WEBFOOTER EXTRA

July 2013

MECHANICAL POSTCARDS & VALENTINES

WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB
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www.thewebfooters.com

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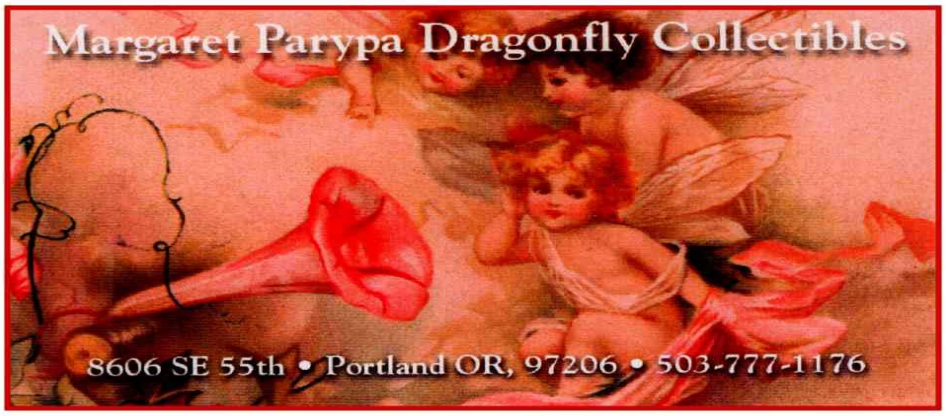

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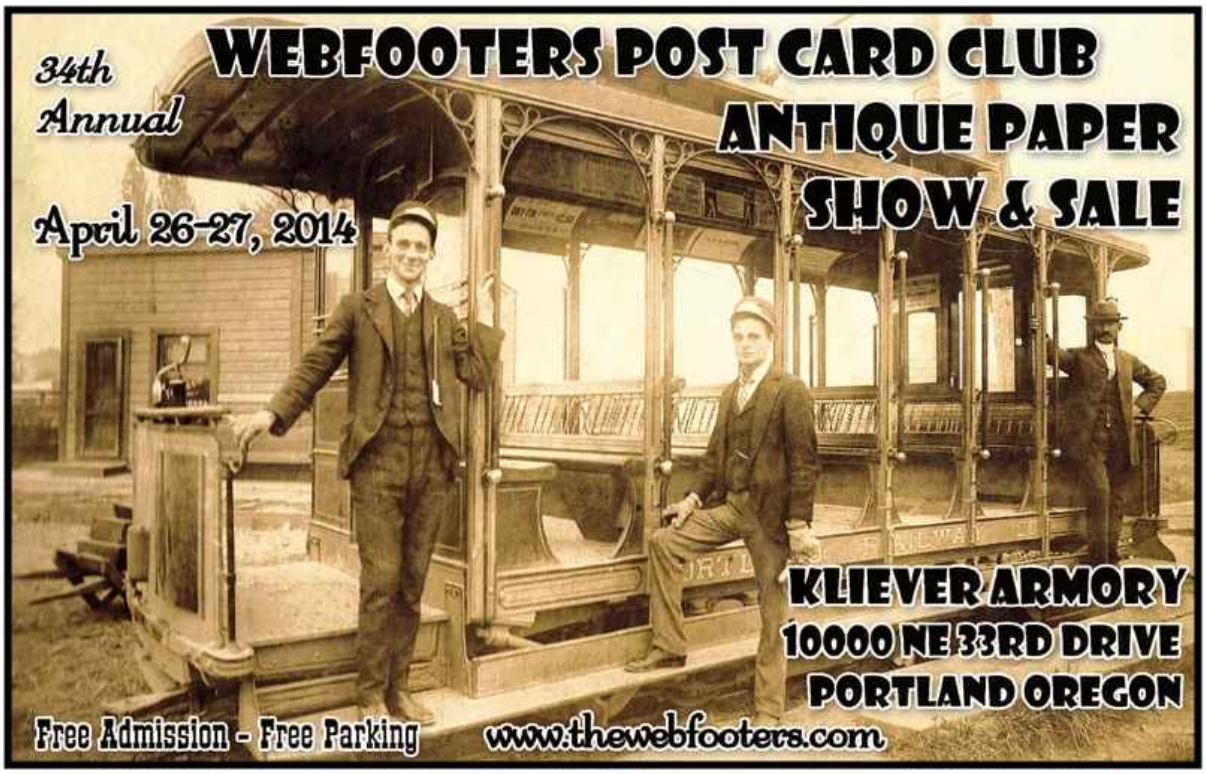
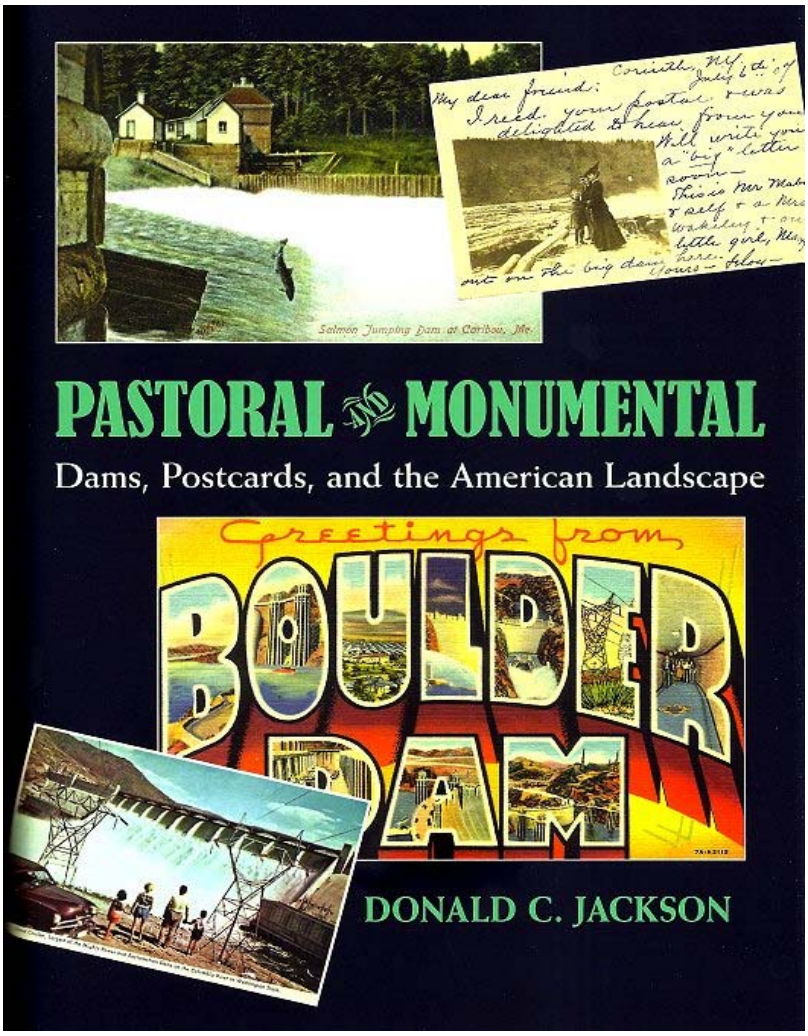


Portland Railway Company streetcar near 16th & Thurman streets circa 1915.



The Webfooters just received an advance review copy of the above book about dams and the American landscape as portrayed on postcards by Donald C. Jackson.

The hardbound book was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, retailing for $34.95 and it will go into our library. Jackson chronicles America's longtime fascination with dams as represented on postcards from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. He has illustrated the book with more than 400 images, including local scenes of the dam at Bull Run in the 1890's as well as early scenes of Celilo Falls.

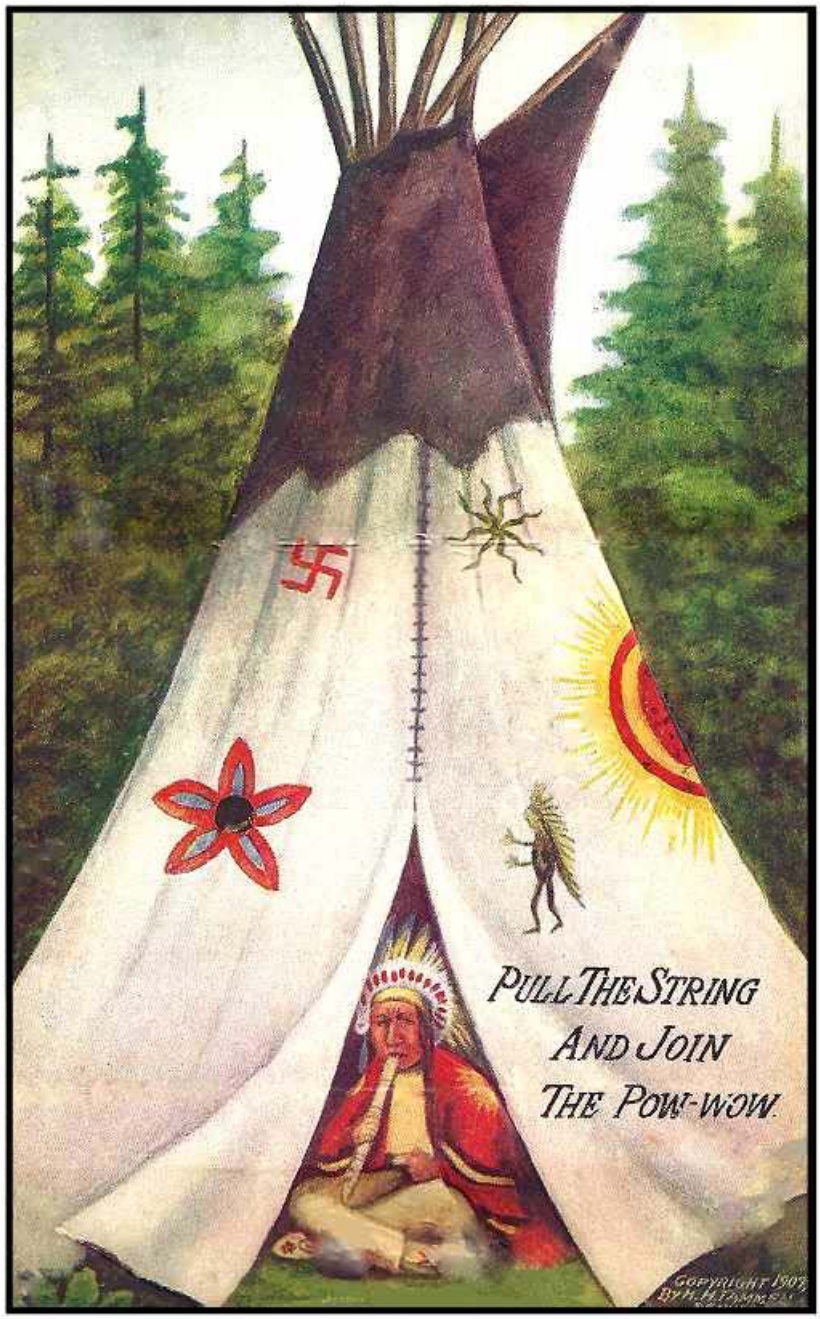
The book documents the remarkable transformation of dams and their significance to the environment and culture of America. The early postcards portrayed the dams in pastoral settings, but later included disaster scenes of flood damage and collapsed dams. Later images featured such New Deal projects such as Hoover Dam and Grand Coulee Dam which symbolized America's rise from the Great Depression through monumental public works projects. Jackson relates the practical application of dams for use in irrigation, navigation, flood control, power generation, milling, mining and manufacturing.

Pastoral and Monumental may be purchased from local bookstores or from the University of Pittsburgh Press: phone 412-383-2493 or visit www.upress.pitt.edu. ISBN 9780822944263.

Mechanical Postcards & Valentines

Legend has it that the first valentine was sent 18 centuries ago by the imprisoned Christian Valentine as a farewell note to the jailor's daughter, whom he had befriended. The story is told that he signed the card "From Your Valentine." Valentine was later beaten and beheaded at the time of the great heathen festival of love and purification.

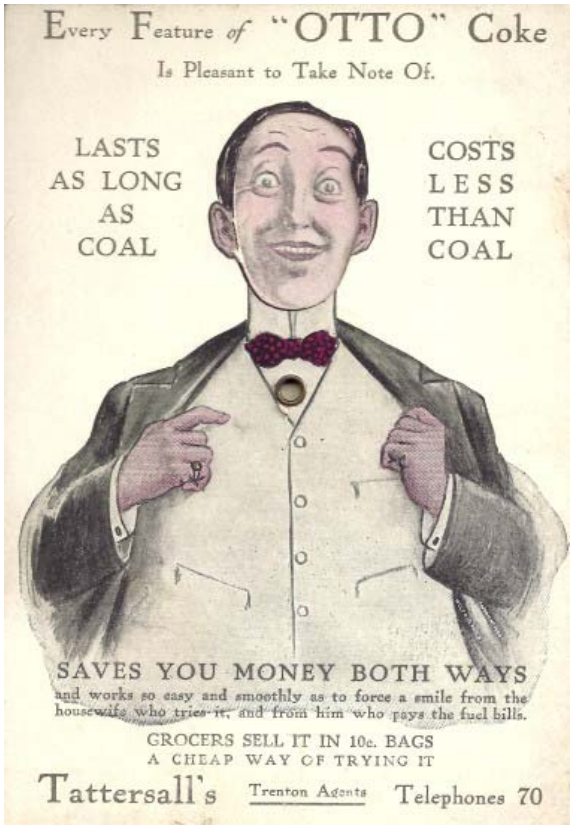
Valentines developed somewhat slowly and crudely over the years, first consisting of a catchy message, sometimes containing a poem or verse; then illustrations were added like love knots, hearts and flowers.

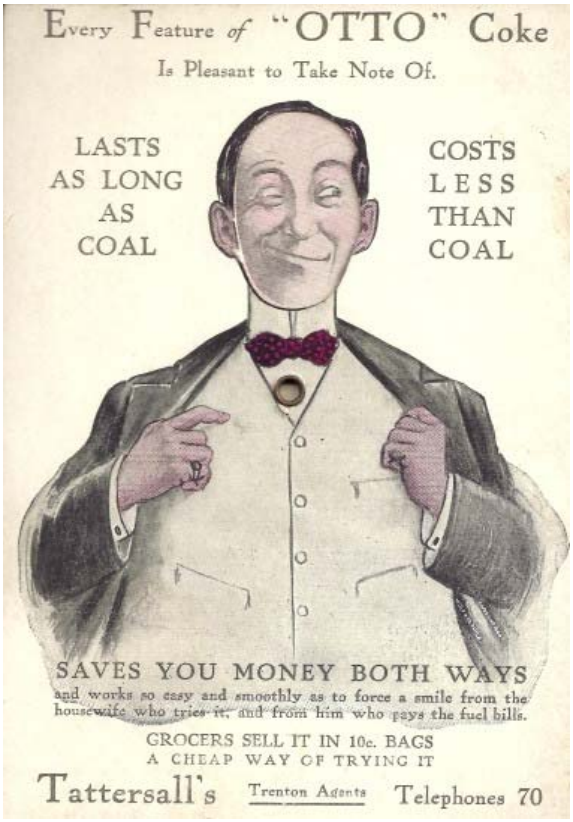


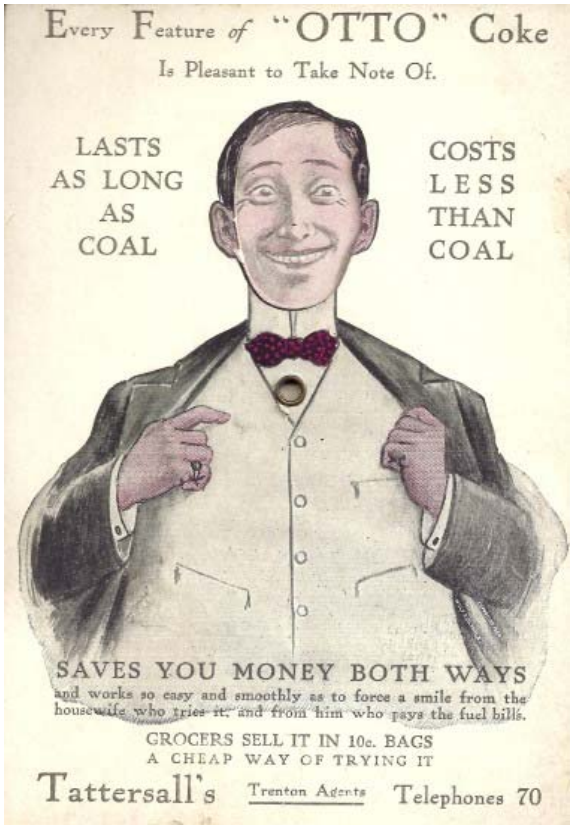
If you pulled the string, a collection of 12 miniature photos would appear.

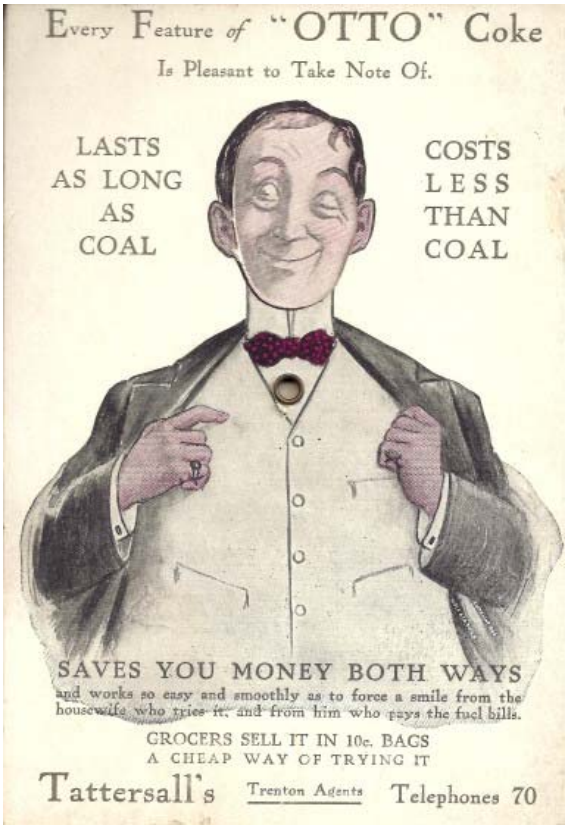
Then in the 1800's, the highly skilled European lithographers in Germany and England began creating elaborate and ornate enameled valentines with bright shiny colors of ink and hand-tinted scenes. In the 1830's the English firm Dobbs began embossing the card stock by using metal dies and a hammer. They began to die cut the paper making lace borders and floral designs. Using a hammer and metal dies the paper craftsmen built up sections of the card to enhance the illustration. They began to fill the raised part to give it the feel of lace.

The production of mechanical cards began in the early 19th Century when mechanical valentines were introduced. Mechanical cards have moving parts. They may be as simple as a die cut top revealing a different view of the previous image when opened. Some movable cards are as complicated as pulling a tab or string to make a curtain move or a door or shutter open. Some mechanicals allow you to change pictures to reveal a new scene or a dozen miniature scenic views.









With the change of facial expressions, the message could target a different audience. This mechanical postcard was published between 1900 and 1906.

With a mechanical card, it was like getting four cards for the price of one. This mechanical valentine postcard was published by the Ullman Manufacturing Company of New York circa 1907.

Some mechanical cards have wheels on the inside of the card that are held together with a rivet and you can see it on the two previous samples. By turning the wheel, you can change the faces on a body or change the people behind the curtains, or even dates on a calendar.

Postal cards became an inexpensive method of communication in Europe in the 1850's. Then in the 1870's, trade cards became popular with the enterprising American merchants who used them to advertise and extol the virtues of their businesses. Trade cards remained popular until the 1900's when postcards became a popular method of communication in America. Postcards were introduced in the United States in the 1890's and mechanical postcards followed shortly thereafter.

This circa 1880's French mechanical card has a note written on the back in English which says "Souvenir from the home of the Red Cross woman from Montlucon France."

DE-CODING THE POSTAL ZIP CODE

By Gloria Osborn Published in the Pacific Northwest Truck Museum's publication *The Air Horn,* July 2013.

The U.S. Postal Service rolled out the Zoning Improvement Plan (zip code) containing five numbers in 1963. Twenty years later, in 1983, the Postal Service added four more numbers to the zip code and they assigned a unique zip+4 number to each address where mail was delivered.

Using the sample zip+4 of 12345-6789, the numbers indicate:

123 = General region or City

45 = Delivery area/Post Office or Neighborhood

67 = Section code which consists of several blocks

89 = Segment code which indicates the side of the street