

19th Century Theorems From D. M. Dewey 1830 - 1874

Horticultural Bookseller, Rochester, NY

The Nurserymen's Pocket Specimen Book, colored from Nature
of Fruits, Flowers, Ornamental Trees, Shrubs, Roses, &c.

These Theorems, a form of unique American Folk Art, were produced as an accompaniment to advertising that was distributed to greenhouses, nurseries and hardware stores in the nineteenth century. The method used to produce them is the same as that used to execute the decorative work often seen on Hitchcock chairs, hatboxes or stenciled on walls and floors.

The artist, using thin cut copper stencil patterns, painted through the hole with a dry brush, producing the defined edges of the pattern. Then brush stokes were applied individually on top of the painted surface to give further detail, such as the veins of a leaf or freckles on an apple. Often random speckles were spattered on with a wet brush.

These are an example of the evolution of American advertising design which eventually lead to lithography.

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