

Hall of Fame Open for Viewing!

It was a long process but at last the first installment of our Siskiyou County Hall of Fame is complete. Several volunteers researched the subjects, wrote narratives about them, sought out photos and objects to put in the display cases and arranged the displays. Some of the names you will recognize, others might be new to you. The exhibit takes up both sides of the entryway. This exhibit will be up for the rest of 2024 and we expect to follow it with Part 2.

The exhibit's "guest curators" were Grace Bennett, Karen Cleland, Gail Jenner, Jill Livingston, Debbie Peters, and Bruce Stiny. The Friends of the Museum and Siskiyou Credit Union sponsored the exhibit.



Sheriff LaRue, Supervisor Ogren and Sheriff Charlie Byrd's brother Al came to see our new exhibit.

Picture Postcards, A Window to the Past

Are you a deltiologist? Perhaps you are and you don't even know it. This exotic-sounding word has Latin roots that mean "small writing tablet" and "specialist" and is nothing more than the official word for "postcard collector."

Postcard collecting has its fans and fan-atics, many with "specialties" based on such things as the location pictured, the publisher or photographer, or a special event. The collector should feel no guilt for squandering a few dollars on a favorite scene. While it's true that, even at this low price, the card's cost has increased a hundred-fold since the first time it was sold, this is still a relatively inexpensive hobby to get in to.

Early in the 20th century, a decade-long postcard-collecting craze that started first in Europe and spread to the US reached almost manic proportions. Not only did hundreds of thousands of the illustrated epistles pass through post offices weekly, but those on the receiving end of the "wish you were here" missives seem to have cherished them. Postcard albums were displayed on tables, and houses were equipped with "postcard closets" to store the postcard-overflow. *Cont. on next page*



Dressing our Hall of Fame ballplayer.

The decline of the thoughtfully-written letter was declared imminent, yet it appears that the postals supplemented rather than supplanted newsy tomes from friends and relatives. It took the telephone with cents-per-minute long distance charges and, finally, email, texting and social media to hammer the nails in the letter-writing coffin. We still scratch out a few postcards when we are away from home or the send the occasional greeting card, but one seldom has to write a personal letter.

Postcard collectors exhibit the typical collector's organizational strategy to catalog and categorize their finds, and in addition have neatly divided the history of the humble postcard into Eras, some of which overlap. But what it boils down to is that, previous to the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition, all postcards were of the plain government-issue sort. At that time Exposition promoters convinced the postal service to let them print some Exposition scenes on penny postcards, and thus started the tradition of "picture post cards."

But until 1907, a Big Year in postcard history, by law only the address could be written on the reverse side. Any message was either pre-printed on the illustrated side, such as "Greetings from Wherever," or scrawled alongside or on top of the picture.

So it was the new "divided backs" allowing message and address on the same side that ushered in true postcard mania. The frenzy, sometimes called the Golden Age, continued until WWI. After this time postcards returned to being just postcards and not a thing that required the building of a new storage closet.

Later in the 20th century postcards again attained "collectible" status. There are three basic types of scenic cards (disregarding the greeting card type postcards for holidays and birthdays that were popular in the early days). **Linens** are colorful prints on a textured paper. Their colors are often not quite true and sometimes vary (i.e. the exact same scene is printed in somewhat different shades). They have a painterly feel to them and were printed roughly 1930-1945. The earlier linen cards were often printed in Europe, sometimes even those of American postcard publishers, but WWI and high tariffs ended that arrangement.

Chromes, taken from Kodak's Kodachrome film, are basically color photographs printed on a printing press, the type of postcard found on the rack today. They first came out in 1939. The black and white **Real**

Photo cards (1900-1960) were actually individual photographic prints. These cards, being "real photos" as it were, are realistic views of everything and everyplace under the sun, which is what makes them fun and so useful for the researcher. Small-town studio photographers supplemented their portrait work by photographing the local sights and businesses. The photos were printed directly onto the photo paper with postcard backs made by a number of companies starting in 1901, and then sold from the studio or local drug store. The scene was identified by a caption etched onto the negative.

Major sites and attractions were widely depicted on postcards by many photographers and artists, yet even the tiniest town in America had its own street scene postcard. This was because the cards were the products of small local or regional studios. The breadth of subjects is almost endless, resulting in a gold mine of cards that provide a "then and now" time line of streets, buildings, types of businesses, special events, working scenes and everyday activities, not to mention local disasters, that is priceless.

Artfully colored linen era cards often showed things as we wished they might be; blazing sunsets, bountiful blooms, rosy cheeked babies, the whitest snow, the orangest oranges, the reddest redwoods. The cards are appealing but do not provide the historical record that the Real Photo cards do. Saying photo cards are a "window to the past" is trite but true.

In our part of the country the itinerant postcard photographer of note was Jervie H. Eastman. Eastman Studios postcards seem to be everywhere. There are, in fact, 13,000 of them in a repository at the Shields Library of the University of California at Davis, and online. The images span 70 years, 1890-1960. What a treasure trove!

The postcard photographers respected each other's territories and there was little overlap. For example, in the Eastman collection, images of state capital Sacramento are absent but Davis and Woodland, a few miles west, and Auburn and Roseville, a few miles east, are well represented. Eastman scoots over the border into southern Oregon a bit and has a few images from the redwoods on the northern California coast, but for the most part he sticks to northeastern California. His panel truck and later station wagon emblazoned "Eastman's Studio, Susanville, California" is often seen

This *Linen* postcard of Cantara Loop depicts a seemingly idyllic scene.



A *Real Photo* postcard from Eastman Studios shows what Forks of Salmon looked like in 1956, tells us that the store was called Wert's, that there was a public phone on the premises and includes fine examples of vintage signage.

A typical 1950-60s era *Chrome* color postcard, a later Eastman Studios image. This was pre Interstate-5, when US99 was still a two lane highway.

parked in the corner of a postcard scene, adding a very personal touch.

Eastman bought a studio in Susanville in 1920 from Jack Thompson. He took on a partner, Mirl Simmons in 1936, who bought out Eastman in 1959 and kept at it another twenty years. Between the two of them, mid-20th century life and work in this part of California was well documented. I surmise that other parts of the country had their own "Jervie Eastman," and for this we should be grateful.

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Artifact Spotlight

Where is This?

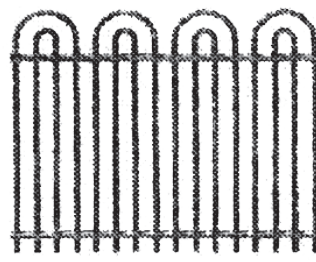
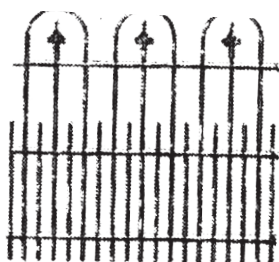
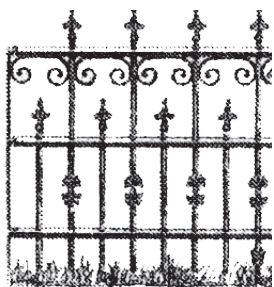
Most people will recognize that the pictured iron fence is in a graveyard. The graveyard happens to be the one next to the historic 1855 Catholic church that still stands in Sawyers Bar on the Salmon River. The plaque on the gate caught my eye: The Rogers Iron Company Springfield O[ho]. I was impressed that the heavy fence had traveled so far and into such a remote area.

A few minute's research revealed that the company, first called Rogers Fence Company, was founded in 1882, shortly after the patent date (1881) appearing on the plaque. The

company name was changed to Rogers Iron Company in 1892, dating the fence to after 1892. The 1869 trans-continental railroad followed by the tracks laid north and south through Siskiyou County in 1887 is what made shipping iron cemetery fence out west feasible, although the final leg of the trip had to go by wagon. Such fencing is found in countless historic cemeteries.

The fence rails are made of wrought iron. This is the traditional material of blacksmiths, almost pure iron (less than 1% carbon) that is easily worked, resists corrosion and is not brittle. In contrast, cast iron (with 3% carbon) is used for the details, such as knobs on top of the rails and the plaque itself. It is poured into molds, is hard and brittle when cooled and is unsuitable for hammering or shaping. The particular style of fence surrounding the plot behind the gate is called "bow and picket."

The Sawyers Bar cemetery is still in use, and with the church is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built by the community in the Salmon River mining camp known as Bestville and served people of all faiths. When gold was found underneath the little town, the entire settlement moved a quarter mile away and became Sawyers Bar. All of Bestville and the ground surrounding the church were washed away by the hydraulic mining. But the church was not disturbed, leaving the church and cemetery sitting alone atop a half-acre man-made knoll.



Some iron fence styles.

(left) scalloped picket

(center) bow and picket

(right) bow and hairpin

Oysters a la Siskiyou

An old story from the museum files. The article appeared in “The Knave,” a history-oriented newspaper column in the *Oakland Tribune* that sometimes featured Rosborough’s stories. The column ran from the early 1900s through circa 1970.

The story Alex J. Rosborough tells us this week goes back to that particular period when the rich placer claims along the Scott and Klamath River bars were petering out, and restless miners moved on to find better gravel. The element that moved in on these abandoned claims became known as “second-hand miners,” and it is at Poorman’s Bar just opposite the lower end of Scott Bar that we find one such simple-minded fellow puttering about with very little success as Rosborough’s yarn begins. “His findings were so small that he determined to look elsewhere,” reports our narrator, “so, as he joined the throng at the saloon that night he announced he was figuring on leaving camp, to look for a job at which he could earn better pay. However, before leaving the resort for his cabin he was approached by a stranger who took him aside and in a mysterious manner told him of a wonderful discovery in which they might become partners and share the profits. His discovery—a bed of oysters in a nearby stream. Now, this was indeed a surprise proposition; something entirely new that would prove a treat for the diets of miners up in this region. The offer was eagerly accepted, and the prospective oyster man was led to where there was a large bed of fresh-water mussels. Little did he suspect that to eat the meat of these fresh-water bivalve mollusks is like chewing on an elastic shoe sole. True, the Indians used to eat them, but only after baking them in hot coals. But he wasn’t even aware of this. Gathering a generous supply, he prepared for business.

“Because there was no vinegar to be procured in the area, our ‘second-hand miner’ paid \$5 for a jar of pickles and drained off what vinegar he could from the jar. Then he bought some tin plates, a small tray on which the luscious looking bivalves were temptingly displayed on the half-shell, and he was ready for business in the barroom at Scott Bar. The first ap-

parent customer was his silent partner who, in a loud voice, ordered half a dozen oysters. But on the side he whispered to his willing server that he was doing this to boost trade. After this he sat down at a table near the door with the evident intent of devouring the tempt-ing oysters. While all this was going on a gambler entered and was quickly enticed by the display of oysters. The fake diner seasoning his dinner undoubtedly had its effect on the newcomer, too. But no sooner did the make-believe, oyster-eating partner see the gambler order a plate than he slid out the door, taking his untouched oyster-looking muscles with him. The hungry card sharp proceeded to put salt and vinegar on his plate, but when he put the first oyster in his mouth and closed his teeth on it there was a look of surprise on his face. Once more his teeth came together, but to no avail. Something was wrong and he was quick to say so. Anger was in his eyes when he shouted ‘swindler’ at the innocent vendor. Next came threats to thrash him, or even plug him, as his hand went to his pistol pocket. By this time the vendor had his customer’s money back in his hands and, with heavy heart, started for his little cabin across the river. But insult was added to injury. When he reached the river bank he found the little ferryboat on the other side. His partner, fearing the worst, had appropriated the boat and hastily put the river between himself and trouble. His shouts were loud but of no avail. As the night was getting colder, the sad and disillusioned oyster vendor decided to return to the saloon. Finding the gambler gone, he begged permission to sleep on the top of a table. Next morning, he disappeared without a farewell to anyone—wandering away, no doubt, to find a better business with better pay. And a business where oysters and vinegar pickles were not required.”

Editors Note: REAL oysters were a fairly common and much-loved feature of the California gold miner’s diet, probably more so in the Sierras than in the Siskiyou. These were the Olympia oysters native to the entire west coast, including San Francisco Bay, until the beds were depleted. They survive today in mud flats in the state of Washington where they are raised commercially.



The historic Catholic church in Sawyers Bar (see story on page 4).

Museum News & Events

New “Scavenger Hunt”

While we still have our colorful one page scavenger hunt designed for young students, one of our volunteers has created a new “adult” (more complex) scavenger hunt that will challenge older students and adults. If you have the time to make the very most of your museum visit, this little booklet will handily guide you through the museum as you seek the answers to its questions. Even if you have been here many times, you will be surprised and how much you’ve missed, and how much there still is to learn. It even has a crossword and a word game! Come in and pick one up!

Outdoor Museum Guided Tour - June

We will be doing something different this year for our annual Outdoor Museum tour. This time, a docent will be stationed at each building and some of the equipment to give short presentations on each feature. Visitors will move from station to station in small groups. This will be our June *Siskiyou Stories*, tentatively set for June 15.

Scholarships

Thanks to our Giving Tuesday donations we will again be awarding one or two \$500 scholarships to Siskiyou County high school students planning to attend 2 or 4 year colleges OR trade schools. Apps due at the museum no later than April 5.

a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, EIN 82-1833303
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Newsletter Editor: Jill Livingston
Board Meetings: Second Tuesdays @ 10am
Everyone Welcome!

Memberships Due!

Time to renew for 2024, with a new benefit - **free admission for the year**. What a deal! You can renew or join online on our website:

www.siskiyoucountymuseumfriends.org

or come on in and join in person (or by mail).



Wildflowers of California's Klamath Mountains

Including the Castle Crags, Marble Mountain, Russian, & Trinity Alps Wilderness Areas

Ken DeCamp - Julie Kneisboed - Julie Knorr

Siskiyou Stories

Feb. 10 @ 1pm
Henley Unhinged!
Researcher Bett Peterson

April 13 @ 1pm
Wildflowers of California's Klamath Mountains
Author Ken DeCamp