

## Call for Presentations Ephemera 46

### *250 years: Ephemera Shapes America*

On July 4, 2026, our nation will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia. John Dunlap, a twenty-nine-year-old Irish immigrant, spent much of the night of July 4, 1776, hastily setting type and printing final copies of the single-sheet broadside of the Declaration. One was attached with a seal and folded into the Continental Congress manuscript journal after the words: "The Declaration being again read was agreed to as follows." The others were distributed throughout the new United States to be read aloud in each of the 13 colonies and to the continental troops. Newspapers quickly published the contents. It is self-evident that ephemera played a pivotal role in the founding of our country. This broadside not only described the reasons for the country's founding, it was also the means by which the public learned of our separation from Britain. Finding an original "Dunlap Broadside" continues to be the holy grail for collectors of American historical documents. Of the estimated 200 originally printed, twenty-six examples are known today. Most reside in institutions, including three at the National Archives, London. But copies have been unearthed in such places as Philadelphia's famed Leary's Book Store in 1968, in a crate that had not been opened since 1909. One, still in private hands, was discovered about twenty-five years ago behind a picture frame purchased for \$4 at a Pennsylvania flea market.

#### Request for Proposals

This historic anniversary is an apt moment for examining how ephemera played a key role not only in our founding, but also during the significant political events and social movements that make up our nation's history. Ephemera has helped to ignite, inform, commemorate, and reflect such events as the Civil War, the abolition of slavery, the Western land rush, the Centennial celebration, women's suffrage, the World Wars, the Second Red Scare, counterculture movements in the 60s and activist activities today. Sometimes, ephemera serves as primary evidence. Without such survivors as hand-written accounts, photos, news clippings, and maps to establish the historical record, we might not know of the existence of Tulsa's Black Wall Street and the tragic Race Massacre of 1921.

We invite submissions for talks at our 2026 conference in March on how ephemera has shaped and mirrored the major events and movements that have marked America's growth. These presentations should be richly illustrated and supported by ephemera. Examples include: broadsides, posters, pamphlets, handbills, leaflets, newspaper articles, trade cards, billheads, letterheads, photographs, scrapbooks, diaries, circulars, brochures, booklets, signs, correspondence, playbills, menus, ration books, tickets, postcards, draft cards, arm bands, and buttons.

Ephemera 46, the Ephemera Society of America (ESA) annual conference, will take place at the Hyatt Regency in Greenwich, Connecticut, on March 20, 2026.

Each presentation will be 30 minutes in length, followed by a brief Q&A. Please submit the following:

- Presentation title and a written abstract, focusing on the way ephemera tells the story of your chosen topic. Please describe the specific types of ephemera you will use to illustrate your topic. Each presentation needs to feature at least three different types of ephemera. Proposals should not exceed 150 words.
- 5 to 6 representative ephemera images
- A one-paragraph biography, including any affiliations
- A jpg photograph of yourself for publicity purposes
- Mailing address, phone number and e-mail address

Following a review of all proposals, finalists may be asked to submit 10 to 15 images of the types of ephemera that will be used to illustrate their talk. Proposals must be submitted via e-mail or post by October 15, 2025, to:

Barbara Loe, Ephemera 46 Conference Chair

e-mail: [bjloe@earthlink.net](mailto:bjloe@earthlink.net) or

post: Ephemera Society of America, Inc., P.O. Box 95, Cazenovia, NY 13035-0095.

Decisions and notification about proposals will be made by November 30, 2025. **Presenters will be requested to sign a release at the time of acceptance allowing their presentation to be filmed for use by the ESA.**

If selected, a draft PowerPoint presentation must be submitted by February 28, 2025. The final presentation must be submitted by March 12, 2026. Presentations must include 25 or more ephemera images. At this time, funding is not available from ESA to support travel or presentation costs.

ESA is eager to expand the use of ephemera in the classroom, and we encourage presentations on all subjects addressing the use of ephemera in teaching and academic research. We encourage undergraduate and graduate students to submit proposals for the Emerging Scholars Program to be held on Thursday afternoon, March 19th. For more information, please see "Emerging Scholars" under the "Discover" tab on our website: [www.ephemerasociety.org](http://www.ephemerasociety.org)