

San Francisco Bay Area Post Card Club

Meetings are usually held the fourth Saturday of every month except December
Visitors and dealers are always welcome

See us online at www.postcard.org

October 2004

Volume XIX, No. 10

Next Meeting: Saturday, October 30, 12 to 3 PM

Fort Mason Center, **Room C-260**

Laguna Street at Marina Boulevard, San Francisco

Please disarm pagers, cell phones, and alarms during the meeting.

Program Notes: Prepare to be treated, not tricked. Jack Hudson, one of our most dedicated and discriminating members will bring seven frames with about fifty cards from his exceptional Halloween collection. We'll get to see them and hear Jack's comments on the very best Schmuckers, including the hard to find Mask series, also Clapsaddle's most sought after mechanical black faced child. You'll be surprised and delighted by these choice examples of our hobby's most popular collectible topic.

The main order of business will be nominations for 2005-06 officers for election in November.

A truly generous member has given the club a box of extremely nice cards—among them some fine real photos, signed artists, and Great Britain. These are intended for our financial benefit and will be offered to members at the meeting this month.

Show & Tell: Halloween, of course, and collector's choice. Three item, two minute limit.

COVER CARDS

Having little luck in my first hours at Concord I decided to hunt for my newest topic, Walkers—to or from San Francisco. It was a popular theme in 1914-15, an old-timer told me, but I found none until I stopped at a table where there were two categories with the label. The finds there more than doubled the number behind my heading, *SF Shleppers*.

—*Low Baer*



CLUB OFFICERS

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Newsletter Deadline: 10th of each month

MINUTES, September 19, 2004

Sunday morning; the parking lot was nearly empty and the library book sale was open.

Cards were brought for sale or trade by Sue Scott, David Parry, Ed Herny and the club boxes. Cards donated by Nancy Tucker were sold at \$1 each, and more than \$40 was collected. A woman who found us on the internet brought a collection of cards for appraisal by Ed Herny.

Twenty-one members signed the roster sheet.

We were called to order by President Ed Herny.

Rudy and Natalie Schafer, members from Sacramento who host the Sacramento Capitol shows were introduced. They presented the club with a donation of \$100 and invited us to have a table at the Sacramento shows for displays to promote the club and possibly to sell a few cards for the club's benefit. A round of applause followed.

Announcements: Dan Saks told that the USPS is issuing a series of postcards on clouds.

Lew Baer suggested we all sign the petition protesting parking charges at Fort Mason Center and that we consider a group tour to Alcatraz. He then told of the donations that the club has received—cards and money—to help bolster the treasury for the coming year.

Old Business: Jim Neider again brought up the

subject of business cards. 1,000 would cost \$101.33. Discussion: An unnecessary expense considering our financial condition. Darlene Thorne, who likes and uses the cards, offered to underwrite the cost. [Brava!] The discussion went on to include name tags, an expensive proposition. It was decided to use a roll of stick on tags.

Ed Herny told of the recent Presidio postcard walk and suggested we tour Chinatown again.

New Business: Lew Baer suggested we increase out of US dues to \$25 to cover rising costs. M2C.

Ed Herny suggested we change the November meeting date as the fourth Saturday will be on Thanksgiving weekend. M2C to change date to November 20.

Show & Tell: Darlene Thorne found three super cards of the Chutes lately, including a 1905 line drawing with photo inset and another from the J series of real photos she has been chasing and on which she finally found the publisher's name: Marsh Garwin Co., 712 Market Street, agents. ... In the back to school theme, John Freeman is working on the circa 1907-08 series showing the wooden school houses built in the city funded by the 1890s bond issue; they have undivided backs and were published by Richard Behrendt for Hill's Bazaar and other schools supply stores. ... Dan



POSTCARD CALENDAR

Cudworth is still collecting exceptional lions such as one for the book by Edward Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar*, he showed a poster card for a band, The Original (White) Cottonpickers, and a 1955 card of the Spirit of St. Louis above Paris issued for the recreation of Lindbergh's flight, sent by Jimmy Stewart.

—Bruce Diggelman, Recording Secretary

TREASURER/HALL MANAGER REPORT

As of October 13 \$814.57

—Daniel Saks

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

both of whom found us at www.postcard.org

Diane Gilkerson, who collects Thanksgiving, swimming pools, movie theaters interiors/exterior, lanterns, sweet peas, cats, dressed Easter bunnies, velvet material on clothes, totem poles, some Santas, and anything else that suits her fancy.

Norman L. McKnight welcomes approvals for his collection of cities by night, incline railways, Orthodox churches and monasteries, his childhood locales, and he has a web site: www.philoxeniapress.com

SHOW BIZ

Santa Cruz, Concord, Santa Rosa, bam bam bam, three hit shows in a row. Dealers were seen smiling at all of 'em, and several reported high figure sales. Meanwhile the collectors were purring, and they'll keep it up for Sunnyvale on November 13, Sacramento on January 15 and 16 AND Pasadena with free entry for SF clubsters on February 4-6.

Oct. 23 and 26, Free tours of Old Mint, 5th and Mission Streets, **San Francisco**, 10am Saturday, 6pm Tuesday. Confirm: 415 775-1111.

Oct. 29-30, Friday-Saturday, Vintage Poster Fair, **San Francisco**, Fort Mason Center, \$10. "Better than a museum...reinforces the advantages of collecting postcards - easier to store and display, and a whole lot cheaper," per Dan Saks.

Nov. 13, Saturday, Sunnyvale, Postcard & Paper Show, Elk's Club, 375 N. Pastoria, 10am-4pm*

Nov. 18-21, Thursday-Sunday, **San Mateo**, Hillsborough Antique Show, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds, 11am-8pm, Sunday 11am-5pm*

Nov. 27-28, Saturday-Sunday, **Pleasanton**, Great American Train Show, Fairgrounds, 11am-5pm*

Dec. 11-12, Saturday-Sunday, **San Rafael**, Antique & Collectors Fair, Civic Center, 10am-6 and 5pm*

Dec. 18-19, Saturday-Sunday, **San Rafael**, Great American Train Show, Civic Center, 11am-5pm*

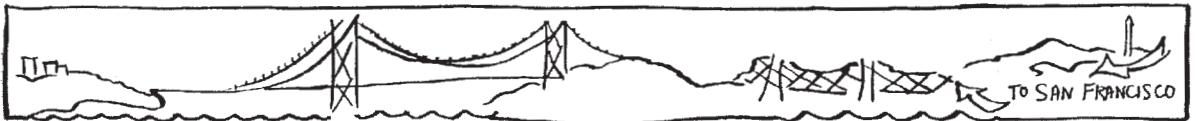
Dec. 31-Jan. 2, Friday-Sunday, **Santa Clara**, Antique Show, Convention Center, 5001 Great Am. Parkway

Bolded dates are shows by SFBAPCC members.

*Ken Prag will set up at these shows. Call him at 415 586-9386 or [kprag\(at\)planetaria.net](mailto:kprag(at)planetaria.net) to let him know what he can bring for you.

+R&N Postcards will be at these shows with cards and postcard supplies for sale.

Postcards are available for browsing seven days a week at the SF Antique Mall, 701 Bayshore Blvd., where 101 and 280 meet, info: 415 656-3530; also Wednesday through Sunday at *Postcards, Books, Etc.*, in Cotati. Call to confirm: 707 795-6499.



September Program:

Pillsbury Does San Francisco 1906-1908

by Ed Herny

COLLECTORS of real photo postcards are most familiar with A. C. Pillsbury as a publisher of images of Yosemite, Lake Tahoe and other scenic vacation areas of California. He did issue hundreds of attractive cards of these places, but throughout his career he rarely missed an opportunity to document events that dominated the news and public consciousness of his time. The period from 1906 to 1908 was particularly rich with dramatic events in San Francisco, and no other photographer created as many real photo postcards of them as A. C. Pillsbury.

He was born in 1870 and arrived in California with his family in 1883. Ten years later he entered Stanford where he made and sold his first photos during his student years.

In 1897 he received a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Soon after, he was hired by the U.S. Census Bureau to photograph the Alaska gold rush and spent two years in the Klondike photographing the mining towns. Returning to California he photographed

Yosemite and other scenic areas, was hired as staff photographer for the *Examiner* in 1903 and held that post for three years. Early in 1906 he opened his own business, the Pillsbury Picture Company, in downtown San Francisco. He had been open

only a month when the great Earthquake struck. Up to this time, although he had been a professional photographer for at least a decade, he had made and sold only large format images, not postcards. Events and circumstances soon changed his focus.

The Earthquake and Fire of 1906 and the Rebirth of San Francisco

Like many residents of the Bay Area, Pillsbury began the morning of April 18, 1906 by being thrown out of bed by the earthquake at 5:15 AM. From his Oakland home he soon saw smoke rising from the fires in San Francisco. He rushed to the city to look after his newly opened store. He took with him two cameras, one a 5" x 7" Graflex



CITY AFIRE, FROM ST. FRANCIS HOTEL

press camera, the other a huge panoramic camera capable of taking views as large as 10 by 120 inches. By the time he had crossed the bay and arrived at his downtown studio it had already burned, along with his equipment and all the precious negatives that amounted to his life's

work up to that point. A less adventurous soul might have been driven to give up by this catastrophic loss. But undaunted, Pillsbury seized the moment at hand and immediately started taking pictures. After all, he hadn't lost everything, he



still had two cameras, plenty of film, the luck to find himself in the middle of one of the great photo opportunities of all time and his *Examiner* press badge! By the end of that incredible day he had taken over seventy “snap shots” with the 5x7 Graflex and two panoramas.

One of the large photos would soon be his financial salvation. To make it he had set up his massive panoramic camera at the top of the St. Francis Hotel balanced on a plank across the angle of two cornices. From this vantage point he shot what would prove to be the defining image of the fire as it raged toward Union Square. Out of film, he then left the camera atop the hotel and took his exposed film, including the 10x40 inch panorama, back to his darkroom in Oakland for developing. When he returned to San Francisco the next morning the St. Francis Hotel and his camera had been destroyed by the fire. But Pillsbury had his great picture. Working out of his home he hired 27 men to turn out hundreds of copies of the panorama of the fire over the next few weeks. He sent out copies of it along with a story to all the large newspapers in the country. At a price of \$10 each, he sold enough prints to take in over \$10,000! In fact he

felt so financially secure that he soon married his sweetheart.

As remarkable as the tale of the fire panorama may be, it is those seventy plus fire snap shots taken with the Graflex that fall into our focus. Appropriately cropped they became real photo postcards.

Pillsbury would later claim that he was the only professional photographer taking pictures in the city while the fires still burned. Certainly many photographers issued photos and real photo postcards of the ruins, but his claim about working alone during the fire may well be valid.

In my quest for his cards I have seen about thirty postcard images of the city in flames and the aftermath. I'm sure more exist and I would appreciate hearing from collectors who know of them.

These cards constitute Pillsbury's first published postcards. Because they were shot and printed under extreme circumstances, many do not possess the artistry, quality and consistency of format that is seen in his later work. The captioning on some is done in barely legible script, and the photo stock they are printed on is varied in its back designs due to the difficulty of obtaining materials in the period immediately following the disaster. A few



DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS IN FLAMES



SOCIETY REFUGEES CAMPING



cards even appear to be printed gravures rather than real photos. But they must have sold well for thereafter, though he continued to produce images in larger formats, postcards would be a major part of his photographic output.

By early 1907 Pillsbury purchased an existing photographic concession in Yosemite National Park known as the Three Arrows Studio owned by partners named Hallett and Taylor. Under the name Pillsbury Picture Company he was soon publishing a large series of real photo cards of Yosemite, the missions, and other areas of California. It appears that in the 1907-08 period alone nearly a thousand views were issued. The cards were all captioned and numbered on the front and were designed with a distinctive double border of a dark outer section and a white inner section. The numbering sequence groups together cards of particular places or themes.

The cards with the numbers 629 to 649 are the first of the new downtown San Francisco and are of particular interest because they document the actual reconstruction. Various large office buildings are shown under construction. As far as I know, no other postcard publisher issued a series of real photo postcards of this theme. Many photographers put out



cards of the completed new downtown, but it appears that, once again, Pillsbury succeeded in scooping his colleagues.

The Visit of the Great White Fleet - 1908

In 1907 President Teddy

Roosevelt sent the U.S. Navy on a 'round the world cruise. They left Hampton Roads, Virginia on December 16th and sailed south around the tip of South America, and entering the Pacific they continued northward along the South American coast. They made port at several points including Trinidad, Rio de Janeiro, Callao (Peru) and Magdalena Bay in Baja California be-

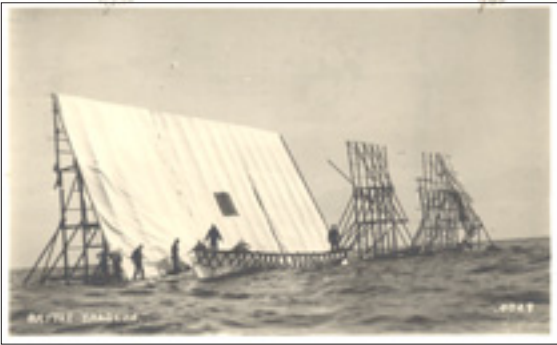


GREAT WHITE FLEET ROUTE MAP



PHELAN BLDG. STEEL WORK





GUNNERY TARGETS



7" GUN CREW

fore reentering U.S. waters on April 14th, 1908. Visits were scheduled in San Diego, San Pedro, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz before arriving at San Francisco on May 5th. All along the way they were welcomed and entertained by the residents of the cities they visited. It was, after all, peacetime, and Teddy wanted the world to take note that the U.S. now had a modern navy and was a force to be reckoned with in world politics.

For the residents of San Francisco, who like many Americans had followed the course of the fleet in newspaper accounts, its arrival was eagerly anticipated as a spectacular event and a worthy excuse for a party.

For Pillsbury it was another great photo opportunity, and he took advantage of every aspect of it. He did not wait for the actual arrival at San Francisco to begin selling postcards of the fleet. Apparently he purchased negatives of the fleet starting with its call at Rio De Janeiro in January 1908. We can only assume that he arranged with one or more of the sailors with the fleet to take pictures and rush the negatives to him in San Francisco. These pre-S.F. views include the fleet entering Rio, naval gun practice at Magdalena Bay, equator crossing parties, sailors visiting a bullfight in

Lima, and coaling at Punta Arenas, Chile.

Numerous photographers had assembled to record the arrival of the fleet at San Francisco Bay, but Pillsbury determined once again to scoop the competition and get the best pictures. The fleet was scheduled to steam in formation through the Golden Gate with the battleships in single file, flanked by the destroyers and smaller ships. It must have been quite a sight for the residents who reportedly lined the shores of the bay for a glimpse of this once in a lifetime event. Most of the professional photographers chose Alcatraz as the best vantage point. Pillsbury, however, chose Point Bonita, on the northern side of the Golden Gate. He kept his plan secret, and on the big day he was the only photographer there. His imagination and pluck paid off. As the fleet steamed through the Gate he had far and away the best view, as they followed a course in the northernmost channel, closest to his location. He got a perfect panorama of the entire fleet entering the bay and numerous smaller images of the individual ships. As soon as the fleet had passed him fog settled in, and none of the other photographers were able to get pictures of more than two or three ships at once. The Examiner ran his panorama at full size—three feet long—across two pages, and



Pillsbury sold this and other shots to many other newspapers, almost equalling his previous success with his fire panorama.

Pillsbury's postcards of the fleet are distinguished not only from the classic portraits of the individual ships but even more so for his views of the crews. He shot artistically composed—often tinted—portraits of gun crews, liberty parties, and even sailors at a barbecue in Oakland. From admirals to bakers, no navy personnel were spared. In all, my research has turned up at least 90 different views of this event, and judging from his numbering of the cards and the gaps therein, there were probably about 150 views published. No other postcard publisher came close to the quality or quantity of Pillsbury's photo coverage of this event.

In the years following 1908 Pillsbury continued to publish cards of California scenery and events.

When San Francisco hosted the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915 he produced at least 200 different views of the fair. He continued to operate his Yosemite business until a fire in 1927 destroyed it and, once again, his negatives.

In all, Pillsbury published well in excess of 2000 real photo cards. After 1927 he seems to have given up postcards and turned his attention to technical innovation in motion picture photography. He did pioneering work in time lapse and underwater photography as well as photomicrography. He is acknowledged as the inventor of the rotating lens panorama camera and other refinements in camera design. He spent the later years of his career continuing to invent and perfect photographic equipment and giving lectures on his achievements. Arthur Clarence Pillsbury, known as A.C. to his family and friends, died in 1946.

THE N . . . a n d . . . N O W



Glenn Koch shows us a vintage card of Compton's Restaurant, once located at 144 Ellis Street. Its site might have been in the vacant lot shown in Glenn's recent photo or in the space cleared for Cyril Magnin Way. The building had a stonelike Moorish facade elaborated with wrought iron scrollwork. Compton's slogan, "Food of Quality," appears on the card, the sign and the window which also reads "Compton's on Kearney Street."



P.S. IN THE MAIL... was a friendly note from Ann Gray in the UK who had visited at our August meeting. Included were two Margaret Tarrant art cards and two vintage views of Birmingham! ... From Helen Angell of the Cape Cod Post Card Club came the third and final packet of California cards for trading. They have no more in their club boxes. We've used up all of our New England traders,



San Francisco Then & Now



... Wayne Nelson sent in a modern Smith Novelty card of Then & Now SF. The old photo is from Marilyn Blaisdell's collection. ... And from Bert Cohen came his belated NPCW greetings along with his renewal dues. [Get the hint?]



... From Andy Brown came the first postcard he has seen which is to be 1. buried; 2. watered; and



3. picked. Found in *Vanity Fair* mag, it's an ad for Timberland with wildflower seeds imbedded.

SAD NEWS from the Northwest: Sandy Renshaw has lost her battle with cancer. Those who have fab Potlatch Traders English S/As in their albums will want to say a prayer or write a note to Kent, POB 1349, Freeland WA 98249.

GOOD WISHES AND REGRETS came by e-mail from Michael Jawitz. He'll be missing meetings as he is actively involved in the downtown hotel workers strike. When it's over we're hoping for a story to illustrate with great vintage SF labor postcards.

THINGS FINANCIAL are looking a bit better. Several members have offered a boost out of the economic abyss. Donations of cards and cash have made headway against the rising tide of 2005 expenses. Those of us who wish to help can send in our dues promptly and possibly go for the gold with a *Supporting Membership* of \$25 or more. Your reward will be an increasingly active and successful club. So, the hint is: dues for 2005 are now due. Let us hear from you soon.

—Lew



Fitzgerald's Hollywood

by Kathryn Ayres

Though he was named for the man that composed *The Star-Spangled Banner*, the stars that dazzled F. Scott Fitzgerald were those of the silent screen.

Fitzgerald apparently had some difficulty persuading publishers to accept his 1932 short story, *Crazy Sunday*, because the resemblance to actual persons was altogether too coincidental. MGM's Irving Thalberg appears as a director instead of a producer, and Thalberg's actress wife, Norma Shearer, is described as a blonde instead of a brunette, "who has a droopy eyelid rather than Shearer's lazy right eye," according to film critic Mick LaSalle. In *Complicated Women* (2000), LaSalle reveals that the scene in which Fitzgerald's fictional alter ego "made a drunken ass of himself" at a party given by the Thalbergs actually happened. Fitzgerald sent a written apology the next day, and Shearer replied with a telegram, saying that he was "one of the most agreeable persons at our tea." The wording of the telegram was changed only slightly in the story.

From that point forward, the tale degenerates from transparent fact into fantastical fiction. The Thalberg character dies in a plane crash, and in her grief, the actress begs the writer to love her and stay with her. Curiously, the story was written four years before Thalberg's premature death at age thirty-seven.

But LaSalle tells us that some time after the disastrous party incident, Fitzgerald drunkenly phoned Thalberg in the middle of the night "to say he had just completed a novel that he believed would make a great 'show' for Shearer.... The novel: *Tender Is the Night*. The role he had in mind for her: Nicole."

So Fitzgerald had carried his star-struck fantasy one step further—the fictional Nicole was partially patterned after Fitzgerald's wife, Zelda. Nicole is slipping into madness, but her incipient insanity is not noticeable enough to keep her from attracting an extramarital lover. Her husband is an alcoholic psychologist who is "just not practicing." Zelda's husband, like Nicole's, frequently appeared to be more dedicated to drinking than to practicing his profession.

Most of the characters in the novel are apparently based upon actual friends and foes of the Fitzgeralds. Who, then, is the seventeen-year-old actress with designs on Nicole's husband?

In *Bobbed Hair and Bathtub Gin* (2004), Marion Meade tells us that the character of Rosemary Hoyt was based upon starlet Lois Moran. Like her fictional counterpart, Lois had made her first films in France, though she did not, as in the novel, meet the Fitzgeralds on the French Riviera. Scott made her acquaintance in Hollywood when he was writing a screenplay for a movie that was never pro-



duced. Lois was just in her first flush of stateside fame, having received rave reviews for her American film debut in *Stella Dallas*. But few people today would be aware of her past popularity if it were not for her association with Fitzgerald. Though he was obviously quite intrigued with Lois, his fictionalized account of her screen performance is patronizing in the extreme: "Was it a 'itty-bitty bravekins and did it suffer? Ooo-ooo-tweet, de tweetest thing, wasn't she dest too tweet? Before her tiny fist the forces of lust and corruption rolled away; nay, the very march of destiny stopped ... all rationality fell away." The fictional actress basks in the polite applause of her friends after the lights come up, and then announces that she's arranged a screen test for Nicole's husband.

According to Meade, this had some basis in reality. Lois had flattered Scott on his good looks, and

suggested he take a screen test so he could appear in her next movie. "Zelda said he'd better do it.

"They could use the money." Zelda didn't initially see the girl as a threat. But soon Scott began taking the girl and her mother out for the evening, leaving his wife behind at their room in LA's Ambassador Hotel. On one such evening, Zelda responded by burning her own dresses in the bathtub.

Zelda was much relieved when her husband's screenwriting stint was over and they headed back east by train. But, Meade writes, Scott told Zelda during the journey that he'd invited Lois and her mother to come stay with them as soon as they got settled. Zelda

nonchalantly unfastened the immensely expensive wristwatch that Scott had given her, "the courtship watch engraved on the back FROM SCOTT TO ZELDA," and tossed it out the window of the moving train.



POSTCARD HIGH SOCIETY

At the Third Annual San Francisco Museum & Historical Society dinner and auction at the St. Francis Hotel in September fellow clubsters Kathy Elwell and David Parry were seen, left to right, along with Dona Crowder, 2004 President of the San Francisco Association of Realtors, being served by His Honor Gavin Newsom, Mayor of San Francisco. The event was to benefit the Museum of the City of San Francisco and its future home, the Old Mint.

Photo courtesy John Ralston, Ralston Independent Works™



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA POST CARD CLUB
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

New Renewal Individual/Family \$15 Supporting \$25 or more Out of USA \$25

Name: _____

Family members: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Collector Dealer Approvals welcome: Yes No

Collecting interests: _____

Please make your check payable to SFBAPCC
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10/04

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Are your dues paid for
2005? Check the address
label for expiration date.

The stamp this month is
chosen in support of
several of our members.

CLUB MEETINGS
2004

October 30

November 20, C-235

See us online at www.postcard.org