

All Aboard!

A Grand Tour - American Style, 1915

Exhibit Improvements

Using recent acquisitions and judging comments, I have made many improvements to this exhibit.

The deltiological description is thorough, with history of publishers and printing methods included, when available. I have the most extensive knowledge of real photo postcards of any exhibitor today.

Postcards depicting rural views, as would have been seen along the route, have been added. These are very scarce, as the market demand for them was nil.

Treatment and Importance

The purpose of this picture postcard exhibit, treated thematically, is to show how affluent people in the U.S. were traveling in 1915. Thanks to the Santa Fe Railway and hotelier Fred Harvey, the American West was becoming accessible. For example, the Grand Canyon, which was not known just 10 years earlier, was becoming a popular tourist destination.

A second purpose is to show the major impact made by railroads and the Pullman Co. in making long distance travel more comfortable.

The role of photography in the era will also be seen, as people were snapping photos to be made into postcards, thus making the real photo postcard popular.

The postcards in the exhibit are mostly of the era 1915. Some undivided back cards (pre-1907) are shown when they depict scenery or buildings that were unchanged in 1915.

Deltiology/Subject Knowledge Study and Research

Deltiological description is comprehensive, given that this is an area where much was undocumented. I have documented printing methods in most cases (the printing method sometimes is not apparent). I have done extensive research on the evolution of real photo postcards, and am able to distinguish those taken by professional photographers, as compared to amateur photographers.

The many places visited over 59 days required research into locations all along the tour, and included what the tourists would have seen in the countryside as they traveled.

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I have been creating picture postcard exhibits based in California in 1915 since 2015. I am able to accurately assess rarity/scarcity. I am familiar with the publishers and the postcards.

The exhibit follows a real Thomas Cook & Son tour that was offered and attended by 35 people in 1915. It follows the tour from New York City, across the country to the Grand Canyon, and then on to California to visit numerous cities, as well as the Panama Pacific International Exposition, a major World's Fair. The tour then goes up the west coast of California, stops at Glacier National Park (Montana) and then leaves Seattle on a steam ship to tour the Inland Passage of Alaska. The dates the tour visited the sites are included. In addition to the tour brochure, I consulted the Thomas Cook & Son archives in England.

I have depicted fictional sisters as travelers on the tour, as a way to make the tour more real for those viewing the exhibit. The majority of the travelers on the tour were women, as the tour was escorted, and considered safe for women.

Rarity and Condition

Picture postcards for some of the stops are plentiful, while other locations, such as Glacier National Park, are not.

This exhibit places a lot of emphasis on real photo postcards, especially those taken by amateur photographers, which are most certainly one-of-a-kind.

Most of the photos were gelatin prints. These were made on chloride papers with very small particles of silver suspended in a gelatin emulsion. They tend to be vulnerable

to contamination and can easily deteriorate. The challenge was to find postcards in good condition, which also depicted views on the tour. Most dealers put their real photo postcards in a box labeled "real photos." Finding cards for this exhibit was finding a needle in a haystack that required years of searching. Views are depicted in the season in which the tourists would have been there—summer. This was particularly a challenge with Alaska postcards.

The condition of the cards is generally good to excellent, given that these were purchased to be sent to Aunt Harriet and Uncle Bob in Des Moines, and were never considered heirlooms. It is amazing that they have survived over 100 years.

Highlights

- 44 amateur real photo postcards, only examples known
- 24 professional real photo postcards, susceptible to deterioration and printed in fewer quantities than standard commercial cards
- 8 undivided back cards, pre 1907
- 2 large format and 1 double card
- Scenes that would have been less popular with tourists, making them scarce today.

Notable Items

Noteworthy items, usually because of rarity, are marked with a small red circle and the significant reason is bolded in the deltiological description.

References

For general reference, Wikipedia for the tour stops is fine. For the Panama Pacific International Exposition, I suggest

<https://www.nps.gov/prsf/learn/historyculture/1915-panama-pacific-international-exposition.htm>

I suggest you read a bit of the history of the Pullman Co. in Wikipedia. Also, the story of Fred Harvey is interesting.

I have a pdf. of a master's thesis on real photo postcards. If you would like to read it, contact me and I will send it to you.

If you would like more detail of the actual tour, I have a scan of the 1915 tour booklet. I would be happy to send it to you.

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Picture Postcards—A Window to Early 20th Century America

The period 1907 (when the divided back could first be used) to 1915 (beginning of World War I) is known as the Golden Age of Postcards. Rural free delivery made it possible for people throughout the country to send postcards, and they quickly embraced the craze. From June, 1907 to June, 1908, Americans sent nearly 668 million postcards. Most were holiday cards; the early views shown in this exhibit are much scarcer.

I enjoy studying and exhibiting postcards of this era because they show us American culture and pastimes in a way that nothing else does. Picture postcards are an important part of American history, and important philatelic items.

All Aboard!

A Grand Tour-American Style, 1915

Thomas Cook & Son offered a 59-day tour across America by train. Americans were eager to travel west, as trains now ran across the country, and sites like the Grand Canyon were just becoming accessible. Highlights of the tour included 5 days at the lavish world's fair in San Francisco and a cruise through Alaska.

The purpose of this picture postcard exhibit, treated thematically, is to show what the tourists saw on this lavish tour, through postcards of the era.

Come along for a travel adventure, 1915-style!

The longest part of the journey, on the Santa Fe Railroad, took the travelers from Chicago to California.



79100 DESCENDING FROM CAJON PASS ON SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SIDE OF OCAST RANGE.

FRED HARVEY

Published by Fred Harvey, an entrepreneur who built restaurants, souvenir shops and hotels along the Santa Fe Railroad route. Printed by Detroit Publishing Co. (1880s-1936) Detroit, Mich., a major publisher of view cards, # indicates series printed for other companies, lithography.

PANAMA PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION

San Francisco
1915

INCLUSIVE TOURS
WITH ESCORT



FOR TICKETS AND INFORMATION
APPLY TO
WENTWORTH TOURS
EVERYTHING IN TRAVEL

12 EAST COURT ST. (COR. MARKET ST.)
TEL. 1610 SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

THOS. COOK & SON

PROGRAM No 24A

The Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, was a dream destination in 1915. It stretched for 5 miles along the Presidio.



1989. BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF EXPOSITION, FROM PRESIDIO HEIGHTS.

Published by Cardinell-Vincent (1907-1919) San Francisco, the *Official Publisher* for the fair. The company employed hundreds of photographers during the fair. #1989 in series of 99 cards, hand-colored halftone.

Thomas Cook & Son

Founded in England in 1841, the company originally escorted temperance supporters. It expanded to provide general tours in Europe, and in 1866 led a trip to see Civil War battlefields in America. By 1915, they were selling over 4 million tickets a year worldwide. This tour cost \$630—equivalent to \$18,000 today. Many young women took this tour, as it was considered a safe way for a single woman to travel.

Real Photo Postcards

More than 60 postcards in this exhibit are real photos, usually taken with a Kodak 3A camera, which held postcard-sized film that could be developed on special postcard paper. In 1915, most were developed on chloride paper suspended in a gelatin emulsion. Prints were subject to deterioration, so good quality ones after more than 100 years, are precious. The date of the photo is determined by the stamp box; the most common in this era is AZO paper made by Kodak. A common stamp box looks like this:

