

# Scribblings

...from the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library

Ellengail Beuthel, Librarian



Vol. 17 - No. 6  
www.rmpldenver.org

2038 South Pontiac Way, Denver, CO 80224  
303.759.9921

November-December 2009  
Email - rmpl@qwestoffice.net

## IN THIS ISSUE

Contract Signed .....	1
Abbott's "Dear Doctor"	
Post Cards.....	1-2
The Prez' Observations .....	3
What's New on the	
Shelves.....	4
Book Review.....	5



## LARGE LOT LIVE AUCTION .....

Donations.....	6
New Members .....	6

Second Saturday .....	
Programs .....	7



November



December

Meetings & Stamp	
Shows.....	7
What's Happening	
Calendar ..	Back Cover

online card catalog  
www.rmpldenver.org

## Contract Signed on Purchase of Building Final Closing Expected on December 7

A contract has been signed for the purchase of the adjacent property at 2048 South Pontiac Way. The RMPL Board and the Negotiating Committee reached agreement with the seller on the purchase price of \$297,500. A final closing date on the property is planned for December 7, 2009. A number of steps still remain, including a formal appraisal, inspection, and other contractual details. A complete report to the membership will be made upon final closing and transfer of title to the property. The RMPL Officers and Board would like to thank the many volunteers who have donated their time and effort to accomplish this important step. We are looking forward to the benefits of this expansion and improvements that will now be possible with the additional space. We are making a substantial down payment on the purchase which is made possible by the many generous pledges by members. Other fund raising events, such as our Large Lot Auction on November 14, now more than ever, are especially important.

## Dear Doctor: Unusual Variations in Abbott's Medical Post Cards

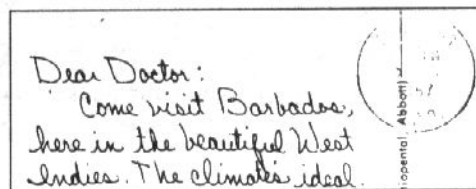
by Roger Cichorz

From 1954 to 1968, Abbott Laboratories, headquartered in North Chicago, Illinois, conducted a massive advertising campaign for its popular anesthetic drug Pentothal® Sodium that involved mailing a postcard every few weeks to thousands of doctors, nurse-anesthetists, and health facilities around the world. Abbott distributed at least 185 face-different postcards to doctors with the salutation, "Dear Doctor," followed by a message extolling the virtues of Pentothal.

During that campaign, postcards from 91 different countries were sent to doctors in the United States, Canada, and 20 other countries. The Abbott cards are known with their messages in ten different languages (Arabic, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish). Some of the card mailings were enormous—for example, 280,000 of the "Wilkes, Australian Antarctic" cards were posted in January 1961. This card is still relatively common and often sighted in dealer's inexpensive cover boxes. However, finding some of the Abbott cards from the later mid-1960s mailings presents a great challenge as only a small number (perhaps as few as 1000) of these face-different cards were mailed and only a few of each still survive.

I did not begin collecting the Abbott cards in earnest until six years ago when I spotted a lot comprising perhaps 25 or so different cards at a local bourse and decided to purchase them. Thus began my quest to obtain every face-different Abbott card and their variants, a quest that is still ongoing.

So far, I have 129 of the 185 face-different Abbott cards issued—scouring stamp shows and bourses, postcard shows, eBay, and various other sites on the internet in the process of trying to identify and obtain them. During the past six years there have been ten additional previously unknown Abbott cards reported and added to the checklist. I was the discoverer of seven of these, finding them on internet auctions, but my "discoveries" are bittersweet in that I was outbid on most of these finds, and the end result was simply increasing my "want list"!



# Dear Doctor:

Continued from page 1

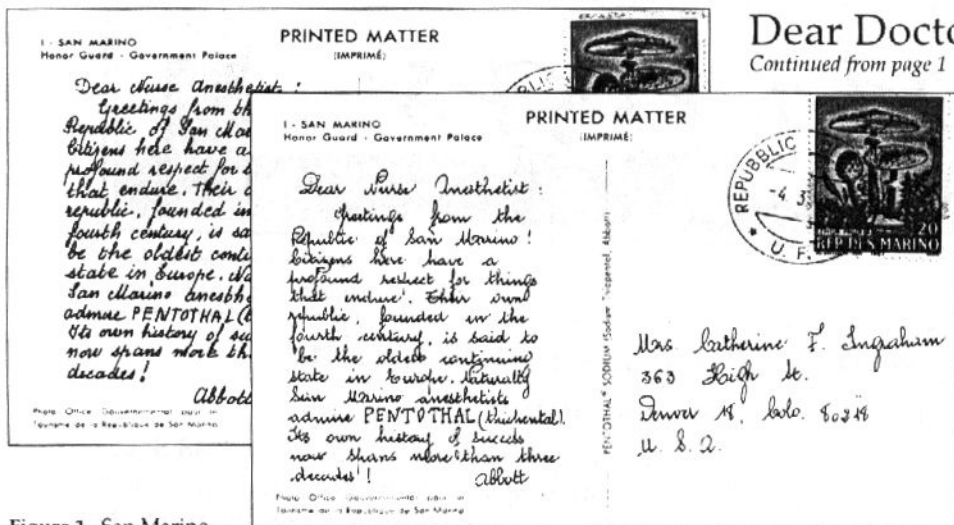


Figure 1. San Marino, "Dear Nurse Anesthetist" identical ad messages in different script.

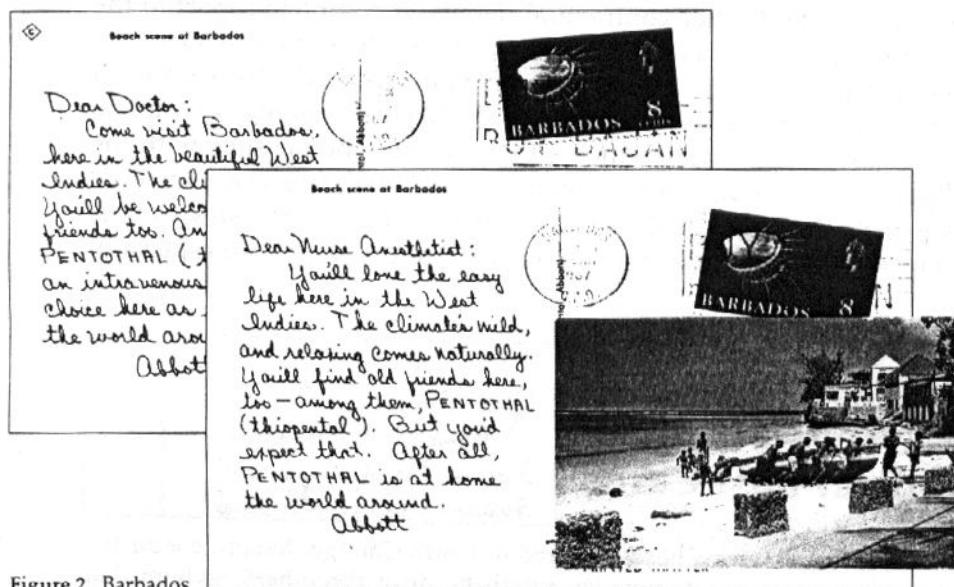


Figure 2. Barbados Beach Scene same-picture "Dear Doctor" and "Dear Nurse Anesthetist" cards with completely different ad messages.



Figure 3. Two Face-Different Nelson's Column/Trafalgar Square Cards. Horizontal format card posted February 1955 and vertical-format card posted July 12, 1968, also a first-day-of-issue card for the "QE1 painting" stamp.

I have made other interesting (previously unknown and/or unreported) findings with the Abbott cards. For example, I discovered two different script typefaces used on the same Abbott San Marino card (Figure 1) - the first reported instance of this on an Abbott card.

Some Abbott same-picture cards are "variants". Some cards sent to nurse-anesthetists do not have "Dear Doctor" salutations but rather either a "Dear Nurse-Anesthetist" salutation or no salutation at all. All these "Dear Nurse" examples were known to have the identical message as their "Dear Doctor" counterparts until I examined the Barbados "beach scene" card (Figure 2) and found that the two have completely different messages!

Recently, I purchased an Abbott "Nelson's Column" vertical-format card (Figure 3) at APEX thinking it was a duplicate of a card I already had since it was not on my want list. When I got home and compared it to the card I already had with that title, it was an entirely different card that was not on the checklist of known Abbott cards! The other "Nelson" card that was on the checklist is in horizontal format and is from a 1955 mailing. The vertical-format card I bought at APEX is uncanceled, while mine has a "First Day of Issue" postmark for the stamp, so mine has now been added to the list of only six recorded Abbott FDC mailings.

If this discussion stimulates an interest in these cards, be sure to visit the "Dear Doctor Club" web site (<http://www.deardoctordocuments.com>). Also a book by David C. Lai, M.D. titled Pentothal Postcards is available at the RMPL. Oh yes, and if you have any questions about these cards, you can contact me at [reichorz@comcast.net](mailto:reichorz@comcast.net) as I am always happy to talk about "Dear Doctor" postcards!