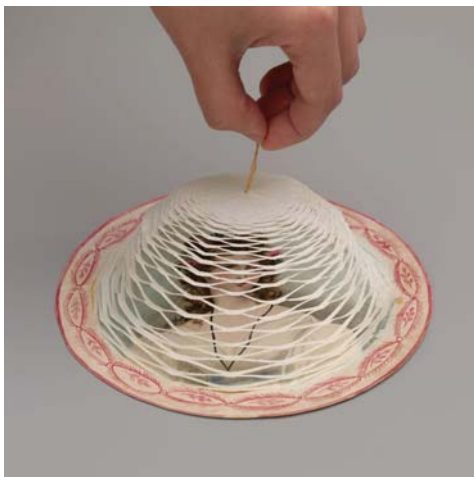# Cobweb Cards

Victorian Era Valentines

In the mid- 1800s, new technologies made printing and paper-making easier and more affordable. During this Victorian era, the custom of sending elaborately decorated greeting cards for valentine day took off in Britain and the US.

Young admirers spent hours handcrafting these lavish multi-layered cards. Adorned with lace, beads, satin, feathers, and bits of fabric. Many of the valentines contained some mechanical or movable part. One particularly fun style of paper art was called "cobwebs."

In the Cobweb cards, also called 'beehives' or 'birdcages', pieces of paper were cut in such a way that when the center is lifted, an image or message would appear underneath.

Anonymous Cobweb valentine, 1830–40. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Valentines from the Helga J. Ingraham Memorial Library Collection at the Litchfield Historical Society
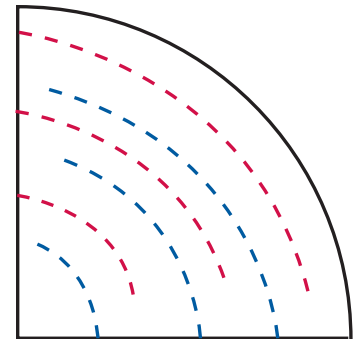
Cobweb Card Instructions

Supplies Needed:

- ☐ Materials to make card - paper doilies, stickers, stamps, etc.
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Markers or colored pencils
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ String
- ☐ Glue

To Make your Cobweb Card

1. Decorate your card

2. Place the image you want revealed in the center of your card

3. Cut a piece of paper in a circle large enough to cover your image

4. Fold the circle in half, and then in half again (for tighter slits, fold in half a third time)

5. Cut your circle in strips, going most of the way, but not all the way across. Alternates side, as shown in the image:

6. Carefully open you circle back up and lay flat

7. Attach a string to the center using tape, glue, or a needle

8. Glue only the outer most ring of the cobweb over the image

For video instructions, visit our website.
www.litchfieldhistoricalsociety.org
We want to see your cobweb cards!
Share your creations with us by tagging us on social media with #litchfieldhistory