

The Far Traveler, June 29, 2000-September 3, 2000

Historically, people have traveled for many reasons: exploration, pilgrimage, migration, trade, diplomacy, or education. Until the advent of steam power in the 19th century, journeys were made on foot, on the backs of animals, in carts or carriages pulled by oxen or horses, or aboard boats powered by oars or sails. Traveling even short distances was time-consuming, and even for the wealthy, it was often risky and rough.

With the development of new modes of transportation, however, travel solely for the pleasure of visiting new places and seeing new things became more common. Railways, steamships, automobiles, and airplanes all fostered the growth of travel as a leisure activity.

To travel in comfort - and in style - required specialized clothing and equipment. And, of course, what necessity called for, fashion enhanced. Inspired and challenged by the requirements of portability and economy of size, designers created artful and ingenious solutions to the problems faced by the traveler.

The aura of romance and adventure surrounding travel also inspired artists to create works that reflected or influenced society's perception of travel and the means of travel. The works in this gallery reveal some of ways in which art and industry responded to the needs and desires of travelers and the concept of travel, during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Air Travel

In its earliest years, immediately after World War I, commercial aviation was confined to a few passengers riding in a cramped, noisy, unpressurized, unheated cabin, as an adjunct to the mail service. Those who traveled in their own planes fared little better. Until the mid 1920s, both commercial and private pilots usually sat in open cockpits, at the mercy of the elements. By the mid 1930s, better engines, metal construction, and streamlined designs made aircraft more comfortable, reliable, and fast enough to compete with railways or ships over long distances. Not until after the Second World War did long-range land-based aircraft make intercontinental air travel competitive with the great ocean liners. After 1958, large capacity jet-powered aircraft changed commercial aviation, opening the way for mass travel on a scale, and in a time frame, never before considered.

Space and weight were always restricted when traveling by air. In the 1930s it was not uncommon to ship a trunk or two - carrying the larger portion of one's wardrobe - to one's destination ahead of time by rail. The post-war weight limit of 44 pounds, including suitcases, made coordinated wardrobes and multi-purpose garments an important consideration for travelers.

Motor Travel

The automobile had a profound impact on travel and travelers. Women joined men in pursuit of the 'sport' of motoring, and as cars became more reliable mechanically, people took to the open road in great numbers, happy that they had no schedule to follow, no timetable to keep, no train to catch. A sense of freedom and spontaneity was often a dividend of travel by automobile. Automobile travel spawned a host of related enterprises, such as the motel, that catered to motorists.

RISD MUSEUM

In motoring's early days, when most cars were open to the wind and dust of the road, protective garments were essential wear for passengers and drivers. Sporting goods manufacturers were often the first to cater to the new clientele, but purveyors of fashionable merchandise followed rapidly. Even when closed cars made protection of the passengers and driver unnecessary, special luggage and other fitted gear was still important. Specially designed motoring accessories saved space and weight, providing a comfortable ride for motorists while surrounding them with the comforts of home.

Railway and Steamship Travel

In the mid 19th century a paddlewheel steamship with auxiliary sails might take six weeks or more to make a trans-Atlantic crossing. By the 1920s, a typical turbine-powered ocean liner might take six days to make the same trip. When the trans-continental railway was completed in 1869, a two-day train trip from Chicago to San Francisco saved weeks of travel time in a horse-drawn coach.

Trains and steamships were heralded as faster, although at first noisier and dirtier, alternatives to their non-mechanized predecessors. With the passage of time, as the machinery was refined, they became luxurious and fashionable means of travel. Railway lines opened across continents; steam powered ships plied rivers, lakes and oceans. The 18th century "Grand Tour," a trip of two or three years duration, could be compressed in the early 20th century into a season.

Well-to-do travelers could carry as much extra luggage in the train's baggage car or ship's hold as they could afford. However, even in First Class, a train's compartments or a ship's cabins were not always equipped to hold all personal belongings they needed in transit. Many items were designed expressly to accommodate the need to carry and store travelers' essentials efficiently and beautifully.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

American; Possibly
Match safe
Silver plate
Gift of the estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.32



RISD MUSEUM

Women's shoes

Gift of Mrs. Henry C. Babcock 1993.018



Vera Maxwell, American, 1901-1995

Coat, 1975

Ultrasuede

Gift of Vera Maxwell 80.065.8A



Vera Maxwell, American, 1901-1995

Skirt, 1975

Ultrasuede

Gift of Vera Maxwell 80.065.8B

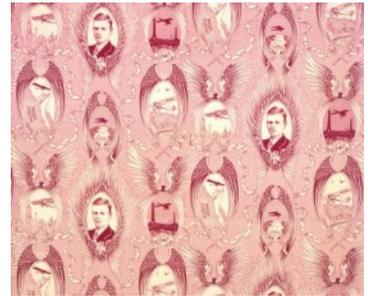


RISD MUSEUM

Vera Maxwell, American, 1901-1995
Blouse, 1975
Polyester
Gift of Vera Maxwell 80.065.8C



Witcombe McGeachin Co.
The Lindbergh Toile, 1927
Cotton
Gift of Mrs. Constance Wharton Smith 58.165.33A



Coveralls and helmet
Gift of the Whitehouse estate 58.160.10

RISD MUSEUM

French

Coverall flight suit, ca. 1917

Cotton

Gift of the Whitehouse estate 58.160.10A



French

Flying helmet, ca. 1917

Silk

Gift of the Whitehouse estate 58.160.10B



French

Flying helmet, ca. 1917

Cotton

Gift of the Whitehouse estate 58.160.10C



RISD MUSEUM

Bonnie Cashin, American, 1915-2000
Skirt, 1977
Wool
Gift of Phillip Sills 85.198.3B



Bonnie Cashin, American, 1915-2000
Cape, 1977
Wool
Gift of Phillip Sills 85.198.3A



RISD MUSEUM

English

Match Safe, ca.1890

Brass

Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.6

English

Match safe

Brass (alloy); silver plate

Gift of the estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.37



English

Match Safe, ca.1885

Silver

Gift of the Estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.38

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-

Match Safe, ca.1910

Silver

Gift of the estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.41



RISD MUSEUM

American; Probably
Match safe, late 1800s
Silver

Gift of the estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.44



American
Match safe, ca. 1891
Silver; enamel

Gift of the estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.47



American; Probably
Match safe, ca. 1886
Metal

Gift of the estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.48



Duverdrey and Bloquel, French
Travel Alarm clock with Case
Brass (alloy)

Gift of the estate of Elizabeth T. Casey 1989.045.10

RISD MUSEUM

German; Swiss

Poster

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Rowland Hazard 26.148

American

Duster, ca. 1910

Linen; mother of pearl

Gift of Mrs. John Jennings 1986.064



Joyce Shoes, American

Pair of shoes, 1948

Suede; metal

Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.10



RISD MUSEUM

Continental; Possibly

Match safe

Agate; metal

Gift of the estate of Richard Harrington 1990.061.3



Indian

Trousers, ca. 1910

Cotton

Gift of the Whitehouse estate 58.160.6B



RISD MUSEUM

Louis Vuitton, French, founded 1854

Trunk, ca. 1895

Wood

Gift of Mrs. Joseph K. Ott in memory of Mary Sneed Schenck Baker

76.208.54

George Wesley Bellows, American, 1882-1925

Rain on the River, 1908

Oil on canvas

Jesse Metcalf Fund 15.063



Franklin Simon Co.

Cape, ca. 1910

Silk; mother of pearl

Gift of the estate of Miss Ethel Merriman 68.108.48A



C.A. Buffington Co., American, Early 20th Century

The Buffington Folding Chair, 1915-1920

Iron; wood; brass (alloy)

Gift of Joseph K. Ott 83.234

RISD MUSEUM

Vaill & Co., American, Late 19th Century
Railway excursion folding chair, late 1800s
Rosewood; wool
Gift of Russell Ward Nadeau 1989.027

American
Skirt, 1880s
Gift of Helen W. Kelliher 60.016A



American
Jacket, 1880s
Gift of Helen W. Kelliher 60.016B



RISD MUSEUM

Indian

Jacket, ca. 1910

Cotton

Gift of the Whitehouse estate 58.160.6A



French

Motoring veil, 1906

Gift of Mrs. John W. Mackay 58.009.43



Hoar & Co., Indian

Suit worn by W. F. Whitehouse, ca. 1910

Cotton double cloth, twill weave

Gift of the Whitehouse Estate 58.160.6



RISD MUSEUM

American
Skirt, ca. 1910
Silk
Gift of the estate of Miss Ethel Merriman 68.108.48B



American
Belt, ca. 1910
Gift of the estate of Miss Ethel Merriman 68.108.48C

American
Bandbox, ca. 1830
Cardboard; block printed paper
Gift of the estate of Arthur Heiningen 1986.188.10

RISD MUSEUM

American

Set of mechanical drawing instruments, mid 1800s

Wood; silver

Gift of Mrs. Adelaide F. Horton 35.782

Asser & Sherwin, English

Writing Cabinet, ca. 1850

Walnut veneer; mahogany; brass (alloy)

Gift of Luella Johnson in memory of Emily Pollard Johnson 190.130

Louis Caplan, American

Woman's day suit, ca. 1907

Wool twill-weave coat, bodice, and skirt with silk satin lining

Gift of Mrs. Clarence E. Bird 69.137.2



RISD MUSEUM

American
Coat, ca. 1880
Gift of Mrs. Francis Boardman 55.025.24



American
Dress, ca. 1905
Cotton
Gift of Mrs. Gurney Edwards 55.069.2



RISD MUSEUM

Italian

Women's shoes, 1982

Leather

Gift of Phyllis Feldkamp 1986.162.2



Red Grooms, American, b. 1937

Lysiane Luong, French, b. 1951

The Fabric Workshop

Mummy Bag, 1986

Hand-screenprinted cotton plain weave

Museum purchase: gift of Norman J. Bolotow, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph A.

Chazan, Steven L. Lerner, Mrs. Frank Mauran, Mr. and Mrs. Houghton

P. Metcalf, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Nathan and Roslyn H. Winograd

1987.045



Springs Industries, American, est. 1887

Furnishing textile length, ca. 1933-1940

Cotton plain weave, printed

Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 1999.29.4



Eric William Ravillious, English, 1903-1942

Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, English, 1759-present

"Travel" demitasse and saucer, ca. 1936-1940

Glazed earthenware

Anonymous gift 1996.108

RISD MUSEUM

James Tissot, French, 1836-1902
The Two Friends, ca. 1881
Oil on canvas
Helen M. Danforth Acquisition Fund 60.005



Charles Sheeler, American, 1883-1965
Yankee Clipper, 1939
Oil on canvas
Jesse Metcalf Fund and Mary B. Jackson Fund 41.006



RISD MUSEUM

LoBalbo
Milliken
Lord & Taylor, American, 20th century
Coat, 1948
Wool
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.1



Filcol
Saks Fifth Avenue, American, 20th century
Evening dress, 1948
Rayon
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.2



RISD MUSEUM

Gaynes
Bonwit Teller, American, 20th century
Skirt, 1948
Wool
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.4



Blouse, ca. 1964
Silk
Gift of Sybil Kern 1990.112.10



RISD MUSEUM

Gorham Manufacturing Company, American, 1831-
Flask, 1879
Silver with gilding
The Gorham Collection. Gift of Textron Inc. 1991.126.213ab



Majestic
Bonwit Teller, American, 20th century
Blouse, 1948
Wool
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.8



Carlisle Shoes
Lord & Taylor, American, 20th century
Women's shoes, 1948
Leather
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.12



RISD MUSEUM

Madcaps, American
Beret, 1948
Fur; rayon
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.14



Betmar, French; American, 20th century
Hat, 1948
Cotton
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.15



Ronay
Handbag, 1948
Leather; metal
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.16



RISD MUSEUM

Suzy
Beret, 1948
Cotton
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.17



John Lobb
Men's shoes, 1960s
Leather
Gift of Arnold Scaasi 1991.029



Surrey Classics
Lord & Taylor, American, 20th century
Dress with belt and hat, 1948
Wool
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.6



RISD MUSEUM

Filcol
Cheney Brothers Silk Manufacturing Company, American, 1734-1979
B. Altman Co., American, 20th century
Suit jacket, 1948
Cotton
Gift of Virginia Hardesty Moss 1999.38.5



American
Pair of boots, ca. 1917
Gift of the Museum of the City of New York 59.099.11



B. Altman Co., American, 20th century
Duster, ca. 1910
Linen
Gift of Mrs. Frank Dunne 60.072.12



RISD MUSEUM

American
Duster, ca. 1910
Linen; cotton; silk
Museum Collection S1986.056



American
Duster, ca. 1910
Silk
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Georges Seligmann 59.123.16



RISD MUSEUM

American
Hat, ca. 1880
Straw
Gift of Mrs. F. H. Hood 57.206.3



American
Boots, ca. 1915
Gift of Hazel Goff 55.073.5



Mme. Howard, American, fl. 1875-1900
Hat, ca. 1905
Silk; marabou feather
Gift of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
59.095.79



RISD MUSEUM

American
Women's shoes, 1960's
Suede; leather
Gift of Erma Leavitt 1986.128.7



American
Umbrella, ca. 1900
Silk; wood
Gift of Mrs. Gerard P. Herrick 59.141.7



Puritan Fabrics Co.
"Design Overseas", ca. 1939
Cotton
Jesse Metcalf Fund 2000.32.1



American
Chemisette, ca. 1900
Gift of Mrs. Joseph K. Ott in memory of Mary Sneed Schenck Baker
76.208.42



RISD MUSEUM

American
Blouse, ca. 1916
Silk
Gift of Murray S. Danforth, Jr. S82.160

Women's shoes
Gift of Mr. Rodman A. Heeren 62.017.16



American
Parasol, 1870s
Silk; wood
Museum Collection S85.158

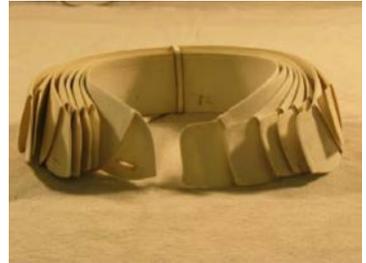


D. G. Eldridge, Inc.
Shirt worn by Richard Merkin, 1967/1972
Cotton plain weave
Gift of Richard Merkin 2000.22.6



RISD MUSEUM

American
Collar, ca. 1900
Anonymous gift 82.053.7A



Men's shoes, early 1900s
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph K. Ott 79.077.22



English
Tumbler with carrying case, ca. 1800-1810
Blown, colorless lead glass, cut and engraved; rattan case
Walter H. Kimball Fund 1993.038



RISD MUSEUM

American
Purse, 1900
Alligator
Gift of Mrs. D. E. Jackson, Jr. 57.195.23



European
Drinking glass, 1900s
Glass; leather
Gift of Daphne Peabody Murray 84.040.17

English
Picnic / Traveling Tea Set, early 1800s
Porcelain; glass; tin; silver plate; gold; wicker
Gift of Mrs. Frank Mauran and Pauline C. Metcalf 1997.97



American
Bandbox, early 1800s
Cardboard; wallpaper
Gift of Stephen Minot Pitman 17.368