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Philatelic Genealogy Follow-up: Real Photo Postcards

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Many genealogists enjoy seeing picture postcards of locations where our ancestors lived. In addition to photographs of cities and towns, postcards can be a source of genealogical information. This paper presents two real photo postcards (RPPCs) from Indiana with key genealogical data on the sender and recipient (when available). RPPCs were produced singly or in limited quantities by amateur and local commercial photographers and were especially popular 1910-1920.[1] The picture on a RPPC is often the sender or someone in the sender's family. Because of the their photos, RPPCs are exceptional sources of family history information.

Miss Clellah Jarvis of Warren, Indiana received



Figure 1A

a RPPC from Huntington, Indiana in 1908 with a photo of three young men seated on a porch.[Figures 1A and 1B] The text states that the photo was taken the previous spring in Angola (Indiana, presumably) and is signed "Garl." A Clellah Jarvis, single, 17 years-old, is in

Rock Creek Township (adjacent to Salamonie Township, where Warren is located) in the 1910 U.S. census.[2] Writing on the front of the postcard identifies the young man seated on the railing as "Claude Bagley of Elwood." A Claude E. Bagley was living in Pipe Creek Township (which surrounds Elwood on three sides) at the time of the 1910 U.S. census, for which he appears to have been the census enumerator.[3] The sender has not been identified; there are at least four men with first name



Figure 1B

Garl, unmarried, around 20 years old, in or near Huntington in the 1910 U.S. census.

[4] This RPPC appears to have a photo from Angola, Indiana of Claude Bagley and two other young men, one of whom was a friend of the recipient. As with any source of genealogical information, postcards must be used in combination with other sources before reaching a conclusion. This RPPC was purchased for \$2.50 from an online postal history vendor.[5]

Dorothy Mays of Onward, Indiana received a RPPC with a photo of a young girl in 1911.[Figures 2A and 2B] The text reads "Birthday Greetings" and is signed "Alma Snell." A Dorothy Mays, 5 years-old, and an Alma Snell, 5 years-old, are in Onward in the 1910 U.S. census on successive pages.[6] This RPPC probably has a photo of the sender, Alma Snell, and appears to have sent been between friends in Onward. This postcard was purchased on eBay® for \$10.[7]

I hope this short article has shown you another type of genealogical information available from old postcards. Other postcards and old envelopes sent to/from Indiana relate to our ancestors' birthplace, political and social interests, work, recreation, and military service.[8] Many more envelope and postcard photos involving Indiana residents are available. Anyone interested in helping to add Indiana envelopes and postcards to the Philatelic Genealogy website and database (<http://philgen.org>) is invited to contact the author.



Figure 2A

NOTES

1. Robert Bogdan and Todd Weseloh, *Real Photo Postcard Guide, The People's Photography* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), pp. 10-11, 19.
2. 1910 U.S. census, Rock Creek Township, Huntington County, Indiana, ED 104, p. 2A (written), NARA series T624, roll 356. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.



Figure 2B

3. 1910 U.S. census, Pipe Creek Township, Madison County, Indiana, ED 116, p. 16B (written), NARA series T624, roll 365. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
4. In the 1910 U.S. census, Huntington County, Indiana, NARA series T624, roll 356, Garl G. Bonawitz is in Rock Creek, ED 104, p. 5A; Garl B. Collins is in Rock Creek, ED 104, p. 4A (written); Garl W. Weller is in Wayne, ED 110, p. 2A (written); and Garl White is in Huntington Ward 5, ED 96, p. 9A (written). Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
5. "Discount Cover Store," select United States, and under By State or Territory click on Indiana (<http://www.discountcoverstore.com/>, accessed 25 May 2010).
6. 1910 U.S. census, Onward, Lipton Township, Cass County, Indiana, ED 43, pp. 5A [Dorothy Mays] and 5B [Alma Snell] (written), NARA series T624, roll 1,187. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
7. A search on eBay® using Indiana RPPC done 24 May 2010 yielded 410 matches; typical prices were \$8 to \$10.
8. James R. Miller, "Philatelic Genealogy in Indiana: An Introduction," *Indiana Genealogist*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (March 2010): 33-40 [viewable at <http://philgen.org>, click on Indiana in the Main Menu].