

WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

30 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts

ARCHIVES

Greeting Card
Collection (Deignan)

1997.136

Processed by William F. Carroll, C.A.
April 2000

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Collection Information

Abstract : Worcester was one of the leading manufacturing centers for valentines and other greeting cards from the mid-1800s through the 1930s. Esther Howland and George C. Whitney were the two principal manufacturers during this era.

Finding Aid : Finding Aid in print form is available in the Repository.

Preferred Citation : Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Provenance : Gift of Joseph Deignan, North Grafton, Mass., November 1997.

MARC Access : Collection is cataloged in MARC under the following subject headings (lcs, aat, tgm, gmgcp)

Greeting cards. (aat)
Valentines. (aat)
Easter cards. (aat)
Howland, Esther Allen, 1828-1904.
Whitney, George C., 1842-1915.
Worcester (Mass.) – Manufactures.

Historical/Biographical Notes

Although valentine cards have been made for several hundred years, the manufacture of valentines and other greeting cards as a major industry began in Worcester, Mass. Esther Allen Howland began manufacturing valentine cards as a home industry in 1849. The business grew rapidly, soon averaging \$100,000 in sales each year, and by the 1870s was reorganized by Howland into the New England Valentine Co. Esther Howland was a leading businesswoman in Worcester and graduate of Mt. Holyoke College, at a time when few women attended college, and fewer still engaged in business. George C. Whitney, a stationer and printer, began making valentines in Worcester in the 1860s. After Esther Howland's death in 1881, the business was sold to Whitney who became the leading manufacturer of valentines and other greeting cards. George C. Whitney Valentine Co. ceased operations in 1942.

Scope and Content

The collection consists of three valentine cards and one Easter card of unidentified manufacture. The cards are probably early 20th century.

Series Description

The collection is not organized into series.

Greeting Card Collection (Deignan)
1997.136
Series 1, Greeting cards

<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>	<u>Accession #</u>	<u>Description</u>
1		1997.136.1.1	Easter card, yellow chick with flowers, with four pages of verse, manufactured in United States, manufacturer unknown.
1		1997.136.1.2	Valentine, girl with large pink heart, movable cat, "for my sweetie", manufactured in Germany.
1		1997.136.1.3	Valentine, boy and girl holding hands, tree with birds, "Valentine greetings ... Love's offering", verse inside. Manufacturer unknown.
1		1997.136.1.4	Valentine, single sheet, "Valentine greetings ... I'm drawn to you ..." verse with hearts and magnet. Manufacturer unknown.