

Marguerite Mills Advertisement Card Collection

Finding Aid

Windsor Historical Society
96 Palisado Avenue, Windsor, CT 06095

Creator: Marguerite Mills
Dates: 1870-1910
Extent: 1.2 linear feet
Accession #: 1986.75.900

Historical Note

Trade cards were a product of the late 19th century. Advertising cards in colonial America had been costly to print and were used mostly to promote luxury goods. The 19th century invention of lithography, a printing process that uses a stone rather than engraved metal plates, allowed printers to create limitless, cheap prints. By the 1870s retailers were using lithography to create attractive trade cards targeting American consumers.

Trade cards were most popular between 1880 and 1900. About the size of playing cards, trade cards used images and witty text to advertise brand name goods from food to farming equipment. Manufacturers gave stacks of cards to stores that sold their merchandise. The stores then gave the cards to customers with their purchases. Shoppers and their children collected the colorful cards and often pasted them in scrapbooks.

Scope and Contents

The collection of over 1000 loose trade cards (mostly chromolithographs) was assembled by donor Marguerite Mills.* It is probable that Marguerite inherited the cards from a close, older relative since collecting trade cards was most popular in the two decades before Marguerite's birth in 1903. The collection features a wide variety of products and focuses on Hartford, Conn. area businesses and merchants. The date range of cards is 1870 through 1910. Of special interest are trade cards from the 1893 Columbian World's Fair in Chicago, including the complete set of 12 cards from American Cereal Co, and a complete set of 8 trade cards from the Allyn, Blanchard and Latimer Company entitled "The Story of Bluebeard and his Wife." Some of the cards feature blacks, Native Americans, and people of many different nationalities. Several trade cards have early images of baseball, ice hockey and other sports, several unfold to reveal the results of the product advertised, and several reveal a hidden image when held to the light.

*There are less than a dozen trade cards from other donors included in the boxes. Each of these cards has been catalogued separately.

Organization

The collection is organized by topic or advertised product. Within each category they are arranged alphabetically by manufacturer's name followed by business name. The box list includes extensive cross references to other categories within the six-box collection.

Box 1 A-L
Box 2 Clothing
Box 3 Food
Box 4 M-P
Box 5 S
Box 6 T-Z, Miscellaneous, Blank cards

Box and Folder Lists

Box 1

Art Supplies: see Printing, Box 4

Alcohol: see Food: Alcohol and Tobacco, Box 3

Birds: see Holiday Goods, Box 1

Books and Magazines

Boots: see Clothing, Box 2

Carpet Cleaning and Carpet Sweepers

Cement

Ceramics: see Dining Wares, Box 1 and Holiday Goods, Box 1

Clothing: see Box 2

Clubs and Organizations

Coffee House: see Dining Room, Box 1

Cologne: see Perfume, Box 4

Diamonds: see Jewelry, Box 1

Dining Rooms, Coffee Houses and Restaurants

Dining Wares

China, Crockery, Glassware, Iron Ware, Silverware

Dolls: see Holiday Goods, Box 1

Dyes: see Laundry, Box 1

Fancy Goods: see Holiday Goods, Box 1

Farming Supplies and Gardening Supplies

See *also*: World's Fair, Box 6

Florist

Food: see Box 3

Frames: see Furniture, Box 1

Furnace: see Stoves and Furnaces, Box 5

Furniture and Furnishings

Furniture, Frames, Lamps and Accessories

See also: World's Fair, Box 6

Gardening: *see* Farming, Box 1

Glass: *see* World's Fair, Box 6

Glassware: *see* Dining Wares, Box 1

Holiday Goods

Birds, Dolls, Ceramics, Fancy Goods, Etc.

Insurance

Ironware: *see* Dining Wares, Box 1

Jewelry and Diamonds

Lamps: *see* Furniture, Box 1

Laundry: Dyes, Starches, and Wringers

Laundry Soap: *see* Soap, Box 5

Lawn Mower

Livery: *see* World's Fair, Box 6

Luggage and Travel

Box 2

Clothing

Box 3

Food: General

See also: World's Fair, Box 6

Food: Alcohol and Tobacco

Box 4

Magazines: *see* Books and Magazines, Box 1

Medicine

Musical Instruments

Pianos, Organs

Oil

Astral Oil

Finishing Oil

Organs: *see* Musical Instruments, Box 4

Organizations: *see* Clubs, Box 1

Perfume and Cologne

Photography

Piano: *see* Musical Instruments, Box 4

Polish: *see* Oil, Box 4

Printing, Stationery and Art Supplies

See also: World's Fair, Box 6

Box 5

School

Sewing: Thread and Machines

See also: World's Fair, Box 6

Shoes: see Clothing, Box 2
Silverware: see Dining Wares, Box 1

Soap

Starch: see Laundry, Box 1
Stationery: see Printing, Box 4

Stoves and Furnaces

Box 6

Theater

Thread: see Sewing, Box 5
Tobacco: see Food, Alcohol and Tobacco, Box 3
Travel: see Luggage and Travel, Box 1

Twine

World's Fair

See also: Farming, Food, Glass, Furniture, Livery, Printing, Sewing

Wringer: see Laundry, Box 1

Miscellaneous

Blank Advertisement Cards

Custodial history

Marguerite Mills bequeathed her collection of family heirlooms to the Windsor Historical Society at her death in 1985. The bequest covers several hundred objects and documents as well as several thousand pieces of ephemera. The collection contains materials from the Mills and Phelps families.

Subject Terms

Advertising cards
Business – Connecticut – Hartford – 19th century
Clothing and dress – 19th century
Food- 19th century
Medicine-19th century
Mills, Marguerite, 1903-1985

Administrative history

Collection processed by Erin Stevic and Betty Tonucci, Summer 2005.