

[Lunchbreak](#) by [Charles C. Ebbets](#) (On Sale!)

Lithograph on Paper - Main Subject: Americana



Item Number

2418216723

Retail Value

\$50

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\$25

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Dimensions (As Shown)

15.5W x 11.5H Inches

39.37W x 29.21H cm

Medium

Lithograph on Paper

Edition

- Edition Size is Unknown

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About Charles C. Ebbets

Charles Clyde Ebbets was born on August 18, 1905 in Gadsden, Alabama. He got his first camera at age 8 by charging it to his mother's account at a local drugstore. It cost him a sound spanking with the back of a hairbrush, but he got to keep it. He moved to St. Petersburg, Florida where he continued to work with still photography and also became interested in the new phenomenon of motion pictures. In 1924, Charlie's dashing appearance and obvious confidence on both sides of the camera led him to roles in several early films under his screen name of Wally Renny. He enjoyed film, but soon found his true love lay in being the man behind the lens. For the next several years, he did photographic work traveling throughout the southeast following the sports and social seasons of cities like Miami, Augusta, Virginia Beach and New York City. During this time, he also followed his love for adventure and became a wing-walker, auto racer, wrestler, avid hunter, fisherman and licensed pilot. His daring led to many early aerial photos and action shots the likes of which had not been seen before and he began to be known among the newspaper editors as a photographer who liked to get the pictures no one else could. His knowledge of sports also led to a job as Jack Dempsey's official staff photographer, as well as one as a staff photographer for the Miami Daily News.

As the 1930s came around, Charlie was becoming well-known throughout the eastern U.S. and began having his work published in many well-known venues such as the New York Times. From about 1931-33 he continued to do seasonal work traveling up and down the coast. During this time he also began working for the Hamilton Wright Features syndicate, a publicity firm based in Miami and New York. It was in this capacity in 1932 that he was appointed photographic director for the construction of the Rockefeller Center in the fall of 1932. There he documented the construction of the center and continued to do freelance shoots in and around New York. His pictures were featured in the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, The Chicago Tribune, the Augusta Chronicle, the Norfolk News Service, the Miami Daily News and many other publications. It was also during this time, that he took the photograph of the workmen having lunch out on a beam high above the city of New York, which has sold more copies than any other single image in stock photography history and has been called an iconic representation of twentieth-century American photography.

After doing freelance work and seasonal jobs in New York, Virginia, Georgia and Florida for several years, Charlie had returned to South Florida permanently in 1933 and continued to establish himself as a well-known photographer. During this time he began to focus his work on the City of Miami and the burgeoning south Florida tourist industry that had begun in the 1920s. Having worked in the big city of New York and traveled throughout the south, he had a unique perspective on the fledgling growth of professional photography.

In 1935, Charlie was asked to become an official Associated Press photographer for the growing south Florida region. That year, while out doing coverage of the construction of the first railroad into the Florida Keys, he found himself caught up in a natural disaster when a category 5 hurricane roared into the region. Without the benefit of early warning, over 400 individuals died in the storm. Charlie was the first photographer on the scene, sent out the first AP wire service photos of the devastation across the nation, and spent four days documenting the massive recovery effort as the bodies of the dead were recovered and given burial services and early relief services arrived for the survivors.

Ebbets was always ready to cover a challenging news story, but some of his most prolific and remarkable work centered on the wildlife of the Florida Everglades and the Seminole Indians. Charlie had spent much of his youth exploring the Florida Everglades, and as both an early Glademan and a close friend to many in the Seminole tribe, he was privileged to document a rare time in the history of this region and its people. He loved the people and natural beauty of the Everglades and was more at home in its back country and swamps than in any city office. He photographed rare animals like the Florida panther and bird rookeries deep in the Glades that no other man had ever seen, and used the beautiful large-format displays of the Miami Daily News rotogravure sections to share their beauty with the rest of the country. He would often relate stories of spending days on end poling a small skiff, perched in trees and slogging through the swamps for pictures of wildlife. He would emerge filthy, sunburned, covered with bug bites and talking about loving every moment of it. By the mid-1930s, his photographs of the Everglades had been seen in newspapers throughout the country and as the government began to make plans to preserve this rare region, the Department of the Interior contacted Charlie and requested use of his vast collection of images to create their displays and brochures for what would become Everglades National Park.

During his explorations, he had also befriended many of the people of this region, including the Seminole Indians who had taken refuge in the swamps of the Everglades after decades of conflict with the federal government. Charlie knew many of the elders in the tribe and traveled freely throughout their Florida reservations. He was one of only a handful of white men or women to be offered unlimited access to their people from the newborns to the tribal leaders. These historic collections of photos taken throughout the 1930s-1950s offer an unprecedented look into the life of a proud people that few outsiders even knew existed. In the mid-1930s, their plight of poverty and lack of government support had grown desperate, and Charlie began to use his images and photo essays to tell their story to the rest of the world. His photos, and the stories he wrote to go with them eventually helped garner attention and federal support from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the form of schools and roads into the region that led to many new opportunities for the Seminole people.

From the animals, to the rare flora, to the reclusive people of the region, many of these images of early life in the Everglades region remain unsurpassed in their beauty and historical significance in documenting the early growth of South Florida.

When he wasn't in the Everglades, Charlie was back at work in the City of Miami promoting its growth as a tourist mecca. During this time, Miami was just beginning its heyday as a home for northern snowbirds on holiday, and many photographers and newsreel producers were flocking to the region to document its growth. In 1939, he invited a group of fellow photographers and friends into the living room of his Miami home and expressed his belief that they needed a professional organization to represent their work. After several hours of talking, that night the Miami Press Photographers Association was founded and Charlie was elected to serve as its first president. For the next several years, his reputation continued to flourish throughout the East as his photos were published extensively in a variety of venues, and then in 1941 the world changed dramatically as the United States

entered World War II.

Ebbets was in his mid thirties during the start of WWII. As American forces were called up, he found that even though he was a licensed pilot, his history of a broken back made him ineligible for regular military service. It did not, however, prevent him from doing superb work while serving as an attaché to the Army Special Services throughout the war. At the start of the war, Florida had an established school of aviation in Miami called Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Institute which was called upon to assist in the training of American pilots and our allies in the British Royal Air Force. The founder, John Paul Riddle knew of Dad's reputation with a camera and hired him as a military attaché and Embry-Riddle's official photographic director during their involvement in the war effort. In 1941, the U.S. government directed Embry-Riddle to establish 3 Florida bases for the training of much-needed pilots and ground support personnel. Carlstrom, Dorr, and Riddle Fields were quickly raised from the scrub pines near

Arcadia and Clewiston Florida. From ground-breakings, to training, to visiting dignitaries, to confidential aerial photography of bases and terrain-Charlie was involved in every phase of their operations.

Embry-Riddle's success in working with the Army Air Corp, the U.S. State Department and the allies in the Royal Air Force of Great Britain soon drew international attention. In 1942, when German U-boats became a threat off the coast of Brazil, President Vargas came to General Harold H. Hap Arnold of the USAF to help him establish a well-trained Brazilian Air Force for national defense. The government then went to Paul Riddle to act as the United States attaché in training these new forces. When the Riddle Institute began its operations, Charlie promptly found himself en route to South America working under General Arnold to cover the events and do aerial documentation of the forces and facilities. The hundreds of pictures he shot in Rio, Sao Paulo, Recife and Belem tell a graphic story of the two countries war-time collaboration.

At the end of World War II, Charlie returned to his home in Miami and went back to work as a private citizen. He had seen and learned a great deal in the past ten years, and in 1945, he and long-time friend Ben Jacobs (a local publicist) decided Miami needed a full-time publicity department. Together they mapped out their plan and hired a young writer named Woody Kepner. This trio became the nucleus for the City of Miami Publicity Bureau. For the next 17 years, from 1945-1962, during his career with the city as Chief Photographer, the bureau became known as the Miami Metropolitan News Bureau and expanded from a three man operation to a full-time staff of twenty-four and became a vital division of the Miami Publicity Department.

Charlie's work on behalf of the city and his extensive wildlife photography publications garnered national recognition for himself and for South Florida's tourist industry. During the three decades that followed, his photographs were featured in the Miami Daily News, The New York Times, National Geographic, Outdoors Unlimited, Field and Stream Magazine, U.S. Camera, Outdoor Life, Look Magazine, Popular Photography, Florida Outdoors, Miami Metropolitan Fishing Tournament Yearbook, and many others. He also sent out early Miami Beach cheesecake bathing beauty photos across the Associated Press wire service to newspapers from around the country. Several publications during this time (U.S. Camera, Popular Photography, the Miami Daily News) even did feature articles and stories on Charlie himself and his amazing adventures and photographs. His pictures were also used in travel brochures, tourism post cards, military records and training materials, trade magazines, product promotions and informational brochures for such organizations as The U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Wildlife Federation, The Rockefeller Center, The British Royal Air Force, the National Park Service, Embry-Riddle Aviation, Orvis Fly rods, Johnson Motors, Essex Motorcars, B.F. Goodrich Tires, the Clyde Beatty Circus, the Miami Serpentarium, the Miami Seaquarium, The Parrot Jungle, The Monkey Jungle, Theater of the Sea, the Norfolk Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Augusta Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and many others.

He retired from the City of Miami in 1962. In an article about his career, he was quoted as saying covering the events, recording the history and contributing my time and talent to Miami's future have been a major part of my life for over 17 years. Greater than any one of the thousands of assignments I've covered has been the feeling that working for Miami was not just a job. It has been a privilege with a purpose. He continued to work in the private sector for many years after his official retirement. Sadly, he lost a long battle with cancer and died in 1978 at the age of 72. Much of his work can still be found today in print, vintage books and post cards in private collections across the country.

Charlie's was a life that exemplified the idea of living every moment to its fullest and savoring every experience for its own sake. He was as well known as a fearless adventurer as he was a loving husband, father and friend. He truly loved life and all those that knew him were caught up in the fun. He counted everyone among his friends; from presidents, to film and sports celebrities, to Indian chiefs and convicted murderers...Had he been a man more pursuant of fame or commercial success, his name might have had much greater general recognition today. Instead, he chose to put his efforts into living every moment as a photographer, adventurer, friend, husband and father.

Lithograph on Paper

This printing technique uses a planographic process in which prints are pulled on a special press from a flat stone or metal surface. The surface has been chemically treated so that ink sticks only to the design areas, and is repelled by the non-image areas. Lithography was invented in Germany in 1798. The early history of lithography is dominated by great French artists such as Daumier and Delacroix, and later by Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Braque and Miro.

Based on the principle that oil and water repel, a Lithograph is created when an artist produces an oil-based or pen image on a stone or piece of metal. This surface is then moistened and covered with an oil-based ink. The resulting chemical reaction between the oil and water drives away the ink on the surface except where the drawing was first done. Fine quality paper is then placed against the surface and a lithographic press is used to create the print. Modern technology and processes have provided artists with many unique methods with which to create magnificent lithographs. In the 1890s color lithography became enormously popular with French artists, Toulouse-Lautrec most notably of all, and by 1900 the medium in both color and monotone was an accepted part of printmaking, although France and the US have used it more than other countries. George Bellows, Alphonse Mucha, Pablo Picasso, Jasper Johns, David Hockney and Robert Rauschenberg are a few of the artists who have produced most of their prints in the medium.

As a special form of lithography, the Serilith process is sometimes used. Serilith are mixed media original prints created in a process where an artist uses the lithograph and serigraph process. The separations for both processes are hand drawn by the artist. The serilith technique is used primarily to create fine art limited print editions.

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