



POSTVIEW

The Newsletter of the
Vancouver Postcard Club

www.vancouverpostcardclub.ca

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Changing of the Guard

For almost ten years, the Vancouver Postcard Club has been led by Don Steele, President and long-time member of the Club. The AGM held on December 18th therefore had an "end of an era" feel to it as Don delivered his final President's Report. Many changes have occurred under Don's presidency and we draw your attention to his article on page 2, in which he reflects on some of these changes.

The AGM elected a new Executive Committee to lead the Club in 2012 and roles and responsibilities were agreed as follows:

President - Philip Francis
Vice President - Ron Souch
Secretary-Treasurer - Margaret Waddington
Program Director - Tim Woodland
Membership Coordinator - Diane Rogers

A number of additional roles were assigned - Ron Souch will assist Don Steele in organizing the annual postcard show.
- Margaret Waddington will also act as Club Archivist.
- Diane Rogers has kindly agreed to become Club Website Manager.
- Philip Francis will continue as Editor of the Club newsletter, Postview.
- Tim Woodland will conduct a Survey of members and present recommendations.

At its first meeting, the new Club Executive decided to conduct a membership survey - the first for several years. A copy of the survey is enclosed with this issue together with a stamped return envelope. It covers such questions as the date and time of future club meetings, preferences for delivery of the newsletter, possible future increase in membership dues and an invitation to comment on anything we could do better. Please take a few minutes to complete and return the survey or bring it to the club meeting on Sunday 19th February - the deadline for replies. It's your opportunity to make a difference!

An unusually low number of members have completed and returned the annual membership application form with their annual dues, currently \$12. An additional copy of the form is also enclosed with this issue. Please make sure you renew your membership as soon as possible so that your collecting interests can be included in the roster.

We'll soon be entering "show season", the postcard collector's favourite time of the year! We look forward to seeing you again at one of this season's many opportunities to trade postcards.



Family Group. Photographer unknown. 1918.

My dear Winnie

Sometimes an image jumps out at you as you're scrolling through the eBay postcard listings. Here's one that caught our eye, addressed to Miss Winnie Sadler, Penticton, B.C. and mailed on March 1, 1918. "My dear Winnie - Will try and pen you a few lines. Received your welcome letter and certainly glad to hear from you. I am sending you a card. I suppose you will know who this is. It was taken after Papa got over the pneumonia. Will write you a letter later. Hope you are all well. Will be glad to hear from you any time. Bye Bye ." (unsigned).

We wonder about the story behind this little group of dad and his two beautiful daughters. Was dad back from the War? Where's mom? Postcard collectors love these types of unanswered questions!

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Vancouver Postcard Club - January 2012

By Don Steele

Change is something you see everywhere and the Vancouver Postcard Club is no exception. During the time I have been associated with the Club (some 25 years) allows me to detail some of them.

I have seen the meeting location move three times, each to larger and more central locations. The meeting times and dates have changed several times in an effort to meet the changing habits of our members.

The Club has been fortunate to have at least six Newsletter Editors, each making positive improvements for the benefit of our readers and moving forward with technology. This progression has allowed the Club to produce, not only an informative connection with our members, but an attractive and readable format. I am convinced the Newsletter has been the glue that has held the Club together for the past 30 years. In February 2011 our newly designed Newsletter "Postview" came into existence, with very positive reviews.

In the beginning the Club was primarily concerned with buying and selling cards (this was when cards were plentiful and reasonably priced.) It was during this period that some important and significant collections were established. In the past few years we have been entertained by some excellent programs featuring these collections and the stories behind them. These presentations have also changed, with cards often being shown as PowerPoint presentations or slides; shown on the big screen where the detail on the cards can be fully enjoyed.

In 2008 the VPCC was the first Postcard Club in Canada to design and activate a Web Page with links to our Newsletter and other Postcard Clubs and dealer sites. The site was redesigned and updated in April 2010 to better service our members and Postcard Dealers.

Beginning in 2009 the Club adopted a resolution to elect a five member Executive Committee to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Club and to institute changes that might lead to increased attendance at our monthly meetings and to avoid lengthy business meetings. This initiative was successful and is to continue.

In 2010 The Club Roster was changed and



Don Steele - Past President

is now maintained in a new program which facilitates not only the publishing of a more attractive format but allows the production of labels as required.

There is no question that internet trading has changed the way many collectors enhance their collecting interests and the Club must meet these changes by creating an environment where good cards, can be acquired.

This can be accomplished by using Club meetings to buy and sell cards and by producing a Postcard show and sale to bring buyers and sellers together in a congenial atmosphere. To do this effectively we must have more members to attend the Club meetings.

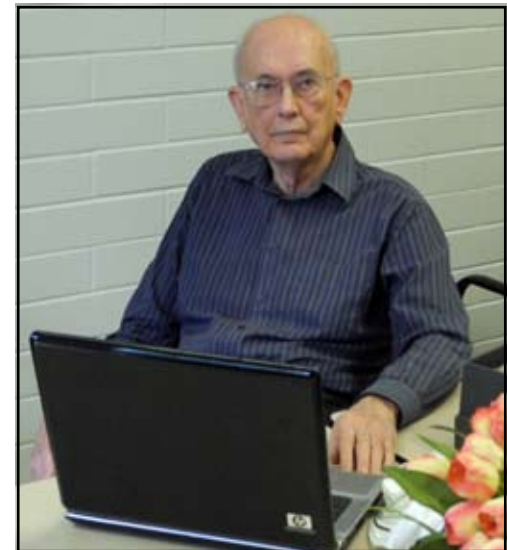
The Club has been a leader in Canada in publishing books about postcard publishers and photographers and has encouraged the gathering and publishing of various lists of work done by these individuals and businesses.

Now that we have all these functions in place, the Club must move forward again. Postcards are now being viewed as historical documents by Museum Curators, Archivists and those concerned with special collections at libraries and Universities. We must find a way to bring these individuals and others into our membership where they can benefit from our collective knowledge and we from theirs. ***In other words, we as a Club must refocus to insure the Club attracts new members, if it is to survive. This to me is the challenge for the new Executive.***

Club News

The Club's Annual General Meeting was held at the Hastings Community Centre on **December 18th**. The meeting opened with retiring President Don Steele giving a report on the Club's progress in 2011. Don was warmly thanked for his years of service to the Club. In her financial report, Margaret Waddington said that the Club had made a profit of \$63 for the year, helped by revenues from the sale of Club publications of \$123.60, Fred Thirkell books of \$244.56, donated postcards of \$147.04, donations of \$56 and proceeds from the Annual Postcard Show of \$582.96 less concession expenses of \$238.56.

A new Executive Committee was elected by acclamation. Following the annual Club photo, Tim Mustart conducted a lively auction of postcard books and ephemera followed by Christmas party refreshments, arranged by Art Davies.



Ron Souch

January 15, 2012. After a short trading session, Ron Souch gave a PowerPoint slide presentation on the cards of the Cariboo Wagon Road from Ashcroft to Barkerville. Ron showed approximately 50 fine real photos including images of Indians rocking for gold on the Fraser River; the road houses at 100 Mile and Clinton; the "William Irving" at Yale in 1880; the first Alexandra Bridge; Frances Bernard's BX Express and his BX autos in 1913; and the last pack train leaving Ashcroft in 1919. He also showed early views of Barkerville's main street and the gold dredges at Wells.

After the presentation, club members updated each other on their collecting interests, noting that there were several new areas of interest this year, including cemeteries and war memorials on postcards.

Widening the Circle

by Philip Francis, Club President

Don Steele will be a tough act to follow. Don presided over many changes during his ten or so years in office and the Club's survival owes much to his quiet persistence and tireless work on its behalf. We are truly grateful. All members of the new Executive are committed to seeing the Club continue to survive and prosper, despite the challenges of an aging membership, the growth of online postcard trading and the declining number of local postcard dealers (Albert Tanner is still greatly missed).

Don has challenged us to "refocus to insure the Club attracts new members" if it is to survive. How do we intend to do this? We have taken two immediate steps. Firstly, we are pleased that Diane Rogers has agreed to join the Executive in the new role of Membership Coordinator. Diane is well known in BC historical research and collecting circles and brings a great deal of experience to the Membership role, as Past President of the BC Genealogical Society. We are indeed fortunate! Secondly, we feel it's important to seek the views of our members on a range of club-related questions - meeting times, communications etc. and ways in which the Club can attract new members. We hope for as full a response as possible to this survey, which is being coordinated by Executive member Tim Woodland, the Club's new Program Director. Please note the deadline of February 19th for the return of your survey forms.

Beyond these initial steps, as your new President, I will be proposing a number of new initiatives with the aim of "widening the circle" of interest in postcard collecting in British Columbia:

1. Asking ourselves the question of "Who we are"? The 2012 roster of 99 Club members reveals that only 44 live in Vancouver and the surrounding cities of West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby etc., with a majority of members living elsewhere in BC or out of province. In fact only 25 of our members reside in the City of Vancouver. We again need to consider the possibility of re-naming ourselves the B.C. Postcard Club and reaching out to postcard collectors across the Province to become club members. Many of us know and enjoy the company of collectors all across the Province - we think particularly of the warm welcome we always receive at the Muffin Break meetings in Victoria and the postcard friends we have made in Vernon, White Rock, Williams Lake and Lake Country etc. Not only are many of us not from Vancouver but our collecting interests are also certainly not confined to Vancouver. These interests are just as diverse geographically across the Province as our membership. Our club name needs to reflect the province-wide scope and interests of our members.

2. There is a growing recognition of the importance of postcards as a historical resource. The "front of the card" contains a unique image of life in bygone times - providing for many a more accessible "window" into the early life of the province than you can read about in a book - transportation, buildings, dress, shipping, forestry, schools, churches, mining - you name it, it's all there on BC postcards. And social historians, genealogists and anyone interested in the lives of earlier generations can also find a wealth of information on "the backs" - more often than not rather banal ("wish you were here", "see you for dinner this evening",) but sometimes witty, poignant, tragic, humorous or suggestive and often reflecting the social customs and prejudices of the times. We need to reach out to others with an interest in the history of BC in the first half of the 20th century - historians, archivists, librarians, those who create or



Philip Francis, new Club President. Philip has been collecting postcards of British Columbia since 2005 and now focusses on real photo postcards of Vancouver.

manage special collections as well as those who research and teach or who are interested in genealogy.

3. We can also reach out to BC collectors with different interests because old postcards contain much that is of potential interest to collectors of paper ephemera, postal history, early motor vehicles etc. And they collect much that is of interest to us. For example, how can we become better informed about the scarcity of a particular cancellation or how to date a postcard from the stamp; or obtain ephemera as a means of contextualizing the work of a favourite photographer or postcard publisher.? We can offer to present our postcards to other collectors and we can welcome them as guests or representatives at our monthly meetings, which are a rich source of information on a range of different subjects.

4. We might consider offering a series of "Postcards 101" sessions for those who are either new to collecting postcards or interested in starting a collection. Many of us have had to learn "the hard way" how to start a collection, organize it, catalogue it, how to buy postcards online, how to get the most out of a postcard show etc. We need to attract a new generation of postcard collectors and to make greater use of digital media to inform, educate and enthuse about postcard collecting. Postcards are meant to be seen and enjoyed and many of them present very well in enlarged digital images.

I have a lot of sympathy with an "if it ain't broke don't fix it" philosophy when it comes to clubs and voluntary organizations. With a healthy bank balance and a core group of loyal members, the Vancouver Postcard Club is far from being broke. But I very much agree with my predecessor that we need to attract new members to ensure our long term survival. Please send us your ideas on this subject in your survey responses so that your new Executive Committee can take them into account in framing recommendations. We will consult widely before making any major changes.

Meanwhile, as you'll see from this newsletter, postcard collecting is alive and well in British Columbia and we hope you'll take advantage of some of the opportunities to buy and sell cards at shows in Vancouver, Victoria, Richmond and the annual TPC show in Toronto in the weeks ahead. See you there! Again, sincere thanks to Don Steele for his heroic leadership of the Club in recent years. We shall try to live up to his high standards.

BIOGRAPHIES OF B. C. PHOTOGRAPHERS

CHARLES CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT, 1901-1972

Compiled by M. Waddington

Charles Christopher Wright was born August 6, 1901 in Wales.

According to the information on his death certificate, he arrived in Canada circa 1922 and in B. C. about 1932. He may have lived in Saskatchewan before arriving in B. C. - his obituary mentions that while living in that province he spent many years with Mr. and Mrs. R.H. Leake and family (parents of Mrs. Leslie Potter of Oliver) and with Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Dolphin and family.

Wright first appears in Vancouver directories in 1940 as a picture framer rooming at 4486 Commercial Drive. In 1942 he was described as being a picker at West Coast Woollen Mills, and an employee at Boeings. He was listed as an employee (riveter) at Boeings from 1943 to 1946, a finisher for Home Photo, 255 Granville St., Vancouver, from ca 1947 to 1949, a printer for Gowen, Sutton from 1953 to 1959, a photographer for Coast Publishing from 1960 to 1965, and a photographer from 1966 to 1972.

In May of 1972 he retired to Oliver, making his home with Robert and Joan Potter and their sons Lee, Ross and Vance.

In August tragedy struck. William Bernard Lepine, aka William McConnell, a 27 year old schizophrenic American who had worked in orchards in Summerland, took a gardening and maintenance job for the municipality of Creston in 1971 before being hired as a gardener and children's supervisor for Creston's Dr. Endicott Home for the Retarded. Fired when he took one of their vehicles without permission, he spent some time in the East Kootenay Mental Health Unit in Cranbrook but returned several times to harass the staff at Creston. Subsequently he was committed to Riverview. Believing that his mission was to rescue the children at the Dr. Endicott Home from a nuclear holocaust, he escaped three times, on the last occasion in July of 1972.

On August 28th he shot and killed Wright and 16 year old Lee Potter who were servicing orchard irrigating equipment in Oliver. Commandeering their Land Rover, he headed east, killing Phyllis Clark and injuring her husband Lester and Mr. and Mrs. Allan Wilson, all of Princeton, at Damfino campsite, 60 miles north of Westbridge. He went on to kill Herbert and Nellie Thomas of Rock Creek at Edgewood and Nakusp resident Thomas John Pozney near Burton,



Grotto & Pavilion, Stanley Park, Vancouver, B.C. Unsigned. Published by The Gowen & Sutton Co. Attributed to C.C. Wright

before being captured at Galena Bay. On October 8, 1974 Lepine was found not guilty by reason of insanity and committed to Riverview.

Wright and Potter, whose bodies were found on the Kettle Valley road, five miles south of the Damfino campsite, were buried October 1st, 1972 in Oliver Public Cemetery.

The C.C. Wright accession (Visual Records 199111-001) in the B. C. Archives contains just over 1,600 nitrate negatives and over 930 contact prints mostly from the 1920s to 1949. According to the accession record, some of the photographs are by Victor Bull and several other photographers. The photographs depict B. C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec, most of which were published as postcards by the Vancouver firm Gowen, Sutton Co. for whom Wright had worked. They were donated by Kenne Allen, son of George Allen, who had acquired them from Wright upon the latter's retirement. Kenne retained the Wright material for commercial reproduction, however there are also C.C. Wright negatives in the George Allen Aerial Photos accession (Visual Records 198312-005).

Due to preservation measures taken by the B. C. Archives for its nitrate negatives, researchers will need to contact staff for access procedures well in advance of any visit.

In 2002 Dan Propp, himself a postcard photographer, described his association with Wright at Coast Publishing circa 1964 in these words:

"The owner of Coast Publishing was Tony Sardone, who had purchased the business just a year or so before my employment. Previous to that the company was called Gowen and Sutton, well known to postcard collectors today.

The only employee besides myself was an elderly and wise gentleman called Chris Wright. Chris had been with Gowen and Sutton for many years and turned out to be something of a mentor, teaching the new owner the ins and outs of the postcard business...

Often I would have the privilege of listening to the nostalgia that literally danced in the eyes of Chris when he spoke of the good old days at Gowen and Sutton. In the back of the basement much of the equipment used to make black and white plus tinted photographic cards was still there. So was the dark room, the Pako dryers and thousands of five by seven negative glass plates. Chris would take me on a tour of this untouched basement postcard museum...

He spoke of the days when he, as a postcard photographer, would carry the four by five graphic (in more modern times, when cut sheet film had replaced the old glass plates) on the handlebars of a bicycle. He would pedal the bike into Stanley Park in search of new postcard views.

Very conservative and self sufficient, Wright never wasted film. Whether it was a trip to the interior of British Columbia, the Canadian Rockies or Vancouver Island, he would take only a few sheets of film. Truly a perfectionist, all images developed precisely as he intended them to...

Less than two years afterwards Coast Publishing closed its doors as a postcard entity. My understanding is that the glass plates shattered one atop the other as they were unceremoniously tossed into a dumpster."

Special thanks to David Mattison who drew attention to this photographer and to Lynn Couch-Allaric, Oliver and District Heritage Society, and Ron Souch for their assistance.

Cheramy's Chatter - by J & G Cheramy

December 1 – 31. A quiet month for a change. Just the usual exhilaration of Tuesday morning "Muffin Break" at Cedar Hill Rec. Centre. There's always quite a bit of "Show 'N Tell" and some trading going on. We see most of the regulars weekly: Lee Dowsley, Ron Greene, Ian & Robin Mowat, Gray Scrimgeour, Don Stewart Sr., and sometimes Michael Rice

After the morning get-together from 9:00AM to about 11:30AM, we drive to nearby Cedar Hill Golf Club restaurant for lunch with the Mowats. Good food, generous portions and super friendly staff. We sometimes add one or two more to our group for lunch. We've just learned that the restaurant is closing because it's losing about \$1,000.00 per day! More on the outcome later.

Dec. 23rd, we drove up to Nanaimo to spend Christmas with our daughter Vicki and our son-in-law. She's an excellent cook, and we took advantage of three plus days of eating some delicious meals. I had just received a parcel of postcards in the mail Thursday afternoon, so I played with this new stock in between meals! Great way to spend a Holiday!

We even got to look at a fabulous collection of Prince Rupert postcards on our way home. We had time for only one album of perusing but saw many super cards. The other two albums will have to wait for our next trip.

All the best of 2012 to everyone from the Cheramys!



Palace Bakery was located at 2159 Main, Vancouver, BC in 1921 city directory. Photo by J.W. Wilson Co., Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver. (from the collection of John & Glenda Cheramy)

References for C.C. Wright article

B. C. Archives death registration 1972-09-012920
(in mfm B13319)

B. C. directories (Vancouver) 1940-1949, 1952-1972

Oliver Chronicle, Aug. 31, 1972:

"A day of terror"

"Funeral services will be held Friday for Lee Potter, age 16"

"Friday funeral for C.C. Wright"

Propp, Dan. "Memories of a postcard photographer"
(in *Postcard Collector*, Oct. 2002, pp. 38-40)

Vancouver Province, Sept. 30, 1972, pp. 1-2: "The menace of madness: could deadly rampage have been prevented?" by Tony Eberts

Cariboo Wagon Road

Here are two cards from Ron Souch's presentation at the Club meeting on 15th Jan. Francis Bernard, who started delivering mail on foot, eventually owned a large fleet of stagecoaches as well as mail sleighs for use in winter. The first shows an escorted freight wagon leaving Ashcroft which became the third mile zero for the Cariboo Wagon road after the railway came to the Fraser Canyon.



The second one shows six of the eight automobiles that Bernard's B.X. Express was using for transport in 1913, two years before his last stagecoach left for Barkerville.



Upcoming Meetings & Events

VANCOUVER POSTCARD CLUB MEETINGS (12 NOON)

Feb. 19: Tom Beasley – Photographers of Thunder Bay, 1900-1930

Mar. 18: Diane Rogers - subject tba

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 12; Retro Design & Antiques Fair, Croatian Cultural Centre, 3250 Commercial Drive at 16th Avenue

Feb. 18-19; Greater Seattle Postcard, Stamp and Paper Collectibles Show, Kent Commons, 525-4th Avenue North, Kent WA

Feb. 26; Toronto Postcard Club Show, the Old Mill Inn, 21 Old Mill Road, Toronto, Ontario

Mar. 3-4; VICTOPICAL Stamp & Postcard Show, Comfort Hotel, Victoria

Mar. 18; 21st Century Flea Market, Croatian Centre, 3250 Commercial Drive at 16th Avenue

Mar. 18-19; RICHPEX Stamp Show, Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel, Richmond

Apr. 2-3; Oakridge Stamp & Coin Fair, Oakridge Mall, Vancouver

Apr. 9-10; Fraser Valley Antique & Collectible Club show, Queens Park Arena, New Westminster

Apr. 14-15; Kerrisdale Antiques Fair, 5670 East Blvd at 41st Ave

May 13-14; Vancouver Stamp Fair, Holiday Inn Express, 2889 E. Hastings at Renfrew, Vancouver

May 27; Vancouver Postcard Club Show, HCC, 3096 East Hastings St., Vancouver

American Views - "Dot.Gone"

By Buzz Kinninmont

The Internet boom of the 1990's was well under way when the advertising postcards known as freecards or rack cards appeared on the scene in America.

Originating in Europe at the beginning of the decade, the distinctive display racks in which they were distributed began to appear in restaurants, bars and other hip hangouts in New York and Los Angeles in mid-1994 and in other cities shortly thereafter.

Some of the original publishers' names only lasted for a few print runs, like Gitter's Gallery (NY, named for owner Michael Gitter), Five Finger (NY, named for the "five-finger discount" because the cards were there for the taking) and On The House (Chicago).

Gitter's became M@xRacks and the other two joined forces as GoCard. At about the same time, pik:nik (later Hot Stamp) began operations in Los Angeles.

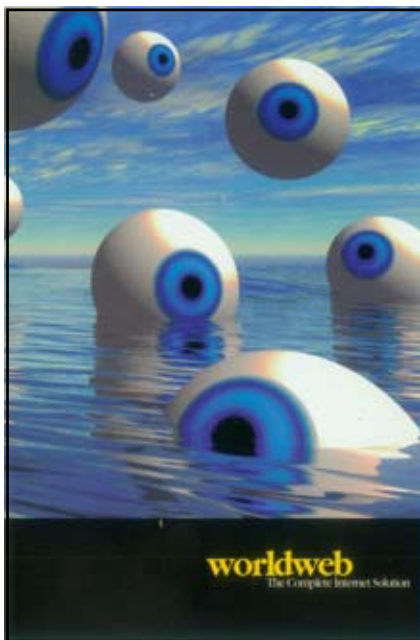
Those companies quickly expanded their operations across the country, while a number of independent single-city operations sprung up as well, including Frankie Freecards in Washington, Postcard Factory in Philadelphia, Striped Tennis Shoe in Salt Lake City, Global Design in Baltimore. Even Boulder, Colorado had Direct Effect postcards for a fleeting moment.

A number of mergers and take-overs ensued, with M@x & Go eventually being the two survivors. Distribution on the West Coast began to fade in the early 2000's, and a recent check online revealed that M@x appears to have wrapped up East Coast operations in 2009, with GoCard now being a very small subset of a business called GoGorilla Media.

Many factors combined to bring about the demise of freecards, including the difficulty of measuring their effect as marketing tools, ever-increasing printing & distribution costs and the failure

of the publishers to grasp their significance as collectibles and promote them as such both to advertisers and to the public.

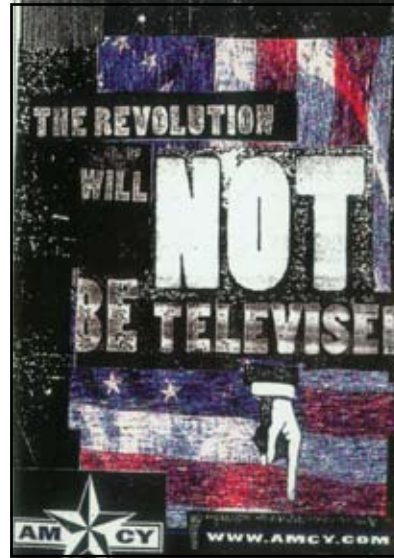
Many of the national advertisers failed to grasp the concept and didn't make the effort to design postcard-specific images as part of their campaigns. Perhaps the worst offender was the movie industry which often just shrunk their text-heavy poster-size ads down to 4 in. by 6 in., producing cluttered, unappealing images.



"WorldWeb" website design - "The Complete Internet Solution"

It's too bad they've faded away, because these postcards are terrific mirrors of their time, featuring ads for clothing, movies, cars, theatre & dance, charities & fund-raisers, social issues and - perhaps the best cards in terms of great graphics - ads for the restaurants and other venues in which they were distributed.

But, in terms of them representing their specific era, my personal favourite rack cards are the ones that advertised flash-in-the-pan Internet-boom businesses... dead dot.com's from the 1990's.



"American Cybercast" provider of online-only video entertainment - "With the world's first (and best) episodic web-shows like The Spot, EON-4 and The Pyramid."

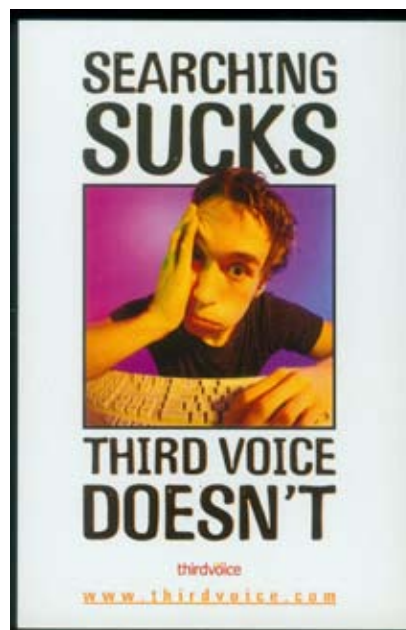
At a recent postcard show I asked a couple of my shoppers to set some of those cards aside as they found them, and of the 18 cards that they found, 17 of them were for now-dead online business ventures, including the 3 pictured with this article.

If you try to go to some of the web addresses on those cards today, you get a variety of results.

Some, like cyberjava.com, whisk you off to totally unrelated sites. Originally it was a collaborative art gallery venture, with the "java" part of the name likely referring to JavaScript programming language. Now it takes you to a Hollywood, CA espresso bar called Tiago.

Others show you who currently owns the inactive domain name, and whether the name is for sale.

And some of them take you nowhere at all... just like those shares of eToys that you might have bought somewhere between \$20 and \$84 a share during that company's brief moment of stock market boom and bust over a few short months back in 1999.



"Third Voice" search engine enhancement software - "let the information on the Web come to you."

Chief White Elk

By M. Waddington

One of the most intriguing, and colourful stories connected with Stanley Park's Hollow Tree concerns "Chief White Elk" here portrayed in all his regalia in a 1920s Gowen and Sutton postcard.



An unidentified, undated, news clipping glued on the back of John Cheramy's copy of the card reported that "Dr. Trewanna," whose stage name was "Chief White Elk," and a young Indian woman put on an Indian show entitled "Before the White Man Came" at Victoria's Variety Theatre in 1922. At the conclusion of the act Chief White Elk gave an address on Indian customs and his Indian partner took the occasion to rap the Dominion authorities for what she claimed was lack of educational facilities for the Indians in Canada.

Attracted by the allegations against the Indian administration, Indian commissioner W.E. Ditchburn interviewed the pair after the show. Trewanna, who claimed that he had taken his medical degree at Carlisle University but said that he was not allowed to practise in the United States, admitted that the allegations as to lack of educational facilities were unfounded and promised to amend matters. Shortly afterward the couple left town and played in Nanaimo and other Island centres.

In fact, as Ditchburn was to discover, Chief White Elk was no more Indian than Grey Owl. The so-called "chief" was the American showman, actor, lecturer and singer, Edgar Laplante, born March 1888 in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, son of Arthur Laplante, a carpenter, and Virginia Ostiguy, both of whom originally came from Canada.

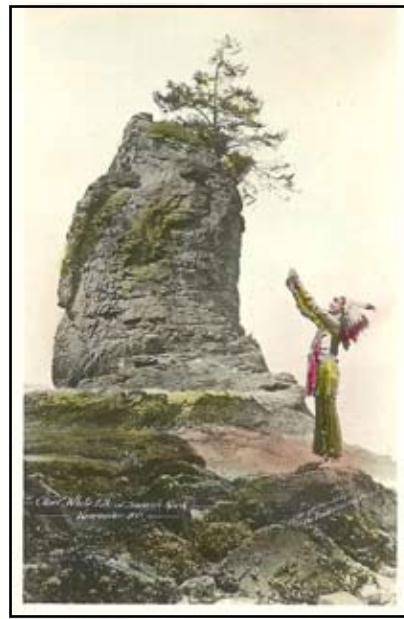
In March 1918 he and his wife, Princess Ah-Tra-Suan (described variously as Bertha Thompson, a Yurok Indian who was the favourite model of Emma B. Freeman, and as an Indian from the Klamath reservation, Oregon) whom he had married on the steps of the state capital, spoke on behalf of the American Red Cross in Salt Lake city, Utah. On this occasion he claimed that he had served on the American troop transport, "Antilles"- under the assumed name of C.W. Ellis because he wasn't allowed to use his Indian name - and was severely wounded when he was thrown from the crow's nest when the ship was torpedoed in October 1917. Rumour had it that the "chief" was wanted in New York and Wyoming for fraud.

In April he gave several pep talks in Berkeley, California on behalf of the Liberty Bond drive, during which time the Princess gave a talk on Indian religions.

He later stated that he had accompanied the Prince of Wales on a tour in 1919, had given him an Indian costume as a gift, and had named him "Morning Star." On December 5th, 1922, Laplante passed through Montreal on the way to Portland, Maine where he took passage on the White Star liner, "Regina" for England. On arrival in Liverpool he told reporters that he was Dr. Teewanna of Vancouver, B. C., that he was the last chief of the Cherokees, a branch of the Iroquois, and that he had come to England to lay the grievances of his people before the King.

According to Laplante, Princess Ah-Tra-Suan died sometime in 1922. On June 27, 1923, using the name Ray Tewanna, and claiming that his father's name was Chief Blackrobe, he married Ethel Elizabeth Holmes in Stockport Wesleyan Methodist Church, Levinshulme, Manchester.

Subsequently he toured Europe with the Paramount film *The Covered Wagon* (1923). Before and after the film there were dances, songs and a speech about Indian culture. Posters of the show describe Laplante as "Dr. Chief White Elk - Noted Tenor and Cinema Star," who was to sing "The Sunshine of Your Smile" and "The Sheik of Araby." Ethel and her child Leslie, born in 1914, accompanied him to Paris (where the show broke up) and Brussels, but had to return home when they ran out of money.



As "Capo Cervo Bianco" [Prince White Elk] - Indian name "Tewanna Ray" - Laplante arrived on the Italian scene in the summer of 1924 claiming that he had come to Europe to defend the rights of the Tuscarora at the League of Nations in Geneva.

Arriving in Nice with a troupe of Arapaho Indians, he attracted the attention of the Austrian countess Melanie Khevenhuller, who showered him with presents, including a Bugatti racing car, and introduced him to the highest levels of society as her Italian nephew. Exotic, worldly, witty, incredibly rich (he was said to own oil lands in America)

and generous (with the Countess' money), he was received in audience by Pope Pius (or so he claimed), and suggested to Mussolini that fascists and Indians march side by side to Geneva.

However by June of 1925, penniless and sick, he was arrested in Bellinzona, Switzerland, and after serving three months in Lugano for swindling Swiss soldiers, he was tried and convicted in Milan on the charge of swindling the Countess Khevenhuller out of 1,000,000 lira. (She said the money was a loan; he claimed that it was a gift.) After spending 5 years, 7 months and 15 days in prison he was sent to Genoa where the American consul gave him money for incidentals and arranged for his passage home on the American ship "Executive." (Continued on page 8)

Chief White Elk (contd.)

In April 1930 Laplante was listed in the US census as a theatrical performer, living in Pawtucket with his cousin, the widow Exilda Perrault, and her son Arthur, a theatrical agent.

In January of 1931, he showed up in Rock Hill, South Carolina as Chief White Elk, described as being a highly educated man who spoke 14 languages and 9 dialects, and as an actor and singer who had appeared in such movies as Whoopee! and The Big Trail in 1930. [Laplante also claimed to have appeared in The Fall of the Romanovs (1917), Before the White Man Came (1920), Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1921), and The Sheik (1921).] Billed as the secretary of the American Indian Association which sought the advancement of the welfare of the Indians in the United States, he spoke to city schools presenting beads, blankets and an Indian pageant "Red Wing," which he wrote, to the pupils and music supervisors

On August 11th, after enjoying six weeks of hospitality at the hands of leading Tuscaloosa, Alabama citizens, civic clubs and Boy Scout leaders, Chief White Elk - wanted by police in Selma, Montgomery and Mississippi - left the city leaving behind an unpaid hotel bill and a trunk full of clippings.

Finally, in the last glimpse we have of him, the Reno Gazette of November 24, 1931 reported that "Louie Tewanna, commonly known as Chief White Elk of Shawnee, Oklahoma," who was on his way to the Indian service hospital in Carson City, Nevada for medical treatment, claimed that he had won the 8-mile marathon at the 1908 London Olympics and that he was invited to be a guest at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics.

The records of Laplante's trial are in the State Archives of Turin, Italy and his Indian costume is preserved in Turin's Museo di Antropologia Criminal Cesare Lombroso.

The "Chief White Elk" saga has given rise to four books, one film and an upcoming documentary.

The writer wishes to thank "Rubedo72" for sharing his research on Chief White Elk. References for this Article are available on request from Margaret Waddington - too numerous to list here.

Postview

Postview is the quarterly newsletter of the Vancouver Postcard Club. The views expressed herein are the views of the Editor and contributors and may not reflect the views of the Club as a whole.

We welcome letters and articles from members but reserve the right to edit them in the interests of space. Please send any material by email to the Editor, Philip Francis, at philipfrancis@shaw.ca. Postcard images to accompany your material are welcomed (please send as a .jpg attachment).

Can you help?

In the last issue, we asked members if they could clarify the link between Harold Uttley Schofield of Vernon and B.C. Photo Card Co. of Vancouver. Several members have been in touch to let us know that Schofield moved from Vernon to Vancouver in 1912 to operate B.C. Photo Card Co. but have not been able to provide details. Don M. Stewart has written that "I have always filed B. C. Photo Card Co. under Schofield." That's good enough for us (for now!).



Ken Ellison in Vernon sent us the above real photo postcard of a Provincial Police Station, published by The Gowen, Sutton Co., some time before 1951. Can anyone identify the location?



This wonderful real photo postcard of the former Woods Hotel at the south east corner of Hastings and Carrall (now the Pennsylvania Hotel and restored for social housing) looks east along Hastings Street. Leading a procession are two police constables on horseback followed by an Indian Chief in full ceremonial dress, also on horseback.

The Woods Hotel was completed in 1906 and was one of the first major hotels built on Hastings Street. But can anyone either date or identify the procession or the Indian Chief? The buildings are decorated with flags and many spectators are leaning out of the windows of the Woods Hotel. The photographer is not known.