POCO *muse*

Magazine

Issue No. 6

A PERIODICAL HISTORY PUBLICATION *of the* POCO MUSE

"Pictures are worth a thousand words, and postcards captured the way life felt in the early twentieth century."

Old postcards transport us back in time, but what can they tell us today? *The history of their Golden Age* anticipates our current social media practices (page 4). *Mass-produced postcards of local scenes* crafted an idyllic narrative of Valparaiso (page 10). A tourist postcard and a model of a barn *share a meaningful connection* (page 18). *Kaelie Eberhart's Top Five* finds a postcard with a niche interest (page 20).

Issue No.6

Dear Readers,

Preparation for our exhibit *Ever Yours: Postcards from the Golden Age* required flipping through thousands of postcards from the early 1900s. Often, we recognized neither the recipient nor the sender, nor the context for the correspondence. It was a bit like reading a letter in a bottle—one caught only glimpses of the sender's hopes and fears during an ephemeral moment in time. Who wrote this? What's their story? Though we couldn't see the whole picture, we recognized that postcards are more than just small cards with pretty pictures; they are powerful vessels that connect us to one another.

Ever yours,

Kevin Matthew Pazour
Executive Director, PoCo Muse

Joanne Urschel
Chair, Board of Trustees, PoCo Muse Corporation

About the Cover

Student's Bridge, Valparaiso University

This issue's cover image shows Valparaiso University students walking on the Student Bridge, a wooden foot bridge spanning the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks. This famous Porter County landmark is sometimes called the "Kissing Bridge" or "Lover's Repose." Built in 1880s, the Student Bridge connected the center of campus to a nearby lake retreat and was a popular place for students to gather and socialize. The structure was condemned in 1967. The steel portion, however, was salvaged by restaurant owner W. F. Wellman and was later relocated to Valparaiso University's campus in 2005.

This issue builds on the exhibit Ever Yours *and highlights the Golden Age of postcards (1907-1915). The Student Bridge appears in various forms throughout and is itself a rich metaphor, connecting a number of important themes from this era. The height of postcard popularity coincided with a period of buoyant hope and optimism in Porter County. Valparaiso was a bustling transportation hub, its lake resorts were driving a healthy economy, and the reputation of its booming local university was on par with the Ivy League. The Student Bridge is a crossroads that touches all three.*

Student's Bridge, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.

Postmarked May 4, 1916—1900.56.81

"Please accept our many thanks (James and I) for the cake. It certainly was fine. Also saw the Birth of a Nation. It was real too. Am expecting a letter soon. As ever, Forest."

Every gilded age must come to an end. Even in this postcard, sent in 1916, the faceless students cross the bridge into a setting sun. Despite its decades of growth, the university suffered a difficult financial period as the United States prepared to enter World War I. Take special note of the message on the back referencing the 1915 film Birth of a Nation. *The film's racist and inflammatory content set in motion a revival of the Ku Klux Klan. Eight years later in 1923—exactly 100 years ago—the Klan attempted, but failed, to purchase the struggling university.*

Before we're taken in by the bright and colorful images from a prosperous period featured in this issue, let's ask ourselves: What bridge are we crossing today? Where are our crossroads? •

The Postcard Golden Age

Postcards deliver their messages in myriad ways. Their short, ephemeral messages offer a glimpse into intimate relationships. The beautiful images fill in where words don't suffice and connect the recipient to a faraway place. The history of their production, circulation, and collection during the Golden Age of their popularity (1907–1915) reflects the social fascinations of a distant past and foreshadows the social networks of our present moment.

Early History

In an 1869 article in the *Neue Freie Presse*, Austrian economist Dr. Emmanuel Herrmann noticed that the time and effort of writing a short note was out of proportion with the cost of its postage. One must purchase paper, envelopes, and stamps, and the act of writing a letter often involved long-winded pleasantries. Why waste precious time and money on a letter when just a few lines will do?

Dr. Herrmann proposed a more efficient and cost-effective alternative: a small, stiff card with one blank side for a short note and the other side with pre-printed postage and three ruled lines for the recipient's address. On October 1, 1869, the Austrian Postal Department introduced *Correspondenz-Karten* into domestic circulation for half the cost of a letter. In the first three months, nearly 3 million of these "correspondence cards" were sold.

The success of these rudimentary postcards immediately caught the attention of other European countries. Initially, postcards were circulated domestically as international delivery proved tricky for postal systems and local carriers. As technology and social institutions caught on to the trend, the logistics were ironed out. Images began to appear on the front side with a small space for a message.

These early picture postcards made their way to the United States in the 1870s. During the next three decades, only the U.S. Post Office was legally allowed to print what was called a "post card" with one-cent postage, although commercial printers could print and sell "private mailing cards" for two cents. In 1898, Congress passed the "Private Mailing Card Act," which set postage uniformly at one cent. "Penny postcards" had entered the mainstream.

The Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 was another turning point for postcards; the first commercially-produced souvenir postcards in the U. S. appeared in novelty sets featuring views of exposition pavilions. Downtown Valparaiso was a popular stop for fair-goers traveling by train to and from Chicago, and Lowenstine's Department Store capitalized on the influx of visitors by distributing its own souvenir albums of pavilion views.

Early Postcards *Private mailing cards (top), cost two cents before 1898 and featured a built-in enclosure. Early examples (bottom) predating "divided-back" postcards included one side for address and the other for a message.*

The Golden Age (1907-1915)

By the turn of the century, postcards began to resemble what we have come to expect. The advent of the "divided-back" postcard in 1907 opened the floodgates of postcard popularity and dawned a Golden Age. Pictures are worth a thousand words, the saying goes, and the images captured the way life looked and felt in the early twentieth century. The restricted space for handwritten messages allowed for informal and easy communication.

During the peak years of the postcard craze . . . an estimated one billion penny postcards were sent per year.

In a period before easy transportation and ubiquitous home telephones, if you wanted to send a quick note to friends or family, you'd use a postcard. "The Poor Man's Telephone," as some have called the postcard, became a main form of communication. Although a step slower than the telegraph, postcards moved quickly. The increase in mail volume resulted in the hiring of additional postal workers. Deliveries became more efficient and frequent. Some communities saw several deliveries per day. During the peak years of the postcard craze between 1907 and 1915, an estimated one billion penny postcards were sent per year.

During World War I, people sent letters and

Company "L" Postcard *An irregularly-sized "real photographic" postcard by Charles W. Beam captures a panoramic sea of Porter County residents gathered on June 24, 1916, to send off the soldiers of Company "L" of the 3rd Infantry to Fort Benjamin Harrison. The soldiers can be seen in single file in the center of the crowd. The note on the back reports, "the largest crowd I ever saw at Penn Station . . . near the flag the band was playing national airs."*

postcards at an unprecedented rate. Soldiers were given free postage, and postcards were often allowed when letters were not. For homesick soldiers overseas, postcards provided a physical connection to home and a way to assure families of their safety.

Publishers and printers met the demand by developing methods of mass production. In the early years of the Golden Age, German printers dominated the manufacturing of postcards with their meticulous and efficient lithographic printing techniques. These large manufacturers, however, could not always penetrate small markets like Porter County with their photographers. Local druggists, stationers, and department store owners often sent their negatives to the larger printers for mass production. Soon, companies like Kodak began to develop photo-sensitive card stock which allowed small, local publishers to produce their own photographic postcards. Some even offered the do-it-yourself equipment for sale.

In Porter County, many small publishers joined the fray and distributed their own postcards of local scenes. Professional photography studios, like Charles W. Beam and Marion M. Mudge, promoted their work by using their own negatives for photographic postcards of portraits and events. The M. E. Bogarte Book Company, located in the heart of Valparaiso University's campus, sold textbooks and postcards mostly depicting academic buildings and residence halls from the rapidly growing school. The site-specific postcards of campus life were popular with students writing home. Another Valparaiso store owner, Elmer Eugene Starr, was

For homesick soldiers overseas, postcards provided a physical connection to home.

perhaps the most prolific local distributor of postcards. His scenes of Porter County landmarks are easily identified by their distinctive maker's mark: a star-shaped stamp box logo and a red letterhead of the the University Kissing Bridge over the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks. A savvy marketing strategy, this image resonated both with university students and tourists traveling by rail through Valparaiso.

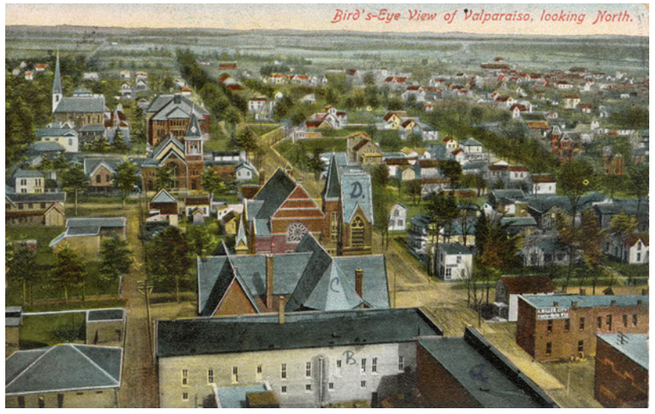
Altruria Hall *This postcard published by the M. E. Bogarte Book Co. depicts Altruria Hall of Valparaiso University, designed by local architect Charles Lembke. It is very likely this was sent by a busy Valparaiso University student checking in with family back home. A brief note (see right) paired with an image of a residential building perhaps expressed hectic student life better than a long-winded letter.*

The Divided Back

The "divided-back" postcards, which marked the Golden Age, are typically 3 ½" by 5 ½". The front side is reserved for an image while the back side is divided into two parts: one for the message and the other for the recipient's address. The restricted space for writing necessitated short and to-the-point messages. This brevity created a casual and loose, at times playful, informality. Some postcards, on the other hand, are jammed with writing from edge to edge. Without an envelope to conceal the contents, the open form was susceptible to curious eyes. Some senders developed secret coded systems to ensure privacy.

The subject matter of images for Golden Age postcards was wide ranging: sun-bathed landscapes, formal portraits of famous figures, and local buildings, bridges, or engineering feats. Marketers seized on the social potential of the postcard, introducing an abundance of generic holiday and greeting cards. "Greetings from Valparaiso!" commonly appeared with non-specific landscape images. Humor also showed up, including bawdy images with double-entendre captions. Political propaganda was not uncommon, and satirical cartoons and anti-militarist propaganda sometimes fell victim to the censorship regulations of the time. "You name it," one writer claims, "and I am willing to bet that it can be found on a postcard."

The photographic and colorful images on the



Marking Locations *This Bird's-Eye View of Valparaiso was sent home and marks the locations of four notable buildings: ice cream parlor/confectionery (A), post office (B), Presbyterian Church (C), and the Methodist Church where the sender attends (D).*

"[Postcards] provided a portrait of life in America at a time when newspapers carried few, if any, photographs."

front opened new possibilities for communication, allowing for more than just accompanying a message. As Fred Bassett, Senior Librarian at the New York State Library, writes, "they provided a portrait of life in America . . . at a time when newspapers (especially in small towns) carried few, if any, photographs."

The relationship between message and image added a personal layer to the communication. A note on the back of a building's image might read, "The view from my dorm window." An "x" in a street scene might mark the location of a described anecdote or dwelling (see example above). "Saw this and thought of you!" postcards gave tangible form to inner connections between people.

Less is sometimes more, when it comes to postcard messages. One scholar notes how an abbreviated message could carry extra emotional power: "'Wish you were here' on a hand-colored postcard of the "moonlit" Eiffel Tower—necessarily just a taste of what the sender was thinking as he put pen to card—could evoke a world of desire. The recipient would imagine the rest."

Short on Time *The message on the back of the postcard of Altruria Hall (see left) succinctly sums up the appeal of postcards. "Merely because time is too short for a letter." There's another interesting detail, too: the red stamp from the post office. While it was common in small communities to address postcards only with the name and city of the recipient, sometimes more information was needed for prompt delivery.*

Printing Methods

The widespread proliferation of picture postcards at the dawn of the twentieth century coincided with new revolutions in printing technology. The two primary types of postcards from the Golden Age are "real photographic" and printed. The differences are not always clear, and hybrid varieties abound.

Real Photo Postcards

Real photo postcards are created by hand on photosensitive card stock directly from an original photograph negative. The direct nature appealed to amateur and professional photographers alike and was ideal for both large and small quantities. They can be identified by their smooth surface, crisp image quality, and their handwritten titles and captions. These were applied with ink in mirror image directly to the negative. In the same way, the negative could be retouched: clouds were embellished, distant buildings or soaring airplanes were added, and figures were sometimes crudely removed.

For today's viewers and researchers, handmade real photo postcards provide remarkable insight into the daily lives of Porter County residents at the time. The creation of one-of-a-kind images were designed to specifically suit the needs and interests of the recipients and therefore reflect life with an unpolished honesty. One family posed for "selfies" with their pets and made comments on the quirky process. Others documented major local events like parades and train wrecks. Like the digital photos saved in one's smart phone, they may not all be professionally crafted, but they provide an honest depiction of daily life.

Printed Postcards

Printed postcards also started with an original negative. A step was added, however, by first transferring the negative image to a printing surface that was then used to apply ink to the paper. The extra distance posed an obstacle for a clearly defined image, and publishers responded with clever manipulations. The finished products are often colorful and beautiful, if at times clumsy and off-kilter. Printed postcards are typically identified by their vibrant colors, matte finish, and their neat machine-printed titles and captions.

Inaugural Interurban Ride *A 1910 real photo postcard documents the momentous occasion of the first time an interurban trolley care departed Valparaiso for Flint Lake on July 4.*

Whitlock Family "Selfie" *Lila and Thaddeus Whitlock pose with their dog, Maxie. The homemade postcard from 1912 was addressed to their daughter, Olive, and begins: "I was so engaged in trying to keep Maxie still, I forgot to look pleasant."*

Precursor to Social Media

The accessible nature of early twentieth-century postcards created a revolution in communication. The ease and speed of delivery, as well as the interplay between message and image, established a global social network among postcard senders. In many ways, postcards were a forerunner to today's direct messaging apps

Making a digital post on social media today is similar to sending a postcard. A short message paired with an image, like a Facebook or Instagram post, creates a quick point of contact between family and friends to stay in touch and share updates. Additionally, postcards during the Golden Age were affordable and open to anyone, regardless of social class. The appeal was revolutionary.

Postcards . . . were affordable and open to anyone, regardless of social class. The appeal was revolutionary.

During the postcard's heyday, however, some detractors voiced concerns about this condensed mode of communication, echoing many twenty first century critics of social media. "I have no words in which to speak of this abomination," complained one writer in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1908. "It symbolizes the triumph of the commonplace, of the cheap and easy, the utter capitulation of individuality." The perceived triviality of postcards threatened the thoughtfulness of long-form correspondence between those "who so dearly love a quiet letter from a friend, (even) written infrequently."

Another criticism of postcards was their tendency to encourage vanity. Postcards provided individuals the opportunity to craft personal narratives exhibiting an exaggerated version of their life and activities. Sound familiar? Stunning views from glamorous vacation spots offered the opportunity for the writer to gloat about the weather, such as one message on a postcard from Cuba asking, "Does this look like Feb. in Valpo?" Handmade real photo postcards depicted happy family portraits, pets, and food. If it can be found on Instagram today, a similar subject was likely photographed, printed, and sent on a postcard a century ago.

The Art of Collecting

It was customary for people living in the Edwardian era (1901-1917) to keep and display albums of souvenir postcards from their travels and collected correspondences. Albums set open on coffee tables made great talking pieces, serving to prompt storytelling and inspire vacation ideas (and perhaps a bit of jealousy). Exhibiting postcards was another way one broadened social networks.

Despite their decline in popularity, the powerful personal quality of postcards has sustained their survival.

"Just Bought This Place" *The extensive private collection of postcards received by Valparaiso resident John F. Griffin illustrates the global reach of postcards during the Golden Age. Griffin's vast network of friends sent postcards from all corners of the country, such as this one from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Young people especially embraced the postcard for its speed and concision, just as they do today's direct messaging apps. The format created channels for inside jokes between close friends. Images and captions sent to a pal were similar to "memes" of today, humorous cultural references that spread quickly through social media.*

Understandably, postcards are appealing objects for private collecting. Their small, flat size makes them easy to store in an album or shoebox. The abundance of subject matter in their images attracts a plethora of niche fascinations such as hotels, celebrities, sports, disasters, and more. Today, many people still collect reproductions of masterpiece paintings from museum gift shops. Postcards are by nature disposable objects, and it is inherently impossible to obtain the entirety of a specific theme. The scarcity spurs collectors on even more. Flea markets, antiques malls, and estate auctions give postcards a second or third lease on life. Many postcards related to Porter County came to the PoCo Muse from these sources. Who hasn't sifted through a pile of postcards at an antique store hoping to stumble on a vista from one's hometown?

Postcards Today

Do people still send postcards? In short, not nearly at the rate they did at the beginning of the twentieth century. Many factors played into their decline in the decades following the Golden Age, but the postcard has continued to adapt to changing times.

Since the Golden Age, popularity has ebbed and flowed, but generally, the number of circulating postcards has been reduced by 80 percent. In the decades after the Golden Age, the common "white border" postcard was introduced to save money on ink. The numbers decreased during WWII due to a shortage of supplies and mail carriers. The 1950s saw a resurgence, as technology created colorful and vivid photographic images, but numbers dwindled again a decade later. By 1968, postage for a postcard was the same as a letter. Cheaper and faster air travel often meant that a tourist abroad could return home before a postcard was delivered. In recent decades, the introduction of e-mail and direct messaging apps overtook postcards as the favored method for quick communication.

Despite their decline in popularity, the powerful personal quality of postcards has sustained their survival. Today, digitally-produced postcards allow personal images not dictated by publishers. The Covid-19 pandemic slowed the pace of life and instilled a nostalgic return to intentional personal connections. Sending postcards today may seem quaint to some, but to others, it makes a deliberate statement ("I still send postcards")—akin to listening to albums on vinyl. Postcards continue to adapt. Their history tells us something important about the way we live and communicate today. •

Wish You Were Here
Printed Postcard Views of Valparaiso

A young Ace Bartz poses with a handsaw in the threshold of an unfinished barn. A ladder leans against the side of the barn amidst piles of lumber. The photograph is overexposed, and the top of the barn has been cropped out of the frame. "I tried to take this to show you the pitch of the roof but made rather poor 'outs' at it." This 1917 "selfie" from a series of postcards chronicling the Bartz family barn raising (seen at right) epitomizes an important subsection of "real photographic" postcards in the PoCo Muse Collection. Most of these handmade documents come from rural communities outside of Valparaiso and offer unfiltered glimpses into the everyday life of Porter County families in areas not frequented by tourists.

On the other hand, a main driver of postcard popularity in its Golden Age was their function as a physical souvenir—like a refrigerator magnet—from one's travels and holidays. The majority of mass-produced printed postcards in the PoCo Muse collection feature attractions from Valparaiso: downtown street scenes, schools, railroads, and resorts. It's common to find stacks containing over a dozen duplicates. In fact, the sameness and predictability of the imagery were part of the appeal.

As the county seat, Valparaiso was a major transportation hub. Many tourists traveling by rail stopped here and purchased postcards depicting local scenes, which then circulated across the nation. The proliferation of postcards established a narrative about Valparaiso as grand, welcoming, and idyllic, but also modern and open to a changing world. What can these popular postcard images tell us about how Valpo, like other small towns, wanted to be perceived?

1 *Porter County Courthouse*
The center of county government, this majestic structure was built in 1883 as the third iteration of the county courthouse. Its 168-foot tower could be seen from miles, appearing in the distance of some scenic postcards (page 16) and making a great vantage point for bird's-eye views (page 7). In its heyday, its lawn was a gathering place for public parades, demonstrations, and celebrations. A fire on December 27, 1934, destroyed the tower, and the damaged structure was remodeled by 1937.

2 *Washington Street looking South*
Views of storefronts along the courthouse square captured a bustling commercial center and froze it in time. The expert coloring of this popular vantage from 1910, taken from Main Street, now Lincolnway, looking southwest down Washington, evokes the end of a long day. Awnings are retracted, as the oppressive midday sun has eased. Third-floor windows of the stately brick Academy of Music block glow in the golden hour. A horse-drawn delivery coach parks at hitching posts along the square.

3 *View of Main Street*
Prior to 1919, this iconic stretch of Lincolnway from Franklin Street through Washington Street was known as Main Street. The arrival of the Lincoln Highway along Valparaiso's main downtown thoroughfare prompted the name change. A close look elicits fantastic details, such as a hanging electric streetlamp and handpainted signs.

4 *Memorial Opera House*
The Memorial Opera House was built in 1893 to commemorate the Union soldiers and sailors of the Civil War. This rich interior view has been interpreted by some as an event during the 1912 "Bull Moose" presidential campaign of Theodore Roosevelt (whose portrait is displayed at center stage). The postcard, however, is postmarked in 1910, and it's doubtful Roosevelt ever appeared publicly in the building. In fact, this image comes from June 1906, when Valparaiso hosted thousands of visitors for the Twentieth Annual State Encampment of the Sons of Veterans. The Opera House was the center of activity and was beautifully decorated with "'Welcome' streamers in national colors . . . five large bells over the center aisle." Notice, too, the ceremonial field sword and scabbard in the aisle and the framed Sons' charter to the left of the portrait of President Roosevelt, who was still in office at the time.

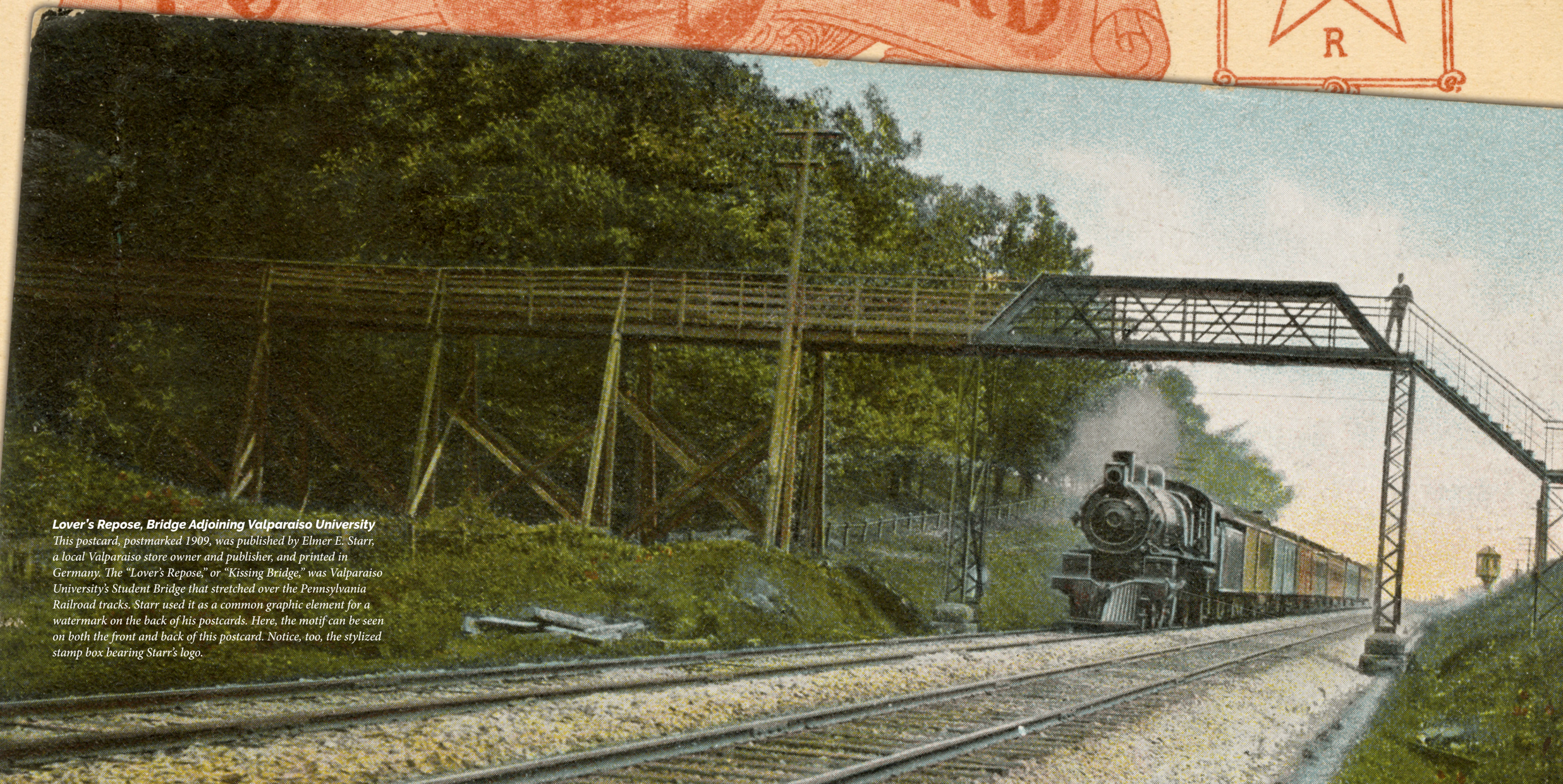
VALPARAISO

POST CARD

PLACE STAMP HERE.

T A S R R

Elmer E. Starr, Publisher, Valparaiso, Ind. Made in Germany.



Lover's Repose, Bridge Adjoining Valparaiso University
This postcard, postmarked 1909, was published by Elmer E. Starr, a local Valparaiso store owner and publisher, and printed in Germany. The "Lover's Repose," or "Kissing Bridge," was Valparaiso University's Student Bridge that stretched over the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks. Starr used it as a common graphic element for a watermark on the back of his postcards. Here, the motif can be seen on both the front and back of this postcard. Notice, too, the stylized stamp box bearing Starr's logo.

5 ***Intersection of Franklin and Calumet***
The confluence of Franklin Street and Calumet Avenue made a small, picturesque triangle of land that was often photographed. Here the Valparaiso and Northern Railway interurban passed by Central School on its way to and from Flint Lake. This particular postcard view was popular with short-term visitors who boarded nearby. One such visitor marked her lodging with an "x."

6 ***Central School***
Designed by Charles Lembke in 1904 to replace the first Central School, this building was considered one of the most modern in Indiana. It served as high school until rapidly growing enrollment demanded a new high school building in 1927. A noble landmark of the neighborhood, its presence loomed large in the imagination of teenagers who often sent jocular postcards bearing its image.

7 ***The Pioneer Apartments***
Built in 1908 by Perry Sisson, who later served as Valparaiso's mayor from 1914 to 1922, "The Pioneer" was the first apartment building in Valparaiso. Located at Franklin and Chicago Streets along the interurban route (see image on page 8), it attracted both transient and long-term tenants to its thirty-four units. The Pioneer epitomized the rapidly-changing Valparaiso of the new century: modern, connected, and metropolitan.

8 ***Pennsylvania R. R., from University Bridge***
This view of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks looking west was taken from the famous Valparaiso University Student Bridge. Also known as "Lover's Repose" or the "Kissing Bridge," it was so named after a student tradition: if a train passed under while a couple was crossing, they were obliged to kiss until the train was gone.

9 ***Pennsylvania R. R. Flyer***
Another angle of the Pennsylvania Railroad shows the Student Bridge at the very left edge of the image. Valparaiso University's Old College Building can be seen in the background.

10 ***University Place at Valparaiso University***
This double-wide novelty panorama of University Place was published by local photographer Charles W. Beam. The wide angle provides a great overview of the center of campus teeming with students: Old College Building (left), Science Hall (center), and Auditorium (right). One end of the "Kissing Bridge" can be seen to the left of Science Hall.

11 ***Pres. Henry B. Brown at His Home***
Founded in 1859 as the Valparaiso Male and Female College, the school closed in 1871. Two years later, Henry Baker Brown (president from 1873-1917) revived the school, renamed it Valparaiso University in 1907, and established it as a nationally-recognized institution. Here, Brown poses before his home, located prominently on Calkin's Hill at Morgan Avenue and East Jefferson in downton Valparaiso.

12 ***College Avenue, Looking North***
Under Henry B. Brown, Valparaiso University experienced its own Golden Age. Its "low-cost, no-frills" approach to rigorous learning earned it the nickname of "The Poor Man's Harvard." The years of the postcard Golden Age line up nearly perfectly with the height of Valparaiso University's enrollment. Its 6,000 students in 1915 made it the second-largest university in the nation at the time, behind only Harvard University

13 ***University Days***
University students were major consumers of postcards during this time; they used images of campus buildings to report home about the hustle and bustle of student life. In this image, two students pose for photographers with their tripods pointing north on College Avenue. Perhaps one of them was Charles W. Beam planning his composition for his image in #12 depicting the Auditorium, Music Hall, and the M. E. Bogarte Book Company (a notable postcard publisher and vendor, and very likely the location of the camera taking this view).

14 ***Boat Landing, Sagers Lake***

The Valparaiso University Student Bridge was popular primarily for connecting students to the popular Sager's Lake, where they enjoyed picnicking, boating, and swimming. On the horizon of this bird's-eye view can be seen the two towers of the Old College Building, the Science Hall, and the roof of the Auditorium.

15 ***Sagerology***

This 1909 postcard depicts a couple sitting on Sager's Lake's famous twisted "Freak Tree," a popular frame for creating attractive tableaus of the water. "Sagerology" was a favorite extracurricular course for nearby university students. The man in this image is believed to be local photographer John Walter Hisgen. A decade later, Hisgen was again photographed with the tree, but the tree was broken off at the very point where the couple sits. A sign had been posted to the curved branch reading: "Keep Off This Tree."

16 ***Sager's Mill***

Before Sager's Lake was a popular retreat with students and locals, it was the location of a flour and sawmill. The image shows a flour mill constructed in 1841 by William Cheney and briefly owned by M. B. Crosby. William Sager purchased the land in 1890, took over the operation of the mill, and used the property to harvest, store, and distribute ice for residential iceboxes.

17 ***Crosby's Mill and Home***

The mill at Sager's Lake (see #16) is often referred to as "Crosby's Mill" because Morgan Crosby owned it for seven years. However, this mill (seen on the left of the image), owned and operated by Crosby between 1861 and 1906, was located on the southeast side of South Washington Street, between the Pennsylvania and Nickel Plate Railroads. The creek ran under the road, known then as Crosby Avenue, to the millpond where the Crosby residence (seen on the right) was positioned on the west bank.

18 ***View at Flint Lake (Edgewater Beach)***

Where Sager's Lake was primarily a local retreat, Flint Lake was a popular resort for tourists, mainly from Chicago, and contributed significantly to the local economy. Flint Lake had its own Valparaiso and Northern Railway station, connecting visitors from near and far to its resorts where they could swim, boat, and camp. This image, erroneously printed as "Flink Lake," shows a family driving their touring car away from the hotel at Edgewater Beach on the north shore of the lake.

19 ***Sheridan Hotel, Flint Lake***

Immediately east of Edgewater Beach was Sheridan Beach, where there were private cottages and another hotel resort. The photographer of this sunny image surely made a valiant effort to keep these children still for the shutter, but the movement suggested by the blurred figures perfectly captures the joy of summer at the lake.

20 ***The Willows at Burlington Beach***

The frenetic activities of summers at Flint Lake were balanced by its calm waters. "The Willows" refers not to the large trees framing this canoe gently floating by, but to the hotel in the background. The Willows resort, owned by Charles Specht, was located at Burlington Beach on the southern shore of Flint Lake.

21 ***A Peep at Long Lake***

Lakes were the most common feature of Valparaiso postcards. Sager's Lake is a manmade lake, or reservoir, created by a dam on Salt Creek. Flint Lake and the adjoining Long Lake are the largest of this area's distinctive "kettle lakes," formed over ten thousand years ago when retreating glaciers created depressions in the land that initially collected glacial melt. In the early twentieth century, both lakes had their own interurban stations and appealed to developers who subdivided lots for hotels and vacation rentals.

Making Connections

Connections *is a permanent exhibition in the Eunice Slagle Gallery and pairs objects together that speak to each other in unexpected ways. They may appear different at first glance, but after careful consideration, they reveal important relationships. As you join their conversations, we hope you ponder the ways these objects connect with everyday items and experiences in your own life.*

The exhibition is occasionally refreshed with new additions, and two items will shortly be added at a new station that highlights model making. We are delighted to introduce them to you here before they go on public display. They are a scale model dairy barn built in the 1950s and a postcard showing Littleville, a miniature village operated as a tourist attraction in Chesterton from 1937 to 1942.

Scale Model of Maxwell/Remster Dairy Barn
Circa 1950s—On loan from Bryce and Colton Birky

"Littleville: A Miniature Town at Night, Chesterton, Ind." *Postcard, 1939—2017.70.10*

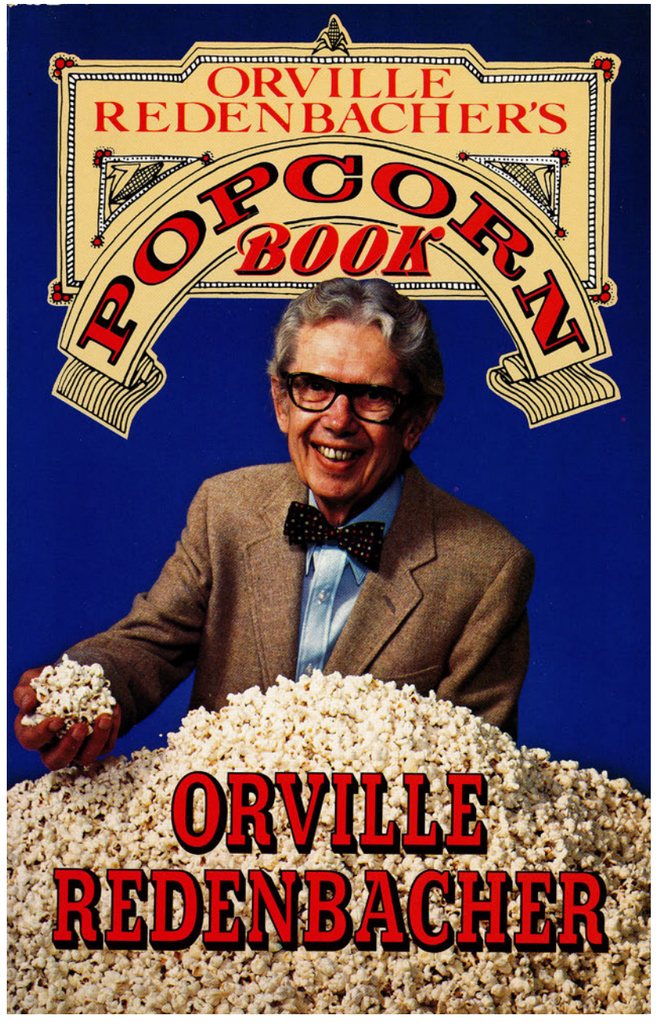
Model making can be a meaningful hands-on experience that brings generations together. Octogenarians huddle over small-scale train sets. Parents assist their children building model airplanes and ships. Grown ups feel like kids again, and kids feel grown up. Encountering a miniature version of something familiar or exotic (or make believe) transports and ignites the imagination. Making something with a child is a social exchange where skills are learned, memories are shared, and values are passed down.

In 1937, William Murray began building a miniature town in his Chesterton backyard with his son-in-law Harry Koch. Littleville, "The World's Biggest Little Village," consisted of over one hundred scale model buildings Murray reimagined from his travels, including a commercial district, Bavarian castle, Chesterton's Bethlehem Lutheran Church, and a courthouse (where a dollar watch in its clock tower "kept near perfect time"). The 1939 postcard (above) shows the ocean liner Empress of Lilliput floating on the lagoon. When Littleville closed in 1942 in response to WWII, an estimated 133,000 tourists from all over the U.S. and several foreign countries had visited.

John Remster Sr. built a scale model of his dairy barn (left) for his son, John Remster Jr., who represented the sixth generation of the family to farm their Morgan Township property. After his death, John Jr.'s wife Emily gifted the model to Bryce and Colton Birky, the grandsons of nearby farmers Ron and Cheri Birky, who continue to make necessary repairs. The original dairy barn was built around 1912 by John Sr.'s great uncle, John Maxwell, and included a milk house, feed shed, and twin silos. Today only the milk house still stands.

Kaelie Eberhart's TOP 5

TOP FIVE *is a new featured series in which friends of the PoCo Muse share personal stories behind their five favorite objects from the Collection.*



Kaelie Eberhart *began an internship at the PoCo Muse in June 2022 and soon after assumed the position of Collection Assistant. She graduated from Valparaiso University with a Bachelor of Arts in History in May 2023. As of September 2023, Kaelie is pursuing a Master of Arts in History at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, England.*

"One of my favorite hobbies is writing, primarily historical research on mid-twentieth-century American and British history, a lot of which intertwines with another hobby of mine, music. The five objects I have chosen for this list reflect those two interests, but they also correlate with events and personal interests that have popped up throughout my life, telling the story of how I have grown to love material culture. I hope you enjoy looking at these five artifacts just as much as I have and learning a little about me through my connections with them."

1 *Orville Redenbacher's Popcorn Book*

1984—2015.94.11

Good ol' Orville Redenbacher: an unofficial mascot of Valparaiso who is celebrated annually during the Popcorn Festival and has been memorialized with a bronze statue in Central Park Plaza. In my childhood, I didn't recognize him as a local businessman who revolutionized the popcorn industry, but rather as a delightfully cheesy character I saw in 1970s and 1980s television commercial compilations. This book and its cover remind me a lot of those old commercials: pleasantly kitschy. Who could resist smiling at the figure of Orville Redenbacher with his hair parted down the middle, horn-rimmed glasses, signature bowtie, and mounds of his popcorn surrounding him? It's the kind of book you'd find in a thrift store with a discount sticker, waiting for a kid like me to beg their parents to buy it for them. Artifacts like this remind me how even simple objects like mass-market paperbacks from the 1980s have their place in local history.

2 *Valpo High School Sweatshirt*

Circa 1960s—2022.36.1

This sweatshirt is an obvious favorite of mine because I donated it to the PoCo Muse! The story of how I acquired it is interesting, as I bought it on Etsy from a seller who mislabeled it as a Valparaiso University sweatshirt. I wore the sweatshirt casually for a couple of years, thinking it was a strangely green 1960s VU sweatshirt. However, once I started my internship at PoCo Muse, I decided that this 50-plus-year-old sweatshirt should be preserved rather than slowly deteriorated through continual use. After searching through multiple 1960s VU and Valparaiso High School yearbooks, I inferred that it was most likely a VHS cheerleading sweatshirt that was worth donating to the collection. Donating this sweatshirt provided a perfect hands-on opportunity for me to learn our acquisition process step-by-step, from filling out donation forms to storing it, and gave it new life where it has now been properly labeled and preserved!

3 *"Daisy," Taxidermy-preserved Dog*

Circa early 1930s—1901.15.1

Is it any surprise that Porter County's most beloved canine has dug her way into my heart? I remember the first time I met Daisy. It was the first day of my internship and I was being shown around the Old Jail. My eyes met those of the 90-plus-year-old taxidermied dog in a vitrine case. My first reaction was a mixture of shock and fear, but I soon learned that Daisy is one of the PoCo Muse's most popular artifacts, with people coming from all over the country to see her! Many visitors are understandably

terrified when they first see her (like I was), but others grow to adore her (like I have). I honestly wish she could be kept on permanent display, but she occasionally needs a break from the spotlight to maintain her condition! Daisy is truly one of my favorite museum oddities, and working with her will be a core memory from my PoCo Muse experience.

4 *Illustrated Postcard, Valparaiso University*

1907—2011.10.8

When I was working the PoCo Muse booth at the Porter County Fair, I was asked by many fairgoers which was my favorite postcard in the Ever Yours exhibit—a daunting question, as there are thousands. I think I would choose this early-twentieth-century Valparaiso University postcard from F. Earl Christy's College Kings and Queens series. Christy usually drew these mascots for Ivy League institutions, but I find his treatment of Valpo's signature brown and gold colors on this College Queen phenomenal. The colors pop wonderfully on the pennant and the woman's very fashionably spirited outfit. The use of Christy's visually-astounding Valparaiso College Queen in advertising material was discontinued after the 1910s, but the design has luckily been preserved. Christy's lovely drawing will remain with me as an important reminder of the change my alma mater has experienced in its 165-year history.

5 *Vinyl Record, "Stars and Stripes in Britain" featuring Frank Slagle*

1942—1900.47.23

This final artifact was discovered this summer by our most recent intern, Ashley Vernon, while conducting inventory. The first thing that caught my eye was the striking iridescent yellow-green color of this 78 rpm vinyl record. Then, I noticed that it had been produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). This baffled me at first. Why would a local history and art museum in Northwest Indiana have this British object in its collection? The story is very interesting. The record, "Stars and Stripes in Britain," features the 34th Regiment band performing for the King and Queen of England during World War II. One of the musicians was local resident Frank Slagle! As someone interested in music and British cultural history, this record intrigued me on a superficial level, and its unique backstory revealed to me the role that Porter County residents have played in history. •

POCO *muse*

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The award-winning PoCo Muse maintains free general admission as this area's oldest institution devoted to the history and culture of Porter County.

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We engage Porter County's rich past with its evolving present to educate, enrich, and inspire our communities.

VISION

We believe our work of interpreting this area's history and culture empowers Porter County residents to form a strong and purposeful sense of place, identity, and community.

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Last Look! *This circa 1910 postcard features an illustration by Indiana artist Conrad (Cobb) X. Shinn. Shinn was a prolific artist working in Indianapolis during the postcard Golden Age. After serving in World War I creating camouflage, he returned home to find the postcard market had dramatically changed and turned his focus to book illustration, publishing under the name "Uncle Cobb." While this card was designed with Valparaiso University in mind, any school's colors and flag could be applied to Shinn's generic illustration of a young woman wearing a mortarboard.*