Collaboration, Creativity and Collections: Historical Preservation for Alabama Communities

Collaborators and Co-presenters:

Ruth Elder, Troy University Libraries
Jerry Johnson, Int’l Center for Collaboration and Creativity
Dr. Wade Hall
Alabama Postcards
Non-Alabama Postcards
Iconic Kansas City from Our Postcard Past
Missouri Valley Sundays

Sunday, June 8, 2014  RSVP Required
Program: 2:00 pm
Central Library

Postcards were the “instant messages” of their day, a means of communicating hometown pride, civic identity, and a visitor’s curiosity. But where today’s electronic missives disappear with a click, the images and notes on vintage postcards endure – doorways to lost worlds.

Steve Noll, executive director of the Jackson County Historical Society and a postcard collector, leads an illustrated walk through Kansas City’s postcard history.

This event is keyed to the exhibit Greetings from Kansas City: Postcard Views of a Midwestern Metropolis, 1900-1950 currently on display at the Central Library. First shown in 2013, the exhibit is being reprised after earning the American Library Association’s Excellence in Library Programming Award.
Wade Hall Postcard Exhibits

- Aspects of a quality exhibit:
  - Expensive
  - Needs to be accurate
  - Professionally designed
  - Interesting

- Aspects of our exhibit:
  - AHF grant helped with expenses
  - Dr. Martin Olliff checked the captions for anything misleading or inaccurate
  - Mr. Jerry Johnson designed all the panels and the digital exhibit
Wade Hall Postcard Exhibits

- Is the exhibit interesting:
  - Contacted public and university libraries
  - Contacted the Bicentennial Committee
  - Made decisions to increase the appeal
    - Divided the state into regions
      - North
      - North Central
      - Montgomery
      - South Central
      - Southeast
      - Southwest
  - Choose both big cities and small towns
  - Tried for very few repeats
Wade Hall Postcard Exhibits

Wade Hall Postcards: Historical Scenes of Alabama

Wade Hall Postcards: Basic Information about Postcards
Wade Hall Postcard Exhibits
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WADE HALL POSTCARDS: Historical Scenes of Alabama

A postcard is a card sent through the mail at a lesser postage rate than a sealed envelope: one side usually has a picture and the other has space for a written message and the recipient's address. The first postcards were issued in America in 1873. Postcards became popular because people could send a quick "hello" or show a friend or relative where they were staying for only a penny. Many times, postcards replaced pictures in the family albums showing vacation scenes. The Golden Age of postcards lasted from 1900 until about 1920 when widespread use of the telephone began.

IN THE LESS THAN 150 years since postcards were introduced to the United States, they have become one of the most popular items to collect.

Wade Hall Postcard Exhibits

Dr. Wade Hall was a delfiologist, the formal name for a postcard collector. The quality and size of his collection is impressive because he built it at a time when good, historical postcards were scarce. This exhibit is a small sampling of the historical postcards which Hall donated to the Troy University Archives on the Troy Campus. Hall grew up near Union Springs, attended the small Inverness Consolidated School and Troy State Teachers College. After teaching in Opp and serving in the U.S. Army in Germany, he earned a master's from the University of Alabama and a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Hall taught English at the University of Florida, Kentucky Southern College, and Bellarmine University. Hall collected these postcards during his travels around the country.

Many postcards were, and still are, made from photographs. Early postcards were black and white, so companies started the practice of colorization to make them more attractive. Colorization is the process of sending the postcard photograph to another country to enliven with color. India and Italy were often chosen because they specialized in using exotic colors which caught the eye of the common person. Colorization has a major effect on a picture. It could make an ordinary scene look beautiful or idyllic. Many of the postcards in this exhibit are colorized versions of locations in Alabama.
Wade Hall Postcard Exhibits

WADE HALL POSTCARDS:
Basic Information about Postcards

Photographs can depict social history without words. The postcards featured in this exhibit demonstrate that fact. These are known as “view cards” and they document a certain place in time. They give historical references to buildings, streets, and even towns which may no longer exist or that have changed significantly. By looking at the front of these cards, we can learn about the history of an area, including early forms of travel, architectural styles of the time, the beginning of power and telegraph/telephone lines, and monuments that may or may not be there now. The messages on the backs can provide a “snapshot” of the moment since the sender often refers to the weather, travel experiences, and their relationship to the recipient.

Today, you might snap a photo with your smartphone and send it to someone with a quick message.

Consider how similar that is to this postcard. Here is a 1950 picture of Broad Street in Gadsden with a brief message. It provided an easy way to stay in touch while away from home or on vacation.

Postcards have advantages over smartphone pictures, namely, it is always a good picture, the photographer could take it from the right angle, and the weather is always perfect. All of these are iffy when you are “there” in person.

For this reason, buying postcards is still common for vacationers. They buy them to keep as souvenirs to remember their trip or to send back home to impress friends, co-workers and family and to say “Wish you were here!”

To view these and many other “Historical Scenes of Alabama” postcards, visit the online exhibit at:
http://troy.edu/postcards
What is iC3?

- **iC3**; the International Center for Collaboration and Creativity identifies, fosters and sustains collaboration between academic institutions and disciplines across the globe. **iC3** utilizes *creativity* as the catalyst for exchange—*collaboration* as the conduit for global and cultural understanding.

- **iC3**'s VISION is academic, international, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural.

- **iC3**'s MISSION is to stimulate new, innovative and more hybrid ways of thinking, living and solving problems through *collaboration* and *creativity*.

- **iC3**'s ROLE is to discover new and creative means to encourage problem-solving and to share such findings with the academic communities and the world-at-large.
Sample iC3 Initiatives

Creative Waves
Graphic + Photomedia Project (global)

BULLY PROOF PROJECT
Typography Students with Fifth Graders

GYMLAB
High-Tech Co-Lab in Troy Library

Set it Free
Charrette with Sweden / US

GROUND WATER FESTIVAL
Design + Photo Students with 8 government agencies

nutrition camp
Design + Photo Students with Publix / B&G Club

USDA Garden Partnership
Design Student + Elementary Students with community

2015 BITOLA OPEN CITY
Sweden + US + Macedonia Int’l Youth Arts
thank you