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Valentine's Day — Where Did THAT Come From?

By LeAnn R. Ralph

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by: **LeAnn R. Ralph**

Just as soon as the stores put away their Christmas merchandise, out comes the Valentine's Day items — even though Valentine's is still more than six weeks away.

I don't know why, but it always takes me by surprise to see Valentine's Day merchandise so soon after Christmas.

I've always wondered where Valentine's Day came from, and under those circumstances, a person could be forgiven for thinking it was invented to create more business when Christmas is over.

But no, after a little research, I discovered that Valentine's is not a holiday that was "invented" by greeting card companies to sell more greeting cards or by candy companies to sell more candy or by florists to sell more roses.

Valentine's Day actually started more than 1,500 years ago.

According to legend, Valentine was a priest who defied the orders of the Roman emperor Claudius and continued to perform marriages. It seems that Claudius realized no young men wanted to join his army because they didn't want to leave their wives and sweethearts. When it was discovered that Valentine was still performing marriages in secret, he was sentenced to death. Valentine allegedly cured the jailer's daughter of blindness, and on the night before his execution, sent a note to her signed "from your Valentine." He reportedly died on Feb. 14, 269 A.D.

In 496 A.D., February 14 was named by Pope Gelasius to honor St. Valentine.

The first Valentines are credited to Charles, Duke of Orleans, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London during the 1400s where he wrote romantic verses that he sent to his wife.

Valentine's Day — Where Did THAT Come From?

A woman named Esther Howland is credited with sending the first Valentine in the United States.

The United States Postal Service is credited with advancing the popularity of sending Valentines when the penny postcard was introduced in the mid 1800s. Before that, sending mail was too expensive for the average person, because at the time, the person who RECEIVED the letter paid the postage and not the person who SENT the letter.

Personally, I'm thankful it's not that way today. Can you imagine paying the postage to receive your Valentines?

In days gone by, Valentines were hand-painted cards decorated with lace and feathers and sequins.

I don't know about anybody else, but if I were going to hand paint a Valentine and decorate it with lace and feathers and sequins, I wouldn't go to all that work for just anybody.

Nowadays, however, Valentine's cards are mass produced in thousands of designs and sizes — large ones and small ones; serious ones and silly ones; inexpensive ones and expensive ones.

The variety of Valentine's cards is overwhelming and, as far as I'm concerned, rather unnecessary. I mean, how many Valentine's cards does one person need to buy? Spouse? Parents? Siblings? Second and third cousins? The teacher you had in fifth grade? The lady who cuts your hair? The grocery store clerk who tallied up your last purchase? The man who stopped his car so you could make it through the crosswalk without being run over?

And what about the Valentine's merchandise? The candy, the posters, the teddy bears sporting a red heart that says `Be Mine,' socks with little red hearts all over them, heart-shaped rings, necklaces and earrings, and the list goes on and on.

I wonder what the real St. Valentine would think of the cards and the candy and the jewelry and whatever else?

Then again, maybe the real St. Valentine would be delighted by this turn of events.

After all, it's been more than 1,700 years since he died, but every Feb. 14, people are still celebrating Valentine's Day.

And that puts giving Valentines into a whole new perspective, doesn't it.

LeAnn R. Ralph is the editor of the Wisconsin Regional Writer (the quarterly publication of the Wisconsin Regional Writers' Assoc.) and is the author of the book, *Christmas in Dairyland (True Stories from a Wisconsin Farm)* (Aug. 2003; trade paperback). She is working on her next book, *Give Me a Home Where the Dairy Cows Roam* (which will be available later in 2004). Share the view from Rural Route 2 —

~Happy Valentine's Day~

By Patricia *Lite* Hickman, RM

~Happy Valentine's Day~ by Patricia *Lite* Hickman, RM

"HAPPINESS IS...
SOMETHING YOU DECIDE ON,
AHEAD OF TIME" ~
Mrs. Jones, 92 yrs old

~HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY~ This is February, the month we celebrate love, not only relationship love, but more importantly, self love. Not everyone is in relationship, for those that are, I wish you the most Blessed Valentine's Day,,,ever :-)

For those that aren't, I wish you the most Blessed Valentine's Day,,,ever! This Valentine's Day (and month), celebrate the love you have in your life, friend(s), family, pet(s)~ celebrate loving yourself, and where you are right now. :-)

Grounding/centering, working on projects that have been put off in the household, or an extra 30 minutes of work-out time is also a good use of the energy.If you are feeling anger or frustration, or find yourself around angry people, or situations, just send yourself a beam of love or give yourself a hug –) Weather might also be a tad bit bizarre, as it has been in Wisconsin :-) Stay warm darlings, and if possible stay home :-)

The GOOD NEWS most people will focused on LOVE, this Valentine's Day. Love energy will be flowing for most of us, and that's the best energy we can operate under :-) let the love flow this February 14th. Let us approach it as a Return to Love, give yourself a hug everyday, just because, you deserve it :-)

I wish you Love and Light, during the month of February, and always~

Lite
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Psychic and clairaudient, I am, a Reiki Master, Healer, Minister and Metaphysician for more than 25 years. In order to find out the answers to my life, I studied Astrology, Tarot, Numerology, Religion, Psychic Phenomenia, as well as Healing,Spirit Releasement Therapy and Psychic Self Defense. I am the Grandmother of 9 and reside in Milwaukee, WI

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