



Winterthur/University of Delaware
Program in Art Conservation
Conservation Report



Accession #: 2001.0017.0023

Object: [Portrait of an unidentified man]

Object Date: 1900-1930

Artist/Author: Unknown

Materials: Silver gelatin developing-out print (DOP) postcard

Owner: University of Delaware Museums: "The Baltimore Collection"

Permanent Location: UD Museums Collections

Reason for Treatment or Examination: Examined as part of the photo block documentation project and aimed to add to the curatorial and conservation body of knowledge.

Examined by: Joanna Hurd, WUDPAC 2020

Report Date: January 17, 2018

Dimensions: Photograph: 5 ³/₈" x 3 ³/₈" (13.6 x 8.6 cm)

Window mat: 7 ¹/₈" x 4 ¹/₄" (18.1 x 10.8 cm)

Folder: Opened: 7 ¹/₂" x 9 ¹/₂" (19.1 x 24.1 cm); Closed: 7 ¹/₂" x 4 ¹/₂" (19.1 x 11.4 cm)

DESCRIPTION

The postcard features a silver gelatin DOP photograph on the recto of a cardstock-weight AZO paper with printed gray postal markings on the verso. The postcard was mounted in a two-fold folder framed by a window mat. Embossed text is partially visible through all three layers of the window mat in the bottom right corner reading, "631 Penna Ave., Ralto MD."

CONDITION

The substrate of the postcard is in fair condition. The paper has yellowed and darkened overall and the edges are worn. The left, right, and bottom edges on the verso feature adhesive residue and paper remnants from when it was attached to the folder.

The gelatin binder layer and silver image are in poor condition. The figure has greatly faded and a matte layer of soil further obscures image details. The bottom half of the man's suit is irregularly faded with splotchy areas of dark brown. The dark areas may be the result of mold damage or may be the original, saturated silver image. Faded spots are visible throughout and faint silver mirroring is visible along the bottom edge. Fine, irregular cracks in the binder layer appear as a small series of dark lines in the upper right corner of the image. Dark accretions are found in the center of the left edge and appear shiny under magnification. The verso is in fair condition with soiling overall and slight darkening towards the edges.

Significant soiling was reduced on the verso of the postcard and on the mounting materials with a cosmetic sponge. Only minor soiling was removed from the image surface with cosmetic sponges so wet cleaning was pursued. After testing the solubility of the surface in water and ethanol, the image was cleaned with a 3:1 ethanol to water mixture applied with cotton swabs followed by a 1:1 ethanol to water mixture applied in the same way. Moderate soiling was removed during the wet cleaning, however it also revealed mold spots in light image areas. The mold did not appear to lessen with wet cleaning but any active mold spores should have been rendered inactive through the application of alcohol.