

# ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

## Albany Institute of History & Art

125 Washington Avenue Albany, NY 12210

T: (518) 463-4478; F: (518) 462-1522

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## NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:**

Nycole Kinns, Marketing and Public Relations

(518) 463-4478, ext. 420; [kinnsn@albanyinstitute.org](mailto:kinnsn@albanyinstitute.org)

## AIHA's "Temple of Fancy" Exhibition to Open November 19

Albany, NY— Opening November 19, 2011, the Albany Institute of History & Art is proud to present *Temple of Fancy: Pease's Great Variety Store*. This eclectic exhibition brings back Richard H. Pease's upscale "Five and Dime" where Albany families could purchase fancy goods, toys, household items, children's books, and games from the 1830s to 1855. The exhibit will draw from the collections of the Albany Institute, and includes a reproduction of Pease's 1850-51 Christmas card, considered to be the very first printed in America, on loan from the Manchester University Museum in England, where the only surviving copy resides.

Before F. W. Woolworths', Whitney's, or even Myer's department store, there was Pease's Great Variety Store, located in the Temple of Fancy at 516 and 518 Broadway in Albany. As with other fancy goods stores, Pease's catered to the middle and upper middle class selling highly decorated goods like ceramics, prints, furniture and other decorative household items that progressively thinking people might have wanted to purchase.

The 1844 *Wilson's Albany City Guide* provides a flattering description of Pease's: "For richness and extensive variety of novelties, combining the beautiful, the useful and the ornamental, this establishment excels any in town. Mr. P. has many fancy articles which are surpassingly rich; exceeding anything in elegance that we have ever thought, dreamed or read of." Pease's advertisement in the *Albany Evening Journal* on December 17, 1841, was the very first time Santa Claus was used to advertise a store. They also produced the hand-colored lithographs of fruit for Ebenezer Emmons' *Agriculture of New York* published between 1846 and 1854.

*Temple of Fancy: Pease's Great Variety Store* will be on display in the library cases at the Albany Institute of History & Art, located at 125 Washington Avenue, Albany. The exhibition will run through March 25, 2012. Coinciding with the exhibition, the Albany Institute has produced a 20-page booklet, "Pease's Great Variety Store and the Story of America's first Christmas Card", that will be available for sale in the Museum Shop.

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The Albany Institute's distinguished collections and acclaimed exhibitions comprise the definitive expression of the cultural, historical, and artistic heritage of Albany and the upper Hudson Valley. From its world-renowned Hudson River School collection, to the famous Albany Mummies, to the wide range of performances, lectures, and festivals, to its outstanding educational and family programming, this distinctive and engaging institution provides visitors of all ages and interests with a splendid museum experience. One of America's oldest museums, the Albany Institute of History & Art was founded in 1791, during the presidency of George Washington, making it older than the Louvre, the Smithsonian, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Visit [www.albanyinstitute.org](http://www.albanyinstitute.org) for more information, and be sure to follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute](http://www.facebook.com/albanyinstitute)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/albanyinstitute](http://www.twitter.com/albanyinstitute)).

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**Media inquiries:** Nycole Kinns, Marketing and Public Relations, at (518) 463-4478, ext. 420, [kinnsn@albanyinstitute.org](mailto:kinnsn@albanyinstitute.org).

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**Hi- and lo-resolution images may be available.** Contact Nycole Kinns, Marketing and Public Relations, at (518) 463-4478, ext. 420, [kinnsn@albanyinstitute.org](mailto:kinnsn@albanyinstitute.org).