

San Francisco Bay Area Post Card Club

October 2006

Next Meeting: Saturday, October 28, 12 to 3 PM

Volume XXI, No. 8

Fort Mason Center, Room C-260

Laguna Street at Marina Boulevard, San Francisco

Meetings are usually held the fourth Saturday of every month except December.

Visitors and dealers are always welcome.

Please disarm cell phones and alarms.

- IN
THIS
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Program Notes: Michael Semas, author of the new Arcadia Postcard History book, *King's County*, will present "San Joaquin Valley: Postcard Scenes from the Other California." We will see views that connect the Bay Area with Central California, as the early economic growth of both areas was closely intertwined. Michael will also tell of the personal history of George Besaw, who owned the Western Card Company in Reedley and provided photo stock to Cardinal Vincent and Edward H. Mitchell. This promises to be a fascinating and informative program. Don't miss it.

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

Dealer Alert: Ken Prag will bring many boxes of 25¢ cards!

Parking: Inside the Fort Mason Center gate there is a parking charge, but there is usually ample free parking before the gate, along Marina Green, and in the lots in the upper level of the FMC. Enter on Bay Street at Franklin, turn left at the first intersection and wind to the left. Park where permitted and walk the paths toward the Golden Gate and the main gate of the Center.

COVER CARD

The Oscar Mayer Wienermobile turns 70 this year. According to the AP, the 1936 "original was a



13-foot-long metal hot dog on wheels with an open cockpit in the center and rear.... The Wienermobile has evolved with the times. Now it's 27 feet long and boasts a GPS navigation system, six mustard- and ketchup-colored seats and a V-8 engine." The 1952 version, which is perhaps the one shown on this chrome, is now parked at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. Chromes, incidentally, will turn 70, too, in less than three years.

—ED.

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Newsletter Deadline: 5th of each month

MINUTES, September 30, 2006

Twenty-six members signed in. Cards were offered for sale or trade by Ed Herny, Sue Scott, and the club offered a box of 10¢ cards. Rich Roberts offered several vintage postcard publications.

The meeting was called to order by President Ed Herny. New member Bill Barlow was introduced. He collects Oakland on books and stamps, but in postcards his focus is restaurants recommended by Duncan Hines and water-skiing. Bill is also an organizer of the stamp show being held in the East Bay, at which he urged our members to display postcards of the effects of the 1906 earthquake on Oakland and environs.

There were several lucky winners in the drawing, including your Editor, who won a very desirable, used-in-the-era, Family Dog concert poster postcard.

Announcements: Bill Barlow voiced his invitation to participate in the earthquake exhibit on October 28 and 29. There were damage and deaths in Berkeley and Oakland, but the greatest effect was that the population doubled.

Ed Herny reminded us that the Santa Rosa show will take place in two weeks. He also reminded us to tell dealers that they are always welcome to set up (for free) at our club meetings.

Lew Baer told of the exchange newsletters he brought and of the inquiry from a British collector wishing to dispose of his cards.

Old Business: Lou Rigali brought up the parking difficulties at Fort Mason. There was general discussion and suggestions to use the free upper level parking areas or the spaces along the Marina Green. Either site involves a stroll with exquisite scenery. At this point we have no plans to leave Fort Mason.

New Business: Harold Wright mentioned the difficulty of our meeting date in November on Thanksgiving weekend. Can't help it; the Concord show is the previous weekend.

Ed Herny told that we will be having elections at the October meeting; come prepared to vote. The current officers have announced that they would be happy to serve again, but nominations will be in order.

Show & Tell: Dave Parry (in working clothes... a necktie!) showed two cards found at Pasadena: an oversize leather card with photo insert of the Palace Hotel marked as "Oregon State HQ" in 1904 (why?) and an embossed colored card of Chinatown by Weidner. ... Darlene Thorne told of the fab time she had at Pasadena and showed the 1908 Eaglenest cards she found there; in 1910



the town on the Russian River was renamed Rio Nido. Darlene also brought copies of the card she had made of the view from the Fairmont Tower on the night of her parent's 60th anniversary and her husband's 60th birthday... Gail Ellerbrake showed a card of the *Flandra*, the ship her grandparents traveled on to England and France and a card from the Viking Ship Museum in Norway. ... Jack Hudson showed (an awesome) diner interior from Willow Grove, PA and an RP of "Balloon Girls, Napanee, Indiana" with harnesses and ropes possibly from the balloon. ... Ed Clausen displayed three cards with the centennial postmark of Ester, Alaska, the town for which Ed coined the slogan "100 years of mining our own business." ... Ed Herny showed a French card of a *sorcier*—a fellow in folkloric costume—listed at 1000 francs in the Neudin catalog; two cards of German New Guinea (he likes cards of out-of-the-way places); and a letter from the Chief Justice of Bermuda.

Before closing the business meeting Ed assured us that we are always eager for people to put on programs, and that the easiest is to show and tell about one's own collection. Once people know just what you do collect they'll find new cards for you.

—BRUCE DIGGELMAN, RECORDING SECRETARY.

Program: Ted Miles on Maritime Preservation in California

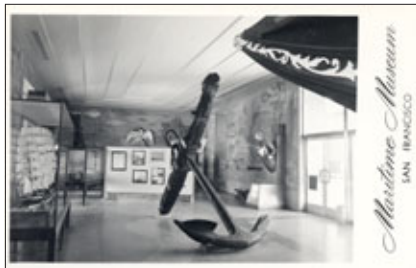
Ted began by explaining that people and cargoes have been moved by water for thousands of years, but in the mid 19th century there was a switch from wind to steam power. In 1926 there were no maritime museums on the West Coast, and a group in San Diego wishing to preserve remnants of the sail age decided to open an exhibit on sailing ships. They acquired the *Star of India*, then a floating warehouse for Alaska salmon, which had been built to carry passengers to the Antipodes.

As Ted spoke he passed around album pages of postcards—real photos, color prints, linens and chromes.

In the 1920s there was no funding for preservation of the *Star*, and by the 1940s she was in poor shape; her rigging was failing and the Army Air Corps ordered the masts lowered as a threat to planes. There was a push to have the old hulk scrapped. But in 1963, on its 100th anniversary, the ship became an active preservation project, and on July 4, 1976 it sailed for the first time in 50 years. One card we saw showed Bugs Bunny and Yosemite Sam on board.

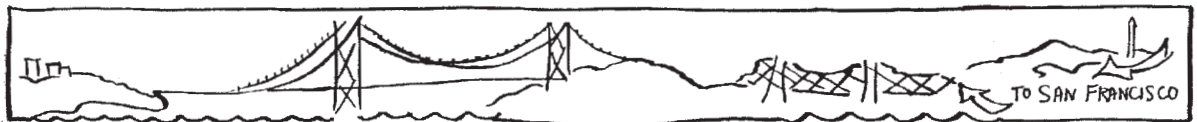
The *Star of India*, like the *Balclutha* in San Francisco, is a squarerigger, an ocean going vessel with sails perpendicular to the hull of the ship; the *Star's* is iron, and the *Balclutha* has a steel hull.

San Francisco became home to California's next maritime preservation project when a museum was founded by Karl Kortum and another WWII sea-



man. The city agreed to rent to them an empty 1930s WPA building in Aquatic Park, and it's been the museum's home since 1950. A series of real photos made in the '50s has been at the top of Ted's want list for 20 years.

In 1933 Alaska Packers sold a ship to a circus man who used it in films like *Mutiny on the Bounty*.





The *Pacific Queen*, formerly the *Star of Alaska* and before that, the *Balclutha*, had been designed to carry California grain around the Horn to Europe. It was purchased by the new museum, and in 1954 and '55 craftspeople donated their time to refurbish the ship, and it was moved from Sausalito to

Fisherman's Wharf. The museum recouped the \$25,000 purchase price in a year from visitor fees.

Karl Kortum, one of the 20th century's most accomplished preservationists, led a worldwide movement to preserve squareriggers. Of the 26 ships worldwide, he was involved with a dozen.

In 1978 the Maritime Museum became part of the National Park Service, like Alcatraz and Fort



Mason. When the *Balclutha* was moved to the Hyde Street Pier, Arlene and Ted produced a new postcard of her using Arlene's photograph.

Ted has more than 300 postcards of the two ships. Some were on view in two albums after his talk. [*Hearty applause.*]

—NOTES BY LEW BAER

POSTCARD CALENDAR

Nov. 2-5, Thursday-Sunday, **San Mateo**, Hillsborough Antique Show, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds, Thursday-Saturday 11am-8pm, Sunday 11am-5pm*

Nov. 11, Saturday, Sunnyvale, Postcard & Paper Show, Elk's Club, N. Pastoria Ave. 10am-5pm*

Nov. 11-12, Saturday-Sunday, **Arcadia, Nina Swanson sale, see flyer**, San Gabriel Valley Paper Show, 50 West Duarte, 10am-6 and 4 pm+

Nov. 18-19, Saturday-Sunday, Concord, Vintage Paper Fair, Concord Centre, 5298 Clayton Road; 10am-6 and 5pm, free entry Sunday*+

Dec. 9-10, Saturday-Sunday, **San Rafael**, Collectors' Fair, Civic Center; 10am-6 and 5pm*

Jan. 21-22, Saturday-Sunday, Sacramento, Capitol Postcard Show, 6151 H, from 10am*+

Feb. 2-4, Friday-Sunday, Pasadena, Vintage Paper Fair, 400 West Colorado Blvd., Fri. 1pm-7pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. FREE 10am-4pm*+

Feb. 8-11, Saturday-Sunday, **San Mateo**, Antique Show, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds. Thurs.-Sat. 11am-8pm, Sunday to 5pm*

Mar. 3-4, Saturday-Sunday, **San Rafael**, Collectors' Fair, Civic Center, 10am-5pm*

Apr. 14-15, Saturday-Sunday, **San Mateo**, Collectibles Show, San Mateo Expo, 10am-6 and 5pm*

Apr. 21-22, Saturday-Sunday, Santa Cruz, Postcard Show, 611 Ocean, 10am-5 and 4pm*+

Bolded entries are events by SFBAPCC members.

On the first Sunday of each month several dealers set up at the huge outdoor antique market at the Old Naval Air Station in Alameda.

*Ken Prag will be here. Let him know what he can bring: 415 586-9386 or kprag(at)planetaria.net.

+R&N Postcards will set up with cards and supplies.

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.



THE COLUMBARIUM, REDUX

Only a few days before the event—leaving no time for notice by snail mail—an invitation arrived for a “songfest” at the Columbarium (see March 2006

DOUBLEWIDE RP, EXC: DANIEL SAKS



newsletter). The invitation was forwarded to those on the club email list, and on the 28th of September eight of us were there. Folding chairs were set up on the rotunda floor for the crowd of about 100; other guests ringed the balcony on the upper levels. The event was held so that future and potential “residents” could meet their neighbors-to-be-in-the-afterlife. The music was performed by Wesla Whitfield, the “Skylark of San Francisco,” and the Mike Greensill jazz combo. Whitfeld sang cabaret and show tunes with enough gusto to delight the audience and move her wheelchair. Afterwards guests were at liberty to wander the balconies, nooks and stairways contemplating how to decorate their own niches. An array of refreshments was spread out beneath one of the ground floor stained glass windows.

Numerous postcard prominent names were noted, as were the vacant



JACK DALEY

niches of several members—and one occupied by an exmember. A discovery was made in the top tier on the ground floor: A bronze plaque for the Moulin family: Gabriel (1872-1945); brother, Ferdinand (1870-1945); wife, Lenore; and sister-in-law, Nellie. [Thanks to Frank Sternad who sorted out relationships via ancestry.com.]

The Columbarium is a startlingly beautiful place to visit if not to spend eternity. See for yourself, 415 752-7891.

It was impossible not to notice the many niches bearing two men’s names and one or two sets of dates—most ending in the 1980s—with notes, letters and postcards addressed to missing loved ones displayed. A few days later I came across this card of the Castro marquee and street thronged with carefree gay revelers. The photo was made in 1977 by Fisher Ross, a photohistorian of the then burgeoning gay lifestyle in San Francisco.

The image with jubilant crowd and theater sign mimicking *Homo erectus* captures a moment in



time that too few participants can recall today. Even the films being advertised are milestones of gay cinema. “Boys in the Band” deals with gay/straight friendships; bittersweet “Outrageous” centers on a Canadian drag queen.

—LEWIS BAER



Opium Bonfire in Chinatown

by KATHRYN AYRES

In 1907, former Chinatown missionary Ella May Wong Sun Yue Clemens opened a curio store on Grant Avenue, selling “relics dug from the ruins”—melted bottles and broken and burnt crockery — as souvenirs of the 1906 earthquake and fire. Ella May took full advantage of the postcard craze, issuing real photo postcards of herself and her common-law Chinese husband as the shop’s proprietors. She almost invariably inscribed the cards, and most usually included a reference to her sister, the wealthy Mrs. Howard Gould of New York.

There are possibly more than one hundred different postcard images of the Wongs. And yet, at times, Ella May’s inscription appears on other postcards of interesting Chinatown scenes.

This real photo shows a humongous pile of strange-looking objects stacked on top of a makeshift platform constructed of wooden packing crates. The jackets hanging on the slats on the side of the platform undoubtedly belong to the two industrious-looking fellows who have taken the precaution of covering their ties and vests with workman’s overalls. One policeman can be seen in the foreground, and another officer stands in front of a crowd of men and boys.

Ella May’s distinctive handwriting appears on

the front: “\$40,000 Opium Utensils — burned May-10-1912 Ross Alley — Mr. and Mrs. Wong Sun Yue Clemens. Mrs. Howard Gould’s Sister.”



As there are no buildings or other landmarks visible, it would be impossible to identify the locale or the meaning of the strange pile of debris if it were not for Ella May’s dated inscription.

Although the bonfire was reported in the papers of May 10, 1912, it was actually ignited on the previous day. The contraband was reportedly the result of 1,500 arrests made within the previous ten months in San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton, Oakland, San Jose and Fresno. Each of these cities had large Chinese communities at the time, but San Francisco’s Chinese population was (and still remains) the largest within any city in the United States. Apparently the officials in charge decided to create the bonfire at the



intersection of Washington Street and Ross Alley as a misguided attempt to teach a “lesson” to the Chinese community. J.O. McKowan, president of the California State Pharmacy Board, was quoted as saying: “Fifty per cent of the crime in this state results from the use of

narcotics and if we can take the supply away we can reduce the evil, we believe.”

The prevailing attitude of the press in those days seemed to be that all of the “heathen Chinese” were



hopheads. But perhaps the origins of crime in Chinatown could be traced to lack of opportunity, rather than lack of morals. The Chinese were prevented from practicing any profession, other than private service, outside the confines of Chinatown. Merchants within the community were often beaten and robbed when they went down to the docks to purchase supplies. The Chinese were the victims of both sides of the law, taunted by police and thieves. Because it was difficult, if not impossible, to make a living by legitimate means, many turned to illegal activities — gambling, prostitution and drug trafficking. And perhaps many turned to opium out of despair.

Crime is seldom reported with any semblance of accuracy. Apparently no one actually counted or weighed the items that were to be burned. Only dollar amounts were given, and each of the daily newspapers gave a different estimate of the value of the contraband, ranging from \$20,000 to \$40,000. The dollar amount was based upon the claim that some of the pipes, inlaid with silver, were over 200 years old, and worth hundreds of dollars each. One Chinese elder reportedly broke down in tears at seeing the antiquities destroyed.

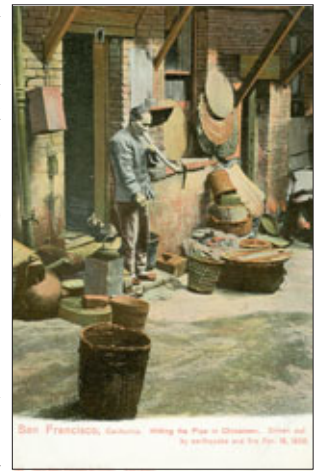
The *Examiner* stated: “The heap was comprised of pipes, bowls, trays, picks, scrapers, scissors, scales, lamps and hoptoys.” The *Call* reported that



the bonfire platform also contained opium, cocaine, morphine and “so-called drug habit cures.” Motion picture men filmed the event, and a crowd of 2,000 spectators, “with a large number of drug fiends,” watched the blaze.

The pile of contraband was soaked with gasoline, and McKowan ignited it with a taper. Once the fire took hold, the flames shot thirty feet, “lading the air with the nauseating fumes of the drug, the pungent smell of burning olive wood and a stench like bad garlic,” according to the *Examiner*. The *Chronicle* joked that the “dream laden smoke” resulting from the conflagration was conveyed on “some wise and charitable gust of wind” to an elderly addict viewing from a third-story window—the last “high” that the observer was likely to obtain for quite some time.

The heat from the flames blistered the paint and cracked the windowpanes on the Washington Street storefronts. When the insulation on the overhead electrical wires began to smoke, the fire department turned on the high-pressure hoses. Under the circumstances, it seems doubtful that the Chinatown property owners were reimbursed for the fire and water damage to the buildings that they had so painstakingly reconstructed after the 1906 calamity. It seems cruelly ironic that government officials would have purposefully ignited a huge bonfire in Chinatown’s tiny, crowded streets, with policemen and firemen in attendance, in the exact same area that had been consumed by fire just six years before.



San Francisco Hotels — A to Z... the As and Bs

Inspired by Glenn Koch, this is a group effort with lists of hotel postcards and images contributed by several members. What hotels do you have? Let the Editor know, and he will alert you when your images are needed. They may be submitted as jpgs, color photocopies or the cards themselves. Please include captions or comments. In November we will be at C. Images this month are from the collections of Kathryn Ayres, Glenn Koch, Lew Baer and others. See notes on page 10.



ADENA



ALEXANDER



ALEXANDER HAMILTON



ALTIMONT

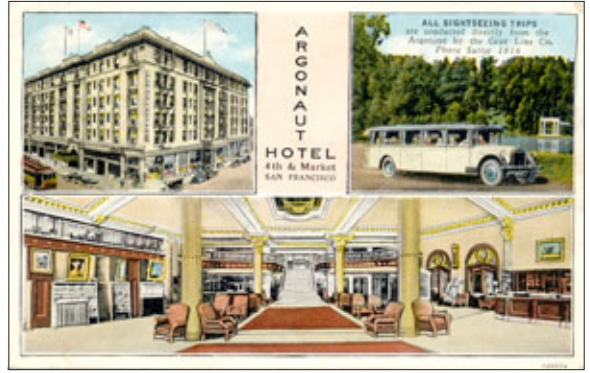


AMBASSADOR





AMERICA



ARGONAUT



ARLINGTON



BALTIMORE



BAY STATE



BELLEVUE





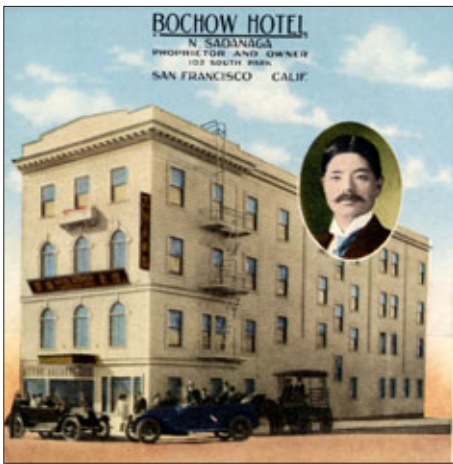
BERG



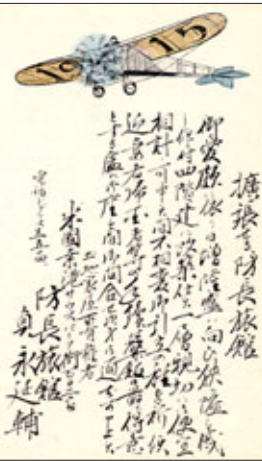
BEVERLY PLAZA



BRAYTON



BOCHOW



"NEW" HOTEL BRAYTON
 50 Turk St., 1/4 Block off Marker St.
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
 Personal Management: Mr.-Mrs. J. S. MULPETER
 Rooms with Private Toilet, \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day,
 \$7.00 to \$9.00 a week. Rooms with Private Bath,
 \$2.00 to \$2.50 a day, \$8.00 to \$14.00 a week.
 Family Suites Reasonably Priced. Free Garage with
 daily Rates.
 Take "YELLOW CAB" (free) from any Depot

BRULÉ



SAN FRANCISCO HOTEL NOTES – A-B

Adena, 144 O'Farrell, Mrs. Helen Orr, Prop. ; Swain's Restaurant on ground floor.

Hotel Alexander at 352 Geary Street, just off Powell. Solari's Grill located on the first floor. This building disappeared with the expansion of the St. Francis Hotel.

Alexander Hamilton, O'Farrell Street, (no address on card); an apartment hotel that welcomed black entertainers.

Altamont, 16th Street, between Mission and Valencia; member Official Exposition Hotel Bureau; on three direct car lines to Exposition; one and one-half blocks from Official Baseball Grounds. Pub.: E.H. Mitchell.

Ambassador, Eddy & Mason Streets, 250 rooms with "the best beds you ever slept in."

America, 1043-1045 Market Street, modern European hotel, 50¢ – \$1 per day.

Argonaut, 4th & Market Streets, "California's most popular hotel; owned and sponsored by the Society of California Pioneers"; \$1-\$3 per day. At least four versions of multiviews were published by Curt Teich.



ARLINGTON

Arlington, This hotel at Ellis & Leavenworth Streets was built shortly after the quake. The original photo was possibly taken upon completion as ladders are still visible sitting in the empty corner storefront. This image of the interior shows it to have been a rather stylish place.

Baltimore, at the corner of Geary and Van Ness. According to another card, it survived the disaster of April 1906 unscathed.

Bay State, 263-275 O'Farrell Street.

Bellevue Hotel, 501 Geary Street, now the Monaco. Many cards show the Bellevue, its gracious interior and elegant staircase. This artist drawn view is done in a charming European style; reconstruction still in progress. Pub.: Chilton Co., Philadelphia.

Berg, 221 Mason Street, B. Berg, proprietor.

Beverly Plaza, At the corner of Grant and Bush, the old Washington Hotel renamed as the Beverly-Plaza Hotel, "completely modern throughout, beautifully furnished rooms and suites, each radio equipped, Coffee Shop and famous Pan Americana Bar."

Bochow Hotel, 102 South Park, with inset of N. Sadanaga, "proprietor and owner," and airplane design bearing "1915" on its wings. Pub.: Pacific Novelty.

Brayton, 50 Turk Street.

Hotel Brulé, "Take Eddy Street car direct from ferry; get off at Polk Street." Although named for the manager, a bizarre name for a post fire establishment. "Brulé" means "burned" in French.



P.S. CONGRATZ go to club member Matthew McQueen on his appointment as Director of the Santa Fe (New Mexico) Conservation Trust. I'm not sure that his Mitchell collection will be much help with his new responsibilities, but postcards have played active roles in the conservation of other communities. ... Kudos to John Freeman, also, on his upcoming presentation to the SF History Association on October 24 and his numerous published articles on SF reconstruction. He's got a new project in the works, and we'll be reading about it in these pages fairly soon.



DARLENE THORNE had this postcard made from a photo taken in 1995 at her parents' 60th wedding anniversary and her husband's 60th birthday party in the penthouse of the Fairmont Tower. At the last meeting she brought copies for all present.

GEORGE JUILLY took home another blue ribbon for his postcard exhibit at the Sonoma County Fair in August. His specialty: Cazadero. His cards: really special!

GLENN KOCH, who is easily excited by postcards, was more than agitated when he attended the opening of the new mall on Market Street. "They were selling a really neat circular postcard—which costs

52¢ to mail—that looks like the underside of the dome." Find a copy for yourself (\$2) at the concierge desk on the main level. Glenn, as usual, could not restrain himself; he also sprang for the same image on a plate with the date of the opening emblazoned on it. A few weeks ago Glenn made one of his frequent scores on eBay and sent in a scan of the card for our delectation. It's a real photo of Building C at Fort Mason Center, parking lot (now trackless) and the pier used today as an exhibition hall.



IT'S OUR SAD DUTY to report that George Payton's wife, Wanece, passed away on October 7. Our sympathy and warmest wishes are for George at this time. At the Santa Cruz show George had told me of her grave illness and that he would like to put an ad in the newsletter to liquidate his sales stock. It appeared here last month, and I don't know if he had response or not. I do know that I hope he retracts his idea of selling out and that he continues to find friendship and diversion as a postcard dealer. A few of my favorite cards came from his neighborly priced boxes. I'd like to find lots more.

BOB BOGDAN's just released book, *Real Photo Postcard Guide: The People's Photography*, has received rave reviews from those who already have a copy. From Syracuse University Press, it is destined to be an indispensable reference: www.syracuseuniversitypress.syr.edu/fall-2006/real-photo.html

—LEW BAER



STAMP and EARTHQUAKE POSTCARDS

Stamp collectors and postcard collectors are cousins—not always kissin', but usually respectful and understanding of each other. The stamp hobby focuses on rules and regulations as stamps are official documents. Stamps require a good deal of care in perusing as their small size makes them easy to damage and difficult to see. Postcards require care, as well, but they are bigger and tougher and can be handled with fingers, not always with tongs. It's in the realm of postal history that the two interests make their closest connection. Stamps on cover are often on postcards, and if a card's image—as well as the stamp and postmark—is of interest, we have a winner for anyone's album.



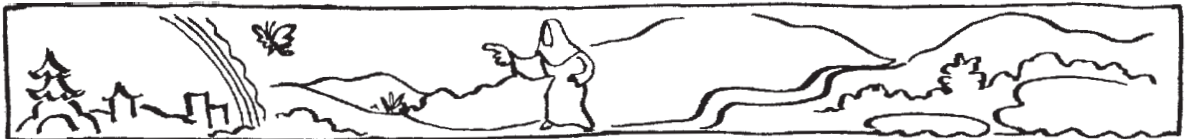
Errors are one topic of disagreement. With stamps they are treasured and avidly sought and are often of substantial monetary value. With postcards errors are common printing results and are noticed but rarely add to collectibility or interest. The promotional cards issued for WESTPEX, the April stamp extravaganza at which we exhibited boards of earthquake cards, does have interest for all of us. The cards were printed and reprinted *FOUR* times.

The first run looked perfect until Switzerland stamp collectors noticed that American Helvetia Philatelic Society had been spelled Helvetica (the name of a type font). Redo. Then the British got into the act: the Union Jack was displayed hanging to the right; protocol requires that it slant left. Redo! In

this third version one of the stamp-like views of San Francisco was changed from a night to a day view. Success, at last! The fourth printing was a lighter weight repro of the third used for bulk mailing.

Any or all of these advertising cards belong in the collections of many of us as they are fascinating earthquake cards, and WESTPEX has our appreciation for publishing them—and in such variety. [Thanks to Ed Jarvis and Bill Dwyer for details of this story.]

Another contemporary card of the 1906 disaster has appeared: This one from the San Francisco Museum & Historical Society promoting commemorative coins of the Old Mint, the museum building-to-be. —Ed.



Profile:

WALT AND GAIL KRANSKY FIND TREASURES AMONGST BUSHES AND TWIGS

To hear Walt Kransky of San Jose talk about his postcard collection, you'd never guess that he is probably the premier collector of Edward Mitchell cards. He has even compiled a checklist of Mitchells that is accessible on the San Francisco Bay Area Postcard Club web site. To him, they were just "bushes and twigs" at the beginning, but, "I wasn't a cheapskate; the more I found, the more I wanted," recalls Walt. He admits that Mitchell cards were very inexpensive and plentiful, so he amassed 38,000 of them over 50 years of collecting and is still seeking more, now of much higher quality and especially those that are rare such as the Hula Girls done for the Island Curio Store in Honolulu. He gathers checklists from other Mitchell experts across the United States and compares them with his in order to maintain a comprehensive list. He is currently checking a 200 page list from a collector in the Midwest and has added three listings to his "complete" Mitchell check list. Endeavoring to learn and to educate, Walt has expanded on the Edward H. Mitchell Company history written by Sam Stark for the Golden Gate Post Card Club, a predecessor of our current San Francisco Bay Area Post Card Club. Our club's newsletter editor, Lew Baer, researched and wrote a biography of Mr. Mitchell, and it appeared in our newsletter last year.

Walt would like feedback on the ease of using the online Mitchell checklist. In addition to our club web site at www.postcard.org, (click on links), the Mitchell list can also be found on Walt's own web site: www.thepostcard.com/walt/ and click on the "M" section for Mitchell. For this internet based project Walt has tapped his own background as a Railroad Communication Wire Chief, when he acted as the technical advisor at the data processing cen-

ter in San Francisco for 25 years of his 41-year career at Southern Pacific Railroad.

Walt was given his grandmother's postcard collection by his mother when he was just seven or eight and living on his dad's farm in Miner, Wisconsin. The town consisted of a gas station, city hall and tavern. He has only seen one postcard of Miner. To further his collection, when the family moved to Chicago, he would ask the customers on his newspaper route if they had any postcards that he could have, and he was given entire shoeboxes of



"PRE-LINEN," H.T. TAMMEN, PUBLISHER

postcards, both scenic and topical. When he graduated high school, he started working for the railroad, joined the Marines, and then returned to the railroad, moving first to Portland, Oregon where he met and married his wife of 48 years, Gail, then a middle elementary school teacher. By the time he moved to California, he had over 100,000 postcards in his collection and Gail had become an avid collector too. "It was a matter of self-preservation; he was always at stamp shows where I discovered that there were postcards."



SCHMUCKER, WINSCH, 1911

Gail's taste turned more towards greetings, and her collection of Schmuckers is second to none in the Bay Area. While everyone is familiar with the Schmuckers published by Winsch, Gail has copies by National Art, and other publishers who featured the artist's work.



MITCHELL FOR ISLAND CURIOS,
HONOLULU; PMC BACK

Schmuckers have always been proportionally expensive, but they are beautiful.

Postcard collecting came easily to Walt and Gail. Each had been a collector of other items, including Beam bottles, owls and Maud Humphries figurines. But the postcards that Walt had accumulated and Gail had treasured overwhelmed all the other collections.

By the 1950s, Walt had turned the postcards over, fastidiously studied the stamps and became president of the San Jose Philatelic Club for the next six or eight years. He was trading, sometimes at the value of only one cent each, many of the postcards he had acquired. He was active in an unofficial postcard club that met once a month at Leninger Center in San Jose. It consisted of a dozen or so people who enjoyed the deltiology hobby. Grasping an opportunity to make the club more organized, Walt started the San Jose Postcard Club and remained the president for 10 years. With Gail by his side, he has edited the newsletter the entire time the club has been in existence. Working as

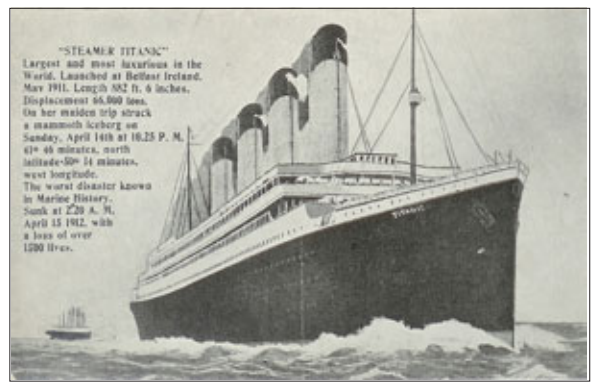
a team, they attend postcard shows and Gail's trained eye can spot cards that they do not have in their collection. "I know his taste better than he knows mine," observes Gail.

As Walt expanded his categories, as many deltiologists do, he has acquired an impressive collection of historically unique postcards, such as the statistic card of the Titanic and a 1927 Indianapolis race card. When filing, he has to make choices amongst many categories, such as Mitchell, Portola Festival or SF, which proves that there is more to collecting than merely buying a card and putting it in an album. Walt can tell almost all there is to know about a card by studying the reverse side, which shows the paper, the color, the stamp box and the publisher's design. When Walt and Gail put their collections together, they found each collection enhanced the other as, for example, poinsettias from various publishers and multiple holidays. Wishes have gained a prominent place in their collection and they are beginning to compile a checklist on those, especially on the exquisite art of Samuel Schmucker done for Wunsch and for other publishers. Schmucker's specialty was women and children on holiday cards.

Walt encourages every collector to entice young people into the hobby; "Get as many young people as you can to love postcards," and let them start with bushes and twigs and grow to be the best of the new collectors.



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