

Characterizations of the Working Elephants of Ceylon - Synopsis

Treatment & Importance

Focus on having my post cards tell a story with each double page having a specific topic. As to Importance, in Ceylon post cards the elephant is often shown. The aspect of the working elephant is more a novelty of an era gone by. The country name of Ceylon is used as the country was renamed Sri Lanka in 1972 after the era of use of these post cards.

Selection

Ceylon – two local printers in Ceylon, other individual photographers. Three foreign printers (England, Germany, France). In selecting post cards for the exhibit, I avoided repeating items from series – for instance, the Lipton Tea series has three post cards where you can see elephants working, I selected the best one from these. Skeen-photo has several the cards, these vary on topic and series.

Knowledge

My background with Ceylon elephant post cards was that I bought a few when I was a child to go with my Ceylon stamp collection, these were used cards, but their elephant images held an interest. Over the years I bought more at shows, not exactly sure what I wanted to do with them. As a judge I wanted to learn more about post card exhibiting, and I've had the chance to see some of the best exhibits. Once I had a story in mind, though, I collected in earnest to develop this one frame exhibit.

Research

What I have added to the information about printing methods and card types is background information about the printers located in Ceylon. This information I'd researched when working with revenue documents of Ceylon and in gathering background for my other Ceylon collecting interests.

Rarity and Condition

Just two cards are doubled boxed, although another four are the only I have ever seen of their image. These cards had restricted availability (at the temple for one, in highland tea country for the other) Condition is a challenge because these were just not heavily collected and while they were in Ceylon, they were subject to tropical climate conditions.

Presentation

Double pages worked best for the story line and for allowing more cards to be shown.

References:

Collecting & Exhibiting Picture Post Cards, Seija Riitta Laakso, pages 31-42 – **key reference**
Post Card Companion, The Collectors Reference, Jack H. Smith, various, info on a few publishers only.
Official Price Guide to Post Cards, Diane Allmen – general reference

Ceylon Related:

Mercantile Lore, Sir Thomas Villiers, Colombo, Ceylon – key reference to Ceylon information, various
The Hills of paradise, British Enterprise and the Story of Plantation Grown in Sri Lanka, S. N. Breckenridge. – historic context
Tropical Pioneers, Human Agency and Ecology Change in the Highlands of Sri Lanka 1800-1900, James L. A. Webb, Jr. – historic context