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CALLING CARD, MARIANNA VENTURI, ABOUT 1793

REFERENCE: | SUGGESTED AGE GROUPS: KS2, KS3, KS4, LIFELONG LEARNERS | THE GRAND TOUR,
SOCIETY, ITALIAN GOVERNANCE

THE GRAND TOUR

During the 18th and 19th century, it was fashionable for wealthy British families to send their sons, and occasionally daughters, on a Grand Tour. This saw privileged young men and women setting off usually from London to travel across Europe. The tourists were affluent enough to

spend multiple years on the Tour. They would often carry letters of introduction with them to integrate into society while abroad.

JOHN AND HARRIET CARR

John Carr (1764-1817) and Harriet Carr (1771-1848) were siblings who set out on their Grand Tour in 1791, returning to England in 1794. They were the children of successful northern businessman Ralph Carr and his wife Isabella.

Ralph and Isabella were initially against Harriet going on the Grand Tour but eventually gave their approval because it was thought that the tour would benefit Harriet's health – she had a cough thought to be tuberculosis. Some of their objections were around fears of the political situation in Europe and potential dangers to travellers. John and Harriet's ultimate destination was Italy, travelling via France and Switzerland.



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John and Harriet spent almost six months in Rome with short trips to Bologna, Florence, Naples, and Turin. They had planned to leave for England in early 1792 but the outbreak of the Franco-Austrian War prevented this. They returned to Florence in May 1792, staying there until November 1793. In December 1793 John and Harriet made a final visit to Rome before leaving for England and arriving home in the summer of 1794.

CALLING CARDS

Paper calling cards, or visiting cards, were in use from the 18th century. They were used by fashionable and wealthy members of society and were a form of status symbol.

Visitors would leave a card at the homes of friends and acquaintances to announce their arrival, to express appreciation for hospitality or to express sympathy. If a visitor called and the host or hostess was not at home or was unavailable the card would be left to let them know that the visitor had called.

Some of the cards collected by John and Harriet Carr on their Grand Tour have been preserved. This is a useful way of finding out who John and Harriet met on their Tour. Social contact was an important part of the Grand Tour.

SOCIETY DURING THE GRAND TOUR

Well-connected tourists in Italy might expect to be introduced to court society. Before the unification of Italy which began in 1848, the country was made up of a number of states, some ruled by Kings and others by Dukes. This system of governance was very different to the system that which British tourists were familiar with.

An introduction to court society might lead to invitations to dine at court and attend court events such as balls or hunting parties. Letters of introduction prepared by friends and acquaintances formed an important role in opening society doors to the Tourist. Their father's business and personal interests would



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undoubtedly have opened doors to John and Harriet. The networking opportunities provided by the Grand Tour allowed friendships, and sometimes romantic relationships, to develop that would last beyond the Tour.

MARIANNA VENTURI

This printed calling card is one of those collected by John and Harriet Carr. The card has been bought as a blank with a space for the owner to add their handwritten name, in this case, Marianna Venturi. The scene is in the classical style. Initials, presumably of the engraver, can be found in the bottom right-hand corner of the card.

The Venturi family were a noble family in Florence. In a letter from 26th June 1793 John writes to his father ‘...We have been lately staying [two] or three days with the Marchesa Venturi at a delightful country house a few miles distant. She amongst many others has always had the utmost affection for Harriet, and she calls her her daughter. She has indeed a daughter a few years older married in France whom she says Harriet puts her in mind of, whose place she has the goodness to say is now amply supplied by a substitute scarce less dear to her than the original...’.

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

Britannica page on Italian governance: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Italy/Revolution-restoration-and-unification>

Wellesley page on Italian governance and states: http://omeka.wellesley.edu/piranesi-rome/exhibits/show/18th-century-urban-life/general_information

Journal article on British perceptions of Florence during the 18th century: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20175130>

History of Florence: <https://www.odysseytraveller.com/articles/history-city-florence-italy/>

Book on the Tuscan Enlightenment: <https://www.routledge.com/Florence-After-the-Medici-Tuscan-Enlightenment-1737-1790/Tazzara-Findlen-Soll/p/book/9781032087634>



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Learning and Educational Archive Resources from Northumberland

Britannica page on the unification of Italy: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Italy/Unification>

History Matters video on the unification of Italy (10 mins): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjFscoiE8eI&ab_channel=HistoryMatters



LEARNING ACTIVITIES: CALLING CARD, MARIANNA VENTURI, ABOUT 1793

TOPIC: THE GRAND TOUR, SOCIETY
SUBJECT AREAS: HISTORY, LITERACY, ART, GEOGRAPHY



Background	Activity	Resources
<p>Paper calling cards, or visiting cards, were in use from the 18th century. They were used by fashionable and wealthy members of society and were a form of status symbol.</p> <p>Visitors would leave a card at the homes of friends and acquaintances to announce their arrival, to express appreciation for hospitality or to express sympathy. If a visitor called and the host or hostess was not at home or was unavailable the card</p>	<p>See: What are calling cards?</p> <p>See: Who used calling cards?</p> <p>See: Why might someone leave a calling card at a friend of acquaintance's home?</p> <p>See: Who is this calling card from?</p> <p>See: Who were the Venturi family?</p> <p>See: How were Grand Tourists introduced to Italian society?</p> <p>See: What was Italy's system of governance during the 1790s?</p> <p>See: When did the unification of Italy begin?</p> <hr/> <p>Think: How might calling cards show a person's status in society?</p> <p>Think: What can be inferred about Marianna Venturi's status in society?</p>	<p>https://www.oldmapsonline.org/</p> <p>https://www.britannica.com/place/Italy/Revolution-restoration-and-unification</p> <p>http://omeka.wellesley.edu/piranesi-rome/exhibits/show/18th-century-urban-life/general_information</p> <p>https://www.britannica.com/place/Italy/Unification</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjFscoiE8eI&ab_channel=HistoryMatters</p>



would be left to let them know that the visitor had called.

Well-connected tourists in Italy might expect to be introduced to court society. Before the unification of Italy which began in 1848, the country was made up of a number of states, some ruled by Kings and others by Dukes. This system of governance was very different to the system that which British tourists were familiar with

Think: What can be inferred about Marianna Venturi's relationship to John and Harriet Carr?

Think: How might calling cards have been made?

Think: Why was social contact an important part of the Grand Tour?

Think: What is court society?

Think: What was Britain's system of governance during the 1790s?

Do: Design your own calling card.

Do: Discuss how Britain and Italy's systems of governance differed from each other during the 1790s.

Do: Create a map showing the different Italian states in 1793.

Do: Watch the History Matters video on Italian unification.

Do: Discuss how the Italian unification changed the way that the country was governed.

Do: Discuss the causes of the unification of Italy.

Do: Discuss the consequences of the unification of Italy.

Do: Imagine you are a British Tourist in Italy. Write a letter home describing how Italian governance differs from the system you are familiar with.



	<p>Do: Imagine you are a British Tourist who has been introduced to court society. Write a diary entry about the experience.</p>	
<p>During the 18th and 19th century, it was fashionable for wealthy British families to send their sons, and occasionally daughters, on a Grand Tour of Europe. This saw privileged young men and women setting off usually from London to travel across Europe. The tourists were affluent enough to spend multiple years on the Tour. They would often carry letters of introduction with them to integrate into society while abroad.</p>	<p>See: What was the Grand Tour? See: Who went on the Grand Tour? See: Where did Tourists usually set off from? See: Which continent did people travel on the Grand Tour? See: Who were John and Harriet Carr? See: When did John and Harriet go on the Grand Tour? See: Where did John and Harriet visit on their Tour? See: How long were John and Harriet abroad for?</p> <hr/> <p>Think: Why did people go on the Grand Tour? Think: Which countries and cities did people visit on the Grand Tour? Think: Was there a specific route for the Grand Tour? Think: Why did the practice of going on the Grand Tour end? Think: Is there a present-day equivalent of the Grand Tour? Think: Why did Tourists spend so long abroad? Think: Why did only wealthy families undertake the Grand Tour?</p>	<p>https://www.thoughtco.com/grand-tour-of-europe-1435014</p> <p>https://grandtour.bncf.firenze.sbn.it/tale/how-the-journey-was-made/equipment-for-the-journey/passports-health-certificates-bank-credits-letters-of-recommendation</p> <p>https://educated-traveller.com/2017/11/23/history-of-the-grand-tour/</p> <p>https://www.oldmapsonline.org/</p>



- Think:** Why did Tourists carry letters of introduction?
- Think:** Would Tourists have mixed with local people and local culture?
- Think:** Do people today mix with local people and local culture when they are abroad?
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- Do:** Imagine you are going on a Grand Tour. Make a list of the items that you would need to take with you.
- Do:** Discuss whether you think travel across Europe would have been difficult or straightforward during the 1790s. Why do you think this?
- Do:** Create a map showing a typical Grand Tour route.
- Do:** Create a map showing what Europe would have looked like during the 1790s. Have borders and countries changed between then and now?
- Do:** Come up with your own Grand Tour itinerary.
- Do:** Choose a city that John and Harriet visited on the Grand Tour. Create a tourist brochure highlighting the main attractions visitors could see there today.
- Do:** Create a tourist brochure for the same city in the 1790s. What might have changed and what might have stayed the same in the city? Would people's hobbies and interests have changed?



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Learning and Educational Archive Resources from Northumberland

Do: Imagine you are John or Harriet. Write a postcard to your parents from each of the places you have visited on your Grand Tour.

Do: Discuss how the Grand Tour might be different if it was undertaken today.