



**Researches into the History of Playing Cards:  
With Illustrations of the Origin of Printing and  
Engraving on Wood (Cambridge Library  
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*Samuel Weller Singer*

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## **Researches into the History of Playing Cards: With Illustrations of the Origin of Printing and Engraving on Wood (Cambridge Library Collection - Art and Architecture)**

Samuel Weller Singer

The literary scholar Samuel Weller Singer (1783-1858) was largely self-taught, but his enthusiasm for reading caused him to open a bookshop, and he developed a wide circle of bibliomaniac friends, including Francis Douce (who later left him enough money to retire from writing for a living). He was an editor of many early modern poets, and his editions of John Selden's *Table-Talk* and Joseph Spence's *Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters, of Books and Men* are also reissued in this series. This highly illustrated 1816 work, originally published in a run of only 250 copies, was praised for its quality by Thomas Frognall Dibdin. In it, Singer argues that the increasing sophistication sought by the buyers of playing cards led to increasing improvements in the art of wood engraving, and that the study of these humble and rarely surviving artefacts can give insights into the achievements of the greatest Renaissance carvers.

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