



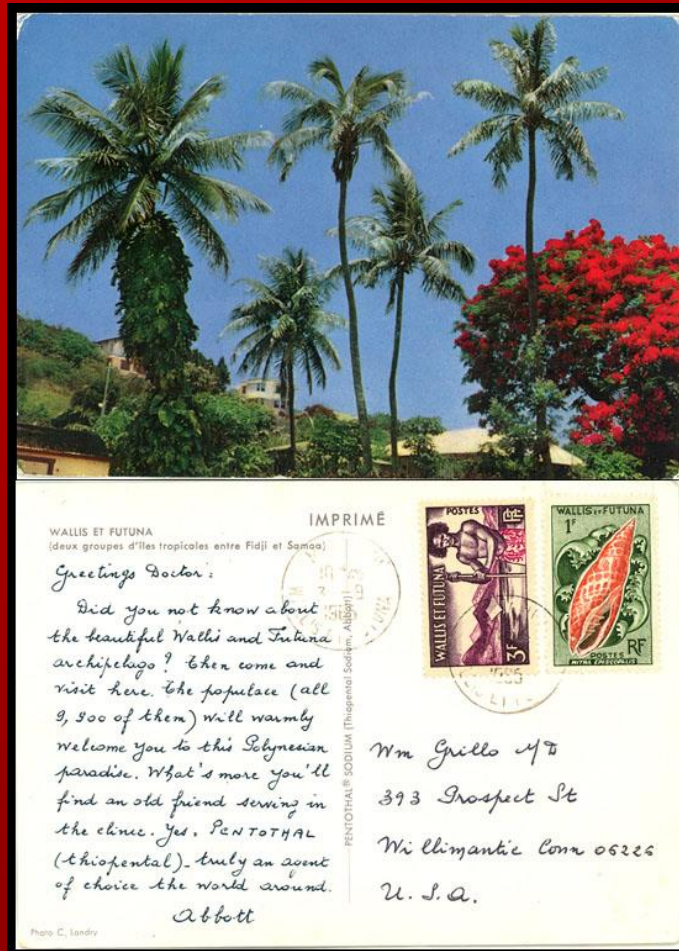
Introduction to “Dear Doctor” Postcards: Junk Mail from Exotic Lands

*By Tom Fortunato, January, 2016
for the Rochester Philatelic Association*





I'll bet you've seen postcards like this before and wondered about them. This presentation is meant as an introduction to this fascinating area of postal history. They're commonly known as "*Dear Doctor Cards*" based on their salutation.





In days before the Internet, email and spamming, mail was used as the primary form of cheap advertising by companies looking to sell their products and services.

Perhaps no other business exploited this marketing strategy more than the drug industry.





Postcards were the rage at the turn of the 20th century and drug manufacturers started sending out mailings to doctors touting the latest and greatest pharmaceutical medicines they made. Mailings sent from exotic lands proved to be especially eye-catching to the recipient for both the pictures found on one side and the stamp and message on the other.





One of the earliest of these mailings was sent in November and December 1898 by the New York City based drug firm E. Fougere & Company. Their postcards introduced Colchi-Sal capsules to doctors as a remedy for gout, rheumatism, and rheumatic arthritis. Its major ingredient- cannabis.





* Int'l post card rate from Japan to the U.S.- 2 sen (1.0316 cents)

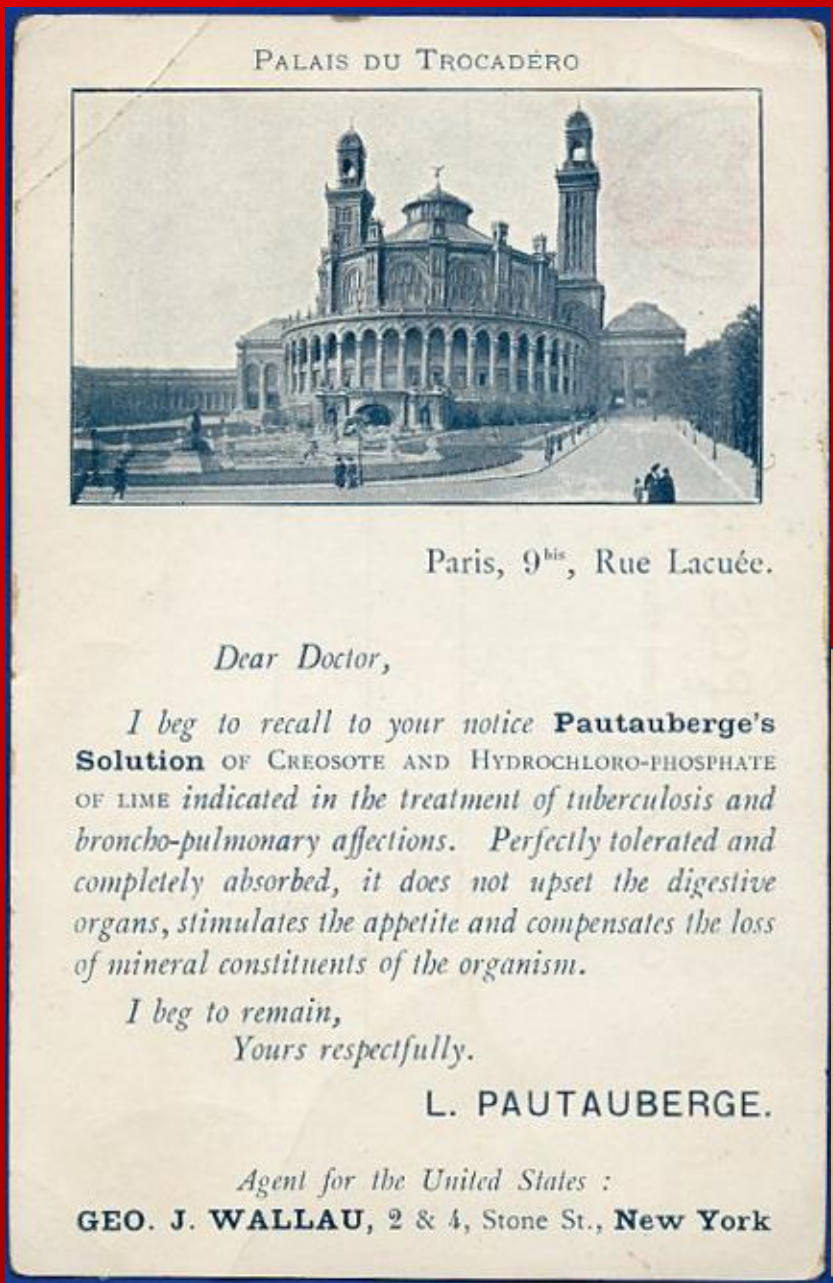
* U.S. domestic postcard rate- 1¢

If the cost to print the messages on these cards was less expensive in Japan than the U.S., it would have been cheaper to mail these from Japan than within the U.S. itself!





Pautauberg's Solution was a well-prescribed treatment for tuberculosis for at least 20 years before this postcard was mailed in August 1904 from company headquarters in Paris to a doctor in Springfield, Massachusetts.

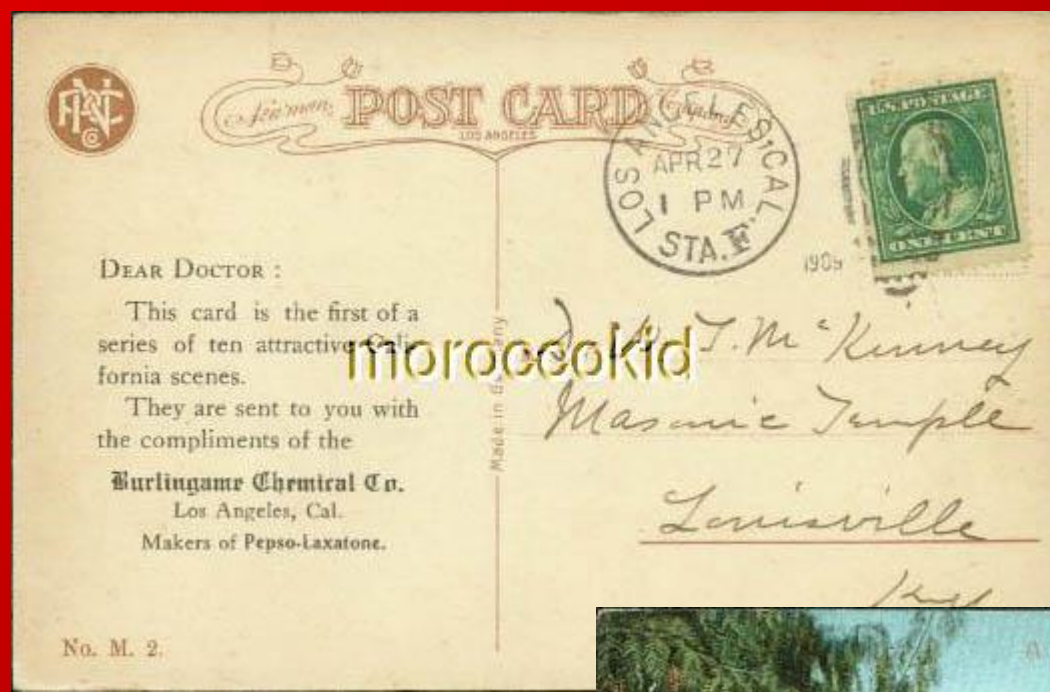


First known use of the salutation "Dear Doctor."





Not all cards were sent from overseas. Here is Card #1 mailed April 27, 1909 of a series of 10 cards sent by the Burlingame Chemical Company of Los Angeles advertising Pepsolaxatone, a digestive laxative that contained 14% alcohol. The series depicted "attractive California scenes."





Postmarked May 2, 1913 in Paris, this card was written in Spanish and sent to a doctor in Bolivia. It touts a drug called Ceribrine, for neurological pain by the French company Fournier. It is one of at least seven sent 1911-1916 depicting different French tourist sites sent to doctors in Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay.





Mailed April 4, 1917 by Laboratories Ch. Couturieux in France to Rosario, Argentina, , this card advertises “Levurina extract” as a medication for skin infirmities of all kinds, including acne, eczema and herpes. Note the military themed image, as WWI was nearing an end.



El mejor tratamiento de las **Enfermedades de la Piel** es la
“LEVURINA EXTRACTIVA”
COUTURIEUX

a la dosis de 4 a 10 comprimidos por día.

Este poderoso depurativo destruye en el intestino los microbios patógenos y aumenta notablemente la fagocitosis.

Su actividad es mucho más considerable que la de todas las levaduras, y sus indicaciones son las mismas: abscesos, acné, ántrax, eczema, furúnculos, herpes, sifonones, estreñimiento, etc.

Laboratorios Ch. Couturieux. 18, avenue Hoche, Paris

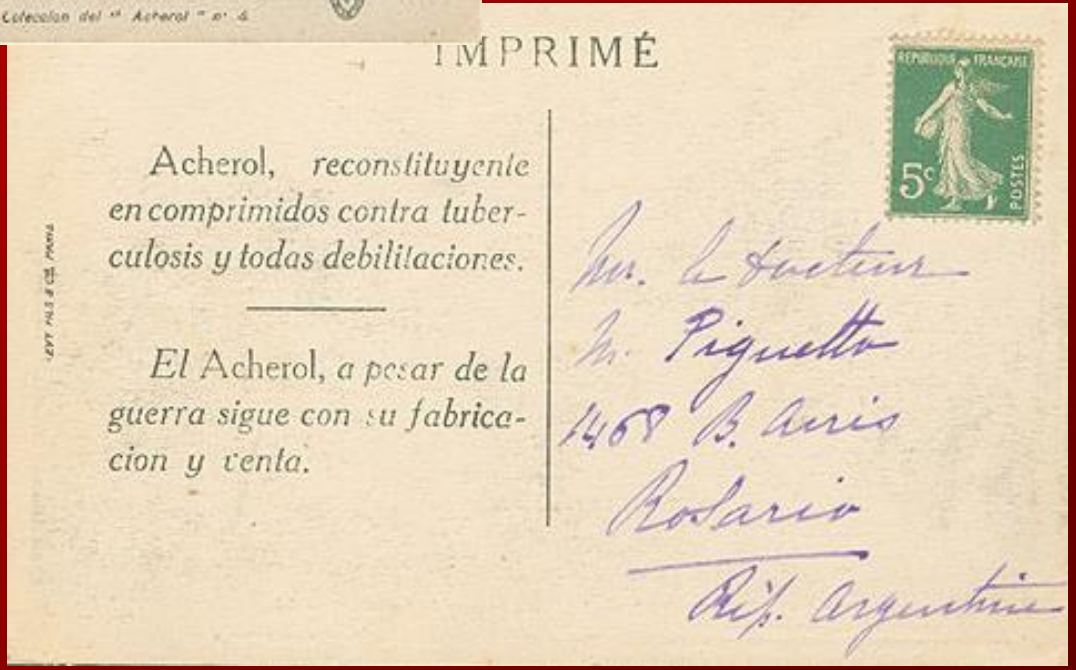
J. D. Sigot
Medico
Rosario
R. Argentina

531504





A different drug mailing, again to Argentina, also with a military theme-“The War 1914-1915” of men preparing trenches. An anti-tuberculosis drug, “Acherol, despite the war, is still being manufactured and sold.” By an unknown drug company.

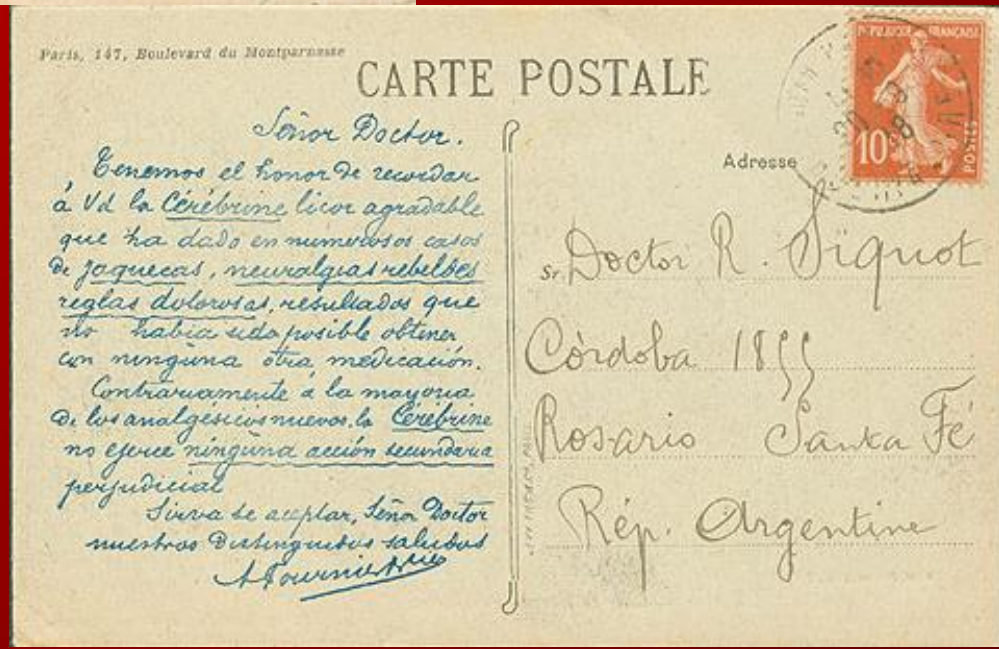




Fournier is known to have sent a military series of cards. Here the Battle of The Somme is seen, a joint British and French offensive in 1916 against the Germans, marked by the first battle using tanks. Sent September 20, 1918. The company's Paris return address is in the upper left.



Type equation here.



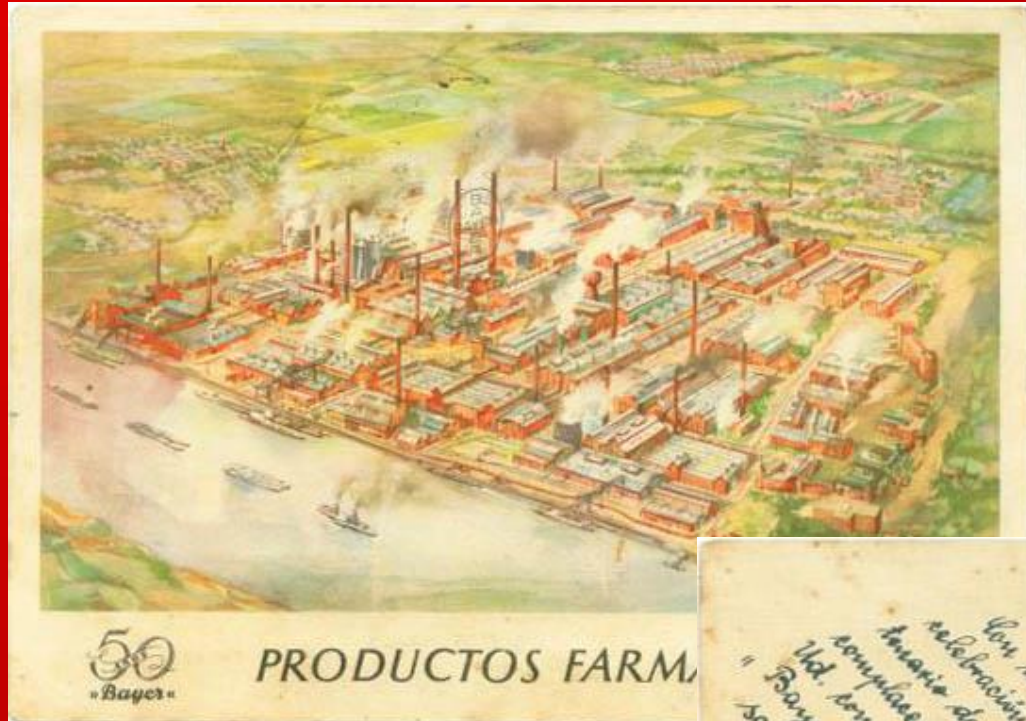


Postmarked September 13, 1935, this card mailed from the Vatican in Spanish to a doctor in Buenos Aires, it advertises the drug Novalgina (diperona) as a pain and fever reducer originally developed in 1922 as "Novalgin" by the German company Hoechst.





Everyone has heard of Germany's Bayer. 1937 marked the company's 50th anniversary. Here's a card in Spanish mailed from the company's headquarters in Leverkusen to a doctor in Paraguay. It's main plant is depicted along the Rhine river.





Here are 2 of 4 known cards mailed in 1937 from headquarters in Leverkusen to doctors in Argentina. All depict historic sites of Germany, mailed on:

- Nuremberg- March 3
- Frankfurt- May 28
- Wurtzburg- June 25
- Breslau- September 13

Romántico rincón del viejo Nürnberg

Muy distinguido doctor:

Desde que ha llegado a reconocerse ampliamente la gran importancia de las vitaminas para el organismo humano, la vitamino-terapia se ha constituido en un valioso auxiliar del médico. Confiamos por ello que habrá de interesarle un ensayo con Cantán, la vitamina C «Bayer», que puede suministrarse tanto por boca, como por vía intramuscular o endovenosa.

Siempre por entero a sus órdenes

» Bayer «

TARJETA POSTAL

LEVERKUSEN - NÜRNBERG
3 9 37
14-15
e

5 5
Deutsches Reich

Señor

Dr. F. Fernández González

Breslau: El ayuntamiento, construido en estilo gótico en los siglos XIV a XVI

Muy distinguido doctor:

En todos los tiempos, aliviar dolores ha sido la tarea más humana del médico.-

El Comproal reúne la acción analgésica con la sedante y su inocuidad es perfecta.-

Le saluda muy atentamente

Casa » Bayer «

TARJETA POSTAL

LEVERKUSEN - NÜRNBERG
13 9 37
17-18
e

5 5
Deutsches Reich

Señor

Dr. F. Fernández González

Avacabuco 269

Córdoba F.C.A.

(Prov. Córdoba)

Argentinien





Headquartered in Dieppe, France, famous for its healing mineral waters, Laboratoires La Biomarine produced Dear Doctor cards for many decades from 1947 to 1966 advertising three major drugs they produced, all with a sea-water base:

- > Marinol -calcium and phosphorus
- > Ionyl - phosphorus, manganese and magnesium
- > Plasmarine - calcium, phosphorus and manganese

This company took to postcard promotional campaigns like no other, relying on mail from exotic lands to capture the attention of French-speaking doctors in France and abroad.



Catalog of La Biomarine postcard campaigns



Their advertising division, "Publimer," created mailings sent to doctors from 6 to 16 countries in various mini-tours, with starting and ending points, along with story lines that flowed from one stop to another.

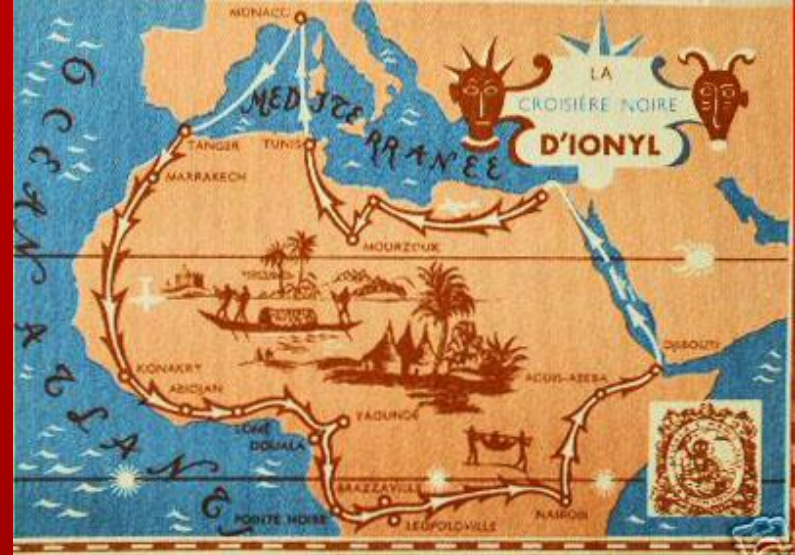


Tour 12 - North Pole to South Pole Tour:
1958-1959 from Greenland to French Southern and Antarctic Territories





All of these “tours” started with Card #1 that was always a map showing the countries planned to be visited.





La Biomarine tours took pride in highlighting locales around the various French colonies and foreign possessions.

Philatelic or not, mail sent from the French military post of Fezzan in southwestern Libya is very rare.





Here in the U.S. collectors may be most familiar with “Dear Doctor” cards from Abbott Labs. Their numerous postcard mailing campaigns ran from 1956 to 1968. Over 193 face-different cards have been recorded to date, with a wealth of varieties in each type.





All card advertise only one of their many drugs—pentothal sodium—a fast acting intravenous anesthetic used primarily in operating rooms. It was invented in 1936 by an Abbott scientist, Ernest Volwiler, who later became president of the multi-national company.



The trademarked drug was also know as “truth serum,” especially during the Cold War era and is typically mis-spelled, as in this Superman cartoon.





Cards have been found in 10 languages: Arabic, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish...



 عزيزي الدكتور
 إن خميرة أكثر من ٢٥ عامًا جعلت كلمة
 بانثوثال، PENTOTHAL، مرادفة للتخدير
 الوريدي في العالم كله.
 وهو يوجد في جميع المشافي البحرية منها
 والصغيرة، وحتى في الأماكن البعيدة
 مثل كاليدونيا الجديدة، New Caledonia،
 حيث يقدره الأطباء هنا أيضاً
 لسلامة وسهولة استعماله.
 أبوت
 PENTOTHAL SODIUM
 Abbott Laboratories, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

NOUVELLE CALÉDONIE - Vue Générale de Nouméa
 C.A.P., 44, Rue Lallemand, Paris 15^e
 Cliché Ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer

DR. ADOLF ISRAEL
 RUE MAY ZIADE
 BEIRUT
 LEBANON



 ΑΤΑΛΕΝΣ
 COLOR PHOTO BY HERMOS SIGMIAS

Ärade Doktor
 I Grekland fanns fordom
 Eukhedes Eupides och
 Eukemos Nu fanns här
 bl.a. Endurona värt
 höjddrivikum
 Vänliga hälsningar
 Abbott

• Endurona (methyclothazid), ett effektivt - men mildt verkande -
 diuretikum med 24 timmars saluretisk och hypotensiv verkan.

ABBOTT LABORATORIES (HELLAS) S. ó R. L.
2, ERMOU STREET, ATHENS 126, GREECE

Överläkare
 Einar RODEN
 Umedalens Sjukhus
 UMEDALEN

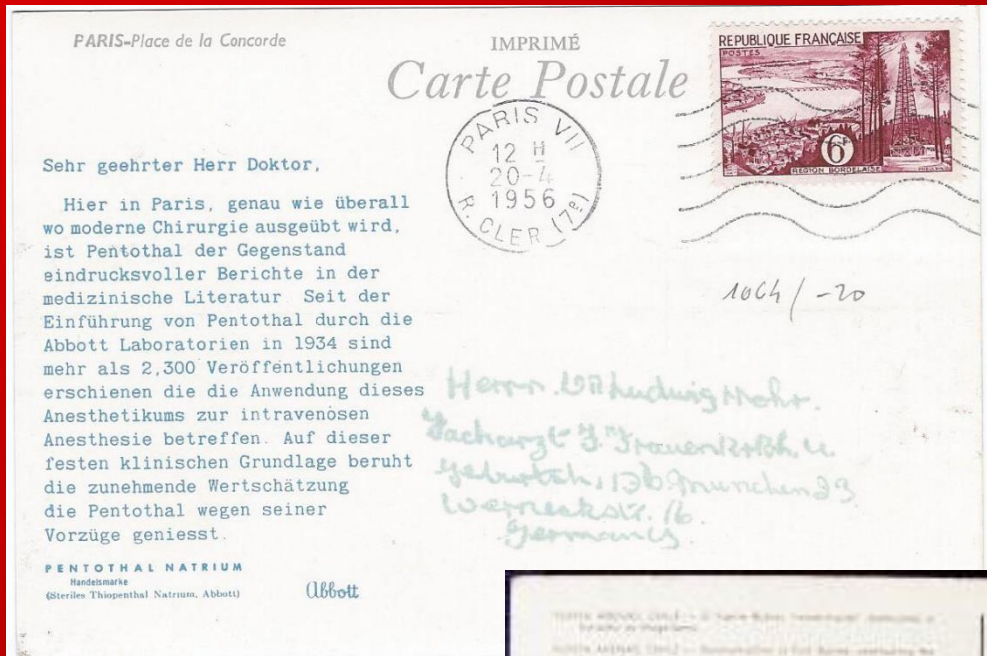
ΑΘΗΝΑ - ΟΛΥΜΠΕΙΟΝ - ΖΑΠΕΙΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΛΥΚΑΒΙΤΟΣ
 ATHENS - THE OLYMPIEUM - THE ZAPPEION AND THE LYKABETTUS HILL
 ATHENS - L' OLYMPIEON - LE ZAPPEION ET LE LYKABETTE
 ATHEN - DAS OLYMPIEUM - DAS ZAPPEION UND HÜGEL LYKABETTOS

ΣΟΥΗΔΙΑ
 FORBIDDEN REPRODUCTION
 CC18940





And sent to these 30 countries and territories: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belgian Congo, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Canal Zone, Chile, Cuba, France, Germany, Greece, Hawaii (pre-statehood), Hong Kong, Italy, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, USA





An interesting variety on some Abbott cards deals with the handwritten message itself. While the text is identical, the printed handwriting among cards can be different, as seen here in this 1966 mailing from the New Hebrides.



IMPRIME

A native of the New Hebrides, in the South Pacific.

Dear Nurse Anesthetist:

People of these small islands in the Coral Sea are still in transition from the old to the new. One of the best changes has been the coming of modern medical care including PENTOTHAL (thiopental). The merits of PENTOTHAL have made it an I.V. agent of first choice the world around.

Abbott

PO BOX VILA
7 1150
1-10
1966
NOUVELLES HEBRIDES

CONDOMINIUM
NEW HEBRIDES 10

Mrs Gloria W. Belling
6651 Hillside Lane
Wauwatosa 13, Wis 55213
U.S.A.

PENTOTHAL® SODIUM Salt with Thiopental, Abbott

Photo C. Lundy

IMPRIME

A native of the New Hebrides, in the South Pacific.

Dear Nurse Anesthetist:

People of these small islands in the Coral Sea are still in transition from the old to the new. One of the best changes has been the coming of modern medical care - including PENTOTHAL (thiopental). The merits of PENTOTHAL have made it an I.V. agent of first choice the world around. Abbott

PO BOX VILA
7 1150
1-10
1966
NOUVELLES HEBRIDES

CONDOMINIUM
NEW HEBRIDES 10

Harriet I. Aberg
Department of Anesthesia
Cottage Hospital
Galveston, Tex

PENTOTHAL® SODIUM Salt with Thiopental, Abbott

Photo C. Lundy

IMPRIME

A native of the New Hebrides, in the South Pacific.

Dear Nurse Anesthetist:

People of these small islands in the Coral Sea are still in transition from the old to the new. One of the best changes has been the coming of modern medical care including PENTOTHAL (thiopental). The merits of PENTOTHAL have made it an I.V. agent of first choice the world around.

Abbott

PO BOX VILA
7 1150
1-10
1966
NOUVELLES HEBRIDES

CONDOMINIUM
NEW HEBRIDES 10

Priscilla J. Gantta
Chester County Hospital
West Chester, Pa. 19380
U.S.A.

PENTOTHAL® SODIUM Salt with Thiopental, Abbott

Photo C. Lundy

IMPRIME

A native of the New Hebrides, in the South Pacific.

Dear Nurse Anesthetist:

People of these small islands in the Coral Sea are still in transition from the old to the new. One of the best changes has been the coming of modern medical care including PENTOTHAL (thiopental). The merits of PENTOTHAL have made it an I.V. agent of first choice the world around.

Abbott

PO BOX VILA
7 1150
1-10
1966
NOUVELLES HEBRIDES

CONDOMINIUM
NEW HEBRIDES 10

Julia R. Pollock
20624 Applegate Ave
Maple Heights 37 Ohio
U.S.A.

PENTOTHAL® SODIUM Salt with Thiopental, Abbott

Photo C. Lundy



Some cards, especially those of the later series, are scarce and in high demand.



Austria Abbott Lab Dear Doctor Card to Chicago #622A tied 1968 Lippizaner horses

Like Want Own

Item condition: --
Ended: Sep 27, 2012 14:40:48 PDT

Winning bid: **US \$297.99** [9 bids]

Add to list

Shipping: **\$1.00** Standard Shipping | See details
Item location: Kentucky, United States
Ships to: Worldwide

Delivery: Estimated on or before **Tue. Oct. 02** to 14626

Payments: **PayPal** | See details

Returns: 14 days money back, buyer pays return shipping | Read details

Seller information

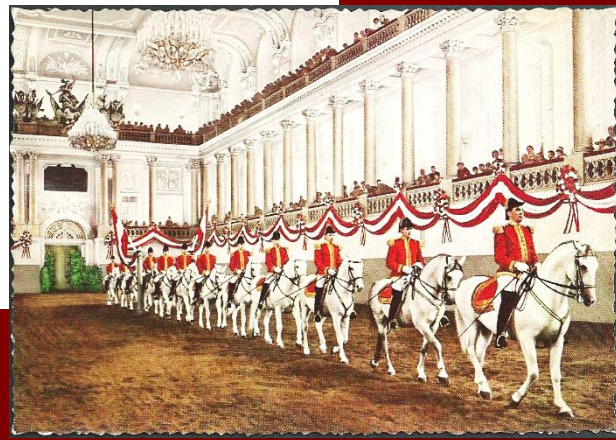
mcmichiganinky (8735) ☆

100% Positive feedback

Save this seller
See other items

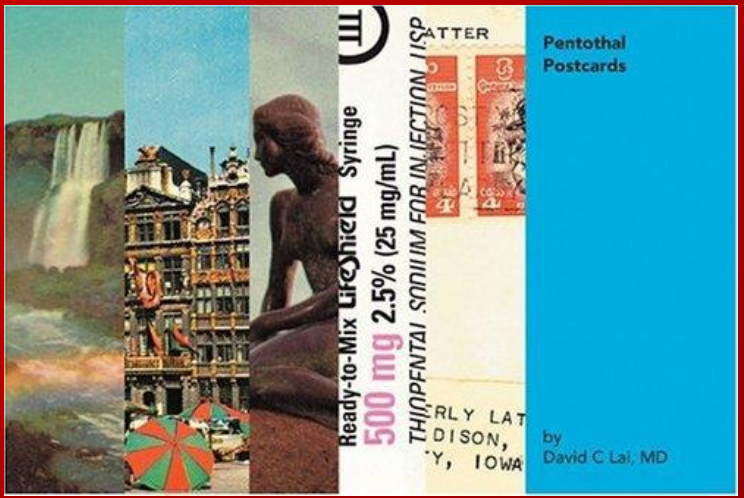


eBay Buyer Protection
Covers your purchase price plus original shipping.
Learn more





There are several resources for Abbott postcard collectors. An illustrated book provides images of the front and backs of many cards.



The Dear Doctor web site provides articles and an extensive checklist of all types of advertising cards, nearing 1,000 in all, including counts of each seen and reported.

**The "Dear Doctor"
Postcard Collector Page**
<http://www.deardoctorpostcards.com>

Details about Abbott Labs' and other advertising campaigns using postcards from around the world.

by Tom Fortunato

Jump to: [Basics](#) *** [Check Lists](#) *** [References](#) *** [Members](#) *** [Join Us/Report Findings](#) *** [Publications](#)



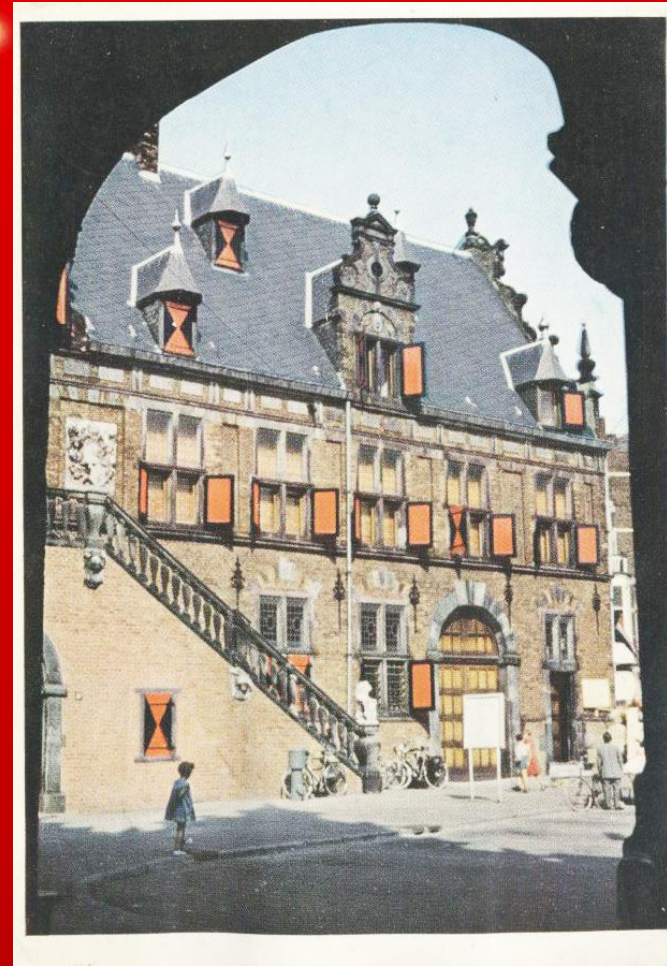


Remind yourself again that these advertising postcards were sent in a time before the Internet, email, and text messaging. Mail was the primary way to get information into the hands of a targeted audience, and several other drug companies used postcards through the decades in their advertising plans.





An antacid, rabro tablets were made by the company of the same name in the Netherlands. It's interesting to note that the Hong Kong agent for the firm was based in a garment factory!



RABRO tablets

Indications :
ulcus ventriculi and duodeni, chronic and acute gastritis, gastric disturbances of nervous-vegetative origin.

Formula :
succus liquiritiae RABRO, bismuthi subnitras, magnesii carbonas levis, sodii bicarbonas, rhamni frangulae cortex, calami rhizoma.

Dose :
1 to 2 tablets thrice daily.

Advantages :
90 % favourable results, pains disappear quickly, ambulatory treatment, strict diet not necessary, no injurious side-effects.

Carlo Garment Factory,
G.P.O. Box no. 5158,
KOWLOON.

Photo number 7 out of series of 8.

Ran.K.E. 6. 59. 9600



Dr. LEAN Sick Keng,
Alice Ho Miu Ling
Nethersole Hospital,
HONG KONG.

15404



Laboratoires
 Rolland-Hepatrol of
 Paris sent this card
 in 1969 about
 Activarol, an anti-
 fatigue liquid
 medicine of
 glycine, vitamin C
 and dried yeast.



Cher Docteur,

*l'action naturelle de
 l'ACTIVAROL vit. C rétablit
 l'équilibre physico-psychique
 et favorise le bonheur serein.*

Salutations très distinguées.

*Laboratoires
 Rolland-Hépatrol.*



DOCTEUR C. PRUD'HOMME
 1252 BELANGER EST
 MONTREAL, P.Q.
 CANADA

vitamin C 2500 mg | extract de levure séchée 2000 mg
 acide ascorbique 2500 mg | glycine 2500 mg
 extrait concentré de fève 0.100 g | extract de levure 10 g

LABORATOIRE DE L'HEPATROL - 4, rue Platon - Paris 15^e
 Société d'Exploitation des LABORATOIRES ALBERT ROLLAND



SPRINGER-VERLAG



Tranxilium is an anxiety drug, here in a postcard from its manufacturer, Clin-Byla in France, sent to a doctor in Argentina mentioning that country's local representative.



« SOUS LE CIEL DE PARIS »
La fontaine de Médicis
dans les jardins du Luxembourg.

Estimado Doctor:

Hemos recibido y analizado con gran interés la ficha de su Experiencia Clínica con TRANXILIUM que oportunamente facilitara al Agente de Propaganda Médica de Laboratorios Dr. Gador & Cía. S.A.C.I., nuestro Representante Exclusivo en la República Argentina.

Sepa distinguido Doctor, que su colaboración es debidamente estimada y valorada por nosotros.

Sirva la presente como cordial agradecimiento con un afectuoso saludo desde Paris.

[Handwritten signature]

por Clin-Byla

PARIS 101
10-45
18-5
1972
R. DE TOLBIAC (1321)

REPUBLICA FRANCESA
1,10
CASTEL FORT DE SEDAN

DR. ALTSCHULLER JOAQUIN
MENDOZA 6331
ROSARIO-STA. FE
ARGENTINA

PAR AVION

120

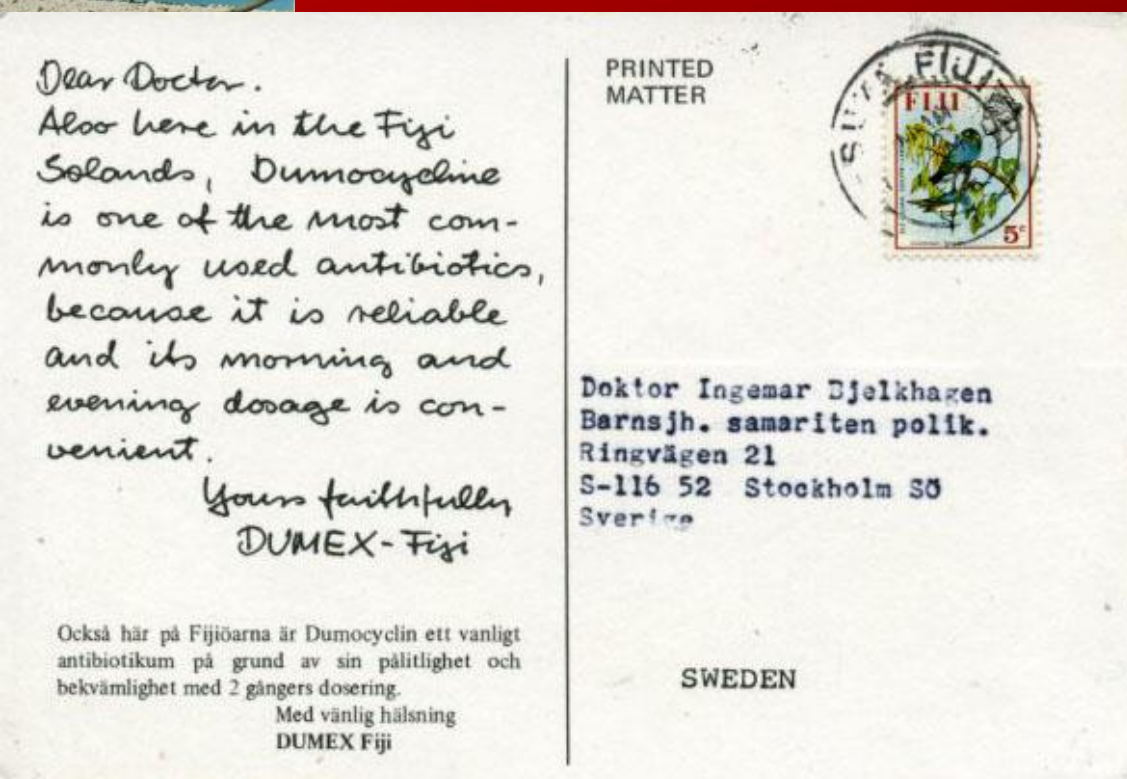
Editions P.I. - 71, avenue de Wagram, Paris



Between 1971 and 1972 Dumex created a series of postcards from exotic places. They tout Dumocycline, an antibiotic used to treat bacterial infections.



Most postcards found are known sent to doctors in Sweden. The native language of the country depicted was used in the upper text, with a Swedish note below.





Dyaresani,
 Dumex Ghana ye nuru ahorow pii
 wo yen nuru yeeba a ewo Nkran no mu,
 nanso nuru a borofa kasa mu wofre no
 Antibiotics node woye no wo aburokyiri.
 Yekra Dumocycline a ayaresafo pii
 anigeyho no fi Dumex Copenhagen.
 Ayaresafo zhanan ne aduonum a
 ewo Ghana no nyinaa gye Dumocycline a
 agye din no to mu na nebo nso nnye
 den koraa.
 Eye yen,
DUMEX - Ghana

PRINTED MATTER
 GHANA
 MAIZE
 1^h
 GHANA
 2^h
 7 SP
 7^h
 GHANA

Överläkaren
 Doktor Theodor Schönberg
 Sjukhuset
 S-880 50 Backe
 Sverige

SVEDEN

Den tillverkning av läkemedel som Dumex har vid
 fabriken i Accra omfattar inte antibiotika. Dumocyclin,
 som används i stor utsträckning, importerar
 därför från Dumex i Köpenhamn.
 Dumocyclins popularitet bland Ghanas 450 läkare
 bygger på den säkra effekten och det förnuftiga
 priset.
 Med vänlig hälsning
DUMEX - Ghana

Tuan Dokter jtt.,
 Salat saku pabrik obat-obatan Dumex
 yang terbaru didirikan (th. 1969),
 terletak di daerah industri yang baru
 pada jarak 30 km dari Djakarta.
 Di antara hasil produksinya, termasuk
 Dumocycline, suatu hasil sbractum
 yang telah memperoleh ketuntutan
 yang luas ditelam pasaran kaum
 pribumi yang dapat dipergajai dan
 penggunaan yang mudal serta
 hal-hal yang pantas.

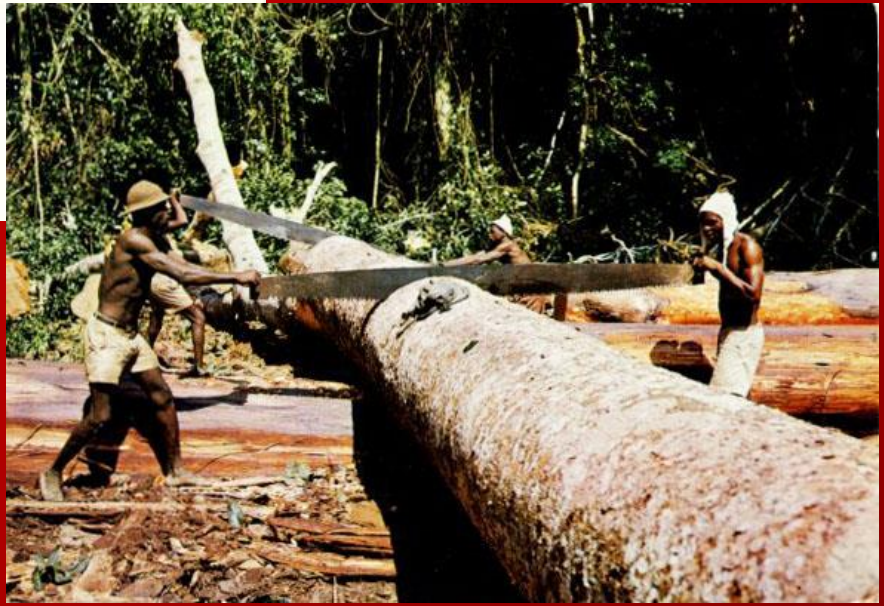
Hamat kami,
 Dumex - Indonesia

PRINTED
 PERKENAAN WILAYAH 1969
 SPARKING EFFORT
 REPUBLIK INDONESIA
 Rp. 10.
 REPUBLIK INDONESIA

Dumex Läkemedel AB
 Fack
 S-250 03 Helsingborg 3
 Sverige

SVEDEN

Dumex' nyaeste läkemedelsfabrik (uppförd 1969) är
 placerad i ett nytt industricentrum 30 km från
 Djakarta. Tillverkningen omfattar bl.a. DUMO-
 CYCLIN, som uppnått en stark position som ett
 pålitligt och bekvämt tetracyclinpreparat - till ett
 rimligt pris.
 Med vänlig hälsning
DUMEX - Indonesien



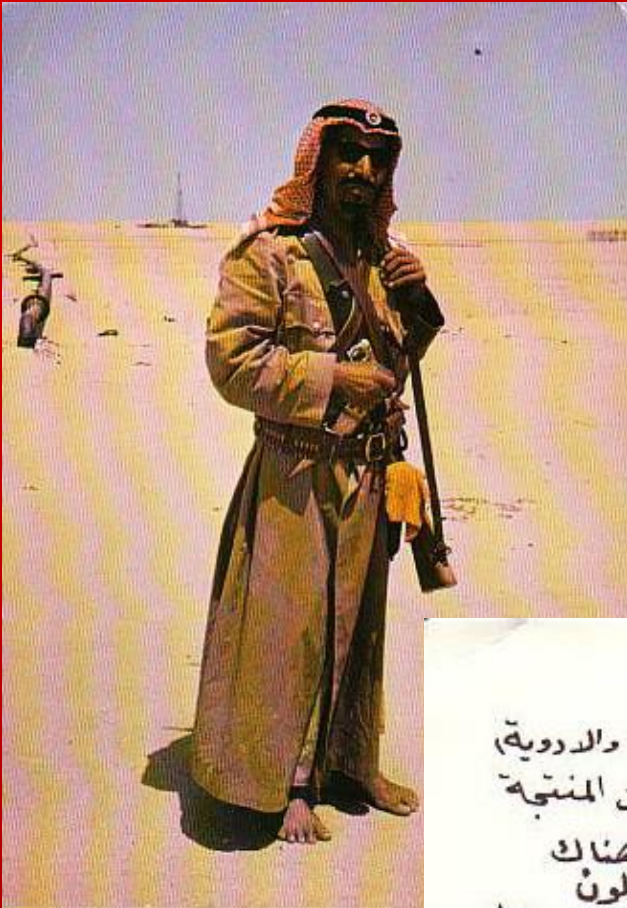
Ghana to Sweden

Indonesia to Sweden



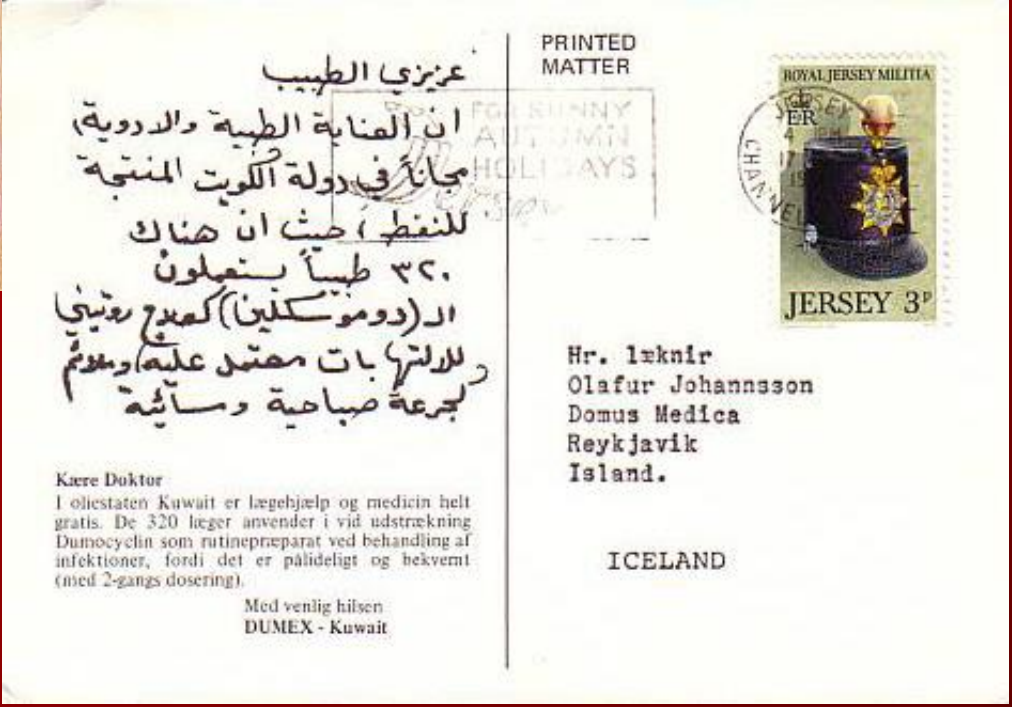


Ethiopia to Sweden



Jersey to Iceland

It's not known why this card depicting a Kuwaiti native was mailed from Jersey, Channel Islands instead.



Also note the lower text is in Swedish, not Icelandic.

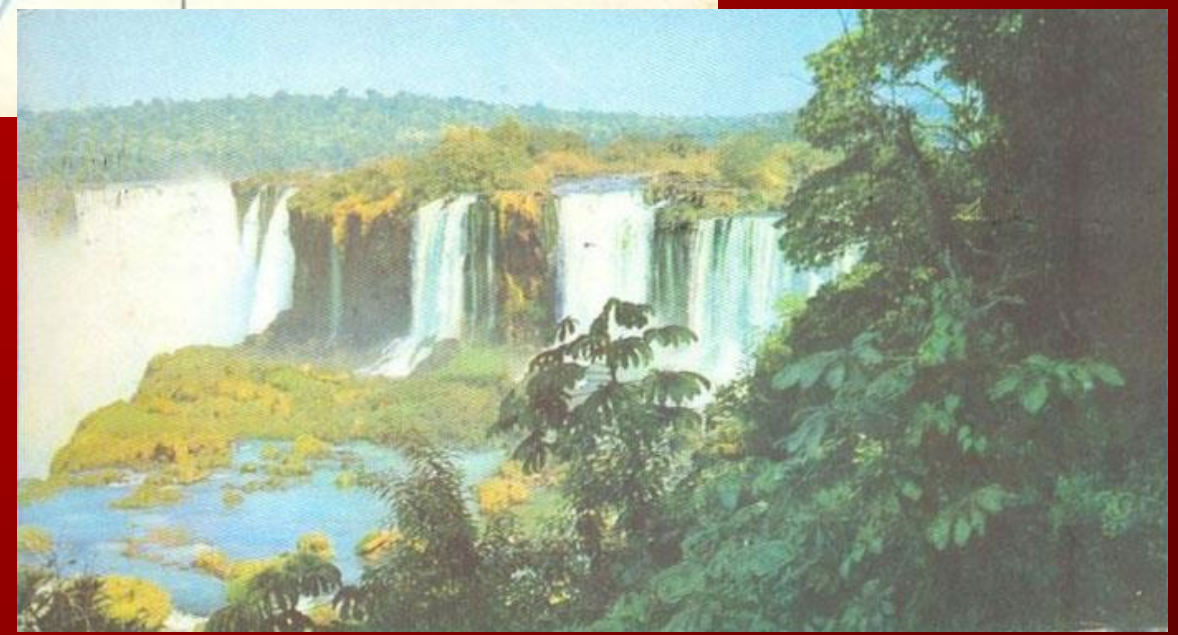




The Netherlands pharmaceutical firm Organon mailed a series of postcards from its Argentine division to doctors in that country in 1973. They advertised docabolin, a hypotension medication.

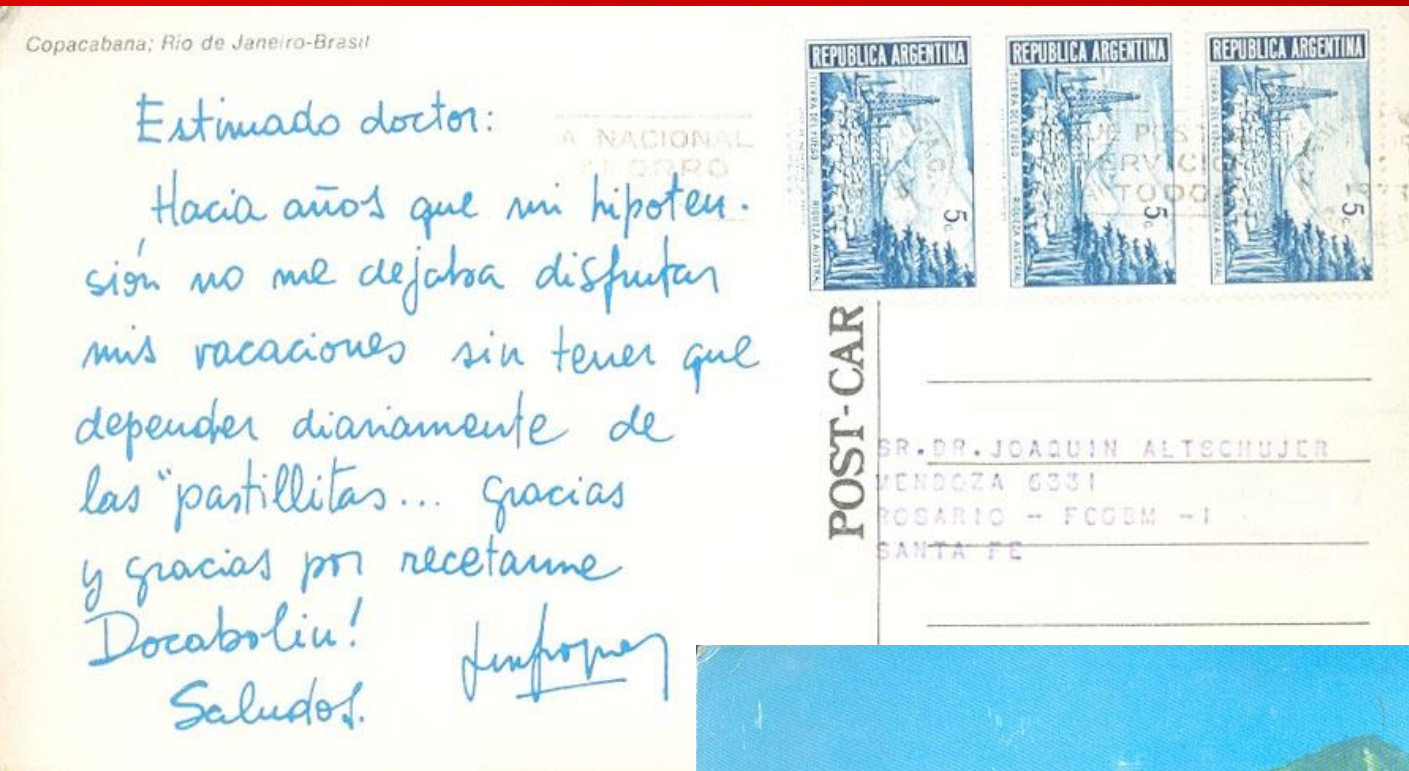


Iguazu Falls, Argentina

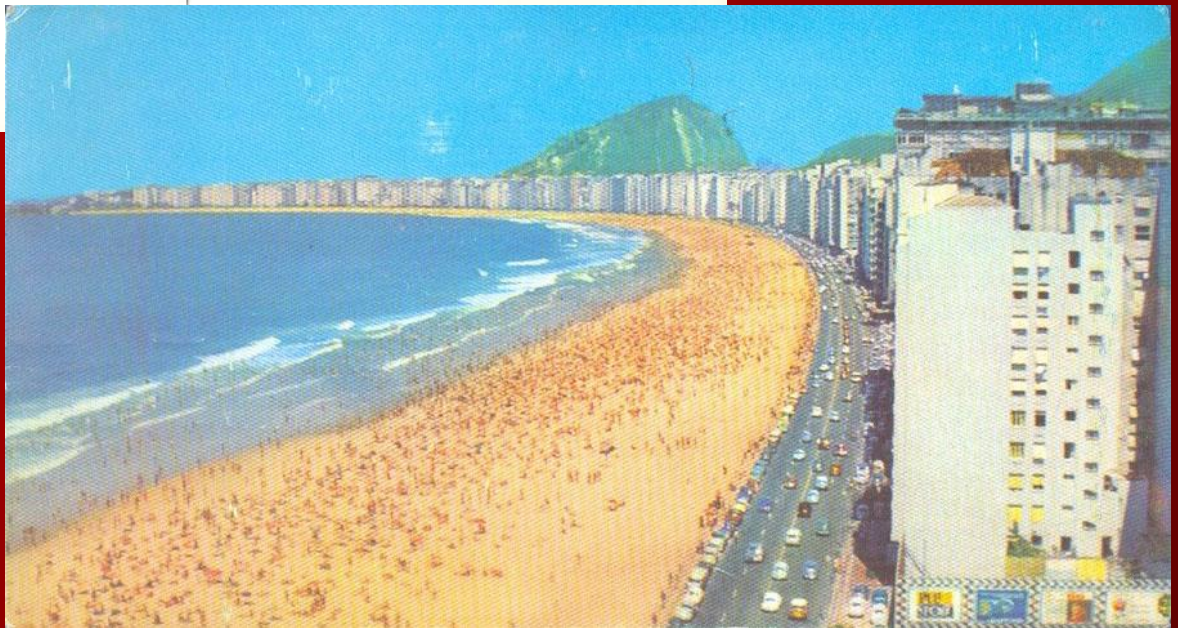


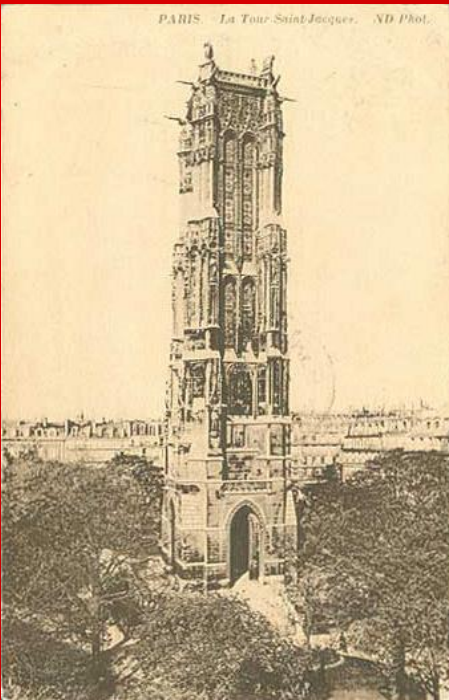


Interesting that this postcard depicts a neighbor's famous attraction but was mailed domestically instead of from Brazil.



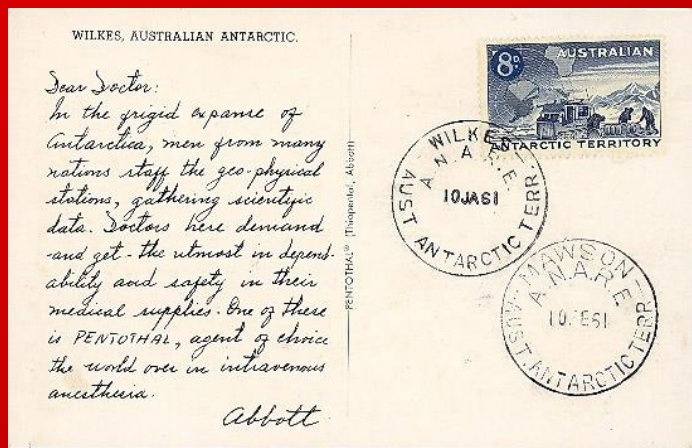
Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil





I hope you've enjoyed this brief introduction to Dear Doctor postcards.

This just touches the surface of the subject. Additional presentations will be made dealing with Abbott Lab postcard varieties and errors, domestic postcard drug advertising campaigns, and non-drug postcard mailing series.



Check out my site for more information:

<http://www.deardoctorphostcards.com>

