 or even \$2,000, using two or more 1,000 watt lamps and electric fans to prevent scorching the original picture. It's almost a case of—"pay your money and take your choice."

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These bits which have been picked from my morgue (yes, I have one big enough to cremate a wet mule) have been warped about a bit, and set down here ready to throw into your projector on short notice.



Plate 95—Often-needed pictures handy for projector.

martin's ideas

WITH the projector it goes almost without saying that silhouette treatments or strong line black and white or color drawings are best for copying. Half-tones may give some trouble; to overcome this outline your picture with opaque white and India ink and then proceed. When the subject must go on a dark background—first project onto white poster paper or starched sign cloth, then perforate the outline with a tracing wheel and pounce this pattern onto the dark background with whiting or other powder. The main essentials for good results are: a dark room, a clear, clean-cut sketch, and strong lights. With too-weak lights the operator may be wrongly blaming the projector.

Two practical incidents will illustrate the value of a projector at the right time. An order was on the hook for a burlesque showhouse for a poster depicting the stage and dancing girls on the runway. My employer procrastinated and let it "slide," till finally the ultimatum came. "We must have it by tonight or we'll cancel the order!" The part-time evening artist could not be reached in time, so the only workman available and at all qualified for the job was a young bench letterer who had attended art school evenings for several years. He tremblingly approached the task, hunted feverishly through a pile of old Vogues till he found a figure he thought would suit, drew it on the board in the nude or "altogether," then draped it in classic-like garb; so made up something of a sort that he thought would pass. It fell to my lot at 9:30 p. m. to stagger down four flights of narrow winding stairs and out onto the king's highway with the finished poster, and to speed it down to the playhouse—fifteen blocks away—roped to the top of a taxi. A

'hard guy' of a manager, with big black cigar, derby and spats, met us in the lobby. He gave it the once-over, guffawed, and swore that that was no dancing girl; more like a "female impersonator." What he wanted was something as "hot" as a pail of boiling Life—pep—action! So back it came. The regular artist was put on the job next day and asked to do it over—he too failed to measure up; back it came a second time, and outside talent was sent for—a garrulous scenic artist. Garrulous he was, but producing at the same time a poster crowded with action and color that saved my employer's skin. A well stocked morgue and a handy projector would have prevented all this useless expense and ill feeling with the customer.

Again: same place, six months later; a call for a map of the United States to be accurately reproduced in outline, about twenty feet in length, and proportionately high, showing principal cities. At that time one of the workmen had a projector at his home, which being fetched, and the studio darkened—dull finished Sanitas oilcloth was used and when the pencil or charcoal outline had been traced, we threw four long flat tables together, put the map on it, and wriggled around on our stomachs painting in these cities.

A last hint is the advice that as with the cutting machine and airbrush, the projector should be kept out of sight. There is no need—in fact it is decidedly unwise—to let the merchant know all the ins and outs of your business.

•••
 "My Little Lady says: Money's tight these days', and she threatened to pin up my ears if your book was a waste of money; when she saw the book . . . well, my ears are still on my head. It's RIGHT! And . . . here's my dollar for Book Two."—A Canadian Reader (Name on file in my records.)

When you run dry of Ideas peep into your **Idea-Envelopes** or your several **MARTIN "IDEA-Books"!**



Plate 96—Put these ideas to work for you!

MARTIN'S IDEAS

IN ANY cross country motor tour one is impressed by the drabness, the dreariness of the poster around the smaller towns and cities. The larger metropolitan areas show really very fine outstanding examples, both by local and national advertisers; but the small town signist's work is so often commonplace,—generally too much copy, lettering overlarge, muddy and illogical color combinations, static layouts.

His complaint may be that his trade will not pay for better work (how often do we hear that gag), that he has not the de luxe bulletin sizes or setups on which to work, but is often restricted to baby bulletins and such small sizes. Even so—his excuses do not hold water; they deceive no one.

The main reason I see is that if he keeps in touch with outside practice through our trade journal "Signs of the Times," he fails to assimilate the splendid examples shown there. True, quite often they are of too pictorial nature, and shoot clear over his head. The average man looks at them, evinces possibly a slick tickling of the eyeball, possibly regards them as so much pastry eclaire—cream-puff style of creations impractical and unsuited to his bread-and-butter sign needs—and so goes on his accustomed way. The really earnest man will seriously open-mindedly study the finer examples just mentioned, and getting the spirit of them, be led to do some *thinking* along the line of real advertising.

In an endeavor to bridge that very evident gap between the de luxe type and the all-too-common, line-of-least resistance types—on the adjoining plate are offered a few simple ideas that may be adapted to the small town man's individual requirements (these, sir, are from a despised "card writer's" studio!). Even lacking pictorial work, but with proper color, a little

modern variation in lettering occasionally (from the stodgy old gothics and Egyptian)—even the baby bulletins, so increasingly popular, may stand out and show pep if thoughtfully designed.

Learn to pick out and use ideas from layouts shown on other pages. Make up your first rough sketches quite small, as small as the six smallest sketches here shown—in thumb-nail size. Thus you will not attempt to put in too much detail, and when enlarged they will indeed be "fast."

Analyze your sketches; what can you leave off and out? In the cleaners and dyers sketch, is there any need to give street number? No; but *phone*—yes! Your wife does not run out to the edge of town to the plant with her garment—she phones and they call for it. But does the householder phone the paint store? No, nineteen times out of twenty, he goes personally in order to get the paint dealer's advice on the kind of paint needed.

Again, with the six Radio sketches. In the small town, "Radio" and "Doc" tell the whole story to every one; he is already known there, but these bulletins act as reminders. In one sketch the street number has been purposely omitted. Even the motorist passing through whose car radio is out of whack, may find a query in town as to "Doc" Lewis as easy to make, as asking the whereabouts of Main St., for of course "everybody knows 'Doc'."

(Incidentally, I filched the "Society" design literally from a Tampa (Fla.) window! It was very striking. The lettering was all silver leaf on horizontal panels of black, with light green background; only the S was on a circle of brightest vermilion, and behind this were two upright bands of black with center band of light green. Sound good? Thank you, Tampa! . . . for painted bulletin use white or cream lettering.)

CARTER PAINT STORE
Dependable
PAINT...PAINT...GOOD PAINT ONLY
CENTRAL ARCADE

BULLETIN SKETCHES
Everybody knows "DOC"!
LEWIS
Radio! Radio!

STANDARD RADIOS!
507 MAIN
see "DOC" LEWIS

DE LORO BEAUTY SHOPPE
Laugh at the Passing Years
SEVENS BLDG.

"DOC" LEWIS Radios

HOTEL CLAYTON
MODERN - FIREPROOF
RATES REASONABLE Turn Right on West Central

Radio "DOC" LEWIS 570 Main St.

RADIO LEWIS 517 MAIN ST. Everybody knows "Doc"

WELCOME STRANGER STRAIGHT AHEAD Ask for "Pete"
SPOT LUNCH
HOT CAW FEE SAMMICHES of character!

SOCIETY CLEANERS DYERS Phone 307 We Mean We CLEAN!

"DOC" LEWIS RADIO REPAIRS 517 Main St.
for those without Pictorial Ability

Plate 97—Sketches for small, simple bulletins.

MARTIN'S IDEAS

MODERNISTIC valances may be designed in the card shop, of wallboard. If surmounted by aplikay decoration these should be tacked into place by tiny nails clinched on the back side. Brace the back with 1x1 inch stuff. Coat with water colors, then spray with clear thinned lacquer; or, lacking the sprayer, and if a high enamel-like gloss is desired, brushcoat with two coats of clear lacquer.

Special valances are also used by some, made from the velour type papers; purple, turquoise and magenta for only very temporary use, a week or less; while cream, brown, green and such colors may be for more permanent designs. These should be mounted on wallboard, or even in some very protected locations not exposed to the rain, are pasted on the outside surface of the window to overcome the shine of the glass.

For wallboard valances, or other cut-out shapes, window "dividers", "back drop" panels for use with cards in modern treatments—embossed foil papers, or the plain metal foil with paper backing are very fine. These foil papers can be put on with ordinary poster paste or rubber cement. Silver, gold, magenta, green, blue, red, purple—10 yard rolls, 50 yard rolls. They must be seen to be appreciated. To get really modern effects you should have them. Send to your supply house for samples.

Of the valances shown on the accompanying plate, half a dozen—A, J, W, L, R and one above it—were created by Miss Dorothy Hodges of Tampa, Florida; Lucille Shoppes and Collegiate from Chicago, as I remember.

Drugs, and Eddie's Tavern, also seen in Chicago, were black background painted directly on the glass. Lettering was white, rule lines or edge lines

may be yellow or vermillion; with Drugs outside the yellow lines was all around a band of black.

Music Shop and For Oddity are sign panels, serving the purpose also of valances. The two Andorfer valances, from Tampa, were cream, the panel in each case black with very dark gray rules, and white lettering. In the center below the lettered panels, a touch of orange. The pendant decorations or flutings in center and on ends, are pale gray separated with lines of black, and with center stripes (or half rounds aplikayed) of white. These were conservative in color, and in very excellent taste. To the right of the Drugs valance is a side decoration of cutout work and to the left a center ornament, both designed to go in some manner or in certain very narrow window panels, with the Andorfer designs.

Collegiate was a center panel of very peppy bright red; this may be water color, clear lacquered, then white lettering and a silver rule below after lacquering; a half circle spot of black on each end of this center portion, then an area of silver and the extreme ends black with bright red half circles. Try this in a little color dummy!

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Plate 98—Valance Sketches for the display artist.

martin's ideas

THE brief tabloid notes on practice as given in Book Two of IDEAS are for those young display men in the making who may wish to teach themselves—though there are also more advanced students who might do well to look to their own methods of working. Yes, there are scores, nay hundreds, of lettering veterans who show very plainly by the general sloppiness of their technique that they, even, have never taken the trouble to master the basic tools of their craft.

He who can do, and he who can't teach others," said that brilliant British satirist Bernard Shaw. The writer offers these hints and instructions on lettering to you not as if he considered himself the last word in experts, but more as one plain worker would show to another the methods he used to advance himself—to make his living. He realizes that those "who live in rock houses shouldn't throw glass"; in other words, his simple method is not dogmatically laid down as the only perfect way, as if there were no other, but it is merely presented rather as one of the best. As such, try it.

Visualize him, if you can then, not with green eye shade and typewriter, lecturing somebody else on how to do it, but as a worker over the bench top, himself with pen and brush in hand, trying to start you along the right road. Standing by your side at the bench, as it were, in an interesting, chatty way talking the whole matter over with you, explaining patiently, showing you the whole field of cardcraft (in this and others of the IDEA Books) so that you cannot go wrong. The opportunity is open to you; use it.

The first thing for you as a serious student to realize is that you cannot

afford to overlook a single trick if you want to work yourself into a bread and butter job. Don't trifle with the pens and brushes. One of America's foremost artists, a nationally known teacher of drawing the human figure, made the statement that anyone, even a ditch digger, could be made into an artist—that is, an artist of a sort—if he would only work conscientiously enough at it. So also with this free-hand lettering—any one can be a letterer, but of *what* sort will be decided by the individual's determination. Use a little mental discipline and decide to stick at it and learn it if it "takes a leg," and not let a weak little brush, a pen, and a flat sheet of cardboard bluff you. What may appear at first appallingly difficult becomes, after practice, astonishingly easy. The thing you do fifty times, until the process becomes almost subconscious, puts you in the position where you may begin to call yourself a professional.

The statement is again made, that but two or three weeks of proper application, both mental as well as mechanical, should suffice to put one in a position to produce saleable tickets and cards of a sort, not the high grade, of course, but as said—saleable.

•••
"I have learned two *most* important things from you that will well repay me for my investment in your books thus far . . . First, the powerful influence of layout upon the finished display . . . and secondly, the importance of adopting a style of lettering and basically adhering to it. Layout has always been my bogie,—and further, my lettering has been entirely too "hodge-podge"; too much of the theatrical type of letter—when a 'bread and butter' style (as you have aptly put it) was what I most needed.—Joseph P. Moore, Clarendon, Virginia.

Every "IDEA-BOOK" will contain alphabets or examples of modern lettering

either by MARTIN or other well known lettering craftsmen,

ABCDEFGHIJ
JKLMNOPQRSTU
VWXYZ:123456789
abcdefghijklm
pqrstuvwxyz

EASY-TO-MAKE
ITALICS

abc
defghijklm
nopqrstuvw
BAGTWS - XYZ

A "SMASH" EFFECT
POSTER ITALIC

Plate 99—Two contrasting italic alphabets.

R

martin's ideas

For the beginner in ough study of *theory*, then *sketching* in pencil of classic forms to train one's eye in proportion and in basic letter fundamentals. In a certain well known English school of lettering large, accurately drawn models of single letters are placed about on walls at convenient eye level for this sketching drill. Following these two steps comes *layout* sketching and practice. All this with soft black pencil and good pads of unruled paper.

Makers of the various lettering pens have on sale small instruction books that are illustrated and very clear. The smallest only of these (costing but a few cents, 15c or thereabouts) are *best*, as the larger books will be found confusing often, with such a miscellany or assortment of unpractical alphabets—fairly bewildering to the beginner. With these cheap helps and the unbiased emphasis on certain phases which you read here, the way is clear for you to go forward.

Before taking up actual practice work with pen and brush, you should realize that it can be made real enjoyment if you will only look at it so—this drilling and grouping of letters. Not to minimize the importance, however, of real, honest-to-goodness study, for much fumbling, much stumbling among beginners comes from lack of this. You can't expect it to come easy. Study that tires the brain, that's the kind that actually produces results. One must keep his mind wholly on this practice; if at home, not allowing a blare of orchestra music from the radio to interfere with concentration necessary. One should be alone for this first drill-work, at least, till action becomes semi-automatic. Of what use is mechanical

practicing if the mind be off "wool-gathering"? Success in this sort of thing is comparatively simple—it's a matter of concentrating and of making the hand obey the mind. Learn then, to apply yourself, to fix your attention and concentrate on the problem in hand, with all you've got.

If you be one, as was the writer, already settled in life and trying by home study to fit yourself to leave your position at the filling station or that label-pasting job, to get into what seems to be more congenial work you may also be the sort who (even as I) is not able to progress definitely until you set some concrete objective in front of you, something—even if small—to work for.

Let me suggest: make some sort of definite promise—to Friend Wife, we'll suppose—that in two weeks time you'll begin to fix some neat little motto cards (*her* selection, mind you) into the inside panels of the kitchen cabinet doors as an original touch that her neighbors will not have. Or take some little daily nursery jingles neatly lettered and trimmed up with color to place in the little chap's room, or in the bath room as an incentive for him to do his hated tooth brush chore. Any such homey dodge to trick or tease yourself into going forward, instead of haphazard, desultory meandering along, carrying on a conversation as you work, with an admiring neighbor, and throwing your half-hearted efforts into the trash basket meanwhile.

•••

Now we're speaking of brushes, colors, etc., there's the question of ink. I know of no better than Dick Blick's "Black Cat Black", a water-proof pen ink, free flowing, jet black, does not gum; it's perfect! (I buy it by the quart—\$2.25 f.o.b. Galesburg, Ill.)

"Are you lettering still in the stage of the tomato-can styles? Be modern..!"

ABCDEFGHIJKL
MNOPQR
STUVWXYZ
*Italic
thus*

abcdefghijklmnop
qrstuvwxyz

Plate 100—Modern poster Roman alphabet

martin's ideas

A FEW words regarding the card bench: we all have our notions of our own as to the particular construction, height, degree of slant, and so forth; therefore, only the general suggestion will be given that it be long, wide enough for "jumbo" sheets, well braced. Or, one may have shorter tables, several of them, all perfectly matched, a standard uniform size, with castors, so that they may be thrown together and different combinations made in a jiffy. If constructed in, say, five foot units, two end to end would make a ten foot table, three, a fifteen foot table, etc.

The advantage in the single long bench lies, of course, in its greater efficiency in ways—for the use of professional short cuts. Minutes may be saved and lost motion eliminated by laying cards along the bench, one overlapping the other if necessary, and putting on similar color stripes all at one time—as, for instance, in the case of ten or a dozen half sheets alike or very similar in layout.

If a runway affair is made to stand on, it will permit building a higher bench for the average run of small work; then when larger cards like double-full sheets (jumbo sheets) are to be made, simply pull out this runway with the toe from where it has been pushed under the bench, and mount it—to permit better leaning over the larger size card.

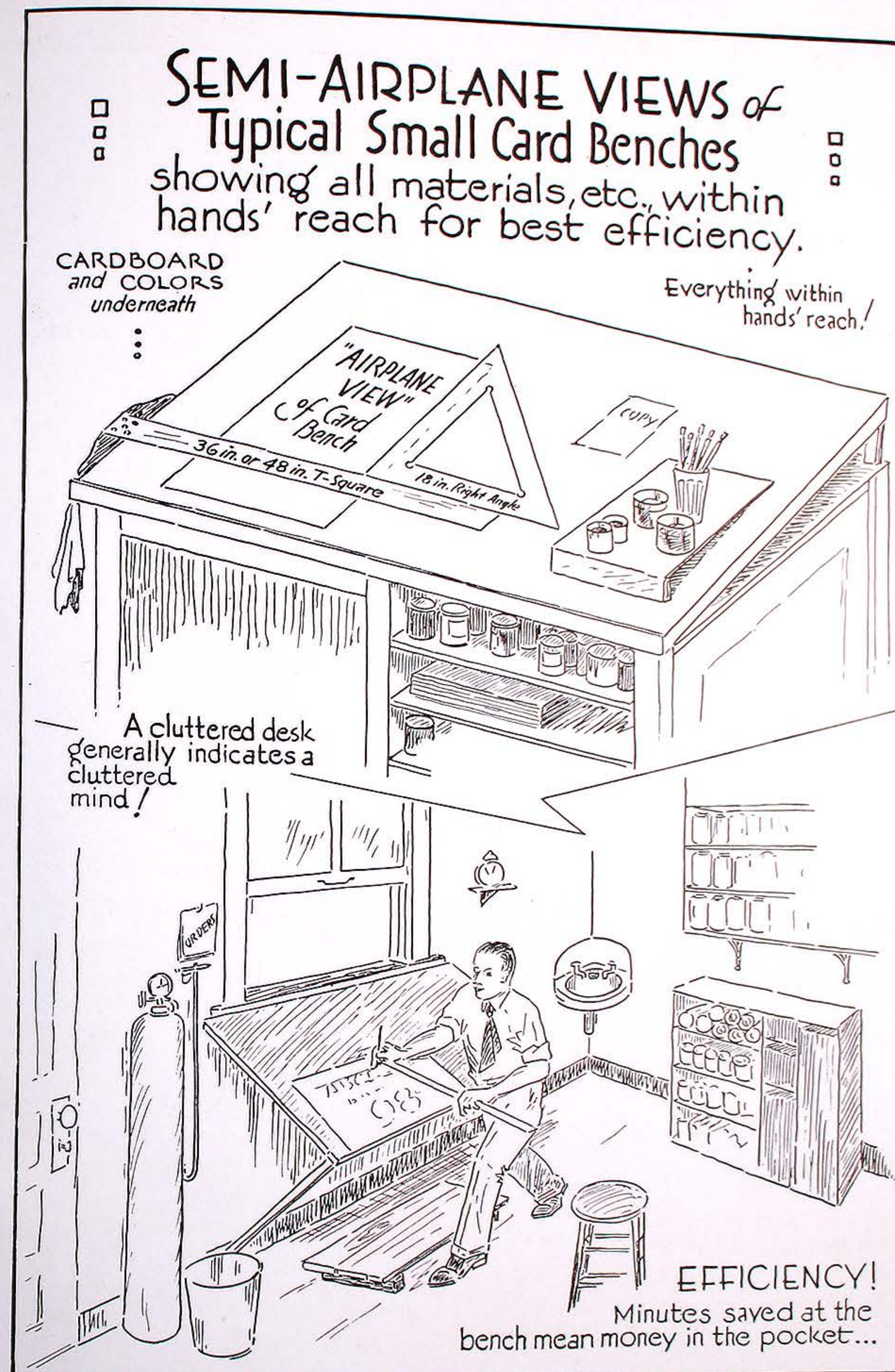
The bench should be painted some neutral or dark color, or, if your taste runs so, may even be lacquered about the sides, edges and legs with more snappy finish like bright orange! The top should be first covered with cheap shiplap over cross braces, then wallboard laid over this, and tacked down, thus avoiding or preventing warping or sagging. This wallboard should be painted a plain medium dark gray or other color, and a coat or two of hard

floor varnish or of lacquer applied so that it can be easily wiped with a damp cloth and kept clean.

Or, "battleship" linoleum may be used for the top of the card bench, cemented down with the proper paste medium for this. Battleship linoleum is high in first cost, but well worth it. It will close-up thumb tack holes, pounce wheel marks, razor blade cuts, and leaves a smooth surface.

A battery of several good lights with regular outdoor sign reflectors on a strong cable over the bench, so fixed to permit sliding from one end of the bench to the other, is best efficiency. Many shops use the blue "daylight" bulbs, as bringing out the true colors more perfectly. The regular lights, I believe are better for eye health. True, the illumination of electric lights is not a sunlight white, but really a reddish-yellow which is distinctly noticeable when first turned on; however, we quickly get accustomed to the artificial light, and the eye soon sees things as if they were in a really white light. The slightly darkened lenses often used in spectacles ("Cruxite", etc.) may cause an amusing struggle to make color combinations "snappier" unless the cause be realized.

On other letterheads, plate 104, Hodges colors given, dispose your colors thus—supposing we use only two, besides the lettering which is black in every case. A—Top triangle light yellow green, lower bright magenta; B—Inside of circle yellow (except card), a band of light green around the circle, spot below green; C—Dot "rules" in green, cap S magenta; D—Inside circle is clear light green (except card), all spots and rules magenta; E—Diagonal rule magenta, address tint block is light or almost pale yellow-green (the diagonal rule may be put on by hand.)



martin's ideas

FROM time to time in this series of books, ideas will be selected from my own personal "dope" notebook, not strikingly new or startlingly original, but ones which I have gleaned from various sources, a bit here and a bit there, and so pass on to you; they may give you a spark of inspiration, and be genuinely useful in helping you formulate that letter or blotter advertising. The plodding workman at the bench has little time or skill for this sort of thing. The modern studio man is often swamped with business detail. He cannot think new ideas while trying to keep in action; he appreciates, I believe, a suggestion when his own slender stock of ideas is used up; so he need not apologize for using these, out of the whole cloth if necessary—that's exactly what they are for.

We try to do the work a little better than seems necessary.

Phone now and let me stop in and lay a few samples before you.

... and I take all the risk anyway. Why hesitate?

Quality—which characterizes every job we deliver!

To prove this, all you have to do is phone J-1234. . . .

Look to Martin's for Originality—for Something Different.

"Mr. Shakespeare was right! We are advertised by our loving friends."

Tell me your problems—profit by my experience.

Display cards talk—what do *yours* say about your display?

May cost a trifle more—but *worth* it!

... attract the customer's eye and dollar.

A real dollar-and-cents advantage to you.

Make your windows **STAND OUT!**

A modest, modern little shop, giving *individual service*.

Distinctive sales cards with sound sales value.

MARTIN'S CARDS—add zest and pep to your window!

"Planned Display Cards for the man whose business is different."

Glad to talk it over with you some morning.

Speak to the "window shopper" . . . tell her with a Martin Display Card!

Boost your business with business-building display cards.

Martin Cards . . . have but one duty—they must *sell* something!

Your ideas and our ideas will turn those window displays into *profits*.

Your next move is to call us—then it is up to us to make good.

Display cards of the better class, together with the service you have a right to expect.

Miss a Martin Card? You can't! People can't help reading your window message.

Canny business men will see where it is to their advantage to get acquainted with my service.

We have no personal solicitors. Straight dealing. Promises kept. We're busy.

"Every time a customer asks my advice instead of my price, I feel two inches taller."

An advertising campaign through the inexpensive route—display cards.

Mere assertion? No! Statement of fact—read this list (of customers) . . .

Always something new . . . different . . . a sure cure for sluggish sales.

Martin Cards are "star salesmen"—work 16 to 18 hours a day if necessary, yet require no salary.

(More of these will be given in succeeding books; Book One contained 30 or 40, likewise the larger volume, "1000 Show Card Layouts" had fully as many.)

•••



Plate 102—Letterheads carrying heaviest possible copy.

martin's ideas

THE letterheads on previous page illustrate handling of "heavy" copy; where for some reason it seems advisable to tell the whole story; two are traditional, three fairly modern, none extreme. The Hodges example is characteristic of Bill's cleverness applied to his own advertising. The stock was a ripple finish pale or pearl gray, lettering and figure black, rules bright green, feather (a *real one*) tucked into and through a two-cut slot—of brightest red! The card in the figure's hand was hand-painted with white. It made a hit!

On this plate the blotters above and below are a bit out of ordinary, well worth the money invested in them. Such advertising kept consistently before the merchants' eyes on bank desks, in post office, in stores, will *work* for you. With the Hodges blotter if printed on glazed stock, only one printing color is necessary. The other may be applied for economy, by the delivery boy, using a "flat", and brushing a swipe of clear theatrical color down the panel, so that "studio" comes out in a second color.

Below, the Hiatt blotter had lettering in black, silhouette figure and stand in a good rich magenta, color band below in a clear yellow! Yowzah! Or, lettering black, silhouette a purple-blue, band orange; or lettering black, silhouette rich beaver brown, band light turquoise (this is odd); again, silhouette in purple-blue and band in light olive green; or silhouette and lettering in a very dark blue, band in silver; or lettering black, band in gold, silhouette a fiery red-magenta. And so one could go on. All these on white stock or the palest of "antique India," or cream.

Hiatt also used this design with simpler lettering, "Hiatt Sign Shop" and address and phone, reduced to $3\frac{7}{8} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$ in. and the white card mounted on pocket or check blotter $3\frac{7}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$, as a combination card-and-blotter,

which will not be thrown away. Reader, if you'll do some stunt like this, and keep them strewn about your neighborhood as if you were running for alderman, you'll get *results*, eventually. Must be printed in two and three colors, however.

"Peterman Studios" may be same size as the *small* Hiatt card blotter just described. Cap P block $1\frac{1}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{16}$ in. is orange, lettering black (on thin white stock) mount or tip on light turquoise or cerulean blue stock blotter. Directly below this is an *upright* form; this panel may be double thick, beveled if wished, mounted on pebble finished gold. In the circle use an orange tint block, leaving the card white.

"Joe" Carpenter used a tiny blank memorandum book of 16 pages (or sheets rather, making 32 pages, $2 \times 3\frac{1}{4}$ in. for his "card." Covers were printed on various bright color stocks. On the back it read—"Window, Office, Truck LETTERING; Sale Banners, Metal Signs, Process Signs, Show Cards, DeLuxe Walls, DeLuxe Hi-Way, Bulletins." This back side was printed to read vertically.

"Meyers" was on a leather-finish stock 9 inches (over all, when open) $x1\frac{1}{2}$; opening where dotted lines are shown; nothing on the back or outside. On the left side was a panel $4\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$ tipped on very neatly. Incidentally this card sets back very nicely on a desk (stands open, I mean), when spread wide. At one time here in Orlando I used the long narrow card shown below (the Meyers card was evolved from this—he acknowledged.) A white very-thin-stock panel $4\frac{5}{16} \times 13\frac{1}{16}$, was mounted on a corn railroad board panel $4\frac{1}{2} \times 1$ in., these mounted in turn on maroon or dark blue or dark green leather finish cover paper $5\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$. The "Reagan Studio" is a simplification of this, printed in one color; with transparent color, hand striped rules or bands.



Plate 103—Two blotters; several unique business cards.

martin's ideas

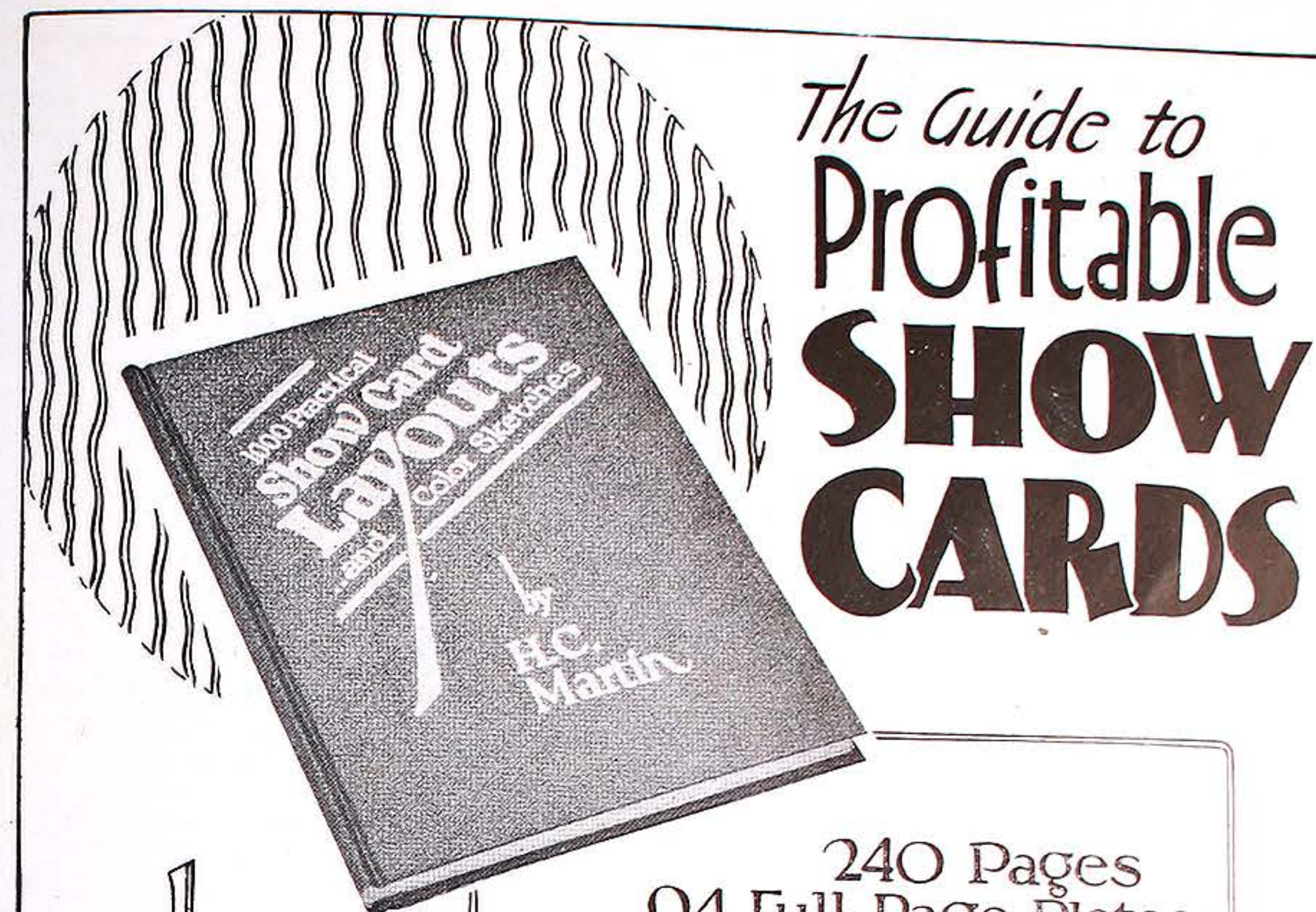
THE first person pronoun has been used consciously and constantly throughout these pages—not from mere egotism, but to make it seem more clear to each and every reader that there is a definite person who stands back of all statements. To attempt to gloss the style with an academic finish would cause it to be just that less sincere: for my very self lies truly enclosed in these books. I have asked the printer—in the spirit of Cromwell who said, "Paint me warts and all"—to follow, if he will, my errant style, my shop vernacular, my dashes and my italics, that the reader may feel the true personality of the work.

I owe very much to the many who, without knowing it, have furnished me ideas which I have forthwith made available here for others; for the help from these I am truly grateful. My endeavor is to keep up-to-the-minute abreast of the times, versatile! Each year I make at least one extensive trip from my Florida home, with small Boston bag containing spare collar and Sox, and a box of my favorite whole wheat crackers, visiting the leading cities over the country, and return with the little bag bulging with notes and IDEAS.

WITH an "ear to the ground" and a careful eye to the future—to catch the present trend as well as the reaction which may follow—I work these notes out so that they are *practica* and usable even in the smallest town, as well as in the largest city. While a majority of the ideas are mine own, and proven in use, yet others are actually as made and used by the best studios in the country. Each idea is practical, not theory or mere opinion of Martin. The sparks of ideas from many

minds is far better than one person's individual mannerisms and narrow style. So then utilize this array of practical suggestions, and put them to work; thankful to Martin for his labor in collecting and presenting them.

Montesquieu, in speaking of one part of his writing, said to a friend: "You will read it in a few hours: but I assure you it has cost me so much labor that it has whitened my hair." Similarly so, the sense of responsibility, the feverish effort of getting this book in shape for the press, the struggle to give my poor thought articulation, the long hours of night toil, the midnight oil burned, testing, rejecting what was uncertain, striving to further improve the good, working everything out to completion—all these things have left the writer mentally and physically spent. As did Montesquieu, he has made it his study by day and his dream by night. But the realization that thousands of fellow craftsmen "may sit down comfortably and turn these pages and profit thereby, has been sufficient recompense thereof—and more, too!"
"H. C."



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240 Pages
94 Full-Page Plates
81 Chapters

A single idea may pay the cost of this book & you have...
999
IDEAS
left!

The proficient card writer, of course, doesn't accept all ready-made ideas, but evolves new ones from them and creates new arrangements of his own—a more striking display of some sort—in card, color, shape, etc.

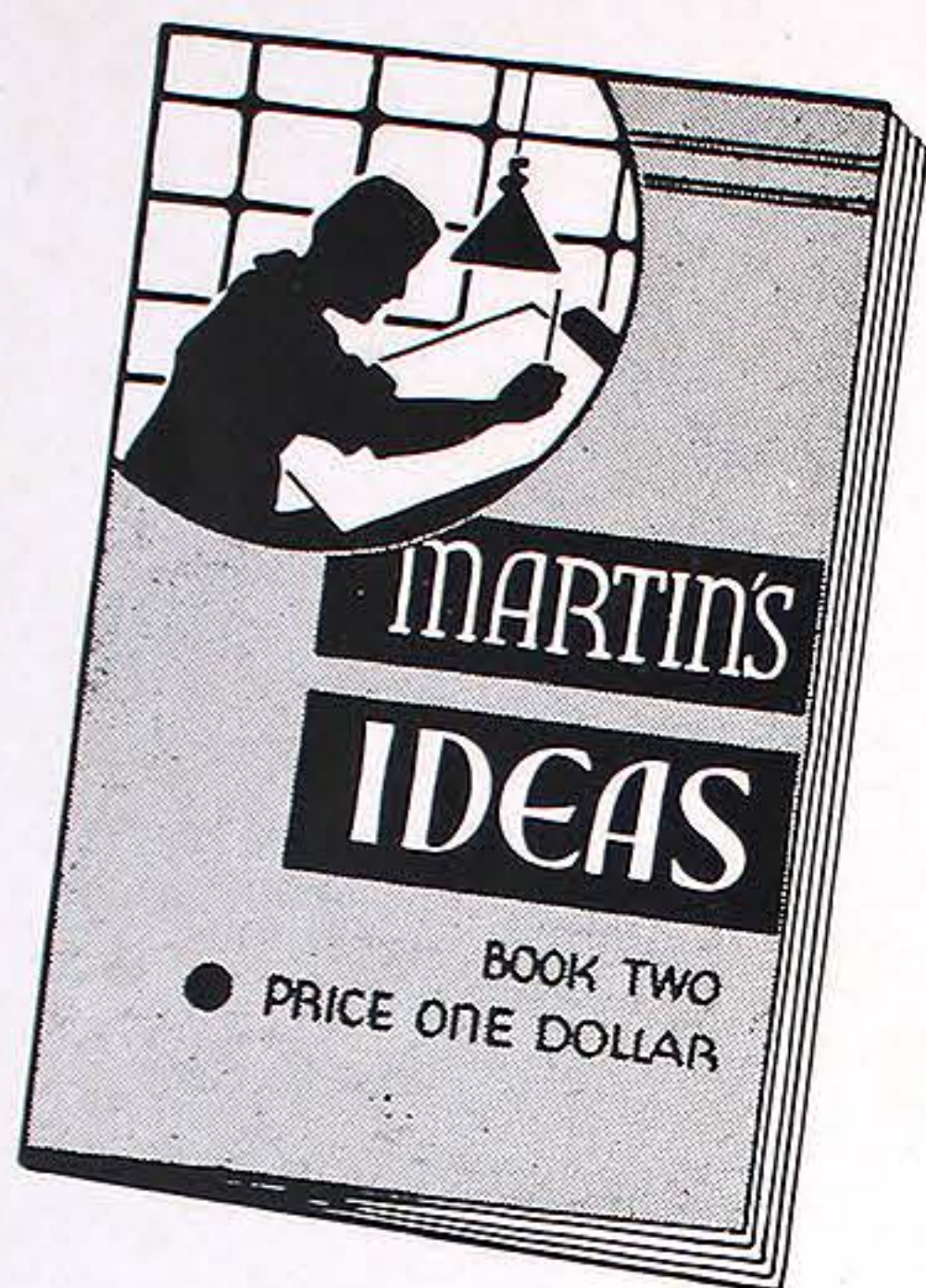
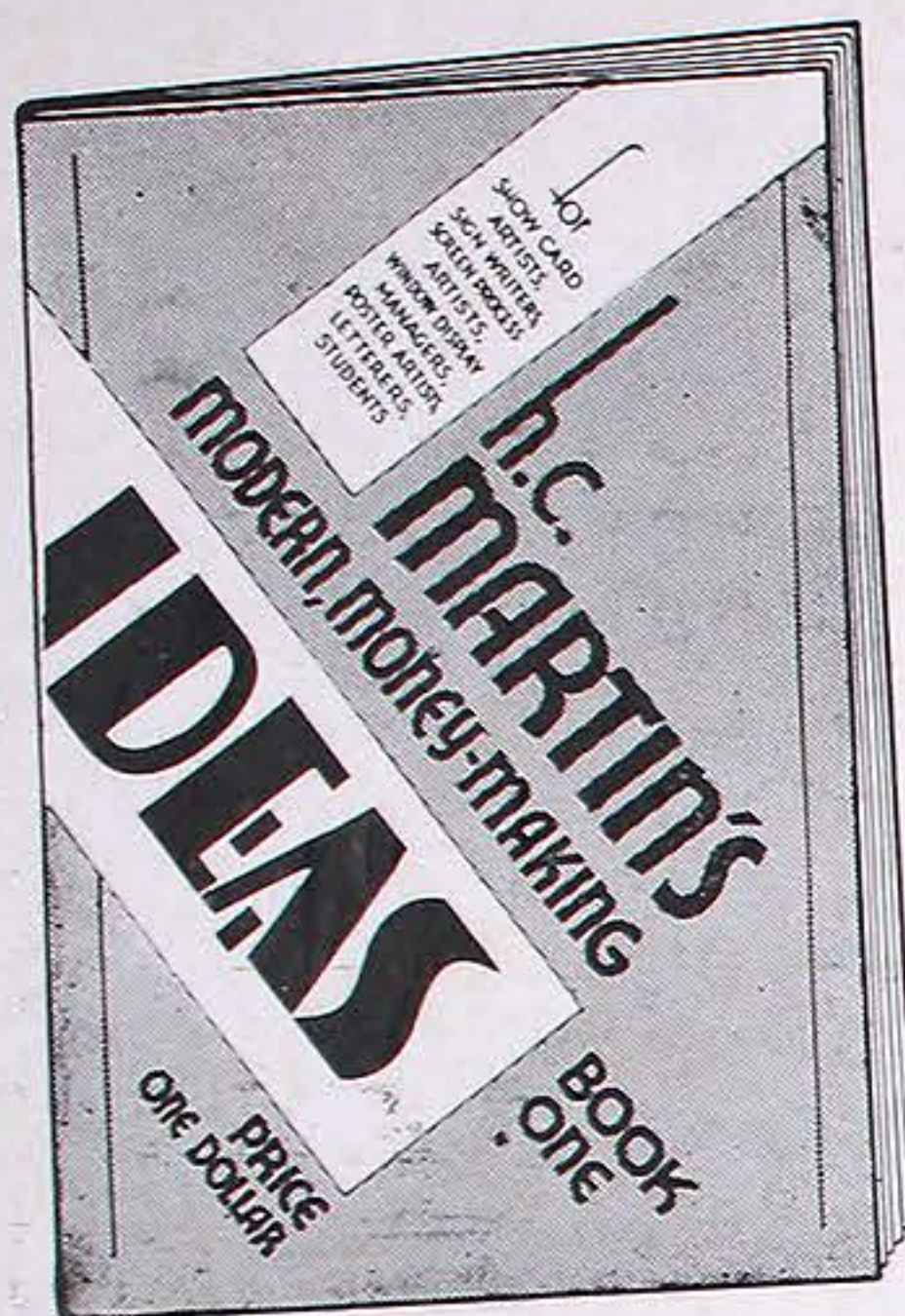
We are all continually thinking ideas of our own and swapping them for the ideas of others. If we do not get new thoughts from others we get stale, in a rut, shrivel up.

With the Martin book in your possession you will not find it necessary to grope in the dark for ideas, in case your immediate supply of them has given out. You merely open your copy of SHOW CARD LAYOUTS and have before you the largest collection of modern show card material, layouts, color schemes, etc., ever compiled between the covers of one book. There are 1,000 layouts alone.

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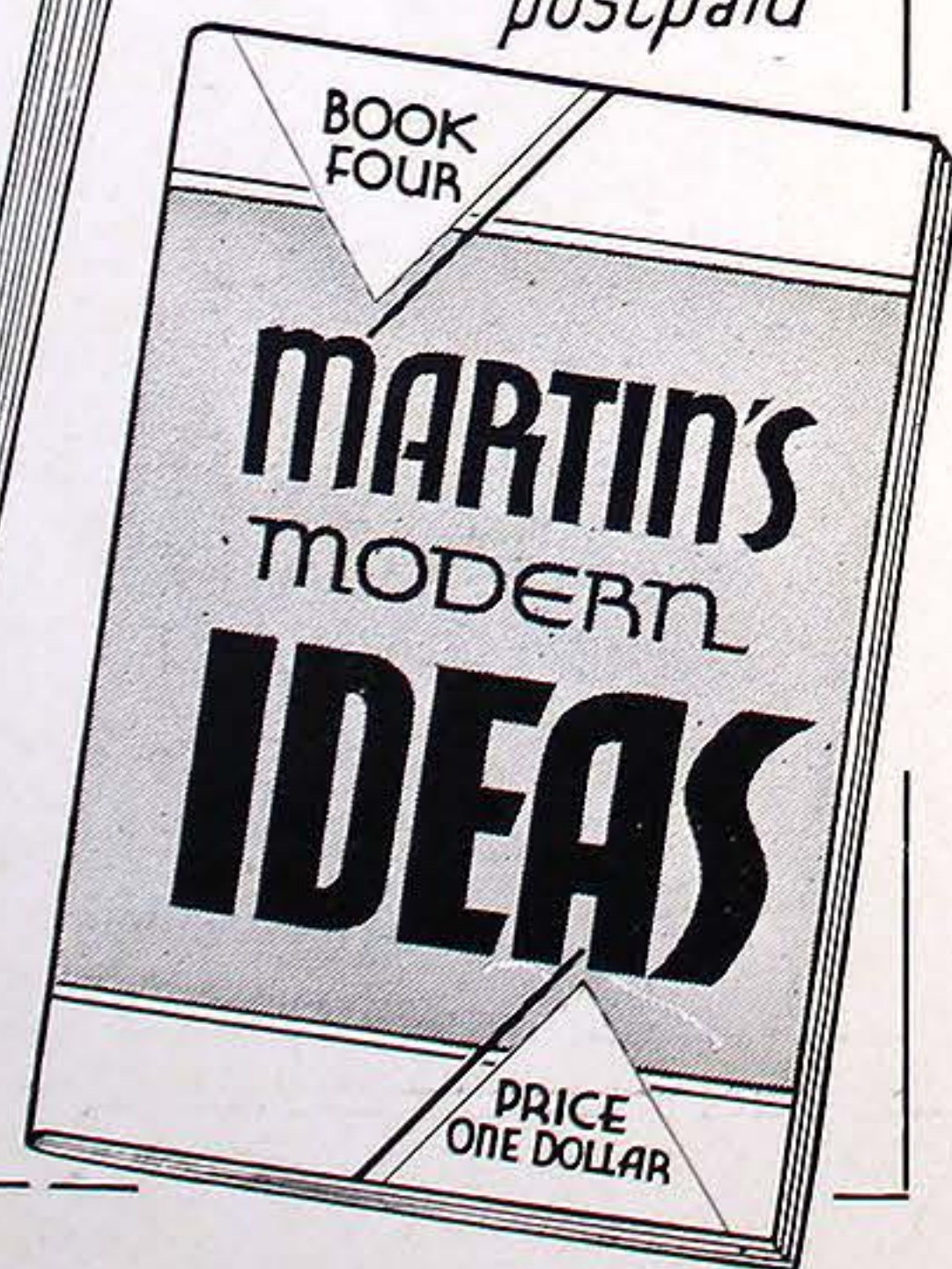
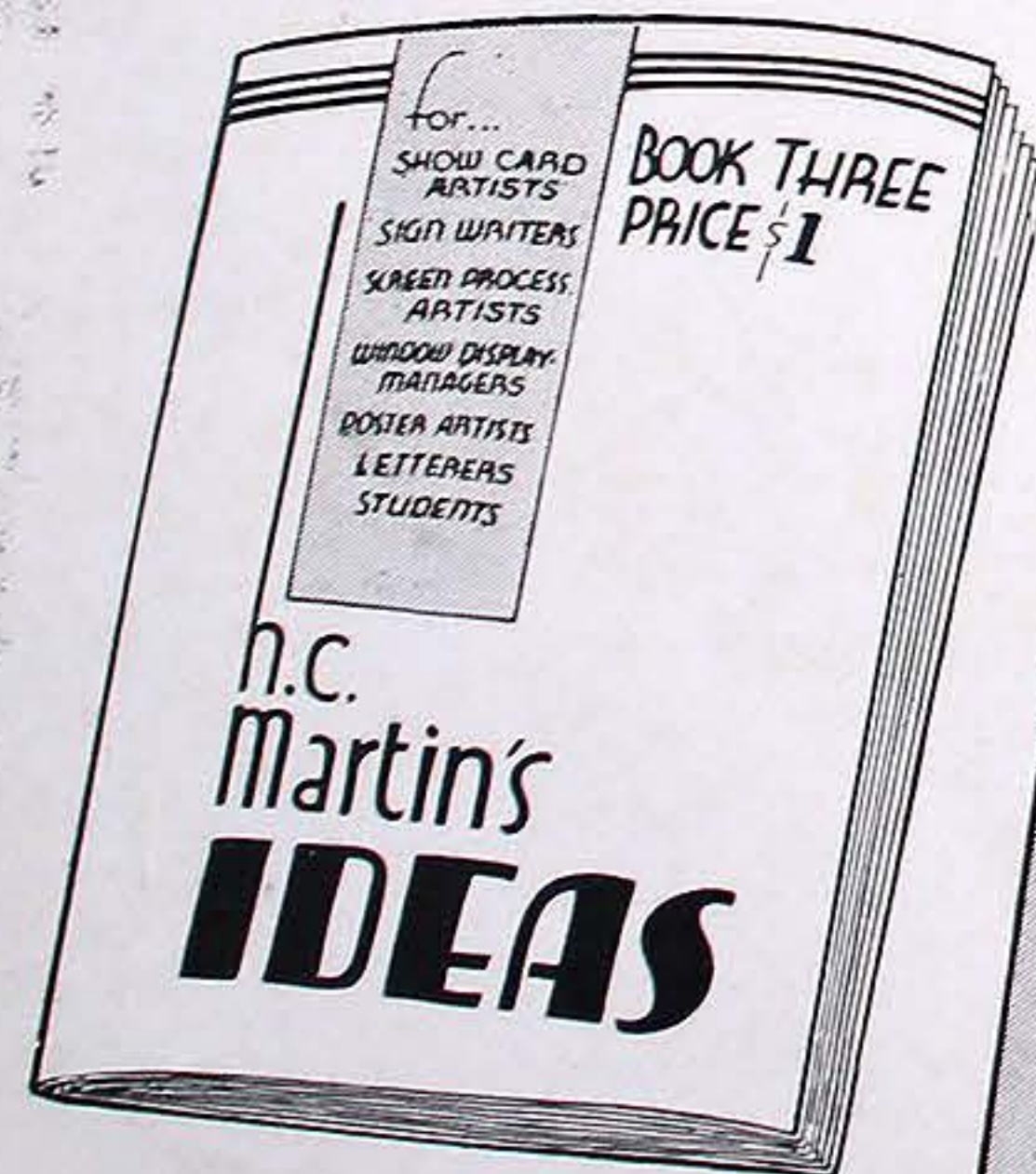


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