

Baker Street *Elementary*

PRESENTS
"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"



Baker Street *Elementary*

THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON
077 -- "IT'S ALL IN THE CARDS" -- FEBRUARY, 2022





**WELCOME TO TOPIC # 077... TODAY WATSON AND I
WILL BE LOOKING AT VISITING OR CALLING CARDS
DURING THE VICTORIAN PERIOD.**





IN MORE THAN ONE TALE, WHEN SOMEONE CALLED ON ME, THEY PASSED A VISITING OR CALLING CARD TO MRS. HUDSON, WHO WOULD TAKE IT TO ME.





FOR EXAMPLE, MARY MORSTAN, YOUR FUTURE WIFE, IS FIRST INTRODUCED BY HER CARD.





WITH MANY POTENTIAL CLIENTS, HOWEVER, MRS. HUDSON BARELY HAD TIME TO OPEN THE DOOR, LET ALONE HAND OVER A CARD, BEFORE THE VISITOR WOULD ENTER THE APARTMENT.



BUSINESS OR VISITING CARDS FIRST APPEARED IN 15TH CENTURY CHINA, BUT THE PRACTICE DID NOT BECOME WIDESPREAD IN EUROPE UNTIL THE 17TH CENTURY.

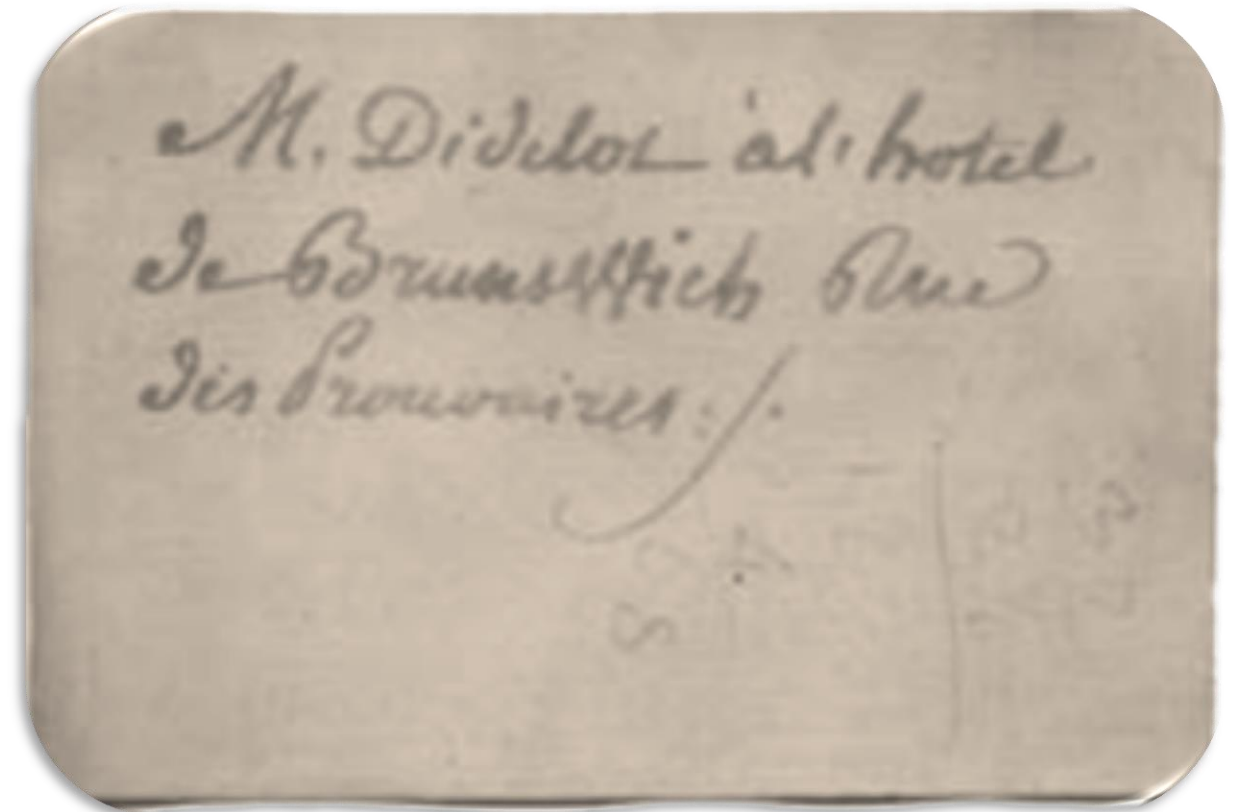
J. W. von Goethe.



FRENCH ARISTOCRATS AND ROYALTY INTRODUCED
THE CUSTOM AS A MEANS OF REQUESTING
MEETINGS WITH THOSE AT COURT OR OTHER
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.



BOTH LADIES AND GENTLEMEN USED THEM, AND A
WHOLE ETIQUETTE EVOLVED AROUND THE
PRACTICE AMONG THOSE IN ELITE SOCIETY.



THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CREATED A RISE IN THOSE SEEKING ENTRÉ INTO 'SOCIETY' AS WELL AS BUSINESS DEALINGS.



THE FIRST BUSINESS CARDS WERE REFERRED TO AS 'TRADE CARDS' AND SERVED AS A MEANS OF ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS... BECAUSE STREET ADDRESSES WERE NOT INTRODUCED UNTIL THE 18TH CENTURY IN LONDON, CARDS CARRIED BOTH THE NAME OF THE MERCHANT AS WELL AS SOME MEANS OF LOCATING THE ESTABLISHMENT.





THE BACK MIGHT BE USED TO NOTE TRANSACTIONS (SUCH AS AN INVOICE OR QUOTATION) AND BECAME MORE ELABORATE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLOR PRINTING.



FOR THOSE SEEKING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS, A HIGHLY RITUALIZED PRACTICE KNOWN AS 'MORNING CALLS' DEVELOPED THAT SERVED AMONG OTHER PURPOSES, A MEANS OF SCREENING THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH THOSE IN THE UPPER CLASSES.



*MOST OFTEN THE WIFE OF SUCH AN ASPIRING
COUPLE WOULD VISIT THE HOUSES OF THOSE SHE
WISHED TO SEE SOCIALLY AND LEAVE HER CARD
ALONG WITH TWO OF HER HUSBAND'S (ONE FOR
THE LADY OF THE HOUSE AND ANOTHER FOR HER
HUSBAND) WITH THE SERVANT WHO ANSWERED
THE DOOR.*



THE CALLING CARD INCLUDED THE ADDRESS OF THE ORIGINAL VISITOR AND AN INDICATION OF WHICH DAYS THE LADY OF THE HOUSE WOULD BE 'AT HOME,' AND NOT MAKING VISITS OF HER OWN.



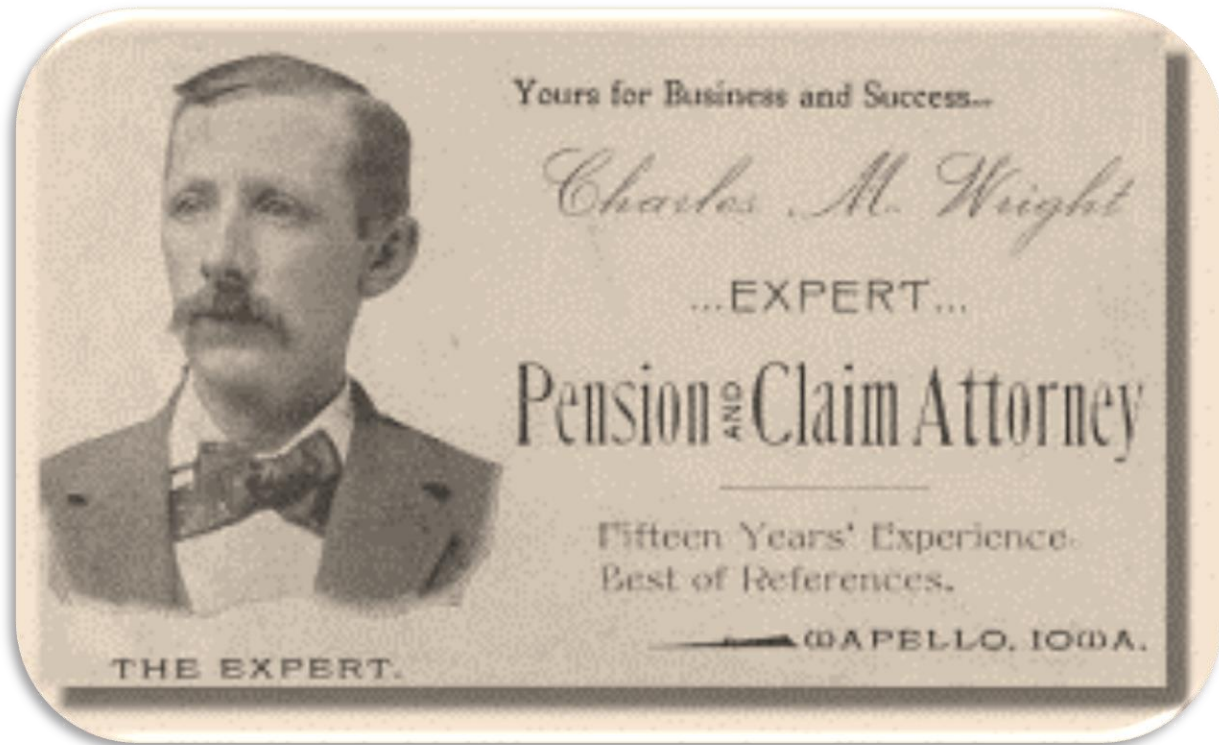
THE RECEIVER WAS EXPECTED TO RETURN A CARD
OF HER OWN LATER OR ACTUALLY VISIT (SHOULD
SHE SO DESIRE).

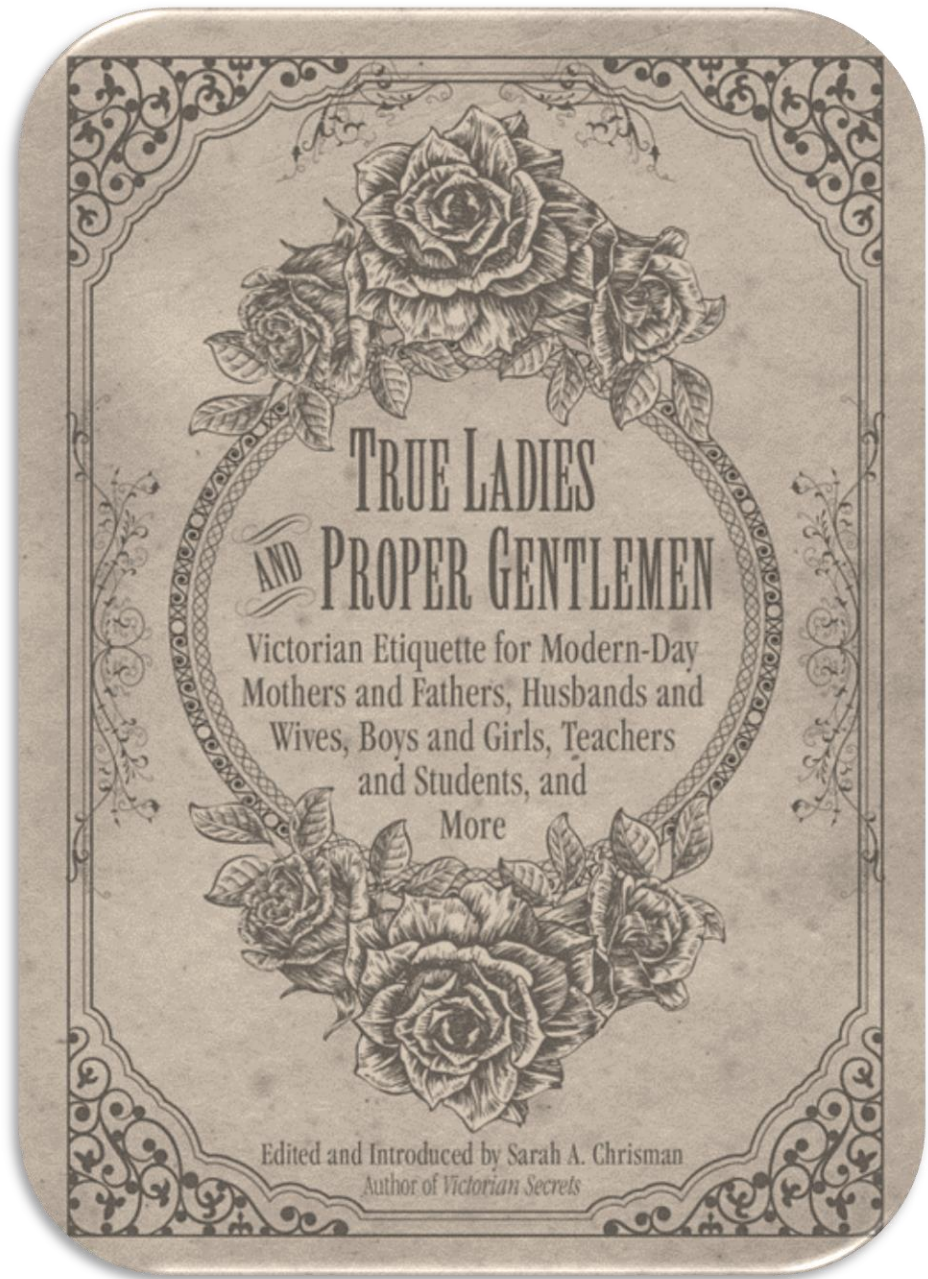


RETURN VISITS OCCURRED BETWEEN 3 AND 5 PM
WHEN WOMEN WORE THEIR 'MORNING' OR DAY
DRESS (HENCE THE NAME 'MORNING CALLS').



ANOTHER CARD WOULD BE SHARED WITH THE SERVANT ANSWERING THE DOOR, AND THE VISITOR WOULD ENQUIRE WHETHER THE LADY WAS 'RECEIVING...' THIS ALLOWED THE HOSTESS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO PERMIT THE VISITOR INTO HER SOCIAL CIRCLE OR NOT.





FOR THOSE WHOSE ARRIVAL WAS ACCEPTED,
ETIQUETTE BOOKS INCLUDED VERY STRICT
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VISITORS' CONDUCT.



THOSE ADMITTED WERE TO KEEP HATS,
UMBRELLAS, ETC. WITH THEM AS A SHOW OF NOT
PLANNING TO STAY LONG, AND CONVERSATION
WAS TO BE KEPT LIGHT.



THE
LADIES'
BOOK OF
ETIQUETTE
AND MANUAL OF
POLITENESS

A COMPLETE HAND BOOK, *for the*
USE *of the* LADY IN POLITE SOCIETY

Containing

RULES FOR THE DUTIES
of BOTH HOSTESS and
GUEST IN VISITING,
EVENING PARTIES
AND BALLS

FULL DIRECTIONS
for CORRECT
MANNERS, DRESS,
DEPARTMENT *and*
CONVERSATION

by

LORENCE HART

WHETHER OFFERED TEA OR NOT, THE TOTAL TIME SPENT WAS TO BE NO MORE THAN FIFTEEN MINUTES. WHILE MEN MIGHT CALL ON A LADY, A LADY NEVER CALLED ON A SINGLE MAN.



IN ADDITION TO EXPECTED SOCIAL CALLS,
CALLING CARDS WERE ALSO USED TO THANK A
HOST AND HOSTESS FOR A DINNER PARTY EXPRESS
BEST WISHES UPON ANNOUNCED ENGAGEMENTS OR
WEDDINGS, OR PASS ON CONDOLENCES.



**CARDS WERE TO BE SENT TO A LADY FOLLOWING
THE BIRTH OF A CHILD FOR TWO TO THREE TIMES
A WEEK FOR THE FIRST FEW WEEKS FOLLOWING
THE ANNOUNCEMENT.**



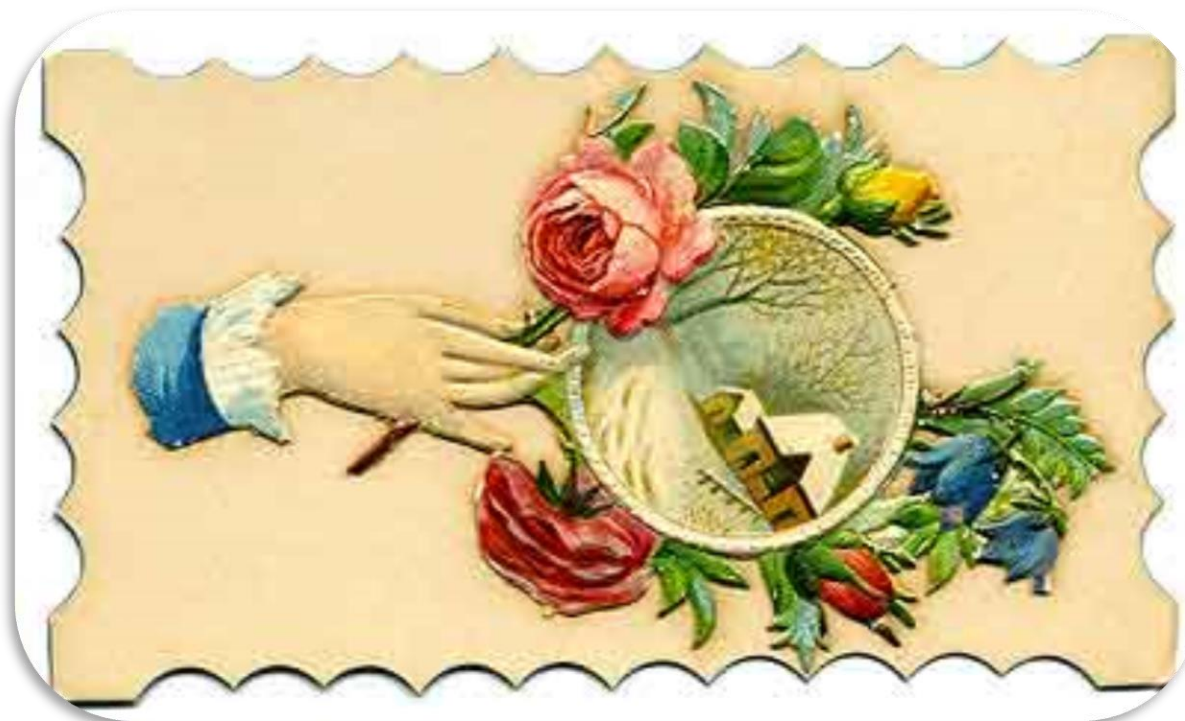
SOME OF THESE SENTIMENTS WERE INDICATED BY TURNING DOWN THE CARD'S CORNER, BUT BY THE 19TH CENTURY WAS NO LONGER SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE.



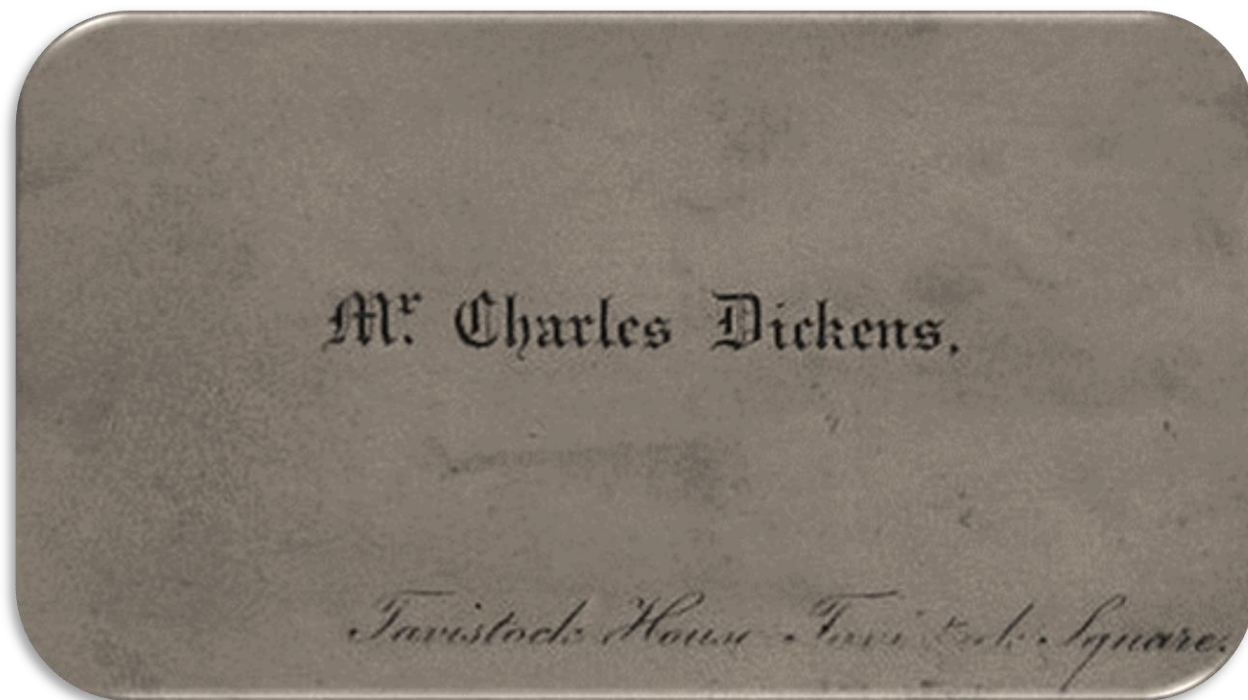
SHORT MESSAGES WERE INSTEAD WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF THE CARD... ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MIGHT BE NOTED AS WELL — SUCH AS P.P.C. (POUR PRENDRE CONGÉ OR, 'TAKING A VACATION') WHEN LEAVING TOWN.



DESPITE THE INTRODUCTION OF COLORED PRINTING, PERSONAL CALLING CARDS WERE STILL TO BE 'SIMPLE' AS LATE AT THE 1870s.



ETIQUETTE MANUALS DICTATED THAT CARDS SHOULD NOT BE 'GLAZED' AND THE ENGRAVING 'SIMPLE'... ONLY THE FAMOUS, SUCH AS DICKENS, SHOULD INCLUDE THEIR AUTOGRAPH (AS A COLLECTOR'S ITEM).



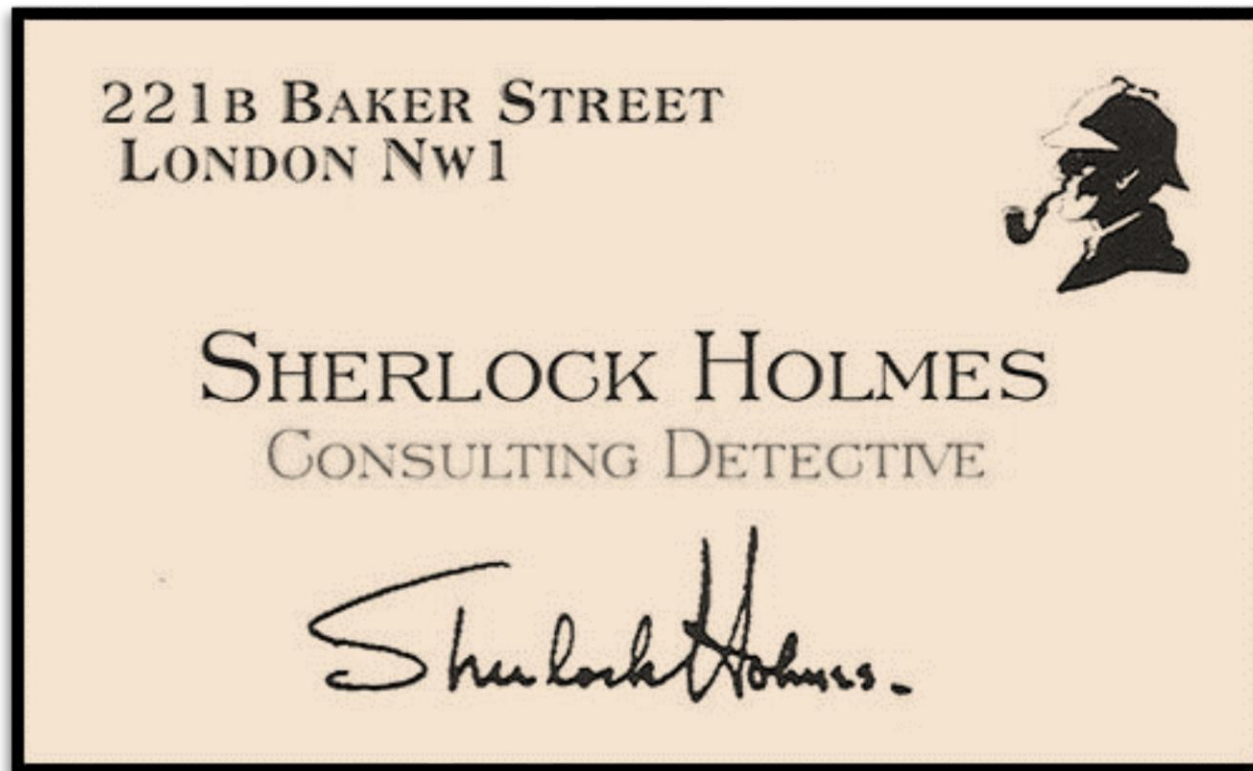
WITH ADVANCEMENTS IN LITHOGRAPHY AND LETTERPRESS PRINTERS, CALLING CARDS BECAME MUCH MORE COLORFUL AND ELABORATE BY THE LATER PART OF THE 1800s.



THESE CARDS MIGHT BE EMBELLISHED WITH GILDED EDGES OR ACTUAL CLOTH OR LACE FRINGE. WHILE BUSINESS CARDS SURVIVE CALLING CARDS FELL OUT OF FASHION BY THE 20TH CENTURY AS OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION EVOLVED.



WHILE MANY CARDS WERE LEFT AT 221B BAKER STREET, I SHARED MINE AS WELL... WHAT BETTER MEANS OF INFORMING THE RECIPIENT THEY WERE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS CONSULTING DETECTIVE?



SO, WE HAVE COMPLETED TOPIC # 077 IN OUR SERIES...

IN TOPIC # 078, WE WILL BE LOOKING AT THE PINKERTON DETECTIVE AGENCY
DURING THE VICTORIAN PERIOD.



ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL FOR THIS TOPIC:

- [HTTPS://WWW.CASEYPRINTING.COM/BLOG/WHAT-IS-THE-HISTORY-OF-BUSINESS-CARDS](https://www.caseypainting.com/blog/what-is-the-history-of-business-cards)
- DANIEL POOL, WHAT JANE AUSTEN ARE AND CHARLES DICKENS KNEW. NEW YORK: SIMON AND SCHUSTER, 1993
- [HTTPS://WWW.GREATFXPRINTING.COM/ARTICLES/HISTORY-OF-BUSINESS-CARDS.HTM](https://www.greatfxprinting.com/articles/history-of-business-cards.htm)
- SALLY MITCHELL, DAILY LIFE IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND. WESTPORT, CT: GREENWOOD PRESS, 1996
- [HTTPS://HOBANCARDS.COM/CALLING-CARDS-AND-VISITING-CARDS-BRIEF-HISTORY](https://hobancards.com/calling-cards-and-visiting-cards-brief-history)
- WARD, LOCK, AND COMPANY, ALL ABOUT ETIQUETTE: THE MANNERS OF POLITE SOCIETY FOR LADIES, GENTLEMEN, AND FAMILIES, LONDON, 1875
- COUNTESS OF ***** , MIXING IN SOCIETY: A COMPLETE MANUAL OF MANNERS. LONDON: GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS , 1972
- [HTTPS://HOBANCARDS.COM/CALLING-CARDS-AND-VISITING-CARDS-BRIEF-HISTORY](https://hobancards.com/calling-cards-and-visiting-cards-brief-history)



Baker Street *Elementary*

"THE LIFE AND TIMES IN VICTORIAN LONDON"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

JOE FAY
LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE
RUSTY MASON &
STEVE MASON

