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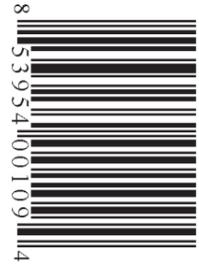
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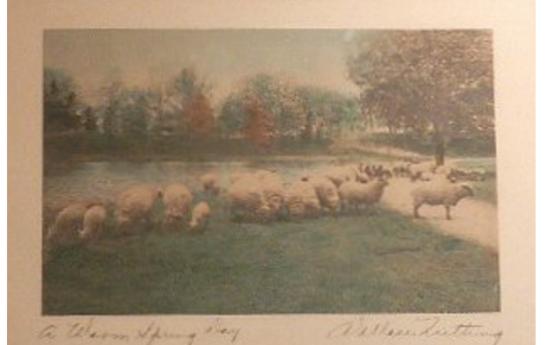
THE WEEKLY ANTIQUE AUCTION & COLLECTING NEWSPAPER

EASTERN EDITION

VOL. 51 ISSUE No. 2556

WWW.ANTIQUEWEEK.COM

SEPTEMBER 10, 2018



Nutting photos still paint a pretty picture

BY BARBARA MILLER BEEM

It was a new century, the 20th century, and the American landscape was changing. Automobiles were soon to take the place of horse and buggies, and quiet country lanes were destined to be paved over and studded with telephone poles, traffic signals, and billboards.

As he pedaled his bicycle through the idyllic countryside, one New England clergyman found the loss of natural beauty more than he could bear. So Wallace Nutting, a Congregational minister, began experimenting with hand-tinted photography. And within the next half-century, there was scarcely an American home that did not have one of his pictures hanging on the wall.

Nutting was born in Rockbottom, Mass., in 1861, the first year of the Civil War; his father, Albion, joined the Union war effort before his son's first birthday and was killed in battle. Wallace's mother, Elizabeth, moved back home with her family in Maine with Wallace and his older sister in tow. Educated at Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard University, Nutting went on to seminary and was awarded a Doctor of Divinity in 1893. He and his wife Mariet (whom he married in 1887) proceeded to move about the country, serving a string of parishes, ultimately returning to New England.

By 1904, due in part to health issues, Nutting stepped back from the ministry and pursued what had begun as a hobby but rapidly bloomed into his true passion: photography. The following year, the Nuttings moved to a Southbury, Conn., house they named "Nuttinghame," from which they operated their photography studio until 1912. Making the decision to move closer to the Boston market, the Nuttings relocated to Framingham, Mass. Here, at the home they called "Nuttingholme," their business continued to grow and flourish.

Not only did Nutting have a good eye for capturing a pleasing scene, but he also had a keen business sense. He knew his market, which, at first, was primarily New England farmers, and he understood what they wanted to see in their homes and what they didn't want. "The last thing they wanted to be reminded of was snow," said Michael Ivankovich, a longtime Nutting enthusiast. Instead, the collector continued, they primarily wanted to see the promise of the upcoming spring. Nutting also photographed the interiors of

Above Left: Fearing that the idyllic nature of America would be lost, Nutting photographed scenes much like this one. The pink blossoms cheered New England farmers, reminding them that spring was just around the corner.; Above Middle: If you're a farmer, do you really need a reminder of what cows look like?; Above Right: Animal pictures were not Nutting's best sellers, but they are favored today by many serious collectors.

homes with "women doing chores, such as sewing, cooking and tending the hearth," Ivankovich noted. For some reason, images of men did not sell ("I can't tell you why").

Similarly, pictures with sheep, cows, and animals were not among popular sellers; Ivankovich suggested that farmers saw enough of them during the day and did not necessarily consider them to be a desirable subject for art.



Above: Old Mother Hubbard holds the record for the Nutting picture commanding the highest dollar: \$9,300 at auction.

Less frequently, Nutting photographed still-life settings; he also embarked on three European tours (in 1904, 1915, and 1925), taking pictures along the way. He took all of his own pictures, sometimes as many as 100 in a day.

After capturing an image on glass plates, Nutting returned to his studio, developed the negatives, and named and recorded each picture. Sometimes, he would assign two names to one image, later dropping the one that sold less than the other. He conferred with the supervisor of his colorists (who would later write the title and Nutting's name on each completed picture) to determine how to best enhance the image. A model was created, and the staff of colorists would then hand tint each picture accordingly ("some were better than others," Ivankovich said). Over the years, at least 100 colorists were employed. Because they mixed their own paints and had varying talents, no two

Wallace Nutting pictures are the same, Ivankovich stated. Most of the artists were young women, many of whom were sent by their parents to live with the Nuttings. Not only was working for the artist considered to be a suitable job for a woman, but the Nuttings were thought to be "safe" because of his background in the ministry.

Additionally, Nutting employed a staff to mat and frame those pictures that he sold directly to the public, although pictures were also available through catalog sales, and at gift shops and department stores. Nutting did

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