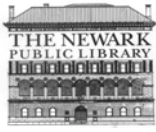


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Newark Public Library Exhibit Takes Viewers on European Grand Tour

For generations of Englishmen, a journey through the cultural epicenters of Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries was considered a fashionable rite of passage reserved for the wealthy and elite. The trip, dubbed by author Richard Lassels as the "Grand Tour" in 1679, typically included extended stops in Paris, Florence, Milan, Venice and Rome.

The route expanded with time and often included Berlin, Geneva, Amsterdam, the Hague, and other cities. According to historians Peter Hanns Reill and Ellen Judy Watson, the Grand Tour was commonly seen as the final step in a young man's (and at that time, never a woman's) education. It provided worldly cultural sophistication through the exposure of foreign customs, experiencing great works of art and ancient ruins, and learning foreign languages. All of this was considered a necessity for a man of high social standing. The original Grand Tour of the English gentry lasted into the early 19th century, but given that many cities along the old grand tour routes were major destinations to many other northern Europeans and also for Americans throughout the 19th century, one can argue that Grand Tours still take place even today.

In April, the Newark Public Library will re-create this journey through vintage travel posters, fine prints and illustrated books that highlight the history, architecture, and art of the cities along the grand tour route. The exhibit, *The European Grand Tour: Visiting the Old World through the Collections of the Newark Public Library*, will be on display in the Library's second floor gallery from April 7 through May 29.

Chad Leinaweaver of the Special Collections Division is the curator of the exhibit.

The exhibit will include engravings and etchings of European cities by various artists from the 16th to 20th centuries, maps from the 16th century, modern day tourist maps, and massive illustrated tomes of various cities often visited by these young gentlemen.

It will feature a postcard booklet, *Relief Panorama of the Rhine*, which unfolds to five feet in length, and a selection of oversized illustrated books, such as *Le Nouvel Opéra de Paris*, whose plates document the architecture of the famed Paris Opera House and *The History of St. Paul's Cathedral in London from its Foundation Extracted out of Original Charters, Records, Leiger-books and other Manuscripts*, which was published a few years before the Great London Fire of 1777 that devastated the original St. Paul's Cathedral.

Also included is a German pop-up book that highlights historic and modern sites in Berlin, and *Tudor Homes of England with Some Examples from Later Periods*, an oversized illustrated book on English architecture.

The Grand Tour is associated largely with England, where graduates from wealthy families viewed the trip as a critical step to attaining cultural enlightenment. The young men meandered through Europe for months or possibly even for years (sometimes learning much more about liquor and women than culture and language, much to the chagrin of their creditors), traveling with unlimited funds and aristocratic connections, making the trip a symbol of prestige for the wealthy. However, young men of more modest means also often took their own Grand Tour, particularly if they obtained some sort of scholarship or funding to hone their talents in art, music, or other endeavors.

Travelers who embarked on the tour often returned home with books, artifacts, paintings, and pictures that they picked up along the way. The Englishmen were expected to come back as more refined and well-learned aristocrats, taking the knowledge they gained from their trip to influence the arts in England. Some historians have credited the Grand Tour for dramatically changing and improving British culture and architecture.

Author Lassels gave the journey its famous name Grand Tour in his 1679 book, *An Italian Voyage, or a Compleat Journey through Italy*, in which he extolled the virtues of traveling, saying it offered intellectual, social, ethical, and political benefits. His knowledge of art treasures, culture, and language was vast beyond most 17th century Englishmen, and he even took young men along on his travels, as most young gentlemen had a tutor on their Grand Tours.

The European Grand Tour: Visiting the Old World through the Collections of the Newark Public Library is free and open to the public. The Library is located at 5 Washington Street, Newark. For more information about the exhibit, please contact the Special Collections Division at 973-733-7745, specialcollections@npl.org or log on to www.npl.org.