

PORTRAYALS OF THE WORKING ELEPHANTS OF CEYLON

Purpose: To show the portrayals of Ceylon's working elephants on a wide variety of picture post cards and to describe the production methods and history of the printers and photographers of these cards. This is a story of the changing characterization of these elephant, from the revered elephant central to traditional village life to different depictions as tourist interest in the island grew.



"A Struggling Elephant" Plâté Ltd. Plate's Post Card, lithograph, Great Britain. Title on reverse.

EXHIBIT PLAN

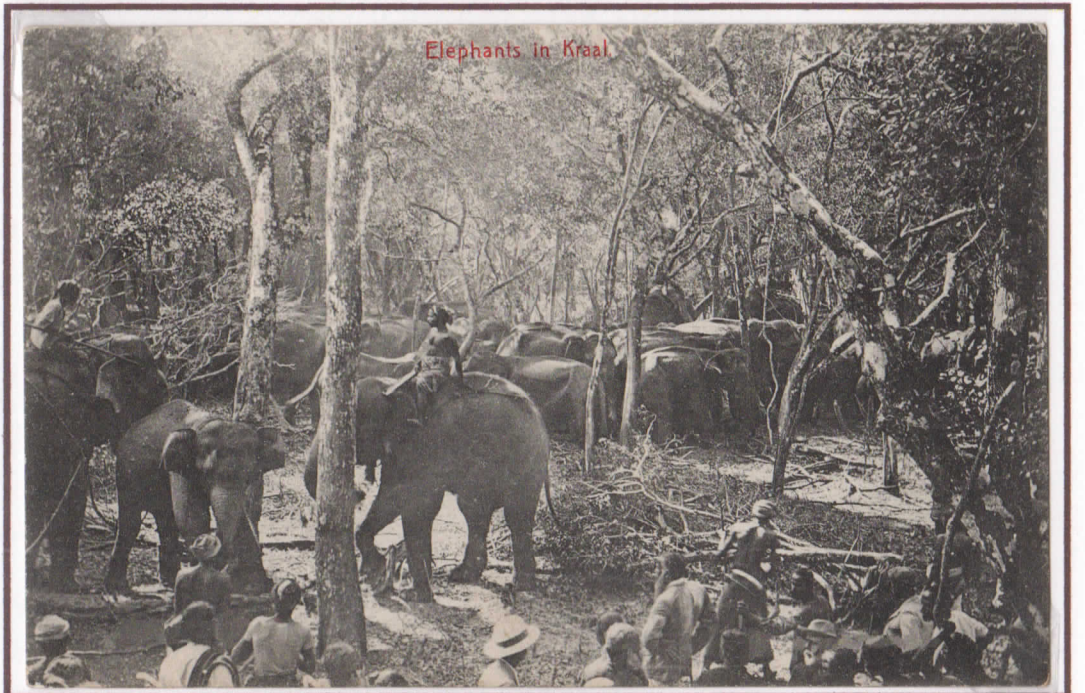
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Capturing Elephants Initially elephants were captured and tamed for the king, and held in his stables. Elephants, suitably trained, took part in ceremonial, cultural and religious pageants and processions. Traditional Singhalese also captured elephants for working use.

Methods of Capture

The Pit Method: A pit was dug along one of the jungle paths used by the elephants. This pit was covered with leaves and camouflaged. Elephants, then walking these jungle paths, would fall into these man-made pits.

The kraal method: A whole herd of elephants in the wild were driven into a stockade.



"Elephants in Kraal" Plâté Ltd. Plate's Post Card, lithograph, title in red, top. See pit at right.

Background: Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, has enjoyed a large native elephant population which has been central to island life. For tourists, the elephant is something to see and remember from a trip to the island of Ceylon. Post cards capture "exotic views" and these images capture the many ways of island life where the elephant played a working role: from traditional farming where elephants were used much like a horse, to commercial plantation use for transportation and construction, to urban use and tourism.

Timeframe of cards shown after the turn of the century to before WWII, with most 1905-1935.

Format: The post cards selected were those that illustrated each aspect of the storyline while also presenting a wide variety of types of printing and formatting, as well as a variety of printers. Cards were printed in Ceylon, England, Germany and France. All cards are divided back cards, printing methods are described and card titles indicated below each card.

Rare items are **double boxed**. All cards are divided back unless otherwise noted.

 Elephant paw print for Ceylon elephant facts.

 Research related to post cards shown.



"An Elephant Kraal, the Stockade" Colombo Apothecaries, Ltd., Colombo, Ceylon, collotype.

 **Colombo Apothecaries, Ltd.,**
a mercantile business on Slave Island, Colombo, Ceylon. As their post card photography business grew they added studios in Kandy, Ceylon.