



# Flash from the Bowery: Classic American Tattoos, 1900-1950

*Cliff White*

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Between these pages are images of the original acetate rubbings from Charlie Wagner's turn of the 20th century tattoo shop, The Black Eye Barbershop, in the Bowery at Chatham Square in New York. This is the only known art that has survived from this shop, where Samuel J. O'Reilley's modern-day electric tattoo machine was born and patented. The imagery of this classic flash preserves the origins of American tattoos, when tattoo art was transferred to the client from these templates via an acetate stencil. Everything was done by hand until O'Reilley's electrified tattoo machine changed history. This rich heritage of folk art has more than 900 individual pieces of flash that provide commentary on the shop's clientele and reveal some of the social, economic, and political ideas of the time. Including nautical themes, Asian imagery, flowers, boxers, circus characters, and plenty of girls, this is an exciting collection of early American flash and a necessary book for the tattoo artist, aficionado, and student.

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