

January Meeting

A range of postcard displays based on Carisbrooke Castle, Osborne House, A & B of A—Z of London, and a set of embroidered postcards based on the Bayeau Tapestry. The cards are all early 1900—1950 era cards. Then the display of Reproduction cards of Sunlight Soap is of the modern era. Thanks to Linda for bringing along for the members to view.



A—Z of
London

Carisbrooke
Castle



Embroidered cards



Osborne
house



Sunlight
cards

February Meeting

The first postcard in his display is of the Drumadoor Bridge. This started Tony's interest in collecting Bridges of South Australia.

The first bridge in South Australia was built of timber in 1837 across the River Torrens. It was washed away in 1839 and replaced again by timber and again washed away in 1944 due to a flood.

Timber bridges were built through the 1850's to mid 1915 era. But as the years progressed how bridges were built also changed. Stone bridges started to be built in the 1960's, from stone we progressed to steel bridges then either re-enforced or pre-stressed concrete.

There is only about 5 major examples that remain from the early 1870's onwards. Currency Creek is currently being restored and is one of the last timber frame bridges standing.

Thanks to Tony for his very interesting talk on bridges



March Meeting

The display by Neil was very colourful , interesting, and illuminating. His knowledge of Linen Postcards also enhanced his display by giving the members a rundown of how Curt started his cards and the processes that he went through to achieve the level of postcard production.

Many thanks Neil

Curt Teich Linen Postcards

What are Linen Postcards?

Linen cards are often confused with Silk postcards produced in France during WW1 and fabric type postcards like those from Spain showing Flamenco dancers.

These are not Linen Postcards and do not form part of what would become the largest postcard publishing company in the World.

So, let's start at the beginning and introduce Curt Teich.

Curt Teich

Curt was born 1877 in Greiz Germany into an existing printing and publishing family.

It is not 100% clear whether he had the blessing of his father, or he was making his own mark, but Curt Teich arrived in the USA 1895 aged 18 as a German Immigrant.

Curt Teich
ca. 1895



Curt setup a Postcard import company in Chicago with a loan from his brother Max, who was already a successful businessman in the Hotel industry.

Around 1904 the company started printing their own postcards and with that started expanding to become the dominant American Postcard printer.

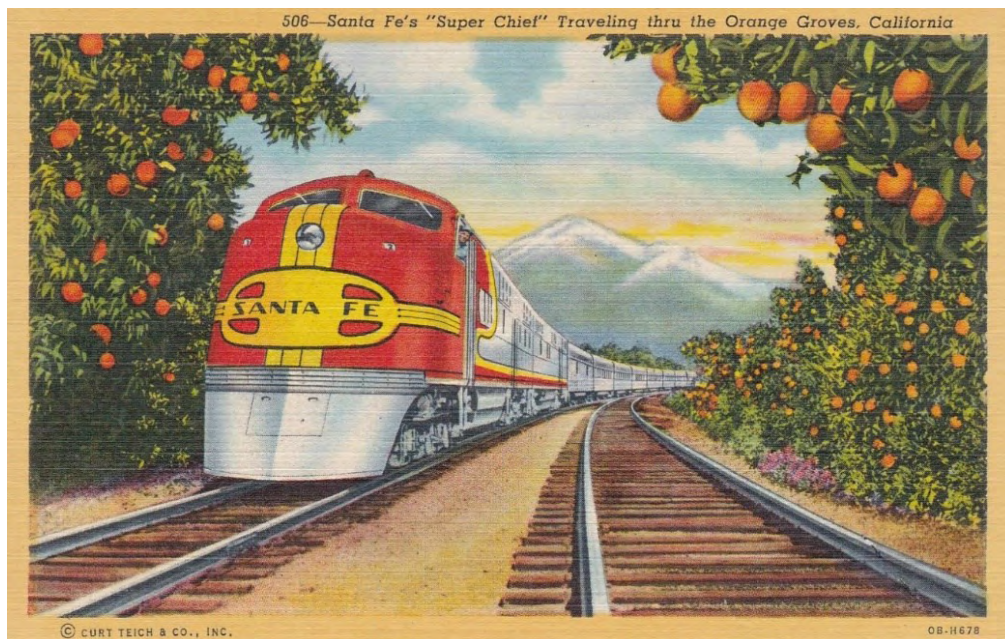
Linen Postcards

The printing process of Linen Postcards was developed in the early 1930's to reduce costs of labour and materials following the ongoing WW1 restrictions, the depression (1929 to 1941) and the change in legislation on the import of German postcards.

At first, Teich tried printing the new bright inks of the day on the company's regular smooth postcard stock, but the colours soaked deep into the paper, leaving the image on the surface dull and faded. And so Teich started tweaking, this time introducing a textured paper into the printing mix which had been run through an embossing roller to impart the surface texture. Simply put, more ink on the surface meant more colour there, too. Concurrently, Teich dialled back the amount of black ink used even more than he had in the 1910s & 20's thus making the vibrant colours of his new ink even more prominent.

By 1931, he had his formula, which he introduced to the world as the "C. T. Art-Colortone," the highfalutin name Teich trademarked for what most of us now know as the linen postcard.

Looking closely at a linen postcard you can see it resembles a painter's canvas, giving each C. T. Art-Colortone postcard the feel of a 5½ by 3½ inch work of art.



While the recipe of ink and paper had an enormous impact on the look of a finished C. T. Art-Colortone, these postcards became pocketsize masterpieces thanks to the work of 20 or so artists employed by Teich & Co. Based in Chicago, where they worked at rows of desks bathed in light from a wall of windows, these "retouchers" would use everything from mechanical airbrushes to precision sable-tipped brushes to clean up, and sharpen details on source photos that were often stupefyingly dull upon arrival.

Working on a 10" x 8" B & W copy photo which when completed with enhancements after typically 4 to 8 hours, was re-photographed and plates made with front and back relief plates.

Halftone proofs were then made for colouring, 1 x black to guide a watercolour artist and 4 x light blue for the colourist. One for each print colour; cyan, magenta, yellow and dark blue.

These were then hand coloured, over approx. 2 to 3 hours for the watercolour required for client approval and up to 10 hours for the colourists to complete the four colour plates.

The Salesmen

No town was too small for a Teich sales agent to pay it a visit, and no visit was ever fruitless enough not to warrant a return. Beyond meeting regularly with the photographers in all regions, there would be regular catchups with local business and restaurant owners, town councils, club members, etc. to realise production of anyone's requirements.

By supplying "made-to-order" postcards tied to small-town civic pride, Teich somewhat inadvertently began documenting both the extraordinary and the mundane corners of American life.

Topics

Teich alone, published about 45,000 unique individual views of the United States using the linen printing process. If you factor in the postcards created by Teich's competitors, the number of American scenes reproduced on linen cards during these decades would likely exceed 100,000.

Between 1920 and 1930, the number of passenger cars in the United States rose from 8 to 23 million, which may explain why so many postcards of roads were produced by Teich & Co.

Most Linen cards were American subjects, but this process was also applied across many companies and global examples like the Sydney one below, do exist.



Serial Numbers

One of the nice things about Curt Teich's postcards is the serial number on the majority allowing accurate dating. If only all companies had adopted this approach, it would have made things a lot easier for us all. The numbering format changed a few times over the decades but the 30's thru to the 70's were particularly easy to decipher.

This web link: https://www.newberry.org/uploads/files/Teich_Postcard_Dating_Guide_2016.pdf defines the breakdown of all the variants.