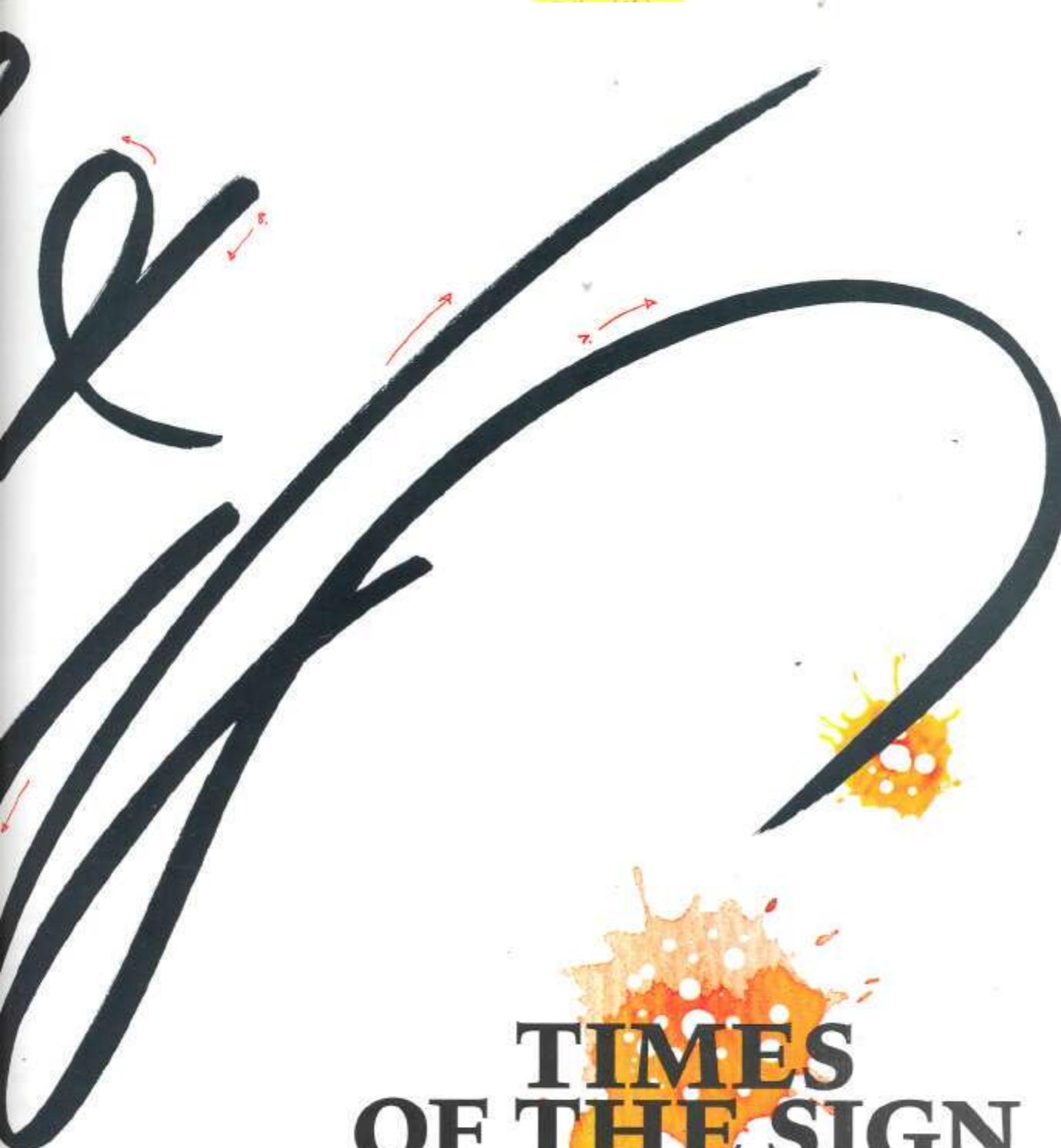




Follow the Line
Linking the many iterations of the Lord & Taylor logo is a common "ductus"—the sequence and direction of the movements of the hand as it writes the signature, indicated here by red arrows that trace Frank Tartaglia's rendering. Though the signature's format has changed the ductus has always remained the same



TIMES OF THE SIGN

*It's been on shopping bags and boxes
for decades—a true American brand. But how well do we
really know Lord & Taylor's signature flourish?*

BY PAUL SHAW



ONE OF THE Most recognizable and-yet most overlooked logos in America is that of Lord & Taylor. The logo for the venerable New York department store is not as famous as those of Mobil, Coca-Cola, or even Bloomingdale's, but it is perhaps more remarkable in that it is not the work of one person. Instead, it has been shaped by many people and has evolved organically over time. One could say there is no such thing as "the" Lord & Taylor logo.

Everyone knows—or thinks they know—what the logo looks like: a brush script with "Lord &" stacked on top of "Taylor." Yet upon closer inspection, it begins to fall apart. Several letters are ambiguous and others seem to be missing entirely (look at the *r* in "Lord"). Like the personal signature it emulates, this logo can only be read as a whole, and like a signature, the Lord & Taylor logo is always different.

I got my first glimpse of the mark's complex provenance in the early 90s when Lord & Taylor hired me to write a new logo—due the next day. The casual nature of the assignment contradicted

everything I had ever learned about corporate identity, but a senior designer at the store assured me it was no big deal—they made new logos whenever they needed them. She then showed me old photo-stats of Lord & Taylor logos going back decades. Collectively, they were a repository of the past, but also a resource for the present.

The Lord & Taylor logo's origins have never been clearly defined. There are conflicting stories about who designed it, each with a kernel of truth. Through conversations with several Lord & Taylor veterans and a survey of the store's advertising in company scrapbooks and newspaper microfilm, I have attempted to trace its history and to parcel out credit to its many creators.

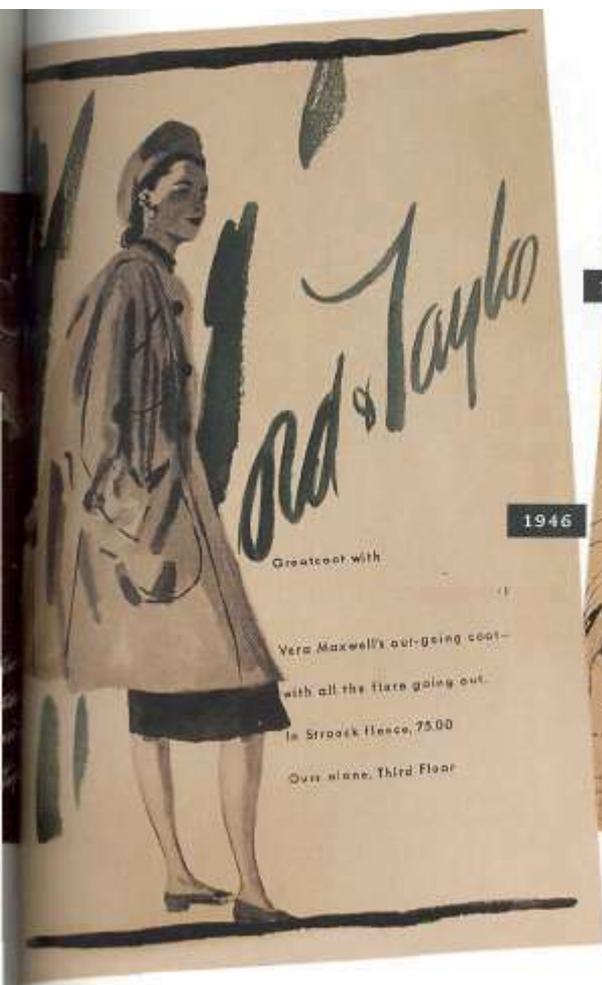
Harry Rodman and [Dorothy Shaver

Logos derived from signatures were common at the turn of the 20th century. But prior to the '30s, Lord & Taylor's name was either set in type or hand-lettered to look like type. The script logo debuted in 1933, and credit for it belongs to Harry Rodman, the art director of

The images shown above are from Lord & Taylor's archives, with the exception of the 1994 ad, which was provided by Paul Shaw.

1933 This year saw the first use of the script logo by Lord & Taylor art director Harry Rodman.

1942 The logo became lighter around this time to match the subhead "New York & Manhasset."



Lord & Taylor from that year until 1970. With its heavy, condensed script and horizontally arranged words, his logo has little in common with later incarnations, yet the basic Lord & Taylor DNA is there: The ampersand is a plus sign, "Taylor" is composed of a number-seven-like T, "ay," and "lor," and both rs are arched curves sprouting from the *o*. This early logo was used, in a fixed form, from its inception through the early '40s.

In 1941, at the urging of Dorothy Shaver, the company's first vice president, Lord & Taylor opened a branch store in Manhasset on Long Island, and "New York & Manhasset," in a lighter script, was added below "Lord & Taylor." Other subheads, such as "Fifth Avenue," followed. A year later, the words "Lord & Taylor" were redone in a lighter script to match those subheads. The logo remained a light script for the next three decades, but its exact rendering and its use changed radically.

Shaver became the company's president in 1945, and she immediately began to promote "The American Look," making Lord &

Taylor synonymous with American fashion for decades to come. To signal this new emphasis, at Rodman's suggestion, she adopted the American Beauty rose as the store's symbol, rendered by the illustrator Dorothy Hood. At the same time, Rodman began encouraging illustrators to incorporate the logo in their drawings for ads, with the result that it was written afresh by each artist.

Dorothy Hood and the Illustrators

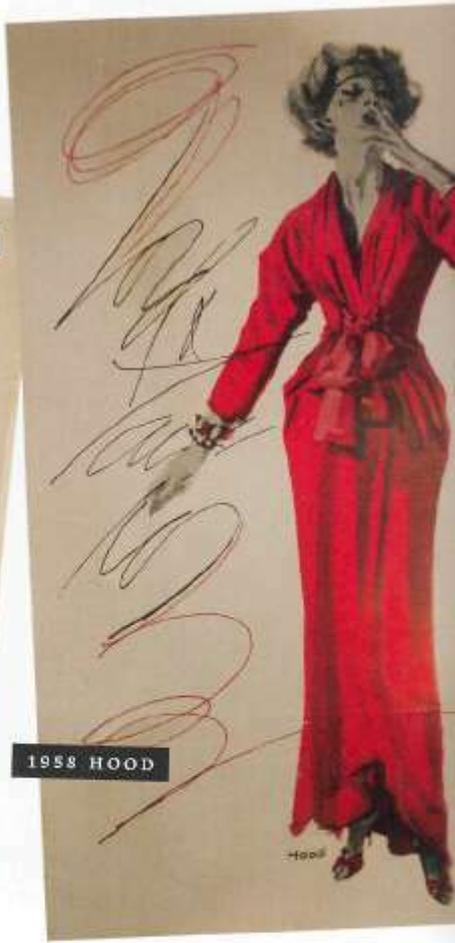
The integration of the logo into the illustrations was a brilliant move, but its success depended on the artists the store hired. In the '40s and '50s, Lord & Taylor had some of the best in the business, among them Hood, Carl Wilson, Helen Hall, Arnold Hall, Jean Karnoff, Susan Abbott, Betty Offt, and a talented unknown whose work is simply signed "Yuskowski."

Hood was the most famous of all—the "Hood Girl" became as well known as the Gibson Girl of an earlier era. While Hood is often incorrectly credited as the originator of the store's script logo, there

1943 From the early '30s until the mid-'70s, Futura was the preferred typeface for the text of ads. In the early '40s, Rodman sometimes swapped out Futura for a light script.

1945 To differentiate Lord & Taylor's use of drawings from those of the store's many competitors, Rodman insisted that the artists sign their work (Helen Hall's signature can be seen in the lower

left-hand corner of this ad). This practice became so ingrained at the company that, in later years, missing signatures were often added by staff layout artists.



As the logo was bent, curved, and angled in response to the illustrations, the familiar stacked format began to emerge.

is no doubt that she was the first to blend the logo into her illustrations. As early as 1947, her logos—distinctive in their thin, scratchy line—emerge from swirling pen strokes unifying the various illustrations in an advertisement.

The script logo truly became a chameleon in the '50s. It was made with a variety of tools—mainly crowquill pen and pointed brush, but sometimes crayon, China marker, pastel stick, or even ballpoint pen—the same ones used to create the illustrations. The logo was

also bent, curved, and angled in response to those drawings, and in the course of these alterations, the familiar stacked format began to emerge.

Tartaglia, père Jules Tartaglia joined Lord & Taylor in 1952 as a staff layout artist. He and his colleagues created versions of the logo for advertisements; but increasingly, Tartaglia took over responsibility

1946 Modern layouts, such as this one, combining Futura with asymmetrically arranged text that activated white space around illustrations, had much in common with the work of Paul Rand,

Alvin Lustig, and Alex Steinweiss. Many of Lord & Taylor's advertisements from the late '40s to the late '50s were as daring as any of those luminaries' designs.

1952-64 Illustrator Dorothy Hood's swooping style, wherein the logo often darts around the figures, was much copied by other Lord & Taylor artists.



for the logo in the full-page illustrated ads. He scribbled the logo directly on the artwork, a gutsy move that guaranteed its integration in the layout.

From the end of the '50s until his death in 1983, Tartaglia was the sole person responsible for the Lord & Taylor logo. His great pride in writing it out is particularly evident between 1967 to 1970, when the logo often appears to have been written at breakneck speed, usually with a Flair felt-tip pen or an AD chisel marker.

When Harry Rodman retired as advertising director of Lord & Taylor in 1970, he was succeeded by Carl Ammirati, who tried to tame the script logo. A lightly written logo by Tartaglia became the armature for a series of stylized—and much heavier—marks, which were no longer being remade in response to each new illustration. Eventually, a stacked version of the stylized logo was stuffed into a black box and used in the fall of 1975 for every advertisement.

The flexible Lord & Taylor logo seemed dead—until Joseph E. Brooks became CEO of Lord & Taylor in late 1975 and immediately

set about trying to resurrect the company's heritage. He named the rose after Dorothy Shaver and replaced Ammirati with Kermit Adler as creative director. Adler, who had previously worked for Lord & Taylor on staff and as an illustrator, promoted Jules Tartaglia to art director; Tartaglia, with the blessing of management, brought back the thin, monoline logo.

Tartaglia, fils

Jules's son, Frank, had a long history with the store. As a child, he visited his father there, and he worked as a messenger when he was a teenager. When Jules was promoted, Frank, who was then studying illustration at New York's School of Visual Arts, noticed that his father was overburdened in his new job. "My father and I were great friends," he recalls. "I knew he was having a hard time doing all the logos and script handwriting. So I took some ads from the newspaper and practiced the logo." Frank showed these to his father, who showed them, in turn, to Kermit Adler; shortly thereafter, Lord &

1971 In the '60s and '70s, Jules Tartaglia wrote the logo on vellum overlays, reflecting changes in the production of mechanicals and an increased workload that did not allow time to carefully

consider how the illustration and logo could be intertwined. His logos tend to have a more monoline character than those done by the illustrators.

1972 In the early '70s, stylized, heavy logos were treated as graphic elements within an advertisement: they were reversed out of rectangles and squares, cropped and bled.



Taylor hired Frank as a layout artist. -

When Jules died in 1983, Frank, who had become an art director, took over the role of the "logo writer." He remained with the company until its parent, Associated Dry Goods Corporation, was purchased by the May Department Stores Company in 1987. During his time at Lord & Taylor, Frank Tartaglia introduced a heavier "brush" version of the logo, usually made with a marker, and also continued the light script pioneered by his father.

David Lipman

Kermit Adler retired as creative director of Lord & Taylor in 1989. Under his successor, Russ Harden, the heavier "brush" version, in a stacked format, became the preferred form of the logo in the '90s. During this period, I was one of several designers who tried their hand at the logo.

Two years ago, the store's new owners, NRDC Equity Partners, hired David Lipman and BrandBuzz (a division of the agency Younj

& Rubicam) to rethink Lord & Taylor's advertising and promotional efforts (see following article, "Good Things in Store"). Lipman visited Lord & Taylor's archives with Frank Tartaglia, and embraced the company's heritage. A fixed logo—chosen from the recent past but used larger and in more daring colors—now appears on the chain's credit card, shopping bags, gift boxes, window displays, signage, and website. But for the newspaper advertising, the logo is constantly changing once again. And Frank Tartaglia, whose company Ambrosi is now responsible for all of Lord & Taylor's catalogs, is back writing it afresh each time. "It's great to see people understand the history of the store and want to bring back that tradition, but in a modern and new way," he says.

The Lord & Taylor logo is an artistic collaboration that evolved to fit the times. Having functioned from the start as the company's signature, personality, and its bond with its customers, it was a brand decades before the concept existed. The time has come to give this enduring logo its due. 

1986 Frank Tartaglia created light script and heavier versions of the logo in the '80s.

1994 A logo created by Paul Shaw, one of several designers to work on the Lord & Taylor mark during the '90s.

2007 Lord & Taylor's redesigned boxes display a new, fixed logo. But Frank Tartaglia writes the logo afresh for each newspaper ad.