

Pictures for Winter Days

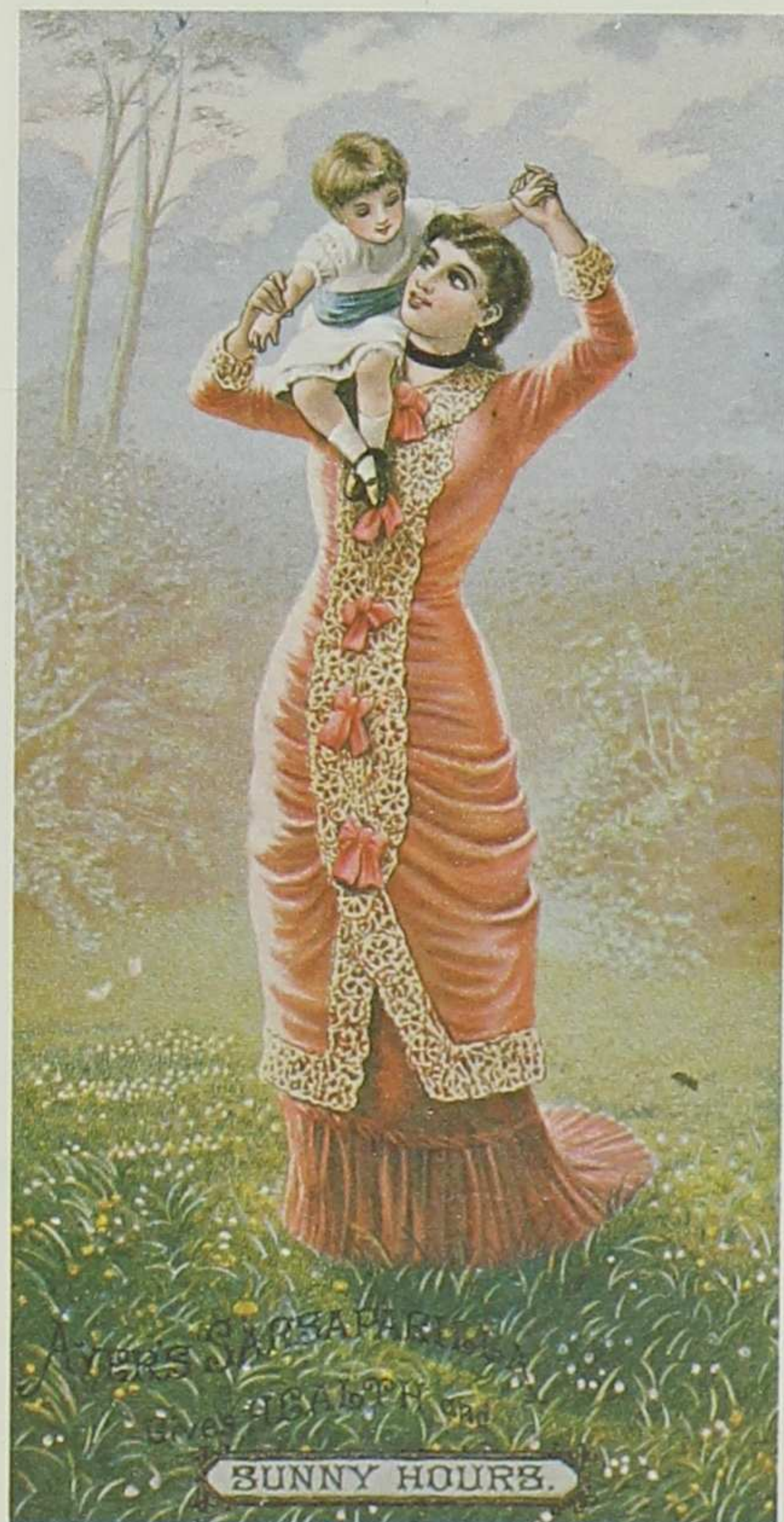
Among the most charming examples of late nineteenth-century color lithography are advertising cards. In many ways similar to post cards, advertising cards were prepared with attractive scenes printed in bright colors. Patent medicines, special foods, or household items were the most common products to be found on advertising cards--sometimes national products, sometimes local. Retailers often used stock cards (pre-printed elsewhere) to boost sales.

The State Historical Society has many examples of such advertising cards, often preserved in scrapbooks made by Iowans young and old during the long winter months when entertainment was something you did not get from a cathode ray tube. Jeanette Mather York recorded in 1965 her memories of scrapbooks and the role they played in social life at her family home. The quotations accompanying the following examples of advertising cards are from her reminiscence.





"The making of scrapbooks was always a winter time job . . . Only on days when raging blizzards made roads impassable for visits did we work on them."





"Each of the three older girls had a scrapbook of this type . . . Each saved his cards and pictures against the day. Colored illustrations were not common in the early 1890s. When the mid-day dishes were washed we gathered around the dining room table with accumulations, our scrap books and a dish of flour paste."





"Mother took care that each had her fair share of the best of the cards and pictures. When sorting and trading had finished, work began. Each planned a page. Mother did some shifting to get as many cards as possible on a page."



"From earliest memory [we] had an insatiable love of pictures. We poured over scrapbooks for hours, remembering tales told us and making up others. Any free time... we might be found in the library or 'back parlor' pouring over our scrapbooks."