

FOCUS

Prunier, Pierre Falize, c. 1925, private collection



When this large-format poster arrived at the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA), the paper was brittle, weak, and yellowed. It had been folded multiple times, creating tears and losses along the creases, and it showed significant water damage.

The poster's poor condition is the result of a long life spanning two continents. It originally served as an advertisement for Restaurant Prunier, a renowned seafood restaurant located in the chic 16th *arrondissement* of Paris. Established in 1872, Prunier began as a modestly-sized oyster shop and restaurant and then expanded in the 1920s, which was when the poster was used. The restaurant prides itself on serving *tout ce qui vient de la mer*, or "everything that comes from the sea," and the poster promises that it is "served fast and well"—almost straight from the ocean.

The private collector who brought the well-traveled poster to CCAHA first saw it hanging in the Samson Street Oyster House in Philadelphia, PA. Over the years, he admired it each time he went to the restaurant, but was disappointed to find that when the restaurant recently reopened as the newly renovated Oyster House, the poster was no longer there. "I asked what happened, and they told me it had been significantly damaged at the time of refurbishing," he explained. The Oyster House sold him the poster's remains at a reduced price.

At CCAHA, Paper Conservator Corine Norman McHugh and N.E.A. Fellow Jessica Keister surface cleaned the poster, then humidified it and immersed it in several baths of calcium-enriched deionized water. They removed adhesive residue from tape used in previous repair attempts and lined the poster to a mulberry paper support. Ms. McHugh created inserts for areas of loss and attached them with wheat starch paste. Finally, she inpainted areas of ink loss.

Restaurant Prunier continues to thrive in Paris—in fact, the poster's owner was last there in early June—and now the poster will live on as well, encapsulated between sheets of polyester film and displayed in its owner's home.

Left: Ms. McHugh surface cleans the poster using a rubber sponge

Below: The poster, before treatment



Above: Loss and stains on the poster, before treatment



Above: Conservators place the poster into a bath