

The Filson Historical Society

Greeting Card Collection, ca. 1850-1940

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Size of Collection:
0.66 cubic feet

Locator number:
Mss. A G816

Greeting Card Collection, ca. 1850-1940

Historical Note

Greeting cards first became popular and affordable in Europe in the early 1800s, when the first Valentines were sent out. The first known Christmas card was published in London in 1843. In 1856, America's greeting card industry began in earnest when Louis Prang opened a small lithographic business near Boston. The style of cards in the 19th century emphasized intricate detail and often depicted pastoral and nature scenes. Greeting cards soon expanded beyond valentines and Christmas cards to commemorate every holiday and festivity.

References:

Information obtained from the Greeting Card Association's website: <https://www.greetingcard.org/industry-resources/history/>.

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Scope and Content Note

This collection contains primarily greeting cards, as well as a few advertisements, trade cards, and other lithographs. The contents were formerly part of the Filson Library's Greeting Card Collection.

Folders 1-3 contain Christmas cards from ca. 1920 to 1940. Many are signed or include handwritten messages. Some non-Christmas cards are also included, including an Easter Card and a valentine card/advertisement from florist Henry Fuchs. These cards were donated to the Filson by Elizabeth Glock (1918-2001) in 1982.

Folder 4 contains Victorian valentines from ca. 1850 to 1910. Many include elaborate paper cutouts, detailed lace layers, and excellent examples of colorful Victorian art. The cards are accompanied by a letter noting that they were originally sent to Miss Martha Washington Herr (1833-1896) by Mr. George Andrew Jackson Owen, whom she afterwards married in 1855 in Jefferson County. However, many of the valentines included are addressed with other names, including Mrs. Lewis A. Walter, Eliza, and others. (This folder is a transfer from the Filson's museum collection.)

Folder 5 contains two Mother's Day cards and a small book of Christian imagery and Bible quotes, which was found with the cards.

Folder 6 contains colorful Victorian paper cutouts, most of which depict pastoral images of flowers, children, and animals. The cutouts are unlabeled and unsigned.

Folder 7 contains advertisements. Some Louisville companies represented are umbrella and parasol manufacturer George Cross and J. Bacon & Sons dry good and novelties store. Also included is an 1893 calendar from Clark's Horse Review, a newspaper out of Chicago.

Folder 8 contains miscellaneous greeting cards donated by and addressed to various people. Included are a Halloween card from 1913, intricate valentines, two Christmas cards from Mr. and Mrs. Marc Klaw, and a decorative cardboard hanging in the shape of a rose.

Folder 9 contains more miscellaneous greeting cards donated by and addressed to various people. Included are a two birthday cards and two Easter cards, as well as a three-dimensional lace card printed with the words "With My Best Love" from or to Eliza Morris, New Albany, In.

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Folder List

- Folder 1: Christmas cards donated by Elizabeth Glock, ca. 1920-1940
- Folder 2: Christmas cards donated by Elizabeth Glock, ca. 1920-1940
- Folder 3: Christmas cards donated by Elizabeth Glock, ca. 1920-1940
- Folder 4: Victorian valentines sent by George Andrew Jackson Owen to Martha Washington Herr, ca. 1850-1910
- Folder 5: Mother's Day cards and book of Bible quotes, undated
- Folder 6: Victorian paper cutouts, ca. 1890s, undated
- Folder 7: Victorian advertisements, ca. 1890s, undated
- Folder 8: Miscellaneous Victorian greeting cards, ca. 1890-1920
- Folder 9: Miscellaneous Victorian greeting cards, ca. 1890-1920

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Subject Headings

Art, Victorian.
Birthday cards.
Christmas – Kentucky – Louisville.
Christmas cards – Kentucky – Louisville.
Clark's Horse Review (Chicago, Ill.)
Easter.
Emerson Talcott & Co. (Rockford, Ill.)
Florists – Kentucky – Louisville.
George Cross Manufacturer (Louisville, Ky.)
Greeting cards – Kentucky – Louisville.
Halloween.
J. Bacon and Sons (Louisville, Ky.)
Mother's Day.
Valentine's Day – Kentucky – Louisville.
Valentines.