

Philatelic Genealogy in South Dakota: Family Postcards Provide Clues

By James R. Miller

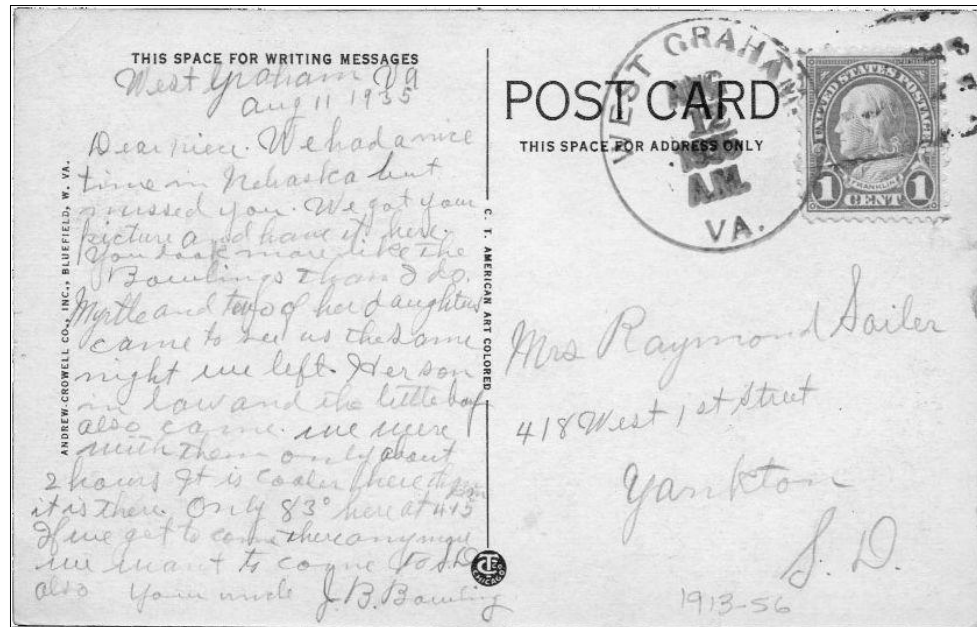
Many genealogists enjoy seeing picture postcards of places where our ancestors lived. In addition to photographs of cities and towns, postcards can be a source of genealogical information and a glimpse at our ancestor's daily life. This article presents six old postcards from South Dakota with basic genealogical details on the sender and recipient (when available) to introduce the Philatelic Genealogy website and database (*Philgen.org*, at <http://philgen.org>).

The website was launched in March 2009 to begin building a digital archive of envelope and postcard images with genealogical value and to promote an exchange between postal historians, postcard collectors, and genealogists. The site has grown to more than 1,500 envelopes and postcards. Every item includes a photograph (used with the owner's permission) and U.S. census or similar details on the sender and/or recipient. All of the postcards in this article come from Jim Forte Postal History, a postal history vendor who has given *Philgen.org* permission to use his photographs.[1] As with any source of genealogical information, postcards and envelopes must be studied in combination with other sources before reaching a conclusion.

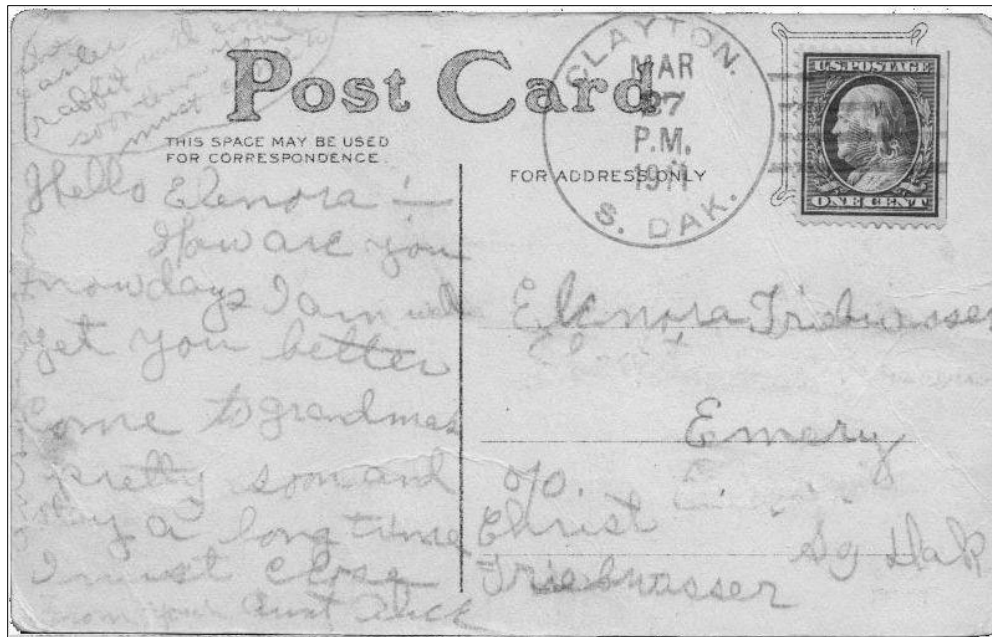
All photographs are courtesy of Jim Forte Postal History.



Mrs. Raymond Sailer of Yankton, South Dakota received a postcard from West Graham, Virginia in August 1935. The text begins "Dear niece" and is signed "Your uncle J.B. Bowling." A J.B. Bowling is in Bluefield, Virginia (about one mile east of West Graham) in the 1930 U.S. census, and a Raymond Sailer is in



Yankton in the 1930 U.S. census.[2] Raymond Sailer married Evelyn Bowling in Yankton on 6 September 1930.[3] An online family tree shows that William James Bowling, Evelyn's father, was the brother of James Blaire Bowling.[4] J.B. Bowling writes that his niece looks "more like the Bowlings" than he does. He writes also that he recently visited Nebraska (where Evelyn grew-up), and he hopes to visit South Dakota.[5] Myrtle, mentioned in the text, is yet-to-be identified.

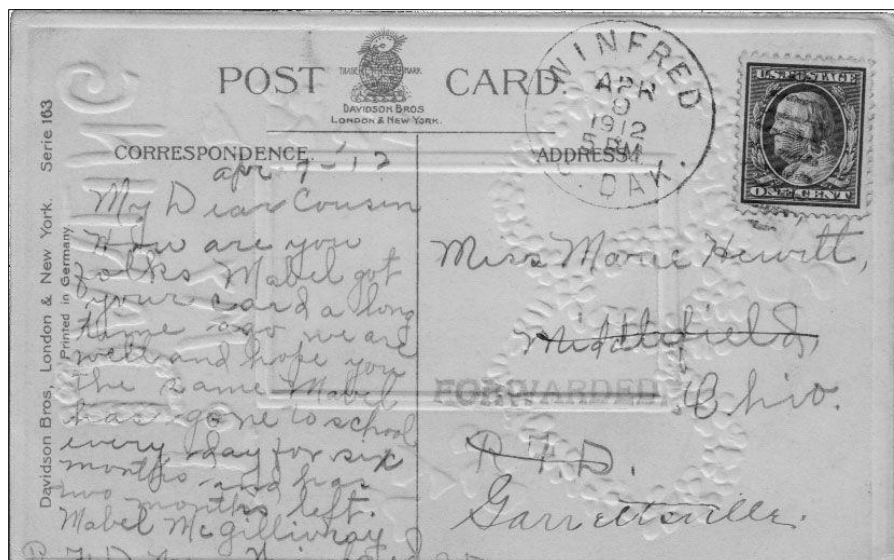


Elenora Triebwasser of Emery, South Dakota received a postcard from Clayton, South Dakota in March 1911 that is signed "Aunt Alice." An "Elnoie" Triebwasser, three years-old, is in Emery in the 1910 U.S. census, and she is shown as Elnora in the 1920

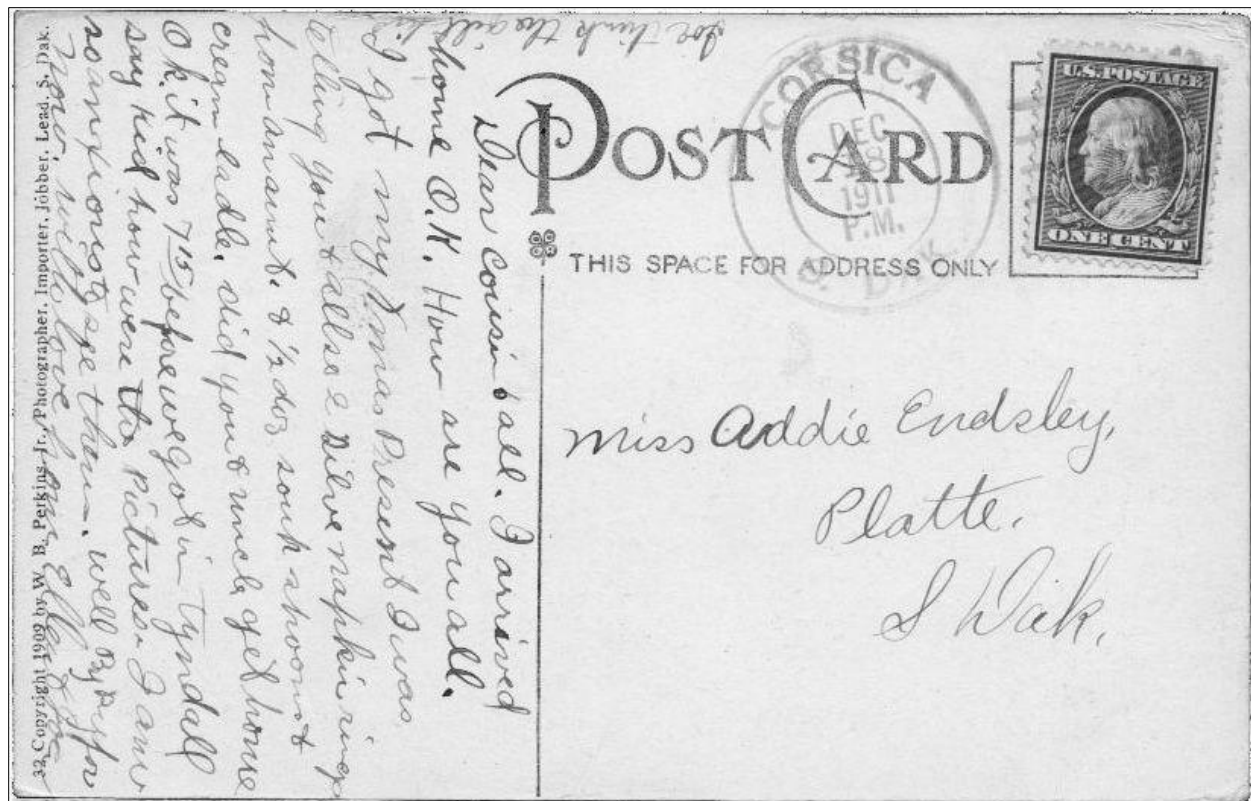
U.S. census.[6] An online family tree shows that Amelia (Jucht) Triebwasser was Elenora's mother, and Alice "Juecht," Amelia's sister (and thus Elenora's aunt), is in Clayton in the 1910 U.S. census.[7] Aunt Alice Jucht was twelve years-old in 1911 and she writes that "the easter rabbit will come soon." Elenora also received a postcard from "Aunt Emma" postmarked in Clayton in December 1911 that was probably sent by Alice's older sister Emma (viewable on *Philgen.org*, search on Jucht).[8] Emma asks "did you see old Santa already[?]"



Mabel McGillivray wrote from Winfred, South Dakota to Miss Marie Hewitt in Middlefield, Ohio in April 1912, and the postcard was forwarded to Garrettsville. The text begins "My Dear Cousin." A Mabel (Mrs. D.A.) McGillivray is in Winfred in the 1900 U.S. census, and in Hartford, South Dakota (about

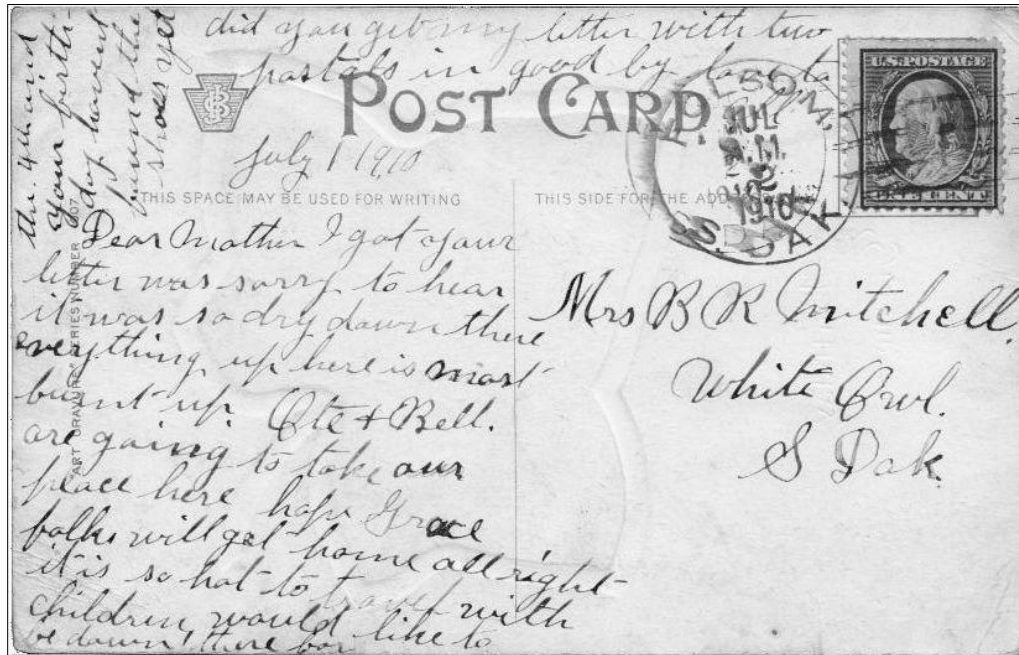


thirty miles southeast of Winfred) in the 1910 U.S. census.[9] Marie Hewitt, single, is in Parkman (about six miles north of Garrettsville) in the 1910 U.S. census.[10] The text states that Mabel has gone to school for six months and has two months to go. The details on how Mabel McGillivray and Marie Hewitt are cousins have not yet been found.



Miss Addie Endsley of Platte, South Dakota received a postcard from Corsica, South Dakota in December 1911. The text begins “Dear Cousin” and is signed Ellen and Joe. An Addie Endsley, single, is in Carroll Township (adjacent to Platte) in the 1910 U.S. census.[11] The postcard text speaks of receiving silver napkins rings, soup spoons, and a cream ladle for Christmas. Ellen and Joe are not yet identified.



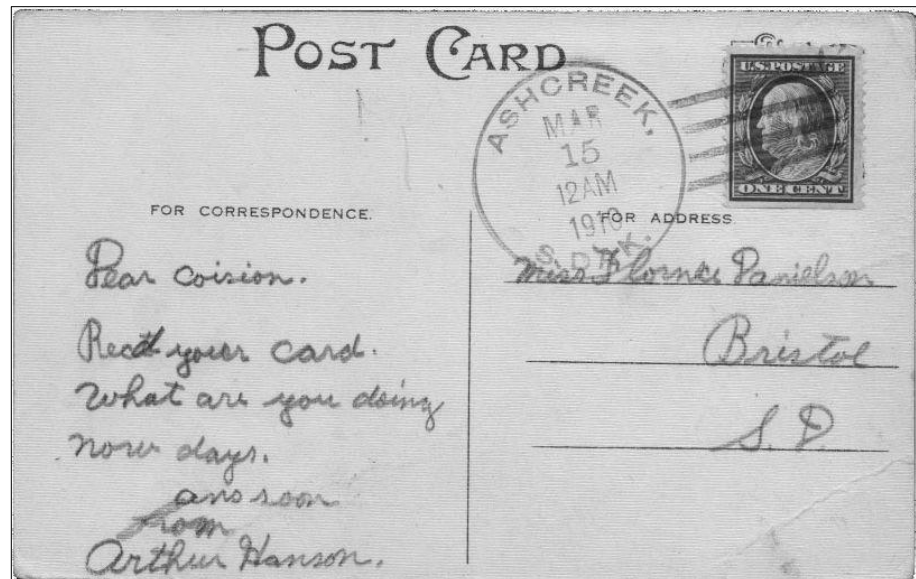


Mrs. B.R. Mitchell of White Owl, South Dakota received a postcard from Folsom, South Dakota in July 1910. The text begins "Dear Mother." A Nettie (Mrs. Benjamin R.) "Mitchel," mother of four living children, is in Meade

County (where White Owl is located) in the 1910 U.S. census.[12] The text speaks of dry conditions and "everything up here is most burnt up." The text refers to Grace, who may be the recipient's daughter, Gracie Mitchell.[13] The sender is not yet identified, as are Ote (Otis?) and Bell.



Miss Florence Danielson of Bristol, South Dakota received a postcard from Ashcreek, South Dakota in March 1910. The text begins "Dear coision" and is signed "Arthur Hanson." A Florence Danielson, six years old, is in Valley Township (centered four miles south of Bristol) the 1910 U.S. census.[14] An Arthur H. Hanson was in Haakon



County (where Bristol is located) in both 1918, when he registered with Selective Service, and in the

1920 U.S. census.[15] Details on how Florence Danielson and Arthur Hanson are related have not yet been found.



Old postcards let us glimpse our ancestors' daily life and handwriting, and may provide details that are unavailable elsewhere. Other postcards and envelopes illustrate our ancestors' work, military service, travel, political and social interests; may reveal where they lived before emigrating to the U.S. or Canada; and even their photograph (as a real photo postcard).[16] Many more envelope and postcard photographs involving South Dakota residents are available. Postal history vendors have given *Philgen.org* permission to use thousands of photographs from their websites and archived philatelic auction catalogs and most have not yet been placed on *Philgen.org*.

At present, genealogists cannot easily locate an envelope or postcard sent or received by their ancestors. Envelopes and postcards for sale and in postal history collections are classified by stamps, cancellations, and other postal markings.

The purpose of *Philgen.org* is to classify envelope and postcard photographs by who wrote and received each one to make them accessible to genealogists. Anyone interested in adding South Dakota envelopes and postcards to the website is invited to contact the author. Photographs and data posted for each item will be credited to the person and/or their genealogical or philatelic association.

Acknowledgments

The author thanks Jim Forte Postal History for the use of postcard photographs, the genealogists who posted online family trees and responded to email and message board queries, and Lisa Birsinger for database and website support.

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Notes

1 Jim Forte Postal History (<http://www.postalhistory.com/>: accessed 30 June 2011). The author has no financial interest in this website.

2 1930 U.S. Census, Tazewell County, Virginia, population (pop.) schedule, Bluefield, Enumeration District (ED) 93-1, sheet 12B (penned), J.B. Bowling, dwelling 230, family 236; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>; accessed 19 July 2011); citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication (NARA) T626, roll 2,462; 1930 U.S. census, Yankton County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Yankton, ward 2, ED 68-19, sheet 8B (penned), Sophia Sailer, dwelling 186, family 199; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T626, roll 2,232.

3 "South Dakota Marriages, 1905-1949," database and digital image, Ancestry.com; citing South Dakota State Board of Health, Yankton County, marriage record 3,070, entry for Raymond W. Sailer and Evelyn Bowling.

4 "Bowling Koppelman Wegner Whipple" family tree, owner: LKoppelman, sources shown include U.S. censuses and online family trees, Ancestry.com.

5 1930 U.S. Census, Pierce County, Nebraska, pop. schedule, Foster Precinct, ED 70-8, sheet 3B (penned), William J. Bowling, dwelling 59, family 59; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T626, roll 1,290.

6 1910 U.S. Census, Hanson County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Emery, ward 3, ED 219, sheet 2A (penned), Christian Triebwasser, dwelling 2, family 2; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T624, roll 1,481; 1920 U.S. census, Hanson County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Emery, ward 1, ED 89, sheet 2B (penned), Amelia Triebwasser, dwelling 45, family 46; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T625, roll 1,719.

7 "Schmiedt-Triebwasser" family tree, owner: billewing, no sources are shown, Ancestry.com; 1910 U.S. census, Hutchinson County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Clayton Precinct, ED 240, sheet 6A (penned), August Juecht, dwelling 8, family 8; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T624, roll 1,482.

8 1910 U.S. Census, Hutchinson County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Clayton, ED 240, sheet 6A (penned), August Juecht, dwelling 8, family 8; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T624, roll 1,482.

9 1900 U.S. Census, Lake County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Winfred, ED 214, sheet 4A (penned), Duncan A. McGillivray, dwelling 57, family 60; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T623, roll 1,551; 1910 U.S. census, Minnehaha County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Hartford, ED 329, sheet 3B (penned), D.A. McGillivray, dwelling 76, family 79; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T624, roll 1,486.

10 1910 U.S. Census, Geauga County, Ohio, pop. schedule, Parkman, ED 65, sheet 8A (penned), James D. Hewitt, dwelling 167, family 171; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T624, roll 1,185.

11 1910 U.S. Census, Charles Mix County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Carroll, ED 86, sheet 7B (penned), Ruben Endsley, dwelling not indicted, family 91; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T624, roll 1,478.

12 1910 U.S. Census, Meade County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, 7N, 14E, school district 90, ED 76, p. 14A (penned), Benjamin R. Mitchell, dwelling 151, family 151; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T624, roll 1,485.

13 1900 U.S. Census, Custer County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, school district 2, ED 11, sheet 1A (penned), Benjamin Mitchel, dwelling 11, family 11; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T623, roll 1,548.

14 1910 U.S. Census, Day County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Valley, ED 142, sheet 1A (penned), Hans Danielson, dwelling 1, family 1; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T624, roll 1,479.

15 “World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917–1918,” digital image, Ancestry.com; Arthur Hamilton Hanson, Haakon County, South Dakota; 1920 U.S. Census, Haakon County, South Dakota, pop. schedule, Township 7N, R23, ED 82, sheet 3B (penned), Arthur Hanson, dwelling 42, family 43; digital image, Ancestry.com; citing NARA T625, roll 1,720.

16 For examples of other types of genealogical information available from postal history, please visit <http://philgen.org>, and in the Main Menu click on NEA, American Ancestors, Michigan, Minnesota Case Study, Nebraska, or North Dakota for examples showing immigrant origins; on Central NY, Georgia, Maine, New Jersey, South Carolina, or Western Pennsylvania for Civil War service; on Kansas for examples of real photo postcards; on Iowa WWI or NGS for First World War service; or one of the other state names for a general survey.