Pfeiffer, Gordon A.

Finding aid for Gordon A. Pfeiffer nineteenth-century Delaware trade card collection
circa 1800-1900, 1974
(bulk dates 1800-1900)

Abstract: Gordon A. Pfeiffer is a Delaware book, postcard, book art, and ephemera collector and an original founder of the Delaware Bibliophiles. The Gordon Pfeiffer nineteenth-century Delaware trade card collection comprises over one thousand trade cards of Delaware suppliers and merchants.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: GRA 124
Creator: Pfeiffer, Gordon A.
Title: Gordon A. Pfeiffer nineteenth-century Delaware trade card collection
Inclusive Dates: circa 1800-1900, 1974
Bulk Dates: 1800-1900
Extent: 2 linear feet (8 boxes)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: GRA 124, Gordon A. Pfeiffer nineteenth-century Delaware trade card collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Boxes 1-8: Shelved in SPEC MSS binder boxes
Location: Special Collections, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware
19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/

Processing: Processed and encoded by Dustin Frohlich, June 2014.
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Biographical Note

Gordon A. Pfeiffer is a Delaware book, postcard, book art, and ephemera collector and an original founder of the Delaware Bibliophiles.

Pfeiffer received his bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Delaware in 1956 and served in the U.S. Army Reserve from 1957 to 1963. He retired in 1996 as senior vice president of Mellon Bank after 40 years of service. Pfeiffer has served on the board and was an officer of numerous organizations including the Historical Society of Delaware and the University of Delaware Library Associates. He is a 1977 founder of the Delaware Bibliophiles, a group of book hobbyists and collectors, and has served as president and treasurer of the organization as well as editor of their semi-annual newsletter, *Endpapers*. His own collecting interests include "the influence of William Morris on American printing with special emphasis on the work of Will Bradley; American publishers trade bindings; and Delaware ephemera including broadsides, postcards, and trade cards."

Sources:


Scope and Content Note

The Gordon A. Pfeiffer nineteenth-century Delaware trade card collection comprises over one thousand trade cards (2 linear feet) of Delaware suppliers and merchants.

The collection of trade cards largely features merchants with addresses on or nearby Wilmington’s Market Street and demonstrates an increased availability of Delaware goods and services, particularly in downtown city-centers. In addition, the highly decorative and colorful trade cards reveal an increasing complexity in advertising that targeted a burgeoning Delaware middle class. Some cards also depict commonly held social attitudes towards race gender and class. The trade card collection maintains Pfeiffer’s original arrangement as two series, both arranged alphabetically: Merchants and Location.

Series I. consists of Delaware trade cards organized alphabetically by merchant name. Operating from Wilmington’s Market Street or nearby locations, Wilmington merchants used trade cards to advertise goods such as soap, boots, oysters, produce, dry goods, notions, harnesses, java coffee, hosiery, standard cures, and watches. Trade cards in this series advertised Shakespeare and comedy shows at Wilmington’s still operational Grand Opera House. Other trade cards sold train excursions from Wilmington to Atlantic City, offered advice on child-rearing, or marketed dyspepsia, worm, and other cure-alls. Some cards innovative designs suggest an increasingly sophisticated advertising industry. Decorative cards include those shaped as painter’s palettes, oysters, fish, and flowers and also in "puzzle" trade cards: Cards posing questions that, when held against light, reveal a solution (often the name of the business).

Series II. comprises Delaware trade cards organized alphabetically by location. Trade cards from the towns of Camden, Delaware City, Dover, Laurel, Middletown, Milford, Smyrna, and St. Georges, among others, are included in this series. In addition, many trade cards in this series were created with chromolithographic processes and exhibit bold, vibrant colors.
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Pfeiffer, Gordon A.

Topical Terms

Advertising--History--19th century.

Chromolithography--United States--History--19th century.

Geographic Names

Delaware--History--19th century.

Form/Genre Terms

Trade cards (advertising)

Chromolithographs.

Occupation

Collectors.

Related Materials in this Repository

MSS 121 Gordon A. Pfeiffer Delaware postcard and ephemera collection
Arrangement

The trade cards in the collection reflect Gordon A. Pfeiffer's original arrangement.

I. Merchants

II. Location
Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. Merchants

Series I. consists of Delaware trade cards organized alphabetically by merchant name. Operating from Wilmington’s Market Street or nearby locations, Wilmington merchants used trade cards to advertise such goods as soap, boots, oysters, produce, dry goods, notions, harnesses, java coffee, hosiery, standard cures, and watches. Trade cards in this series advertised Shakespeare and comedy shows at Wilmington’s (still operational) Grand Opera House. Other trade cards sold train excursions from Wilmington to Atlantic City, offered "Save the Baby," advice on child-rearing, or marketed dyspepsia, worm, and other cure-alls. The advertising industry’s increasing sophistication is demonstrated in decorative cards shaped as painter’s palettes, oysters, fish, and flowers and also in "puzzle" trade cards: Ad cards posing questions that, when held against light, would reveal a solution (often the name of the business).

Book 1, circa 1800-1900 [Box 1]
26 (1)

Book 2, circa 1800-1900, 1974 [Box 2]
26 (2)

Book 3, circa 1800-1900 [Box 3]
26a

Book 4, circa 1800-1900 [Box 4]
27*

Book 5, circa 1800-1900 [Box 5]
28*

Book 6, circa 1800-1900 [Box 6]
29 (1)

Book 7, circa 1800-1900 [Box 7]
29 (2)

Series II. Location

Series II. comprises Delaware trade cards organized alphabetically by location. Revelatory of greater-Delaware commerce, trade cards from the towns of Camden, Delaware City, Dover, Laurel, Middletown, Milford, Smyrna, and St. Georges, among others, are included in this series. In addition, many trade cards in this series were created with chromolithographic processes and exhibit bold, vibrant colors.
Series II.

Book 8, circa 1800-1900 [Box 8]

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