Ephemera are a means to see and understand typewriters in time, with none more revealing than calendars advertising typewriters. These, like all calendars, are rooted in specific cultural and social ideas about time sequences and locations. In the Euro-American context, this means a primary emphasis on linear time and annual cycles within it. Typewriter-related calendars appear and develop in relation to the larger cultural and business dynamics that engaged, accepted, and needed the mechanization of the office. That, in turn, placed an increasing emphasis on smaller and more precise divisions of time for a larger and larger portion of the people in industrializing societies. Time and sequences of production, sales, and delivery were more and more measured in terms of the Industrial Age aphorism “Time is money.” In the case of typewriters, this can be seen in the increasing emphasis in typewriter marketing on calendars in general—and perhaps most literally and figuratively in this premium, a Smith-Premier silk wallet (below), marketing the model #1, that includes a calendar for the 1892-1893 fiscal year. Calendars in this context became a regular part of urban Euro-American life in the 1830s and began to be used to advertise products 20 years later. Their early use as guides to religious cycles and as frameworks for agricultural scheduling meant that a large portion of people in a community or a society did not need daily access to a calendar. Ironically, it was exactly their use as guides to holy days and religious events that, until the 1830s, had prevented widespread agreement on their form. This conflict specifically involved competition between the newer, Roman Catholic Gregorian calendar and the older Julian form favored by many Protestants. At a point when the UK had been industrialized for a full century and France and Germany were rapidly industrializing, the greater precision of the Gregorian system won out. The Gregorian calendar provided the necessary standardization to synchronize the running of the burgeoning industrial systems that later in the century were so essentially defined by the typewriter and its impact on people’s lives.

At the beginning of the 19th century, there was usually no distinction between calendars and almanacs, as both often emphasized religious holidays and events or agricultural cycles. The term “calendar” soon came to mean primarily the printed essentials of chronology with none of the predictions and ancillary information of almanacs. Calendars during much of the century took the form of a vertical list of days and months, but, starting around 1870, the now-familiar layout—in which each month appears as a rectangle—became more common. One of the first advertisements for a typewriter utilizing a calendar (a perpetual one in this case) used this new format to promote the Remington #2 in 1884. More importantly, the rectangular format stimulated the prolific development of and demand for decorative “calendar backs,” often in the form of elaborately printed polychrome wall cards. This late (most likely 1899) French example (top left) shows a Smith-Premier #2 being used by a fancily dressed typist. The rectangular format of this calendar is modified by an additional late 19th-century feature, the “daily tear-off,” which was a pad giving the day and date for each day. Such calendar

1. I want to thank Bert Kerschbaumer and Herman Price for sharing several items from their collections and Cornelia Weil for her suggestions on the form and content of this article. Important scholarly sources include Maurice Rickard’s The Encyclopedia of Ephemera (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 70-71; Graham Hudson’s The Design and Printing of Ephemera in Britain and America: 1720-1920 (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2008), especially Ch. 5; and Nancy Munn’s “The Cultural Anthropology of Time,” Annual Review of Anthropology, 21, 1992, pp. 93-121.

2. Author’s collection. The approximate open interior dimensions are 6” x 6.25” (15.25 cm x 16 cm). Approximate closed external dimensions are 6” x 3” (15.25 cm x 7.75 cm). Wallet was manufactured by the Thayer and Jackson Stationary Co., Chicago, IL.

3. Author’s collection. The size is 4.75” x 6.5” (12 cm x 16.5 cm). All sizes given for this and other calendars are approximate. Published in Prost’s Comprehensive Calendar, Philadelphia, PA. The drawing style is strongly influenced by that of Palmer Cox, the creator of the then-popular “Brownies” characters.

4. Bert Kerschbaumer collection. The approximate actual size is 9.84” x 4” (25 cm x 10.55 cm).
backs, with monthly or daily calendars, were not originally produced as advertisements, but later became a major medium for touting the wares of manufacturers and retailers of goods.

The wall card, more than any other calendar form, was especially attractive to advertisers because the form offered year-round and daily visibility for their messages. Some advertising had appeared since the middle of the 19th century in almanacs and century selling through branding in the United States and Europe. They now turned to the new, innovative calendar medium to accomplish their ends. The earliest example identified is this decorative and relatively complex perpetual calendar advertising the World Index published about 1886 for the Pope Manufacturing Company.6 As was the case with the early advertising use by typewriter firms of trade cards and other early media, this Heath’s Forever Calendar

tributor of both machines in New England, seized upon it to promote its products.

Starting in this early period in the use of calendars to promote typewriters, the makers and sellers also produced several forms of miniature calendars as premiums to present their products. For example, United Typewriter and Supplies Co. in St. Louis promoted the Caligraph #3 (and the New Yost and Densmore #1) with a daily diary issued by the company each month.7 Other,

Typewriter manufacturers and retailers had themselves only recently joined the market and the nascent frenzy of late 19th

6. Herman Price collection; 7” x 9.5” (17.75 cm x 24 cm). It is not clear if this was mounted on a wall or only used as a desk calendar.
7. Author’s collection; 10.75” x 7” (27 cm x 17.8 cm). The calendar was originally owned by Lula P. Taft of Holyoke, MA, and New York City; she used it as an appointment and activity calendar while at school in Holyoke.
8. Cutter-Tower was central to the marketing of the Franklin and the Victor Index and it was based in the same city, Boston, in which they were manufactured, so it is probable that the firm was in some direct way involved in the capitalization of the manufacturing of both machines.
9. Author’s collection; each page is 2.5” x 5” (6.4 cm x 12.7 cm). The Caligraph is on the front cover and the calendar page is the first on the inside.

5. See ETCetera #83, September 2008, for discussion of premiums in typewriter advertising.
later examples include a 1901 celluloid mirror premium for the Remington #6 and a celluloid-bound 1913-1914 fiscal year miniature notebook that promoted the manual version of the Ellis typewriter-adding machine. Other small calendar premiums often took the form of blotters, such as this 1902 one touting the Jewett #11 and another one promoting Yost’s new model #10 in France in 1903.

As they moved their marketing into the 20th century, promoters of typewriters emphasized more complex and elaborate themes in their wall calendars and other calendar advertising. This can be most easily seen in Remington’s development of the graphic concept of “Miss Remington,” a paragon user of the company’s products once described by the company as “that young lady who personifies every operator of the writing machine.” The image first was introduced on company postcards with the caption “Miss Remington’s Reverie” and in other advertising in 1900, and she appeared on a calendar the following year. In the example here, we find her advertising a shorthand school, another illustration of a mutually beneficial dual relationship between schools and typewriter makers that began as early as the 1880s. We see her again, in a style more appropriate to a later time, in a 1915 wall calendar touting the Remington #10 and the machine’s status as the official typewriter of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Other early 20th century examples of wall calendars advertising typewriters include a 1907 one for the Stearns Visible (from its distributor, the Typewriter Inspection Co.), one for the same year for the Smith Premier, and another one promoting Yost’s new model #10 in France in 1903.

10. Both from the Herman Price collection and both manufactured by Whitehead and Hoag. The mirror is 2” (5 cm) in diameter. The notebook’s size is about 3.75” x 2” (9.5 x 5 cm). See ET Cetera #80, December 2007, on the use of celluloid in typewriter advertising.

11. Author’s collection; 3” x 7.5” (7.6 cm x 19 cm).

12. Bert Kerschbaumer collection; 4” x 9.5” (10.5 x 24.5 cm). Printed by Pichot, Paris.


14. Herman Price collection; 6” x 9” (15.3 x 23 cm).

15. See article on the Caligraph and its relationship with Vermilye’s College in ET Cetera #75, September 2006.

16. Author’s collection; 14” x 22” (35.5 x 60 cm). This example has been restored to some extent through using pieces of two different examples, both in poor condition. Larger wall calendars, like their advertising wall poster cousins, are more subject to deterioration through long-term exposure to light, the lack of interest in storing them after they have served their immediate marketing purposes, and the difficulty of storing larger paper items.
and a 1914 one for the by-then booming Underwood Typewriter Co., pushing its best-selling model #5. In the images for Smith-Premier and Underwood, the women appear as their manufacturer’s unnamed graphic symbolic answers to “Miss Remington.” Such wall calendars were available to the public, but in photographs surviving from the period, they usually are seen on the walls of stenographic and typing schools, as seen in this 1910 picture of a student typing under an Underwood calendar.

Wall calendars and their many smaller forms advertising typewriters were regarded as so successful by typewriter manufacturers and retailers that they expanded the numbers and styles to became a used, often unconsciously visual, often tactile dimension of peoples’ lives in schools, offices, and homes. As such, they defined and regimented time, and often space, in North America and Europe. Later examples are well represented here by Olivetti’s 1923 wall calendar for the model M20 and Royal’s little blotter pushing its portable as a Christmas present in 1927. All these ephemera—from the smallest daily diaries and blotters to the large and rarest wall calendars—contain pieces of typewriter history, and each tells us something about the lived life of typewriters. As such, they are typewriter time capsules well worth digging for!

18. Author’s collection; 6.25” x 3.75” (16 x 9.5 cm).
19. Herman Price collection; 3.5” x 6.25” (9 cm x 16 cm).
20. Author’s collection. Stenographic school probably in Mt. Morris area of New York state.
21. Former Willi Süß collection; 21.7” x 15” (55 x 38 cm). Note the theme that is similar to that evoked by the phrase “Miss Remington’s Reverie” and its associated image, one of affection for the typewriter product embodied symbolically in the face and the body language of the subject vis-à-vis the machine.
22. Author’s collection; 6.25” x 3 3/8” (16 x 8.5 cm).