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## Wake Up, America. World War I and the American Poster.

Walton Rawls, Maurice Rickards  
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#1374530 in Books Abbeville Press 2001-05-01Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 1.40 x 9.50 x 12.30l, 4.85 #File Name: 0896598888288 pages | File size: 74.Mb

**Walton Rawls, Maurice Rickards : Wake Up, America. World War I and the American Poster.** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wake Up, America. World War I and the American Poster.:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful, Well Reproduced, and Interesting Group of Posters and the History They TellBy Randy StaffordA beautiful, big coffee table book not only full of well-reproduced posters but also a brief history of the American war effort as touched upon by the subjects of those posters.Rawls starts out with a brief history of the lithographic poster, an art form still in its golden age during the war. The art poster, not only advertising a product but also aesthetically interesting to collectors, started in France. He also talks about some of the famed European poster artists and their American counterparts on the eve of the war.The poster was an ideal form of

communication in the days before radio and tv, a form that yanked eyes to it and imparted a message even to the illiterate or those not speaking the language of the land they found themselves in. Every nation in the war used them. A German artist who later achieved some political prominence said that American and British posters were the best of the war, uncluttered and effectively conveying their demands to the viewer, conveying and persuading. The book has a number of non-American posters illustrating events in the pre- and early war years or those few that inspired American imitators. Americans were producing posters concerned with the war even before the country joined the conflict. Most begged for money to relieve suffering in France and Belgium, an effort very efficiently managed by future President Herbert Hoover. Others were affiliated with the 1915 preparedness efforts of groups like the private National Security League to get ready for a war they thought inevitable. On April 17, 1917, a mere 11 days after America entered the war, the president of the Society of Illustrators, Charles Dana Gibson, the man who created the famous pictures of Gibson girls, was asked by illustrator George Creel to let the latter form a committee to produce whatever artwork the government needed. On April 22nd, Gibson met with Creel and the Division of Pictorial Publicity of the Committee on Public Information was born. By the end of the war, they had produced 700 poster designs to the U.S. government as well as hundreds of other advertisements, cartoons, banners, seals, and buttons. The subjects were multiple: recruiting for the military, food and fuel conservation, war bond, war films, counterespionage and security awareness, book drives, the Veterinary Corps, the Y.W.C.A and Y.M.C.A, women in factories, war gardens, and admonitions to immigrants (often in foreign languages) to prove their loyalty. The book talks about American at war through the context of these posters with some mostly forgotten stories like the largely unsuccessful attempt to produce a purely American fighter plane, the Liberty Plane (proclaimed by American ace Eddie Rickenbacker as Flaming Coffins) or the specifics of the Liberty Loan drives or a call by the U.S. Navy for citizens to loan them binoculars and spy-glasses. There are a few post-war posters about hiring veterans, getting other veterans to re-enlist, and the Watch on the Rhine overseeing defeated Germany. Of definite interest for those interested in poster art and World War One. With 279 pages of text and at least one poster on almost every page, there are hundreds of things to look at here. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wake Up, Readers! By untamed cynic I couldn't let this listing pass without posting a better ranking than appears so far. I believe this to be an outstanding book. It is an excellent presentation of the poster art of the era, and how the artists/illustrators fit into and advanced the war effort. It also provides a concise, understandable, and essential summary of World War I. More "history books" should be like this. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A patriotic exploration of the WWI poster's contemporary context By Ryan C While Rawls takes a somewhat naive approach to the motives and methods behind America's actions leading up to and during the First World War, his book incorporates the history of the propaganda poster into a readable, highly useful examination of WWI phenomena including the Committee on Public Information, the Liberty Loans and the US Food Administration. Essential reading for students of American military poster propaganda and the circumstances on the home front during the Great War, though I'd recommend getting your political interpretation of this period from other sources (for instance, "The Politics of War" by Walter Karp -- quite a different take on the same period, particularly on Wilson's motives).

The "War to End All Wars" did not begin as a popular cause. Americans were reluctant to get involved in what they viewed as Europe's war and reelected Woodrow Wilson on his promise to keep this nation out of it. When war became inevitable, public opinion had to be turned around. To do this, the government mobilized the talents of an incredible cadre of artists to create "pictorial publicity" for all aspects of the war effort - from recruiting to war relief to food and fuel conservation. Artists of the calibre of James Montgomery Flagg, Howard Chandler Christy, Charles Dana Gibson, J.C. Leyendecker and N.C. Wyeth produced an impressive -even magnificent - body of art, yet all but a handful of these posters have been almost totally forgotten. In this volume, historian Walton Rawls combines a stirring popular history of America's role in World War I with a remarkable collection of posters that boldly demonstrate their artistic worth. The text, while providing ample art-historical background, concentrates on the all-absorbing historical and political context in which the posters were created. The result is a fascinating look at these artifacts, which can be appreciated today both as graphic masterworks and as illustrations of a tragic historical episode.

From Library Journal World War I coincided with a golden age of achievement in the art of poster design, and all sides in the conflict employed the best talents to make maximum use of the poster's ability to stir emotions. This book tries to re-create a more innocent era in which a poster could be used to "sell" a war. While the book is undeniably attractive, it covers too much ground and is too unfocused (despite the title, posters from many countries are illustrated; further, too many nonposter forms of propaganda are considered.) Instead of offering insights, the text simply rehashes popular World War I history adequately covered elsewhere. The general reader will find this sprawling study more confusing than enlightening. Stephen Rees, Bucks Cty. Free Lib., Levittown, Pa. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A totally original way to document a dynamic period in our history...adds a new dimension to our understanding of the events." --Americana From the Publisher Returning with critical acclaim, this

unique popular history of America examines the surprising artistry of World War I posters.