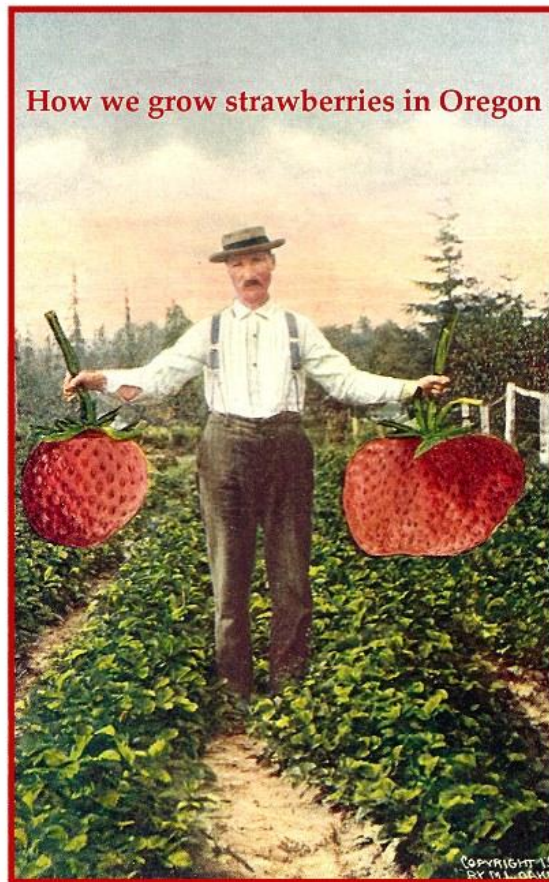




WEBFOOTER EXTRA

AUGUST 2018

EXAGGERATION POSTCARDS



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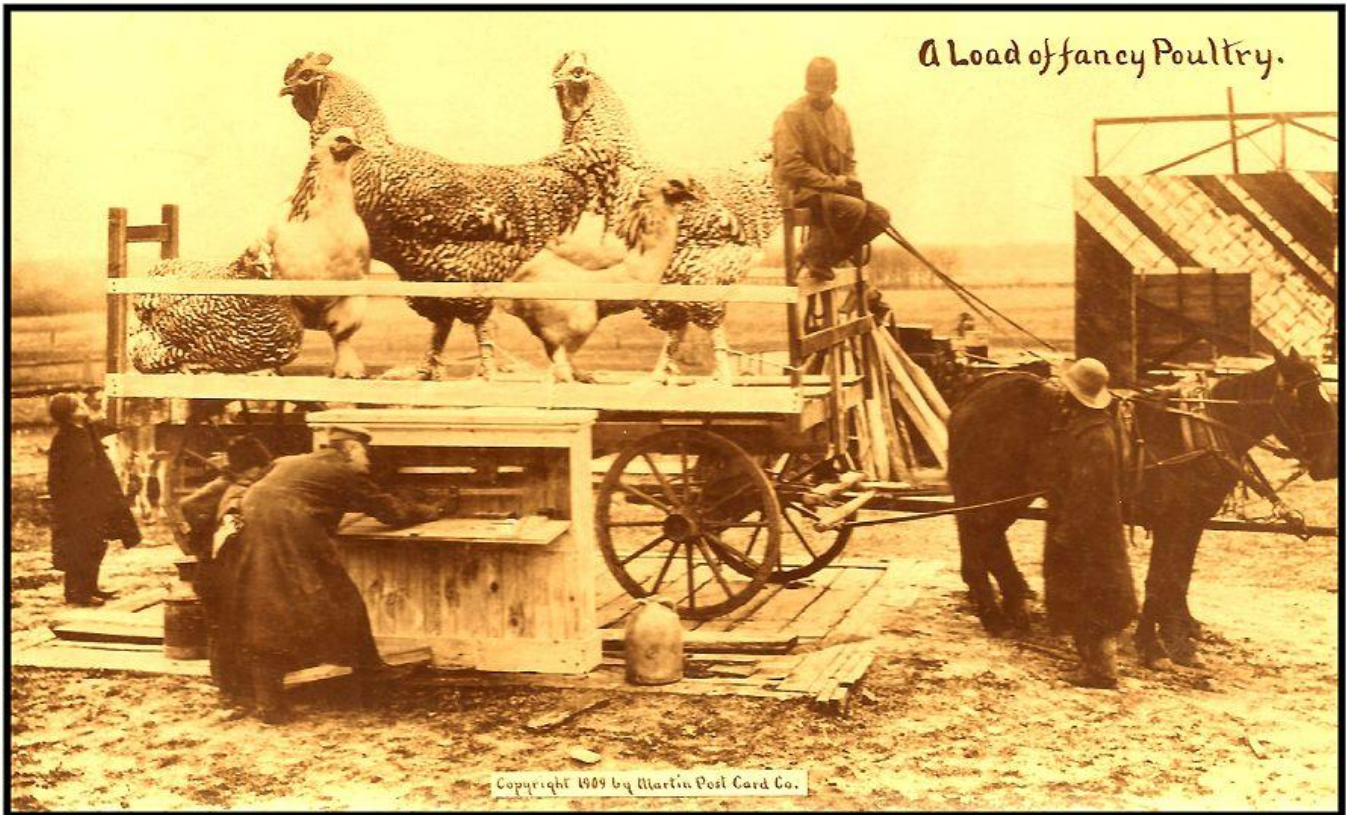


William H. Martin of Ottawa, Kansas, is considered to be one of the first to produce exaggerated postcards. His work featured large chickens, huge ears of corn and peaches, a giant rabbit being roped by men in a car, and pumpkins uprooting a farmstead.

As the Iron Age and automation were embraced by agricultural endeavors late in the 19th century, farmers began to harvest produce bigger than the imagination. Heavy equipment was needed to can giant peaches; a saw was used to cut an ear of corn; and a couple of onions made a wagon load. Picture postcards, which were in their infancy, documented the produce of prosperity.

Exaggerated postcards required creativity and skill to create. A photographer took two black-and-white pictures: a wide shot and a close-up. The enlarged image was cut, placed and glued over the wide shot to create the exaggeration. Headlines such as "Shipping a Few of Our Peaches" and "Harvesting a profitable crop of onions" helped exaggerated postcards become extremely popular. They also showed a sense of humor in dealing with disaster.

The picture postcard presented the possibility to inventive photographers to extend the traditional tall-tale to the photographic plate, and what is more, to devise entirely new forms that were possible only through photography. It brought into being visual effects that tall-tale tellers through the centuries had seen only in their fertile imaginations.



W.H. Martin's photography studio began experimenting with trick photography in 1907. He was so successful that he established the Martin Post Card Company in 1909 and reportedly produced seven million cards the next year.





One of the earliest exaggeration postcard artists in the Northwest, M.L. Oakes, produced this real photo postcard Expressing the Big Oregon Apple on the Northern Pacific Railway.



A local postcard publisher, Portland Post Card Company, produced a number of lithographed exaggeration postcards, using negatives obtained from the Oaks Photo Company of Seattle, including the Big Oregon Apple on page 5.



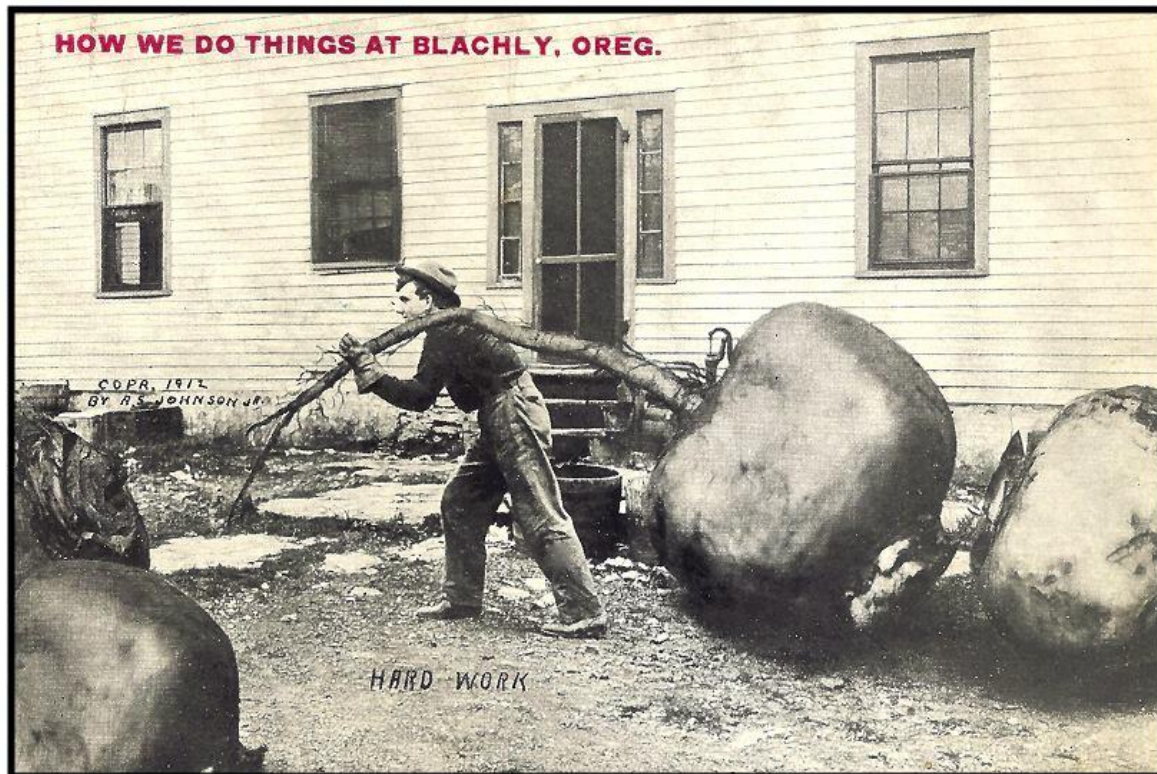
Loading Mammoth Oregon Corn.

Starting postcard production in 1907, the Portland Post Card Company (PPCC) became one of the most prolific postcard publishers in the American West, including Alaska. They setup a satellite office in Seattle as an official publisher for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (AYPE) in 1909. Their specialty was producing brightly colored lithographed souvenir cards that were printed in Germany. About this time, they also began producing a limited amount of real photo postcards.

After the AYPE closed, PPCC focused on printed postcards of buildings, and they began to produce specialty cards such as exaggerated postcards. PPCC purchased the rights to use the negatives from M.L. Oakes of Oakes Photo Company of Seattle, a photographer at the AYPE, who began producing real photo postcards in 1907. His specialty was exaggerated postcards. PPCC turned Oakes' real photo exaggerated postcards into colored lithographs. PPCC ceased production in 1916.



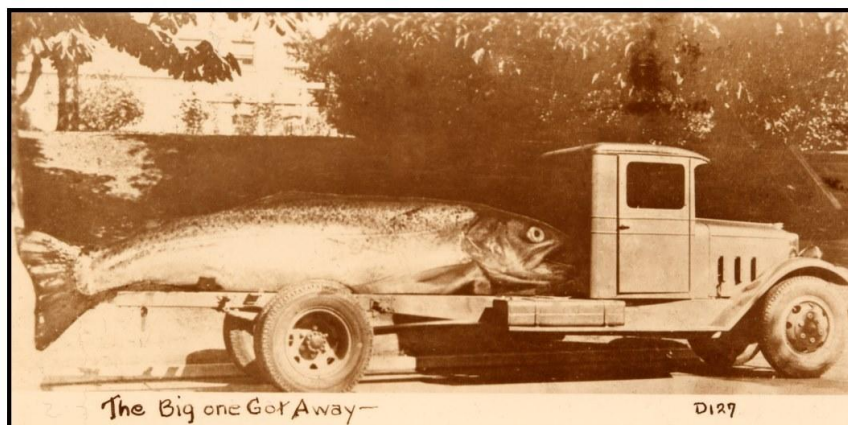
Portland Post Card Company Logo.



A. S. Johnson, Jr. created this postcard showing “How We Do Things at Blachly, Oregon.

Another early postcard artist who produced exaggeration postcards, Alfred Stanley Johnson, Jr. (A. S. Johnson, Jr.) of Waupun, Wisconsin, published postcards beginning October 30, 1909 and he continued until 1923. However, most of them were made from 1909 to 1913 under his characteristic heading starting with "How We Do Things in ..." The "Scene on the Road" series appeared in 1915. His subjects include giant vegetables and fruits, fishing, hunting, traveling and more.

When a swarm of grasshoppers descended on Garden City in 1935, Frank D. "Pop" Conard had a vision. The photographer made a montage of giant insects with humans and sold the postcards like "hotcakes." A master re-toucher, Conard continued to print "hopper whoppers" until his retirement in 1963. Grasshoppers were enlarged to battle a man, fit on the bed of a pickup, and hold up a train.



The Big One Got Away by Smith's Scenic Views of Tacoma, Washington.

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