Peabody Postcard Collection, 1880-2017

Collection Summary

Reference Code: MPeaI
Repository: Local History Resource Center, Peabody Institute Library, Peabody Massachusetts.
Call Number: PCC
Collector: Peabody Institute Library
Title: Postcard Collection, 1880-2017
Dates: 1880-2017 (bulk: 1905-1920)
Size: 0.63 linear feet (1 Box)
Language(s): Collection materials are in English.
Abstract: The postcard collection compiled here, dating from 1880 to 2017, includes images from the city of Peabody’s past. These images range from snapshots of the town square throughout history, to images of famed resident George Peabody, the namesake of the town. Additionally, on some postcards there is correspondence, but on many there is no writing at all. Some of the postcards concern locations and events from outside the town of Peabody, including locations relating to the Peabody Trust, and correspondence and images from areas not located immediately within Peabody, but still relating to the Peabody Institute Library, such as the branch in Maryland and the Peabody Museum at Yale University.

Organizational History

The Peabody Institute Library was begun with the June 16, 1852 donation from George Peabody.

George Peabody was born in South Danvers in 1795 and had sailed for London in 1837 to expand his import/export business. By 1843, Peabody became an investment banker. As he rose in prominence, and especially in the year 1851, he began to consider making a gift to his home town of South Danvers.

On January 5, 1852, the Danvers Mechanic Institute (DMI) named George Peabody an honorary member. This subscription based institute, located in South Danvers, was both a library and a lyceum. Though the committee appointed to inform Peabody of this honor waited until June 17,
1852—after the town had been informed of the donation from George Peabody—it is possible his awareness of this institution influenced Peabody in deciding the type of institution he wished to create.

Later that spring, the Danvers Centennial Committee issued an invitation to George Peabody, asking him to join the citizens in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Danvers' separation from Salem. His response, sent on May 26, 1852, announced his intention to donate $20,000 for the creation of the Peabody Institute. Though similar to the Danvers Mechanic Institute in that it would be both a library and a lyceum, the Peabody Institute would be open to everyone, free of charge. By the time of his death in 1869, George Peabody would have donated over $217,000 just to the Peabody Institute.

The architect chosen for the Peabody Institute was Richard Bond (1797-1861), a well known New England architect. Franklin Merrill of Danvers and Russell & White of Salem were the contractors hired to build the library. The Peabody Institute opened on October 18, 1854.

Fitch Poole had been chosen as the first Librarian on January 3, 1854. His participation in founding the Danvers Mechanic Institute in 1841 and his work with it until it closed in 1855 made him a natural choice. He was instrumental in selecting many of the original books for the library, as well as organizing it. He resigned just before the library’s opening on September 27, 1854. Eugene B. Hinckley was then elected Librarian and he served until May, 1856. Upon his resignation, Fitch Poole once more became Librarian, continuing his work with the Peabody Institute until his death in 1873.

Poole collected and organized many of the early documents of the library. He put together some of the scrapbooks containing news accounts regarding George Peabody, as well as created the Reception of George Peabody, of the Children of South Danvers, October 15, 1866.

In 1866, after consulting with George Peabody, Eliza Sutton, a prominent woman in the town, donated $20,000 to the Peabody Institute. This gift, coinciding with George Peabody’s October 15, 1866 visit to South Danvers, was made to create the Eben Dale Sutton Library. It was the first reference room of the library and was named in memory of Eliza Sutton’s son who died at the age of 14. During the construction of the tower, a front portico was added on to the library. Alterations were also made to the Lyceum. The architect for this work was Gridley James Fox Bryant and the contractor chosen to complete the addition and renovations was Simeon Flint.

From 1841 until the early 1850’s, the Danvers Mechanic Institute hosted yearly courses of lectures. These Lyceum speakers were part of a nationwide movement which sought to educate adults in a wide variety of subjects. They included topics of the days, such as mesmerism, as well as philosophy, literature, history and culture.
Upon its opening in 1854, the Peabody Institute mirrored the DMI by beginning its own yearly courses in adult education. As with the DMI, these Lyceum topics included philosophy, literature, travel and history. Among the speakers invited to the Lyceum were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rufus Choate, Charles Sumner, Frederick Douglass, Josiah Quincy and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

The Peabody Institute would not expand again until the late 1970s. For the bicentennial of the United States the Library received a grant to clean and restore the Sutton Room. Also, the Library Trustee’s realizing that the Library had out grown the original building looked to add an addition, which was constructed in 1977-1978. During the construction the lyceum was removed and the children’s room was moved from the first floor to the second of the original building. A mezzanine was added to the original building. The children’s room would remain on the second floor from 1978 until the early 1990s when it was moved to the basement level and the offices were moved to the second floor. The director’s office would move to the area near the miniature of Queen Victoria. In 2013 a creativity lab was added in the former meeting space in the lower level of the Library.

Arrangement

Series 1: Peabody General, various dates
  Subseries 1.1: Peabody Square, no date
  Subseries 1.2: South Church, no date
  Subseries 1.3: Scenic Postcards, 1905-1960
Series 2: George Peabody, 1905 – date unknown
Series 3: City Hall, no date
Series 4: Municipal, 1905-2011
  Subseries 4.1: Peabody Fire Department, 1909-1915
  Subseries 4.2: J.B. Thomas Hospital, no date
  Subseries 4.3: B&M R.R. Station, 1909
  Subseries 4.4: Peabody Institute Library, 1905-2011
Series 5: Shops & Services in Peabody, c. 1880-1976
Series 7: Dana, Mass., 1915
Series 8: St. John’s Parish, no date
Series 9: Peabody Trust, 1912-2012
Series 10: Peabody High School, 1909-2011
Series 11: Beyond Peabody, no date
Series 12: South Peabody Baseball Team, 1910
Scope and Content

This collection contains in it postcards that have been collected by the Peabody Institute Library over the years. The postcards are a mix of images from Peabody’s past, dating from 1880 to 2017. Many postcards were produced by the Peabody Historical Society while others come from local businesses. Some of the postcards have correspondence on the back side, but most do not have anything written on them. For example, two of the postcards in series 7, concerning Dana, Massachusetts, contain correspondence written to Mr. Harold B. Goodhue and Mr. A.J. Goodhue, of Beverly, Massachusetts. The letters appear to be complimentary of the town of Dana and suggest that their authors, Sister Narcissa and “N.B.E”, are enjoying a vacation.

Administrative Information

**Preferred Citation:** [identify the item], Postcard Collection, Peabody Institute Library.

**Provenance:** Many materials found in collection or donated/purchased by the library over time. The Peabody Institute Library is the sole known custodian of these materials.

**Acquisition Information:** It is unknown when exactly some of the materials in the collection were donated, much of the collection was compiled from several donations and library purchases over the years from eBay and other auction websites.

**Processing Information:** Connor G. Campbell, Intern, 2020.

**Access Rights:** Collection is open for research.

**Physical Access Restrictions:** None.

**Tech. Access Restrictions:** None.

**Special Formats:** None.

**Copyright:** Ownership of the originals belongs to the Peabody Institute Library, Peabody, MA. Materials unpublished and in the public domain. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the archivist.

**Conservation Notes:** Postcards were placed into inert sleeves and acid free sleeves.

**Related Collections:** None.

**Separated Material:** None.

**Controlled Access Headings**
Corporate Name(s)

A.B. Clark Tannery
Convent of Notre Dame
J.B. Thomas Hospital
Kiley School
Newburyport Public Library
Peabody (Mass.)
Peabody City Hall
Peabody Historical Society
Peabody Institute Library
Peabody Square
Peabody Trust, London (United Kingdom)
St. John’s Parish
South Congregational Church, Peabody (Mass.)
South Danvers (Mass.)

Genre(s)

Buxton Hill
Peabody (Mass.)—History
Peabody Historical Society—Clyde & Mary Hudnall Military Room
Peabody Square, Peabody (Mass.)
South Danvers (Mass.)—History

Personal Name(s)

Hudnall, Clyde D. (1918-2019)
Hudnall, Mary U. (Leahy) (1919-2015)
Peabody, George 1795-1869

Subject(s)

Postcards
Collection Inventory

Subseries 1.1: Peabody Square, no date

Box Number/Folder Title

Box 1
Peabody Square Postcard, no date
Peabody Square Postcard, no date
Peabody Square Postcard, no date
Peabody Square Postcard, no date
Peabody Square Postcard, no date
Peabody Square Postcard, 1906
Peabody Square Postcard, 1917
Peabody Square in 1902
Peabody Square Postcard, no date
Peabody Square Postcard, no date

Subseries 1.2: South Church, no date

Box 1
South Church Postcard, no date
Peabody Square & South Church, no date
Peabody Square & South Church, no date
Peabody Square & South Church, no date
Peabody Square & South Church, no date
Peabody Square & South Church, no date
Peabody Square & South Church, no date
Peabody Square & South Church, no date
Peabody Square & South Church, no date
Subseries 1.3: Scenic Postcards, 1905-1960

Box 1

West Street Church & Schoolhouse, 1905
Residence of Lewis Brown Postcard, 1906
Convent of Notre Dame, 1920
Pine Grove Cabins, no date
Kiley School, 1960
Apple Tree Lane, Osborn Farm, 1908
Buxtons Hill Postcard, 1905
Main St. Postcard, 1948
Ship Rock Postcard, no date

Series 2: George Peabody, 1905-

Box 1

Birthplace of George Peabody Postcard, no date
Portrait of George Peabody Postcard, no date
Portrait of George Peabody Postcard, no date
Portrait of George Peabody Postcard, no date
Birthplace of George Peabody Postcard, no date
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Birthplace Plaque Postcard, no date
George Peabody Postcard, no date
George Peabody Postcard, no date
George Peabody Postcard, no date
George Peabody Postcard, no date
George Peabody Postcard, no date
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Postcard, no date
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
George Peabody Burial Postcard, 1905
Series 3: City Hall, no date

Box 1

Peabody Town Hall in winter, no date
Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
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Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
Peabody City Hall Postcard, no date
City Hall Postcard, no date
City Hall Postcard, no date

Subseries 4.1: Peabody Fire Dept., 1907-1915

Box 1

Fire Station Postcard, no date
Peabody Fire Dept. Postcard, 1907-1915

Subseries 4.2: J.B. Thomas Hospital, no date

Box 1

J.B. Thomas Hospital Postcard, no date
J.B. Thomas Hospital Postcard, no date
Subseries 4.3: B&M R.R. Station, 1909

Box 1

B&M R.R Station – Peabody, 1909

Subseries 4.4: Peabody Institute Library, 1905-2011

Box 1

Snowy Owl Postcard, no date
Snowy Owl Postcard, no date
Peabody Institute Postcard, no date
Peabody Institute Postcard, no date
Peabody Institute Library, 1908-1928
Peabody Institute, 1905
Peabody Institute Postcard, no date
Peabody Institute Postcard, no date
Peabody Institute Postcard, no date
Peabody Institute, 1905
Peabody Institute, 1943
Peabody Institute Postcard, no date
Peabody Institute Postcard, 1907
Peabody Institute Library, 1905
Queen Victoria Peabody Institute Postcard, no date
Peabody Institute Library Postcard, 2011
Peabody Institute Library Postcard, 2011
Peabody Institute Library Postcard, 2011
Series 5: Shops & Services in Peabody, c. 1880-1976

Box 1

A.B. Clark Tannery, 1909
Ted’s Service Station, Foster St., 1976
Allen Block & Main Street, 1919
Humphrey Provision Co. Postcard, no date
W. Winslow Trade Card, c. 1880s
William P. Elwell Electrical Shop, no date


Box 1

Clyde & Mary Hudnall Military Room Postcard, 2016
Clyde & Mary Hudnall Military Room Postcard, 2016

Series 7: Dana, Massachusetts, 1915

Box 1

Postcard Main Street – Dana, Mass., 1915
Postcard Store and Post Office – Dana, Mass., 1915

Series 8: St. John’s Parish, no date

Box 1

St. John’s Parish Postcard, no date
St. John’s Parish Postcard, no date
St. John’s Parish Postcard, no date
St. John’s Parish Postcard, no date
St. John’s Parish Postcard, no date
St. John’s Parish Postcard, no date
St. John’s Church, no date
St. John’s Church, no date

**Series 9: Peabody Trust, 1912-2012**

**Box 1**

Peabody 150 Years Rosendale Estate Postcard, no date
Tachbrook – Peabody Housing Postcard, no date
St. John’s Hill Postcard, 2012
Estate Party at Whitecross Street, 1920s
Estate Party at Herbrand Street, 1924
Chelsea Manor Street, 1931
Vauxhall Bridge Road, 1912
Cleverly, Shepherds Bush Postcard, 2012
Peabody 150 Years 1953 Coronation Party Postcard, no date
Peabody 150 Years Walworth, no date
Peabody 150 Years Camberwell, no date
Peabody 150 Years Abbey Orchard St., no date
Peabody 150 Years Islington Postcard, no date
Peabody 150 Years Spitsfield Estate, no date

**Series 10: Peabody High School, 1909-2011**

**Box 1**

Peabody High Exhibition Postcard, 2011
Series 11: Beyond Peabody, no date

Box 1

Newburyport Public Library Postcard 150 Years, no date
Peabody Museum Yale University Postcard, no date
Peabody Branch, Enoch Pratt Library Postcard, no date
Peabody Branch, Enoch Pratt Library Postcard, no date

Series 12: South Peabody Baseball Team, 1910

Box 1

South Peabody Baseball Team, 1910