

Scrapbooks

Adapted from: <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/ea/scrapbooks.html>

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a scrapbook as:

"A blank book in which pictures, newspaper cuttings, and the like are pasted for preservation."

The dictionary gives the earliest known example of the word used in print dating from 1854.

With improved printing technologies in the second half of the 19th century, increasing quantities and varieties of printed paper items became available to ordinary people. By the late 19th century, color lithography added beauty and novelty to printed items. Printers and advertisers greatly expanded the range of printed items they disseminated: newspapers, calendars, leaflets, advertising trade cards, etc.

Creating scrapbooks became a popular pastime, especially for women and children. Scrapbooks were used as a way of teaching children to organize and classify information and to develop an artistic sense.

Based on surviving examples of scrapbooks, it can be seen that people put them together sometimes as a craft project, and sometimes, to preserve letters, photos, and other aspects of their personal or family history.

Nineteenth century scrapbooks vary about as widely as 20th century ones, though perhaps they contain more advertising items, given the prevalence, novelty, and popularity of trade cards at the time.