

# Greenwich High School Wreadin Writin n Wreminiscin

Weekly Wreader

21 November 2004



## Hamilton Avenue School



Kathie **TEMPLE** Azoff . Old Greenwich . CT  
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What a shame to lose such a beautiful old building! It will be considered one of the biggest mistakes the town has made along with the Pickwick Arms and the Tod's mansion and probably many others.  
Kathie

## A ristotle n Beauty



Kent **REMYNTON** . Micanopy . FL  
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My Forever Bond With Buddy Titsworth: The first day my parents ever let me take their car to school I was gliding along in front of the school at about 20mph feeling all the world like a 'new' man when out of the corner of my eye I spied the most beautiful ass in a tight green dress, I had ever seen in my life. A second later I heard a CRASH, and then I CRASHED into the first one. Buddy and I got out of our respectively bent cars and agreed that we were concentrating on the same pair of beautiful buttocks instead of the mundane road ahead, but it was damn well worth

it. - That night I tried, in vain, to convince my father that although it was a bad day for his relationship with his insurance company, it was a good day for any questions he might have had about my interest in the opposite sex. He didn't buy it, and for the next six months I went back to hitch-hiking. Evidently he hadn't read Aristotle who described Beauty as, "Size as well as symmetry." - God Bless her, whoever she was.

## More Mysteries for the Mix



Jane **BENJAMIN** Sheen . St. Thomas . VI  
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I can't believe it, but I just found two more that might fit the bill - also currently listed on eBay. I may bid on some of these. I have no idea where the Ruwe Pencil Company was. I think I'll email it to my siblings and see if they know. I think Lafayette Place is the



road on the way to the hospital. Nancy Fitzgerald lived there; maybe she'll recognize the house - assuming its still there.

## T herein Lies the T ale

Aye, there's the rub. Jane wrote to Gene and me and sent four postcards leading off with the Ruwe Pencil Company and the Lafayette Place at left. In Jane's comments she suggests that Lafayette Place is near the Hospital. She is "write" and that area of Greenwich is now called the Fourth Ward. (See the article below about a 114-year old house planned for demolition. The Ruwe Pencil Company is

at 321 West Putnam Avenue in the triangle near Edgewood Avenue in Chickahominy. Ruwe Pencil was acquired by the Dixon Ticonderoga Pencil Company in 1988.



Eugene **DAVINO** . Greenwich . CT + Chatham . MA  
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I can help with the Ruwe Pencil Company. The building still exists on West Putnam Ave across from Partridge and Rockwell around the BMW dealer. I grew up in Glenville, but that picture of the post office doesn't look familiar. I need to check with an old timer when I'm back down there.

## Further on the T ale

Included in the second eMail Jane sent along two more listings from the eBay website, these being the "mega-structure" called the Ely School for Girls... a foreboding cluster of penitentiary style buildings, appropriately set on a forced perspective in a dark aging paper. With some newsprint below, stating it to be "One of the best equipped schools for girls in the country. Beautifully located overlooking Long Island Sound and only ... New York City." The remainder is badly blurred and illegible.



And the fourth card is the Post Office in Glenville. Including the one-horse power natural fuel energy efficient vehicle. And a few of the locals. Do you recognize anyone?



Bob **McMILLAN** . Scarsdale . NY  
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The little white building in Glenville, was the original Post Office and it is still there... it is sitting on the corner opposite the old Felt Mill site and is still functioning as "retail" property... the post office moved about 1000 ft to the north into a modern (1970) shopping center... The Ruwe Pencil Company is indeed still on Putnam Avenue... and every year at this time, my father would pack us boys into his truck and we would go to the Pencil Company, to buy his "Christmas" stock of pencils... all with the company name and a "seasons greeting"... and about 400 little long gray envelopes big enough for 3 pencils... we would address the envelopes and insert

3 pencils and then send them off to his customers for 5 cents each at the post office... (Not the one in Glenville, but in Byram) The one in Byram also doubled as a candy store. So we got paid for our services.

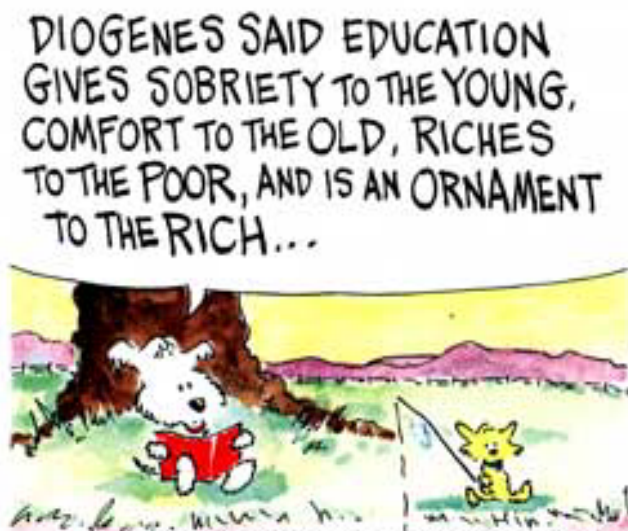
## The Beach at Byram Shore



Ilona **GALASSO** Mendicino . Lecanto . FL  
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I believe that Photo #2 is of Byram Shore. I remember going there during the summers...even walking there and roasting to a golden brown tan.

## Webbster n Button



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## On the Subject of Sound Beach



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My little history book has nothing about either property...nothing much north of the Post Road on the eastern side of town - east of Greenwich Avenue - but it does have a story about Sound Beach Avenue.

"This ancient thoroughfare follows an Indian path which leads from the shore across the ford of the Asamuck (in Binney Park) and north. The settlers continued to use the path as a route to the mill at Dumpling Road and the Kings Highway (Post Road.) Sound Beach was straightened toward the shore at the turn of the

century when the shore road area was a popular summer resort and trolley tracks ran from the railroad station to the Old Greenwich Inn (built in 1895 in the middle of a triangle where the trolleys turned around.) The tracks were ripped up and used as scrap during WWII. The name Sound Beach is a relic from 1872 when, in order to get a railway station, the town changed its name to Sound Beach. The railway had refused to build one in Old Greenwich, claiming that the town already had one stop called Greenwich. In 1932 the name was changed back to Old Greenwich."

## T own to Pay for Rail S tation U pgrade

By Neil Vigdor Staff Writer  
The Greenwich Time  
13 November 2004

A bid-rigging scandal at the state Department of Transportation could disrupt ongoing renovations to the Old Greenwich Metro-North Railroad station unless the town advances the money to complete the over-budget project.

The town will probably put up \$150,000 of its money to finish the work, for which the state DOT has already budgeted \$500,000 collected from parking fees at the town's railroad stations.



Local public works officials attributed the overrun to recently discovered structural defects in the 1892 building's foundation and roof. The station, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, sustained damage in a 2002 fire that began in a portable toilet.

A request for additional state money for the project remains in flux as the DOT officials responsible for authorizing the release of unspent parking fees from the railroad stations were suspended last month amid a corruption scandal. The money is in a town account, but state authorization is required for its release.

To keep the project on track, local public works officials will seek an additional appropriation for \$150,000 in contingency funds from the town finance board Monday night.

"Certainly, it makes me take pause, and I would prefer not to have to take the funds from town contingency to expedite the project, but the reality is we're moving into winter and I'm told the project could get delayed," said Peter Tesei, chairman of the town finance board.

Tesei confirmed that a few of his colleagues on the board have expressed reservations over having to lay out the money but said he was confident the town would be reimbursed.

"I don't think the town will get caught holding the bag, so to speak," Tesei said.

Mark Neri, the DOT administrator with temporary responsibility for approving additional charges, conceded yesterday that he was not entirely familiar with the circumstances of the project and said he requires more information from the town.

"We're in a transition period here," said Neri, an assistant rail administrator at the DOT's Newington headquarters. "That's not to say that the department is not going to pay for this work. We're just looking to see that it's a reasonable cost."

First Selectman Jim Lash said the need to continue the project outweighs the potential risks of using town money as a stopgap. The project started in late August and was expected to finish in March. A concession stand at the station has been relocated to a temporary trailer during the project.

"We can make government incredibly inefficient if we don't take any risks," Lash said. "We can't use their money until they authorize it. In the meantime, because we don't want to inconvenience the commuters, we will appropriate the money and then get reimbursed."

## DOT Releases Funds for Train Station

By Martin B. Cassidy Staff Writer  
The Greenwich Time  
17 November 2004

Responding to lobbying efforts from town and state officials, the state Department of Transportation released funds yesterday to finish renovations to the Old Greenwich Metro-North Railroad station, the town's public works commissioner said.

The town's finance board voted Monday to appropriate \$150,000 to finish work on the historic station on time. An investigation involving DOT officials threatened to delay the release of money set aside for rail improvements in Greenwich and collected from parking fees at train stations.

But yesterday, Mark Neri, the DOT administrator handling appropriations for rail improvements, told Public Works Commissioner Marcos Madrid the state would release the money, Madrid said. The project will be finished by March 2005, its original completion date, he said.

After the state reviewed the contractor's proposal and estimate for the remaining work, state officials concluded everything was in order, Neri said.

"It was more of a process thing than anything else," he said of the delay.

State Sen. William Nickerson, R-Greenwich, said he put Madrid in touch with DOT officials to make a case for releasing the money.

Nickerson said he thought it would be unfair for administrative problems at the state level to force the town to appropriate money.

"I didn't think the town should be put at a disadvantage because an individual was suspended, and the DOT came to understand that," Nickerson said. "Life goes on, and the work goes on."

The state DOT already authorized \$500,000 for the project. The \$150,000 released now will be spent to fix structural problems discovered in the 1892 building's foundation and roof during the renovation, Madrid said.

"In some sections, there was no foundation support whatsoever," Madrid said.

The station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It sustained damage in 2002 from a fire that began in a portable toilet.

Town officials appropriated the money Monday because they wanted to prevent further inconvenience to Old Greenwich residents, First Selectman Jim Lash said.

"We didn't know if the state would approve this two days or two months from now, so we didn't want the work to be unnecessarily delayed," Lash said.

The renovation includes redoing the station's interior by stripping the inner walls, floors, and ceilings and replacing them with wooden panels. The building has been updated with new heating, cooling and electrical systems as well as handicap-accessible bathrooms.

The project is being overseen by the town Department of Public Works and is part of a multiyear project to upgrade the Cos Cob, Riverside and Old Greenwich train stations.

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## A Panoply of Postcards



### AS YOU LIKE IT BELLE HAVEN

Gene **DAVINO**

House in Belle Haven demolished in the 1940's.

Jane **BENJAMIN** Sheen

Also, no information specifically about "As You Like It" in Belle Haven. I think I already shared some stuff about the early development of Belle Haven. It was originally the Nelson Bush farm and was divided into lots that went on the market in 1882. Early developers were Captain Thomas

Mayo, Nathaniel Witherell and Robert M. Bruce. My major source for the rest of the info is [Greenwich, an Illustrated History](#), published by the Greenwich Time and the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich in 1990. I found one interesting tidbit:

"Greenwich's first low income housing project was established to shelter the domestic workers of Belle Haven"



## INDIAN HARBOR YACHT CLUB

Gene **DAVINO**

It was founded in NYC in 1889, because so many of the members were commuters. On the night before Prohibition went into effect the club auctioned off its wine cellar. After the stock market crash the membership went from 345 to 167 members.

Jane **BENJAMIN** Sheen

The Indian Harbor Yacht club was organized in 1889. A forerunner to IHYC was the Greenwich Yacht Club, which had its original clubhouse on Finch island, off Mead point. This island was later owned by the infamous "Boss Tweed". - my words summarizing info from the book:



"So many of the Indian Harbor Yacht Club members were commuters that its founding in 1889 took place at a New York City meeting; by 1893 only 27 of its 172 members were year-round Greenwich residents."

"On the night before Prohibition went into effect, the Indian Harbor Yacht Club auctioned off its wine cellar amid much tasting. The last survivor was seen emerging unsteadily from the premises at 5 a.m., still singing."

"Before the Crash, Indian Harbor Yacht Club boasted 345 members, 96 yachts, and a staff that included two doormen in starched white gloves, two maitre d's, 11 waiters, and a ladies' maid. .... But it wasn't long after the Crash before the club's membership had shrunk to 167, the dining room was closed and a small gas stove near the ship-model room pressed into service as a makeshift kitchen for whatever dining was done. The depleted club arranged a new \$45,000 bank loan, but even that didn't wipe out Indian Harbor's sea of red ink. Two former commodores split up the pile of mounting bills and paid them personally."



## PICKWICK ARMS HOTEL

Gene **DAVINO**

It opened in 11/26/1920 with 120 bedrooms, 60 baths, a silver duck press at the dining-room entrance. First guests were 330 people returning from the Yale-Harvard football game. Famous for celebrity weddings and interludes. It was demolished in 1971.

Jane **BENJAMIN** Sheen

"New hotels and inns began to spring up, including the impressive 120-room, 60-bath Pickwick Arms,

which opened in 1920 at the top of Greenwich Avenue. Not completed in time for the summer season, it was packed on opening night with 330 guests driving back from the Yale-Harvard Game."



In 1930 a full-course dinner at the Pickwick Arms cost \$2.00. Pickwick Arms was demolished in 1971. I know I went to Nancy Cross Smith's wedding reception at the Pickwick Arms in 1967 or 1968. I wonder if anyone else held their reception, or any other significant celebration there? That's the best I can do. Hope the rest of you come up with some more stuff.

## MAIN DINING ROOM RICH'S RESTAURANT

Jane **BENJAMIN** Sheen  
I have absolutely no idea about Rich's restaurant. The Post Road part of Old Greenwich is relatively short, so I think it must have been somewhere near the end of Sound Beach Avenue, not far from the Caldor's that was the scene of one of Dick Delage's early forays into crime.

Bob **McMILLAN**

So we leave you hanging on Rich's, are there any "guesses" or wild stabs at where and what this place was? I can say one thing, as an architect, "I love the columns framing into the ceilings and the Cathedral-like Quality of the Space. The lighting fixtures on the columns, would make an Interior Designer drool. And would you like at all those windows, what could there be in the way of a 'View'?"



## Fourth Ward Home May Be Razed

By Hoa Nguyen Staff Writer  
The Greenwich Time  
12 November 2004

A little over a month after a compromise was reached to save two out of three historic houses developers had wanted to demolish, another house in the same Fourth Ward neighborhood appears headed toward a dispute both sides want to avoid.

Stephen and Annette Batkin, a Greenwich couple finalizing their purchase of 8 Division St., want to demolish the 114-year-old house and build a new modular structure where they and an elderly family member can live.

But what the empty-nesters, whose sons are away at college, didn't realize was that the quick construction they sought will be delayed for at least 90 days.

Historic preservationists said they are seeking the delay, which anyone can request from the town's building officials, so they can try to persuade the Batkins to renovate rather than rebuild. In addition to a porch designed with Queen Anne elements, the house is representative of the old houses in the Fourth Ward.

"We want to emphasize to them the importance of the streetscape," said Debra Mecky, executive director of The Historical Society of the town of Greenwich. "Our concern is that they preserve the streetscape and do the development behind the house."

This would be the second time in several months preservationists have sought to block proposed demolitions in the Fourth Ward. Developers of three Sherwood Place houses, who had wanted to rebuild what they said would be better-looking historic homes, spent months locking horns with preservationists before agreeing to a compromise last month. They will demolish one house and renovate the other two.

That battle even involved state officials of the Historic Preservation Council in Hartford, who could have recommended the attorney general enforce a law banning the "unreasonable" destruction of houses listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The council didn't do so because of the compromise.

The Fourth Ward was added to the national register four years ago, recognizing the area as one of Greenwich's earliest settlements of multifamily housing and a racially and ethnically diverse population. Its residents included Irish families in the 19th century as well as blacks and immigrants from Poland, Italy and other countries.

The neighborhood's name was likely copied from New York City's Fourth Ward, a well-known Lower East Side area settled by immigrants, according to historic researchers. William Marcy "Boss" Tweed, a Tammany Hall politician who wielded influence in New York's Fourth Ward, spent summers in Greenwich during the 1860s.

The house at 8 Division St. also honors the neighborhood's Irish past through Queen Anne-style brackets on the porch, which are cut in the shape of shamrocks, said Nils Kerchus, who researched the Fourth Ward's history and helped the historical society nominate the area to the national register.

"That's the main element of interest," he said of the porch detail. "But you have to take the rest of the house into context."

Preservationists have said that while Fourth Ward houses are not known for their architecture, and have been modified through such means as the installation of aluminum siding, the mere fact that there are dozens of old houses still standing and reminiscent of the area more than a century ago make them worth saving.

In this case, the house also appears in good condition, said Bill Schneider, a Church Street neighbor who has in the past waged campaigns to preserve Fourth Ward buildings.

"It's typical of the neighborhood, typical of the street," he said of the house, adding that he would rather owner's build additions in the back of the property.

"I can't see that that is more costly than tearing something down," Schneider added.

When Annette Batkin and her husband decided to purchase the Division Street house, they were looking for a quick way to buy a central Greenwich house that could fit them, their three cats and her 84-year-old father. Since her mother recently died, her father has been living with the couple during his summers away from Florida, she said.

The couple wasn't looking for a house like the historic Glenville house in which they lived and worked to restore over 14 years at a cost of \$500,000, Batkin said. But at the same time, she said the Fourth Ward house, with its 1,000 square feet, is too small for the threesome and needs more work if it were to be renovated.

"It's not that it can't be done," Batkin said. "It can. I don't have that kind of money to do what needs to be done." The couple will soon meet with historic preservationists to share their plans, but are uneasy about entering into a prolonged process, Batkin said. "If they're going to fight us, there's a good chance we'll sell the house to a developer," she said.

## The Castle at Sound Beach



William **VANNEMAN** . South Yarmouth . MA  
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I had looked at your postcard of "The Castle" and had this vague recollection that I knew this place, but couldn't precisely place the time, location, and purpose. My Dad, Bill Sr. (age 95 and still sharper than me) was up this week and

remembered immediately. The Castle was located on Shore Rd. beyond my house, just before the entrance to Lucas Point, on the opposite side of the Rd. Behind the Castle, as seen in the second photo, were summer rental units that were occupied by visitors to the Tod's Point area during July and August. The picture of the Castle looks at the Dining area. The entire stone building was torn down sometime in the 50's and the houses were built--which stand there to this day. Who knows what happened to what my Dad describes as spectacular furnishings inside. Hard to imagine that anyone would tear down such a landmark today, but this was a different era, and since most of the business was summer only, the area was probably not economically viable when there was demand for year round housing. I'd be curious if anyone else has memories. Trentje Clark lived almost across the street. She was a very good friend of my brother, and she may well know more. Last I heard she was somewhere in the New Haven-or Hartford area.

## On the Subject of Postcards



Jane **BENJAMIN** Sheen . St. Thomas . VI  
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I think that Mead's Stationery and other stationery/news stores sold postcards as souvenirs. I find certain publishers such as Curt Teich and Albertype, Co. on cards from various places. There seem to have been other smaller, more regional publishers. Sometimes you will see both "distributed by" and "published by" and a card, which falls in with your theory about certain businesses commissioning cards. A quick look through my "Memories of My Childhood" collection reveals that all the "linen style" cards with the white borders were from The Ruben Publishing Co., Newburgh, NY. I also have repeats of The Collotype Co. in NJ & NY, NATCO

(Natural Color Cards Company) in NJ, and Gramatan Art Co., in Mt. Vernon. The plot just thickened - I discovered that sometimes there is also a "Made by" indication i.e. DEXTER in addition to published by and that sometimes the aforementioned Curt Teich gets credit for the picture as in "CURTEICHCOLOR". You are certainly correct about the "giveaway at the front desk" technique. Often those cards have information about hours, menu, amenities, rates etc. on the back. The heyday for postcards was the early 1900's before everyone traveled so much, so people especially wanted souvenirs, and in many cases cameras weren't available to the average person. I have a great book Greetings From New England - A Glimpse of the Past through Postcards, by Ernest Hebert, and (naturally) a similar one on the Caribbean - Glimpses of Our Past - A Social History of the Caribbean Postcards by John Gilmore. Isn't it amazing how much there is to find out about the simplest thing.

## A Few More Locations

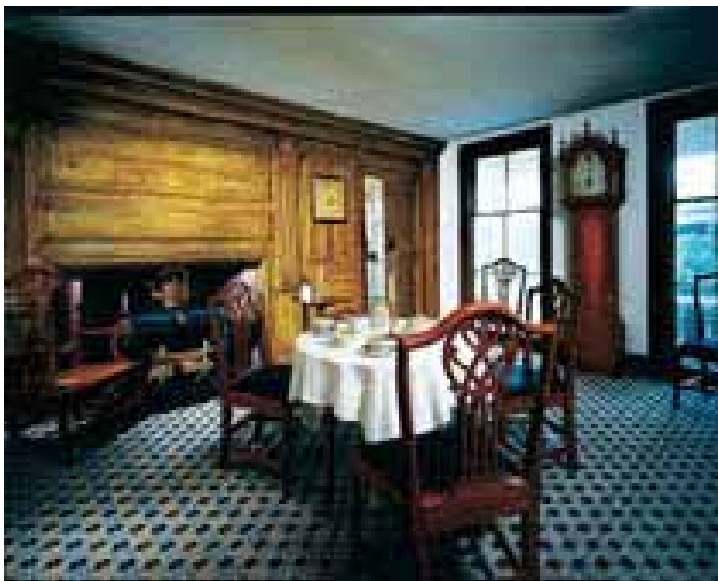
### THE BUSH HOLLEY HOUSE

In the last newsletter, along with the Castle and Byram Shore, there was this quaint little scene, which one person guessed as the YMCA on Putnam Avenue. Of course he wasn't too far off... only about 3.75 miles as the crow squats. The room is at the Bush Holley House

The Bush-Holley House is the oldest building on the site. It is comprised of two separate buildings that were joined to form what is now called the Bush-Holley House. The first building, constructed circa 1728-1730, was a single-room building with an attic and cellar. The original purpose of this building is not known. The main



house, constructed circa 1730-1733, is a two-story, center chimney, saltbox-style house with an attic and cellar. The two buildings were joined by a main entrance hall around 1770. The house was occupied by two generations of the Bush family, the wealthiest family in Greenwich in the late 18th century, from 1755 until 1848, when the home was sold in order to pay off business debts.



The Parlor - Upon entering the elegant parlor at Bush-Holley House, one immediately notices the updated Federal furnishings that Justus Luke Bush likely introduced in 1821 to welcome his bride, Sally St. John of Norwalk. Parlors were often decorated with the family's finest furnishings for entertaining and formal family gatherings.



The Bush-Holley Historic Site contains other buildings of historic significance.

The barn and wash house are two outbuildings that were constructed ca 1870, and reconstructed by the Historical Society in the 1960s. In 2001-2002, the Historical Society insulated, resided and added a wing to the barn in order to provide an education center. Elements of the barn's appearance, circa 1900, when it was used by the Cos Cob artists, were restored. French windows were installed to replace the existing barn door, and the original carriage drive was recreated.

The Justus L. Bush Storehouse is another historically important structure on the site, and is the only remaining commercial building on the former Cos Cob landing. Built circa 1805, it is now the Historical Society's Visitor Center and Administrative Offices. The Storehouse was built by Justus Luke Bush, who used it as a store and warehouse.



The building still occupies its original footprint, but the interior has been altered through several incarnations of use--at various times in its history it has been used as a post office and as a two-family residence. The Historical Society purchased the building in 1989, and renovated the structure during 1997-1998.

The Joseph Brush House, built circa 1850, was purchased in 1995 and continues to be used as a residence.

The Photo above is from the Bush-Holley Historic Site and bears a strange resemblance to the Cos Cob Post Office, shown in another card sent by Jane Benjamin Sheen. So here goes another quest. Is there anything in the postcard that might be still recognizable today?

