

JOHANNESBURG: A WINDOW INTO THE PAST, 1896 - 1904

The basis of the exhibit consists of Pioneer Picture Postcards (PPPC) of Johannesburg. South Africa's Pioneer Postcards are generally accepted as being produced between 1896 and 1900. These Postcards give a fascinating glimpse into the city's early days, serving as a visual record of its transformation.

AIM:

This exhibit intends to showcase the early development of Johannesburg through Pioneer Picture Postcards (Pioneer Postcards), printed and published in South Africa and Germany.

ABSTRACT:

The presentation contrasts Pioneer Postcards with Picture Postcards from the Undivided Back (UB) era, in South Africa 1901 to 1904. This juxtaposition elaborates and enhances the subjects depicted in the Pioneer Postcards. The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 transformed the region from a remote farming area into the world's leading gold mining hub. Johannesburg emerged as the nucleus, growing into South Africa's largest and wealthiest city within a few years.

In the wake of the *Jameson Raid (1895/6)*, an ill-fated military expedition, Johannesburg saw the creation of the first privately published Picture Postcards in South Africa. Two local stamp dealers, M Z Booleman and Sallo Epstein, obtained approval to privately print pictures on the reverse side of official Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) Postal Stationery Cards, allowing it to be sent at the regular Postcard rate. In February 1896, they released a set of five *Raid* related postcards titled *The Late Crisis in Johannesburg*, marking the **beginning** of Johannesburg and South Africa's deltiological history.

Encouraged by the success of this early cards, Epstein continued to publish postcards, becoming South Africa's most prolific postcard publisher. His achievements reshaped the landscape of postcard production across the region. Early Johannesburg's rapid growth, driven by the gold mining industry, was shaped by the discomforts of mining life. Noisy stamp mills and the ever-present stench of cow dung prompt residents to seek quieter suburbs away from the mines. This shift encouraged urban development that led to a mix of public and private buildings that are distinctly captured in Postcards of the era.

SCOPE:

This exhibit presents a reflection on the early growth of Johannesburg embracing themes such as dignitaries, buildings, landmarks, street scenes gold mines. The historical significance lies in how the expansion of the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg played a pivotal role in the growth and development of South Africa. Its gold has exercised a profound and unthinking predominating influence in shaping the history of South Africa.

MATERIAL:

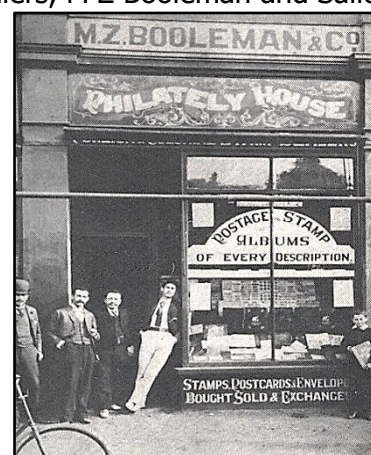
The Pioneer Postcards are the forerunners of South Africa's postcard history. With only a limited number still in existence, they are rare and seldom appear on the market. Often absent from general collections, they are regarded as a prized find for collectors.

All the Pioneer Postcards displayed are selected as most sought-after items and are highlighted with **green** borders. Cards that are considerably rarer are additionally marked with a 🚩 bullet. Against this background, Undivided Back (UB) postcards are not classified.

A different font is used to distinguish between subject related and deltiological information.

ROAD MAP:

<p>Frame 1: pp 1: Introduction pp 2: Birth of a City pp 6: Novelties - 1896 pp 10: Reminiscence pp 11: With Compliments from Johannesburg</p> <p>Frame 2: pp 17: With Compliments from Johannesburg pp 21: Johannesburg pp 23: Greetings from Johannesburg</p>	<p>Frame 3: pp 33: Greetings from Johannesburg</p> <p>Frame 4: pp 49: Greetings from Johannesburg pp 61: ZAR Vignette Triplets</p> <p>Frame 5: pp 65: ZAR Vignette Triplets pp 67: Greetings from Johannesburg pp 76: Johannesburg pp 80: Acknowledgement/Perspective</p>
--	--



Johannesburg's first stamp shop - Mid 1890's

Bibliography:

Leeftang Bram: *Pioneer Postcards of South Africa, 1896 – 1900*. Divendal Repro, Haarlem, pp 9 - 145
 Archie Atkinson, 2007: *Something of a Novelty, Postcards of SA*, A.D. Donker, pp 7 - 18, 47, 80 - 100, 101 Oscar I Norwich, 1986: *A Johannesburg Album, Historical Postcards*. Creda Press (Pty) Ltd, Cape Town, pp 12 - 108, 136 - 41, 158 - 62
 Joseph and David Barnett, 1966: *The Barnett Collection; Pictorial record of early Johannesburg*. Frier and Munro (Pty) Ltd for the Star newspaper - pages not numbered