

Australian Postal History & Social Philately



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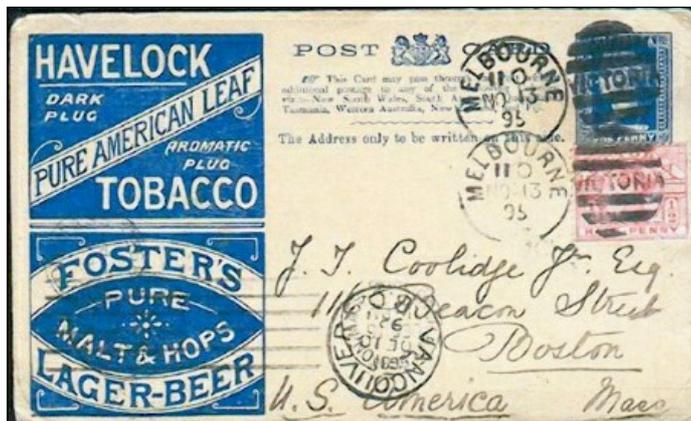
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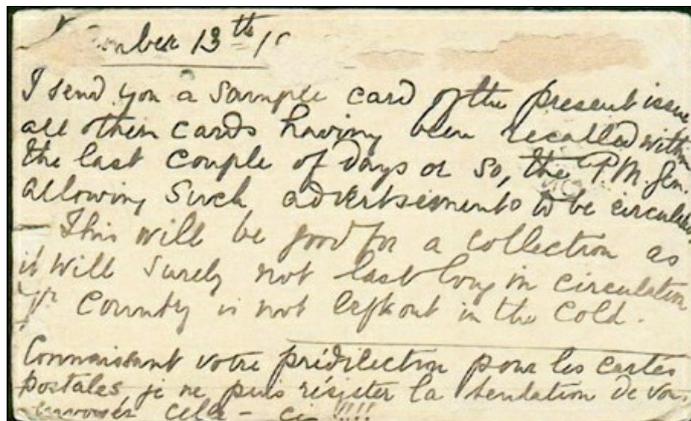
BEER & BACCY -- VICTORIAN ADVERTISING POSTCARD SENT to BOSTON 1895

This 1d blue 'Reading Stamp Duty' postcard was the first and only Victorian postcard with advertisements, and it could be sent to all Australian Colonies, New Zealand and Fiji without additional postage. It had a very short life for their was a furious response from conservative elements in the community, its day of issue being 1 November 1895 and it was withdrawn on 19 November 1895. During the three weeks of use 84,960 cards were sold, many of them as a result of the bad publicity. Mint cards are common, but postally used cards in this period are desirable. After their withdrawal, the Post Office sold cancelled-to-order cards for 2d! The Postmaster-General, J. Gavan Duffy had sold the rights to private advertisements to Cameron Bros., and this was an unfortunate choice of 2 popular brands.

This card is particularly interesting on several accounts: its overseas destination requiring an additional 1/2d pink 'Stamp Duty' stamp, the postmarks showing both the routing and destination cancels, the message on the reverse, and the ability to identify the addressee. There are 2 copies of the duplex MELBOURNE/ 11 O/ NO 13/ 95 with the obliterator VICTORIA, and it is addressed to J.T. Coolidge, 116 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass, U.S. America. Two additional postmarks are superimposed, but identifiable: the card was routed through VANCOUVER on Dec 10 and arrived at Boston on Dec 15, 1895 (Figure 1)



The reverse is not as pristine as the front, and it reads: November 13th.... I send you a sample card of the present issue all other cards having been recalled within the last couple days or so, the P.M. Gen. allowing such advertisements to be circulated. This will be good for a collection as it will surely not last long in circulation. Y(ou)r country is not left out in the cold. [I am not sure of the French that follows] (Figure 2).



The withdrawal of the offending card from sale apparently did not preclude their postal use as shown by this card, which was posted at BALLARAT/ J(-) 12/ 97 and addressed to the German Laundry, Howill Street (sic), of Creswick road. The reverse written in large letters spoke of an emergency: Please call at Mrs Marks, 'Quambi', Armstrong Street, as soon as possible, H.M. (Figure 3).



Geoff Kellow in *The Stamps of Victoria* mentions that three types of the card exist, identified by the wavy lines under the text, representing the three "dyes" from which the electros were produced. This difference is very evident in this mint copy of the postcard which overlies the first used copy, and the breaks in the wavy line are well seen in the mint copy. The difference in the blue shades as mentioned by Kellow are also seen (Figure 4).



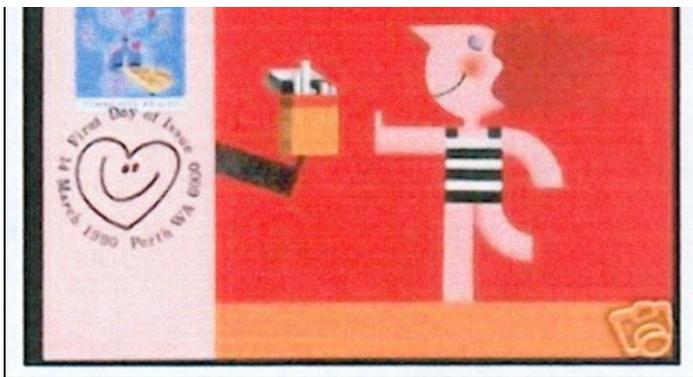
In the first postcard, J.T. Coolidge (senior) was the president of the Columbian National Bank and his son was John Templeman Coolidge Junior who in 1935 published a book in Cambridge Massachusetts *The London Convention for the Protection of African Fauna and Flora*. With map and notes on existing African Parks and Reserves. He was a merchant of considerable financial means and his business in association with A.C. Slater was at 21 Lewis Wharf, Boston. He was a patron of an important exhibition of Handicrafts of New England in Boston in 1897, was President of the Arts and Crafts Society in 1935-37, and was a jury judge of exhibits. He made donations of objects from his own collection to the Society.

The postmaster general, John Gavan Duffy (1844-1917) who was responsible for the advertising postcard's issue, was the son of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, former premier of Victoria, and he was the successor to his father in the safe seat of Dalhousie, Victoria in the Legislative Assembly. He filled many ministerial positions including attorney-general, postmaster-general, agriculture, and crown lands and survey. Like his father, he was a supporter of Federation and attended the Federal Council of Australasia in 1893. After leaving parliament Duffy's law partnership did much of the legal work for the Catholic Church.

The postmaster-general's philatelic pratfall did not appear to affect his political profession!

Addendum: The finding on Ebay of two Community Health 14 March 1990 First Day Covers reminded me that we had come a long way in Preventative Health against drinking alcohol and driving, as well as cessation, as two of the themes on these 41 cent stamps (Figure 5).





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