



52 chromolithograph playing cards, elaborate printed clock design to versos, housed in original brown slipcase.

PATRIOTIC PLAYING CARDS, FIRST EDITION

Royal National Patriotic Playing Cards

Author

KIMBERLEY, David

Publication date

[1892].

Publisher

David Kimberley and Sons,

Publication place

Birmingham,

Physical description

52 chromolithograph playing cards, elaborate printed clock design to versos, housed in original brown slipcase.

Dimensions

91 by 62mm. (3.5 by 2.5 inches).

Notes

The Maker

Before the publication of their first deck of cards around 1892, David Kimberley & Sons do not ever seem to have worked in the printing or publishing trade. Rather, they were manufacturers of

carpenters' saws and planes in Birmingham. Since there is no direct reference to this business on their playing cards, they do not seem to have been a publicity or advertising stunt. The motivation behind this deck therefore remains something of a mystery, unless it was purely out of "national patriotic" pride!

The Cards

Across a ten year period, Kimberley issued his "National Patriotic" deck in four editions, the present deck being an example of the first, which appeared in December of 1892, ten months after Kimberley had submitted his application to patent his 'improved playing cards'. Each suit represents a great nation: its Ace bears the national flag and the Court Cards its rulers or leaders, with the Jack depicted as a typical naval soldier:

Clubs - Germany

Diamonds - Britain

Hearts - America

Spades - France.

Interestingly, the pip cards show huge suit marks, containing two mirror-image Arabic numerals providing the value. This was one of the features Kimberley had been keen to patent, but was not reproduced in later editions of the deck. Furthermore, the first edition was by far the most luxurious, printer chromolithographically in eleven colours including gold.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £500

Inventory reference: 20703