



We might think of post cards as something primarily used by tourists to tell friends back home about their vacation.



However, some of our best historical photos are from post cards. These include those taken of lumber camps, family & individual portraits, and street scenes featuring a popular building such as a church, store, or school. Most were taken by a professional photographer using a high quality camera.

The tricky part is how does something that was usually mailed away end up back here in Otsego County? Some post cards were saved in scrap books, some may have been later returned to the sender, and some were never mailed.

Currently, local post cards from our past are sold at flea markets and on-line at sites such as eBay. Probably the largest accessible collection of Otsego County post cards is the one amassed by Jan White. Jan, a 1965 graduate of Gaylord High School, included more than 1100 post cards on his alumni site. He conveniently divided them into decades 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and a catchall for pre-1940 which includes the earliest post cards of the 1800s. Each decade is further sub-divided into 4 categories: City, Lakes & Parks, Motels & Resorts, and Miscellaneous. Plan to spend hours viewing history through the eyes of these skilled photographers. You'll want to bookmark this sight for return visits. [Link](#)



The post card's location is often written on the front photo. The date might also be included. If not, the post mark on the back may help determine when the picture was taken.

History Matters Detective Marsha Lash has been helping Ann Wright and other volunteers scan post cards at the museum. The digital image is then entered into the PastPerfect software program. In the near future, the entire collection will be on-line making it easy to access this treasure trove of visual artifacts. The extensive index of searchable terms will be a valuable resource for our History Detectives.

To help promote this project and generate awareness of the museum's extensive post card collection, Marsha created the exhibit shown below. It features just a sample of the Otsego County related post cards. She used her scrapbooking skills to draw attention to and create interest in the wide array of topics. Marsha included brief descriptions for added detail about the post cards. She also prepared a one-page overview on the history of post cards. Be sure to take a look – the display is in the museum's north gallery.



**Discover ♦ Learn ♦ Share**

Post Cards offer a fun and interesting way to learn about the history of Otsego County. We continue to seek picture post cards depicting life here long ago as well as in recent times. Please share your post cards with us – we will scan them so you keep the original and we'll have the digital image for our archives.