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FINE BOOKS INTERVIEW

# Hearst's INTERNATIONAL



A rare Hearst's cover by Czech Art Nouveau painter/illustrator Alphonse Mucha.

## A New Jersey Neurologist Keeps Three Centuries of American Magazines Alive

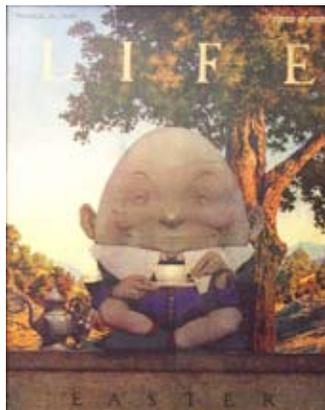
# Bedside Manor

**By Richard W. Stevenson** “One day I am visited by a collector of ordination sermons; the next, by a collector of 4th of July orations; then comes a collector of geography; an other wants religious newspapers; another wants every book printed in New York before 1700. I accommodate myself to all; for I want every thing and collect every thing, and I have more zeal than the whole of them.”

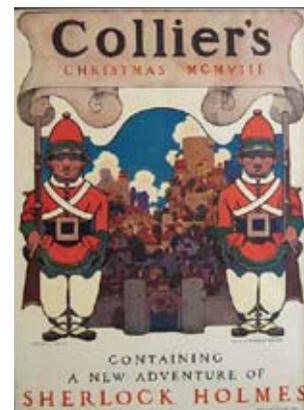
So wrote Christopher Columbus Baldwin, who from 1827 to 1835 served as librarian—and sole, full time employee—at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, an organization devoted to the printed matter that chronicles our history. Now meet Steven Lomazow, M.D., present day member of the American Antiquarian Society, and Baldwin’s brother-in-zeal. Lomazow’s home in



In 1902 *McLure's* began running Ida Tarbell's great muckraking history of Standard Oil.



Parrish painted Humpty Dumpty for the Easter 1921 cover of *Life*.



Sherlock Holmes made his American debut in *Collier's*.



In February 1937 *Look* put Nazi leader Hermann Goering on the cover, feeding a lion cub with a baby bottle.



Ben Franklin's 1740 *American*.



The first issue of *Boys' Life* appeared in March 1911.

suburban New Jersey is completely overrun by America's love affair with bedside reading: room upon room of American magazines, dating back to the 18th century.

In a lighthearted bit of self-analysis, Lomazow says: "I have a little bit of attention deficit, like a lot of crazy people." In fact, he's a polymath with a generous nature, intent on sharing what he knows with others. And he knows a lot, about a lot. According to Richard West of *Periodyssey*, who specializes in pre-1950 periodicals: "Steve Lomazow has made a world-class collection. It's unlikely there's a better one out there, anywhere."

In his day job Steve Lomazow is a neurologist, which he describes as a specialty of last resort for people suffering from the intractable, like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. He serves on the board of his local medical society in New Jersey and frequently lectures on matters neurological. Lomazow is currently writing a medical biography of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, due to be published in 2009 by Public Affairs Press, and he used to produce and host a medical radio program, "Real Medicine Radio," which aired on New York City radio station WOR.

But he was a born collector, starting as a boy with stamps and coins. He's been collecting magazines for 30 years, beginning when he was in medical school in Chicago. He wandered one day into a now defunct bookstore looking for medical ephemera and instead saw the first issues of *Life* and *Look*—magazines whose stories, and in particular, dramatic photographs—explained all the big events of the mid 20th century to millions of readers.

"The February 1937 *Look* issue has Hermann Goering on the cover and when I looked inside it said, "Volume 1, Number 2," despite ample documentation that this was indeed *Look's* "first issue," said Lomazow, in an interview that can be found on his blog ([www.magazinehistory.blogspot.com](http://www.magazinehistory.blogspot.com)). When the young medical resident asked the bookstore owner what happened to Volume 1, Number 1, the man said he didn't know. "I was hooked," said Lomazow. It took him 15 years to find the answer. Number 1 turned out to have been a larger, very fragile issue, essentially a "dummy" mocked up for internal use of the publisher in Des Moines, Iowa. "I obtained one at great expense in the late eighties and have only seen (and owned) one other of this truly ephemeral magazine," said Lomazow.

For magazine collectors Lomazow wrote *American Periodicals: A Collector's Manual and*

*Reference Guide*, currently available on Amazon, which the author calls "the single most comprehensive tome on the subject. I've also put together a catalog of the acquisitions I've made in the last ten years as a supplement," he said.

The Lomazow Collection begins with a strong selection of magazines published in America before 1800, including complete runs of *Columbian*, *American Museum*, *Pennsylvania* and *Boston Magazine*, most of *Royal American* and many other rarities. "I doubt if I could replace more than a handful," said Lomazow.

The collection continues with two large rooms containing thousands of volumes and first issues of key American periodicals from 1800 to the present. "Lately," said Lomazow, "I've been focusing on pulp magazines. The universe of pulps is about 1,000 titles. I have been trying to obtain the first issue of each and every one of them. Currently I'm about 165 short of completing the collection, an almost impossible task but a lot of fun trying. And to think—this all started with some positive reinforcement in second grade 'show and tell!'"

According to Lomazow the first use of the word "magazine" in the context of a "storehouse" of information, was in *Gentleman's Magazine*, which began publishing in London in 1731. In America, magazines have covered every aspect of the country's popular culture with a "uniquely comprehensive textual and visual eye," and the information on the Lomazow blog makes clear how important magazines have been in American history.

The section on periodicals from the 18th century shows the cover of John Peter Zenger's *New York Weekly Journal* and here Lomazow writes, "With this issue Zenger initiated the debate over freedom of the press in America. His controversial writings brought about his trial and imprisonment by the colonial government and laid the groundwork for a basic tenet of democracy later codified in the First Amendment to the Constitution."

Lomazow also owns copies of the first and second magazines published in America. The protean Ben Franklin planned to publish America's first magazine but one Andrew Bradford, whose publication was called *American Magazine, or, Monthly View of the Political State of the British Colonies*, beat him to press by three days in January, 1741, and stole the credit. Franklin's effort was called the *General Magazine*.

Printing and the products of the press were central to Franklin's life. He learned the craft

as an apprentice to his brother James Franklin, publisher of the pioneering Boston newspaper the *New-England Courant*. When he was 16, young Ben wrote an essay on freedom of thought published under the pen name Silence Dogood. It got the brothers Franklin into deep trouble with the Puritan authorities in Boston, for whom in 1722 the idea of freedom of thought was about as welcome as bubonic plague. After he moved to Philadelphia Franklin made enough money as a writer and printer to retire at 40, and in Colonial America only the Bible outsold *Poor Richard's Almanack*.

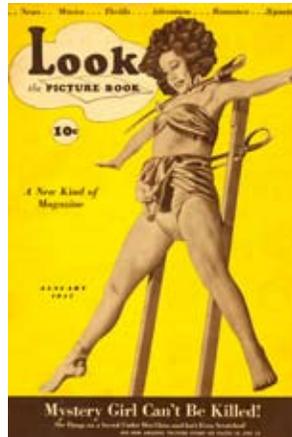
Steve Lomazow also consults for the Washington, DC-based Newseum, a museum that focuses on five centuries of news history and is located adjacent to the Smithsonian museums on the National Mall. Here, a hundred choice examples from the Lomazow collection are on loan, publications central to the history of journalism in America. This grouping includes the November 1902 issue of *McClure's Magazine*, which contains the first of a 19-part series, "The History of the Standard Oil Company," written by Ida Tarbell.

Today the phrase "malefactors of great wealth" is once again current, which makes the life and career of journalist/writer Ida Minerva Tarbell even more interesting than usual. She was one of the first "muckrakers," early 20th-century slang for investigative reporter. Tim Friend, a staffer at the Newseum, writes:

"Tarbell's groundbreaking 19-part series, "The History of the Standard Oil Company," was published in *McClure's Magazine* from 1902 to 1904. The exposé tracked John D. Rockefeller's path to fortune and exposed shady deals that harmed honest businessmen, among them Tarbell's father. Tarbell's investigation inflamed readers' passions, inspired journalists and led to new antitrust laws."

Steven Lomazow's collection of Americana continues to grow as his collecting net spreads wider. "My girlfriend and I have begun to collect outsider art and mid-20th century material, dinnerware in particular," he said. "You can get a lot of collecting bang for not too many bucks." 📖

**Richard W. Stevenson** is a freelance writer focusing on art, antiques and historic preservation. He and his wife live in an 18th-century house that shelters a collection of 18th-century American furniture and many, many books about the history and evolution of America's material culture.



The very first *Look* (January 1937) was a mockup on rotogravure paper, with a magician's girl on the front, and Marlene Dietrich on the back cover.



Maxwell Parrish painted the Frog Prince for *Hearst's* July 1912 cover.