Primary Maker: J. H. Singer
Title: Game of Dr. Busby
Date: 1900-1930
Medium: Cardboard, paper
Dimensions: Container (box): 1 × 5 1/8 × 4 1/8 in. (2.5 × 13 × 10.5 cm)
Credit Line: The Liman Collection
Object Number: 1992.12.6

Object Name: Card game
Classification: TOYS

Curatorial Remarks:
The Game of Dr. Busby, an American version of the English Happy Families, was first devised by Anne W. Abbott, daughter of a clergyman in Beverly, MA and issued by the W.S.B. Ives Company of Salem, MA, in the 1840s. (See Publications)

Physical Description:
Card game consisting of 20 playing cards in cardboard box; cardboard box covered in dark red paper with cover illustration of man in orange hat and green trench coat, standing behind raised counter and holding silvery jug out to crowd of people, with red banner flying above; each playing card with a cartoon-like picture and caption (in various colors); each "family" has an identifying motif marked on the upper left corner of the card: melon, bull's horn, fish, mortar and pestle, and corn.
Markings: lithographed: on box lid, top: "GAME OF/DR. BUSBY/PLAY CUCKOO FOR FUN" lithographed: on box lid, bottom: "PUBLISHED BY J.H. SINGER, N.Y." printed: captions at the bottom of each card: e.g. "CAESAR MELON, Dr. Busby's Coachman."; "BULLY BOY, The Butcher's Son."; "MOLLY COD, The Fishmonger's Daughter." printed: on piece of paper: "Game of Dr. Busby./Shuffle the cards and distribute them equally/to the players. Any player, as agreed, can/commence the game by calling on his right-/hand neighbor for any card he has not in his/own hand. If his neighbor holds the card/called he must give it up; he must then call/again, and so continue until he calls for some/card which his neighbor does not hold; then/the player on his left side calls on the first player; calling first for the cards which have been/called and obtained by him./When a player has called all the cards from/his right hand neighbor, thus putting him out/of the game, he must continue to call from the/next on his right./At the close of the game/the victor will have all four families united in/his hand/PUBLISHED BY/[J.] H. SINGER, NEW YORK, U.S.A."