

San Francisco Bay Area Post Card Club

June 2008

Next Meeting: Saturday, June 28, 12 to 3 pm

Volume XXIII, No. 6

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.

**IN
THIS
ISSUE**

- GREAT WHITE FLEET BY PILLSBURY
- RP PROJECT: SIERRA ART COMPANY
- REID BROS, ARCHITECTS
- A FEW ABC'S OF SF RESTAURANTS

Program Notes: Kit Hinrichs, club member and partner in the international design consultancy Pentagram, is a collector of all things graphic. Within this vast collection, his primary focus is on the American flag, including, of course, flags on postcards. Kit has designed and authored several books about the American flag, among them: STARS & STRIPES, LONG MAY SHE WAVE and the newest, 100 AMERICAN FLAGS. His collections have been displayed in museums across the country, and he currently has an exhibit at the Museum of Craft and Folk Art in San Francisco. Kit will delight us with a presentation on the origins of his collection, and will wow us with his flag real photos.

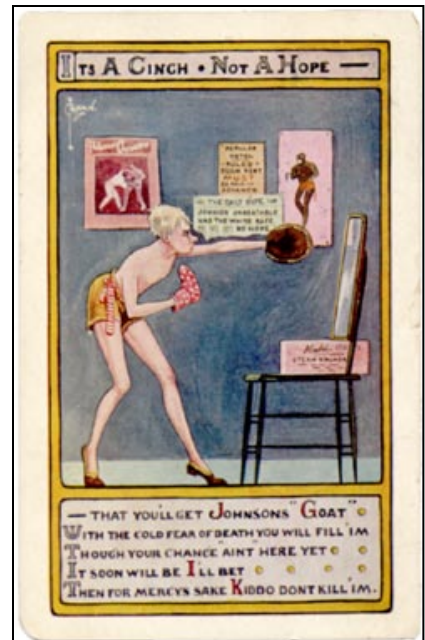
Show & Tell: Collector's choice! Three item, two minute limit.

Parking: Can be difficult. Come early; park in pay lot or in free lot off of Bay Street, or along Marina Green.

COVER CARD

As fascinating and informational as real photos can be they are, well, black, white and shades of gray. And local views everyone loves, unless they are not of one's own area. So I am taking this opportunity to present a lightweight, colorful, artist drawn card. The design is by Ryan, a familiar signature on cards chased and cherished by many collectors. Little is known about the artist, and discussion over COMICS boxes used to center around Ryan's supposed gender. (I've always preferred the distaff side.) In the image we see a dandified weakling training to take on Jack Johnson, "The Galveston Giant." In the doggerel text, the pantywaist is alluded to being the "Great White Hope" that would recapture the World Heavyweight Championship from African American Johnson. The White Hope was, in reality, James Jeffries, who met Johnson in the ring, at Reno, on July 4th, 1910. The black man triumphed, and white men rose up in anger. Race riots scourged the country and reverberated across the seas. Hey! This isn't an easy going comic card after all.... It's black v. white.... And it's local, as Johnson trained for the fight in San Francisco! Well, I tried.

—Ed.



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Newsletter Deadline: 5th of each month



MINUTES, May 24, 2008

About 30 members and guests attended; only 23 signed the attendance sheet.

Cards were brought for sale or trade by David Parry, Roman Manevich, Ed Herny, Dorothy De Mare, Sue Scott, Bill Ashley and Ken Prag.

The meeting was called to order by President Ed Herny.

Announcements: Ed Herny shared the sad news that Mark Adams died 16 days ago. John Freeman and Ed were at his funeral where the SF Fire and Police chiefs spoke about Mark's friendship and advice.

Drawing: Many lots and many happy winners.

Old business: Kathryn Ayres alerted us to the fact that a club Secretary is still needed. "Please volunteer. It is an easy position to fulfill."

New Business: Ed Herny suggested that the club place an order for collecting supplies. Let him know what sleeves you will need in standard sizes.

Ed also suggested that we plan another postcard field trip. Suggested sites were Nob Hill, Oakland and Land's End.

Show & Tell: John Freeman brought a framed print of the Pillsbury 36 inch photo of the Great White Fleet ships approaching Point Bonita. ... Jim Caddick told of seeing a book by A. C. Pillsbury on his photo techniques in which he claims to have invented time lapse photography, and he showed a linen of a night view of ships of the Pacific Fleet in SF Bay and two duplicate rodeo cards. One was labeled Tucson, the other Sheridan, Wyoming; both by Scenic Art Co., of

Richmond and Berkeley, apparently Mike Roberts' second label. ... Bill Ashley showed QSL cards used by ham radio operators to confirm contact; Bill has a source for thousands of them. ... Ed Herny showed a real photo of a rock 'n' roll performer. Who is it?

—LEW BAER, RECORDING SECRETARY, PRO TEM

Program:

Ed Herny on

GREAT WHITE FLEET PHOTO POSTCARDS MADE BY PILLSBURY PICTURE COMPANY

As Ed took the floor for his computer driven slide presentation, he told that he has been collecting postcards by A. C. Pillsbury for 30 years. He provided the following recap of his program.

The Cruise of the Great White Fleet refers to a 'round the world journey undertaken by the Atlantic fleet of the US Navy lasting from December 16, 1907 through February 22, 1909. The fleet consisted of 16 battleships and several auxiliary vessels, and was manned by a combined crew of over 14,000 men.



The journey was ordered by President Theodore Roosevelt at a time of peace to show other nations that the US was a major naval power with worldwide capability. The title “Great White Fleet” referred to the battleships, the hulls of which were painted white with gold trim on the bows.

Arthur C. Pillsbury (1870-1946) was a commercial photographer who lived in Oakland, California, and did business as the Pillsbury Picture Co. He published real photo postcards under that name from 1906 through the late 1920s and is most well known for his photographs of Yosemite, where he had a photography studio from 1907 until it was destroyed by fire in 1927. During this twenty year span, he would spend his summers in Yosemite and the rest of the year in Oakland.

My own research on Pillsbury’s real photo postcards indicates that he published nearly two thousand different views. His subjects included the 1906 SF Earthquake, Yosemite, downtown San Francisco, the Lake Tahoe region, the Monterey Peninsula, the California Missions, the Panama Pacific International Exposition and many others. Nearly all were of scenes in California, although he did publish a few views of Alaska, Hawaii, Washington and Utah.

What distinguishes these cards from those of most of Pillsbury’s contemporaries is the outstanding quality of both his photography and his photo printing methods. Many of his cards are exceptionally well done on every level that a photograph can be judged. He often tinted his cards, some in green tones, some in brown tones, and some with both colors on the same card. I have yet to determine how he did this.



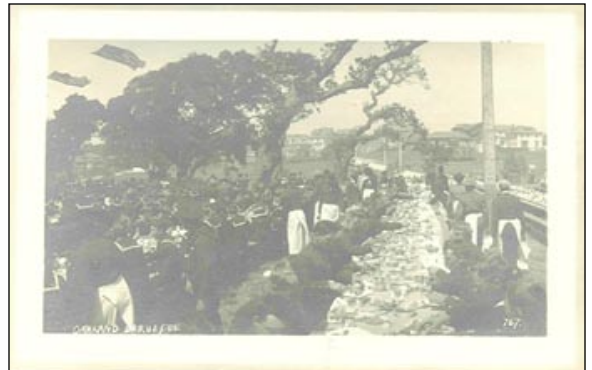
CREW AND BASEBALL TEAM OF THE USS MINNESOTA

When the Great White Fleet cruise was announced, Pillsbury set to work to publish a truly comprehensive series of cards documenting the trip. To record the actual arrival of the ships at San Francisco on May 6, 1908, Pillsbury went to elaborate lengths to outfox his fellow photographers. While the Navy had announced in advance the date and approximate time that the fleet would sail through the Golden Gate into San Francisco Bay, few details were known.

Dozens of photographers chose their spots on the shoreline hoping to get the best vantage point. The largest group was on Alcatraz Island. Pillsbury sent a couple of his assistants and a camera to Alcatraz with the others, but apparently did so only as a ruse. He personally traveled by boat to Point Bonita in Marin County, on the northern side of the Golden Gate, to set up his cameras. Whether through genius or just good fortune, this turned out to be the perfect vantage point from which to photograph the entire fleet in formation. The photographers in other locations were hampered by fog and shooting from a bad angle. Pillsbury thus scooped his rivals and his panoramic view was the one that was published in the San Francisco *Examiner* the next day.

Thus far I have identified 104 different Pillsbury real photo postcards of the Great White Fleet. As all of these cards are numbered, and a card has not been seen for every number in a given sequence, there are certainly other cards in this series yet to be found.

This great series of cards can be broken down into three subgroups based on the numbering system employed. The first group all have numbers that begin with “.00” and range from .002 through .0037. These



BARBEQUE IN OAKLAND



cards have captions, as well as numbers, and nearly all seem to be views of the earlier parts of the trip before the fleet reached California. Subjects include coaling at Punta Arenas, Chile, located at the tip of South America, and naval artillery target practice in Magdalena Bay, Mexico on the western side of southern Baja Cali-

fornia. Of the spread of 36 entries possible in this range, I have identified 24. I call this group the “Double Zero” group.

The second group all have numbers that begin with “.0” and range from .0720 thru .0800. These cards do not have captions. The two main subjects include “hazing” at an equator crossing initiation and a bullfight at Callao, Peru, the port city of Lima. Of the spread of numbers possible in this range, 81, I have located only 15. I call this group the “Single Zero” group.

The third and by far the largest group all have whole three digit numbers ranging from 687 thru 776. All of these that I have seen have the double dark and light framing that appears on so many of Pillsbury’s cards of other locations from this period. The subjects include not only many striking portraits of the ships, but—even more interestingly—portraits of the officers and crews, posed individually, in small groups, and en masse. These include “Bakers and Mascot” (goat) on the *Minnesota* and several shots of the mascot bear cub on the *Buffalo*. The views of the fleet entering SF Bay are also in this group as well as two views of a barbecue for the crew in an Oakland park. Of the 90 numbers possible in this group, I have located 64.

I have my own theory regarding the origins of these three groups. I believe that most, if not all, of

the cards in the Double Zero and Zero groups were not photographed by Pillsbury. It is clear that he could not have been at many of the locations, and I believe the most likely explanation is that Pillsbury purchased the negatives from one or more sailors who actually created them while on board ship. I further suggest that most of the cards in the third group were photographed by Pillsbury, although a few are of locations prior to arriving in California and are probably also purchased from crew members. These theories are based largely on conjecture and logic, but I have discovered one genuine clue, though it is a bit ambiguous.

This evidence consists of a message on a Pillsbury real-photo postcard view of Yosemite (FROM BRIDAL VEIL MEADOWS, NO. 367) postmarked on April 6, 1908:



“Just to show you I am home in Oakland. And this will be my address unless you have notice in the dim future. Arthur went South to get pictures of the Fleet and picked me up on his return trip.

Love to all. Yours truly, H. F. Pillsbury.”

Harriet Foster Pillsbury was Arthur’s mother.

This intriguing tidbit can be interpreted in different ways. One is that Pillsbury went all the way down to Magdalena Bay (the fleet’s location from March 12-April 11) and made his own photographs. Another is that he went to Magdalena Bay and bought photographs from one or more cruise participants. Yet another is that he didn’t go all the way to Magdalena Bay but perhaps just to Southern California or Northern Mexico and made arrangements by telegraph or other means to purchase photographs.

Clearly, more research needs to be done to further clarify this issue.

I mentioned that I had located 104 different views in this series. In case you weren't taking notes on the math, the total of numbers in the spreads of the three groups is two hundred and seven, and, of course, the groups could be larger. I suspect that Pillsbury did not publish cards having all the numbers in the first two groups but may well have with the third. My best guess is that the total number of these cards that he published is approximately one hundred fifty.

This brings us to the question of why would he publish such an extensive series of cards for this event. While we are grateful that he did, for the wonderful documentation these cards provide, his motivation in doing so has been the subject of much speculation on my part. It is easy to think of Pillsbury playing the role of photo-journalist for this event. But we have to keep in mind that creating these cards was his business as well as his art, and that decisions such as how many views to publish had to have an economic component. It is hard to imagine that it made good business sense to create so many views of an event that would probably remain in the public imagination for only a few weeks or months. Certainly, the fact that these cards are very hard to find today, suggests that sales could not have been huge. We therefore arrive at the theoretical point of wondering why an astute business man like Pillsbury would choose to publish so large a variety of cards illustrating this single event, if it could not have made good business sense to do so. The answer to this question requires further research and perhaps better speculation. I look forward to this task.

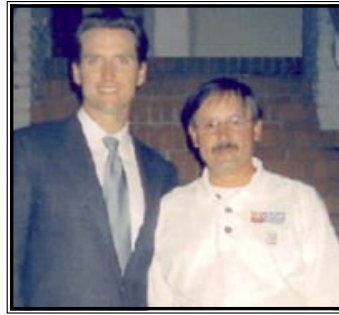
But for all of us it is appropriate to be thankful that this talented and innovative photographer/photojournalist/businessman has left us with such an artistic and extensive record of this brief and fascinating chapter in our nation's history.

WELCOME...

Gary Gritchoff joined the club in May; he collects turn-of-the-twentieth-century women. No approvals.

...AND FAREWELL

The news of Mark Adams' sudden passing came as a shock to those of us who had gotten to know him at meetings. Mark had been a member for about two years and began attending meetings only a few months ago. Mark was quiet and always pleasant and a strong club supporter who encouraged



MAYOR NEWSOM AND MARK ADAMS

others to join and contributed images to the newsletter as well as donations to the treasury. He was also an aggressive collector—primarily on eBay, where he was known as *alaskaboundusa*. Living in the home his grandfather had lived in, he was proud to be a native San Franciscan, and the city is what he collected. And also fire fighting. Being a relatively new postcard collector, he bid on cards many of us have known for years; he also bid on the rarest and very best postcards he came across. Mark's bidding technique would seem unusual for many of us online buyers. He bid early and heavily, and it was up to others to try to find his upper limit. That did not happen often. The technique probably worked to his advantage, as before eBay began hiding bidder IDs, a mere glimpse of his screen name could scare potential competition away. Mark bought eagerly at club meetings, too, and had plans to attend his first postcard show on May 17, at Concord. He died on May 8.

Mark was 49 years old, but seemed considerably younger. He was an actively involved San Franciscan, and, although he did not talk much about his non-postcard interests, he counted the chiefs of the Fire and Police Departments among his friends, as well as the Mayor. He had long yearned to serve in the SFFD himself, but was kept from doing so, perhaps by diabetes, the disease that claimed him too soon. Our sympathy is for his mother, sister and other family members. Mark was an enthusiastic postcarder who would have added much to the future of the club.

Word has come that Jack Hamelle of Swanton, Vermont, a member for several years, several years ago, has died. Jack was an old time collector-dealer who enjoyed belonging to the club and sending cards on approval. His prices were old timey, and the cards too—just like Jack.

TREASURER/HALL MANAGER REPORT

As of June 5, 2008\$4,827.95

—ED CLAUSEN, TREASURER/HALL MGR.

POSTCARD CALENDAR

July 6, Sunday, **Healdsburg**, Antique fair, Plaza Park, Free! 8am-4pm*

Aug. 9-10, Saturday-Sunday, San Francisco, Vintage Paper Fair, Hall of Flowers, 9th Avenue & Lincoln Way, Golden Gate Park.*+

Aug. 16-17, Saturday-Sunday, **San Rafael**, Antique Fair, Civic Center, 10am-5pm*

Aug. 23-24, Saturday-Sunday, Sacramento, Capitol Postcard and Paper Show, 6151 H Street, 10am-5 and 4pm*+

Aug. 31, Sunday, **Healdsburg**, Antique fair, Plaza park, Free! 8am-4pm*

Sept. 13, Saturday, Santa Cruz, Central Coast Postcard Show, 611 Ocean Street, 10am-5pm*

Sept. 20-21, Glendale, Vintage Paper Fair, 1401 North Verdugo Road, 10am to 6 and 4pm, Free entry Sunday*+

Oct. 10-11, **Santa Rosa**, Old Bottle & Collectibles Show, County Fairgrounds, Fri. noon-7pm (\$10), Sat. Free entry 9am-3pm*

Nov. 7-9, **San Mateo**, Hillsborough Antique Show, Expo Fairgrounds, Fri. 11am-9pm, Sat. 11am-7pm, Sun. 10am-5pm*

Nov. 15-16, Concord, Postcard & Paper Collectibles Show, Concord Centre, 5298 Clayton Rd., Sat. 10am-6 and 4pm, Sun. (Free) *

Dec. 13-14, **San Rafael**, Antique & Collectors' Fair, Civic Center, 10am-5pm*

Bolded entries are produced by SFBAPCC members.

* Ken Prag will be there; let him know what to bring: 415 586-9386, kprag(at)planetaria.net

+ R&N will have cards and supplies

POSTCARD PHOTOGRAPHER SURVEY

The club's plan to compile and publish an encyclopedic survey of Northern California postcard photographers continues with few participants, but outstanding results. It's still in the data gathering phase, and we need you to help by noting down uncommon photographer names and any other info shown on real photos in your collection. When your compilations are received, new entries will be forwarded to the research team. Results on some photographers will be pages of biographical and production details. On others there may be no more than a name. For all there will be representative postcard images.

This is an exciting project that will benefit our club, its members and our hobby as well as historians and other researchers.

A few weeks ago a new club member in Oklahoma wrote in to inquire about a group of photo cards she believed were made by an Oklahoma photographer. Read the extract of the story below to understand how valuable our survey book will be.

—ED.

The Sierra Art Company of Big Creek

by Frank Sternad

In mid-April the editor received a request through the club web site for information about some spectacular real photo postcards. The query actually provides much insight to the cards and stimulates a desire to know more:

Dear Mr. Baer,

I am enjoying being a part of the SF postcard club and eagerly await each month's newsletter. There are so many things to learn from the members of this club! Speaking of which...I have a request.

I'm attempting to find information about the photographer of a group of real photo postcards I recently acquired. They appear to be taken by a young man who traveled to Arizona to work the mines there. He sent printed postcards from the towns of Douglas and Humboldt in 1907-08, giving his address in one as Poland, Arizona Territory. By 1909, he was in Bisbee, sending home a real photo postcard of a construction site where he was working.

In 1913 his real photos were postmarked from Big Creek (Fresno County), and he indicated that he was working on the tunnels for the Big Creek-San Joaquin Hydroelectric



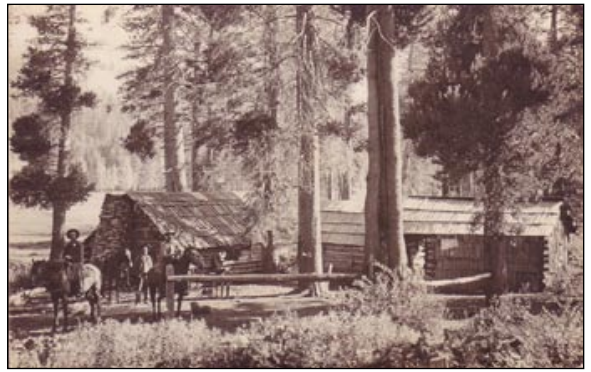
Project. Other cards he sent home were not postmarked but pictured local views: the dam construction at Huntington Lake, a smoke belching train, people at the Big Creek Hotel, etc. Many subjects were identified in manuscript on the back, but others were not. In Oct. 1913 he wrote with some intrigue, "Have a promoter investigating my latest copper strike."



One card shows a view of a locomotive steaming up a grade. An identical view is posted on the Huntington Lake-Big Creek Historical Conservancy web site that has the name "Allen" written on the front along with the title, "Along the S.J.&E. RR near Big Creek & Huntington Lake Cal." My card has no inscription on the front, but there is a handwritten note written on the back that reads, "View of the Railroad to Big Creek. This is an average of my pictures."

By the way, this guy is really good! His images have nice depth, contrast, aubergine tone, and are quite artistic in composition. On one, he writes to his mother, "I'm trying to make enough out here to open up a studio in Los Angeles." On another he says, "I'm in the photo business now in earnest. These cards are a sample of my work."

One of his shots is identified (on the back) "Rogers Cattle Camp, Crown Valley, King's River Country." Can



anyone help me locate this place?

Two cards in the group (with nothing written on the backs) feature an embossment on the lower right corner which reads "Sierra Art Co., Huntington Lake, Big Creek, Cal." One shows the Mountain Inn in Kernville, and the other pictures two young men sitting in an automobile titled "S.A. Co. On the road." I believe one of the men



pictured is "my" photographer, and based on other notations on the postcards I think his name was Charles R. Clendening. Judging from addresses on the postcards his mother's name was Mrs. George Olsen and his sister Miss Ruth Olsen, suggesting his mother remarried and Ruth is photographer Charles' half-sister. The two women lived in Stillwater, Oklahoma and the nearby towns of Yale, Mannford, and Olive during the years 1907-14.

I'm looking for any information anyone may be able to share about this man and/or the Sierra Art Co.

Thank you, Lori Kimball (Ripley, OK)

Editor Lew in turn forwarded Lori's letter to me and I ran the names through genealogy and newspaper search programs. I was hoping the photographer could be positively identified and thus qualify as an exciting addition to the club's forthcoming

book about Northern California photographers on postcards.

The Internet searches soon revealed that one Charles R. Clendening, identifying himself as a photographer at Big Creek, was listed in the 1914 Fresno County register of voters; and the same Charles R. Clendening, born in Arizona about 1885, was later working in Groveland (Tuolumne County, CA) as a construction engineer (per the 1920 federal census). The case for Clendening as the photographer of Lori's real photos was looking strong.

Regarding Rogers Cattle Camp: Crown Valley is 20-25 miles southeast of Big Creek and 12 miles northeast of the town of Hume in Fresno County. "Rogers Cattle Camp" no doubt refers to the Rogers (aka Rodgers) Creek area named after John A. Rodgers, an early cattleman in the Crown Valley vicinity. "Rogers Corral" was surveyed in 1902 at the junction of the Tunamah and Tehipite trails at 7882 ft. elevation; and what we see in Clendening's real photo is the settlement about 12 years later.

A big breakthrough in attribution was discovery of a news item in the *Fresno Bee* referring to a photographic trip to Mt. Whitney in the winter of 1916 by "C.R. Clendening and Harry Allen of the Sierra Art Company of Big Creek." Harry M. Allen was well known in the Huntington Lake area during the 1920s when he ran a lumber mill and trading post; and we now feel confident that Harry is the driver of the car in the circa 1915-16 Sierra Art Co. "On the road" real photo. Knowing Harry was Charles Clendening's partner also helps explain why "Allen" was inscribed on the 1913 San Joaquin & Eastern Railroad image negative and used for a 1920s postcard printing.

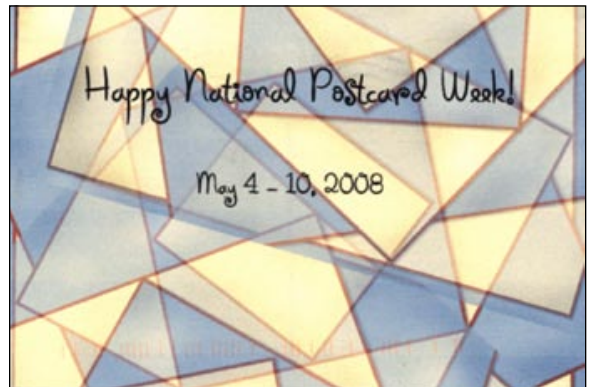
Other fascinating details about Clendening, Allen, and the Sierra Art Co. have been gathered and will be presented with several of their striking photos in the club's book. The Big Creek project opened up a remote Sierra wilderness, and Clendening and Allen's postcard images are among the earliest taken in the area. We are hoping to learn that someone out there has more real photo postcards marked "Sierra Art Co." If you have one or more in your collection please contact the editor.

NATIONAL POSTCARD WEEK

More cards have been received from club members—hand decorated, computer generated, and photographically replicated. They are all appreciated.



DON BROWN, MYERSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA



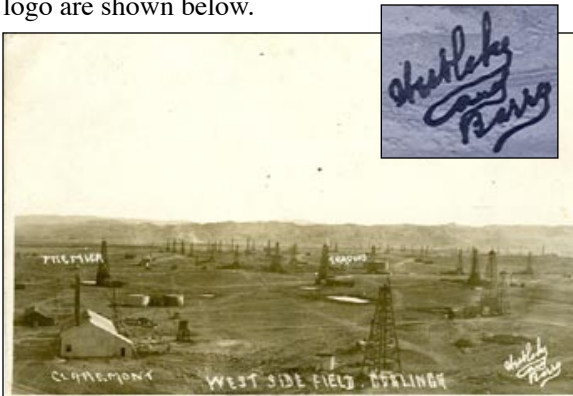
J. WAYNE NELSON, FREMONT, CALIFORNIA



J. D. WEEKS, GARDENDALE, ALABAMA

P.S. THE ROSTER WORKS! A letter came from Betty Mitchell: “In perusing the club roster, I noticed you collect Portals of the Past and thought you might like the enclosed card.” I do; I do! It has a super message! Thanks for it and your encouraging postcardy comments.

MORE MAIL: Jack Hamelle’s dealer stock (p.6) will be offered for sale in a sealed bid auction. If you’d like details, write Barbara Hamelle, 50 Canada Street, Swanton VT 05488. ... Another postcard exchange and discussion group is up and active: Amatulla Richard, 3701 2nd St. Lot 64, Coralville IA 52241 or amatullahjr(at)yahoo.com. ... Michael Semas is a club member with an advanced collection of San Joaquin Valley cards. He’s hoping we can help him with info on real photo makers Westlake & Barry. Examples of their cards and an enlargement of their logo are shown below.



Along with his current NPCW card, J. D. Weeks included last year’s card showing the cover of his most recent book on Birmingham, Alabama. Check his web site to see the list of his other publishing efforts,

or ask at your bookstore or www.amazon.com.

National Post Card Week



National Post Card Week is May 6-12, 2007. I am sharing the cover view of my newest book about Birmingham, which also includes many nice postcard views.

J.D. Weeks
1636 Magnolia St.
Gardendale, AL
35071
www.jdweeks.com

LEARNED ON THE WWW by Web Master Jack Daley: The Hiller Museum of Northern California Aviation History, (8 miles south of SFO at the San Carlos airport) is California’s newest and largest aviation museum. This world class museum features Lincoln Beachey’s Little Looper and probably the largest collection of Beachey material in the world!

Thanks to Hank Flanders for sending in a newspaper clipping of Mark Adams’ obituary. Mentioned in the list of Mark’s accomplishments and attachments—Washington High, City College, USAF, Division Commander SFFD Reserve—was his membership in the postcard club.

COMMENTS WE LIKE- From Bay Area expat Dave Parish: “Learned quite a bit from the April newsletter pertaining to early day flights in THE CITY. Awesome RPPC! These folks are top grade in sharing and history!”

—ED.

WELCOME MORE NEW MEMBERS

Paula Shorf collects Halloween; signed artists Crite, who designed a 12 card set of Billy Possum cards, and Clapsaddle; Hold-to-Lights and real photos. Don Scott is a long time stamp, postal history and stamped document collector who has succumbed to the allure of postcards. He likes Petaluma, among many other topics.

THE REID BROTHERS, ARCHITECTS, AS ILLUSTRATED IN VINTAGE POSTCARDS

by Carol Jensen with additional material from David Parry

POSTCARDS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF ED CLAUSEN, LEW BAER, AND CAROL JENSEN

ONE OF THE FOREMOST architectural firms sculpting the look of gaslight San Francisco was Reid Brothers. The Reids have the distinction of both crafting elaborate mansions for Comstock Lode millionaires and employing modern 20th century architectural styles associated with the Chicago School. Their patronage as the favored design team for the Spreckels family ensured their commercial success as they created both public and private buildings. Their commercial buildings were the civic pride of the city. Although some of the more spectacular mansions designed by this firm have been lost, several fine houses remain. This monograph attempts to describe James and Merritt Reids' accomplishments as captured on postcards of their era.

James William Reid (1851-1943) and his brother Merritt J. Reid (1855-1932) were born in Harvey, a rural village south of Moncton, New Brunswick. They and their younger brother, Watson (1857-1943), were the sons of William J. and Lucinda Robinson Reid. William Reid was a house carpenter and deeply influenced James and Merritt who left home in their late teenage years to train and apprentice with architectural firms in Boston. Several years later, both brothers left New Eng-

land seeking wider opportunities. James worked briefly in Toronto, and Merritt in Philadelphia and Saint John.

After graduating from MIT and study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, James found work as a draftsman for the architectural firm of Boyd and Brickley in Evansville, Indiana in 1878. He soon opened his own business. Merritt joined him in 1880 and the two quickly established a solid reputation, designing buildings for the Evansville and Terre Haute railroad and other local clients. A fine example of the Reid Brothers' work, the 1885 Willard Library in Evansville, was designed in Victorian Gothic style, and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

Two of the firm's earlier buildings, dating from 1880, had been commissioned by banker Aaron Guard Cloud in McLeansboro, Illinois, 60 miles from Evansville. One was a bank, designed in classic Second Empire French Baroque style, and the other was a more restrained private home nearby. Both buildings were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

In 1886, a consortium of businessmen bought a large tract of oceanfront land in San Diego and telegraphed James Reid to come to California to



HOME AND BANK, 1880, MC LEANSBORO, ILLINOIS



WILLARD LIBRARY, 1885, EVANSVILLE, INDIANA



HOTEL DEL CORONADO, 1888



THE BROTHERS REID IN THEIR SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE

discuss the design and construction of a large 400-room hotel in an area called Coronado. James came to California and served as the principle designer. The Hotel Del Coronado opened its doors in 1888 and one year later John D. Spreckels, who was investing heavily in San Diego, bought a one-third interest in the company. Spreckels eventually took over as owner of the hotel when the builders were unable to repay a loan to him. The “Del,” as it is affectionately known, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 and became a National Historic Landmark in 1977.

In 1889, both James and Merritt were made Fellows of the American Institute of Architects. Merritt moved north that year to open an office in San Francisco, soon to be joined by James, leaving



THE OREGONIAN

their younger brother, Watson, running the San Diego office. Watson returned to New Brunswick in 1899 and continued architectural design there and in Vancouver until 1936.

At their San Francisco office, in 1892, the Reid Brothers designed the first steel frame building west of Chicago, for

the Portland *Oregonian* newspaper. The development of steel engineering allowed for taller buildings, less bulky exterior walls, and the assumption that the structures would be fireproof. In selecting the architects, the newspaper’s management said they desired “architectural talent...of the highest order” and chose the Reids based on “their standing in the profession.” The nearby Yeon Building was commissioned and built shortly thereafter.

The Reids’ first residential commission in San Francisco, dating from April 1894, was a connected group of six houses on the southwest corner of California and Pierce.

Then, in 1895, Claus Spreckels hired the Reid Brothers to build a new headquarters for his rapidly growing newspaper, the *San Francisco Call*.

The 315 ft. high steel frame Call Building was, when completed in 1897, the tallest building west of Chicago, almost doubling the height of San Francisco’s first “skyscraper,” the 1899 Chronicle Building. The Call Building was topped by a spectacular four story dome in which the Reid Brothers



YEON BUILDING



CLAUS SPRECKELS "CALL" BUILDING

set up their offices on the 18th floor. Local architect B. J. S. Cahill called it the "handsomest tall office building in the world." By the end of 1897, Claus Spreckels had spent over one million dollars on the construction of his new building, nearly every cent of it on local labor and materials. It immediately became the most recognizable San Francisco landmark, dominating the city's skyline, and was featured in many postcards of the day. The interior burned in the fire of April 1906, but the steel structure survived intact. In 1938 the building was remodeled in an Art Deco Moderne style and is now known as the Central Tower. Tragically, the elegant dome was replaced by six plain sided floors of offices.

The Reid Brothers essentially became the Spreckels family architects, designing commercial buildings, several residential mansions such as the one located on the southwest corner of Clay and Van Ness, and the Spreckels Car House (2301 San Jose, 1899, now San Francisco Landmark #180, known today as the Geneva Car Barn). Surviving



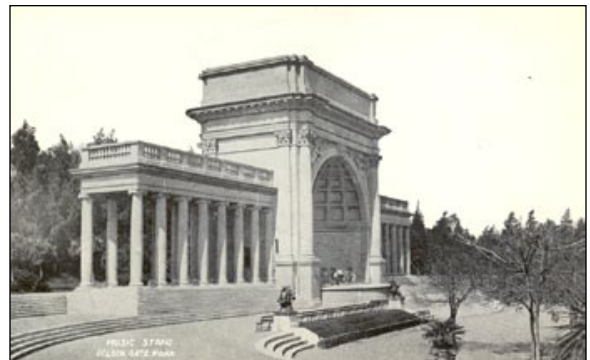
CLAUS SPRECKELS HOME, CLAY STREET AND VAN NESS AVENUE

examples of their earlier residential work in the city can be seen in Pacific Heights at 1919 Sacramento (1895), 2770 Broadway (1904), 2083 and 2099 Pacific (1904-05). The last two houses were built by John D. Spreckels as wedding gifts for his only son.

Public buildings commissioned by the Spreckels family and created by the Reid Brothers include the 1900 classically inspired Temple of Music band shell in Golden Gate Park. At the official dedication, Claus Spreckels addressed a crowd of 75,000 and proclaimed: "This noble pleasure ground will doubtless be the chief scene of the open air festivities of the people of California and indeed of the whole Pacific Coast for all time to come." The Temple of Music has since hosted performers such as John Philip Sousa, Luciano Pavarotti and the Grateful Dead, among thousands of others.

In 1902 the firm was commissioned to design the Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill. The building was close to completion at the time of the 1906 earthquake, but was badly damaged by the ensuing fire. Julia Morgan supervised its repair and the Fairmont finally opened on April 18, 1907, one year to the day after the earthquake. Ms. Morgan often receives acknowledgment for her renovations, but the design is the Classical Revival style made popular by the Reid Brothers.

Commissions outside the Spreckels patronage included resort hotels, most notably the Moorish style Byron Hot Springs Hotel completed in 1902



TEMPLE OF MUSIC BAND SHELL, GOLDEN GATE PARK



FAIRMONT HOTEL, NOB HILL

[see page 14]. After it burned in 1912, a new, fireproof, concrete and brick hotel was built in time to accommodate the crowds arriving for the Panama Pacific International Exhibition opening in 1915. This Italianate designed building was known as the “Little Fairmont.” James Reid later married the widowed owner of Byron Hot Springs in 1922, and the couple moved into her residential apartment at the Fairmont as originally designed by her new husband.

Other surviving examples of the Reid Brothers’ work include two department stores for the Hale Brothers (989 Market, 1902 and 901 Market, 1912), the W. & J. Sloane Building (222 Sutter, 1908), the First Congregational Church (south-east corner of Post and Mason, 1913, now San Francisco Landmark #177), and many theaters, including the Alexandria (5400 Geary, 1923), the Metropolitan (2055 Union, 1924), the Balboa



HALE BROS DEPARTMENT STORE, MARKET STREET

(3630 Balboa, 1926) and the Grand Lake Theater in Oakland (1926).

The firm also designed the third generation Cliff House which opened in 1909 after its ornate predecessor was destroyed by an electrical fire in 1907. John Tait, the Harry Denton of his time, was known for bringing fine dining to San Francisco. Tait had recently entered into a ten year lease of the grand 1896 gingerbread style cliff house and begun renovations during which fire broke out. The charming Tait convinced Emma (née Sutro) Merritt, Adolf Sutro’s daughter and heir, to rebuild with a grand reopening in 1909. This time, the Reid Brothers’ version of the seaside roadhouse emphasized the view, rather than the structure.

The Reid Brothers continued to design fine homes and apartments in San Francisco, but their prolific partnership ended with the death of Merritt in 1932. James retired from active practice at that



GRAND LAKE THEATER, OAKLAND



CLIFF HOUSE BY MOONLIGHT

time, turning to his hobbies of oil painting and music. He was a founder of the San Francisco Opera Company. James died on September 22, 1943 in his apartment in 1100 Union.

SAN FRANCISCO RESTAURANTS

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COMMENTS AND DATE ESTIMATES BY EDITOR



▲1902 BYRON HOT SPRINGS 1915 ▼



Annka's Speisehaus, 1701 Powell (after six years in the Haight)—original German cooking. c. 1975

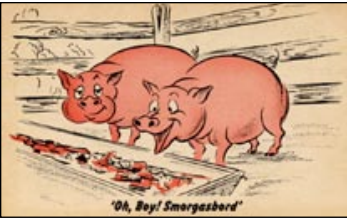


Bismark Cafe, Fritz Müller Sons, props. Market Street. c. 1910

"When in Frisco, motor to the Crest, the most unique place of its kind in the world";
Ocean Blvd. *Cheery within; foggy without.* c. 1915



Far left: Hotel Canterbury, Sutter near Taylor—San Francisco's only outdoor restaurant. Lunch there in the 1950s was like being on summer vacation, except for the cold and fog. c. 1960



Bob's Smorgasbord Steak House on Geary at Mason apparently encouraged its diners to make hogs of themselves. Bob's also offered additional post-cards that they would mail for you. c. 1970



Castilian Grill, 344 Sutter Street. c. 1910



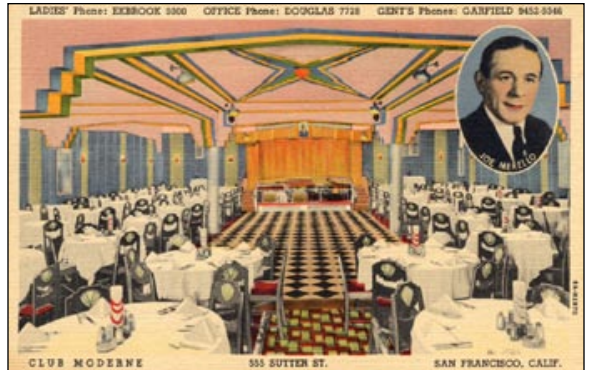
Bonanza Sirloin Pit, 420 Beach at Fisherman's Wharf—no tipping, come as you are, no reservations. c. 1970



Claridge, 165 Maiden Lane; a restrained place for ladies downtown to have a bite of lunch with their cocktails. c. 1960



Caravan Restaurant, Pan-O-Gold Room, Eddy at Larkin. c.1960



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One Way to get the finest Italian food is to go to Caruso's No. 1, 134 Taylor; the other way is at Caruso's No. 2, 138 Mason. c. 1970

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