

Postcard Histories

When it comes to antiques or antiquities, I've got a lot to learn. For instance, I did not know that cash registers before a certain date have labels not only who manufactured it, but who it was manufactured for! I recently learned some interesting things about postcards. Thinking back to the county fairs and other events, there has always been an antique post card vendor, selling the black and white or sepia vintage card of people or places. Penny Postcards have quite a history and are still in high demand.

Up until 1898 only the U.S. Post Office could manufacture postcards. They were very plain, blank on one side for the message, postage and address on the other side. Congress then allowed manufacturers to produce Private Mailing Cards (not postcards, which was reserved for the government produce) from 1898 to 1901. These cards had pictures and writing space on one side, and address and stamp on the back.

The undivided back postcards of 1901 to 1907 had the words Post Card, a place for a stamp and address on one side and a full sized picture on the other. Often, the sender would write their message across the photo.

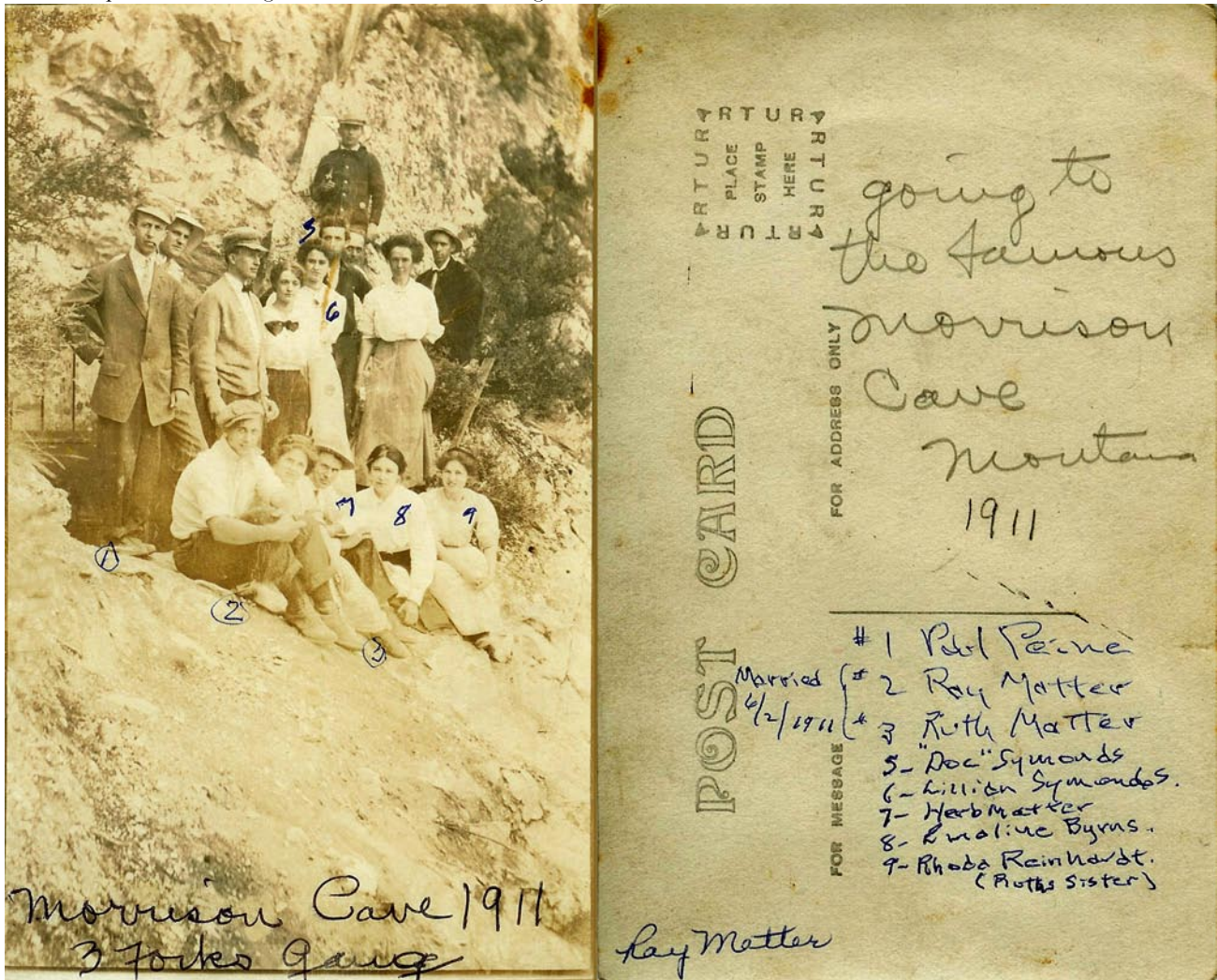
In 1907, Congress allowed the design that is still used today, the divided back postcard. Postage and an address on the right

side and room for a small message of the left side, while the other side was taken up in a full sized picture. From 1907 to 1915, most of these cards were printed in Germany. It is amazing the number of postcards from this era that are still around, including the one featured below.

In 1911 a group of Three Forks residents hopped a train to the Limespur siding for an excursion into Morrison Cave (now Lewis and Clark Caverns). It was a mile and half walk up a steep hill to the cave entrance with not a lot of luxuries along the way. The event is not only mentioned in the Three Forks Herald of August 17, 1911, but a postcard was printed to commemorate the event and one made its way into the collection of the Headwaters Heritage Museum, with some of the adventurers enumerated.

1. Paul Peine, 2&3 Newlyweds Ray and Ruth Matter, 5. Doc Symonds - Dentist, 6. Lillian Symonds (wife), 7. Herb Matter (Ray's father), 8. Emoline Byrns - wife of the Postmaster, 9. Rhoda Reinhardt (Ruth Matter's sister). Others in the picture are named but not identified; Lou Gardner and wife, Dr. Holm and wife, Dr Hoy, Geo. Gross, and H.P. Samuel, a lawyer.

During World War I, U.S. postcard publishers tried to fill the void in the market while conserving ink, so from 1915 to 1930 most post cards have a white border around the edge. After WWI, Germany's printing industry never recovered.



Images this page courtesy of the Headwaters Heritage Museum