

South Jersey Post Card Club Newsletter

July 2002

Serving Post Card Collectors Since 1971

Re. Vol. 2 No. Three

CONGRATULATIONS, PAULA !



Paula Cocciolone, one of our Club's longtime members and one of the nicest people we know, won the much contested "Best of Show" medal at PoCax 2002. Her board "**Mermaids**" was truly a showpiece of masterful collecting and exhibit board making. Marilyn Aclin, a longtime PoCax member, remarked about the difficulties of collecting mermaid postcards. "These cards are very rare and when you do find them, the prices on mermaid cards are high. Sometimes too high."

Over the years that we have seen boards from Paula's collection we have learned about what a wide ranging collection she has. Paula has participated in every PoCax exhibit for many years and each time she presents us with new surprises. Regrettably, Paula was unable to attend PoCax this year, but Paula's sister Emily DiVento accepted the award on her behalf.

Congratulations, Paula - for your win and your participation in our PoCax exhibit.

Honorable Mention Medals to John Valentino, Jay Miller, and Ray Hahn



John Valentino, a new member of SJPCC entered his first board in the 2002 PoCax exhibit, and won an honorable mention. John described the help and advice he received from his daughters when putting together his **Salem Oak** board. The cards were artfully arranged in the shape of an ancient oak tree. "Bravo!" John and thank you for participating in the PoCax 2002 exhibit.

With his artistic talent and his visual thinking skills, **Jay Miller** is a tough act to compete against. Jay participated in the PoCax Exhibit for the first time in many years, and we have missed his gentle humor and artistic spirit. Jay's board, **Jersey Modern** caught the eye of the voters and we are proud to have Jay back among the competitors. Jay's favorite card is a 1940s or 50s card of a Camden-based truck with an enclosed

merry-go-round behind it. The truck visited neighborhoods to offer local kids five-cent rides. Jay also included on his board two diner exteriors, plus two Union, New Jersey, ship (programmatic architecture) restaurants. Jay's vision of what is "Jersey modern" might change some day, so we are looking forward to the boards Jay will exhibit at PoCax '03.

Ray Hahn, has been interested in foreign post cards since the second day he started collecting. Every card on Ray's board **Milk Delivery by Dog Cart** is either Dutch, French or Flemish.



The oldest one is postmarked 1902, the latest, 1931. Ray is very happy to have won an honorable mention - this is the third year his board has been entered in the PoCax exhibit. Ray says the board is now officially retired.



America's First Bank Robbery

In the last issue of our newsletter, I promised you the rest of the story about **Patrick Lyon**, the Philadelphia blacksmith who was accused of the first American bank robbery.

Returning to our April issue, the story started during the night of Saturday, August 31 or the morning hours of Sunday, September 1, 1798, when the enormous sum of \$162,821 was taken from vaults of the Bank of Pennsylvania at Carpenters' Hall.

Mr. Lyon and his young apprentice were two of the few people who escaped the terrible yellow fever that was raging through the city of Philadelphia. Lyon and his young helper made their way to Lewiston, (now Lewes) Delaware. In the days that followed, all the talk was about the plague in Philadelphia and the amazing bank burglary.

Lyon was interested in the news of the robbery. The last work he finished before fleeing the city was to change the fittings and locks on the doors of the vault at the Bank of Pennsylvania.

Because there were no signs of forced entry of the building or the vault, everyone knew the robbery was an inside job and Lyon immediately suspected Samuel Robinson, a carpenter hired by the bank to oversee its move into Carpenters' Hall, and a stranger Robinson had brought to Lyon's shop while the blacksmith worked on the doors.

Later, when a friend arrived in Lewistown, Lyon heard more details of the event and although his friend was reluctant to say so, Lyon discovered that he was a suspect in the robbery investigation. Immediately he decided to return to Philadelphia to clear his name.

Lyon's story was not believed, and because bank officials believed Lyon had made an extra key, he spent the next three months in the Walnut Street Prison.

When all was done, the whole thing became a farce. The bank got its money back and Mr. Lyon would regain his good name and profit handsomely from his imprisonment. (In a civil case in 1805, a jury would return with a verdict awarding \$12,000 to the blacksmith for his false imprisonment.)

The thief turned out to be Isaac Davis, a member of the Carpenters' Company. Davis and a partner were the only conspirators. The "inside man" was bank guard Thomas Cunningham, who slept in Carpenters' Hall the night of the robbery.

The pair had apparently done a successful crime, but in a move that will live in the annals of stupidity, Davis began depositing the missing money in the very bank he had robbed.

Confronted with questions about his sudden wealth, Davis gave a full confession and made a deal to return the money. The governor of Pennsylvania promised a pardon in return for full disclosure and full restitution. Davis never served a day in prison.

Even after the confession, the bank and law officers still thought Lyon was involved; he would remain in the prison for several weeks until the charges were dismissed in January of 1799.

Lyon's \$12,000 award was later appealed and in March 1807 as a second trial was to start, an agreement was reached giving Lyon \$9,000.

It was a large sum, equal to several years wages for a blacksmith. Lyon apparently lived out his days in financial comfort and later in life became a very successful manufacturer of fire engines.



From artist John Neagle, we can see a fine likeness of Pat Lyon. Neagle's portrait of Lyon, entitled "Pat Lyon at the Forge" is prominently displayed at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

In the background the artist shows the cupola of the Walnut Street Prison.



Postcard Messages . . . An Insight Into How Our Everyday Language Has Changed

by Bob Duerholz

If I were to say to you, "I'm going to jump into my horseless carriage and go to the stores," you would think I was some kind of nut. You would even think it strange if I said, "jump in my automobile". Today we refer to that vehicle with a motor simply as a 'car.'

Well, as most of you know my special interest in postcards are those that reflect how man's ability to fly influenced greetings, holidays, and simple vacation/travel postcards. It did not take me very long in collecting that I realized how our language has changed, even within a period of less than twenty years. From about 1905 - shortly after the Wright brothers successful controlled flight - to about 1920, the way people imprinted messages on postcards reflects changes in our language. Even the personal messages, hand written by the senders, reflect changes. Aviation was such a new and fascinating phenomenon that it generated many different words to describe "that thing" that a man could fly.

Today we simply say, "I'm going to take a 'flight' to Chicago." We may even say catch a 'plane.' But it was a long time before society just used the word 'plane.' My collection is riddled with references to monoplanes, biplanes, aeroplanes, airships, flying boats, balloons, zeppelins, dirigibles, blimps, air-balloons and of course, the catch all, (my favorite) 'the flying machines.' Even what we simply refer to today as "the airport," was called "ship landings." There was certainly an influence from years of maritime history.

The interesting thing is that even though we have a specific idea of what each of these older used words mean, in the early days of aviation, people were often getting things either mixed up, or just using a word that we would never use today. Some pictures on cards are of what we would say is a biplane, but they would call it an airship. What we would say was without question a blimp; they would call it a flying machine.

Continued. See: Messages on page 4.

Postcards Are The Rodney Dangerfield of Historical Documents. "They Get No Respect."



No. 1

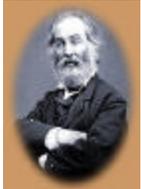
Such words are never truer than on the Internet. I recently did an Internet search for Walt Whitman and found several sites with reasonably good information – most of which was accurate, at least when measured by my sub-standard education in American poetry. If, therefore, you were to ask for a recommendation as to which was the best site, I would tell you the **Whitman Archive**, hosted by the University of Virginia at:

<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/whitman/>



No. 3

All that said, the most interesting thing to me as a postcard collector was the fact that the same photographs illustrated six of the nine sites I examined. That is perfectly understandable since Whitman lived between 1819-1892 when photography was in its infancy – there simply wasn't a camera in everyone's pocket at that time. The best known "Johnny-on-the-spot" photographer of the era was Matthew Brady and there are at least some photographs of Whitman attributed directly to Brady, but there are very few others in existence.



No. 1

So, what's the point? Simply this: not once in any of the Internet sites, is there any mention of the fact that these pictures were published as postcards by Lightfoot Collection, Huntington Station, New York, yet it is plainly obvious that the postcards were used as the illustrations - **The postcards simply got no respect!**

I have four of the cards in my own collection: Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5. I found number 1 and number 6 on the Internet. Maybe there are more, does anyone else collect Whitman cards?



No. 2



No. 4



No. 5

MESSAGES: Continued from page 3.

Obviously, this article is only referring to my specialty. I'm quite sure if you carefully read your own cards, you will find similar changes in our language.

I will close with just a few excerpts from some of my cards. I hope you enjoy them.

- "Too slow by far are automobiles, or anything else that goes on wheels; But what do you say to an air-balloon, a trip to the stars and the honey-moon?"
- "Stranger than an aeroplane, is this heart of mine."
- "I have your invitation, and would fly to you full soon. But my air-ship's out of business, in the dry-dock of the moon."
- "Santa left his reindeer home, and in an airship now doth roam."
- And finally.....
- When he first saw a flying machine, he exclaimed: "What on earth can it mean?"



The handwritten caption on the front reads:
Light hous [sic] Fort Terry, N.Y.

A Most Curious Postcard Mailed At Fort Terry, New York

Card provided by Judi Kearney

In the morning of August 12, 1907, "L.W.C." mailed a homemade (real photo) postcard to Mrs. H. T. Grizzard. Mrs. Grizzard lived at 146 Clark Street in Clarksville, Tennessee. We don't know if there was a relationship between these two people, but one thing was for sure: "L.W.C." was somewhat annoyed with "Mattie R."



On the reverse side the message reads:
I received your letter and papers I have been very bussy [sic] making post cards This is one of my own make not very good. I am O.K. The next time you see Mattie R. ask her why she dint [sic] answer my letter. L.W.C.

Amazingly, if this card were part of a real-life investigation to identify "L.W.C." (the maker of the card) he could easily be identified by his thumb print. It appears on the address side of the card, just to the left of the word Clarksville. It looks like an unsightly smudge, but indeed, it is a thumb print that has literally been "burned" into the real-photo paper.

Why is it there? Old photographic papers were very sensitive to heat – the developing solutions had to be used at certain temperatures – usually about 68° Fahrenheit in order to perform properly. When the maker of the card touched it, the heat from his fingers "enhanced" the development.



An Amazing Face!

Identified only as "Fabiola" this amazing face is a portrait by Jean-Jacques Henner (1829-1905) a French artist whose work is currently found in museums around the world and also in the dedicated **Musee de Jean-Jacques Henner** at 43 rue de Villiers in Paris.

I was lucky to find this mint condition Stengel card (#29246) at PoCax 2002 – thanks to Dorothy and John McGrath.

