

Postcard Collection (circa 1905-2003)
Wellesley Historical Society

Repository Identifier

mawelhs

Local Identifier

2017.31

Name and Location of Repository

The Wellesley Historical Society
229 Washington Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
(781) 235-6690
www.wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org

Title

Postcard Collection

Date

circa 1905-2003, bulk 1907-1945

Extent

2 boxes, 2 linear feet

Name of Creator

Repository Collection

Historical Note

This information is adapted from The Smithsonian Institution's "History of Postcards," retrieved from URL <http://siarchives.si.edu/history/exhibits/postcard/postcard-history>.

Postcards generally fall into two categories. Illustrated greeting postcards are called Picture Postcards, while cards with photographs are called Real Photo Postcards. This collection contains Real Photo Postcards.

Pre-Postcard Period 1848-1870: The precursor to the postcard were "mailed cards," cards sent in decorated envelopes. In February 1861 Congress passed an act which allowed private (non-government) printed postcards without envelopes to be mailed through the Postal Service.

Pioneer Period 1870-1898: The Government Printing Office created postcards in 1873 that had integral 1-cent postage printed on the card. Cards created by private companies or individuals required a 2-cent stamp. These postcards allowed for a message on the front, with the address on the back. These cards did not feature any artwork.

Private Mailing Card Period 1898-1901: In May 1898 Congress passed an act allowing citizens to send private mailing cards for 1-cent. These cards were required to carry the printed message: "Private Mailing Card, Authorized by Act of Congress May 19, 1898" on the back. These cards featured the address on the back, and either artwork or a message on the front.

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Post Card Period (“Undivided Back” period) 1901-1907: Starting December 1901 postcards were required to have “Post Card” printed on the back. Cards with illustrations on the front were common; only the address was permitted on the back.

Divided Back Period (“Golden Age of Post Cards”) 1907-1915: The Universal Postal Congress, followed by the US Congress, approved “divided back” postcards for use in 1907; the cards had marked correspondence and address areas on the back. The front could feature illustrations (Picture Postcards) or photographs (Real Photo Postcards). The ability to send a postcard featuring both correspondence and artwork ushered in an era known as the “Golden Age of Post Cards.” In addition to their correspondence utility, these cards had collector appeal. Cards could also be customized, and Kodak introduced a postcard camera which allowed photographers to print photos directly onto postcard backs. The divided back would continue to be a standard feature for postcards in later periods.

White Border Period 1915-1930: Many of the cards dating from the Golden Age were imported from Germany, however, the advent of World War I brought an end to these imports. The quality of domestic cards suffered and people lost interest in collecting. Cards from this period are of a lesser quality, and feature a white border to reduce printing costs. During this period it was common for descriptions of the card illustration to be featured in the upper left corner on the address side.

Linen Period 1930-1945: Postcards from this period feature paper which has a higher rag content, and the colors are brighter, sometimes garish. The cards have a visible cloth-like texture, as though they were printed on finely-woven cloth.

Photochrom Period 1945-Present: Photochrom (sometimes spelled Photochrome) postcards were introduced in 1939. These color photograph cards dominated the market after 1945.

Scope and Content

The Wellesley Historical Society Postcard Collection contains approximately 775 cards, with roughly 625 of them representing unique (unduplicated) views of Wellesley. The majority of the postcards are of buildings, parks, and landscapes; there is one grouping of cards depicting people.

The cards in the collection date from circa 1905 to the present, but predominantly from 1905 to 1945, with a high concentration dating from the Golden Age of postcards, 1907-1915.

The cards depict Wellesley town landmarks, businesses, homes, and churches. The collection also includes scenes from Dana Hall School and Wellesley College. Several of the Wellesley College postcards date from the period of the fire which destroyed the College Hall on March 17, 1914; these postcards feature photographs of the hall both before and after the devastation. Over 70 of the cards feature early twentieth-century views of Hunnewell Gardens. There are also approximately twenty postcards depicting interior and exterior scenes of the now-razed Wellesley Inn.

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The types of postcards represented in the collection include undivided back, divided back, white border, linen, real photo, and photochrom cards. In addition, the collection contains two fine 1905 Rotograph "souvenir mail cards," featuring a fold-out pane out of which a strip of smaller images can be accessed. These unique cards can be found in the "Town Hall" and "Wellesley College: Aerial/General" sections, and the fold-out sections feature scenes from the town and college. There is also one booklet of seventeen divided back postcards (originally twenty) featuring views of Wellesley College, published by the Wellesley College Book Store.

Prominent manufacturers represented in the collection include C. O. Tucker (Boston), Robbins Bros., Artvue, Plastichrome, Lusterchrome, Leighton & Valentine Co., and Rotograph. Herbert E. Glasier & Co. (Boston) published a number of cards on behalf of several Wellesley companies, including E. A. Davis & Co., and S. DeFazio Co. Cards in the collection are both of domestic and imported origin; most of the imported cards were manufactured in Germany.

Many of the cards in the collection were manufactured for, and sold by, Sexton's Pharmacy, which was located in Wellesley Square, on Washington Street. The Wellesley Townsman notes in its July 18, 1908 issue that Dr. J. H. Sexton sold the business to N. Clark Clement and it was renamed the Clement Drug Co. that month. The Sexton postcards all date from prior to that event.

System of Arrangement

The postcards are arranged alphabetically by subject in two boxes.

Conditions Governing Access

The Postcard Collection is open for research purposes by appointment only. Please contact the Wellesley Historical Society for more information.

info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org

(781) 235-6690

Physical Access

Some of the materials are fragile.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Languages and Scripts of the Material

English

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Accession numbers are written on verso when available.

Accruals

The Historical Society may add materials to the Postcard Collection in the future.

Existence and Location of Originals

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Related Materials

Greeting Card and Picture Postcard Collection

The Wellesley Post Card Album, paperback book published by the Wellesley Historical Society

Description

DACS-compliant Finding Aid created in November 2015 by Alden Ludlow.

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Appendix: Box and Folder List

Box 1: Postcard Collection: Subjects A-K

Babson Institute/College
Belvedere
Charles River
Chin's Village
Club Houses
Dana Hall: Aerial/General
Dana Hall: Aloha, Rutland, Selfe
Dana Hall: Benvenue
Dana Hall: Bowdoin Terrace
Dana Hall: Beveridge Hall
Dana Hall: Cedarhurst Lodge
Dana Hall: The Clematis
Dana Hall: Eastman Circle
Dana Hall: Gray Lodge
Dana Hall: Green Gable
Dana Hall: Grove House
Dana Hall: Gymnasium
Dana Hall: French House
Dana Hall: Main Hall
Dana Hall: Manor Lodge
Dana Hall: Park Place
Dana Hall: Pine Cottage
Dana Hall: Pine Manor
Dana Hall: Rutland House
Dana Hall: Selfe House
Dana Hall: Westlea
Dana Hall: Wheeler House
Dana Hall: Tenacre
DeFazio Building/Post Office Block
Eaton Court
Elm Park and Hotel
Elm Bank
Fire Stations
General
Hair West Salon
Hathaway House Bookshop
Homes
Hundreds, The
Hunnewell Field
Hunnewell Gardens
Hunnewell, H. H. (Horatio Hollis), 1810-1902
Hunnewell Park

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Hunnewell School

Box 2: Postcard Collection: Subjects L-Z

Lake Waban
Library--see Town Hall
Lower Falls
Maugus Club
Miscellaneous Brooks, Bridges, Waterways Ponds
Morse's Pond
Natick
Needham
Newton
People
Railroads, General
Railroad Stations, Wellesley Farms
Railroad Stations, Wellesley Hills
Railroad Stations: Wellesley Lower Falls
Railroad Stations: Wellesley Square
Rockridge Hall
Sports Teams (Town & School)
Sprague Clock Tower
Saint Andrew's Church
Saint John's Church
Saint Mary's Church (Episcopal), Newton Lower Falls
Saint Paul's Church
Shaw School
Texaco Station
Town Hall
Unitarian Church
Waban Street
Washington Street, Wellesley Hills
Wayland
Wellesley Baptist Church
Wellesley College: Aerial/General
Wellesley College: Agora House
Wellesley College: Art Building
Wellesley College: Barn
Wellesley College: Bates, Freeman & McAfee Halls
Wellesley College: Boat House
Wellesley College: Cazenove & Beebe Halls
Wellesley College: Claflin Hall
Wellesley College: Club
Wellesley College: College Hall
Wellesley College: East Lodge
Wellesley College: Founder's Hall

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Wellesley College: Freeman Cottage
Wellesley College: Galen Stone Tower/Founder's & Green Halls
Wellesley College: Gates
Wellesley College: Green Hall
Wellesley College: Grounds
Wellesley College: Gymnasium
Wellesley College: Hazard Quadrangle
Wellesley College: Houghton Memorial Chapel
Wellesley College: Lake Waban
Wellesley College: Library
Wellesley College: Music Hall
Wellesley College: Noanett, The
Wellesley College: Page, Annie L, Memorial
Wellesley College: Phi Sigma House
Wellesley College: Pomeroy House
Wellesley College: Power Station
Wellesley College: President's House/Guest House
Wellesley College: Science Center
Wellesley College: Severance Hall
Wellesley College: Shakespeare House
Wellesley College: Simpson Cottage
Wellesley College: Stone Hall
Wellesley College: Student Alumni Building
Wellesley College: Tower Court
Wellesley College: Tupelo Point
Wellesley College: Whiting Observatory
Wellesley College: Wilder Hall
Wellesley College: Wood Cottage
Wellesley College: Zeta Alpha
Wellesley Congregational Church
Wellesley Country Club
Wellesley Department of Public Works (Aerial)
Wellesley High School
Wellesley Hills Congregational Church
Wellesley Hills Fire Station
Wellesley Hills Square
Wellesley Inn
Wellesley Square
Wellesley Trust Company
Wiswall Sanatorium
Non-Wellesley postcards