

# EXHIBITING 101: The Title Page

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Regardless whether you exhibit thematics, postal history or postcards, your title page may well be the most important page of your exhibit. This is especially true in the Brave New World of exhibiting ushered in at the national level by the *Manual of Judging and Exhibiting* (7<sup>th</sup> edition). Yet far too many exhibitors simply dash off the title page without a second thought.

The title page is not simply a piece of paper containing nothing but the title of the exhibit. Rather, as Randy Neil explains in his *Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook* (Third edition) at 129-30, the title page is best used to explain the exhibit's significance and to "draw a clear, easily understood roadmap for the judge." The well-done title page also can note particularly important items in the exhibit, or new discoveries or research by the exhibitor. Depending on how well these purposes are fulfilled, the title page can have a major impact on the ultimate award level at both local and national exhibitions.

Given the importance of the title page, for experienced exhibitors it is often the first page written and the last one finalized. It is quite common for an exhibitor to revise the title page multiple times during the process of designing and mounting an exhibit.

Much like the introductory paragraph to an essay, the title page should define – as exactly as possible – what the exhibit will show. A judge or member of the public reading the title page should be able to understand both the scope and content of the exhibit, expecting neither more nor less than the exhibit ultimately delivers.

Indeed, the title itself should define the scope of the exhibit. If the title suggests a broader or narrower scope than the exhibit delivers, the award level will suffer accordingly. Using *Shakespeare* as a title suggests that the exhibit will cover Shakespeare's life, sonnets and the impact of his works, as well as his plays. On the other hand, one would expect an exhibit titled *Shakespeare's Comedies* to be limited to the creation, plot, staging and impact of that subset of his plays.

Judges, having limited time to devote to each exhibit, will not appreciate having to search through dense paragraphs of text on the title page to find the statement

## Great Lakes Passenger Steamers of Old

— Travel in days gone bye.

It is the intent of this exhibit to give the viewer a feeling of what traveling around the Great Lakes was like during the 1850's - 1920's. It was an era when steamships plied the Great Lakes carrying passengers, produce and commercial products. In the 1850's there were no roads around the Great Lakes only paths made by the Indians. The Lakes were surrounded by forests, traveling to non-neighboring towns was by passenger steamer. The slowest was being set by immigrants many arriving by steamer. With the expansion of railroads and the arrival of the horse-less carriage, steamer business began a steady decline forecasting the end of an era.



Steamer City of Cleveland  
"The Largest Side Wheeler Steamer In The World" Text on the front of the card.  
◆ The red diamond designates items difficult to acquire.



Title Page

- 1.0 Introduction to Great Lakes Steamship Transportation
- 2.0 Steamers Types Defined by Population
  - 2.1 The Side-Wheelers (Paddle Wheel Steamers)
  - 2.2 Screw Driven Steamers (Propeller Driven Steamers)
- 3.0 Navigation Problems On The Great Lakes
  - 3.1 Lake Michigan's Limestone Eastern Shore
  - 3.2 Winter Ice Problems
- 4.0 Impact On The Great Lakes Region
  - 4.1 St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, Michigan
  - 4.2 Mackinac Island
  - 4.3 Isle La Poudre
  - 4.4 Bulls Lake
  - 4.5 Pelee Bay
  - 4.6 Cedar Point
  - 4.7 Niagara Falls
  - 4.8 Crystal Beach, Ontario, Canada
- 5.0 Major US Great Lakes Steamship Lines (Four or More ships)
  - 5.1 Cleveland & Buffalo Line
  - 5.2 Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Line
  - 5.3 Goodrich Transit Company
  - 5.4 Graham & Morton Transportation Company
  - 5.5 White Star Line
- 6.0 Smaller US Great Lakes Steamship Companies
  - 6.1 Northern Michigan Transportation Company
  - 6.2 Indiana Transportation Company
  - 6.3 Hull Lake and Windsor Ferry Co.
  - 6.4 Northern Steamship Company
  - 6.5 Chesney & South Haven Steamship Company
  - 6.7 Ashley & Dustin Steamer Line
  - 6.8 Georgian Bay Line
  - 6.9 Chequamegon Bay Transportation Company
  - 6.10 Lake Erie Steamship Company
- 7.0 Canadian Steamship Lines
  - 7.1 Canadian Pacific Railroad Line
  - 7.2 Niagara Navigation Co. (Canada S. S. Line)
  - 7.3 Northern Navigation Co. (Canada S. S. Line)
  - 7.4 Nicholson & Ontario Navigation Company (Canada S. S. Line)
  - 7.5 Toxvale Steamship Company
- 8.0 Major Great Lakes Ship Wreckage
  - 8.1 The S. S. Graftland Disaster
  - 8.2 The S. S. Niagara Disaster
- 9.0 The End of The Great Lakes Steamship Industry
  - 9.1 The Impact Of The Railroad

## Great Lakes Passenger Steamers of Old - Roland Essig

of purpose and scope of the exhibit. It is therefore a good idea (absent a very good reason not to) to set off your statement of purpose and scope somehow so it is easy to find on the title page. Some exhibitors use a box around the statement of purpose, while others use a bolded header or the like. The following is the current statement of purpose from my *Spuds* exhibit:

**Purpose:** *This thematically organized Illustrated Mail exhibit uses advertising covers and some ephemera of the time to portray the production methods, uses, and folklore of potatoes in the United States roughly between 1870 and 1935.*

Keep in mind that the statement of purpose is especially important at APS national-level shows judged under the *Manual of Judging and Exhibiting* (7<sup>th</sup> edition). A primary impact of that new edition is to abolish the need to shoehorn exhibits into strict classes and categories, giving exhibitors more freedom to choose what and how to exhibit their material. Of course, a necessary consequence of that change is to place on the exhibitor the responsibility to define for the judges and other viewers exactly what it is they intend to show. Without a detailed and comprehensible statement of purpose, the judges are unable to determine how well the exhibitor accomplished what he or she set out to do. The title page and its impact on the exhibit's treatment scores is discussed in Section 4.3 of the *Manual*, available online at <https://classic.stamps.org/userfiles/file/judges/Judging-Manual.pdf>

A well-designed title page also will summarize the story of your exhibit. Remember, a quality exhibit has a beginning, a middle and a logical ending. The title page will help explain why your story starts where it does, how the exhibit develops that story and why you have chosen the particular ending. This can be done in words or outline form. Although a plan or outline of the exhibit is required for thematic exhibits, either can be useful in other types of exhibits as well, especially where the exhibit is long and the story is complex.

Finally, the title page can **briefly** explain the exhibit's significance or highlight important items (or how to find them in the exhibit). Why should anyone care about the postal history of some small Iowa county that did not even exist until shortly before the Civil War? Perhaps because the postal development of that county reflects or represents the similar development of any number of similar counties throughout the Midwest. Why should we care about hoot owls? Maybe because of their impact on the broader environment and sustainability of a given ecosystem.

### Haiti's 1c Royal Palm of 1892

#### Introduction:

The 1c value was issued in December 1892, along with the 2c and 7c. The 2c and 5c were not issued until 1894, and the 20c in 1895. All were recess engraved and printed by Skipper & East of London, except for the 20c lithographed stamp of 1895. Sheets consisted of 100 stamps (10 x 10) on unwatermarked wove paper and perforated gauge 14 x 14.

#### Aims:

(1) To illustrate the three different colors of the 1c value which ought to be catalogued – violet, lilac, and brown lilac.  
(2) To comprehensively examine and illustrate various stages of the production and usage of the 1c stamp.



1c violet

1c lilac

1c brown lilac



1c essays, imperforate and perforated.

Likely made in Germany.

Only known examples of the 1c in brown.



Undershot recess engraved die proof.  
Only known example.



Similar postcards and trade cards depicting the 2c value of the series are encountered with some frequency. This postcard, depicting the 1c is uncommon. Published by Kienliff Frères circa 1900. Only two examples known.

#### Scope:

Essays, proofs, varieties, and multiples are included. Several have been previously unrecorded, and/or represent the only known examples, and/or represent the largest known multiples. Covers illustrate various internal and external rates of the period some of which are uncommon – i.e. 2c internal rate, 2c merchandise rate to Europe, 5c Caribbean single weight letter rate). Earliest known usages, towns and transit cancels are also included.

Especially significant items are highlighted in red.

### Haiti's 1c Royal Palm of 1892

- Peter Jeannopoulos

The judge or others viewing the exhibit may not know if you do not tell them and may not be willing to wait until the second row of the third frame to find out.

The bold qualification in the preceding paragraph is important. This is not a book, a PhD thesis or even a magazine article you are creating. It is an exhibit for which the judges and others in the viewing audience have little time and much information to try to take in. Again, your job is to make it easy for them to do so.

As for important items, some exhibitors choose to identify the most important items or groups of items right up front on the title page. While not required, such a tactic reduces the risk that the judge and other viewers will miss your best material. Indeed, there was a time when exhibitors would place one of the very best items on the title page as a kind of teaser of things to come. While the exhibitor should not be docked for such a move today, the consensus currently seems to be that the top pieces should be included where they logically fit in the body of the exhibit and that the title page should be reserved for either an item appropriate to the beginning of the story told by the exhibit or an item representative of the exhibit storyline as a whole.

Of course, there is no rule that you must place a philatelic item on the title page. Anything that draws the viewer into the exhibit's story or helps to tell it can be placed on the title page, be it a map, a photograph, a picture postcard or – as with a transformational exhibit from the 1980s called *Gold Fever* – a real gold nugget.

In the end, the importance of your title page rests on two factors. First, the title page often is your best – and usually only – chance to catch the attention of the viewing public. Especially where there are a number of exhibits to see, a boring, uninformative title page or uncreative title will lose the audience to your story no matter how impressive the philatelic material actually shown in the rest of the exhibit.

Second, with very limited exceptions, the title page alone, from among all the pages of your exhibit, goes to the judges before the show. The title page, sometimes joined by the plan page and a synopsis page (to be discussed in a later article, but which is not actually part of the exhibit), is the only page of your exhibit that the judges must read. Again, a boring or pedestrian title page will lead the jury to expect more of the same at the frames, while a well-done title page will leave the judges enthusiastic to see the rest of the exhibit.

For a period of time, the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE) offered an award for the best title page at World Series of Philately (WSP) shows (that is, those shows whose multiframe grand award-winning exhibits compete at the annual Champion of Champions competition at the annual APS Stampshow). You can see some of the winning title pages posted online at [www.aaape.org/aaape\\_awards\\_title\\_page\\_winners.asp](http://www.aaape.org/aaape_awards_title_page_winners.asp)

At the next show you attend, take the time to read several of the title pages of the exhibits presented. Indeed, reviewing other exhibits is a great way to get new ideas for your own exhibits, regardless of the level of the show and the overall quality of the exhibits. See what you like about them and what you decide just does not work for you. Then feel free to incorporate the ideas you like into your own exhibit. ☐