

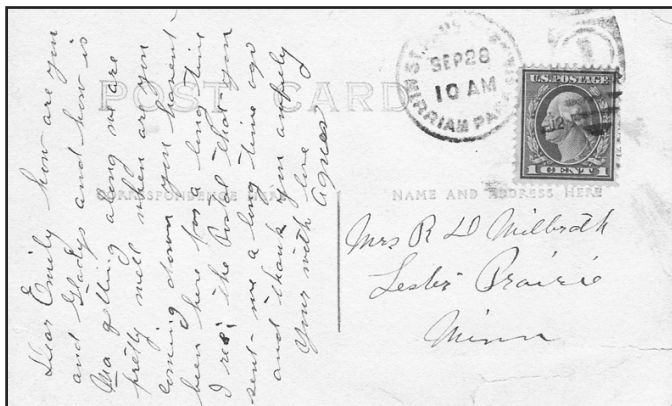
Philatelic Genealogy Follow-up: Real Photo Postcards in Minnesota

by James R. Miller

Many genealogists enjoy seeing picture postcards of locations where their ancestors lived. In addition to photographs of cities and towns, postcards are a source of genealogical information. This paper presents six real photo postcards (RPPCs) from Minnesota with basic 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 an RPPC is often the sender or someone in the sender's family. Their photos make RPPCs exceptional sources of family history information. As with any family history source, postcards must be studied in combination with other information before reaching a conclusion. The RPPCs shown in this article were purchased by the author from two postcard vendors for \$5 to \$10 each.

Merriam Park, St. Paul. Mrs. R.D. Milbrath of Lester Prairie, Minnesota, received an RPPC from Merriam



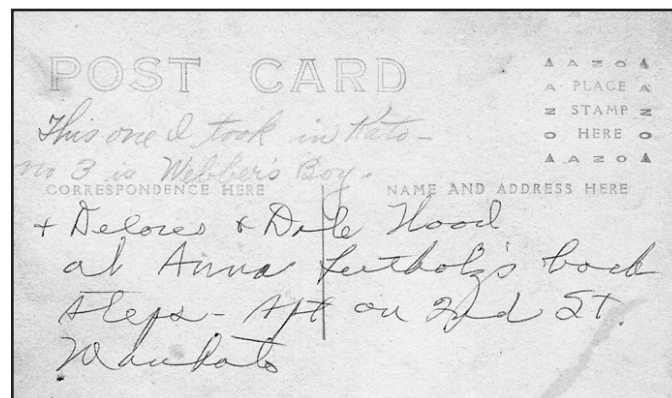
Park, Minnesota, in 1912 with a photograph of two children. The postcard text begins "Dear Emily" and is signed "Agnes." Beneath the children's photograph is written "Gloria Milbrath Wadell and Mary Alice Kerstead."

An Emily M. Milbrath, widow, is in Lester Prairie in the 1910 U.S. census.² An Emily and Reinhold Milbrath are in Winsted (about five

miles north of Lester Prairie) in the 1905 Minnesota census, and a "Rhinehold" D. Milbrath died in McLeod County (where Winsted is located) in 1908.³ An Agnes M (?) Wadel is in St. Paul (where Merriam Park is located) in the 1910 U.S. census, and an Agnes M. Wadel and her daughter Gloria M. are in Minneapolis in the 1920 U.S. census.⁴

An online family tree shows that Agnes Minnie Milbrath was the daughter of Daniel S. and Louisa (Kedding) Milbrath, and that she married William J. Wadel in 1894.⁵ An Agnes and "Rinkolt Melbracht," with their parents Daniel and Louiza, are in Winsted in the 1880 U.S. census.⁶ A Mary A. Keirstead, possibly a friend of Gloria Wadell, is in St. Paul in the 1910 U.S. census.⁷

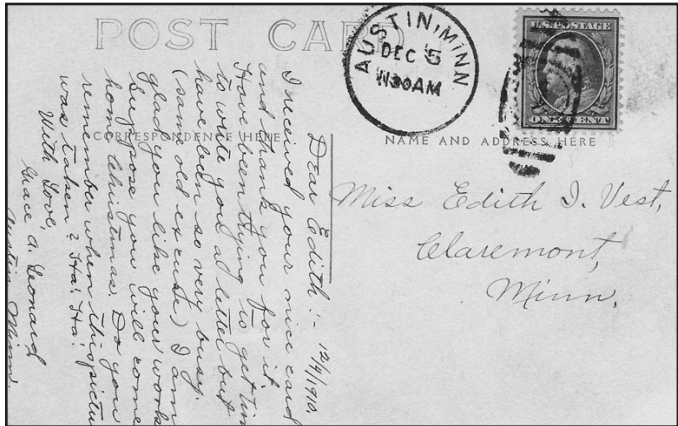
Gloria Wadell and her parents lived at 2015 Dayton Avenue in Saint Paul's Merriam Park neighborhood in 1913.⁸ While the house shown at this address on Google Maps© resembles the house shown on the postcard, a closer inspection is needed to determine if the two houses are the same.⁹



Mankato. An unmailed RPPC has a photograph of three children. Written on the back are "Delores [and] Dale Wood at Anna Lutholz's back steps - Apt on 2nd St. Mankato" and "Webber's boy." A Deloris A. and Dale C. Wood, living with Charles R. and Anna Luthultz, their apparent uncle

and aunt, are in Mankato in the 1930 U.S. census.¹⁰ A Charles R. and Anna Luthultz are in Mankato in the 1920 U.S. census living on 2nd Street.¹¹

Deloris A. and Dale C. Wood are in Frazee, Minnesota, in the 1920 U.S. census.¹² A Webber family, with a 6-year-old son, is living on Front Street in Mankato (two blocks from 2nd Street) in the 1920 U.S. census.¹³ This RPPC may have been taken circa 1916, when Deloris and Dale Wood were visiting their aunt and uncle in Mankato.

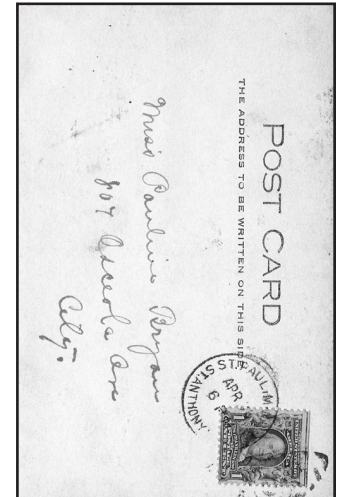


Claremont. Miss Edith I. Vest of Claremont, Minnesota, received an RPPC from Austin, Minnesota, in 1910 with a photograph of two young women in a horse-drawn carriage. The postcard text asks: "Do you remember when this picture was taken?" and is signed "Grace A. Leonard." A Grace A. Leonard, 23 years old, is in Austin in the 1910 U.S. census.¹⁴ An Edith I. Vest, 23 years old, is in Lyle (about ten miles south of Austin) in the 1910 U.S. census.¹⁵

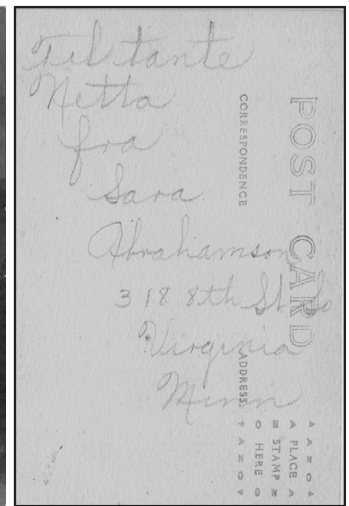
The author did not find a document showing Edith I. Vest in Claremont (about 25 miles north of Austin), but she is in Lyle in the 1920 U.S. census, and an on-line family tree shows that she died in Austin in 1973.¹⁶ This RPPC was probably sent between

friends and may show Grace A. Leonard and Edith I. Vest about 1905.

St. Paul. Miss Pauline Bryan of St. Paul received an RPPC from St. Paul in 1907 showing a smiling girl. The postcard text states: "I hope you will always be as happy as you were Sunday," and is signed "Mrs. C." A Pauline G. Bryan, 10 years old, is in St. Paul in the 1910 U.S. census, at the street address written on the postcard.¹⁷ Mrs. C., yet to be identified, probably took the photograph of Pauline Bryan.



Virginia. An unmailed RPPC has a photograph of a young woman. The text on the back, written in Norwegian, is to Aunt Netta from "Sara Abrahamson, 318 8th Street, Virginia, Minnesota." A Sarah Abrahamson, 15 years old, born in Norway, is in Virginia in the 1920 U.S. census, living at 318 9th Street.¹⁸ Sara Abrahamson is holding a rolled paper in the photograph and this RPPC may have been taken circa 1920, when she graduated from a school. Her Aunt Netta is yet to be identified.





Lakefield. Norma Kohlhoff of Lakefield, Minnesota, received an unmailed RPPC from Selma Malchow circa 1918 with a photograph of a girl and two boys. The postcard is signed “From Selma Malchow.” A “Zelma” Malchow is in Delafield Township (centered 6 miles north of Lakefield) in the 1910 U.S. census with a younger sister and several older brothers.¹⁹ A Norma Kohlhoff is in Delafield Township in the 1910 U.S. census.²⁰

Selma Malchow probably hand-delivered this RPPC to Norma Kohlhoff on her birthday. Selma’s younger brother is not shown with the family in the 1920 U.S. census, but the author did not find an explanation for his absence.²¹

This article shows that old postcards can give us a glimpse of an ancestor’s looks, life and handwriting. Old postcards and envelopes being sold on the Internet, at stamp shows and in auction catalogs are usually classified by their stamps and postmarks.

The purpose of *Philgen.org* <<http://philgen.org>> is to make postal history accessible to genealogists by identifying the senders and recipients. Anyone may place a photograph of an envelope or postcard (with the owner’s permission) used in their genealogical research and/or may help add Minnesota envelope and postcard photographs to the *Philgen.org* website by contacting the author.²² Photographs and data posted for each item will be credited to the person and/or their genealogical or philatelic association.

Editor’s note: *The author thanks Mary Ann Kolb (at www.moodymommy.com) for helpful descriptions of RPPCs for sale, the genealogists who posted online family trees and responded to email and message board queries, and Lisa Birsinger for database and website support.*

Sources:

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, McLeod County, Minnesota, population schedule, Lester Prairie, Enumeration District [hereafter cited ED] 81, sheet 4A, Schmid household, National Archives microfilm publication [hereafter cited as NARA microfilm] T624, roll 708; digital images on the Ancestry.com website, <http://www.ancestry.com> [hereafter cited as Ancestry.com].
3. 1905 Minnesota state census, McLeod County, population schedule, Winsted, ED 4, sheet 4, Reinhold Milbrath, Minnesota State Archives Microfilm, roll 134; Minnesota death index, 1908-2002, Rhinehold D. Milbrath, date of death 31 December 1908, McLeod County; digital images on Ancestry.com.
4. 1910 U.S. census, Ramsey County, Minnesota, population schedule, Ward 8 Saint Paul, ED 111, sheet 6A, Wadel household, NARA microfilm T624, roll 719; 1920 U.S. census, Hennepin County, Minnesota, population schedule, Ward 13 Minneapolis, ED 248, sheet 2A, Wadel household, NARA microfilm T625, roll 839; digital images on Ancestry.com.
5. “Hart Family Tree,” owner James Dutton, (sources are U.S. censuses and on-line family trees); digital images on Ancestry.com.
6. 1880 U.S. census, McLeod County, Minnesota, population schedule, Winsted, ED 80, p. 4, Melbracht household, NARA microfilm T9, roll 625; digital images on Ancestry.com.
7. 1910 U.S. census, Ramsey County, Minnesota, population schedule, Ward 2 Saint Paul, ED 41, sheet 10B, Keirstead household, NARA microfilm T624, roll 716; digital images on Ancestry.com.
8. *St. Paul City Directory 1913* (Saint Paul, Minnesota: R.L. Polk and Company, 1913), p. 1816; digital images on Ancestry.com.
9. Digital images on the Google maps website, <http://www.maps.google.com>, searched using “2015 Dayton Avenue, Saint Paul, MN, United States,” accessed 13 February 2011. Details of the porch foundation are seen best when viewed from behind the gray car.
10. 1930 U.S. census, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, population schedule, Ward 3 Mankato, ED 7-23, sheet 3A, Wood household, NARA microfilm T626, roll 1,080; digital images on Ancestry.com.
11. 1920 U.S. census, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, population schedule, Ward 3 Mankato, ED 20, sheet 5A, Luthultz household, NARA microfilm T625, roll 825; digital images on Ancestry.com.

12. 1920 U.S. census, Becker County, Minnesota, population schedule, Frazee, ED 12, sheet 5A, Wood household, NARA microfilm T625, roll 823; digital images on Ancestry.com.
13. 1920 U.S. census, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, population schedule, Ward 3 Mankato, ED 20, sheet 3A, Webber household, NARA microfilm T625, roll 825; digital images on Ancestry.com.
14. 1910 U.S. census, Mower County, Minnesota, population schedule, Ward 2 Austin, ED 80, sheet 13B, Leonard household, NARA microfilm T624, roll 712; digital images on Ancestry.com.
15. 1910 U.S. census, Mower County, Minnesota, population schedule, Lyle, ED 90, sheet 11A, Vest household, NARA microfilm T624, roll 712; digital images on Ancestry.com.
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19. 1910 U.S. census, Jackson County, Minnesota, population schedule, Delafield, ED 95, sheet 2B, Malchow household, NARA microfilm T624, roll 696; digital images on Ancestry.com.
20. 1910 U.S. census, Jackson County, Minnesota, population schedule, Delafield, ED 95, sheet 2A, Kohlhoff household, NARA microfilm T624, roll 696; digital images on Ancestry.com.
21. 1920 U.S. census, Jackson County, Minnesota, population schedule, Delafield, ED 96, sheet 5B, Malchow household, NARA microfilm T625, roll 841; digital images on Ancestry.com.
22. Reprints of articles on philatelic genealogy that use old envelopes and postcards as a genealogical source are viewable on Philgen.org (<http://philgen.org>, look in the Main Menu for a list that begins with American Ancestors).