

## *Collector's Introduction*

I HAVE BEEN A COLLECTOR since I was a child. New Jersey shore seashells came first, then sea glass, then bottle caps. By age ten I was a seasoned collector, with carefully organized rows of bottle caps lining the shelves of my bedroom. Baseball cards came next, then stamps and coins. In boarding school I began collecting books, first paperbacks of my favorite authors, then first editions of these same authors. After college and law school I returned to New Jersey, sold my first editions, and began collecting New Jersey books—first local histories and early books about New Jersey, then increasingly rare books printed on the earliest presses in New Jersey. Forty years later, I have built a large and important private collection of early printed New Jerseyana, and my collection has formed the basis of several standard reference works on early New Jersey books. Collecting, studying, and writing about the early New Jersey book trade has been a major part of my life over these four decades.

So where do the paintings, drawings, and prints in this exhibition fit in? This is my fun collection. My “I-also-collect” collection. In the mid-1970s, while reading the catalogue of a relatively minor book auction in Baltimore, I noticed among the books an entry for an oil painting. It was described only as a beach scene, signed by one E. P. Knox. From my reading of Henry Charlton Beck’s books about Southern New Jersey, I knew that E. P. Knox was the “bicycle artist of the Pine Barrens,” whose paintings depicted New Jersey scenes in and around Ocean County. I bid on the painting, sight unseen, and was successful. It was the beginning of my New Jersey graphics collection, and one that fit nicely with my larger interest in printed New Jerseyana.

Over the years I have added almost a hundred and fifty additional New Jersey views, many of which are in this exhibition. Even a fun collection needs parameters, and I have several. My chronological cutoff is 1899. I have tried to collect views of *identifiable* structures or scenes—images of the way things looked at the time. The 1830s painting of the main street of Alloway (entry 12), for example, has everything I look for. It is the earliest-known view of the town, predating the earliest photographs, as well as the earliest-known image of two of the most architecturally significant houses in the town, both of which are standing today. The detail is excellent, the artist is identified, and the painting has a great deal of charm. When the objects depicted are no longer extant, such as the Prospect Hill Association’s clubhouse (entry 38), Isaac Collins’s printing office (entry 77), or the other structures in the Alloway view, this is even better. Artistic skill has almost no bearing. When part of the late S. Robert Teitelman’s superb collection was sold at Northeast Auctions in 2008, the one item I wanted more than any other was the primitive 1850 watercolor of the Tammany Fish House (entry 36). My interest was less in its folk appeal than its iconographic value: it is one of only a few known images of this once-important social club on the New Jersey bank of the Delaware River. I am fortunate to own the wonderful 1852 Duval lithograph of the Fish House (entry 37), so adding a unique second image was of considerable importance to me. It may not be great art, but it is great New Jerseyana, and I was pleased to be able to bring it back to New Jersey.

My collection has a few other parameters. Prints should be separately issued, or at least part of a portfolio of views. I do not collect views that were issued with periodicals, even eighteenth-century periodicals, or plates that were issued with books. I avoid modern coloring when possible. If a lithograph

was issued uncolored, I prefer it in that state, contrary to popular collecting fashion. When possible I try to frame my graphics in original or period frames.

Many people helped with this catalogue and the show. Gigi Barnhill, former curator of graphic arts at the American Antiquarian Society, offered valuable suggestions. Julie Mellby, curator of graphic arts at Princeton University Library, helped to clarify technical terminology. Paul Schopp has been an invaluable resource for South Jersey local history. It was Paul who identified the oil painting “Boats on a River” in a forthcoming Freeman’s auction as only the second-known image of the Prospect Hill club and urged me to aggressively pursue the painting. Cynthia McFarland helped to sort out the views of St. Mary’s Church, Burlington, and also provided background information on the portrait of Bishop Doane. Robert Goller clarified several issues on the Morris Canal, and Joseph Hammond added details on the North American Phalanx. I am grateful to Morven Museum & Garden for giving me the opportunity to share these views with the public. Elizabeth Allan curated the show. Her skill, planning, and coordination from inception to execution made the entire process a pleasure. My wife, Linda, knows what it is like to live with a collector, and I appreciate her tolerance.

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#### A NOTE ON THE CATALOGUE ENTRIES

All text appearing on prints is transcribed in full, with line breaks indicated by a vertical bar ( | ) and text in columns separated by a double bar ( || ). The date of a print is normally the date the image was copyrighted or published and not necessarily the date this particular sheet was printed. Large firms like Currier & Ives and the Kelloggs continued to pull prints from older stones, and in some cases new stones were made to replace worn or damaged ones and the original date was retained in the text. In the case of lithographs, the distinction between the artist who originally drew the image, and the artist who copied the image onto the stone, is not always clear. Burlington artist John Collins, for example, often did both. Similarly, the reader should be aware that the lithography firm that *printed* the lithograph may not be the same firm that *published* the print. This distinction is stated on some prints, but in most cases it is not. Dimensions are recorded in inches, height by width. The measurement of lithographs includes the entire image and all text. For intaglio images, the plate mark is measured.