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**Lest We Forget**  
Andover and the Civil War

A SESQUICENTENNIAL  
REMEMBRANCE: 1864 – 2014

by Tom Adams, Editor

The dawning of 1864 found the mood of our nation and our town sorely tempered by the Civil War. It was impossible to escape the war as it ground into its third year with no end in sight. Union and Confederate forces continued to suffer staggering losses. Before it ended at Appomattox Courthouse in April 1865, fully two percent of the U. S. population had perished – many in battle, many others from infections and disease. Given level of health care today, it is mind-boggling to consider that two soldiers died of disease (dysentery, diarrhea, typhoid, and malaria) for every one killed in battle.

Andover had been deeply involved in the anti-slavery movement by providing stops along the Underground Railway for slaves long before the Civil War began. After the shelling of Fort Sumter in 1861, a company of 79 Andover volunteers joined the Union cause. Three years of fighting saw the Union forces push the Confederacy closer and closer to its surrender. In early 1864 President Lincoln, in his resolve to bring the fighting to an end, called for more troops – 200,000 in all. On April 2, 1864 the *Andover Observer*, then the town's weekly newspaper (The *Townsmen* began publishing in 1887), ran an appeal from the town Selectmen. "Let Andover people cooperate...show that the fires of loyalty are burning with intensity in their patriotic hearts." Andover was quick to answer the call. Andover met its quota and those 40 recruits joined the ranks of 700 Andover men and boys who left their homes to serve in the Federal forces.

On the home front, families awaited news of the war. It was all

*Continues on page 4*

IMAGES

(Left) Civil War soldier W.G. Bodwell, #2000.502.1

(Above) Drawing made by St. Augustine 5th grade student after participating in the Society's *Andover at Work* education program



# PRESIDENT'S LETTER, SPRING 2014



The spring of 2014 brings us a new entryway – literally. Thirty-six years of snow and ice have taken a toll on the back door of the 1978 Smith Purdon addition which is the most convenient entrance for our staff and volunteers who park in the adjacent alley. But I like to think that our loyal legion of volunteers wore the old door out! Each week, even through the worst of this winter's weather, dedicated people of all ages have continued work on a variety of projects. April will bring more activity and the return of one of our "snowbird" volunteers. In May, the 2014 edition of our venerable program "Andover at Work in the 1820s" for our town's third graders will swell the ranks even further.

Speaking of doors, we've also seen an increase in the numbers of first-time visitors coming through our main "Essex Green" front door. Dozens of researchers have arrived to explore the library and archives. Hundreds more came to view "Behind the Seams: Stories of Clothing, 1790 to 1920." The exhibit featured twenty-five mannequins and displays arranged throughout the Amos Blanchard house. I am confident that beginning

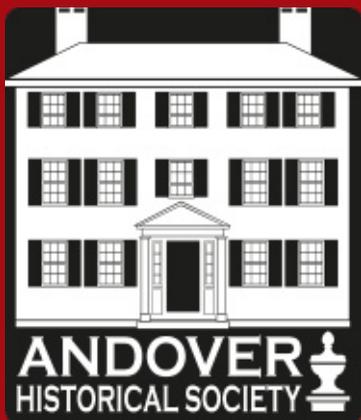
on April 11, visitors, will find our new "Lest We Forget" Civil War installation equally intriguing.

None of these happenings would have been possible without our members, donors, and volunteers. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank each one of you for your interest and support. Your financial contributions help us to make necessary updates and repairs to our building, like the new Smith Purdon door. But your enthusiasm and your willingness to help us spread the word about our programs and activities have boosted not only the foot-traffic through our doors, but also our reputation as a busy and vibrant destination in the heart of downtown Andover.

Enjoy the coming good weather! We've earned it.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Dietzel Cairns".

Jane Dietzel-Cairns  
President, Andover Historical Society



ANDOVER  
LEST WE  
FORGET

## Explore Andover's Civil War History Online

The Andover Historical Society, in cooperation with numerous community partners, is pleased to continue with a series of events commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the American Civil War.

In addition to providing information about the events, a newly launched website ([andoverlestweforget.com](http://andoverlestweforget.com)) provides resources for exploring the history of our town, its people, and their stories during this pivotal period of United States history. New resources, articles, and suggestions for content may be sent to [info@andoverhistorical.org](mailto:info@andoverhistorical.org).

We are grateful to the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for its support of the Lest We Forget series and related website.

# ANDOVER "SAW THE ELEPHANT" AT SPOTSYLVANIA

by Joan M. Patrakis

On the morning of May 21, 1864 Andover residents woke up to terrible news. More than 100 volunteers from town had been engaged in a deadly battle at Spotsylvania, VA. The fighting had begun two days earlier, on the 19th. First reports indicated two or three men were killed or wounded. As news trickled in from the warfront, the community began to realize the confrontation was much more devastating.

Seven Andover men were killed on the battlefield at Harris Farm. Six others were mortally wounded. Two men, imprisoned at Andersonville, died later of disease and debilitation. In total, fifteen Andover men gave their lives. An additional twenty-nine were wounded.

Spotsylvania is the story of Andover. Specifically, it is the story of Company H of the 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery. The unit, which was raised and trained in town, was chartered by the governor in April 1861 as the Andover Light Infantry. On July 5, it was mustered into the 14th Massachusetts Infantry as Company H. The regiment was later designated the 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery.

The seven men killed at Harris Farm were members of Company H. Four of the six mortally wounded were also from this unit. Another member died shortly after release from Andersonville. All but three of the wounded men were enlisted in Company H. Statistics show more than one third of the company was disabled at Spotsylvania.

For three years the Andover boys guarded the entrances to Washington and complained that they had not "seen the elephant." This expression was commonly used by soldiers to define confronting the enemy in combat. Major Holt of Company H expressed his regrets that the 1st Massachusetts Heavy Artillery could not show "an equal share of gallant deeds upon the battlefield with other Massachusetts regiments." The 1st Mass. Heavy Artillery, the state's largest regiment in United States service, was the only unit that had not faced the Rebels.

In early May 1864—two months before Company H was to be discharged from the service—the regiment was ordered to Spotsylvania with General Grant's Army of the Potomac. The "heavies" were reassigned as infantry. The men reportedly accepted the order "with a grim joy that words will not reveal."

On May 19, in the woods at Harris Farm, the men of Andover finally had the opportunity they were hoping for. Company H, attached to the First Battalion, was in the front line of attack at Harris Farm. The order was given to march, touching elbows, to the edge of the wood. The men proceeded into the forest a short distance

when they were hit by a barrage from Confederate troops. Nearly half of the battalion's three hundred and fifty men were killed or wounded.

The second battalion came to the first battalion's rescue, firing at the enemy as they ran from the woods. As the Rebels scattered, the remnants of the first battalion "charged them with cheers," chasing them back to the woods. Three times the enemy emerged from the woods, and each time the first battalion drove them back.

Decades after the war, Lewis Holt of Company H relived the battle of Spotsylvania and its aftermath in a dream he relayed to his sister:

*I saw every man of Company H alive and well, and I saw them fall on the field of Spotsylvania, some dead and some wounded. I saw the wounded tenderly taken up and cared for after the battle, and I saw the dead laid in a row side by side, touching elbows as they did in the ranks. I saw the trench dug, and the dead laid in it still touching elbows, their caps over their faces. I heard the short prayer of the Chaplain a mumbling of a few meaningless words, a disagreeable duty gotten through with as quickly and easily as possible. I saw those who were left of Company H standing with uncovered drooping heads while tears fell from their eyes as the dirt was, not thrown, but gently pushed in as though taking care not to hurt their poor dead comrades. [And I saw] the strip of hardtack box on which was written the name and "killed at Spotsylvania" May 19th, 1864.*

Killed in action was 38-year old Samuel Aiken, a Scottish immigrant and stonemason by trade. Others included Granville Cutler, James Eastes, Edward Farmer, Jonathan Holt, Charles Ridley and James Rothwell. Between the ages of 21 and 24, they had worked as farmers and tradesmen before the war. All were buried on the battlefield.

Today, markers at Fredericksburg National Cemetery identify the graves of Aiken, Cutler and Holt. The other men are buried in unmarked graves. Locally, GAR markers and family monuments honor Eastes, Farmer, Ridley, Cutler and Holt at West Parish Cemetery. Memorials for Aiken and Rothwell are located at South Cemetery.

Throughout the centuries Andover men have answered every call to defend this land from harm. From an encounter at Black Point ME in 1677 to the present Mideast conflict, no battle has claimed the lives of so many residents as Spotsylvania. There the men of Company H finally met the elephant and valiantly chased it off the battlefield.

# SESQUICENTENNIAL REMEMBRANCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

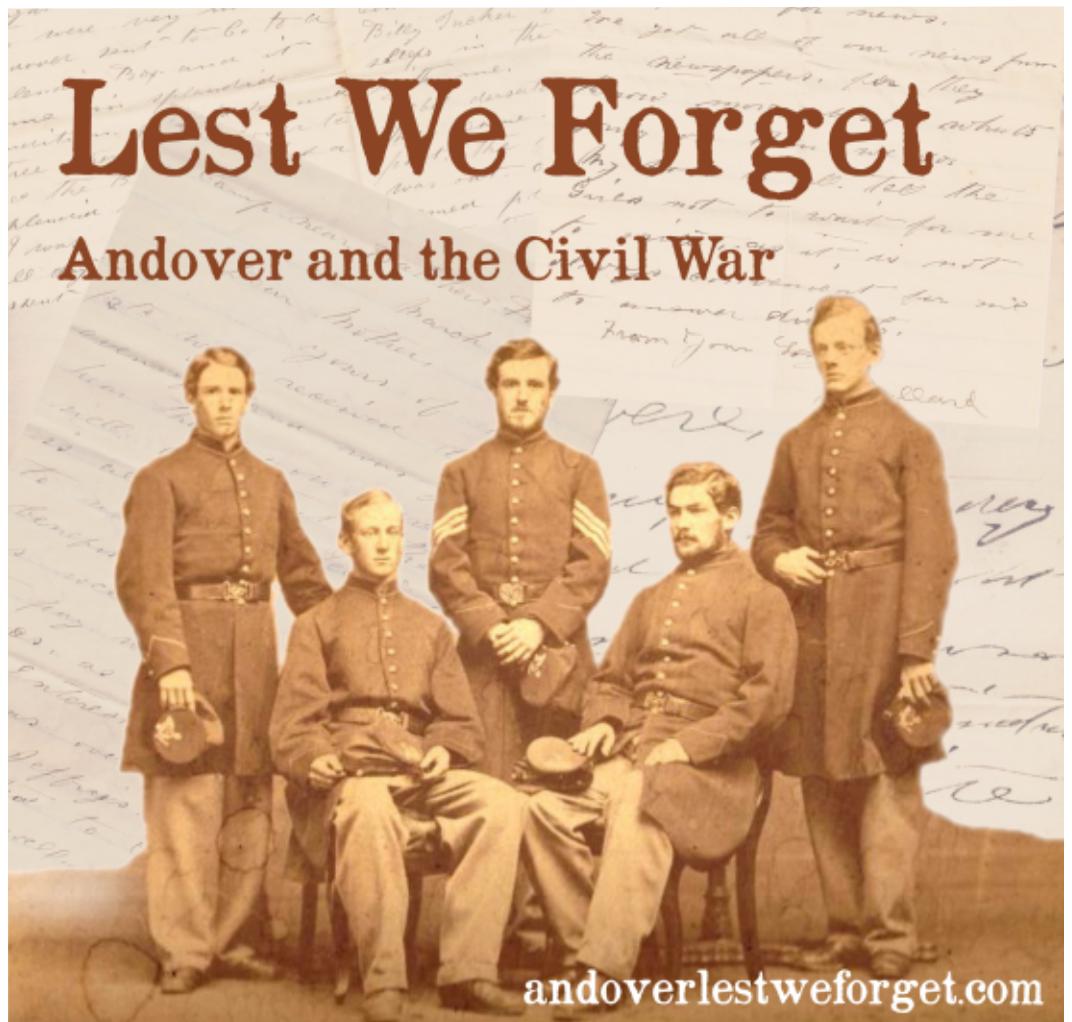
consuming part of their daily lives. The war rarely left anyone's mind. They wished it would end and hurry their loved ones home and out of harm's way. Each Saturday the *Observer* delivered the news. Front page columns carried news of the many battles and skirmishes – Grant had begun his push through the South, key battles were fought at Mobile, Alabama, Dalton, Georgia, Wilderness, Virginia and at Spotsylvania Court House where Andover suffered its highest number of casualties. Readers found much sought after local news of recovering soldiers, how and where they were injured or fell ill, and the progress of their recovery. Yet the lives of those at home contended too with the events of their daily lives. In early April, they dug out from a storm that dumped 18 inches of snow on Andover. They went to work – some at the Whipple File Works in Ballardvale turning out 4.5 tons of steel each day. Others worked in the mills and on the farms that dotted mid-19th century Andover. Organizations formed to help ease the brutal conditions that our fighting men faced on the battlefield, while recovering in hospitals, and for those held captive in Confederate prison camps. They relentlessly collected and sent food, clothing, and supplies. Andover did what it could to help heal our great nation.

Explore Andover's Civil War legacy through the *Lest We Forget* events happening this spring. Coordinated by the Andover Historical Society, this program series takes place over eleven weeks from March through June. Organizations throughout town are hosting walking tours, lectures, gallery talks, concerts, and exhibitions. Get to know the 700 men who fought for our country and learn about the wives and children, mothers and fathers, and sisters and brothers who stayed behind and created the Andover we know today.

## LEST WE FORGET PARTNERS

*Addison Gallery of American Art*  
*Andover Bookstore*  
*Andover Historical Society*  
*Andover Townsman*  
*Andover Veterans' Services*  
*Center at Punchard*  
*Greater Lawrence Technical School*  
*Memorial Hall Library*  
*Phillips Academy*

*with support from the*  
*John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*



# Calendar of Events

**Thursdays, April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1, 2:00 p.m.**

**Lecture Series: North & South: Why the Civil War Happened hosted by Don Robb  
Sponsored by The Center at Punchard, 36 Bartlet Street, Andover**

**April 12 - September 1, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**Exhibition: Faces of Andover: Impact of the Civil War  
Sponsored by the Andover Historical Society, 97 Main Street, Andover**

**Tuesday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.**

**Lecture: Death and the Civil War by Harvard President Drew Gilpin Faust and filmmaker Ric Burns  
Sponsored by Phillips Academy at Cochran Chapel, Chapel Avenue, Andover**

**Thursday, May 1, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Lecture: Drummer Boys of Andover by Doug Mitchell  
Sponsored by the Andover Historical Society, 97 Main Street, Andover**

**Wednesday, May 7, 7:00 p.m.**

**Book discussion: Uncle Tom's Cabin  
Sponsored by Memorial Hall Library, 2 North Main Street, Andover**

**Thursday, May 15, 7:00 p.m.**

**Performance: Harriet Beecher Stowe portrayal by Susan Lenoe  
Sponsored by Memorial Hall Library, 2 North Main Street, Andover**

**Wednesday, May 21, 6:00-7:30 p.m.**

**Community Conversations: Reflections on Narratives of the Civil War  
Sponsored by Addison Gallery of American Art, 180 Main Street, Andover**

**Sunday, May 25, 12:00-1:45 p.m.**

**Walking Tour: Andover and the Civil War Through the Burial Yard by Char Lyons  
Sponsored by South Church, 41 Central Street, Andover**

**Monday, May 26**

**Memorial Day Events**

**Sponsored by the Holiday Committee, Andover Veterans' Services, and Andover Historical Society**

**Thursday, May 29, 10:00 a.m.**

**Friday, May 30, 10:00 a.m.**

**Wednesday, June 4, 1:00 p.m.**

**Exhibition: Guided Tours of Memorial Hall Library's Memorial Hall (25 minutes)  
Sponsored by Memorial Hall Library, 2 North Main Street, Andover**

**Thursday, June 12, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Lecture: The Battle of Spotsylvania by historian Gordon C. Rhea  
Sponsored by the Andover Historical Society at Andover Town House, 20 Main Street, Andover**

**Saturday, June 14, 10:00 a.m.**

**Walking Tour: Abolitionism, Underground Railroad and the Civil War in Andover  
Sponsored by the Andover Historical Society, 97 Main Street, Andover**

**For further information: [www.andoverlestweforget.com](http://www.andoverlestweforget.com)**

**Contact Carrie Midura, Programs & PR Manager,**

**at 978.475.2236, [cmidura@andoverhistorical.org](mailto:cmidura@andoverhistorical.org)**

**with questions or suggestions for additional programs.**



## HAIR-LOOMS

by Tom Adams, Editor

Every once and awhile something stops us in our tracks. It commands our attention. We can't help ourselves. We have to look. And we just can't stop looking. It holds our imagination, our wonder, and a stream of unanswered questions. What is this object? Where did it come from and what does it mean? I had such a moment while viewing the collection objects featured in Andover Historical Society Top 40 exhibit last year. One object, the Sherman Family Wreath, caught me full force. The wreath was created in 1860, one year before the Civil War, by a local woman named Nancy Jane Sherman and her cousin from Lowell, Betsy May Ellis. Made from the hair taken from 125 relatives and friends, it was eerie, yet amazingly intricate and personal. It seemed odd, dated maybe, yet I couldn't take my eyes away. I wanted to know more about why it was made. Even more, how did such things come to be? Finding the answers made for an interesting journey. And a fascinating look back in time - a lot farther back in time than I'd ever imagined.

Hair, I've discovered has entranced mankind back to antiquity. Artifacts fashioned from human hair date back to ancient Rome. There, girls soon to be wed offered their locks to the Gods. Other ancient civilizations in China, the Balkans, Egypt and Southeast Asia the cut of one's hair was viewed as a rite of passage. During the Victorian Era, roughly 1837 to 1901, hair played an important role in connecting people. Fashioning the hair of loved ones into objects marked meaningful milestones in the lives of individuals, families, school classmates, fellow church members and groups of many kinds. In Victorian culture, both here in America and abroad, hair was used to map family history, as a token

of affection among loved ones, and part of grieving for a loved one lost. It served as a tangible remembrance of those core spirits that inhabit our thoughts and memories and dreams. Queen Victoria herself is said to have worn a locket with a lock of her departed husband, Prince Albert's, hair over the last 40 years of her life.

The origination of the hair wreath dates back to at least the thirteenth century. The art of shaping hair gained wide popularity during the nineteenth century. It was used by people wanting to keep a memento to a loved, celebrate special events and happy times before the invention of photography. While originally created by professionals, soon many women in the middle class picked up the practice. By the mid-1800s, 'hair art' caught on in America, heightening in the 1840s and 1850s. With the onset of the Great Civil War and the high number of casualties, families were left with a great deal to remember. So popular, in fact, it spawned a thriving industry creating and selling Hair Art. Companies like Sears sold these goods throughout their network of stores. Hair work became popular among craft groups, jewelers, and individual women. Magazines like Godey's Ladies Book and Peterson's magazines printed often featured articles on the craft and instructive how to's on making useful and eye-appealing objects. Along with hair wreaths watch chains, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and brooches were popular items, as well as jewelry which incorporated the locks of a loved one. These items, made from a mixture of human hair follicles, feathers, and wool, had a great significance in the Victorian home. Victorian women were expected to be proficient in sewing and dressmaking, but these items - referred to as 'fancywork' — allowed women to express their creativity.

The wreaths were most likely displayed in the parlor, the room in which guests often congregated. The fancywork often exhibited their skills in the needle arts there creating an elegant and personal portfolio. School children collected locks of hair from classmates, and put them into small binders, along with the year and name of the persons who had contributed the hair.

In November, 1933 the fascinating, intricate and deeply personal wreath created by Nancy Jane Sherman and Betsy May Ellis some 73 years prior came to reside at the Andover Historical Society. Donated by Mrs. Sherman's daughters, Annie Thayer and Mary Thayer Perkins, it has graced the house ever since. It was there that our paths crossed and my journey of discovery began. I learned much from listening to its story - and then hearing stories of how it came to be. The Sherman wreath is a beautiful, eerie, and profoundly personal statement. It reminded me that history is about stories. All you have to do is listen.

# SPRING FOR HISTORY

May 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 a.m. Andover Country Club

A free one-hour breakfast  
to support the mission of  
the Andover Historical Society

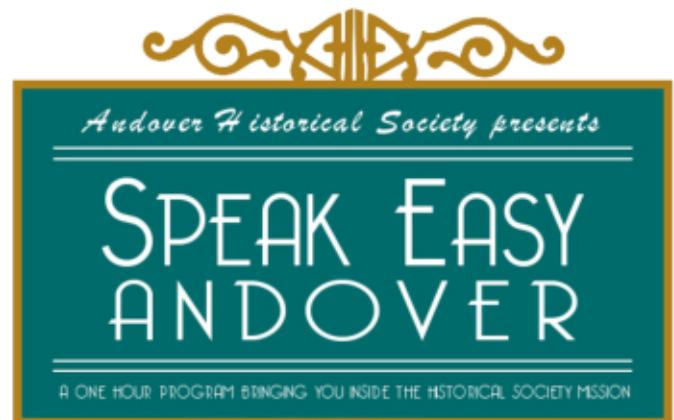
RSVP to 978.475.2236

## Your Support Makes a Difference

This time of year our mailboxes are filled with donation requests from many non-profits. Often, we have a real connection with these organizations and their work. When we are moved to give, we want to know that our donation will truly make a difference.

So how will your gift to the Andover Historical Society make a difference in people's lives?

The Society's mission is to gather, preserve, and share Andover's stories that connect people to one another, to their town, and to inspire community engagement. Telling stories is a natural part of the human experience. It draws us together. It always has. Before the written word, stories and songs were how people passed along knowledge, history, and traditions. It was how connections and communities were built. Every Society program, our tours, exhibits, newspaper articles, and blog posts are opportunities to not only pass along stories, but importantly to inspire connections and community involvement. We see this impact people every day. In the high school student who comes back to volunteer on their own time after completing a mandatory school assignment. In the third grader who asked to come back to the Historical Society after a class field trip – for her birthday, as one girl did this past October. These young people are creating experiences that will last a lifetime. Your annual gift to the Andover Historical Society helps make that possible. Thank you for helping to make a difference!



## Upcoming Dates

Thursday, April 24 at 7 pm  
Tuesday, May 6 at 1 pm  
Thursday, May 29 at 7 pm  
Tuesday, June 10 at 1 pm  
Thursday, June 26 at 7 pm

*Speak Easy Andover* is a free one-hour tour exploring the mission and vision of the Andover Historical Society through story telling. It takes place at 97 Main Street, Andover, MA

RSVP to Marilyn at Andover Historical Society  
[mhelmers@andoverhistorical.org](mailto:mhelmers@andoverhistorical.org) or : 978.475.2236



**ANDOVER**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

*OPEN TO THE PUBLIC*

*Tuesday through Saturday : 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.*

*Office: 978-475-2236 Fax: 978-470-2741*

*[www.andoverhistorical.org](http://www.andoverhistorical.org)*

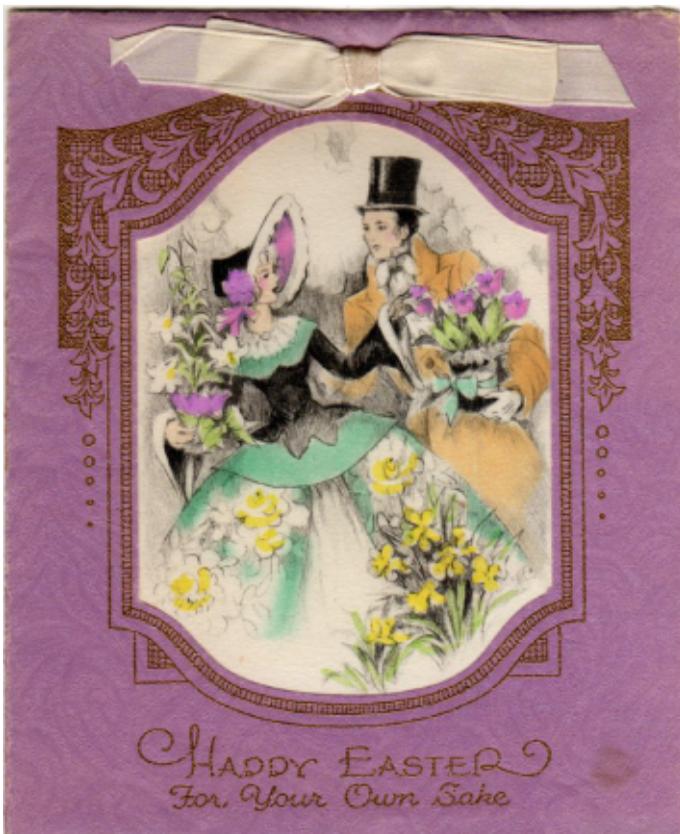
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