

TIPS FOR SEARCHING THE VALENTINE'S ONLINE COLLECTIONS DATABASE

Discover Richmond history with the Valentine!

Trying to find old pictures of your school or home? Doing research for a class project and want to add a Richmond twist? Look no further than the Valentine's online collection database! The Valentine is home to 1.6 million objects and artifacts that relate to Richmond history. Our online database contains records of our digitized collection.

The following tips will help you search the database for materials from the Valentine's collection!

1. Getting started

Visit <https://thevalentine.org/collections/database-search/>

You can choose to search in one of two collections areas:

- Objects (like clothing, furniture, fine art)
- Archives (like, photographs, prints and ephemera)
- Or, if you aren't sure which type of object you prefer, you can search both using the Global Search feature

2. Browse or Search?

When searching in the **Valentine Archives Collection** or in the **Valentine Object Collection** you will have the opportunity to either “browse” or “search” the collection.

- The *Browse* feature will allow you to search for a specific object by catalog number, object name, artist/maker or date. If you know an object exists in the Valentine collection and want to learn more about it, this may be the best feature for you.
- The *Search* feature will allow you to search by key words. If you are interested in a particular subject or person and want to see what we have related to that topic, this may be the best feature for you.

3. Select your search terms

Search terms should include a few key words or short phrases. Try to avoid using broad terms, such as: *of, in, during, with, by, the, object, item, image, photo, culture, people, antique, history, etc.*

For example:

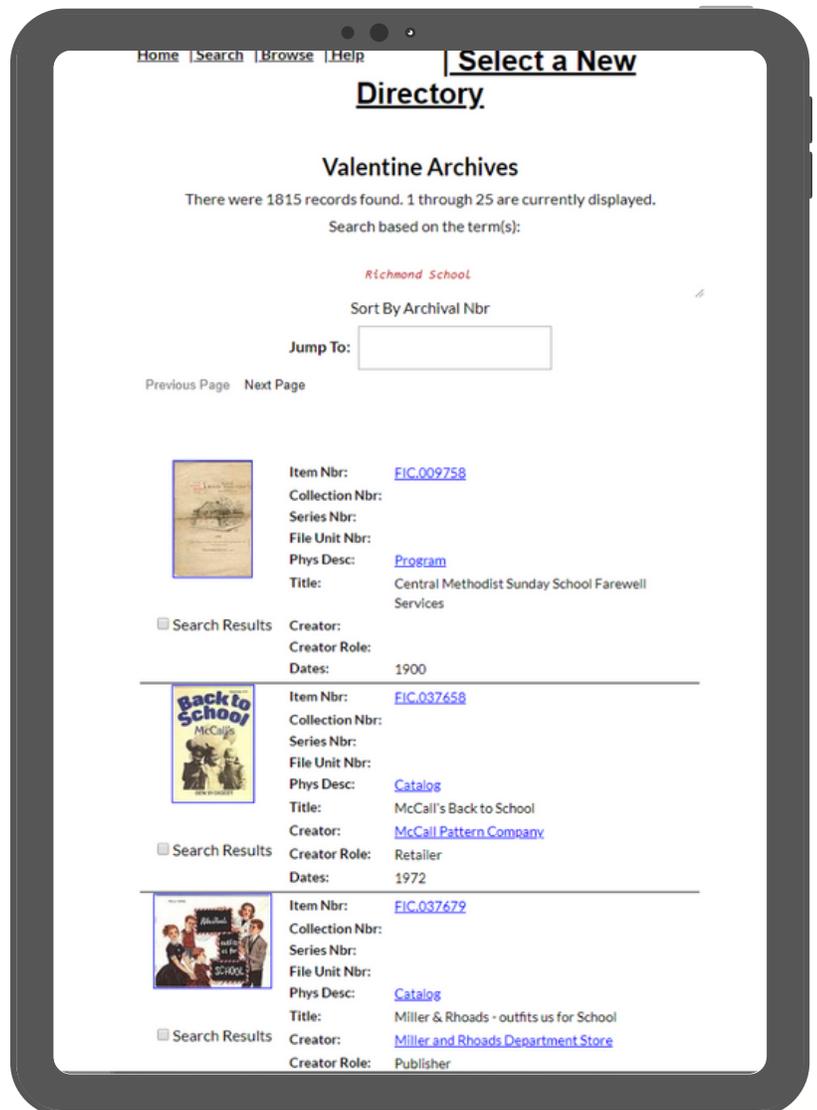
- if you are looking for photographs of schools, use “*school*”
- If you are looking for information about Richmond’s canal system search “*canal*”
- If you don’t get results, try variations of words or abbreviations (“*bike*” and “*bicycle*” may show different results, as will “*West*” and “*W.*”)

4. Be specific

To focus your results, try to be as specific as possible. If you are searching for something that requires multiple words, use quotation marks around the phrase.

For example:

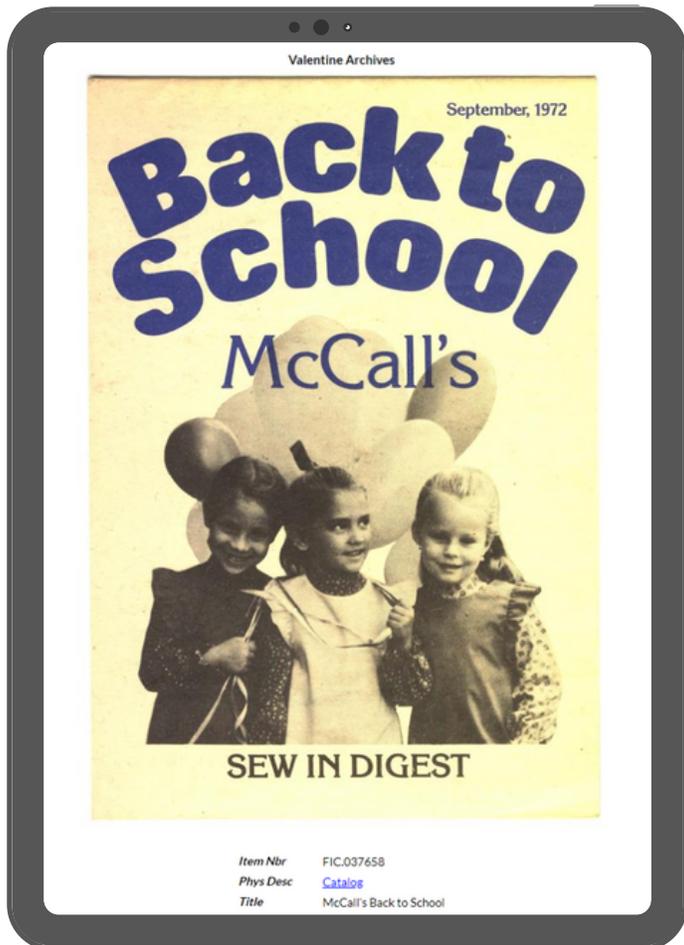
- Search for “*Richmond Public Schools*”
- Search for “*Shockoe Cemetery*”
- But, don't be too specific - If you don’t get results, try a less complex search (like “*Broad Street*” instead of “*3452 W. Broad Street*”)



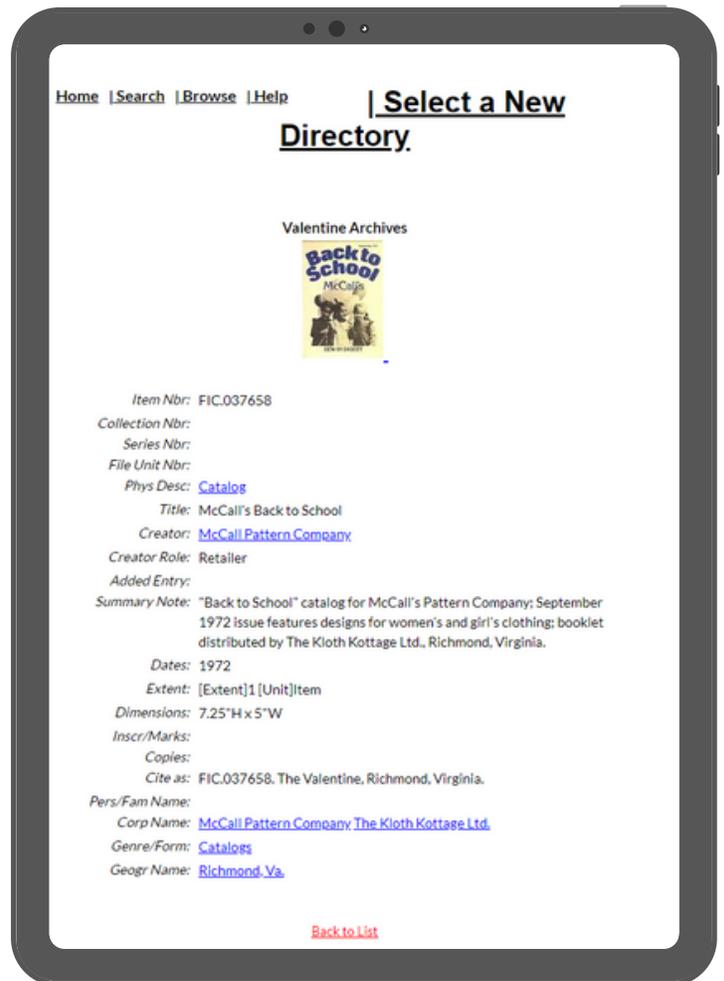
Example of search results

5. Understanding your results

A) Clicking the item number (for example: *FIC.037658*) will allow you to view more details about the object, including a physical description, title, creator and in some cases a summary note that describes what is happening in the picture. You can also discover the date the object was created and learn about any inscriptions or marks on the item.



Item close up



Item detail view

B) Clicking on the photo directly from your search results list will expand the image of the photograph or object for you to view in greater detail.

6. Using your discoveries

What if I want to use this object/image for my research/ presentation/ class project?

That's great - we're so glad you found something interesting in our collection!

- To save your discovery, drag the image to your desktop and save the file as needed (this feature works best with Firefox and Google Chrome browsers).
- **Make sure you keep track of the item number** (this is the object's accession or reference number) so that you can search for the object/or photo again and so you can cite your sources.
- You can also use this number if you have further questions about the object you want our archives team to answer.
- Make sure you cite your source if you use an object from the Valentine Collection. Some item records (not all) have a citation listed in the catalog record.
- The United States Holocaust Museum has a great guide for how to best cite materials from museums: <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/ask-a-research-question/how-to-cite-museum-materials>
- The Valentine's Archives staff is actively digitizing our collection, so if you don't find what you're looking for, we suggest you check back as materials are always being added.

7. Digging deeper

If you have questions about an object, or would like to request a high resolution image for research or educational purposes, contact our Archives team at archives@thevalentine.org.

If you could use help digging deeper into a project for your class, or would like to schedule an educational program with the museum's Education team, contact us at

education@thevalentine.org.

Discover more Richmond
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the
valentine