

# PENOBSCOT MARINE MUSEUM

Inventory for  
Collection

**PMM 37**

## **Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company Papers**

1925-1968

1 boxes  
.5 linear feet  
Accession No. LB2010.9, LB 2014.15

**Stephen Phillips Memorial Library**

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# PMM 37

## Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company Papers

### **Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company**

Papers, 1925-1968

1 box (.5 linear feet)

Photo postcard company in Belfast, Maine

Lists of postcards, articles of incorporation, minutes, and correspondence from the Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company of Belfast, Maine, making a partial record of a prolific publisher of real photo postcards. This is a companion collection to some 50,000 photographs and negatives from the Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company at the Penobscot Marine Museum.

In English

Museum purchase; 2010; LB2010.9. Brewster Harding; Gift; 2014; LB2014.15.

Rangeley Lakes Region Historical Society; Gift; 2016; LB2016.22.

Finding aid available; folder level control

### **Subject Headings:**

Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company

Business enterprises—Maine—Belfast

Photography

Photography—Maine—History—20<sup>th</sup> Century

Postcards

Real photo postcards

### **Acquisition:**

This material was acquired alongside larger gifts and purchases of glass plate negatives produced by the Eastern Illustrating and Publishing Company.

### **Restrictions**

This collection is open for research. There are no special restrictions.

### **Condition:**

This collection is in good condition.

### **Related Materials:**

Material in this collection supports the much larger photo collections from the Eastern Illustrating Publishing Company, which have been individually cataloged and digitized by Penobscot Marine Museum as the "Eastern Collection."

### **Historical Note:**

In 1909, R. Herman Cassens, a young entrepreneur, started a postcard company, the Eastern Illustrating and Publishing Company, in the mid-coast town of Belfast, Maine. Postcards have always been a popular item, especially for travelers, but at the turn of the century they were the absolute rage. Cassens saw a niche between personal/amateur postcards and the mass-produced postcards available in the bigger cities. He had a dream of "Photographing the Transcontinental Trail—Maine to California," focusing on small rural towns and villages. He and his small crew of photographers traveled through rural New England and New York focusing

their lenses on locally known landmarks, street scenes, country stores and businesses, events and people. The exposed glass plate negatives were sent back to the “factory” in Belfast where they were processed, printed and sent back to the general stores for sale at “2 for 5 cents.”

Unlike the mass produced variety, EIP’s postcards were the type known as “real photo postcards” meaning they were actual photographic prints, products of the chemical reaction caused by light onto a light-sensitive surface. The term “real photo” was one used by the makers to emphasize photographic authenticity and to distinguish their cards from the abundance of mechanically reproduced and printed cards that dominated the market.

Cassens sold his business in 1947 and died in 1948. The company continued, with new owners, until 1964, when it merged with Don K. Sieburg Co., of New London, New Hampshire. The combined company retained the Eastern Illustrating name, though it stopped creating new photo postcards and began producing contemporary color post cards. Though Cassens never fully realized dream of photographing all 48 states was not realized, his company did manage to make over 50,000 glass plate and film negatives of everyday scenes from New England and New York between 1909 and 1947.

**Scope and Content:**

The complete Eastern Collection contains more than 50,000 negatives from the Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Company. Written material is a small fragment of the collection, and most of it dates after Cassens’s sale of the company in 1947.

The manuscripts primarily consist of lists and business records. Lists of postcards produced by the company are arranged by topic, then location. These do not list EIP’s entire output, but seem to address particularly popular subjects. Business records start in 1947, with articles of incorporation, by-laws, and meeting minutes for the re-formed Eastern Illustrating and Publishing Co. There is also a folder of letters dealing with legal issues surrounding the company’s merger with the Don K. Sieburg Co. in 1964, and one of letters from customers in the late 1960s requesting specific scenes from the company’s archives. Finally, this collection contains some examples of the photo albums and glass plate negative boxes used by the company to house its library.

**Box and Folder List:**

Obj-ID	Box	Folder	
37-3	1	1	Genuine Photo Postcards: Original List
37-11		2	Lists by topic, miscellaneous
37-12		3	Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Co., bank receipts, 1925
37-1		4	Eastern Illustrating & Publishing Co., incorporation, by-laws and minutes, 1947-1964
37-2		5	Legal correspondence on merger with Don K. Sieburg Co., 1965-1967
37-11		6	Correspondence with customers, 1968

Sample Containers

37-4	1	7	Glass plate negative box labels
37-9	[unboxed]		Glass plate negative boxes
37-6	[unboxed]		Large black postcard sample album, used by sales representatives to display the postcards to prospective customers
37-7	[unboxed]		6 large brown postcard sample albums, used by sales representatives
37-8	1		2 small red postcard sample albums.
37-4	1	8	Inventory of postcards in Eastern Illustrating and Publishing Co. postcard sample albums, 1969. Typed by the New York State Museum