

How to Prepare a Picture Postcard (PPC) Exhibit

by Barb Harrison & Tim Bartshe

Perhaps you have been collecting picture postcards for many years and have spent countless hours examining, studying, classifying and enjoying your cards. You've read dozens of books about postcards and have become quite knowledgeable about your topics. Quite probably you have reasonable writing skills plus a bit of creativity and would really enjoy sharing your collection with the public. You may already be a member of the American Philatelic Society (APS) and the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE) (IF NOT, WHY NOT?). What are you waiting for? You are about ready to enter into the world of **exhibiting picture postcards!**

What are My Goals for Exhibiting PPCs?

Most exhibitors exhibit for one or more of the following three reasons:

1. **Personal satisfaction.** Putting together an exhibit forces one to focus on a particular subject, organize material according to a particular story line, and learn many of the nuances of your material. There is a great feeling of accomplishment when completing a new exhibit.
2. **Sharing your material with others.** Exhibitors truly enjoy sharing their material and can receive valuable feedback from the viewer. Telling a story that will elicit positive responses from viewers, encouraging them to join in the fun, is another aspect of exhibiting.
3. **The award.** Exhibiting is a competitive endeavor and as such has rewards for a job well done. Many exhibitors really do not care whether they receive a top award or not, just achieving the first two goals is reward enough. That is all well and good and not all three must be achieved, but if you do the first two well, you will be surprised how well you fare in the award arena.

How Do I Get Started?

Getting started when you may never have attended a national stamp show let alone formed an exhibit can be a somewhat daunting task. Fortunately, in organized philately, you should never be alone struggling with the task. There are many out there that are just itching to help you along your journey.

If at all possible, attend stamp shows that have competitive exhibits. The exhibits do not need to be picture postcard exhibits because, as we will discover later, all exhibits are judged by five basic dimensions by which your exhibit should develop. Any well-done display that achieves a high award will have excelled in each of those areas. The best show to attend would be the APS-AmeriStamp Expo held each winter sometime during the months of January through March at various locations around the country. This venue showcases such exhibiting arenas as one-frame and display exhibits as well as picture postcards. It will give you a comparative view of what a postcard exhibit looks like versus a more traditional exhibit that you may have seen at another show.

Both the APS and the AAPE are prime sources for help in that each society offers a mentor service to help answer questions from the most basic to the most advanced. The AAPE is more oriented to exhibiting as it has an exhibit mentoring service. This mentor service can be a constant question-answer source for you via e-mail, and even assist in the development of page design and how to

arrange your material once you have put it on a page. Acquire the *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging*, currently in its 5th edition. You would never consider playing a game before knowing the rules, and this publication will give you the basis by which your exhibit will be judged. Forewarned is forearmed!

Also obtain from AAPE the brochure entitled *Getting Started in Philatelic Exhibiting*, by John M. Hotchner. This short pamphlet answers some basic questions and encourages the reader to join the fray. For more detailed instructions in the art of exhibiting, *The Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook*, by Randy L. Neil, Third Edition, revised and updated by Ada M. Prill, © 2006, available from Subway Stamp Shop, is a very good resource.

SO: After reading, attending shows, studying exhibits and discovering the services of AAPE, **you are ready to begin. We will start by going through the five basic aspects of how an exhibit is judged.**

The Story/Treatment: As with ALL exhibits, the part of the exhibit that is primary is the Story Line. Material placed on pages and put up in frames at a show without a traceable and cogent story is a collection and not an exhibit. That is a major point to understand; putting your collection on pages does not bring to life the vibrant qualities of the material you collect. Many would question what sort of story picture post cards can tell us, and the response is “anything that you wish to tell”. These cards all have historical and/or social aspects that plead for an outlet. Creating or developing a story around them for your exhibit is a wonderful way to help them express themselves.

Just like there are Divisions within the General Class of philatelic exhibits such as Thematic or Cinderella exhibits, each of these formats may be applied using postcards as the centerpiece to tell a story. If you collect cats, use the subject to tell us about how cats interact with humans, how one artist portrayed cats during his career, cats in anthropomorphic situations, etc. Although showing your collection of cat postcards from one page to another may be appealing to the viewer who loves cats, it does little to develop a logical story necessary to become an exhibit.

Story lines can revolve around a number of different areas which make exhibiting picture postcards so compelling.

1. **Topographical:** A study of a place or places within a geographical framework. Within this theme, time can be used to show changes over different periods. Such real examples may include *A Visitor's Guide to Bloemfontein*, *Postcards from 'The Yard': US Naval Academy* or *The Cuyahoga River*.
2. **Thematic:** A study of a particular subject, theme or concept. This could be a mixture of cards regardless of publisher, printer, country of origin, etc. Such examples could be *Windmills*, *Strike a Light!*, *Lovely Ladies*, or *A View of the Blind*.
3. **Social/Historical:** The use of the cards to illustrate some social or historical aspect of society. A wonderful example is the exhibit which enlightens us to the development of the picture postcard itself, *The Golden Age of Postcards: 1898-1918*. Another fine example is *The Road towards Irish Independence*, a deltiological review of Ireland's struggle against Britain up to 1922.
4. **Classification:** This is a study of an artist, producer, photographer, etc., over a period of time or geographic area. Examples include *The Picture Postcards of the Knights of Columbus* or *Donald McGill: King of the Saucy Seaside PPC*.

The criterion for this section called “Treatment,” which is some 30% of your score, is fairly simple in that it is the “development of the story based upon a well-defined title page and how well the material chosen is interwoven and aids in story development.” In simple terms, did you select a title that says what it is that you are trying to do, how well did you develop the story from the standpoint of covering and developing the subject in your title, and how well did you choose material to do this task? It is just as simple as that. The BEST way to accomplish this goal is to write an outline or plan by which you wish to develop your story. If the outline is well constructed, you now can choose the items that best develop each section of the outline in a balanced and more focused manner. Make your material fit the story, not the story fit your material. The former will always do best in the scoring arena. One very good reason you want to work from a story outline is that you will achieve a balance of the material needed for each section of your story. You also will discover that you may need to find an item that you do not have but is necessary to properly make a point.

Research and Knowledge: This portion of your score, with the same importance as Treatment (30%), is broken down into two sections: your knowledge of the subject and that of the cards themselves. Each aspect of knowledge is of equal value or 15%.

Subject knowledge is expressed in two separate forms for all formats of exhibiting: implicit and explicit. The implicit aspect relates to the selection of the material that best reflects your knowledge of the subject. The explicit aspect relates to answering questions about the subject that your material would bring to light but not directly answer from viewing the item itself.

Knowledge of the cards is an aspect peculiar to picture postcards. The exhibitor needs to present information about the publisher, photographer, series and number within the series, where printed and other aspects about the card to display personal study and research into the aspects of the cards themselves. This, obviously, is not an easy task and unlike philatelic subjects, very little has been written about these details and much is most likely lost to us. Most of the companies making the cards recorded little or nothing about their business and what they produced. Fierce competition, proprietary processes and loss of any records kept are key reasons for this. Obvious information from what can be seen does little to advance this knowledge, but such things as the differences in the reverse of the cards, multiple printings and variations along with personal observations about the peculiarities of the cards themselves will go far in gaining points here, even if there is nothing in the literature for your subject.

If there is no information about your subject, you will need to tell that to the judges in the title page or synopsis. Personal research can be shown through explanation of the cards that only your experience and observation can give. Even though you may not show a number of cards from a series, making a statement that the card, number 26, is from a set of at least 40 (the highest number you have viewed) is positive. Anything that you discover during your collecting of these items is fair game to put into your exhibit showing that you have gone beyond the basic and obvious knowledge that anyone could glean from the cards themselves. This is a particular challenge to the picture postcard exhibitor -- to find or develop the information related to the production of the cards themselves.

Difficulty of Acquisition: Try to include cards that you know from published information or personal experience to be scarce or difficult to acquire. This information can be subtly imparted to the viewers by statements like “only example seen by exhibitor in over 20 years of looking” or some such

language. This also shows knowledge as well as garnering points on rarity. This section is worth 15% of the score. Subjective words like “rare” and “scarce” should be avoided as they have rather nebulous meaning to each viewer.

Condition of Material: Condition (15%) is very important. Cards, unless very hard to find, should be free of defects, particularly if they are newer and have not gone through the mail. Much of the material available, particularly in the earlier years, was sent through the mail, and if these predominate in the population of available cards, some corner rounding and cancellations and/or ink transfer from the reverse may be expected. This also may assist in difficulty of acquisition factors if pristine cards are the exception rather than the rule. You must use the most appropriate material available to tell your story and if it is used, so be it. Torn and/or repaired cards should be avoided in most instances. The goal is to display the best condition available for the material selected whether unused or used.

Presentation: Strive for a neat and orderly look for your exhibit. Be creative in overcoming page arrangement problems and the redundancy of two cards on every page. Creativity and ingenuity can go a long way to make the exhibit compelling and visually attractive. And remember, neatness at 10% **does** count! Since this is not an English composition, the occasional typo will not detract, but do your best to avoid errors.

Preparing the PPC Exhibit

[Much information can be gained from reading the above mentioned publications. For further study, some excellent references on older cards are (1) *Picture Postcards in the United States 1893-1916*, by George & Dorothy Miller, probably the best reference for U.S. postcards; (2) *A History of Postcards*, by Martin Willoughby, European background of ppc's; (3) *The Encyclopedia of Antique Postcards*, by Susan Brown Nicholson, an expert dealer, author, collector, columnist. There are hundreds of outstanding PPC references. If such books are not in your own personal library, many postcard clubs have libraries for use of members. Some local libraries may also have a few PPC reference books. Following are a few pertinent points related to picture postcards in particular.]

Title and Synopsis Pages: The Title Page goes a long way in setting the stage for what your exhibit should be. A well designed title will focus the viewer into the arena where you wish him or her to be when critically evaluating your labor. This page should clearly outline the goals and parameters of the exhibit which can be done nicely by a plan which will reflect the outline you used to create your exhibit. The Title Page should be the first and last page done for your exhibit, the first in that it defines your exhibit and the last in that it needs to state exactly what the finished product really is. The Synopsis Page(s) is seen only by the judges and should be used to inform them of problems, challenges, and qualities of your material and exhibit subject. It should NOT be a reiteration of the title page. This is your chance to talk personally to each judge, so do not waste the opportunity by including a lot of irrelevant information that is NOT necessary to judge your exhibit. Be succinct and to the point; in fact a bulleted fact sheet is sometimes the best way to go, the Power Point approach. This is your opportunity to bring up things you want to brag about and to address criticisms and questions that they may have about your exhibit.

The Philatelic Exhibitor, quarterly journal of the AAPE, often contains good examples of these pages, and the AAPE has a free critique service for the title and synopsis pages.

Page Design and Layout: Experiment. There are many ways to design an exhibit, to select the material appropriate for moving the story forward, and to present information on the pages. Some exhibitors select the material to be shown and then photocopy or scan the items. This will allow for manipulation of the items as you design each page without subjecting the items to excess handling. Others use stock pages to organize the material with notes for text inserted within pockets. The right way for you will evolve as you progress. It can be slow work at first, but when you get the hang of it you will find it very pleasing and personally satisfying.

Mounting Material: There are many ways to mount and highlight your material on the pages. Some simply place the material on the page using corner mounts; others use the outline or box function of the particular program they are using while others mat each and every item on a separate piece of colored card stock. Although simple is usually better, it is a personal choice for which there is no consensus. One thing for sure, however, is that it must be pleasing to the eye and not distract from the object of the exhibit, namely the cards themselves. Getting too fancy in font selections or paper colors is not a good idea.

Text: Your text should include information about the printer, printing methods, publishers, artists, undivided or divided back, and any other specifics germane to the cards themselves. This is a deltiology exhibit and not a philatelic one. Just as one generally does NOT talk about the picture side of a postcard in a postal history exhibit, the same is true here; philatelic information, unless directly related to the subject of your story, should NOT be discussed.

The headings on the top of your page, taken directly from your outline, should be used to help the viewer navigate through your exhibit and identify the items displayed on the page. If it is about a particular publisher, the card information will be primary. If you are telling a social or thematic story, the subject discussion will be primary, while the card information will be secondary (though necessary). The amount of text should be the minimum necessary to support your story line. Excessive text tends to discourage viewers from reading your exhibit. Remember, they are standing up!

You may choose to use different styles of font depending upon the type of information you are presenting. As with any form of exhibiting, there are few hard and fast rules. Common sense generally dictates what order the text should be in, etc.

USING AND SHARING YOUR COLLECTION

Now your collection is organized, you have begun to exhibit, and you are continuing to learn more and more about postcards and the important role they play in preserving little pieces of history from the past. Through exhibiting you are also making many new friends and contacts. Exhibiting unlike any other aspect of the hobby (be it philately or deltiology) is one of the most enjoyable and satisfying experiences we can have. Not only are you learning more about your material, you are sharing with many other like-minded collectors as well as advertising our hobby to perfect strangers who might be moved to collect a new area for themselves. Organized shows are made up of very outgoing personalities who, like you, are inquisitive and intelligent people. Some of the most interesting people in the world attend these shows and partake in exhibiting. You will soon find out that it isn't only stamps and postcards that you have in common.

What's next? You are ready to move into another area of exciting exhibiting. You have prepared your first postcard exhibit and most likely attended some APS stamp shows to put it up. You have also seen some wonderful stamp exhibits. While collecting your postcards over the years, you have probably been collecting other ephemera and very likely some stamps and covers. It is now time to get your feet wet in the pool of stamp exhibits!

The dealers you find at stamp shows have an array of wonderful and interesting material. Once the exhibiting bug has bitten you, there's nothing to do but give in. Display division is the perfect one for you to try since you can even use some of your picture postcards, your ephemera, all sorts of philatelic material, and even some other collateral material.

Once you attend that first stamp show with your first postcard exhibit, you will be hopelessly hooked! Exhibiting postcards and philatelic material combines the two most interesting hobbies in the world. So don't be intimidated; you don't have to be an expert to have a wonderful time pursuing material, interacting with other collectors, discussing your needs with dealers and other collectors, and enjoying the challenge of preparing new exhibits. You will also entertain and enlighten the public, and as a side benefit you may just win some nice medals and awards!

ENJOY! THIS IS A HOBBY, AND IT IS FUN!

Collecting & Exhibiting Picture Postcards (PPCs) The Craze for Collecting Postcards

by Barbara A. Harrison

It's hard to explain why people collect things. Why does one child in a family collect and another does not? Could it be a "collector gene" that is passed down? Why do we seek, gather, accumulate, classify, and hoard certain things? With postcards, I like to think that it's because we want to learn about the past and preserve those beautiful and interesting little reminders of a time when life was lived at a slower pace and was a whole lot less complicated.

Collecting one thing or another was a popular hobby for a long time before the postcard came into existence. But no craze had been quite as fanatical as collecting postcards. Originally postal cards (the plain, official type with imprinted stamp of the 1870's) were regarded as a branch of stamp collecting (philately). By the end of the 19th century, their beauty was appreciated, and postal cards were collected on their own merit.

Picture postcards became popular in Europe, and by 1893 private publishers in America produced the first American series for the Chicago World's Fair. Many philatelic publications considered picture postcards as "rubbish," and felt the country would be inundated by them, especially if postcards were produced for every historical event. This is an opinion still staunchly held by some traditional stamp collectors even today. Little did the public at the turn of the 20th century realize that these reminders of historical events would prove to be among the postcard's special attraction.

Mere figures are inadequate to give a clear picture of the popularity of the postcard just after 1900, but it may be helpful to note that in 1903, when the postcard cult was near its peak, the number sent through the post in Great Britain had grown nearly ten times since 1871, when the total had staggered the Post Office. Even so, the British total of over 600 million for 1903 was exceeded by that of the U.S. and was only modest compared with Germany's total, which was well over a billion, increasing half as much again only 3 years later. In every country in Europe the figure was in the millions; no country was without postcards. In 1905 alone, it was estimated that the post offices of the world coped with over seven billion postcards!

The hobby of collecting picture postcards produced in Europe had begun in the early 1890's and was in full swing throughout the world well before the end of the 19th century. Collectors liked their cards to be posted from the place pictured on the card, and when traveling often sent postcards to themselves, in order to get the postmarks. Edwardian collectors most commonly placed their little treasures in albums, which were then enjoyed by family and friends in their parlor (or drawing room). Friends could thereby be impressed by the family's wealth and ability to travel widely.

Few postcards were discarded, and once the Golden Age of Postcards passed (around 1918), the albums were eventually tucked away in dusty attics, where many remained for decades. Somewhere around the 1970's interest was renewed in the collection and enjoyment of old postcards, as many of these beautiful collections began to show up in estate sales, yard sales, and antique shops. Many of these wonderful old postcards from the "Golden Age of Postcards – 1898-1918" are really historical artifacts, worthy of our study and preservation. Within the pages of those dusty, sometimes musty old

albums can be found the story of an entire past generation, which is most likely the best chronicle of life at the turn of the 20th century. When these treasured albums come to light, the cards, which often emerge from the attics in outstanding condition, are eagerly sought by collectors who see in them the history and people of a bygone era and want to add them to their own collections.

We owe a great debt to those collectors of nearly 100 years ago for their foresight in collecting the wonderful cards of the period, and for carefully preserving them for us to enjoy in the 21st century.

Postcards 101: The World of Deltiology

DELTIOLOGY is the collection, study, and preservation of picture postcards for fun, recreation, relaxation, and enjoyment – and for the historical preservation of life in years past. Many people collect because they are nostalgic or perhaps yearn for a time they never experienced. Antique cards give us a glimpse of the past; modern cards picture contemporary times. Antique cards tell us about social climate and life style, changes in transportation and business, and show us what existed before a disaster or a wrecker's ball had its way. They remind us of places that are gone, or changed beyond recognition. They hold memories!

DELTIOLOGY is closely related to collecting EPHEMERA, which is the term for OLD paper items that would routinely have been thrown away, but have been saved and collected. Such items would include stock certificates, letterheads and billheads, greeting cards, advertising cards, cigar bands, Civil War letters, old letters of various kinds including WWI and WWII, broadsides, menus, interesting covers (envelopes), calling cards, sheet music, magazine advertisements, catalogs, magazines, auto owner manuals, matchbook covers, calendars, and so forth. Many postcard collectors also collect one or many types of ephemera, in addition to often being stamp collectors.

Evolution of the Postcard

1843 (England): Sir Henry Cole produced for personal use a Christmas greeting printed on one side of cardboard, inserted in an envelope.

1860's-1880's: Carte de visit: Small, mass-produced photographs depicting famous people, views, works of art, and other subjects, some in color. It became popular to have family portraits taken by local photographers, with the affluent displaying these photos in elaborate family albums in their parlor.

Calling Cards: On appropriate occasions, particularly New Year's Day, members of high and not-so-high society "scrambled" to one another's homes, dropping off their calling cards (with their name, perhaps embellished with a lithographed scene and later a photograph), to be accepted on a silver tray by the recipient's maid, or placed on a receiver (called a silver salver) on a hall table. This Victorian formality was eventually replaced by greeting cards, in later years, when the postman did the walking from house to house, instead of the visitor.

1870's-1890's: Trade cards/advertising cards: Distributed free by thousands of commercial establishments, they brought us one step closer to the picture postcards of today. Advertising cards were distributed by merchants on sidewalks and street corners, outside their establishments, hoping

to bring them new customers. Many cards came in sets, with the merchant hoping to entice the customer to return in following weeks to collect more cards in the set. This was their form of advertising before it became common to advertise in magazines and newspapers.

Late 19th Century: Stereoscopes were popular items found in most Victorian parlors. They were optical instruments with two eyeglasses, used for obtaining a single image from the view cards (stereocards), which contained two **nearly** identical photographs of an object or a scene, taken from slightly different points of view, or angles. The object or scene thus viewed appears to be three dimensional. After the turn of the century, many stereoscope views were reproduced on picture postcards.

1869-1898 Pioneer Period: In **1869**, Austria issued the world's first **postal** card (govt. card with imprinted stamp). **May 13, 1873**, U.S. issued its first **postal** card. **May 1, 1882**, first commemorative postcard issued at Nuremberg (Germany) Exhibition (first privately published, non-government issue). **1889**, souvenir cards posted from Eiffel Tower, giving impetus to postcard collecting. Most U.S. Pioneer Card collections began with cards placed on sale **May 1, 1893**, at Columbian Exposition in Chicago. These were illustrations on government printed 1 cent postal cards and privately printed souvenir cards (2 cent adhesives applied). **Pioneer Cards** were never described as postcards or postal cards (on address side) but said "Mail Card," "Souvenir Card," etc. They have a pre-May 19, 1898, cancellation, and a 2-cent stamp (or 5-cent for international mail). They have a higher value than cards of the same design produced after that 1898 date.

1898-1901 Private Mailing Cards (or PMC) Period: No messages were allowed on address side. Postcard publishers and the public pressured Congress to allow privately produced postcards with handwritten messages to be mailed at the same one-cent rate as government postal cards. Visitors at tourist attractions, as well as immigrants, were anxious to impress their friends and family with their travels, but were reluctant to pay this extra postage to mail a card that already cost a penny or two to purchase. The groundswell of political pressure forced Congress to act – and the passage of the **Private Mailing Card Act of May 19, 1898**, allowed the privately printed cards to be mailed first class for one cent, ushering in the "Golden Age of Postcards."

Evolution of the Face and Back of the Postcard

1901-1907 "Postcard Period" (Dec. 24, 1901): PMC Act was rescinded and USPO allowed "Post Card" on the back of privately printed cards, no longer requiring "PMC." Messages still had to be written on the face of the card. Sometimes a small space was left at the bottom of the picture where a very brief message could be written. Sometimes it was about an inch wide blank on the right side of the picture. These are known as **message face cards**. Many examples are available which show how the senders wrote very small, and stretched their messages all around the outer edges of the cards. We also can find many examples of this period which have messages written on every available space on the picture side. This is often called the "**Undivided Back Period.**" Within a few years, the term Postcard was popular. At this point, American printers began to take the postcard seriously and entered the market. Britain also allowed private issues at this time and standardized the size of its cards.

Divided Back Period, 1907-1915: In January 1902, Britain was the first country to permit divided back postcards for domestic use. France followed in 1904, and Germany in 1905. The postcard craze reached its peak in Europe in 1905. Important legislation was passed on **March 1, 1907**, when the U.S.

Post Office first allowed the sender to write a message on the back of the card (in addition to the name and address of the recipient). Cards printed after March 1, 1907, had a center vertical line drawn on the back to divide the message area from the address area and stamp box. This era is known as the **“Divided Back Period.”**

White Border Period, 1915-1930: Even though U.S. postcard printing technology was improving, many publishers were still distributing inferior cards. Use of postcard greetings greatly declined. Views remained strong because of increased auto travel and the great demand for “wish you were here” souvenir postcards. The period got its name from the white borders which appeared around the pictures, giving a new look to postcards. It was popular until the 1930’s, when the **Linen Era** took over.

Linen Period, 1930-1940’s: Virtually all cards of this period feature paper that had been lightly embossed in a linen texture, and were printed in bright, often gaudy colors. Most photos were airbrushed, giving an almost unreal, “painted” look. For example, in a street scene, telephone wires (and sometimes the poles) would be removed by airbrush to make the picture “neater.” Some linens were without the borders that were the trademark of the “white border period.” For many years, linens were considered to be ugly, unattractive, and even grotesque – but now have renewed popularity.

Chrome (Photochrome) Period, 1939-present: 1939 marked the beginning of the **“chrome”** era (the use of color photographic film for the direct reproduction of views on postcard stock – the term is derived from Kodachrome). Union Oil used this new printing medium for different series of cards: 1939, 1940, 1941, 1947, 1948, and 1950 – they were available with a minimum gasoline purchase in Union Oil facilities, mainly in the Midwest and Far West. Another early chrome set was produced for Macy’s Department Store, in New York City. It was a set of 12, with a 1939 copyright. Chromes were the standard postcard size used for 70 years – 3 ½” x 5 ½”. But by the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, the larger size called **“continental chromes”** were used in Europe, eventually finding their way to the U.S. around the 1970’s, when this larger size **“continental”** became the norm in the U.S. also.

The Golden Age of Postcards (1898-1918)

The “Golden Age” of postcards began in 1898, when the majority of postcards were printed in Europe, on top quality presses, were highly embossed, and used high quality paper and expensive, brightly colored inks.

This period saw the transition of the postcard as a simple souvenir of a vacation trip to a collecting fad of almost manic proportions, rivaling stamp collecting, which was itself becoming a very important pastime. Postcards appeared everywhere: newsstands, drugstores, cutout cards in Sunday newspaper supplements, and card offers on the sides of cereal boxes. There were over 1,500 better postcard publishers that produced billions of postcards, including thousands of “sets,” offering the public opportunities to collect sets instead of singles, as a way of increasing sales. People just couldn’t resist the lure of the beautifully lithographed penny postcard (printed in Europe).

Because of World War I, the printing presses of Austria and Germany became inaccessible to U.S. companies. Postcards then had to be printed in the U.S., where paper, inks, and printing presses were inferior. The quality and beauty of postcards changed immediately, and they were never again the same. Coupled with these quality changes were other factors, such as high tariffs on imported

postcards and changing methods of communication for the ordinary citizen, such as the availability of the telephone. By 1918, the “Golden Age” of postcards had come to its end.

The “Golden Age” describes not only the exceptional quality, never to be duplicated, of the postcards themselves, but also the “gold” that was mined and is still being mined in the sales of postcards by dealers to collectors. The beautiful European chromolithographed cards remain highly collectible and much enjoyed by today’s collectors of antique postcards.

I LOVE Old Postcards – How Can I Get More?

- ❑ Begin by cleaning out drawers, attics, old boxes; look for old albums and scrapbooks.
- ❑ Purchase old cards and collections at flea markets, auctions, postcard auctions, from dealers at shows. Even though you can occasionally find a good card or two in an antique shop, the cards are generally fairly common, in less than good condition, and often over priced. **Choose cards in the best condition that you can afford.**
- ❑ Tell family and friends of your interests. They may have some unwanted cards tucked away.
- ❑ You should NEVER, NEVER refuse a picture postcard which is given to you. Even if it doesn’t interest you at the moment, you may find it of extreme interest later, as your collection grows and your interests become more diverse. You can always give it to a new collector, a child, or trade it for something else.
- ❑ Most collectors eventually end up with a sideline collection of newer cards, including chromes. Even if you don’t care for them, don’t throw them away -- at least give them a temporary home in your collection. They are tomorrow’s record of today’s history.
- ❑ Look for postcards wherever you go (on vacation, in stores, museum shops, gift shops, drugstores, airports, bookstores, supermarkets). You can use them for “traders.”
- ❑ Look for free rack cards (generally advertising cards), often available at restaurants, stores, hotels, rest stops. If you don’t need them, you can give them to children, or trade them.
- ❑ Ask family and friends to send postcards to you when traveling.
- ❑ Send them to yourself when on vacation (a daily postcard to yourself provides an excellent trip diary).

Now That I Have Them, What Do I Do With Them?

First, arrange your picture postcards (PPCs) in a logical way.

- ❑ Begin by using storage boxes (archival quality is best), and make or purchase dividers for each of your topics or interests.
- ❑ You will probably soon decide to use binders (such as 3-ring), and should purchase good quality, archival divided pocket pages made for postcards.
- ❑ The most basic arrangement is alphabetically by topic. For your views, you will most likely arrange by geographical area. If you arrange foreign cards by country and U.S. cards by state, you can further break down by city (or county).
- ❑ **CAUTION:** Be forewarned that PPCs are known to multiply in the darkness of night. You may wake up one morning to find 10,000 unsorted PPCs piled in boxes and stacked on your work area in your hobby room! Try explaining that one to your spouse!!!!

As you begin to sort and store your postcards, you will need to think about topics. Of the hundreds of subjects you can collect, listed below are just a few ideas to get you started. Most of these topics can be further subdivided into a few divisions, and other topics lend themselves to dozens of subdivisions.

- ❓ Advertising
- ❓ Airplanes
- ❓ Airships, Dirigibles, Blimps, Zeppelins
- ❓ Angels
- ❓ Animals (collect several kinds, or ALL kinds, arranged alphabetically; or collect the animals of a particular country, region, or continent)
- ❓ Architecture (one particular style, several, or all types)
- ❓ Art Deco/Art Nouveau
- ❓ Autos
- ❓ Babies/Children/Storks/Birth Announcements
- ❓ Banks (limited to National, or all banks)
- ❓ Bicycles
- ❓ Big Letters
- ❓ Cats
- ❓ Chromes, Modern
- ❓ Churches (a particular denomination, or **all** churches)
- ❓ Cities (just 1, several favorites, all those cities you have visited, or perhaps the city in which you were born)
- ❓ Comics/Humor
- ❓ Countries (1 or 2, European, Far Eastern, or all countries of the world)
- ❓ Court Houses
- ❓ Detroit Publishing
- ❓ Disasters (fires, floods, earthquakes, storms, train and ship wrecks, etc.)
- ❓ Dogs
- ❓ Expositions, Fairs, Special Events
- ❓ Fairies
- ❓ Greetings (Birthday, General, Valentines, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, July 4, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Santas, New Year's – each can be further sorted into anywhere from 5 to 25 or more divisions)
- ❓ Gruss Aus cards of Germany
- ❓ Historical Events
- ❓ Horses
- ❓ Hospitals, Sanitariums
- ❓ Hotels
- ❓ Judaica
- ❓ Ladies/Lovers/Romance
- ❓ Lancaster Co., PA (The Amish)
- ❓ Linens (can be subdivided into dozens of categories)
- ❓ Medicine, Pharmaceutical
- ❓ Merry Widows
- ❓ Motels
- ❓ Movie Stars
- ❓ Novelties (can be broken down into 100+ **"types"**)

- ❓ Occupations (your own, many, or all)
- ❓ Patriotics
- ❓ Post Offices
- ❓ Rally Day
- ❓ Real Photos
- ❓ Restaurants/Diners
- ❓ Rotographs
- ❓ Royals
- ❓ Schools
- ❓ Shell Borders
- ❓ Ships
- ❓ Signed Artists, Unsigned Artists (further broken down by artist name)
- ❓ Space Related
- ❓ Special Publishers
- ❓ Sports (Baseball, Football, or all sports)
- ❓ Stamps on Postcards
- ❓ States (your own, several, or all 50)
- ❓ Tuck
- ❓ Washington, D.C.
- ❓ World War I and World War II

The subjects of **Political and Social History** encompass a wide variety of topics: presidential campaigns; presidential family photos; presidential trips; inaugurations; memorial cards after disasters; armed conflicts, wars; victory parades; suffrage; prohibition, temperance; ethnic history; transportation (autobus, river steamers, airplanes); social climate (cities, ghettos, towns); industry, manufacturing; occupations, people at work, working conditions; agriculture, farming; interior views (early stores, barbershops, drug stores); changing fashions (hobble skirts, harem skirts, Merry Widow hats); architectural styles; home furnishings.

View cards can encompass many topics: hometown; by publisher (such as Detroit, Rotograph); topic (such as main streets, trolley cars/horse-drawn vehicles, early fire engines/fire stations, railroad depots); covered bridges; styles of architecture; penal institutions.

The above will give you an idea of how narrowly or how broadly your collection can be defined. In most cases, you will find that as the years pass, you will continue to add new topics of interests.

Today's Collectors can Help to Ensure a Good Supply of Postcards for Future Generations

- ❓ Send lots of postcards to family and friends when you travel.
- ❓ Accumulate cards for yourself as you travel.
- ❓ Send postcards to family and friends to let them know you are thinking of them, remind of a meeting, say thank you, say hello, or send a note of cheer.
- ❓ Send postcards to shut-ins/the elderly.

Include Interesting Messages on Your Cards

- ❓ DON'T say "The weather is fine – having a good time." Use imagination and creativity.
- ❓ Include lots of facts and information; write neatly and small, so you can fit in a large message.
- ❓ REMEMBER: Many years from now your well-written postcards MAY be an important part of someone's postcard collection!!

USING AND SHARING YOUR COLLECTION

As you begin to get your collection organized, you also need to use and enjoy it. You will learn a lot as you study the cards, read their messages, study the postmarks, and read books about postcards and the areas you collect. You are then ready to share the joy of your postcards. Here are a few suggestions:

- ❓ Since you should have already sought out your local postcard club, you can offer to be a speaker at occasional meetings, sharing your wonderful postcards and the knowledge you have gathered.
- ❓ Speak to your local postmaster about putting up a monthly "board" of picture postcards (assuming they have a locked wall case in which to place your display). Some may actually jump at such an opportunity. You can include some description of the topic, along with some historical notes. Such a public display will generate a lot of interest, possibly some publicity, and most likely a number of requests to share your collection and speak at such places as local historical societies, local church groups, women's groups, and local museum groups. You will be amazed at how many people will tell you they look at the displays and how much they enjoy them.
- ❓ Contact your local library to see if they are capable and/or willing to do a similar display within the library itself.
- ❓ Contact your local elementary school and offer to do a presentation for interested students.
- ❓ Contact your local senior citizens group. They are always looking for speakers and will thoroughly enjoy postcard presentations.
- ❓ Be available to talk about your hobby to other groups, such as scouts.

You are a reasonably knowledgeable postcard collector, love your hobby, and want to share it with others at every opportunity. What's next?

You are ready to enter a new and exciting phase of postcard collecting: the world of competitive postcard exhibiting (through the American Philatelic Society). All you need is a nice collection, the willingness to learn how to prepare an exhibit, a little bit of writing skill and creativity, and the desire to create an interesting exhibit with a dual purpose: to inform and entertain the public and have the possibility of receiving a nice medal award for your exhibit. In addition, you will meet dozens of other collectors/exhibitors, from all around the country, who will be willing to encourage you and help you learn how to prepare an exhibit. A side benefit may likely be that you will enjoy this challenge **SO** much that you just **MAY** rekindle your desire to work on your stamp and other philatelic collections that have been gathering dust on your shelves.