

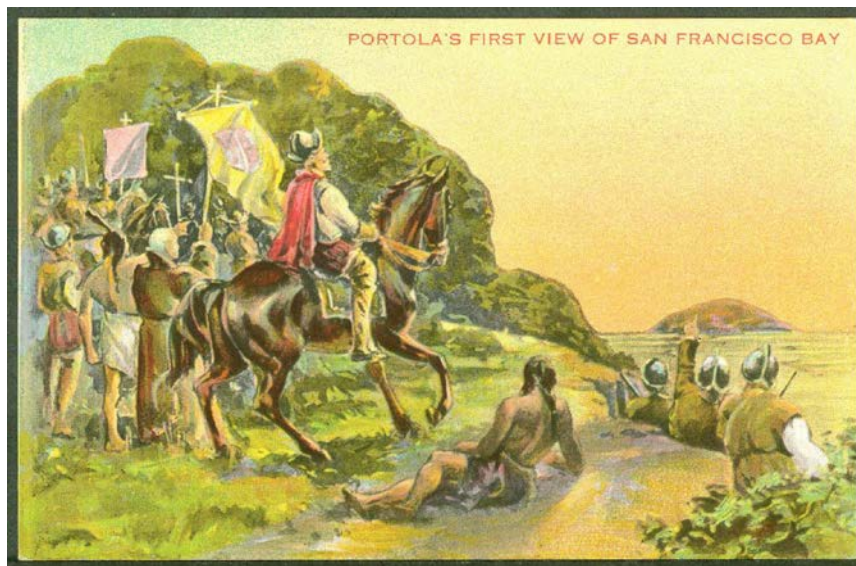
# The Portola Festival October 19-23, 1909

by

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The Portola Festival (October 19-23, 1909 (Tuesday through Saturday)) was the first city-wide event to be held in San Francisco after the earthquake and fire of 1906 (April 18, 1906). The Festival's major purpose was to celebrate the rebirth of the city after the tragic events of 1906 in which over 3,000 people [1] lost their lives and over 80% of the city was destroyed. It is estimated that 225,000 to 300,000 people were made homeless with \$400 million in property damage (over \$10 billion in today's dollars). A second purpose was to prove to the State of California and the nation that San Francisco was capable of being host to a major national or international event such as the planned 1915 Pan Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) [2]. San Francisco, San Diego, and New Orleans were all in the running for hosting the PPIE. The success of the Portola Festival helped make the case for San Francisco, the eventually selected host city.

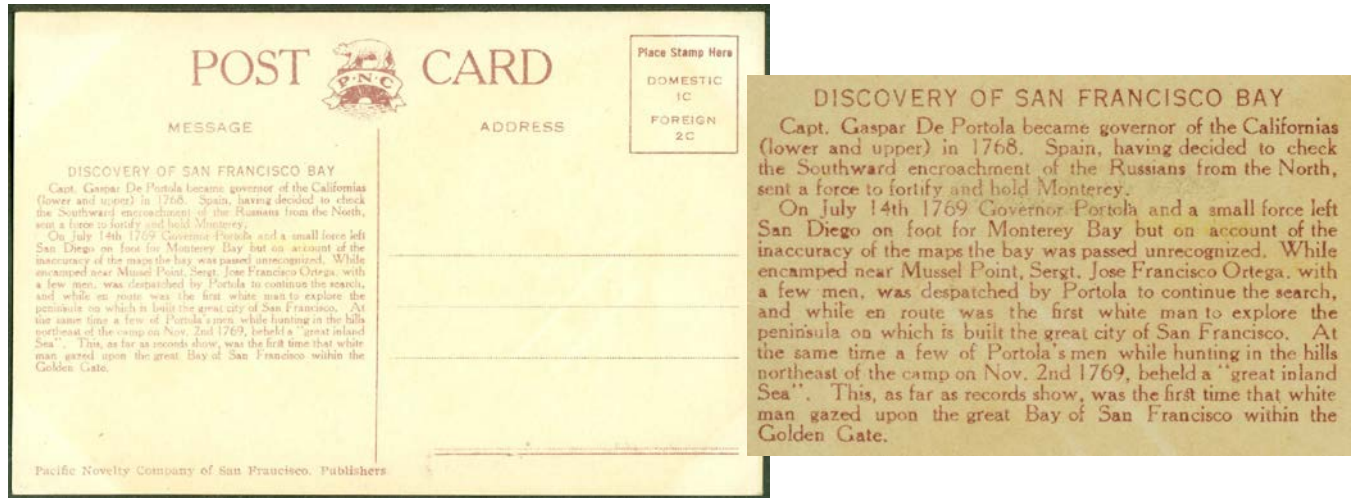
The Portola Festival was named after Gaspar De Portola (1716-1784), the first Spanish Governor of Upper and Lower California (1767-1771). The Festival marked the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Portola and his men discovering San Francisco Bay (the Golden Gate). The post card in Figure 1, illustrates Portola viewing San Francisco Bay for the first time. The card was produced by the Pacific Novelty Company [3].



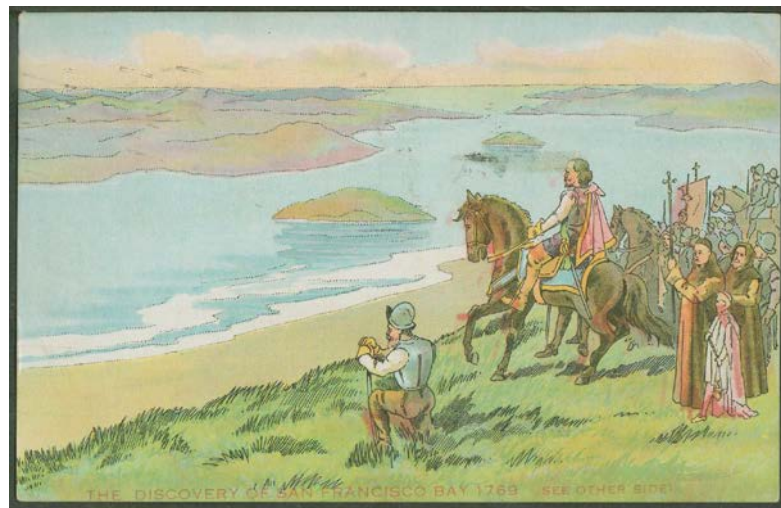
**Figure 1. Post card illustrating Portola and his men viewing San Francisco Bay for the first time (1769). The postcard was produced by the Pacific Novelty Company (P.N.C) and measures 135.9 mm wide by 86.4 mm high.**

The reverse of the card, as shown in Figure 2, presents a brief account of Portola's journey to northern California and the discovery of San Francisco Bay. A similar postcard depicting Portola and his men discovering San Francisco Bay is shown in Figure 3. This card was also

published by the Pacific Novelty Company and has the same discovery narrative on the back. It was postmarked October 12, 1909, in Berkeley, California just seven days before the start of the Portola Festival. It also has a perforated Portola Festival sticker (to be discussed below) pasted on the back.



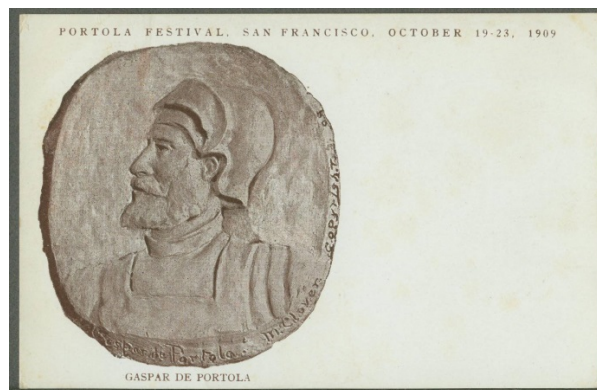
**Figure 2. Reverse of the postcard illustrated in Figure 1. It is a divided back card with a brief description of the discovery of San Francisco Bay by Portola and his men (insert) on November 2, 1769.**



**Figure 3. Post card illustrating Portola and his men viewing San Francisco Bay for the first time (1769). This divided back post card was produced by the Pacific Novelty Company (P.N.C) and measures 136.1 mm wide by 86.4 mm high.**

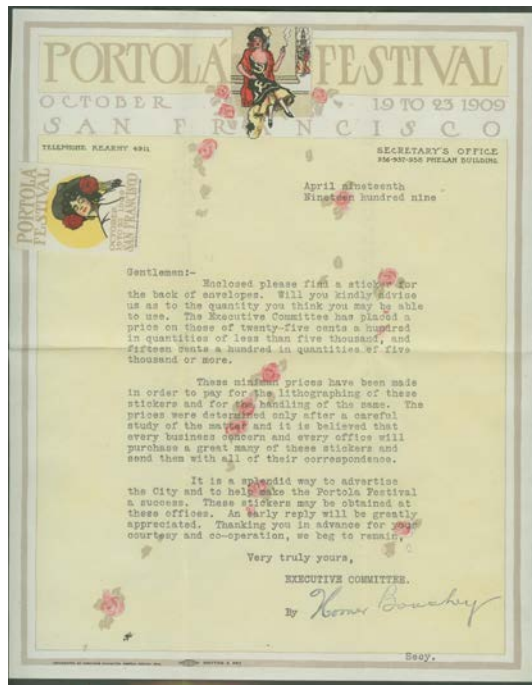
Images of Portola, himself, are extremely rare with only two known authentic portraits. The post card in Figure 4 contains one of these images. The picture on the post card is a photographic reproduction of a relief medallion modeled by Mattie May Clover of San Francisco, California. It was copied from a pen and ink sketch on parchment which resided in the private collection of John P. Burnton (Philadelphia) at the time of the Portola Festival. Mrs. Clover had copyrighted the medallion in 1908. On the post card, itself, there is no indication of the publisher. The same post card exists with a hand stamp in red ink that reads "S. & G. GUMP CO." The Gump Company or

just Gump's is a major retailer in home furnishings and interior décor operating in San Francisco. It was founded in 1861 and it is likely the Portola Medallion postcard was sold by Gump's to promote the Festival. It may even have been given away to its customers.



**Figure 4. Post card illustrating an image of the Gaspar de Portola medallion produced by Mattie May Clover. The card producer or printer is unknown. The card measures 135.9 mm wide by 86.4 mm tall. The card calls attention to the Portola Festival at the top.**

The Portola Festival was an extremely important event for the city of San Francisco and the nation as described above. The Festival Committee [4] was a key element in the success of the event. The Festival committee had their own stationery as shown in Figures 5 and 6. Key functions



Gentlemen:-

Enclosed please find a sticker for the back of envelopes. Will you kindly advise us as to the quantity you think you may be able to use. The Executive Committee has placed a price on these of twenty-five cents a hundred in quantities of less than five thousand, and fifteen cents a hundred in quantities of five thousand or more.

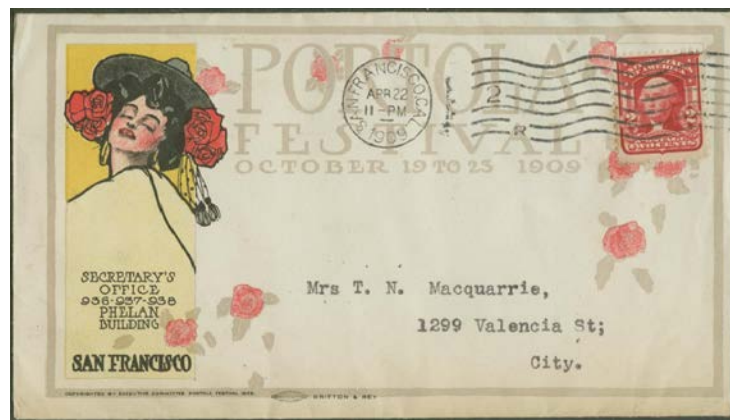
These minimum prices have been made in order to pay for the lithographing of these stickers and for the handling of the same. The prices were determined only after a careful study of the matter and it is believed that every business concern and every office will purchase a great many of these stickers and send them with all of their correspondence.

It is a splendid way to advertise the City and to help make the Portola Festival a success. These stickers may be obtained at these offices. An early reply will be greatly appreciated. Thanking you in advance for your courtesy and co-operation, we beg to remain,

Very truly yours,  
 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.  
 By *Homer Bouchey*  
 Secy.

**Figure 5. A letter sent to merchants requesting purchase of Portola Festival poster stamps. The letter was type written on the official stationery of the Portola Festival Committee and signed by the Secretary. The full color stationery (139.7 mm wide by 271.0 mm long) featured a stylized senorita (at the top) wearing roses at her ears and smoking a cigarette (rather risqué for the time). The stationery also has miniature rose illustrations lightly covering the text area. An example of the imperforate poster stamp is attached.**

of the Committee were to publicize the event and to raise money in advance to help with expenses. To this end the Committee created poster stamps to be sold to merchants and city residents to place on their mail to help advertise the event. The stamps cost 25¢ per hundred in quantities less than 5,000 and 15¢ per hundred in quantities of 5,000 or greater. Such poster stamps are shown in Figure 7. They came in both perforate (perforation 12) and imperforate varieties. The design of the perforated stamps measures 34 mm wide by 50 mm high. The imperforate stamps measure 35 mm wide by 52 mm high. The poster stamps featured a young, dark-haired woman (or *senorita*) wearing a sombrero with two large red roses along the sides of her face. The hair style and pose are similar to those of the Festival Queen (discussed below). Examples of mail containing the poster stamps are shown in Figures 8 and 9.



**Figure 6. Official Envelope from the Secretary of the Portola Festival Committee. The envelope measures 139.7 mm long by 93.1 mm high. It was mailed in San Francisco on April 22, 1909. The envelope has a larger version of the poster stamp image as a corner card.**



**Figure 7. Portola Festival Poster Stamps. The perforated stamp on the left is perforation 12 and measures 34 mm wide by 50 mm high. The imperforate stamp on the right measures 35 mm wide by 52 mm high. The inset at the bottom, from the perforated stamp on the left, illustrates the copyright information printed on both stamps.**



Figure 8. Examples of the Portola Festival imperforate poster stamps used on mail. The post card on the upper left was mailed by a private citizen while the lower right cover is an example of use on business mail.

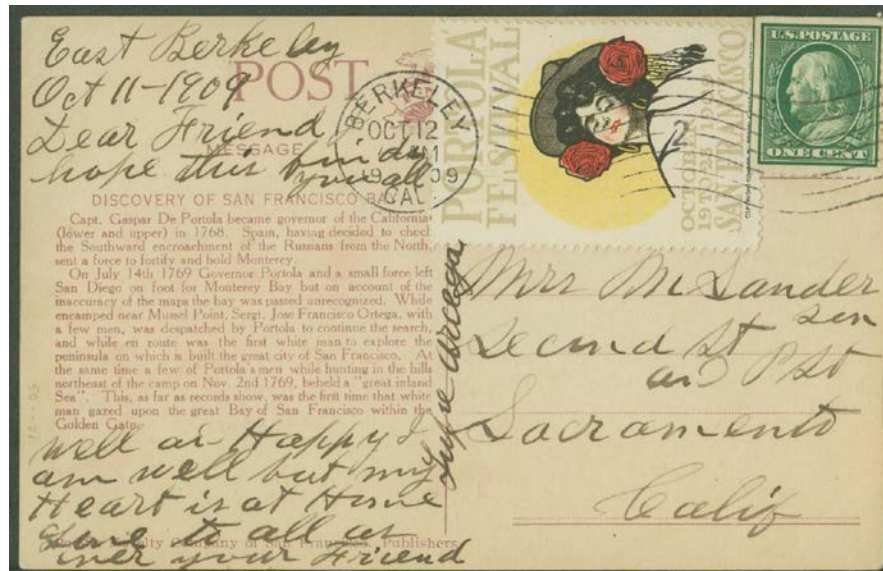


Figure 9. The address side of the Portola San Francisco Bay Discovery Card as shown above in Figure 3. It contains an example of the perforated Portola Festival poster stamps placed next to the regular postage stamp and cancelled with the stamp on October 12, 1909. Note that with the large inscribed message on the card, it is difficult for the sender to include any personal message.

In addition to the poster stamps, the Portola Festival Committee had 8 Official post cards created. These cards carried the wording “(OFFICIAL) POST CARD (PORTOLA FESTIVAL)” across the back at the top (address side). The Portola Festival was printed in two lines within the

parentheses. The designs were serialized beginning with No. 9008 (Figure 10) The Official Poster Design and ending with No. 9015 The Golden Gate by Night (Figure 11). Cards numbered 9009 through 9015 depicted scenes around San Francisco and on the Bay. A list of the various Official post cards and their front side illustrations are given in Table 1. The address side also carried the copyright information “COPYRIGHT 1909 BY PORTOLA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE” [4]. The cards were printed by Britton and Key Lithographers, a San Francisco based firm noted at the time for its publishing of picture post cards. The backs (address sides) of the Official post cards carried one of two messages. Message A: A demographic description of San Francisco and statistics denoting the losses incurred due to the earthquake and ensuing fire (Figure 12a); and Message B: A description of Portola’s discovery of San Francisco Bay (Figure 12b). Table 1 also indicates the inscriptions on the address side of each of the Official postcards. It is interesting to compare the inscriptions on the Portola-San Francisco Bay discovery cards shown in Figures 1, 2, 3, and 9 with the discovery description adopted for the Portola Festival Official post cards, Figure 12b.

**Table 1. Official Portola Festival Postcard Data**

<b>Official Card No.</b>	<b>Card Title</b>	<b>Reverse Message Version</b>	<b>Comments</b>
9008	The Official Poster Design (Vertical Format Card)	A	Two Versions-one with solid red lettering and the other with outline blue lettering.
9009	A view of Union Square, illuminated at night for the Portola Festival	A	Two Harlequin characters around photo-image of Festival Queen. Queen Facing Right.
9010	A night scene on Market Street during the Portola Festival	B	Two Harlequin characters around photo-image of Festival Queen. Queen Facing Right.
9011	A view of Chinatown showing the most typical section of the quarter (Vertical Format Card)	A	Two versions exist-one with sharper image and more color the other paler with less detail, especially in the flags. One Harlequin character near photo-image of Festival Queen. Queen Facing Left.
9012	The Cliff House, San Francisco, California	B	Two Harlequin characters around photo-image of Festival Queen. Queen Facing Right.
9013	Golden Gate and Fort Point, San Francisco, California	B	Revelers on a boat on the Bay, woman appears to be dressed like the Festival Queen. Harlequin characters on the upper left and right. Queen Facing Right.
9014	The Golden Gate, San Francisco, California	B	Basically same scene as No. 9013, except at early evening when the sun is setting. Two Harlequin characters around photo-image of Festival Queen. Queen Facing Right.
9015	The Golden Gate by Night, San Francisco, California	B	Basically same scene as No. 9013, except at night. Two Harlequin characters around photo-image of Festival Queen. Queen Facing Left.

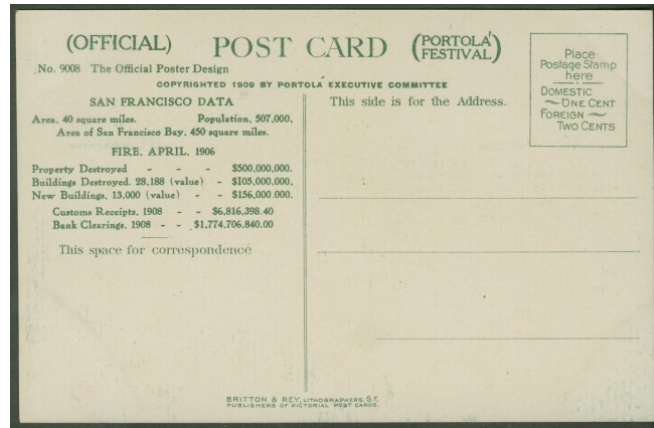


Figure 10: Official Portola Festival Post Card No. 9008. The card features the official poster design for the event (on the front). The card is vertical in format and measures 134.6 mm high by 88.9 mm wide. The card was printed by Britton & Key Lithographers (San Francisco). The address side of the card is printed in green ink and contains statistics of the loss in the 1906 earthquake and ensuing fire. Note the lettering on the poster is in red ink with a solid serif font.



Figure 11: Official Portola Festival Post Card No. 9015. The card features a view of revelers on San Francisco Bay at night (on the front). The card is horizontal in format and measures 88.9 mm high by 134.6 mm wide. The card was printed by Britton & Key Lithographers (San Francisco). The address side of the card is printed in green ink and contains a description of Portola and his men discovering San Francisco Bay (Golden Gate). Note the prominent female reveler (in red) has a striking resemblance to Queen Virgilia.

SAN FRANCISCO DATA	
Area, 40 square miles.	Population, 507,000.
Area of San Francisco Bay, 450 square miles.	
FIRE, APRIL, 1906	
Property Destroyed - - -	\$500,000,000.
Buildings Destroyed, 28,188 (value) -	\$105,000,000.
New Buildings, 13,000 (value) - -	\$156,000,000.
Customs Receipts, 1908 - -	\$6,816,398.40
Bank Clearings, 1908 - -	\$1,774,706,840.00

a) Message A

Gaspar de Portola\* was the first Governor of Upper and Lower California, from 1767 to 1771, under Spanish regime. In 1769 he visited California and made his residence here until 1771—the expiration of his term.

On July 14, 1769, he left San Diego with a small force in search of Monterey, but failed to find it. While continuing the search he explored the peninsula on which San Francisco is now built, and looked upon the Bay of San Francisco within the Golden Gate, being, according to best authorities, the first white man who ever gazed upon these waters.

Father Junipero Serra was President of the Missions of California during this time, establishing the Mission Dolores October 9th, 1776. Portola\* as Commander-in-chief of land expeditions, visited the Missions at San Diego, Monterey and San Buenaventura

b) Message B

**Figure 12. Messages on the address side of the Portola Office Post Cards. a) Message A—a description of the damage and loss caused by the Earthquake and Fire of 1906 (on the left); and b) Message B—a description of Portola and his men discovering San Francisco Bay (on the right).**

Other than the Official poster design shown on card No. 9008 (Figure 10) each of the remaining cards carried the photograph of the Festival Queen, Virgilia Bogue [5], within a circular double ring border containing the words “OFFICIAL POSTCARD” in the upper half circle and “PORTOLA FESTIVAL” in the lower half border (See Figure 11). There are two versions of the ringed queen’s photograph—one facing left (as shown in Figure 11) and the other facing right as shown in Figure 13. These are two distinct images and not just a photo-reversal. The Official post cards No. 9009 through 9015 also contain one or two harlequin or clown type characters. Apparently these characters were used as a sort of “mascots” or symbols of the Festival [6]. They always were depicted laughing or having mischievous looks on their faces, thus implying revelry and a party-like or carnival atmosphere that had certain risqué connotations. In fact several unofficial post cards to be described below referred to the Portola Festival as the Portola Carnival.



**Figure 13. Official Portola Festival Post Card No. 9013. The card features a view of revelers on San Francisco Bay during the daytime (on the front). The card is horizontal in format and measures 88.9 mm high by 134.6 mm wide. The card was printed by Britton & Key Lithographers (San Francisco). The address side of the card is printed in green ink and contains a description of Portola and his men discovering San Francisco Bay (Golden Gate). Note again that the prominent female reveler (in yellow dress and red hat) has a striking resemblance to Queen Virgilia.**



There are two versions of the Official poster design card (No. 9008). One was shown above in Figure 10 and again on the left in Figure 14. The card on the left has the poster wording in solid red letters, while the card on the right in Figure 14 has the poster wording printed in outline style blue lettering. There is no indication on the cards as to which printing may have come first. Both styles were produced by Britton and Key. The latter style (blue outline lettering) has been seen on many cards containing overprinted commercial messages and may have been given out free of charge to their customers (before, during, and after the Festival). Several of these cards are shown in Figure 15. President Taft gave the inaugural toast and one of these blue outline lettered post cards contains the text of his toast as shown in Figure 16.



Figure 14: Official Portola Festival Post Cards No. 9008. The cards feature the official poster design for the event (on the front) and the standard message for No. 9008 on the address side. Note the lettering on the poster image on the left is printed in red ink with a solid serif font. The lettering of the card on the right is in outline style printed in blue ink.



Figure 15: Official Portola Festival Post Cards No. 9008. These cards feature printed advertising messages. Note the lettering on the poster is in blue ink in an outline style serif font while the over-prints are in red. The card on the left advertises “PORTOLA COLOGNE”, the middle card is from the Golden West hotel, and the card on the right is for a Mt. Tamalpais Tour.



**PRESIDENT TAFT'S PORTOLA TOAST**  
 Since Portola looked through the Golden Gate on the descending sun, San Francisco has twice become the Imperial City of the Pacific: first, by the energy of a pioneer race and steady growth into the western metropolis; second, after complete destruction by the greedy flames and in the face of insurmountable obstacles by a regeneration so rapid and complete as to be the wonder of the world. May her future growth be as remarkable as her past and may her civic righteousness and the individual happiness of her citizens keep pace with it.

**Figure 16: Official Portola Festival Post Card No. 9008.** The card features the official poster design for the event (on the front) over-printed with President Taft’s opening toast for the Portola Festival. It contains the standard message for Official Post Card No. 9008 on the address side. Note the lettering on the poster is in blue ink in an outline style serif font while the toast is printed in red. The toast over-print is enlarged at the right.

There are also two versions of card No. 9011 “A VIEW OF CHINATOWN SHOWING THE MOST TYPICAL SECTIONS OF THE QUARTER” as shown in Figure 17. The card on the left has more vivid colors and greater flag and dragon detail than the card on the right.



**Figure 17: Official Portola Festival Post Cards No. 9011.** The cards feature “Chinatown”(on the front). The cards are vertical in format and measures 134.6 mm high by 88.9 mm wide. The cards were printed by Britton & Key Lithographers (San Francisco). The address side of the card is printed in green ink and contains statistics of the loss in the 1906 earthquake and ensuing fire (Message A). The card on the left has bolder colors with more detail than the card on the right which has less detail and subdued colors.

Contemporary with the Official post cards were numerous private or unofficial post cards announcing and commemorating the event. These cards were presumably sold to the public by commercial retailers and souvenir stands and shops. The bulk of these cards were printed by the Pacific Novelty Company while some came from other printers and even photographers in the case of the real photo post cards. These “unofficial” post cards can be best organized by themes. Some theme examples are given below:

- Photographic Postcards of the Festival Parade and the King and Queen, as well as San Francisco sites.
- Festival Announcement Cards
- Portola, Spanish Explorers, and coats of arms
- California symbols (brown or golden bear)
- Flowers
- Carnival or Masked Ball

Figure 18 is a photographic post card featuring the King and Queen of the Portola Festival. The King was Nicholas A. Covarrubias [6] and the Queen was Virgilia Bogue (See Reference 5).



**Figure 18. Photographic post card of the Portola Festival King and Queen. The divided back card was printed by the Pacific Novelty Company and measures 135.1 mm wide by 86.4 mm high.**

Figure 19 is a photographic post card of the Portola Festival sign on Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay. Each letter of the sign is 45 feet in height and the “PORTOLA FESTIVAL” portion of the sign spans a distance of 1300 feet. The photograph of the sign was taken by Charles Weidener, a noted San Francisco photographer at that time. Several similar post cards exist with photographs taken from slightly different angles and ranges to the sign. Exact reprints of this card exist and were sold for many years thereafter. To be sure you have a 1909 example, it is best to get one that has been postmarked in San Francisco during or around the time of the Festival.



**Figure 19. Photographic post card illustrating the large Portola Festival sign on Yerba Buena Island. The letters are 45 feet in height and the signs maximum length is 1300 feet. The divided back card was produced by Charles Weidner, photographer, and measures 134.6 mm wide by 86.9 mm high.**

A particularly interesting Festival Promotion card is shown in Figure 20. It features a drawing of the Festival Queen (Virgilia Bogue) in a circle with a flower border including roses, poinsettias, and California poppies. The background of the card features a view of Portola and his men discovering San Francisco Bay. The card was produced by the Pacific Novelty Company. Another image of Portola and the Golden Gate, as shown in Figure 21, was also used. It features Portola with his men gazing on San Francisco bay at sunset. Portola holds a banner inscribed with Portola Festival and is being watched by a California grizzly bear. The dates of the festival are on a sign in the bottom center of the card. The card was produced by Edward H. Mitchell of San Francisco. This same card design with different dates was also used to publicize the Portola Festival held in 1913 [7].

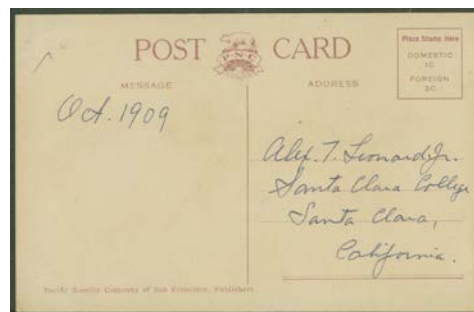


**Figure 20. Festival promotion post card featuring Queen Virgilia with a backdrop of Portola and his men discovering San Francisco Bay. The divided back card was produced by the Pacific Novelty Company and measures 137.2 mm wide by 86.6 mm high.**



**Figure 21. Festival promotion post card featuring Portola and his men discovering or viewing San Francisco Bay at sunset as a California grizzly bear gazes on. Portola holds a banner containing the name of the Festival. The divided back card was produced by Edward H. Mitchell of California and measures 138.4 mm wide by 87.6 mm high.**

Another card featuring a bear is shown in Figure 22, The image on this vertical format post card shows the Festival senorita and the California grizzly bear together in a field of California golden poppies (California poppies-the State flower). The card was printed by the Pacific Novelty Company. This card provides a strong symbolism linking the events of the Festival to the state of California.



**Figure 22. Divided back post card featuring the Festival girl (senorita) with a rose in her hair arm in arm with a California Grizzly bear, standing in a field of California poppies (golden poppies). The card measures 139.7 mm high by 88.9 mm wide and was printed by the Pacific Novelty Company.**

Another promotion card (Figure 23) featured a girl (or senorita) on horseback overlooking the San Francisco Bay filled with warships-obviously referring to the large naval review and ship

visits scheduled during the Festival including naval ships from Great Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, and the United States.



**Figure 23. Festival promotion post card featuring a girl (or senorita) on horseback overlooking San Francisco, Bay filled with warships. A naval review and ship visits were scheduled as part of the Festival. In addition to the United States navy, ships from Great Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Japan participated. The divided back card was produced by the Pacific Novelty Company of California and measures 135.9 mm wide by 87.6 mm high.**

Still another promotional card made reference to California's agricultural abundance by showing a cornucopia with a border of flowers (California poppies, poinsettias, and a rose) and it referred to California as "God's Country." The card was produced by the Pacific Goldsmith Publishing Company of San Francisco. This card is shown in Figure 24. It was mailed on October 19, 1909 the first or opening day of the Portola Festival.



**Figure 24. Festival promotion post card featuring a cornucopia emphasizing California's agricultural abundance. The card has a border of flowers including California Poppies, poinsettias, and a rose. The divided back card was produced by the Pacific Goldsmith Publishing Company San Francisco, California and measures 137.2 mm wide by 88.9 mm high.**

The theme of flowers appears on several promotional cards. Various flowers such as the California poppy or golden poppy (the state flower), poinsettias, pansies, and, of course, the rose

were highlighted. Figure 25 illustrates one example of these flower cards. The card has California poppies (golden poppies) and poinsettias as the dominate flowers. It also carries a welcoming poem from San Francisco and the state of California. The post card was produced by Brunt Press of San Francisco.



**Figure 24. Festival promotion post card featuring flowers and a welcoming verse as the design elements. The flowers on the card are California poppies (golden poppies) and poinsettias. The divided back card was produced by the Brunt Press of San Francisco, California and measures 88.9 mm wide by 139.7 mm high.**

Coats of arms coupled with Portola and his men and the Festival senorita are featured on several cards, two of which are pictured in Figure 25. Both of these vertical divided back cards were produced by the Pacific Novelty Company. As can be seen, the card on the left in Figure 25 contains an ornately framed Portola, one of his conquistadors and a priest as they discovered San Francisco Bay (carries the date 1769). Above them, with a background of the city, stands the Portola Festival girl (senorita) with a basket of roses. Alongside the girl are a craftsman and a sailor reflecting modern day San Francisco industry. The card on the right has a similar overall appearance with the Portola Festival girl standing above an ornately framed coat of arms, presumably Portola's. To the girl's left is an image of Portola and to the right is the California Grizzly Bear. The city of San Francisco is again in the background.



**Figure 25. Coat of arms and statue type promotional cards.** The card on the left features statues of Portola, one of his conquistadors, and a priest as they discovered San Francisco Bay in 1769. Above the statues are images of the Portola Festival girl with a basket of flowers (roses) flanked by a craftsman and a sailor. The card on the right features a coat of arms, presumably Portola's, with the Portola Festival girl, the California Grizzly Bear, and Portola standing above. Both cards have images of San Francisco in the background and were printed by the Pacific Novelty Company. Both cards measure approximately 86.4 mm wide by 137.0 mm high.

The concept of clowns or harlequin characters and the carnival-like atmosphere are shown in the two cards of Figure 26. The card on the left features a clown and a cute young miss engaged in somewhat of a risqué pose and dress for the time. It contains the message “Meet me at the Portola” and below “AT THE CARNIVAL” and “Confidants”. Sent to a friend this card would imply getting together at the Portola Carnival (a big nighttime event to close the festival) and having a fun time (for 1909) and to keep the invitation confidential. The card was produced by the Raphael Tuck & Sons [8]. The Pacific Novelty Company card on the right features a maiden in conventional period dress inviting someone to meet them at the Portola Festival. The card contains a cut down Portola Festival poster stamp and is part of a group of post cards issued to support Berkeley University activities. The stylized slang language at the bottom suggests a good time to be had by all (originally intended for a Berkeley collegiate game-but the context suggests having a good time at the Portola Festival).



**Figure 26. Carnival Cards.** The card on the left features a clown and a cute young miss engaged in somewhat of a risqué pose and dress for the time. It was produced by Raphael Tuck & Sons. The card on the right (produced by PNC) features a maiden in conventional dress inviting someone to meet them at the Portola Festival. The implied messages on both cards are rather risqué for the 1909 time frame. Both divided back cards measure approximately 139.0 mm high by 89.5 mm wide.



Last but not least there was the Portola parade featuring the largest United States flag. The flag is shown on two similar post cards as shown in Figure 27. The card on the left is a photographic card featuring the parade and the flag as it passes the Crocker building [9]. The flag measured approximately 100 feet wide by 60 feet high. The card was produced by the Pacific Novelty Company. The card on the right is a color adaption used by the Crocker Bank to promote its services (safe deposit vaults). This card was produced by Dickinson & Scott Printing Company of San Francisco.



**Figure 27. Portola Festival Parade featuring the worlds' largest United States flag. The flag is shown passing the Crocker Bank company. The divided back card on the left is a photograph of the actual flag on the parade route. The card on the right is an image of the flag used by Crocker to promote its safety deposit vaults. The card on the left was produced by the Pacific Novelty Company. Dickinson & Scott Printing Company (San Francisco) produced the card on the right. Both vertical cards measure 135.9 mm high by 86.6 mm wide.**

In summary, this article has explored the discovery of San Francisco Bay and the Portola Festival of 1909 held in San Francisco through the Official and unofficial post cards surrounding the events of October 19-23, 1909. The Official post cards (Nos. 9008 through 9015 printed by Benton and Key) have been described in detail. Following the Official cards several thematic unofficial post cards have been presented. These cards in many cases are not only extremely attractive, but also present important city information and landmarks as well as promoting the Festival (and California) as an interesting and exciting place to visit (or perhaps even live). The photographic cards form a time capsule of events-capturing the people, the costumes, and the atmosphere of the Portola Festival. Many, many unofficial post cards for the Portola Festive exist or did exist at one time. Hopefully, this article will inspire the readers to uncover more and perhaps one day a listing of all Portola Festival Official and Unofficial post cards can be produced.

Even, the Official Portola Festival post cards while only eight in number can produce many challenges such as collecting all designs mint and used. Collecting cards postmarked on the first day of the Festival, or the last day, or every day. Used post cards containing the poster stamps could form an interesting and challenging collection, especially if one tried to find a card addressed to each state in the Union. Note that all the addressed cards illustrated in this article have a California address.

#### References and Endnotes.

[1] Some official reports at the time listed the death toll at 357, but this was because many hundreds of deaths in Chinatown were ignored and unrecorded. The estimate today is about 3,000 people lost their lives.

[2] Roger C. Birt and Marvin R. Nathan, *History's Anteroom: Photography in San Francisco 1906-1909*, William Stout Publishers, Richmond, California, 2011, pp. 27-29.

[3] Pacific Novelty Company (1908-1960?). A major publisher and printer of view-cards depicting California in tinted halftone line block. They produced cards in different styles, most of which were printed in Germany. They eventually sold off their own printing department to Herman Vogel who renamed it Quadricolor Press. Pacific Novelty went on to produce photochromes that were manufactured in the United States.

[4] The Portola Festival Committee involved hundreds of prominent San Franciscans. There was a 20 person Executive Committee with at least 50 working committees. Each member of the Executive Committee was responsible for or served on one or more subcommittees. P. T. Clay was Chairman of the Executive Committee. Milton H. Esberg was the vice-Chair. Louis Sloss was the Treasury and Homer Boushey served as Secretary. The Governor of California (J. N. Gillett) and the San Francisco Mayor (E. R. Taylor) were also on the Executive Committee.

[5] Virgilia Bogue (1886-1930?) was born in Tacoma, Washington (although the "Official Souvenir Program" says she is a native of California). She was the daughter of Sibyl Russell and Virgil Gay Bogue. At the time of the Festival, her father was chief engineer and vice president of the Western Pacific Railway Company. He built the Aroya railroad in Peru (highest railroad in the world in 1909) and helped build both the Northern Pacific and the Baltimore and Maryland. As described in detail the "Official Souvenir Program" for the Festival, Vergilia was highly educated, well-traveled, spoke several languages fluently, and was an accomplished musician, athlete, and author. At the age of 22 she had authored two books, one of which *The Strength to Yield* has received much literary acclaim. She had brunette hair and was tall with a stately figure and bearing, worthy of being a Queen. After the Festival she went on to marry Carlo L. Baron in December of 1909 and live in Italy. She was a volunteer nurse on the front lines during WWI and after Carlo was injured, they returned to the United States for a period of time. Later after Carlo recovered, they returned to Europe until the end of the war. She returned to the United States in January of 1919 following a reported nervous breakdown and was institutionalized on Ward's Island, New York, New York. Records indicate she was in the New York mental health system until at least 1930. It should be pointed out that there is some controversy in the literature about how Virgilia spelled her first name. The photographic post card shown in Figure 18 refers to Queen Virgilia, yet the Official Souvenir Program for the Festival refers to her as Queen Vergilla

(probably in error). The cover of her book *The Strength to Yield* clearly shows her name as Virgilia, but contemporary newspaper reports of the time also used Vergilia. Archived photographs of her signature tend to suggest the use of “e” instead of “i” since there is no dot, while the other two i’s in her name have clear dots. Virgilia has been used throughout this text.

[6] Nicholas A. Covarrubias (1839-1924) was born in Santa Barbara, California on April 10, 1839. A son of a former Spanish general (General J. M. Covarrubias) and successful merchant in Mexico City. The general came to California in 1837 and became an American citizen serving twelve terms in the California legislature. He was also Collector of Customs for San Diego and served as a Judge in Santa Barbara County.

Nick was educated in the Spanish Public School in Santa Barbara and at Santa Ynez College. He went to work for the Banking House of Palmer Cook and Company at the age of 13. After rapid career growth at Palmer Cook he resigned from the banking house to become the assistant lighthouse keeper of San Diego, and later the principal keeper. Nick resigned in 1860 and went into politics in Santa Barbara where he was elected to various positions of trust. He held similar trust positions with the Colorado River Steamer line and in 1868 was elected supervisor of Santa Barbara County. In 1871, he resigned to become the sheriff of the county-a position he held for four consecutive terms.

The Official Souvenir Program for the Portola Festival described this 70-year old as being “cavalier in bearing, a magnificent horsemen and a daring rider”. It also went on to mention “he will reign over the revels of the Portola Festival fortified by many years (of) experience as a fiesta king.” The Program also referred to him as the “Fiesta King *par excellence*.” Not much is known about Covarrubias after the Portola Festival in 1909 except that he died in San Mateo County at the age of 85 in 1924.

[7] Other Portola Festivals have been held in San Francisco. The next one, after the initial 1909 Festival was held in 1913. Souvenir post cards exist for the 1913 as described in the text. Cards for a Portola festival in the mid-1930s and in 1948 have been seen by this author.

[8] Raphael Tuck & Sons produced a series of these mischievous clown- perky maiden type cards for the 1909 Portola Festival. The author has several in his collection. The number of different designs produced is unknown.

[9] The Crocker bank with its renowned safe deposit vaults was the major bank in San Francisco at the time. It used an almost identical “Flag” card to promote its business during the 1913 Portola Festival.