Swinalia:
A collection of 19th & 20th century porcine ephemera

A collection of approximately three thousand pig-related postcards, tradecards, and other ephemera, dating from the mid-19th to late-20th century. Assembled by noted collector Frances Converse Massey, this archive brings together an incredibly diverse variety of porcine symbolism and imagery, artistic methods, and international imprints. Primarily composed of new and “posted” postcards, the collection also features trade cards, blotters, bookmarks, and pen wipes. The cards are predominately chromolithographed, but there are ample examples of other printing techniques, as well as photography, original art, collage, and several leather and wooden cards. Also represented is a large sample of mechanical cards, including pop-up and hold-to-the-light.

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This vast and unique assemblage illustrates the incredible breadth of meaning found in pigs, across time and borders. From pigs being pigs (illustrated with their proud owners, at state fairs, winning awards, and in the mud) to pigs as good luck charms (pictured with shamrocks, coins, mushrooms, and chimney sweeps) and pigs as calumny (drawn as police, dictators, racial epithets), as well as a wide range of anthropomorphized pigs. This collection is ripe with humor and puns, ranging from the cheap to the political.


Approximately three thousand items housed in ten custom clamshell boxes, condition varies though predominately fine.

$15,000. US
“People all over the world have made swine stand for extremes of human joy or fear, celebration, ridicule, and repulsion” according to pig enthusiast and American studies scholar Richard P. Horowitz (Hog Ties, 23). This collection offers an impressive visualization of the wide-range and often disparate symbology of pigs.
Though diverse in its imagery, a large portion of the collection derives from the Teutonic tradition of the pig as a good luck symbol, specifically with regards to the start of a new year. New Years, Christmas, and other holiday postcards carry the image of the pig as a bearer of good luck, often accompanied by other Germanic charms: horseshoes, four-leaf clover, chimney sweeps, amanita muscaria mushrooms, gold coins, gnomes, and more. This tradition seeps across borders with greetings printed in English, French, Scandinavian, and other.
Other themes that reoccur with regularity throughout the collection include: pigs with monkeys (often antagonized by monkeys); pigs being ridden (pulling a cart or carriage, or like a horse); pigs with dachshunds; pigs playing music or performing; pigs with (but sometimes as) chimney sweeps; pigs with beautiful women; pigs with children; pigs dressed as humans; pigs as Nazis.
International Imprints

Materials in the collection emanate from a wide range of countries: United States, England, Germany, Austria, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Russia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Norway, France, Hungary, Czech, and Ireland. Many of the cards include a greeting in one language, but an imprint from another country, demonstrating both a global market for pig products and fluidity of pig symbolism across borders. Germany led the field in the production of quality chromolithographed cards in the early 20th century and the collection reflects this with hundreds of cards with German imprints but greetings in English (American and British), Spanish, Russian, and many others. But other examples exist, including the series of cards produced for an American market that feature original Japanese collages of pigs comprised from Japanese postage stamps.
Postcards & Other Ephemera

The collection primarily contains postcards, both new and "posted", from the mid-19th to mid-20th century (with later examples also included). These cards illustrate, beyond the omnipresence of pig culture, the golden era of the postcard. First officially produced in the 1860s, the pictorial postcard “golden age” dates from the 1890s through the end of World War I (Willoughby, A History of Postcards, 44). The collection offers fine examples from this period and beyond, with World War II era cards all the way to contemporary (late-20th and early 21st-century) cards present.
From the beginning of their creation, postcards were used to promote products giving further resonance to the inclusion of trade cards and other ephemeral items in the collection. Trade cards include a series of lard cards, for several brands (both American and British) as well as other pork related products.
The diversity of the mechanical pieces is a true strength of this collection; mechanics that cleverly disguise two pigs at a trough as a pair of women’s legs or four pigs as the face of Hitler and creatively introduce movement. Pop-up elements, hold-to-the-light cards, noise, and other moveable parts are represented.
Container List

The arrangement of collection is loosely based on the labels affixed to clamshell boxes, but later efforts have disturbed this original order. Changes noted below.

1. **French** – clamshell box
   Approximately 300 items.

2. **Russia – Austria – Ireland** [contains French materials] – clamshell box
   Approximately 300 items. A range of items with French imprints or French legends, notable for the artistic (set of 10 cards by L.E[spinesse] of Paris in original wrapper); humorous; political; souvenir; and New Years.

3. **German** – clamshell box
   Approximately 300 items. A range of cards notable for the New Years, Teutonic mythology and folk legend, many printed during WWI. This section represents just a portion of the German imprints in the collection, as many of the English and American cards were printed in Germany (or Austria).

4. **German – Low Countries** – clamshell box
   Approximately 300 items. Contains cards from Germany, the Netherlands, and Flemish Belgium. Includes handwritten dividers: Holland, Belgium, German – No Legend, Gelukkig Nieuwjaar (other) and Gen. Belgium and Holland, Gelukkig Nieuwjaar (Pigs in human clothes).

5. **American** – clamshell box
   Approximately 300 items. Includes US imprints and postcards published elsewhere for American market; State Fair, pig owners, photographs.

6. **English** – clamshell box
   Approximately 300 items.

7. **English** – clamshell box
   Approximately 200 items. Imprints of England and printed elsewhere for British market.

8. **Scandinavian – Slavic – Miscellaneous – Photographic** – clamshell box
   Approximately 300 items.
9. **No Legend – Tradecards – Other Media** – clamshell box
Approximately 300 items. Arranged by theme for cards with no imprint; overflow from other areas.

10. **Mechanicals** – clamshell box
Approximately 320 items. Mechanical post- and trade cards; trade cards dating to 1870-1890; postcard oddities (leather, wood, hold-to-light); blotters; bookmarks; pen wipes; 1904 pig shaped postmark).

11. **[Untitled]** – flat file
Four large-scale mechanical cards; two full-color fruit labels; approximately 25 contemporary (late-20th and early-21st century cards), including a set of Japanese postcards; provenance material (including bookseller invoices and correspondence)
Bibliography


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la plus belle Truie des Trois
Les meilleurs vœux pour la nouvelle année