

"Valentine Photo Essay"

Carroll County Times Article for 14 February 1999

By Jay A. Graybeal

This Historical Society's collection contains numerous examples of St. Valentine's Day cards dating received by local residents from the 1850s to the 1920s. The earliest cards were stock cards which were individually embellished with separately purchased motifs chosen by the sender. By the turn of the century, card makers sold a variety of cards that contained appropriate verse on an inside page. Post cards with Valentine's Day motifs appeared around the turn of the century. These cards often featured red hearts, Cupids and a variety of birds. Valentines, especially post card examples, were frequently saved and stored in special albums with similar cards from other holidays. For this reason early valentines survive in large quantities and provide a visual reminder of how the holiday was observed.

Photo caption 1: This elaborate card is an example of a stock type that was customized by the sender. The small lithographic illustrations of the child and cat were purchased and glued in place by the sender. The interior included a printed romantic verse:

"When others speak thy praise And seek thy love to gain. They think I love thee not, Since silent I remain. My lips scarce breathe thy name, Sealed in a silent spell, But love lies in my heart, Too deep for words to tell."

Photo caption 2: This layered card featured a romantic cover scene that when raised revealed a blank area for an inscription to the recipient, "L. M. H." The interior is inscribed "Presented to Lulu M. Haines by Uncle Howard Feb. 26th 1899". It also contains a printed verse:

"The blush of the morn, The stars of the night, Everything lovely, And holy and bright, Speaks to my heart, O dear one! of thee, Sunlight and starlight Thou art unto me."

Photo caption 3: An attractive young woman graced the cover of this card sent to Miss Alice E. Miller from her mother in 1898. The interior contains a printed verse:

"Ah! never can I be One half so dear to thee As thou art, love, to me: Thine image haunts me now, Sweet eyes, and placid brow, Smile once on me."

Photo caption 4: Dr. L. E. Shipley received this post card in 1910 from "Etta May" of Exenia, Ohio, who wrote that it was sent "With oceans and bushels of love." The card featured a nest of birds, a common Valentine's Day motif from the turn of the century.

Photo caption 5: "Etta May" sent this card to Miss Minta Shipley in 1910 with a message, "We are well. Have lots of snow here. I am stage [and] struck can not think of any thing to write." The cover featured a profile of young woman and implored the recipient to "Think of Me sweet Valentine."

Photo caption 6: A pair of embossed cupid-like figures appear to hunting winged hearts in the turn-of-the-century postcard. The embossing, vivid colors and images are typical of cards imported from Germany. This example was not inscribed and was once kept in a scrapbook.