

# Postcards provide a peek into the past

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By David Litogot  
special writer

## footprints in history

Strolling through antique shops, garage sales and flea markets this summer, I was amazed at the history that can be learned.

Unrecognizable items were explained by the seller for just the asking. Items that looked worthless have large prices due to their rarity and history. At times, it was disturbing to find something that I threw away years ago as "junk" was now valuable and desired. Baseball cards, comic books, glassware, postcards, furniture, tools, and even clothes.

If one lingers long enough in an antique shop, he would hear conversations like, "My grandmother had one of those," or "That's like the one Aunt Helen had."

Since I am interested in photography, I am drawn to the old postcards and stereo cards. I was rather fortunate this summer in finding four postcards picturing old scenes of the Farmington area.

ONE CARD had a view of the bridge over the Rouge Creek (behind the Baptist Church). It was postmarked Oct. 1, 1914, and was sent to "Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Drake, Farmington, Michigan." In 1914, no other address was needed. It was signed "Catherine" and talked about a dance at the Odd Fellows Hall.

A second card was hand-colored and showed a small waterfall. It was entitled "Greetings from North Farmington, Michigan." (North Farmington was a village at the corner of Farmington Road and 14 Mile years ago.)

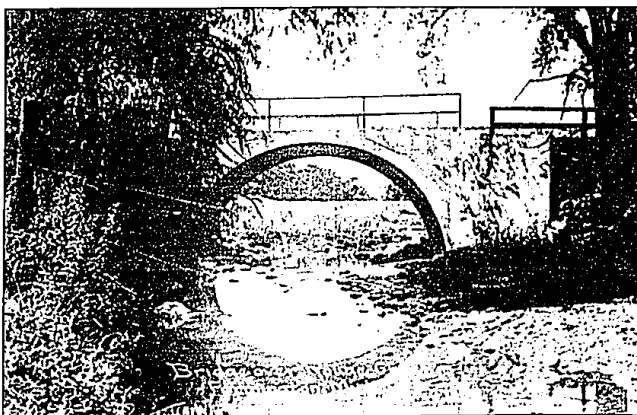
It had a post office, a creamery, some stores, and a few homes. It was postmarked in 1910 and addressed to "Mrs. Hess" in Detroit. Sent by "Nellie," it displays a stamp for one cent. For all you folks out there who are younger than 25, postcards cost just a penny to mail for many years. The message from Nellie discussed the 60 dozen eggs she

sent out that morning and the fact that she needed some coffee.

My third card was dated in December 1948 but postmarked in Dearborn. The picture was of the Botsford Inn after Henry Ford remodeled it. The card was sent by "Nita" of Morley Avenue in Dearborn and sent to a "Miss K. Hughes" in Pasadena, Calif. Obviously, Nita visited the inn shortly before she wrote to her friend on the west coast.

My prize find of my vacation was a 1912 card with a picture of the Owen House. This hotel in Farmington sat on the southeast corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. It was eventually moved and finally burned in the 1930s. The photo was taken by that "roving" postcard photographer Pasha. The photo is still clear and the resolution is fine and accurate. "Ruby B." sent the card to "Mrs. Lily Johnson" in Cadillac. For some reason, the card was eventually returned to the sender.

Farmington history can be found around the state, maybe the country. Stop by a few shops and see if you can pick up some history or a postcard or two. I'm sure the Farmington Historical Museum would be glad to accept a donation of some old pictures and mementoes of the area.



This old postcard depicts the bridge over Rouge Creek in old Farmington.

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