

# CARRIAGE MUSEUM OF AMERICA

FALL NEWSLETTER 2014

In May, a small group of trustees, staff, and volunteers from The Carriage Museum of America travelled to Augusta, Georgia to clean and assess the CMA's carriage collection. The CMA maintains a collection of vehicles, most of which have been donated to the organization. Our priority is to preserve unique vehicles in original condition so that they can be made available to researchers. The original paint, wood, leather, and fixtures provide us with a wealth of information about our carriage history. Proper stewardship of this collection is an important component of fulfilling our mission, to serve as an authoritative resource for information, education and research about animal-drawn vehicles and related subjects.

Cleaning a vehicle gives you a unique opportunity to examine every square inch. One detail we noticed on a number of our vehicles was the presence of a beautiful monogram.

*The Hub* and *The Carriage Monthly*, the two leading trade journals of the carriage era, both included information about monograms in their monthly publications. *The Hub*, especially, provided many examples in their "Paint Shop" section. Customers would often write to the editor with their request, and he would provide a personalized monogram for a small fee. In other issues, outside contributors would submit their own designs for publication.

Designing a monogram required both artistic and practical consideration. In the May 1892 issue of *The Carriage Monthly*, they provided the following advice: "In making monograms it is necessary to have each letter distinct, so that it can be readily discerned. At the same time the design should be graceful and pleasing." The following article, written by F.B. Gardner and originally published in *The Hub*, provides advice to those who wish to create their own monogram:

## **"DESIGNING AND PAINTING MONOGRAMS"**

***The Hub*, February and March 1883**

"To design a tasteful monogram is an art which few possess; and to describe how to execute such work, I find a rather difficult task. However, the expressed desire on the part of correspondents to have me write an article on this subject has of late been so forcibly urged, that I will endeavor to say something about monograms, even if I should fail in fully satisfying the demand.

"The word monogram is derived from two Greek words, namely: *momos*, alone, and *gramma*, letter; it consists of a character generally interlaced or closely connected, and used as a cipher or abbreviation of a name. The simple commingling of two letters may be called a monogram, as there is no more fitting word to express it, but a perfect monogram is one in which all the letters in a word can be traced.

"The use of monograms began at a very early date, when kings, popes, and emperors made use of monograms instead of signing their names, - a practice which greatly lessened their labors where many documents required their signatures; and artists, engravers, and printers also placed upon their works a simple mark - sometimes a perfect monogram, - in order not to deface or disfigure the print or painting by covering too much surface with their names, which became necessary to distinguish their works, and many of these were simply one initial of the name, interwoven with some symbolic figure.

"In more modern times, monograms were used only by the nobility of Europe, and a plebeian hardly dared make use of them; in fact, he had but little use for a monogram, as he

possessed no gold and silver plate, no coach and livery; and for a long time it held its own as a mark of aristocracy. Its introduction into the United States was due, indirectly, to the few who desired to imitate European style or a show of aristocratic lineage; but, thanks to our independence, the monogram soon became public property (so to speak), and those who were not the possessors of a carriage or gold plate, could, with perfect propriety, place their initials or their names on their letter-heads, or other non-aristocratic articles.

### DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SIX STYLES OF MONOGRAMS

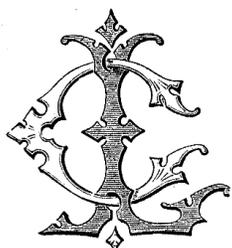


Figure 1

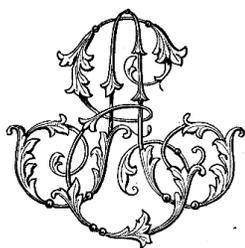


Figure 2

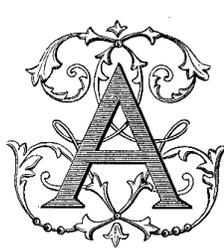


Figure 3

“Although letters of any style may be employed in forming a monogram, there are but three recognized styles in common use, namely: scroll script, ornamented Roman, and old English, by the use of which six different styles of monograms may be composed, known as the *Renaissance*, composed of ornamented Roman alone (see Fig. 1); the *Louis XV*, composed of scroll script letters, one letter upon the other, as illustrated in Fig. 2; the *English*, composed of scroll script letters placed in their right order, but linked together; the *Modern*, composed of ornamented Roman and scroll script letters; the *Florentine*, composed of letters the same as the Modern style, but made symmetrical, if necessary, by transposing one of the letters, as illustrated in Fig. 3; and the *Old English* style, composed of old English and scroll script letters.

“It is not my aim in this article to show by engravings a grand array of monograms and cipher, and I use the above illustrations simply as an aid in describing what monograms are.

“To return now to my original subject, a knowledge of how to design monograms is a

very desirable accomplishment in some localities, and I will endeavor to briefly explain how the amateur may begin the study.

“First, procure some well-calendered letter or note paper, some tissue paper, -or, what is better, transparent drawing paper, or muslin, - and two or three lead-pencils, of different degrees of hardness, - say: one quite hard, another medium, and a third, soft. Next, decide upon the style of monogram best suited to your wants, and (supposing you have no printed samples to work by,) lightly sketch the *prominent letter* on the paper, erasing with a piece of rubber any imperfect marks, and carefully correcting until you have satisfied lines with a soft pencil, to make them blacker. Now, lay over the drawing a piece of tissue paper, and again re-draw the lines. This is simply to preserve the letter you have already perfected. Remove the tissue paper, and proceed with the hard pencil to lightly sketch the other required letter, paying no attention to interlacing them at this time, but keeping that object constantly in view. Rub out and correct faults in the outlines until you are satisfied, remembering that you need have no fear of destroying the letter first drawn, as you have a duplicate. When the second letter is drawn to please you, blacken the lines as before, and mark the crossings or interlacings. Now, lay the tissue paper over the drawing and mark the second letter in its correct place. Proceed in like manner if more than two letters are to be combined. When all the single letters are prepared, lay the tissue paper upon a piece of the writing paper; secure it by pinning it, so that it cannot move; and with a fine needle prick the outlines carefully. You now have a “pounce pattern” with which you can transfer the outlines to the panel, and a tissue-paper drawing by which you can make the crossings or interlacings.

“Whenever a specimen book of monograms is at the disposal of the designer, the work may be greatly simplified. In this case, after a choice of single letters has been made, lay the tissue or transparent paper over one of these; sketch this out in detail; and then by placing this sketch over the other letters, one by one, and turning or twisting it until it “comes right,”

sketch in the others, shade up the crossings or the leafing, and the pattern will then be ready for the needle holes.

“It may be mentioned here that, in case the design is symmetrical – that is, uniform on each side of the center, - as in the Louis XV style, the drawing should be made as follows: Fold and crease a piece of writing paper; open it out flat, and draw one half of the design, allowing the crease in the paper to form the center. Blacken the lines with the soft pencil; then fold the paper again as before, and after laying it on some hard surface, rub it over with an ivory or bone paper-folder (or the handle of a tooth-brush will answer very well) to transfer the pencil marks from one side to the other; when, upon unfolding the sheet, the complete design will be found accurately marked out. This plan may be changed, if preferred, by first folding and marking the paper as before, and then turning the marked side out, when you may proceed to prick with a needle through both thicknesses of paper.

### **DIRECTIONS FOR PAINTING MONOGRAMS**

“Let us now take a glance at the colors most suitable for the use of the painter in putting on monograms.

“The painter should provide himself with a good kit of tools, for no fine work can be done with poor paints or pencils, although some may tell you that a little hair tied to a stick, etc., will answer. If your circumstances will not allow the purchase of a box of artists’ tubes and pencils, such as are supplied by all leading houses keeping artists’ materials, you may begin in an inexpensive way, as follows: Invest a dollar or two in tube colors, assorted, which will give you, say, one dozen tubes, containing: Flake White, Indian Red, Chrome Yellow, Ivory Black, Orange Chrome, Chrome Green, Ultramarine, Burnt Sienna, Vermilion, Verdigris, Burnt Umber, and Carmine.

“With these colors a very fair beginning may be made, providing you know how to combine them to make tints and shades; moreover, in many cases, there are colors in the

ordinary stock of the shop which may be used to advantage if ground fine on the stone.

“Having procured your colors, the pencils are the next requisite. These should be of red-sable hair, bound in tin, with long handles of red cedar. The finest pencils made are about the size of a knitting needle, but if these cannot be obtained, it is an easy matter to cut others down to the proper size. The hair should be about one-quarter of an inch in length, - not longer. A small palette-knife, with which to mix the colors on the palette, together with a rest-stick, pounce-bag, and small bottles of japan and turpentine, will then complete the outfit.

“To begin the painting of a monogram intended for a carriage, the first requirement is to know what color is used for the striping on the gears, as that almost invariable governs the color or colors of the ornament. Exceptions sometimes occur, as in the case of some aristocratic family having a coat-of arms which is to be put on; in this instance, the colors are arbitrary, and the monogram should be painted in the predominating color, if *in relief*, or in the colors of the coat-of-arms.

“If the gears be striped with green, the ornament should be painted with green as the predominating color; if red, then red or carmine; if blue, then blue - and so on.

“Gold and silver may be used together with colors to great advantage, and either of these may be put on in connection with the striping color, without breaking fashion’s rules.

“When painting *in relief* – that is, in one color with its tints and shades – it is a good plan to first lay in the whole design with a medium shade of the color, which gives an opportunity to lay in the shades with the dark shades of that color, and then the lights with tints of the same color, made by the addition of white. Many first lay in the whole design in gold or silver, and then glaze one letter with carmine, another with blue, and still another with verdigris. Where there are three letters, two may be colored, say: Indian red, “cut up” or glazed with carmine; and the other vermilion, “cut up” with dark red and high-lighted with vermilion and white as a tint.”

---

## A Glimpse of the CMA's Trip to Augusta, GA

---



Trustees John Sowles and Jack Day, along with volunteer Gerry Glazier, clean and discuss a cart from the CMA collection. Trustee Bill Nygren and librarian Mindy Groff also participated in the trip.



This unique C-Spring Landau has a small monogram on the door panel.

### Won't You Join Us?

At the Carriage Museum of America, we are dedicated to preserving the history of the carriage trade. This mission is fulfilled in part through our carriage collection. Another component of this work, and our primary area of focus, is the library and archive we maintain in Lexington, KY. The article featured in this newsletter is just one of many articles in a single issue of *The Hub*. Imagine the wealth of knowledge found in the pages of hundreds of issues! It is our privilege to safeguard the trade journals, books, photographs, images, and other materials held in our collection. And it is our goal to continue to make this information available to the public, via newsletters such as this, select publications, our new website – [www.carriagemuseumlibrary.org](http://www.carriagemuseumlibrary.org) – and new forms of media such as Facebook. Won't you join with us in carrying out this goal?



This large roofseat break by Chas. F. Harris & Co. of Littleton, NH features a lovely monogram with the letters "S.H.H." The letters stand for Sugar Hill House, a resort in New Hampshire where the vehicle was originally used.

# THANK YOU!

We are thankful for those individuals who have partnered with the Carriage Museum of America over the last year:

## **Patron**

Jack and Marge Day  
Bob and Karen Fletcher  
Lowell Larson  
Stewart Morris, Sr.  
William C. Nygren  
John Sowles

## **Scholar**

Dr. William Cook

## **Sponsor**

Gloria Austin  
Bissler & Sons Funeral Home  
Roger and Sue Murray

## **Friend**

Buggy Barn Museum  
John Conway  
Susan Emore  
Eleanor Ferrari  
Hansen Wheel and Wagon  
Robin Higham  
Albert Hohenbrink  
Howard Kietzke  
Susan Koso  
David Lewis  
Eric Luebben  
E.G. Moody  
Craig Paulson  
Leigh Semilof  
Raymond W. Tuckwiller  
Michael Zaetta

## **Gifts in Kind**

Stewart Morris, Jr. – Office Computer  
William S. Morris III – Carriage Storage

\*Every effort has been made to acknowledge all donors. If we have made any errors or omissions, please accept our sincere apologies.

## Cleaning Carriages: Our Process

Methods to clean and maintain a carriage vary with the purpose and use of the vehicle; a newly restored show vehicle being treated far differently than a conserved historical piece. For the CMA, where our ultimate goal is to conserve the vehicle in as close to original condition as possible, an excellent resource is the Smithsonian Institute at: [http://www.si.edu/mci/english/learn\\_more/taking\\_care/coatings.html](http://www.si.edu/mci/english/learn_more/taking_care/coatings.html). Because our vehicles had accumulated decades of dirt and grime, we were less concerned about perfect protocol and considered this an initial cleaning to arrest further degradation and an opportunity to survey and document vehicle details and needs. Professional conservation will come later.

Prior to washing, we removed items that should not get wet and tagged or saved loose small pieces in labeled envelopes. The entire vehicle, including upholstery, was brushed using a soft brush to loosen dirt and dust, then vacuumed noting any insect (especially moth and powder post beetles) activity.

We then washed the entire exterior with a mild solution of Murphy's Oil Soap using sponges and rinsed with clean water. Where dirt remained in hard to reach cracks and corners soft scrub brushes were helpful. Leather was conditioned with Lexol while still damp.

Once dry, we used a variety of products to preserve and condition the body and undercarriage. The product varied with area of application. We especially liked a mixture of beeswax and lemon oil (we used Williamsville Wax) where the paint was in good condition – it gives a good shine. We also used orange oil and WD-40 to clean stubborn areas. Linseed oil, commonly used in the past and likely on our vehicles, is not recommended for museum pieces because it darkens over time and gathers and encapsulates dust before it dries. However, we used it judiciously on bare metal to prevent rust and on some dark surfaces in this initial treatment.

Moth balls were placed around and under upholstery and individual powder post beetle holes that appeared active were treated. Lastly, records for each vehicle were updated noting new details on condition and future needs.