

# San Francisco Bay Area Post Card Club

February 2010

Next Meeting: Saturday, February 27, 12 to 3 pm

Vol. XXV, No. 2

Fort Mason Center, Room C-260

Laguna Street at Marina Boulevard, San Francisco

Monthly meeting schedule on back cover.

Visitors and dealers always welcome.

IN • LEONARD PITT: PARIS POSTCARDS  
THIS • POSTCARD VALENTINES  
ISSUE • SELLS-FLOTO CIRCUS

**PROGRAM NOTES:** Since long before statehood, San Francisco and San Jose have had a “friendly” rivalry. Each had a role to play in building California; San Francisco was urban, San Jose rural. “The Valley of Heart’s Delight—100 years ago” will highlight some of the alliances between the two areas and also some of the conflicts. Where did San Francisco get the lumber to build and then rebuild after the 1906 earthquake? How did San Jose become the first state capital when San Francisco was in the running? What fabulous SF fair in 1894 introduced Santa Clara County to the rest of California? Darlene Thorne will answer all these questions in a PowerPoint presentation on February 27.

**SHOW & TELL:** Collector’s choice—three item, two minute limit.

**PARKING:** Car pool, take public transit or come early as parking can be difficult; park in pay lot within the Center gates, upper free lot on Bay Street or along Marina Green and enjoy the stroll by the yacht harbor. Come early; the parking lot-filling Orchid Show runs February 26-28.

## COVER CARD

The Law Company of SF copyrighted this image in August 1909. The Seals were the PCL pennant winner that year. My theory is that the Law Co. was composed of the Law Bros.—owners of the Fairmont Hotel for a short period. I’m really on a fishing expedition, hoping to connect with someone who knows more



about this image. The head shots came from individual or group photos that may be identified as to photographer. A skillful commercial artist created the artwork and paste-up, perhaps the so-called Law Co., unlisted in the city directories.

The team was sponsored by the city. In December 1902, the four-team California League (San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento, Los Angeles) voted to add Portland and Seattle and change its name to the Pacific Coast League. In its first PCL season, San Francisco, with a

team called the Stars, won 107 games to finish in third place. Following the 1903 season, the nickname “Seals” was chosen in a newspaper contest. (Continued on page 5)

—FRANK STERNAD

## CLUB OFFICERS 2009-2010

**President:**

ED HERNY, 510 428-2500  
edphemra(at)pacbell.net

**Vice President:**

KATHRYN AYRES, 415 929-1653  
piscopunch(at)hotmail.com

**Treasurer/Hall Manager:**

ED CLAUSEN, 510 339-9116  
eaclausen(at)comcast.net

**Editor:**

LEW BAER, 707 795-2650  
PO Box 621, Penngrove CA 94951  
editor(at)postcard.org

**Recording Secretary:**

Secretary needed

**Webmaster:**

JACK DALEY: daley(at)postcard.org

**Newsletter Deadline: 5th of each month**


### MINUTES, JANUARY 2010

The downpours abated for several hours on Saturday, and the sky over the bay was bright and breezy. The FMC parking lot was sparsely used, but outside parking was at a premium with most of the curbs blocked by busses bringing marchers for the Walk for Life. After our meeting, crowds now filled sidewalks and streets, and the easiest route out of the Marina District was through the Presidio. The postcard theme continued that evening when KQED ran “Charade,” the elegant Cary Grant–Audrey Hepburn thriller with a breathless chase scene in the Paris stamp market on Avenue de Marigny. It is still operating. However, in past decades, it has become a postcard market as well—“Worth a detour.”

Cards were brought for sale or trade by Dave and Lauren Parry (and, of course, Sophie), Sue Scott, Ken Prag, Heide Chipp for the Museum of Performance and Design, Dan Saks, the now empty club 10¢ box, Michael Reese II, Ed Herny, Joseph Jaynes. There were lots of cards to look through, and we had the chance to take home top notch additions to many collecting categories. [Which Janet and I surely did!]

Heide expressed appreciation on behalf of the Museum of Performance and Design, which is located in the Veterans’ Building next to the Opera House. The \$2.00 real photos she was selling brought in \$104! Thanks to all!

The meeting was called to order by President Ed Herny. Introductions included newest member Tom Nuckton, who collects ocean liners from both the

Pacific and Atlantic, and Catherine Bauman, at her first meeting.

Announcements: Lew Baer showed a copy of the slick new “Postcard World” magazine published by Mary Martin. When the quality of the content approaches that of the full color printing, it will be a marvelous addition to our hobby. Your support is encouraged. Info at [www.postcardworldmagazine.com](http://www.postcardworldmagazine.com) or 800 899-9887.

Drawing: More than a dozen lots included exaggerated fruit, embroidered satin flowers, several Rock Era cards—including the Dead at Chicago, repros of Summer of Love, original Jim Kveskin poster/postcard—collectible pack of MidWinter Fair repros.

Old Business: Sue Scott told that she has a list of lighthouses “needed” by the fellow whose cards were destroyed by fire. He had found Sue’s name and address on a burned scrap of paper that a paper restorer made legible. Another member interrupted Sue to tell that she had sent him some lighthouse cards and that he has been pestering her on the phone and wants to reproduce the cards. Suggestion: ignore him.

New Business: Jim Sauer told that the American Philatelic Society now has a postcard category for exhibiting, and that there will be postcard exhibits at Westpex. Each exhibit should tell a story and need not be philatelic, but cards are to be displayed in the format used by stamp enthusiasts. Info on that from Jim: [hjamessauer\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:hjamessauer@yahoo.com), 408 445-2694.

Lew told of the cards that were donated to the club

box. Most came from a man in Southern California; the dozen SF '60s chromes were sent by a woman in Iowa. Both found us through [www.postcard.org](http://www.postcard.org). Box sales brought in about \$100 for the club coffers!

Show & Tell: Darlene Thorne hopes the card she brought is San Francisco. Can we tell her? ... Ted Miles brought some nautical French cards, mostly



ships and one of the “traveling” bridge at Brest, the major naval port. ... John Freeman told that the researchers working on the club’s Northern California photographer survey are trying to discover who were the photographers at the Cliff House, besides Billington. Please look at your cards and help the project. On site photographers are hard to research because they did not need to advertise—their RPs were made and sold on the spot. ... Chuck Banneck brought his album of Paris 1900 Expo cards, a challenging category to collect.

Hy Mariampolski dined with visitors at Chez Panisse and showed the set of flowerful freecards he got there. ... Joseph Jaynes flashed an RP of a wagon going through a drive-thru tree, an overprinted embossed Christmas greeting and an RP of the Golden Pheasant at Geary and Powell. ... Sharon Mariampolski now looks for animated RPs and showed a little girl with doll, a man in overcoat, woman driving buggy. ... Jack Hudson passed around a super (!) Superman chrome Honda advertising card, another of Howard Cossel with motorcycle stunt riders Evel Kneivel and “Super Joe” Einhorn. ... Ed Herny has added an exceptional Pillsbury RP to his collection: an autographed portrait of David Curry, the “Stentor of Yosemite,” who died in 1916.

Omar Kahn is working on a book on early cards of India and brought three cards to show: “This artist-signed postcard is by Paul Gerhardt, a German painter



and lithographer working with the Ravi Varma Press in Bombay, dated 1899. The Press was among the earliest publishers of postcards in India, and Gerhardt one of its first artists. Found at a Concord show about a decade ago.



“A card by M.V. Dhurandhar, one of India’s leading painters and illustrators at the turn of the century is part of a collection of some 70 cards made around 1903. They helped define the modern city of Bombay and its many types as they emerged in what has become one of the world’s largest cities. Note the faint backdrop of modern buildings behind the woman practicing one of the most ancient chores.

“I picked up this hand-painted card from India postmarked 1908 at the Golden Gate Park show. It helps me build a case for the fact that these cards were





in circulation a century ago even if many available today are modern ones. I saw one this summer in the Prince of Wales' album in Windsor Castle, purchased during his visit to Bombay in 1906. The painted postcards actually have roots in traditional Indian art and seem usually to have been made in Bombay."

—LEW BAER, NOTE TAKER

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Michael Fairley, Mike is a collector of Viet Nam, Cambodia, Laos, hops and hop picking who welcomes approvals, and he is a dealer with a shop in Seattle.

Thomas Nuckton collects ocean liners of the Pacific and Atlantic.

Leonard Pitt, LeonardP(at)sbcglobal.net; author, collector of Paris, and our speaker in January.

Jean Ann, Hilary and Harvey Abuhove. The Abuhove Family collects frogs, Gershwin's, bananas, postcards on postcards, Tin Tin, and mailboxes.

David and Joan Jordan, the Jordans were at Sacramento searching for Yosemite cards.

Carroll Cross is a long time collector and friend of the club. He looks for real photo Yolo County and Lake Tahoe Region; he welcomes approvals and has lots of RPs for exchanges.

### TREASURER/HALL MANAGER REPORT

As of February 5, 2010 ..... \$5,044.65  
The August meeting date has been changed so as not to conflict with the Sacramento show.

—ED CLAUSEN, TREASURER/HALL MANAGER

### CLUB ROSTER and EMAIL

Those of us with email addresses receive fully searchable copies of the club roster in pdf format. For those with no email access, printed copies of the roster will be sent in a few weeks.

In updating the club lists as renewals came in, it was discovered that several people were not getting club emails. If you are one of those, please let me know at editor(at)postcard.org. —Ed.

### SF MUSEUM/HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### POTRERO HILL—QUINTESSENTIAL VILLAGE-ON-A-HILL

Authors Peter Linenthal and (SFBAPCC member) Abigail Johnston of the Potrero Hill Archives Project will give a slide talk on the neighborhood's history, followed by a panel discussion. Monday, March 8, 2010, 7:30 PM, St. Theresa's Church Parish Hall, 19th and Connecticut Streets.

Reception, 7 PM, and program are free to SFMHS members, \$5 for non-members, which may be applied toward membership in the SFMHS.

### PUBLISH OR PERISH

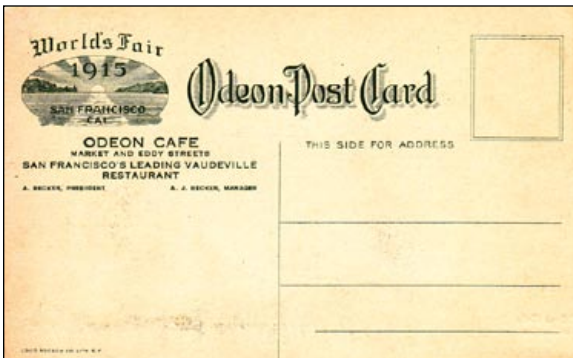
The photo of the Edward Mitchell building in January's newsletter got Daniel Saks to wondering what was happening with the Louis Roesch building at Mission and 15th Streets. He recently noticed that the windows and doors are boarded over.

The Louis Roesch Company began printing in 1879; the Mission St. building was built in 1907; and the company, now known as Ariston Inc., has relo-



cated to Foster City where it makes pressure sensitive can and beverage labels. Ariston still owns the old building but has not used it for two years.

Roesch cards are far less numerous than the “big” publishers’. However, this elegant view of the Odeon Cafe is seen somewhat frequently (in these pages, at least); the PPIE back design and colophon add interest.



LOUIS ROESCH CO. LITH. S. F.

*(The SEALS, COVER CARD, continued)*

So far I've been able to identify one head—seventh from left is Frank Browning, a 28-year-old left-handed star pitcher from San Antonio, Texas. In 1909 he went 32-16, leading the league in wins, and set a PCL record, which still stands, by winning 16 consecutive games from June 10 to August 12.

## POSTCARD CALENDAR

**Feb. 27-28, Sat-Sun, PORTLAND Postcard & Paper Show, 10000 NE 33rd Drive, Portland OR, 10am-6 and 4pm+**

Feb. 27-28, Sat-Sun, **DALY CITY**, Great Train Expo Show, Cow Palace, 10am-4pm\*

**Mar 8, Mon, SAN FRANCISCO, Potrero Hill program; see above.**

**Mar. 13-14, Sat Sun, ARCADIA, San Gabriel Valley Postcard & Paper Show, 50 W. Duarte Road, Arcadia, from 10am+**

Mar. 13-14, Sat-Sun, **SAN RAFAEL**, Antique & Collectors' Fair, Civic Center, 10am-6 and 5pm\*

**Apr. 10-11, Sat-Sun, SANTA CRUZ, Central Coast Paper Show, 611 Ocean St., 10am-5 and 4pm\*+**

Apr. 23-25, Fri-Sun, **SF AIRPORT** Marriott, 50th Anniversary WESTPEX, info: [www.westpex.org](http://www.westpex.org)

Apr. 23-25, Fri-Sun, **SAN MATEO**, Hillsborough Antique Show, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds, Fri. 11am-7pm, Sat. 11am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm\*

**Apr. 24-25, Sat-Sun, SAN DIEGO Postcard & Paper Show, 5440 Kearny Mesa Rd., 10am-4 and 5pm+**

May 7-8, Sat-Sun, **GRASS VALLEY**, Old West & Antique Show at the Fairgrounds, 10-5, 9-4\*

**May 8-9, Sat-Sun, REDDING, Postcard and Paper Show, 2290 Benton Drive, 10am-6 and 4pm+**

**May 15-16, Sat-Sun, SAN FRANCISCO, Vintage Paper Fair, Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue & Lincoln, Sat. 10am-6 and 4pm\*+ Free Admission! <http://vintagepaperfair.com/>**

**May 22-23, Sat-Sun, GLENDALE, Vintage Paper Fair, 1401 N. Verdugo Rd., 10am-6 and 4pm\*+ Free Admission! <http://vintagepaperfair.com/>**

May 30, **HEALDSBURG**, Outdoor Antique Faire\*

**Aug. 14-15, SAN FRANCISCO, Vintage Paper Fair, Golden Gate Park\*+**

**Aug. 20-21, SAN RAFAEL, Antique/Collector Fair**

**Aug. 28-29 SACRAMENTO, California's Capitol Postcard Show [www.californiacapitalshow.com/](http://www.californiacapitalshow.com/)**

**Sept. 11, SANTA CRUZ, Postcard Show\*+**

**Sept. 25-26, GLENDALE. Vintage Paper Fair**

**Bolded** entries are produced by club members.

\* Ken Prag will be there; let him know what to bring;

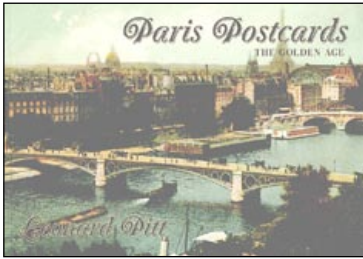
415 586-9386, kprag(at)planetaria.net

+ R&N will have cards and supplies.

See cards on sale at SF Antique and Design Mall, 701 Bayshore Blvd.; 415 656-3531

## Leonard Pitt on Paris Postcards – The Golden Age

Following his introduction by Kathryn Ayres, Leonard began by saying that he had hoped to find counseling for Postcard Addiction at the meeting. He's been under their thrall for 40 years. His collecting began slowly, but has speeded up greatly since he began working on his newest book,



PARIS POSTCARDS – THE GOLDEN AGE. Two of his nonpostcard titles were also available for purchase and inscribing. [See more of his multifaceted artistry at [www.leonardpitt.com/books.html](http://www.leonardpitt.com/books.html).]

Leonard lived in Paris in the 1960s and saw lots of old postcards there, but who cared? They were everywhere, and they were 10 centimes (a penny) a piece. At home, in Berkeley in the '70s, he went to the Ashby fleamarket and bought old Paris cards for a dime. Prices were up! He found more on Clement Street when there were antique shops there... and at the huge antiquery in Port Costa. Everywhere, more postcards, every weekend. Back in Paris a while later there were no more 1¢ cards. They had taken on value both in price and nostalgia.

In France, early postcard era photographers would set up 15-foot ladders in the street and lug their large cameras and, one-by-one, their glass plate negatives up and down to take photos of city and town scenes. They went everywhere in the cities and the countryside—small towns, villages, hamlets. And they photographed everything. France caught on to postal cards in 1872, and by the late 1880s picture postcards appeared. Their acceptance was immediate and overwhelming. By 1900 about a million cards were produced each day in France. They were purchased as mementos and for correspondence. A new industry was born.

Not only in France.... As photography became more user friendly, photographers were everywhere throughout the world. In spite of “technical difficul-

ties,” an early view of a village street flashed on the screen, a rustic home on one side, an old woman on the porch. “This was the postcard that got me started,” Leonard revealed. He was fortunate to acquire it from a family member. It shows the Ukrainian village of



Vapnyarka. “That’s the home my mother was born in, and that’s my great-grandmother on the porch... and it’s a postcard!”

“I like postcards,” he went on. The subtle and intricate differences between apparently identical cards is one of his fascinations. He focusses on minutiae as well as the larger scene, giving meaning to close-up view.

Next came an elaborate “Gruss aus” of Paris. In the message the sender mentioned other places visited and that Paris is better than most of them.

Divided backs came to French cards in 1904, Leonard said. [More precisely, November 18, 1903. Ed.] It took a while for people to get the hang of it and many continued to write on the front. A 1907 street view with five story buildings appeared. The metal plate lithograph made from a photograph was precisely detailed. It was Avenue de l’Opéra, and Leonard pointed out the building he had lived in for several years.

A view of the Champs Elysées and then an enlargement of part of the card showed both right and left-hand drive cars. “When you get down close and ‘into the image,’ you see details and feel the rhythm



of the city. Postcards usually get only a cursory glance,” but look closer and closer, and eventually you will notice differences between seemingly identical cards.

We saw a ho-hum view card of an empty road with people and buildings in the distance.



ENLARGED DETAILS

A close-up view brought the animated background to the forefront, and it became an interesting image. More enlargements showed messages; Leonard read them to show the drama and humor in century-old tourist comments.

The cards all showed Paris in the first decade of the last century. “To see it that way today, get up at five on a Sunday morning and walk.... No people... no traffic... quiet.”

Two “identical” cards popped into view, but in one a horse car had been replaced by an auto. “Early PhotoShop!” Or typical darkroom tomfoolery. Once again, “Look closely! People come to life. There’s a man picking up an umbrella; another man is reaching into his pocket for change.” Other “identical” cards showed a man moving up and

down a ladder above a store front. “He was washing windows!” Leonard’s voice raised in wonder and delight as he showed three cards made from sequential photos.

Next: Then and now shots of a shop; grace-



ful and beautiful embellishments had been shed for plainness and utility. “Less interesting today, in my *humble* opinion.”

Look closely at a street view enlargement...

“post-ers announcing Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show. Quick research showed the image was made in 1905.”

Excited comments accompanied postcard views of elaborately exquisite Paris buildings that had been demolished in the name of progress. Beauty had been replaced by blandness. “Gone in the 1920s!... Removed in the 1950s!” brought “Oh!”s and “No!”s from the audience.



We saw many cards of Paris, its streets, its buildings its denizens. The finale was a pair of “identical views” made a moment apart inside the Café de la Paix. Jumping from one to the other and back again was like a flash book. As the images changed we could see people move, turn, drink, smoke in

postcard stop motion.

As the applause died down, Leonard mentioned the cards with stamps on their fronts. This was part of the postcard collecting craze. Stamp and postmark can add to the interest and beauty of a card and give the date and place that the card was mailed. In French the custom is called *Timbre Côté Vue*, stamp on view side. The letters TCV are often seen written in

the stamp box on the back. It was done in other countries (PTO, please turn over) and was a forerunner of the Maximum Card concept.

—NOTES BY LB



## VALENTINE POSTCARDS

Not as big a postcard holiday as Christmas, Valentine's Day did give reason for cards to be produced and mailed by the millions during the Golden Age. Here are a few Valentines and comment sent in by club members.

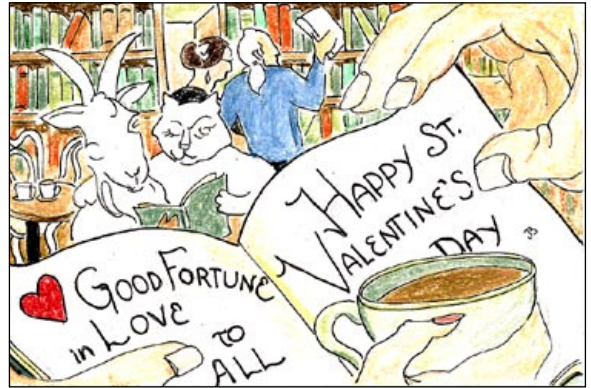


KATHRYN AYRES: My favorite Valentine card is of the lady in a kimono being approached by Cupid bearing a heart-shaped box. I like the idea that the lady is being asked to make a decision, rather than being an unwitting victim of Cupid's arrow. I also like the period embellishments, and the Victorian-era clock and palm tree in the background. No publisher listed, but numbered 361 under Cupid's wing.

"The Business Man's Valentine" continues to amuse me. It reminds me of my boss at my first full-



time job, a bombastic ex-marine. This card insinuates that the business man's Valentine could possibly be sent to more than one woman, while the secretary seems to be secretly pining for her no-good boss, who has his back to her. Or, perhaps he considers romance a business to be attended to in the course of the workday. The verse was one by Carolyn Wells, who no doubt knew the business world too well.



JANET BAER created this Valentine for the two of us... and for you. Cat, goat, coffee, books—at home, library, bookshop or our favorite Starbucks.



THE LOVEBIRDS, STEVE AND PATTY HOWELL, sent this card, its back covered with new and used USPS heart stamps. Thanks. We love you two, too!

SHIRLEY TUTEN is a friend and member-in-spirit of our group. This GoCard freecard from her is a fitting candidate for Valentine greetings. Love to/for All.



JOHN FREEMAN likes 'em plain and simple, as he wrote: "Nothing mushy, or full of cute little red hearts—here is my Valentine greeting." (p.9)

FRANK STERNAD found Valentine postcard news in the February 15, 1907 Olympia WA Record. ►





*They say there's germs in kisses, But I like the little devils.*

## CUPID POSTCARDS SENT BY MILLIONS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15.—The postcard craze has given the valentine habit a tremendous impetus in this country. Fully 3,000,000 postcard valentines were sent through the mails. The idea proved so successful last year that the card printers and dealers laid in enormous stocks and they say there will be few left over. One drug store in an Eastern city, which makes a specialty of souvenir postals, laid in a stock of 25,000 valentine cards consisting of 500 different varieties. The demand for these began about the middle of January, and by February 1 there was a steady sale.

In making these postcards, the valentine idea has been conformed to in every conceivable way. One may have a prettily embossed cupid with a blue ribbon on his quiver, shooting a pale gold arrow through two hearts of cerise, all set off with a vari-colored background as virid as a nightmare, or one may have a selection from Browning printed softly and without offensive ornamentation within a simple border of hearts. Charles Dana Gibson and R. F. Outcault have contributed their genius, and we can choose between the ever-stately Gibson girl and the cute flirtations of Buster Brown.

Browning quotations may be OK, but isn't offensive ornamentation more in Cupid's style?



YOUR ED. drew this undivided back Tuck Valentine from his box of goatish greetings. It has a double in horizontal format—the same design and text arranged differently.



LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY, now lost in Presidents' Day, has also lost much of its cachet. Let's not overlook it. Lincoln postcards, such as this freecard of the 1998 *Lincoln* photo by Kenneth M. Wyner, are widely collected.

## THE FORGOTTEN FREEWAY

Catastrophic as the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake was, it did lead to the removal of the Embarcadero Freeway. The roadway once snaked from the Bay Bridge, above the waterfront, to the foot of Broadway, constricting the city, causing blight within its coils, and poisoning access to the bay. A pre-Zip Code chrome shows a city little recognizable today—no high rises taller than the Shell building, no hotels or ball park... and now, no SFO Helicopter Airlines.



# SELLS-FLOTO CIRCUS

by Art Sommers

I am not a circus aficionado, but I started collecting circus postcards and related memorabilia as a result of acquiring a 5x7 print made from a postcard of my hometown, Auburn, California.

The Auburn print was of a well known hardware store in town, and across the entire top of the storefront were large posters advertising a visit to Auburn by the Sells-Floto Circus. The posters showed only a date of May 17. It took a bit of



THE POSTCARD PRINT THAT STARTED THE CIRCUS COLLECTION

research on my part to determine which year the visit was scheduled for: 1911. I then started to collect a few Sells-Floto postcards simply because of my interest being piqued by that single Auburn hardware store image. I am assuming that like most other postcard collectors, my fascination pushed me into collecting more than just Sells-Floto Circus items. Over the past few years, I have acquired circus related postcards,

cabinet cards, trade cards, and a few other items. Just this year, I bought an Auburn hardware store postcard and that store also has a poster in its window for the May 17, 1911 Sells-Floto Circus. I can only assume that a single photographer took photos of stores in Auburn one spring day in 1911 and I ended up with two of those images, both of which show the poster. As I say, I am not a “circus person,” I am really an Auburn postcard collector.

So, I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the following information about the history of the circus in America. It is provided simply to comment on the postcard images. As you read, keep in mind that the Sells Brothers Circus and the Sells-Floto Circus are only tangentially connected through the adopted son of Mrs. Sells-Greenspan.

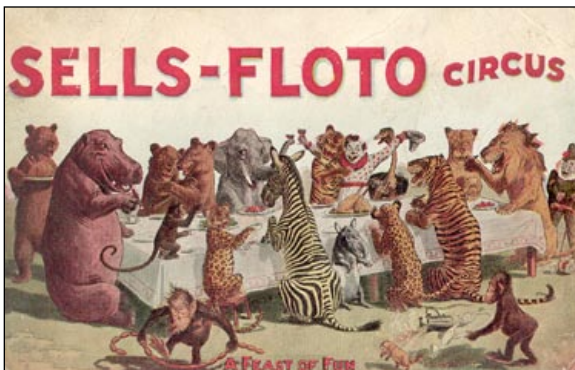
## AN ABBREVIATED TIME LINE FOR THE EVOLUTION OF THE EARLY AMERICAN CIRCUS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1867 Adam Forepaugh Circus formed  | 1902 Floto Dog and Pony Show started in Denver  |
| 1871 P. T. Barnum begins his museum, menagerie, and circus in Brooklyn, N.Y.   | 1905 Bailey acquires full ownership of Adam Forepaugh and Sells Bros. Circus, then sells half interest in it to the Ringling Bros.                      |
| 1871 Sells Brothers put on their first show  | 1906 Bailey dies, Ringling Brothers buys remaining share of Forepaugh-Sells Circus from Bailey's widow  |
| 1873 James A. Bailey buys interest in Hemmings and Cooper's Circus; its name is changed to Cooper and Bailey Circus                  | 1906 Sells Brothers' nephew (Willie Sells) joins Floto Dog and Pony Show, name changed to Sells-Floto Circus  |
| 1883 Buffalo Bill's Wild West founded  | 1919 "Ringling Brothers Circus" combined with "Barnum and Bailey Circus" to create "Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus"                       |
| 1884 The Ringling Brothers establish their circus  | 1929 Ringling Brothers purchases American Circus (which consisted of Sells-Floto, Sparks, Al. G. Barnes, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and John Robinson circuses) |
| 1888 Barnum and Bailey begin partnership, forming the Barnum and Bailey Circus   |   |
| 1891 Barnum dies; Bailey assumes full ownership of Barnum and Bailey Circus  |   |
| 1894 Bailey buys a controlling interest in Buffalo Bill's Wild West  |   |
| 1896 Bailey joins with W. W. Cole and two of the Sells Brothers; Sells Brothers Circus becomes Adam Forepaugh and Sells Bros. Circus |   |

## SELLS BROTHERS CIRCUS HISTORY

Late in the 18th Century, German immigrant Ludwig Sells sent his two sons to Ohio from the family homestead in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. They found land near Dublin, Ohio and sent for the rest of family in 1801. One of Ludwig's grandsons, Peter, moved from Dublin to Columbus, Ohio in 1834. Peter Sells raised 11 children, five of which were boys that all served in the Civil War. One son died in the infamous Andersonville Prison, the other four survived the war and returned to Columbus where they were living in 1860s. Three of those sons were in the auction business, and they would follow circus troupes around the country to take advantage of the audiences that came out to see the circus. The three auctioneering sons brought in their youngest brother, and the four of them ended up buying a human cannonball act, some cast-off circus equipment, nine cages of animals, and two camels for \$6,500.00. Their first show was held in Columbus in 1871.

The Sells Brothers made money putting on their shows. They reinvested the profits and additional borrowed money into their circus. When they purchased their first elephant in 1873, pachyderms became somewhat of a passion for the Sells Brothers. The size of the circus and the brothers' ambition grew steadily, and, by 1878, the circus was traveling all over the United States by railway. In 1884, the circus covered 11,537 miles. The 1887 title of their production company reflected the brother's ambitions: "Sells Brothers World Conquering And All Overshadowing Three Ring Circus, Real Roman Hippodrome, Indian



ANIMALS CELEBRATING AT A BANQUET

Village and Pawnee Bill's Famous Original Wild West Show." The "wild west" portion of the show would occasionally get a little too wild. One day in Clinton, Iowa, a pistol used by the performers was mistakenly loaded with real bullets rather than blanks. The discharge of that firearm during the performance killed three people, including the wife of the County Attorney. The show hurriedly packed up everything and hustled across the state line. For several years afterward, the Sells brothers didn't include Iowa in their itinerary.

An unincorporated community called Sellsville grew up outside of Columbus, yet Columbus remained the official headquarters for the circus. Sellsville was an integrated community to such an extent that the grammar school was called the "Polkadot School" because enrollment was made up of an equal number of black and white children.

The strong family bond that kept the Sells brothers' circus going was weakened by the death of the eldest brother, Ephraim, in 1898. Peter and Allen both passed away in 1904. Surviving brother Lewis sold the show to Bailey in 1905 for \$150,000.00. Then Bailey died in 1906, and the Ringling Brothers bought the entire circus. The Ringlings sent the Sells circus outfit on tour in 1907, 1910, and 1911, the last years that the circus toured under the name Sells Brothers.

### SELLS-FLOTO SHOW

Harry Heye Tammen and Fred Bonfils, owners of the *Denver Post* newspaper, started the Floto Dog & Pony Show in 1902. The name was chosen to acknowledge a very popular sports writer and promoter



SELLS-FLOTO POSTCARD WITH EMBOSSED ELEPHANT





AFTERMATH OF AN ELEPHANT STAMPEDE WHEN SELLS-FLOTO WAS IN CANADA. COULD THERE NOT HAVE BEEN CANADIAN CIRCUSES BECAUSE THERE WAS NO PLACE TO WINTER AS IN FLORIDA OR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA?

for the *Post*, Otto Floto. In 1906, Willie Sells was added to the staff of the Floto Dog & Pony Show and the show became known as the Sells-Floto Circus. Earlier, Willie Sells had settled an estate suit in 1904 where he had to prove he was the adopted son of recently deceased Mrs. Sells-Greenspan. The Ringling Brothers owned the original Sells title and Ringling Brothers' lawyers sued the Sells-Floto Circus owners over use of the name "Sells." Result of the Ringling Brothers' suit was that the Sells-Floto Circus could keep the name "Sells" but could not use pictures of the original Sells brothers in their promotions.

Oh, by the way, when I worked in the large bureaucracy of the Department of Defense, we were always creating briefings for senior management and we jokingly called those briefings dog and pony shows. I wonder where the *Denver Post* owners got idea to call their show "dog and pony."

In 1914 and 1915, the *Denver Post* owners used the



A CIRCUS ACROBAT FAMILY



AN OUTCAULT BUSTER BROWN CARTOON POSTCARD PUBLISHED BY H. H. TAMMEN

name "Sells-Floto and Buffalo Bill Circus" as the newly combined show which featured Buffalo Bill Cody. One story is that Buffalo Bill's popular Wild West production went broke in Denver. The *Denver Post* owner's seized the opportunity and coerced Cody to combine his show with Sells-Floto. Another postcard connection in this circus postcard story is that Harry Heye Tammen, co-owner of the *Denver Post*, was one of the largest postcard publishers in Colorado. For example, Tammen's company printed R. F. Outcault's wildly popular Buster Brown cartoon characters on postcards. Naturally, Tammen's company also printed postcards with Buffalo Bill's image on them.

### THE BIG MERGER

From 1921 through 1929 the American Circus Corporation owned the Sells-Floto Circus. In addition,



CABINET CARD SHOWING ONE OF THE SELLS-FLOTO RAIL CARS; THE LOGISTICS OF GETTING THE CIRCUS FROM TOWN TO TOWN IN JUST ONE DAY WAS A CHALLENGE



LITTLE PEOPLE, TERMED MIDGETS, AL. G. BARNES CIRCUS



BEHIND-THE-SCENES PHOTO OF MEN WHO APPEAR TO BE REPAIRING A CANVAS TENT; THE CIRCUS WAGONS IN BACKGROUND SHOW IT WAS THE COMBINED SELLS-FLOTO AND AL. G. BARNES CIRCUS; PHOTO MADE IN RENO IN THE MID-1920S.

tion, the American Circus Corporation also owned the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, John Robinson Circus, Sparks Circus, and Al. G. Barnes Circus. The corporation booked its Sells-Floto Circus into New York's Madison Square Garden in 1929. The Garden was regarded by John Ringling as his domain. On the morning of September 10, 1929, it was announced that John Ringling had bought all five of the circuses being operated by the American Circus Corporation. Perhaps Mr. Ringling decided to buy out his competition to preclude any further embarrassing encroachments.

We can get a sense of how volatile ownership in the circus world was by following the time line above and by the short business history of the Sells Brothers and of the Sells-Floto Circus. The Sells Brothers also created a good deal of tabloid history. There was a famous divorce trial in 1900 between Peter Sells and his wife whom he accused of adultery. There are many more stories about the owners of the *Denver Post*. The Al. G. Barnes Circus which traveled around the West Coast has its own unique history. There was money to be made by popular circuses touring the United States, but things got tough when moving pictures

gained in popularity. People's tastes in entertainment changed, and the circuses and the side shows suffered.

OFFICIAL ROUTE CARD AL. G. BARNES & SELLS-FLOTO COMBINED CIRCUS				
PERMANENT ADDRESS 331 MADISON AVE. • NEW YORK, N. Y.				
No. 16				
SEASON 1937				
Date	City	R. R.	Miles	
SEVENTEENTH WEEK				
July 12—	Sterling, Colo.	U. P.	41	
July 13—	Bosler, Colo.	U. P.	117	
July 14—	Ft. Collins, Colo.	U. P.	59	
July 15—	Greeley, Colo.	U. P.	104	
July 16—	Laramie, Wyo.	U. P.	110	
July 17—	Rock Springs, Wyo.	U. P.	236	
July 18—	Rawlins, Wyo. (Aft. Only)	U. P.	119	
EIGHTEENTH WEEK				
July 19—	Sidney, Nebr.	U. P.	276	
July 20—	Scotts Bluff, Nebr.	C. B. & Q.	104	
July 21—	Casper, Wyo.	C. B. & Q.	171	
July 22—	Therzopolis, Wyo.	C. B. & Q.	135	
July 23—	Billings, Mont.	C. B. & Q.	195	
July 24—	Lewiston, Mont.	G. N.	136	
			Mileage to Date - 10561	
EDDIE WOECKENER, Mail Agent				

TRIP SCHEDULE SHOWING THAT THE CIRCUS WAS IN EACH TOWN FOR ONLY ONE DAY. MOST OF THE SCHEDULE CARDS I HAVE ARE PLAIN PIECES OF THIN CARD BOARD; HOWEVER, THIS ONE WAS PRINTED ON POSTCARD STOCK AND MAILED FROM MAINE TO TEXAS.

I remember attending a circus in my hometown as a young boy in the early 1960s. I don't remember the name of the small company, but I do recall that I was not too impressed with the entertainment provided. I guess I was a prime example of how movies and television had raised the level of expectations for entertainment. I was a twelve year old boy who was too jaded by televised programs to delight in a live circus. It seems I still don't appreciate the real circus... but I do enjoy collecting circus postcards.

[Ed.'s NOTE: At Playland-not-at-the-Beach, the "Circus World" exhibit features the amazing hand carved miniature circus by Don Marcks depicting the 1930s Sells-Floto Circus. Giant brightly-decorated wagons display the thousands of miniature pieces of the Menagerie, Big Top, Dressing Rooms, Cook House, Dining Tent and Horse Farm.]

# EGGS OVER AMERICA

by DANIEL SAKS

It was 1943, and the Allies were fighting on three fronts: Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific. To help furnish the military with food and supplies, the federal government rationed items to Americans including meat, butter, sugar, shoes, coffee, gasoline, and tires.

But one item was never rationed—eggs. And this 1943 Curt Teich linen offers a reason why. Deviating slightly from the cards shown in my October 2009 article, these chickens aren't offering themselves to be eaten, but instead are offering their unhatched *children*.

These beasts have left the barnyard and organized themselves into a factory “delivery” line which sends their “production” off to war.

Artist Paul Murphy's conception for the May Way Foods animal feed company shows a line of chickens cheerfully arriving at their job of laying eggs. The eggs come down a conveyor belt into a cart which another chicken then wheels off. And the result is a hearty breakfast for everyone, whether in uniform or not.

The enthusiasm on the card's front, “LET'S EGG

OUR BOYS ON,” is matched by the backside's stirring declaration that “Victory may depend upon the food that America can produce” and “Get your poultry to maximum production as early as you can. Forget how things were done yesterday—it's TODAY that's important.”

Artist Murphy got a lot into his small picture. The guard chicken wears a numbered badge and the chicken walking in the foreground carries a metal lunch box and wears what could be a welder's helmet. The line of employees doesn't end there; in the lower left corner we see only a claw of the next chicken.

The “E” banner in the upper right corner represents the E-Award which was the military's Award for Excellence in War Production. I don't know if May Way actually earned an E-Award or the artist bestowed it.

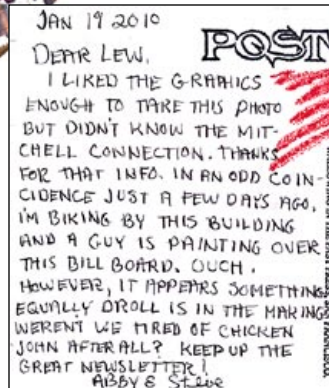
May Way also had its own local weekly radio show. The upper left corner of the picture is shown peeled back to reveal May Way's Sunday afternoon radio contest to “Stump the City Slickers!” Now to whom do you suppose that refers?



## VERY INTERESTING CARDS



The overly franked wooden surfboard came from enabling friends in Hawaii; the Mitchell warehouse graphic card was made by Abby Johnston and Steve Fotter. Thanks!





*P.S.* THE BYRON HOT SPRINGS HOTEL open house to see the WWII POW interrogation facilities drew at least two of our members to the now graffiti riddled building. Dorothy De Mare reported that “Carol Jensen (far right in group photo, put together a fabulous event at Byron Hot Springs, also known as Camp Tracy. The man in the photo with me is Major Alex D. Corbin, author of *THE HISTORY OF CAMP TRACY: JAPANESE WWII POWs AND THE FUTURE OF STRATEGIC INTERROGATION.*



Maj. Corbin presented the history of the camp and led group tours for about 350 people.” The *Chronicle* and the *Tracy Press* were there; see Sam Matthews’ article at <http://tracypress.com/bookmark/5707259>.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

Free to members as space allows

**JACK LONDON SIGNATURE**, large ink (4½”) “Sincerely yours.” \$150. I will be displayin’ @ Feb meeting. Michael Reese II, 415 641-5920.

**CHINESE SNIPPED STAMP art postcards wanted; MARBLES for sale:** Bert Cohen 617 487-5808, marblebert(at)aol.com.

Homes needed for many **PHILIP BOILEAU** postcards of women in hats; also series of **TRAIN WRECKS**, one by Dittrich Studios, New Jersey. Milo Zarakov, 925 937-1470, mzarakov(at)comcast.net.

IF YOU THINK the back cover of this newsletter is screwy, you’ve got company. Sometime last year the USPS issued new standards for first class mail, among them was that folded mail pieces could no longer be closed with staples and the fold must be at the bottom. We complied after only one copy was returned as “unmailable.” This article Chris Pollock found in the April 3, 1907 *Oakland Tribune* tells of a century-old similarity. —Ed.

## POSTAL CARDS ARE PILING UP

Berkeley Postmaster Refuses to Forward Thousands of Tinsel Missives.

BERKELEY, April 3.—Thousands of picture postal cards are being held up in the local postoffice, because they cannot be forwarded according to the postal laws. The department recently issued an order prohibiting transmission through the mails of postal cards which bear particles of glass, metal, mica, sand, tinsel or other similar substances, except when the card is enclosed in an envelope.

Assistant Postmaster Marliave states that a great quantity of postal cards are being sent back to the dead letter office in Washington. He also stated that the general public is paying no attention to the regulation, and for that reason the postal cards are gathering in abundance during each day.

The original complaint against the using of the tinselled postal cards originated in this city. Postmaster Schmidt sent a sample or two back to the authorities at Washington and soon after the general orders were issued. It seems that the railroad postal clerks were bothered by the tinselled cards. They breathed the dust-laden air emanating from the fancy cards, and as a result sickness, which was traced directly to the postal card evil, spread among the clerks.

Good tea and coffee pay ten times over. Schilling's Best.

## SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA POST CARD CLUB

### APPLICATION FOR NEW MEMBERSHIP

If there are no changes, only your name and dues are needed for renewal.

Individual/Family \$15 [ ]

Supporting \$25 or more [ ]

Out of USA \$25/35 [ ]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Family members: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Collector [ ]

Dealer [ ]

Approvals welcome: Yes [ ] No [ ]

Collecting interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Join online at [www.postcard.org](http://www.postcard.org) and remit by PayPal or...

send membership info and your check payable to SFBAPCC

to PO Box 621, Penngrove CA 94951

2/10

P.O. BOX 621  
PENNGROVE CA 94951



**POST CARD**

#### 2010 MEETINGS

February 27

March 27

April 24

May 22

June 26

July 24

☛ August 21 change

September 25

October 23

November 27