

## News from Nan

### NEWS 'N' VIEWS

# OUR “POSTCARDS FROM MICHIGAN” PROJECT (POST #1)

SEPTEMBER 4, 2023 | ANNA



## The “Postcards from Michigan” Zooniverse project

Dick and I like to engage in at least one ongoing volunteer project that we can do on our own, on our laptops, and that we can sandwich in between other things that are also going on during the day. One such activity that we’ve been engaged in for a month or so is transcribing picture postcards written by people in Michigan between about 1905 and 1945.

The sponsoring organization is [Zooniverse](#). The project is called "Picturing Michigan's Past." The collection has 60,000 postcards, and about 3000 volunteers are participating.

The cards were called Real Picture Post Cards (RPPCs) and people could easily buy them in stores or even have their own made. They are a fascinating peek into the past, and link to the present!

## Observations about the project



*Water St, Port Huron, Michigan. I'm enjoying seeing pictures of places in my home state. My childhood dentist had his office in the building on the right of this photo.*

One key observation we've both made is that people in that era used postcards, which were cheap to buy and send, a lot like people nowadays use text messages. Because mail delivery was apparently reliable and swift, people wrote postcards to arrange meetings with friends and relatives, sometimes for the same day! ("I'll be on the 4:10 train; please meet me at the station.").



*School in Brant, Michigan 1911*

Many people wrote postcards to chide a "correspondent" to "write me a letter soon; I haven't heard from you lately." (And they DIDN'T mean a return postcard; they were looking for something longer and more newsy that would arrive in an envelope.)



*Lady hunter on holiday*

Pictures of natural disasters are common.



*Flooded bridge, 1913*

There are also many that just say "Having a wonderful time. Will be back home on Sunday afternoon." Or "We got heavy rain on Wednesday night."



*Boys swimming, 1913*



*Steamboat on the lake*

## Picture postcard of my family's cottage in Forestville, Michigan

The other day Dick discovered a postcard that connected to my own Michigan heritage. My Riedel/Schreiter family owned property in Forestville on Lake Huron starting in about 1916. Over the years my grandparents and their children built cottages there, and many of them lived there or visited often during the summer. Imagine my surprise when the image on Dick's latest postcard matched a "Riedel cottage" photo in an album that I inherited from my mother! I'm still sorting out the significance of "Hillcrest Cottage" and who annotated the album photo (it wasn't my mother), but in the meantime I'm enjoying the "old home week" glow.



*Photo on the Michigan postcard from the Zooniverse collection*



Photo of Riedel cottage from my mother's photo album. I have no idea who (probably a family member) wrote the annotation.

◀ 2023    ◀ HISTORY    ◀ JOHNSON    ◀ MICHIGAN    ◀ POSTCARD    ◀ VAN RAAPHORST    ◀ ZONIVERSE