

Postcards and family history

By **Mary Stamps Bennett**

Contributing writer, Bay County Genealogy Society

My hobbies of genealogy and collecting postcards go hand in hand with my research. Although many people associate postcards with travel, there are hundreds of categories to search through to tell your family history. Just a few categories that have helped me present a more interesting family history include events, people, military, World War II, hotels, historical places and airplanes.

Although picture postcards don't date as far back as I have traced my relatives, I do have a postcard of a painting of my distant relative Harriet Lowndes Aiken of Charleston, S.C. The painting was finished in 1858, and hangs in the Aiken-Rhett home today. Luckily there is a postcard of the painting, because photography is not allowed in the home.

My father, Monroe (Buddy) Stamps Jr., is a wonderful family historian.

He sat down with me a few years ago to tell me his memories and stories of our family. I have written the stories down and I am illustrating his stories with postcards.

He grew up in Manchester, Ga., near Warm Springs, Ga. Dad worked as a lifeguard at the pool in Warm Springs up until he was called into duty for World War II. The pool was very large and shaped like the Liberty Bell. For this reason my dad was never able to get a good picture of the entire pool. But I recently found a postcard of that pool. Plus I also have found postcards of the planes in which he was a navigator during World War II.

My mother, the late Ree Cunningham Stamps, grew up in Madison, Ga.

MEETING

The next Bay County Genealogical Society meeting is at 1 p.m. Jan. 15 at the Bay County Public Library. The presentation is on "Computer Scanning and Translation of Documents," and the speaker is Fred Borg.

Madison is hailed as the city that Gen. Sherman refused to burn on his march to the sea. Four generations of my family can be traced in that small town. I own a postcard of my great-grandmother's house, circa 1910.

Thus, I have a photograph of my family's home original appearance. The house was remodeled in the 1930s to how it appears today.

I cherish the postcards of my family in the city of Atlanta during the 1930s and 1940s. Photographers would shoot candid shots of patrons walking and shopping and would sell the photos as postcards ready to be mailed. Thus, I have action shots of my parents, aunts and grandmother.

My in-laws, Don and Susanna Bennett, were married in Panama City in 1952 and had their reception at the Cove Hotel. There are many pictures of that day, but none of the Cove Hotel. So, I have attached a postcard of the Cove Hotel with their wedding memorabilia.

There are many ways to find postcards. Postcard shows are fun. Vendors have the postcards in just about any category imaginable.

Most antique stores, including the two on Harrison Avenue in Panama City, have many selections from which to choose. So, be a good descendent and inspire future genealogists with an illustrated history of your family.