



# Getting the Scoop Like the Days of Old

By LISA PIERCE Published: June 1, 2003 New York Times



MEN fan themselves with their wide-brimmed hats, women in long white dresses seek shade under trees and children line up in eager anticipation of the day's main attraction: ice cream. From the mid-1800's until the early decades of the 20th century, such sights were common in New England, according to Karen Fredrick, collections manager of the Greenwich Historical Society and curator of "In the Summertime," an exhibition at the Scarsdale Historical Society that highlights summer activities from 1850 to 1920. "People didn't have air conditioning so ice cream and swimming were important ways to keep cool," Ms. Fredrick said. "Events tended to center around those activities." Victorian-era ice cream socials did not focus on children, or even ice cream, said Elizabeth Montgomery, a volunteer coordinator at the Lockwood-Matthews Mansion Museum in Norwalk. "It was about getting together and showing everybody your hat," she said.

## Tradition of

Over the centuries, the holiday evolved, and by the 18th century, gift-giving and exchanging hand-made cards on Valentine's Day had become common in England. Hand-made valentine cards made of lace, ribbons, and featuring cupids and hearts eventually spread to the American colonies. The tradition of Valentine's cards did not become widespread in the United States, however, until the 1850s, when Esther A. Howland, a Mount Holyoke graduate and native of Worcester, Mass., began mass-producing them. Today, of course, the holiday has become a booming commercial success. According to the Greeting Card Association, 25% of all cards sent each year are valentines.

## Valentine's Cards

## A Day at School

School started at 8:00 O'clock exactly and went until four. You brought your lunch and left it in the cloakroom, along with other things, such as a jump rope or ball and bat ((these were not provided by the school). The day started with the boys bringing in the water from the pump out front. In Winter months they also had to start the fire and bring in the coal. The teacher would read from the Bible and the boys would take turns at holding the flag, which was kept in the teacher's desk. Then the teacher would start the day by giving assignments to two groups and calling the third up to her desk to work with them. Somewhere in the middle of the morning there would be a short recess. When it was nice they would go outside. If you wanted a drink of water, you got your own cup out of your desk and poured water out of the dipper.

There would be a play time after lunch, when the girls would sit on a bench to the left of the school and watch the boys play ball, or they might play tag or hide-n-seek.

School was over at four.

