

Lancaster Farming *Antiques Center*

Post Card Valentines No Longer Considered Dreadful

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EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — Victorian valentines bring to mind elaborate cards made of fine paper and decorated with satin, ribbon, or lace. They often pictured turtledoves, lovers' knots in gold or silver, arrows, cupids, and bleeding hearts. Some cards had elaborate pop-outs, or were known as mechanicals in which part of the card moved when a tab was pulled. Many featured three-dimensional designs.

For some collectors, another type of antique valentines appeal to them — post card valentine greetings.

The post cards were much more affordable to the working class. In fact, some of the post cards were called "penny dreadfuls." Compared to the fine artistic Victorian styles, these valentine greetings did indeed appear a bit dreadful and sold for only a penny.

Today, the penny dreadfuls and other post card varieties are no longer considered dreadful. They are just what collectors are searching to find.

But the value of the valentine post cards depends on the condition of the card. If in pristine condition, the post cards can sell from a few dollars up to \$50 according to Jim De Filippis, New Holland. Especially valued are complete sets by one artist or a series for children or friends.

Filippis said that in addition to valentines being marketed by manufacturers and artists, some were made especially for select stores to hand out to customers or to accompany a box of candy given as a Valentine's gift.

Although the more elaborate cards contained heavy sentimental messages, the post card often carried lighter verse. Sometimes the post cards were intended for a sweetheart, but often the messages were for children or school friends.

When collecting post card valentines look for those in perfect condition. If damaged, even slightly, the post cards are practically worthless. Filippis said.

If you have any post card valentines, protect them by storing them in acid-free paper sleeves. Be careful when handling the post cards. The oil from the skin can cause color fading.



The post cards shown on this page are from Jimmy De Filippis' collection. He estimates that these post cards are dated between 1890-1920.

