

## From Shoebox to Showcase



Valentine's Day is straight ahead (guys, pay attention!), and it comes in at second place for number of greeting cards purchased and mailed each year.

More than 143 million Valentine's Day cards are sent to significant others, family members and friends each year – and that's not counting the small Valentines that school children hand out each year.

In first place among the holidays is Christmas, taking the top spot with more than 1.5 billion cards purchased each year. More Christmas cards are sent than every other holiday combined. Others on the Top 5 list are No. 3, Mother's Day, 139 million; No. 4, Father's Day, 94 million; and No. 5, Easter, 57 million.

The life of Joyce Clyde Hall, founder of Hallmark Cards, is a true rags-to-riches story.

Born to poor parents, Hall was quickly put to work, mostly in sales, to help keep himself and his family afloat. Along with his brothers, he began selling postcards in Norfolk, Nebraska. But the postcard business wasn't thriving. So, with little else than a couple of shoeboxes of postcards, he moved to Missouri to start afresh.

Full of innovative ideas, he moved on from postcards to greeting cards, saying they represented class, promised discretion and "they were more than a form of communication – they were a social custom."

When the store from which he operated burned down in 1915, he and his brothers invested in an engraving business and began printing their own cards.

But it wasn't just the quality of the cards that burgeoned the business. It was Hall's groundbreaking idea to move the cards from behind the counters, where clerks would pick an "appropriate" card for the customer, out into display cases where customers could see them, handle them and admire them.



By the time he died in 1982, Hall had turned two shoeboxes of postcards into a multibillion-dollar company.

(more)

The Hallmark corporate website proclaims: “J.C. Hall took greeting cards out of drawers in retail stores, and into displays that let shoppers see all their choices, dramatically changing the way cards are merchandised.”

In the spiritual realm, God did the same thing when He sent Jesus Christ into the world. Jesus left the throne room of heaven to be born in a manger, lived a sinless life teaching and healing, and died on a cross for our sins so that we may have eternal life through Him.



That’s when the Word of Life was moved from behind the counters, out of the drawers, and placed in a display case for all the world to see, handle and admire.

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us (1 John 1:1-2 NIV).*

– Beecher Hunter