Edgerton, Bertha.

Bertha and Ruth Edgerton scrapbooks
1880s-1920s

Abstract: Two of the three scrapbooks in this small collection are identified as having been made by Bertha Edgerton of Creston, Lake County, Indiana. The Bertha and Ruth Edgerton scrapbooks, made during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contain collectible scraps and images from seed packets and catalogs, scrap sets, catalog illustrations and advertisements, and Sunday school cards.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 093, Item 006
Creator: Edgerton, Bertha.
Title: Bertha and Ruth Edgerton scrapbooks
Inclusive Dates: 1880s-1920s
Extent: 3 v.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 093, Item 006, Bertha and Ruth Edgerton scrapbook collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.
Shelving Summary: Shelved in SPEC MSS 093 flat
Location: Special Collections Department, 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 Lora J. Davis, August 2008.
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Biographical Note

Bertha and Ruth Edgerton were born to Alfred and Jane Edgerton of Cedar Creek, Lake County, Indiana. Bertha, born around the year 1867, was about ten years the senior of her younger sister, Ruth, who was born about 1877. The Edgerton sisters had an additional three brothers and three sisters: Oscar, Nora, George, Millie, Homer, and Alma.

The elder sister Bertha was active in Sunday school. In the year 1884, at the age of seventeen, Bertha participated in the Lake County Sunday School Union's nineteenth anniversary celebration. At the event she was one of three young women to give a recitation to the audience; her selection was "Two Banners."

The younger of the Edgerton sisters, Ruth, married Jarvis Dorais, a Canadian of French background, and moved to Muskegon, Michigan, sometime prior to 1910. In Michigan, Ruth Edgerton Dorais started a family which included daughter Flora Lois Dorais, who later took the name Lois Dorais Potter following her marriage. Lois Dorais Potter's daughter, Lois Potter, donated these scrapbooks to the University of Delaware Library in 2008.

Sources:


Additional information derived from conversations with Lois Potter and from the United States Census for the years 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920.
Scope and Content Note

Two of the three scrapbooks in this small collection are identified as having been made by Bertha Edgerton of Creston, Lake County, Indiana. The Bertha and Ruth Edgerton scrapbooks, made during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contain collectible scraps and images from seed packets and catalogs, scrap sets, catalog illustrations and advertisements, and Sunday school cards. The sources for the scraps in these classically constructed scrapbooks are telling of both the period in which they were made as well as of the life of the young woman who made them.

Two of the scrapbooks included in the collection are clearly identified as having been made by Bertha Edgerton of Creston, Lake County, Indiana. The first of these two books, with a cover reading "Scrap Album," contains the inscription "Presented to Ruth Edgerton, by her sister, Bertha Edgerton. Creston, Indiana, May 18th." The second scrapbook, with a cover reading "Scraps," also contains an inscription which identifies "Bertha Edgerton, Creston, Lake Co., Indiana" as the creator of the book. A third scrapbook in the collection contains no identifying information about the maker, but given the similarities in style and content, as well as shared provenance, it is likely that this book was also made by the hands of Bertha Edgerton.

Most of the items pasted in the books are vibrantly colored images and chromolithographic scraps representing three broad image categories. By far the most numerous are scraps depicting flowers, vegetables, and other natural elements. Scraps of fashionably-dressed women and small children are also very common in the three volumes. The clippings of women illustrate Victorian fashion, including tightly bound corsets and vibrant hats. A number of the clippings of women and children, especially those in the gift album presented to Ruth Edgerton, also appear to illustrate individuals in historical garments. Finally, many of the clippings found in the books include biblical verses and imagery.

Many of the images found in the books were clipped from catalog illustrations and advertisements, while other scraps hail from seed catalogs and seed packets. Indeed, a seed catalog and a seed packet are still laid into one of the scrapbooks. Several other items were acquired from period scrap sets. These scraps are generally on thicker paper and have some sort of embossed detailing.
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Edgerton, Bertha.

Edgerton, Ruth.

Form/Genre Terms

Scrapbooks.

Presentation albums.

Personal Contributors

Edgerton, Ruth.
Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. Untitled scrapbook, circa 1910s-1920s 1 volume

This scrapbook contains no identifying information about the creator, but was most likely made by Bertha Edgerton. Scraps and cuttings in this book depict women, men, children, home fashions, flowers, and vegetables. Of note is an advertisement for Wrigley's chewing gum showing a young girl in a cloud of cigar smoke. The ad copy reads "Smoke all you want BUT - Please chew Wrigley's Spearmint before you kiss me." An additional advertisement illustrates a cat playing with Corticelli spool silk. Though the book itself is undated, the fashions and appearance of the clippings suggests the book was made during the late nineteen-teens or early nineteen-twenties. Indeed, one illustration, which depicts a woman and a group of angelic children standing around a figure cloaked in white (presumably Jesus), has the year 1919 marked in the bottom right corner.

Series II. Scrap Album, circa 1880s-1890s 1 volume

This scrapbook was given to Ruth Edgerton by her sister Bertha Edgerton. The book was most likely a birthday gift for Ruth as there is a clipping that reads "I wish you a happy birthday" on the second page of the scrapbook. The book contains many small clippings from scrap sets, as well as several floral-themed scraps with Bible verses and Christian phrases printed on them. Printed on the inside cover of the scrapbook are the names Nora Edgerton and Fannie E. Davis. Nora was another sister of Ruth and Bertha. A card with the name Josie M. Huebsch is also pasted into the book. Several items are laid into the final pages of the book, including a Christmas greeting card "Presented to Ruthie Edgerton by Z. May Muffley, Teacher," the front and back covers of an 1889 garden manual from Z. De Forest Ely & Co. of Philadelphia, and two clippings showing a red school house and a floral display. Most of the scraps and cuttings in this book are illustrations of flowers, men, women, and children.

Series III. Scraps, 1887-1912 1 volume

This scrapbook is inscribed "Bertha Edgerton, Creston, Lake Co., Indiana." The book is similar in many ways to the "Scrap Album" described above. A 1912 Sunday school card is laid loosely into the book. The album contains the name "Fannie Davis, Westmoreland, Pottawatomie, Co., Kan., June 16, 1887." In addition there are five advertising cards for W.T. Scritchfield & Sons dry goods and groceries, also located in Westmoreland, Kansas. The relationship between Bertha Edgerton and Fannie Davis is unknown, but it is clear that they were close as the name Fannie Davis appears in not one, but two of Bertha's scrapbooks. The name Cora Olive Atkin is written into a sketch of a bird on the final pages of the book. The last four pages of the scrapbook are almost entirely decorated with clippings from seed packets and catalogs. In addition, a beautifully illustrated annual seed catalog from J.A. Everitt & Co. of Indianapolis Indiana is laid in to the book.