physical and sensual. The pages must be touched to be turned, and the turning creates movement between objects and amasses visual stimulation. Caring for, handling, and playing with scrapbooks activate the same emotions enjoyed in experiencing art.

Other precursors and cousins to the modern scrapbook require further exploration of the unique within the mass produced. Sewing quilts from scraps of fabric is similar, although commonly associated with group work rather than that of individuals. Mention of almanacs, catalogs, and fancy craft paper cutting, such as Chinese paper cuts, should also be included as of potential importance, as should the composition techniques of mosaics and stained-glass windows.

Although it would be impossible to list the many types of scrapbooks, some of the most common ones are single-purpose albums, single-theme or single-topic albums, and single-material albums. Single-purpose albums might be created for a special celebration—a birth, a teaching portfolio, or a school project, for example. Single-theme or single-topic albums might concentrate on a private individual's life and times or the life of a celebrity, such as a movie star or sports hero. The scrapbooks Julian Black kept on the boxer Joe Louis fit into the category of the single-theme album, as do scrapbooks of photographs of flowers, bird species, or trips (see Figures I.3 and I.4); scrapbooks of favorite comic strips; and albums recording significant events such as wars, earthquakes, presidential elections, or world’s fairs. The Simple Art of Scrapbooking has tips for making thirty types of single-theme scrapbooks, including relatively recent concerns such as retirement. Collections of stamps, postcards, trade cards, wine labels, or matchbooks are examples of single-material albums. The paper dollhouses Beverly Gordon writes about in this volume are probably in a class of their own.

Perhaps the most consulted scrapbooks in libraries and archives are those about the theater. These include single-format albums that focus on playbills, photographs, drawings, or ticket stubs, as well as albums devoted to one star, a particular theater, a performing company, or genre. One of the most stunning examples of scrapbook extravagance is the three-album set of scrapbooks devoted to Diaghilev's Ballet Russe, compiled by his earliest London patron, Lady Ripon. These albums are oversized (28 by 22 inches) and, as a group, offer a visual tour of the productions that made the Ballet Russe the phenomenon it was. Although some of the photographs and prints might be found elsewhere, the compilation itself provides a singular overview and enables a viewer to experience the impact of the whole. Most significant, the three-volume set includes a series of pen-and-ink, pencil, and watercolor portrait sketches of Vaslav Nijinsky by Jean Cocteau.

Rupture and Reassemblage

If the historical development of scrapbooks is clear, how then do we read these fragments as cultural artifacts? Scrapbooks are a pleasure to make and examine, but what guidance is there for those who want to analyze them and use them as evidence for
Figure I.3. *Clippings with heavy racial overtones, from Joe Louis scrapbook, 1941.* (Courtesy Julian Black Scrapbooks of Joe Louis, 1935–44, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution)

understanding history? Numerous works analyze illustrated books and their expository images. Certainly scrapbooks are rich in material culture, but they are not like published books and images. Published works are the product of many people, from the author, editor, and designer to the printer and marketer. Where does one begin with the unpublished, highly personal scrapbook?
Figure 1.4. Page from a “Mrs. Kendrick’s” motoring trip to the Grand Canyon and points west in the 1930s. (Courtesy Scrapbook Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian Institution)
As prime examples of material and visual culture, scrapbooks lend themselves to analysis with interdisciplinary tools. A material and visual culture approach examines the relationship between text or artifact and its social world. In this regard, if scrapbooks can be distilled to one overarching interpretive theme, it is that of rupture. Scrapbooks shuffle and recombine the coordinates of time, space, location, voice, and memory. What could be more emblematic of the fractured narratives of modernity than scrapbooks?

In museum-exhibition practice, one of the basic psychological truths is that the viewer usually believes that what he or she is looking at is natural, authentic, true. The problem is that everything gets its meaning from its context, which is partly supplied by the viewer and partly by the curator and designer. Everything in an exhibit has been removed from its primal environment and artificially reconstituted. The same rupture occurs in scrapbooks, which are, after all, assembled from scraps. Consequently, the first thing that the serious critic must do is let go of the notion that any part of what is under analysis is free of manipulation. As with objects in exhibitions, the contents of scrapbooks undergo double and triple readings: as themselves, as fragments on a page, and as objects related to whatever the viewer brings to them. Susan Pearce has looked at the rupture (although she does not use the term) that is the foundation of collecting. She divides collecting into three categories: systematics, the construction of a collection to represent an ideology; fetishism, the removal of the object from its historical and cultural context and its redefinition by the collector; and souvenir gathering, in which the object is prized for its power to carry the past into the future.61

Albums and scrapbooks present examples of all three categories, but above all they manipulate meaning through rupture and the reconstruction that follows. They shift from the real to the imaginary realm, often with no sign that any change has occurred. The contents fracture chronology; events that occurred weeks or decades apart seem, when placed side by side on a page, to happen simultaneously or in reverse order.62 Displacement and rupture appealed to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century sensibilities. A hallmark of expositions of the era was the bricolage of cultures, cut from sites around the world and installed on the urban fairgrounds of Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and San Francisco (see Jennifer A. Jolly, in this volume).63 In addition, the popular middle-class pastime of collecting—the single-minded hunt for objects of desire—helped turn rupture and reassemblage into a commonplace.64 Reassemblage provided one way to turn fracture into harmony and create unity out of differences.

Collage: The Scrapbook’s Art Form

Collage and its variant, montage, reached prominence during the time that scrapbooks first enjoyed great popularity. The common sense of Marcel Duchamp’s generation that made understandable his controversial Ready-Mades, commonplace objects transformed into sculptures, also stoked the fragmentation of the visual world
of the early twentieth century. Repetition, mass reproduction, and appropriation of public materials for private interpretation punctuated the avant-garde art scene at the turn of the century. These tactics were grounded in mundane experience, not imposed by the scions of high culture. They sprang up from workers in industry and toilers in urban life.65

In the 1850s and 1860s, Hippolyte Bayard, Eugene Appert, Henry Peach Robinson, Oscar Rejlander, and others experimented with photomontage, a process that allowed twentieth-century artists to creatively manipulate images. By the early twentieth century, the informal and highly personal scrapbook had infiltrated the public domain in the form of collage, described by art historians as among the first truly modern art forms.66 Amateur photographers used similar techniques to add to albums and scrapbooks. Scrapbook makers and artists grasped the idea of a fragmented world and expressed it through a scrap aesthetic. The arrangement of items in both collage art and scrapbooks functioned in much the same manner. As Diane Waldman notes in Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object, collage has layers of meaning.67 Both creative forms reflected the modernist characteristics of rupture and multifaceted interpretation. Scrapbooks relied on the assemblage of images borrowed from diverse origins, often discovered by chance and reconstituted to create an entirely new context and meaning.

The convergence of the dissimilar to produce meaningful association was of revolutionary significance. The collage technique consciously sought to cross boundaries among and between genres and media. High-art collage contrasted with the scrapbook’s low-art collage, which contained the private side of identity, the non-political and nonideological. The collage of the scrapbook more overtly juxtaposed the scraps of found or used objects with the memories of the compiler. The viewer must seek the hidden rhyme that connects the elements on the page.68

Montage, an assemblage form closely tied to scrapbooks and collage, is an “aesthetic practice of combination, repetition, and overlap.”69 Montage reached its golden era in the interwar years with cinema and photography. The juxtaposition of unexpected yet familiar images provided the visual syntax for montage. Yet, as with the history of collage, scrapbooks receive little recognition as the ubiquitous mass visual and material form that buoyed the public art of montage.70 Melissa A. Johnson’s discussion of Hannah Höch in this volume is a welcome corrective.

The rise of the middle class frames the era of the classic scrapbook. From the mid- to the late-nineteenth century, many forms of manufacturing consolidated into the blunt force of industrial capitalism. Commodity capitalism, a tributary of this ocean of power, swelled from factories into department stores and mail-order catalogs full of mass-produced consumer goods. The wages for many workers increased and stabilized enough to underwrite the dominance of a middle class of citizens. The ideology of the middle class included the obligation to consume and display goods. Yet the scrapbooks of these avaricious Victorian consumers prove that they were not passive or defenseless in the face of advertising and the proliferation of goods. Trade cards
were cut up to suit the compiler's needs—flowers or animals were removed, product identities snipped away—demonstrating that commerce was not a sacred cow.\textsuperscript{71}

Scrapbooks existed at the crossroads of print culture and commodity capitalism. Seemingly without compunction, compilers ransacked commercial images and plundered paper products to suit themselves.\textsuperscript{72} Compilers, through the continual action of separation and reconstitution, undermined the alienation that often characterized social relations under capitalism. Objects may have originated in the prevailing and impersonal marketplace, but individuals converted the unfamiliar into the familiar by cutting up the materials of capitalism and turning them into gifts to themselves. Compilers personalized their clippings and infused them with individual meaning outside the arena of market exchange.\textsuperscript{73}

Consumer demand for visual material in the last third of the nineteenth century also brought a renaissance of printing and book design. Attention to the handicraft of bookmaking characterized the Arts and Crafts movement. William Morris and the Kelmscott style looked backward to early printed books and medieval and Gothic manuscripts for inspiration. Mass-marketed scrapbooks often borrowed the hand-sewn bindings, cloth pages, and embossed vine-and-castle imagery of this style.

Ephemeral Ephemera

One of the most challenging characteristics of scrapbooks is that they are ephemeral. In fact, they exemplify ephemera made from other ephemera. Ephemera is simply a form carrying graphic or prose information that was meant to survive only for the life span of an event, meeting, or brief period of relevance. The term \textit{ephemera} encompasses a wide range of materials—conference agendas, menus, tickets, leaflets, bills and invoices, labels, calendars, greeting cards, score cards, trade cards, and coupons. Ephemera are created with their demise assumed.\textsuperscript{74}

Most scrapbooks and their ephemeral content do not last and provide only a fleeting usefulness. They disintegrate and crumble. The leaves fall out. The enclosures drop off the page. Archivists, the most conscientious embalmers of primary materials, tend to neglect them because they are conservation nightmares. None of the solutions available will correct all the problems. Sometimes an archivist must destroy a scrapbook—take it apart—to save it.\textsuperscript{75}

Ephemera are beloved by collectors but, curiously, spurned by many serious scholars. They are seldom studied or analyzed. Consequently, their value is not widely appreciated. Few scholars comprehend how to use ephemera as evidence.\textsuperscript{76}

Ephemera have been called "raw, unedited history—the purest kind," as well as "the other half of history: the half without guile."\textsuperscript{77} To some extent, ephemera do reveal culture makers with their guard down, in all their glorious and unrestrained excess: the brilliant crassness of popular culture, which both attracts and repels. But this characterization somewhat overstates the extent to which ephemera
are extracultural, less grounded in their historical context than, say, a novel or a film. It is certainly true that ephemera are among the least understood and most dismissed components of archival holdings. Even many of the early collectors of and writers on ephemera, the so-called friends of the genre, saw these mundane items meant for fifteen minutes of fame as emblematic of the decline of taste.\textsuperscript{78}

The Stigma of Mass Culture

The stigma attached to mass culture led earlier students of ephemera into dead-end disquisitions on good and bad typography, bombastic language, and poor composition at the expense of serious analysis about why and how the styles developed and thrived. The collection, storage, and cataloging of ephemera remain often haphazard and arbitrary, and the professional literature, rather sparse. Some librarians, archivists, and museum professionals, as well as scholars, find scrapbook content more amusing than serious. Yet archivists, special collections librarians, and collectors also tend to be the stalwart protectors of scrapbooks. Scholars too are slowly starting to take an interest in ephemera and their use as more than an occasional book illustration or exhibition brochure.\textsuperscript{79}

One of the biggest obstacles to using ephemera and scrapbooks as primary source material is that they usually arrive devoid of context, with no attribution, provenance, history, or biographical information. Ephemera just exist. There is seldom any listing of items within scrapbooks.\textsuperscript{80} Apart from research libraries, few institutions have the reference tools necessary to support intensive research, such as city and company directories, dictionaries of engravers and artists, or books on iconography and symbols. If a university library has some of these resources, they are likely to be housed, unless they are available online, at scattered locations around the library system—in the business, art, or medical branches. All this makes it frustrating and fatiguing to try to argue from ephemera as well as with them. In addition, most library information access and indeed most academic scholarship rely on the written word as the point of departure and as the foundation for analysis. This tends to make interpretation of images, objects, and mass culture a poor and maligned cousin in the scholarship hierarchy.

Ephemera look the way they do partly because there are few editorial or administrative constraints on them. Producers have no jury or peer review to pass judgment on their taste or truthfulness, only a printer paid to get the product out. Consequently, ephemera often display more drama and hyperbole than do other kinds of primary sources. Yet ephemera have nobility. Their very transitoriness makes them all the more precious.

One of the great poets of the nineteenth century used ephemera in her writing process. Emily Dickinson scissored out images and texts from journals and mailed them to friends. She wrote her poems on household detritus—on the backs of bags, bills,
chocolate wrappers, and old shopping lists and along the margins of newspapers and flyers—and refused to publish them. Her motivation for elevating ephemera may have been a perverse tactic to keep her poetry out of circulation. Or she may have been influenced by the prevalent bourgeois ethos of waste not, want not. Lydia Maria Child, in her popular 1832 book *The Frugal Housewife*, recommended that old letters be saved so that they could be written on again—on the back. Child prodded readers to gather up fragments of time as well as materials, to waste nothing.

Another aspect of the life of ephemera has to do with their circulation through the market—their life cycle within capitalism. Objects change categories many times during their existence. Materials once treasured are given away, become rubbish, or end up stored in a museum. Much of the content of scrapbooks, because it is incomprehensible, exists in a timeless limbo—significant but without value.

The mundane nature of scrapbooks can also be read in a more subversive way. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau wrote at length about the manipulation and use of popular culture by those who consume it but do not control or make it. His analysis of the processes of consumption of culture by common people highlights such everyday activities as reading, talking, walking, and cooking, which he analyzed as creative tactics that people use to maintain control over their lives in the face of the power of the state and society. De Certeau’s “unrecognized producers, poetics of their own acts,” might easily include scrapbook makers. They circumvent publishing, bypass copyrights, and freely cannibalize printed sources. Scrapbook makers avoid the external editing process that would squeeze their creations into narrative and prose forms acceptable to mass audiences. Instead, each album is a rogue and a renegade that both parries with and parallels popular forms.

Guy Debord takes a less positive view of such activities in *Society of the Spectacle*. Debord places spectacle at the core of modern experience. Although he used a hatchetlike manifesto to deliver his argument, when viewed with memory books in mind, a sketchy scrapbook epistemology emerges. For Debord, modern society lacks quality because of the dominance of the commodity form. Life becomes an immense accumulation of spectacles: representations of events not directly experienced or lived. As a result, images are detached from context and eventually merge into a common stream of unreality, the heart of spectacle. Spectacle, then, defines relationships among people. It is a social relationship mediated by images, such as those material manifestations earnestly gathered into albums. In both de Certeau’s and Debord’s frameworks, scrapbooks mediate one’s personal circumstances within capitalistic society. Debord’s view of human endeavor is a sobering counter to de Certeau’s. Yet both throw light on the link between scrapbook making’s appeal and the ideological contexts that support the collection of ephemera.

Scrapbooks have been a central storehouse for U.S. memory. Yet, as David Lowenthal cautions in *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, we must not assume that the material before us reflects a timeless past—that our contemporary analysis perfectly captures past eras or that the material under analysis was once part of a static, undynamic
era. We can only speculate about the worldviews of compilers who worked long before the world had experienced nuclear weapons, Brown v. Board of Education, Walt Disney, the diminution of religion, AIDS, the Internet, or even aspirin or fluoride in the water supply. The least problematic use of scrapbooks is perhaps similar to what Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen in The Presence of the Past describe as the task of public historians: to link the fragments of individual memory, vague bits of knowledge, and the desire for community, to a shared past. Rosenzweig and Thelen also report that such activities as creating albums and going to museums are among the main ways people understand and connect with their own individual histories. The authors found that history associated with grand narratives was not of much interest to people, yet their interviewees felt the pull of the past. This past implied a more personal or familial connection, while history signified the big, official narrative in which the individual was overlooked or lost. In this regard, then, scrapbooks can be understood to reflect the past rather than history. And, like memories, scrapbooks lack closure. They often stop and become silent without forewarning.

Scrapbooks are once again surging in popularity. In the 1990s and early 2000s, home videos, individual and family Web pages, and, most significant, the immensely popular hobby of scrapbooking are serving the need to order life and preserve memory first recognized centuries ago. As one popular magazine article noted: “From elite Manhattan bookbinders to mall-based scrapbook stores, America seems to be cutting and pasting, as never before. We’re attending Memories Expos, and going to ‘crops’ (quilting bees for clip artists). We’re inviting neighbors over for presentation by Creative Memories (like Tupperware parties for scrapbookers). We’re spending $300 million annually on scrapbook materials, according to the Hobby Industry Association, which estimates that one out of five US households has a scrapbook fanatic.”

As was true for the late nineteenth century, the other heyday of scrapbook and album makers, this is a time of changing technology, with nostalgia and retrospection popular, memoirs a favorite literary form, and a world that seems awash with paper. When one can easily download illustrations and digitize or even improve the quality of older photographs, the appeal of making one’s own book is strong. As Mihaly Csikszentmihaly notes in “Why We Need Things,” artifacts seem to reproduce themselves, increasing in complexity as they go along. Human intervention makes for greater and greater complexity of function. The Wall Street Journal noted in the late nineties that a Finnish company offered twenty-four different types of scrapbook scissors. In 1996 Creative Memories trained more than forty-nine thousand consultants to sell scrapbook ware and teach scrapbooking techniques.

Adaptations of scrapbooks are visible in contemporary culture as well. Home movies and videos are a combination of memory bank, popular form, diary, photograph album, and scrapbook. From the cheap 8-millimeter films that hit the post-war market to the digital mixes of today, family movies usually lack an obvious plot. They are fragments of experience, sometimes edited according to a recognizable
logic but more often simply strings of disparate images with fractured chronology at unconnected locations. Like scrapbooks, home movies turn experience into visual memories of significance for the makers but become harder to read the further one moves away from the creators. Like scrapbooks, they commemorate significant occasions—a birth or a baptism, weddings, celebrations, and travel. And they are all fragments clipped from the context or sequence that would provide fuller understanding.  

“The Sims” (short for simulations) have captured the imagination of thousands of computer-game and Internet players who exchange chitchat in coffee shops, classrooms, and homes. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century paper dollhouses fostered similar play with the surprisingly ordinary. Rodris Roth examined twenty-five examples from one collection and found only the typical, unastonishing scenarios of mundane life. Perhaps those imaginary paper sets, lacking in complex fantasies, anticipated the mass appeal of “The Sims.”

Such contemporary aspects make scrapbooks and albums a rich resource for scholars interested in popular culture. By the same token, the scrapbook’s short life, their chaos of oblique signs known only to compilers, and the frequent lack of any recognizable context make for challenges that often doom the memory book to oblivion and place it at the bottom of conservation treatment programs in libraries. For these reasons, the insights of those who have studied particular albums and scrapbooks become even more important.

### A Forecast of This Book

This book is divided into two sections: Part I, “Manuscripts of Learning and Knowing”; and Part II, “Books of the Self.” “Manuscripts of Learning and Knowing” considers scrapbooks and albums intended primarily to support learning and transfer knowledge. They have been used to reinforce a particular point of view. “Books of the Self” includes essays that examine evolving individuals who collected materials more directly about their private selves. These were used to aid in individual and group accumulation of memories and in identity, growth, and survival.

Part I begins with Katherine Ott’s essay, which places the scrapbook in its most prolific period—the turn of the twentieth century, when the work of physicians was being contested, as well as elevated to authoritative status. Ott’s physicians became enthusiastic compilers of texts that would enable them to practice medicine and claim a place within the wider community of professionals.

Emily Wharton Sinkler began her scrapbook of cooking receipts, household formulas, and medical remedies in 1855, and for three generations on her South Carolina plantation, ledger pages carried knowledge from one generation to the next. The scrapbook was continued by her daughter-in-law and later by her granddaughter, who