

Early American Valentines, 1840s-1860s

by James W. Milgram, M.D.

Although the original Saint Valentine cannot be pinpointed to a single individual (the Catholic Church recognizes three martyred saints named Valentine or Valentinus), the Saint's Day of February 14 was established by Pope Gelasius in the fifth century. Geoffrey Chaucer is given credit for the first poem tying Valentine's Day to the fabled wedding day of birds. His "The Parliament of Fowls," written 1381-1382 to celebrate the engagement of Richard II of England and Anne of Bohemia, includes the lines: "For this was on Seynt Valentyns day, / When every foule cometh her to chese [choose] his mate."¹

The first written Valentine still known to be in existence was written by Charles, Duke of Orleans while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. In 1415 he wrote a series of poems to his wife, Bonne d'Armagnac. The first two lines of one begin: "Je suis deja d'amour tanné / Ma tres douce Valentinée..."^{2,3} (The poem is part of the manuscript collection in the British Library in London.) Nearly 200 years later, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (ca. 1599-1601) includes Ophelia's song from her mad scene:

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's Day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.⁴

Just when the practice of sending valentine messages began is uncertain, but it was probably related to the composing of poems for one's valentine. Samuel Pepys whose diaries chronicled domestic life in England during the reign

of Charles II records several valentine customs including, in 1667, the first mention of a card. The Massachusetts Historical Society holds a letter dated 1625 that records one clergyman asking another whether he should allow two young girls in his parish to draw for Valentine's Day. It was frowned on "as the Bible was against witchcraft and things of chance."

Early valentines were handmade, usually homemade. There is a record that nuns in Strasbourg, France created valentines and sold them to local customers. But these were usually small-scale productions. It is agreed that the invention of lithography allowed the production of cheap printed images from inked stones. Lithography, which permitted the reproduction of illustrations and text from limestones, was invented in 1796, but its practical use in the United States did not occur until the 1840s. Following the introduction of steel embossing dies in the first quarter of the nineteenth century even more elaborate designs could be created. Robert Brenner, in his *Valentine Treasury*, describes the wide variety of decorative elements that might be used in the making of valentines:

...artificial flowers, beads, feathers, velvet, plush, silk lace, shells, cork, sachet and perfume, dried flowers and grasses, seaweed, net, straw baskets, spun glass, imitation precious stones, and even human hair. The use of tiny mirrors in the center panel, or a little lace-edged envelope surrounded by hand-painted flowers, was not at all uncommon.⁵

Valentines were made in England, France and Germany, among other countries. The history of actual card making in the United States, however, is rather complex because almost no valentines bear the mark of the manufacturer. It is likely

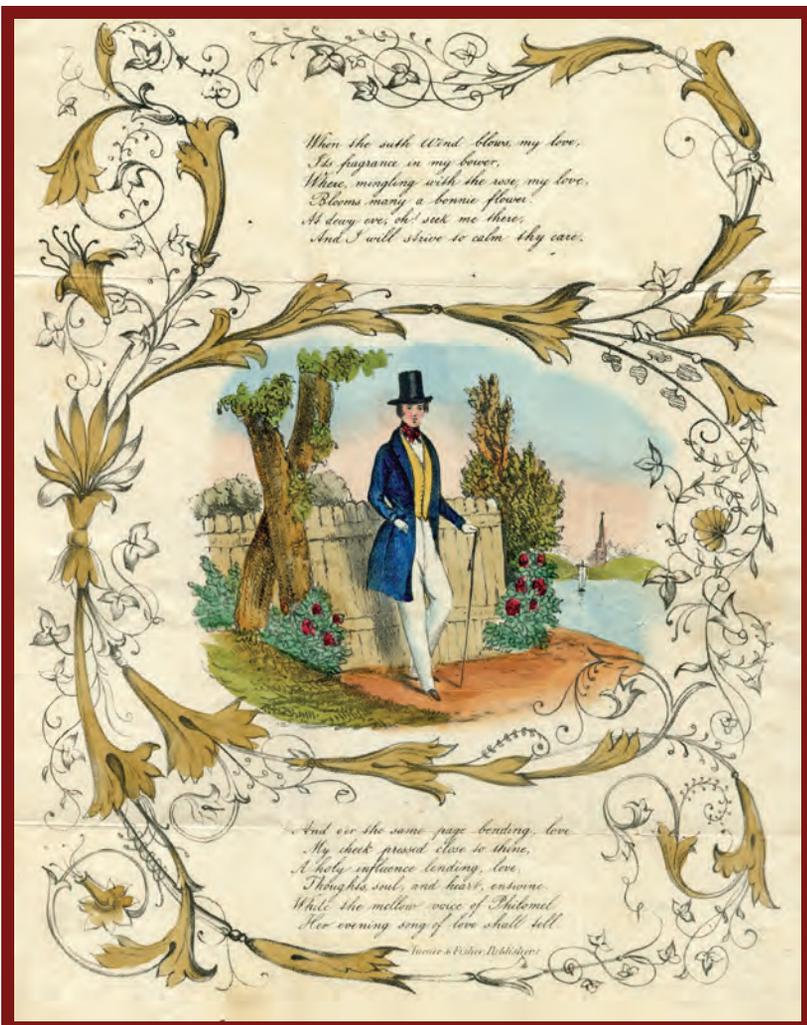


Maiden fair—accept my greeting
Borne upon love's swiftest wing,
See the bird with speed so fleeting,
To thy hands the token bring.
When you read each anxious line,
Accept me for your Valentine.

Mary A. Leman.

Portland Feb 18 1844.

An 1847 dated lettersheet type of valentine with lithographed hand-colored illustration on first page. Postmarked with Portland, Maine townmark and 5 cents due rating.



More elaborate design lithographed in black with gold hand-coloring around a hand-colored scene in center on first page of double sheet with Philadelphia drop rate 2 cents on folded cover.

that some of the early commercial valentines mailed in the United States were prepared abroad and imported to be sold by stationers here. However, a number of American printers made and sold at least limited numbers of valentines in the 1820s and 1830s, with New York being the principal city of manufacture.

In 1849 Esther Howland of Worcester, Massachusetts instituted an assembly line type of production line for her handmade valentines featuring fine lace elements. When she sold the business in 1881, the company was grossing better than a million dollars annually. After 1850 there were many different manufacturers of valentines meant to be sold to the general public. In his *Consumer Rites*, Leigh Schmidt comments that what made the celebration of St. Valentine's Day a fashion in New York, Philadelphia, and an ever-widening circle of places were valentines.⁶ There seems to be little doubt that the valentine card craze began in England and later developed in this country.

The earliest surviving valentines I have found are from the 1840s. In his overview of the valentine trade, *A Token*

of My Affection, Barry Shank also dates the early American valentines from the 1840s.⁷ Leigh Schmidt makes reference to two issues of "Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book," one of which (February 1841) "gave barely a mention to St. Valentine's Day," while an issue eight years later was crammed with the "New Fashion for Valentines."⁸ An illustrated 1848 advertisement from Thomas W. Strong, a New York dealer, describes the many types of subject matter, and prices from 6 cents to 10 dollars are shown.⁹

In a large specialized collection of nineteenth-century American valentines sold at auction (Christie's Robson Lowe June 13, 1991), only one handmade valentine — of uncertain origin and dated 1817 — was earlier than the 1840s. The earliest printed types were lettersheet designs that were probably produced before the widespread use of envelopes. It is difficult to pin down a year of use for most valentines because they are undated, except for the month and date in postmarks. Very few bear written messages and even fewer of the senders put a year date on their messages. When there is a matching postmark, either on folded lettersheets or envelopes, the rates may allow an approximate year date.

So rather than a strictly chronologic sequence, the valentines shown in this article are grouped by types, which are then presented by examples. There is some overlap, which will be mentioned with the presentation of individual valentines. Because this is a philatelic publication, some emphasis is placed on postmarked items, but the contents, the valentines themselves, are shown when they are present.

Lettersheet Designs

The earliest mailed valentines were the double-page lettersheet type with the illustration on the first page. These were then folded and mailed as stampless covers. This was the same type of stationery that was used for the common letter in the 1840s. Before July 1, 1845 the postal rate on a valentine would have been based on the distance the greeting was carried. If it was just dropped off at the post office for a recipient in the same city, the rate was one cent and could be prepaid or sent postage due. Recipients were used to receiving letters with the postage due, so it is not surprising that many valentines were mailed this way.

One of the early valentines with documented dating is the full page lettersheet shown. It is printed in black with a hand-colored central lithographed picture. The verse reads:

Maiden fair — accept my greeting
 Borne upon love's swiftest wing,
 See the bird with speed so fleeting
 To thy hands the token bring.
 When you read each anxious line,
 Accept me for your Valentine.

Below the printed words is written the name "Mary A. Lewen Portland Feb. 18th 1847." The folded cover addressed to Miss Martha Mathews, Bath, Maine bears a postmark "PORTLAND Me FEB 19" and "5" in fancy red box. So this was a valentine sent between two girl friends.

A similar lettersheet valentine is printed in gold ink with two female figures incorporated into the floral design around the words. That example bears a small colored label with roses and pansies as well. It is dated on the valentine "St. Valentines Day Feb 14th 1850." The postmark is from Hartford, Connecticut with five cents due.

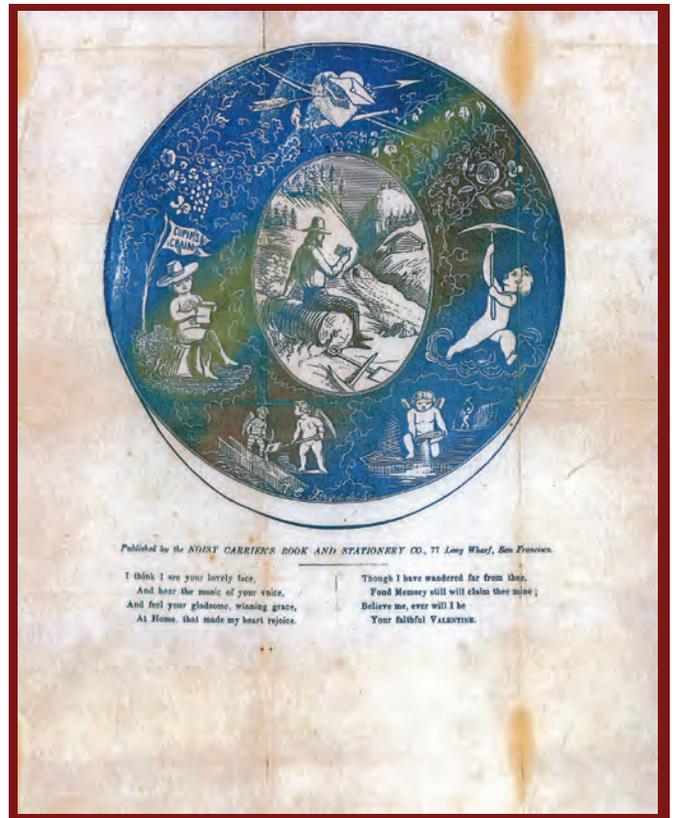
An extremely attractive printed valentine was made by hand-coloring a black printed design. While not actually dated, this valentine is postmarked with the blue Philadelphia 2 in a circle drop rate cancel, which establishes a date range of 1846–1851, since those are the February dates when the two-cent rate was in effect. There is an imprint "Turner and Fisher, Publishers."

Another lettersheet valentine shows some fancy embossing of the paper of the valentine, black and bronze printing of the text and frame, and a central chromolithographed picture of a man and woman that has been glued into the center. This example bears a red "FOXBOROUGH MS. FEB 14", "PAID" and "5" (the paid rate for under 300 miles from 1846–1851). One has to distinguish color printing from hand-coloring over a black printing.

Certainly the most unusual lettersheet valentine I have seen is one contributed to this article by Mark Baker. It is an unreported California miners' lettersheet type printed in blue and gold (not listed in Baird¹⁰). It bears the imprint "Published by the NOISY CARRIER'S BOOK AND STATIONERY CO. 77 Long Wharf, San Francisco." The text reads:

I think I see your lovely face,
 And hear the music of your voice,
 And feel your gladsome, winning grace,
 At Home, that made my heart rejoice
 Though I have wandered far from thee.
 Fond Memory still will claim thee mine;
 Believe me, ever will I be
 Your faithful VALENTINE.

A miner is reading a letter in the center, surrounded by images of cupids as gold miners at "Cupid's Claim" below a heart pierced by an arrow. California lettersheets were mailed in plain envelopes.



California miner's lettersheet in blue and gold printed by Noisy Carriers Book and Stationery Co. with illustrations of cupids performing mining activities and a valentine poem.

Lithographed Envelopes

Before the postal reform of 1845, which changed the postage charges from being based on the number of enclosed sheets to weight, a letter in an envelope would have had to pay a double rate. But the 1845 reforms created only two single rates, 5 cents for under 300 miles and 10 cents for



An 8½ x 10¼ inch envelope made expressly for valentines during 1850s. Such envelopes were lithographed with gold designs on the front and all four back flaps. Postmarked "NEW PHILADA O FEB 27" and manuscript "paid 6."



Extremely ornate valentine enclosure with embossed and gold lithographed first page with various extra features attached in and around the center. The writing was added by the sender who also wrote inside on the white back sheet to which the front-decorated lace-like sheet was affixed.

over that distance with weight being the determining factor for double and higher rates of postage.

There was no cross-country mail at that date, so a new



Large type envelope that was chromolithographed in four colors, dated 1853 from enclosed valentine. The blue Philadelphia postmark shows the one-cent drop rate for a letter left in the post office to be picked up by the recipient.

40-cent rate was instituted later in 1847. That was also the year of the first postage stamps in the United States, but the vast majority of mail in the 1840s was stampless in nature. By the 1850s most valentines were mailed in envelopes, but stamp use was still infrequent. However, by April 1, 1855 the use of government issued stamps became obligatory on all mail passing through the posts. The use of stamped envelopes (entires) was very rare for valentines.

One of the most typical type of valentines of the 1850s was a large valentine, often measuring 8 x 10 inches in size, which fit into oversized envelopes that matched the size of the valentine. These envelopes were generally printed in a bronze ink on blue paper with designs on both sides of the envelope. The example shown is 8½ x 10¼ inches. The postmark "NEW PHILADA O FEB 27" seems dwarfed on such a large envelope. The postage was double weight, manuscript "Paid 6" at upper right. This paid a double Paid 3 single rate after July 1, 1851. These envelopes were only used for valentines, and some may have been printed in Europe.

The valentine enclosed in this envelope also is illustrated. The front is an embossed punched lace paper that looks like a paper doily but is made of thin paper. Glued to the back is an oval sheet resembling cloth, which is gold on the front side. On the front is glued the central gold wreath and four surrounding bursts, but all the other gold decoration that is seen is printed on the paper, which is embossed and punched. There is a central chromolithograph of cupid. The whole first page is glued along the left side to a plain sheet of white paper of about the same size. The sender has opened this and inside has written the following verses:

I think of thee.

I think of thee when morning springs
From sleep with plumage bath'd in dew,
And like a young bird lifts her wings,
Of gladness in the welkin blue;
And when at noon the breath of love,
Per flow'r and stream is wandering free,
And sent in music from above,
I think of thee, I think of thee!

I think of thee when soft and wide
The evening spreads her robes of light,
And when the morn's sweet crescent springs,
In light o'er heav'n's deep, waveless sea.
And stars are forth like blessed things,
I think of thee! I think of thee.
And take me for your Valentine.

This is a very fancy type of valentine for the period. Many of the large 8 x 10 valentines are simply embossed white double pages with a chromolithographed label and printed text on the first page, but others have quite elaborate features, like this valentine.

One of the most elaborate envelopes that I have seen is one of the large 8½ x 10 inch en-



Smaller lithographed blue envelope with back flap lifted to show printed gold design. It was postmarked at Hudson, New York with "PAID" and "2" markings of the late 1840s period.



Enclosed matching valentine shows an exquisite gold lithographed design with chromolithographed labels including central image.

velopes with matching enclosure. In this case the envelope, which can be dated as 1853 from the enclosed valentine, is a chromolithograph in four colors: red, blue, green, and gold. The drop rate in 1853 had been reduced to one cent, postage due in this case.

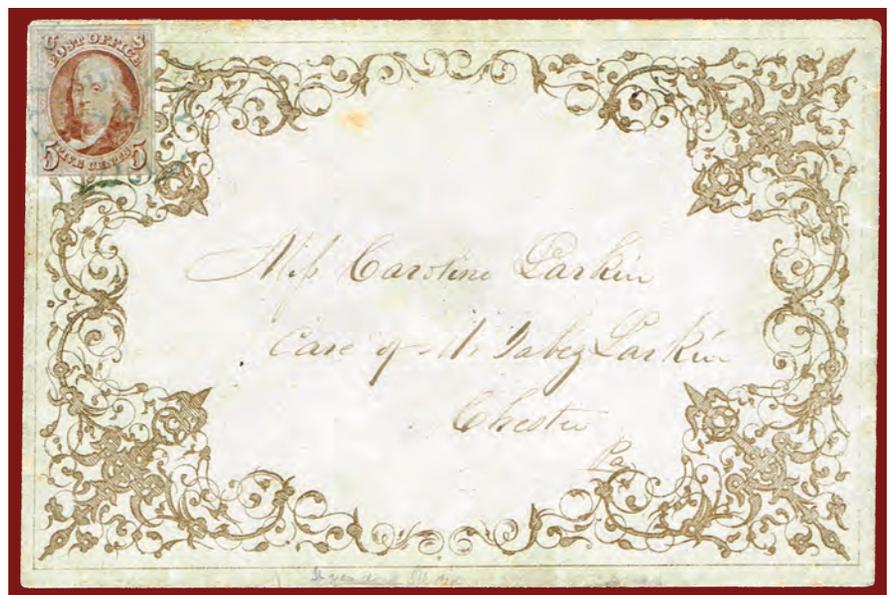
In addition to these oversized envelopes, lithographed valentine envelopes exist in many different smaller sizes. Bluish envelopes measuring 5½ x 8½ inches, with printing on both sides are quite often seen. Typical valentines are embossed white double pages with various colored labels, but some are more elaborate with chromolithographed designs that can include a central cutout image in full color.

Shown is a slightly smaller envelope with the back flap lifted to show its decoration (there is similar decoration on all four flaps of the back of the envelope) and the matching valentine enclosure. The red postmark is "HUDSON N.Y.," "PAID" and "2," so this would be a 1846–1851 period valentine. The greeting is printed on the first of a double-page lettersheet in gold ink with the picture of a lady glued in the center. The flowers to the left and right are colored labels affixed to the lettersheet. There is an imprint in the lower right that reads "G. Snyder's Lith. 122 Fulton St., N.Y."

In addition to the design of the en-

velope, valentines can be collected because of their postal usage. An example is a 5-cent 1847 stamp canceled "WILMINGTON DE FEB 15" in blue on a slightly larger than the mid-size envelope with brownish gold printing. It is addressed to a young lady in Chester, Pennsylvania, and at the bottom is written, "If you don't I'll die."

Both handstamped and adhesive carrier and local stamps



Usage of the 5-cent 1857 stamp on ornate valentine envelope with cancellation from Wilmington, Delaware. The distance to Chester, Pennsylvania was less than 300 miles, justifying the five-cent rate.



City Dispatch Post three-cent carrier stamp used on lithographed valentine envelope at New York.

exist on valentine envelopes, usually for local delivery. Shown is a the United States Despatch Post 3-cent stamp with a "U.S." cancellation on a smaller and simpler lithographed valentine envelope with the postmark of the carrier service. The Christie's Robson Lowe June 13, 1991 auction mentioned above contained many examples of valentines carried by private local posts or carriers. The valentines from these smaller envelopes were thin printed sheets that were folded twice to fit into the envelope. Some were on embossed paper with handwritten messages.



Envelope with simple embossed design and valentine enclosure partly printed and partly handwritten. The cover was postmarked "DROP 2" at Evansville, Indiana dating it as 1846-1851.



Embossed Envelopes

The other major type of envelope used for valentines during most of the nineteenth century was the embossed design envelope. Both the valentines and the envelopes were constructed of paper that had been placed into presses against ornamental steel dies, which in turn imprinted a design onto the paper. In the case of envelopes, the paper was then folded into the shape of an envelope. The valentines could be single or double pages. In addition to embossing, paper could be punched out leaving a design in relief. A combination of both embossing and punch outs was common for valentines during the 1850s and 1860s.

A simpler type of embossed envelope, with its enclosed valentine also on embossed paper, is illustrated. The envelope demonstrates an interesting "DROP 2" postmark used at Evansville, Indiana. The valentine itself is partly handmade, with the verse written in manuscript and the flower printed on the paper. A wonderful envelope with fancy "BOX 2" in ribbon and "BINGHAMTON, N.Y. FEB 15" can be see on a 1846-1851 drop letter. The matching valentine is shown as an example of a very simple embossed valentine with embossed design of lady, floral patterns, and palm trees, on top of which are three labels, one with printed text.



Embossed envelope with more elaborate design for envelope. In this example of a drop letter paid by a stamp, the one-cent 1851 Type 2 stamp is tied on the reverse flap of the cover at Canandaigua, New York.



Plain small envelope with Binghamton, New York postmark and very fancy "BOX 2" postmark dated February 15. The enclosure is a typical embossed valentine of the early 1840s period with labels to add color and text. Note that there are specific design features in the embossing.



tine from a very similar 1857 envelope from Hancock Bridge that demonstrates very nicely the punched out feature combined with embossing.

There is a fairly stiff white piece of paper, the edge of which is folded over at the top and can be seen from the front. This is the foundation for the structure of the valentine. In front of this is the embossed, punched out design, which resembles lace. That flimsy sheet is glued only at the top to the back of the folded flap of the base sheet, which holds this very delicate piece of paper in place. The blue color comes from a sheet of blue tissue paper that is free between the lace and the white back sheet, except where it is glued to the



Valentine enclosure with punched out and embossed lace-like front with two red hearts and blue sheet backing to demonstrate the design features. There are several labels glued to a mesh that is attached to the back of the front sheet. The backing sheet shows more pictures and embossed scenes.



Embossed envelope originally mailed with one-cent stamp at Norwich, Connecticut. The three-cent stamp was then added with a second town postmark and masonic triangle cancel on stamp.

First American slogan cancellation, a red three straight line postmark reading "Valentine's Day, FEBRUARY 14. FREMONT, OHIO" on one-cent 1857 Type 2 stamp, also pen canceled.



lace right in the center. The crisscross lines are due to a real piece of mesh that is attached to the back of the lace. To the left and right of the mesh are two red paper hearts that are also glued to the lace. The blue and red papers produce a contrast of color with the white lace and make it stand out.

In the actual center is a chromolithographed label of a cupid in a gold chariot and above this a second label of birds glued only to the front of the mesh. This is not all. One can fold back the whole front of the valentine to expose the white sheet backing. Instead of being blank, it has been *printed* in multicolors with two scenes of sky and a lake, over which are glued two more embossed cutout lace pieces of paper, one of two angels on clouds, and the other of two cupids in a sailboat.



Matching enclosure has a hand-colored lithographed design. In the center is a double heart (shown open) with more lithographed images.

A later type of valentine from the 1860s has an envelope embossed with designs and is very typical for the period. This example shows interesting postal usage. The sender originally applied a one-cent stamp, which would pay a drop letter fee before July 1, 1863. However, it was postmarked at Norwich, Connecticut and this was insufficient postage for a letter addressed to another town (in this case, Trenton, New Jersey), so a three-cent stamp was placed over the other stamp and a new postmark, "NORWICH CON FEB 15," with a fancy Masonic triangle killer was applied.

The valentine is a hand-colored black lithograph on plain paper with no embossing. In the center is a paper heart that can be opened and closed. The illustration shows the open view. The closed view is a heart, in the center of which two birds are feeding four hatchlings in a nest. The word "WOMAN'S" is above the birds. The inside shows a woman's hat with a verse commenting on a woman's heart being caught by every idle pleasure. Since the valentine was addressed to a young man, it is a fair assumption that she is offering him her affection. This sheet was larger than the envelope and was folded to fit. I have these hand-colored printed valentines from as early as the late 1850s and many are quite charming.



“Satan Making Away with an Old Bachelor” comic valentine printed as double-page lettersheet, folded, and then postmarked by Boyds City Express, a local post.

Earliest Slogan Postmark

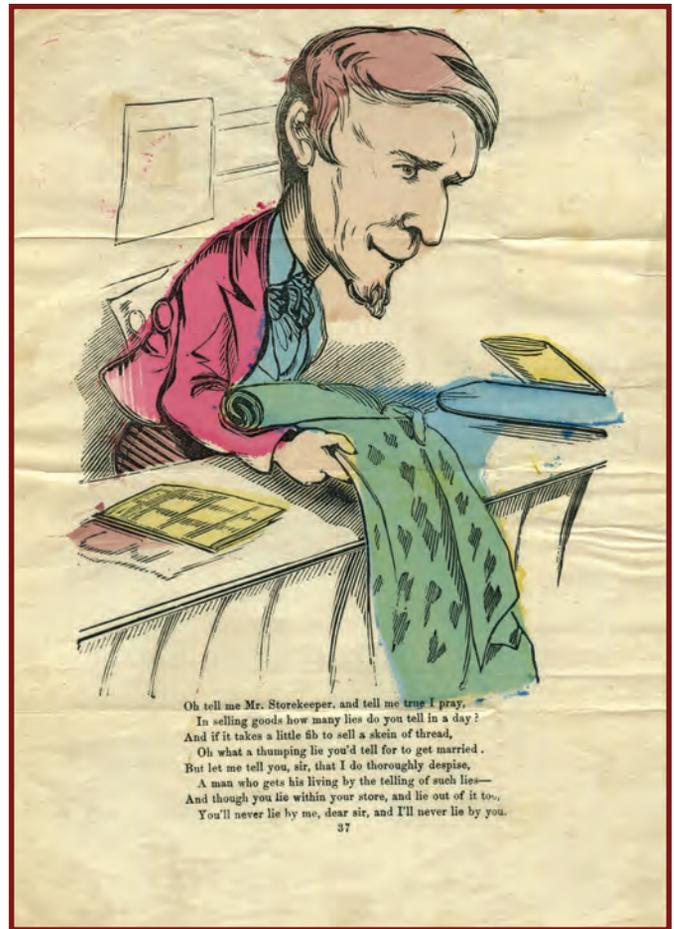
Probably the most philatelically unusual valentine cover from this period is an envelope with the earliest American slogan cancellation, as certified by the American Philatelic Society. The postmaster at Fremont, Ohio fashioned a straight line device reading “Valentine’s Day, / FEBRUARY 14. / FREMONT, OHIO.” It was used in red ink to cancel a Type 2 1851 one-cent stamp on a drop letter. This postmaster also used red straight line postmarks on stampless covers in the same color ink. There is a small colored label on the flap, but there is no valentine enclosure.

Comic Types

The earliest comic valentine I have located is an English text image of an old lady in a ridiculous hoop gown with caption, “I chose thee for my Valentine.” It bears a watermark “J. Whatman 1822.”¹¹ These comic valentines have a number of names including “penny horrible,” “penny dreadful,” and “vinegar” valentines. A very good discussion of comic valentines can be found in the book by Barry Shank cited above.

Some comic-type valentines were among the designs printed as illustrated lettersheets meant to be folded and mailed as stampless covers. These are really quite unusual. An example is a lettersheet type that was printed in black and hand-colored. The text reads:

SATAN MAKING AWAY WITH AN OLD



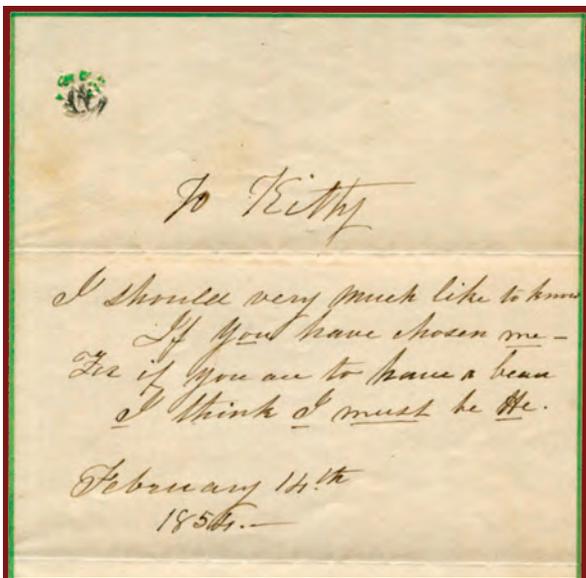
Comic valentine from 1860s depicting a storekeeper. This particular example was sent to A.T. Stewart, reputedly the wealthiest individual in the country at the time.

BACHELOR.

This picture I send to show you your end.
 The end of not only a few;
 Old Nick I intend as your intimate friend,
 For the devil serves thus, such fellows as you.

There is a red oval “BOYD’S CITY/ EXPRESS POST/ FEB 14 55 postmark on the addressed portion. An imprint reads “Published by Turner & Fisher, New York and Philadelphia.” Another lettersheet example shows a well-dressed fellow blowing into a tuba accompanied by a nasty poem about a musician. This also has the Turner & Fisher imprint and was mailed as a stampless cover from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, five cents postage due.

A large number of comic valentines were produced during the 1850s and into the 1860s, usually printed in black on smaller single sheets of cheap soft paper, which were then colored by hand, often quite sloppily. They were mailed in envelopes, usually without any written message. A very large collection of these exists in The Library Company of Philadelphia, gathered by Charles McAllister, who donated his material in 1886. There are more than 650 designs, all from this period, in the collection. One of the printers of comic valentines in the 1850s was Charles Magnus, who



Embossed type lady's envelope with "UTICA N.Y. FEB 14" postmark and "1," addressed to young lady in Utica. Matching valentine to same addressee dated 1854 on plain note paper that bears a written message.

later became well-known for his patriotic stationery during the Civil War.¹²

An example of a comic valentine from the 1860s comes from an original find of letters sold to my father and me fifty years ago. They were all addressed to A. T. Stewart, who was reported in the newspapers of the Civil War period to be the richest man in the country. His company, which was named after him, was well-known for selling clothes and fabrics. Most of the letters are asking for money or a job. The cover for this valentine was a simple envelope with blue "CINCINNATI O. FEB 17" postmark on 3-cent 1861 without year date. The text of the comic valentine reads:

Oh tell me Mr. Storekeeper, and tell me true I pray,
 In selling goods how many lies do you tell in a day
 And if it takes a little fib to sell a skein of thread
 Oh what a thrumping lie you'd tell for to get married.
 But let me tell you, sir, that I do thoroughly despise,
 A man who gets his living by the telling of such lies.—
 And though you lie within your store, and lie out of it too,
 You'll never lie by me, dear sir, and I'll never lie by you.

Comic valentines continued to be produced after the period of time being discussed in this article, and remained

popular through the early twentieth century. The quality of printing of the later types is often much better than those from the 1860s.

Handmade Valentines

As one might imagine, there is quite a variety of handmade valentines. Actually most of the earliest valentines were handmade. Folded and cutout types have been dated from the late eighteenth century. But with the expansion of sending printed valentines in the 1840s came many that were handwritten, too. One example, written on ordinary note paper with a plain white envelope, is a handwritten poem to Miss Sarah Doherty, Johnson, Vermont with red "PAID" being the only postmark. The writer seems to be an admirer:

I love to see thy gentle hand
 Dispose with modest grace,
 The household things around thy home
 And each thing in its place
 And then thy own trim modest form
 Is always neatly clad;
 Thou sure wilt make the tidiest wife
 That ever husband had
 No costly splendors needest thou
 To make thy home look bright
 For neatness on the humblest spot
 Can shed a sunny light.
 Your Valentine

Shown is an embossed envelope of the type commonly used by ladies for many purposes. The address was to Kitty Culver, Whitesboro St., Utica with postmark "UTICA N.Y. FEB 14" and "1" for the drop rate after 1851 (until 1863). Inside was a single letter sheet with a short, handwritten poem:

To Kitty
 I should very much like to know
 If you have chosen me
 For if you are to have a beau
 I think I must be He.
 February 14th 1854

Another young man glued a paper gold heart on a plain sheet and wrote a poem, "To Elvira," which was mailed to Miss Elvira Cable, Brooklyn Academy, postmarked red "BROOKLYN N.Y. FEB 14" and "2" (due two cents, 1846–1851 period). A bit more complicated is a blue image of a near naked lady used as a label on blue writing paper on which the sender writes a long poem about getting a wife. She addresses the envelope to Mr. Jeremiah Hoghurst, Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. (presumably it was carried by hand). This valentine was a form of marriage proposal or at least a suggestion of such.

An envelope postmarked "AUSTIN IND FEB 13" contained two cutout hearts on one of which is written "if you wish to be happy wealthy and wise make haste and git married and quit telling lies." The second reads "one kind kiss

before we part to relieve my aching Heart.”

Printed notepaper could be used for valentines too. An extremely fine chromolithographed envelope and matching lettersheet and envelope, probably printed in Europe, was used for a proposal:

I am fair, my dear Jimmy
As lilies and roses,
My eyes are like vi'lets
And, grecian my nose is!
I ve joys & I ve comforts, the good things
of life,
But- no one to call me, *their dear little wife!*
You may roam all around
My dear little laddie,
There's no one, you'll find,
Will suit you like Addy-
Then grant me the boon, I most wish for in life,
And call me, dear Jimmy, *your own little wife!*
Valentine's day
Leap Year, 1848

A similar valentine was written on a chromolithographed sheet printed in green, black and gold inks with no valentine motif. Its ten-line poem was dated February 14, 1858.

Certainly one of the most spectacular handmade valentines is the Confederate valentine that was shown to me by Dr. Ludwig Simon at his home in New Jersey nearly forty years ago. Both the envelope and the valentine are completely handmade. This leads us into the final section of this article on valentines used during the Civil War.

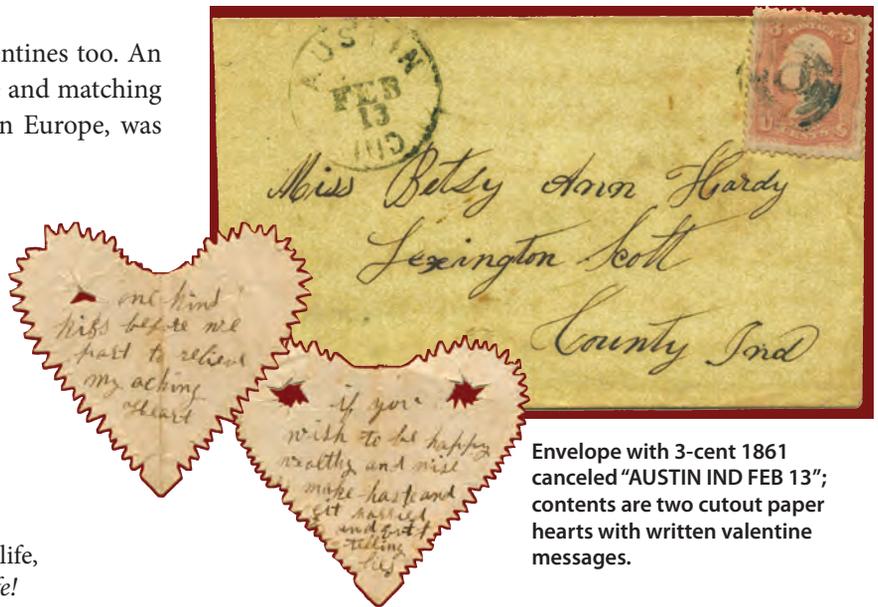
Civil War Valentines

In addition to regular valentines of the types already discussed with postal usage during the Civil War period, there are a number of special envelopes and enclosures with designs relating to war themes. The two most popular envelope types are the Romeo and Juliet design and a similar orange design with a soldier instead of Romeo. It is not well-known, but the Romeo and Juliet design was printed in red and brown and red and blue. Both were illustrated in color in the June 1991 Christies auction catalogue. Those illustrations also show one of the special valentine enclosures picturing soldiers and their sweethearts.

The best of the five known Civil War valentine enclosures shows a soldier sitting writing at a folding desk, dreaming of his girl. Closed, the tent flaps resemble a flag. The paper of the valentine is a folded white sheet with the front side embossed. The colored lithographed designs were glued in the center of the embossed sheet. There are labels with text below the central scene on all five types of soldier valentines including the illustrated example.

The orange soldier parting from his wife design enve-

Chromolithographed notepaper used for 1848 leap year proposal on Valentine's Day. Matching hand-carried, beautifully printed envelope probably of European origin



Envelope with 3-cent 1861 canceled "AUSTIN IND FEB 13"; contents are two cutout paper hearts with written valentine messages.





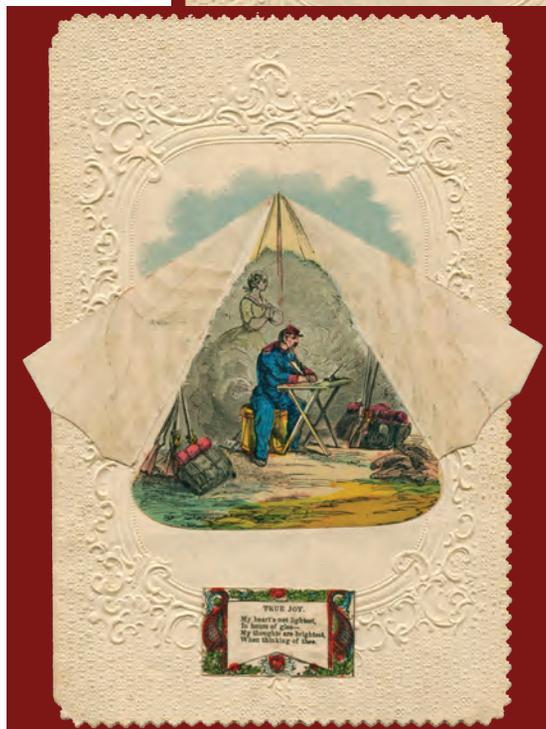
Famous handmade Confederate valentine with matching envelope bearing postmarked 10-cent blue Paterson stamp "BLOUNTSVILLE Ten FEB 16" addressed to soldier in 4th Regt. Tennessee Cavalry at Shelbyville, Tennessee.

lope was sometimes used for these soldier-type valentine enclosures, but most of the ones I have seen were sent in large embossed white envelopes that fit the enclosures. They bear a single three-cent stamp for postage. A slightly larger envelope with the same soldier design and a row of stars all around, but printed in red and blue, is shown. It includes additional text addressed to soldiers asking them to remember The Loved Ones at Home. This was an envelope which we term a portfolio type envelope that enclosed a series of items to be sold as a single package. On the reverse of this envelope there are two 3-cent stamps post-marked at Georgetown, D.C. with the address. But there is also advertising on the back flap:

THE ARMY VALENTINE
 PACKAGAE [sic]
 CONTAINS
 1 SUPERB VALENTINE ... retail
 price ... 25 cts.
 1 ELEGANT EMBOSSED
 ENVELOPE ... retail price ... 3 cts.
 1 ELEGANT EMBOSSED
 VALENTINE ... retail price ... 6 cts.
 1 WHITE PLAIN ENVELOPE ...
 retail price ... 1 ct.
 3 MILITARY COMICS [comic
 valentines] ... retail price ... 5 cts.
 3 WHITE ENVELOPES ... retail
 price ... 2 cts.
 2 Beautiful Val'e Cards in fancy env.
 ... retail price ... 8 cts.
 50 Cents.

Civil War valentine with tent flaps closed to show the tent resembling the American flag. The valentine is an embossed double-paged sheet to which the tent design and lower text label are glued.

Same valentine with tent flaps open. A uniformed soldier sits on a drum at a camp desk writing to his sweetheart who is in his dreams.



Another Union valentine features embossed double pages to which are attached three printed labels: a bouquet of flowers; a patriotic view of seated Liberty with eagle, shield, flags, ship and train; and in the center an open book with the following text:

I Love Thee
 I'll love thee as
 The wild bee loves
 The blossom sweet
 On which he roves
 Around the fields
 And blooming groves
 Such beauty dwells
 In thee my love.

I Love Thee
 The sunbeam after
 Gentle showers



Civil War portfolio or package type envelope, postally used with address and stamps on opposite side. The design is the same as that of the orange envelopes with additional printing. Reverse showing address, postage, and advertising on envelope flap.

Is not more loved
By Drooping flowers
Within their noontide
Shady bowers
Than thou art
Loved by me love.

The embossed envelope depicts within its design a man proposing. The postmarks are red “WATERBURY CT FEB 14 1863” and there is a black grid on the 3-cent stamp. This is the only Civil War patriotic valentine label that I have seen.

A different type of folded square valentine with a matching envelope, which pictures a standing soldier, was shown as Figures 4-53 and 4-54 in my book *Federal Civil War Postal History*.¹³

Comic valentines were popular in the North during the war. The McAllister Collection at The Library Company of Philadelphia contains 109 examples by my count. A cute example of one of these types from my collection shows a young man smoking and pretending to be on picket duty. The inscription reads:

GUARDS.
Twenty-three inches or so is
a pace—
Remember that sir, and
right-about-face ;
Turn down your trousers, and
dress up a bit,
Then shoulder your gun, and



Civil War design label incorporated with two other labels on embossed-paper type valentine. This was sent in embossed-design type of envelope.

you'll make a hit.

The inset shows the cover, a 2-cent drop rate with “MEDFORD, MASS. FEB 15” postmark and is addressed to a young man, “Master Charles M Green. Present.”

As far as is known, there were no special valentines produced in the South during the Civil War.¹⁴ I have seen a large 8 x 10 embossed envelope bearing a 3-cent 1857 stamp with Confederate state usage from Georgia. The enclosure was a lace-type valentine with decorations glued to the lace. A number of individual Confederate valentines have been described with embossed type envelopes.^{6, 15} One of the most interesting was described and photographed by Van Dyk MacBride in the July 5, 1941 issue of *Stamps*. I described two valentines without envelopes but with written

messages indicating they were from Confederate soldiers in *The Confederate Philatelist*.¹⁶ One was taken from a captured Yankee soldier. A wonderful handmade Confederate valentine and matching envelope was shown in the Handmade Section of this article. This is the only patriotic Confederate valentine that is known.

Brian Green described a Howell verse cover “The Bruised Heart” mailed by flag of truce with Confederate and U.S. stamps from North Carolina to a husband in Point Lookout, Maryland, a federal prison.¹⁷ The date and particular poem



Comic Civil War subject valentine “GUARDS” showing teenager with rifle. Sent in plain white envelope mailed at Medford, Massachusetts, February 15 with 2-cent black stamp as drop letter.

suggests this was intended to be a valentine, but unfortunately the prisoner had died on January 25, 1865 before it arrived.

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Mark Baker, Carol Davini, Gordon Eubanks, Richard Frajola, Nancy Rosin, Rumsey Auctions, Siegel Auction Galleries.

Endnotes

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2. “Valentine’s Day,” www.history.com/topics/valentines-day
3. “The Early History of Valentine’s Day Cards,” <http://suite101.com/a/the-early-history-of-valentines-day-cards-a178879>
4. *Hamlet*, Act 4, Scene V; Farmer, *op. cit.*, page 125.
5. Robert Brenner, *Valentine Treasury* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publ., 1997).
6. Leigh E. Schmidt, *Consumer Rites, The Buying and Selling of American Holidays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), page 49.
7. Barry Shank, *A Token of My Affection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
8. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, page 39.
9. *Ibid.*, page 66.
10. Joseph Armstrong Baird Jr., *California’s Pictorial Letter Sheets: 1849–1869* (San Francisco: David Magee, 1967).
11. Ernest D. Chase, *The Romance of Greeting Cards* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1956), page 63.

12. E. Richard McKinstry, *Charles Magnus, Lithographer* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2013), page 74.
13. James W. Milgram, *Federal Civil War Postal History* (Lake Forest, IL: Northbrook Publ., 2009).
14. Patricia Kaufmann, “Civil War Tokens of Affection,” *Confederate Philatelist* (Jan–Feb 1979): 2–11.
15. Brian Green, “Valentines of the Confederacy,” *American Philatelic Congress*, No. 2 (1976): 171–168.
16. James W. Milgram, “Two Confederate Valentines,” *Confederate Philatelist* (Jan–Feb 1979): 27–28.
17. Green, *op. cit.*

The Author

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