

# History of Valentine's Day dates back many centuries

Expressing ones love to another is a celebrated custom on Valentine's Day; whereby sweethearts and family members present gifts to one another, such as cards, candy, flowers and other symbols of affection.



Opinions differ as to who was the original Valentine, but the most popular theory is that he was a clergyman who was executed for secretly marrying couples in ancient Rome. In A.D. 496, Pope Gelasius I declared Feb. 14 as Valentine Day. Esther Howland, a

native of Massachusetts, is given credit for selling the first mass-produced valentine cards in the 1840s. The spirit continues today with even young children exchanging Valentine's cards with their fellow classmates.

Those looking for love might want to try one of the 393 dating service establishments nationwide as of 2007. These establishments, which include Internet dating services, employed 3,125 people and pulled in \$928 million in revenue, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Lots of locations in the U.S. have something romantic about their name – from Loveland, Colo., to Romeo, Mich., to Lovelock, Nev., to Valentine, Texas.