

Carl Garte from Leipzig lithographic fine arts printers and publishers was among the first producers of picture postcards in Germany. Together with J. Miesler, Berlin, Emil Pinkau, Leipzig etc, Carl Garte entered the picture postcard printing field immediately when privately issued cards were officially allowed in all German states in 1885.

Besides postcards the only other speciality of Carl Garte were "views". Meant are views of popular places, of historic and touristic interest often available in different sizes, mounted on stiff card board. These were sold either individually or in booklet form / albums with 8 and more views with nicely embossed covers. Most of the early printers whether they used colotype process or chromolithography produced these "views" which were especially popular in the 1890's.

COMPANY HISTORY

The exact setting up of the Carl Garte business is a bit unclear. I mentioned Carl Garte in connection with the famous postcard printing firm of Louis Glaser in TPA #15 p27. *Christa Pieske* says in her reference book "Das ABC des Luxuspapiers", that a firm with the name "**Glaser & Garte**" - *Kunstverlag, Lithogr. Anstalt u. Druckerei* was set up in 1875. I had found out that Louis Glaser had moved into his new premises at Kreuzstr. 20 in 1883 and that there is no mention of Garte anymore. Entries in different directories state the date Garte set up his business officially sometimes as May 1875 and then again just "in 1874".

Fact however is that from April 27, 1883, the owners of the Carl Garte business were *Anna Garte* (widow) and her partner *Erdmann Carl Heinrich Schulze*. Aha, there was no Carl anymore and his early death might had been the reason for the Glaser/Garte split. Carl Schulze had a business of his own (printing trade supplies) and was also registered as co-owner of the house Seeburgstr. 15 but lived at Wintergartenstr. 11. The house no. Seeburgstr. (con't column. 3)



(ill above) **Leipzig - Café Felsche and Grimmaische Str.** This street (although quite narrow) was important for all traffic from the western direction into central Leipzig. The Café seen on the left was built around 1835 by confectioner Wilhelm Felsche and first named "Café Français" before it became later "Café Felsche". Popular meeting place for tourists, lovers and students with excellent view across the Augustus-Platz. The building was destroyed in WW2.

Printed (halftone process with carefully arranged overlay colours) and published by *Kunstanstalt Carl Garte*. A number "8" is found on picture side at lower left corner. Message dated May 22, '04. Mailed to Berlin on May 24, 1904 where it arrived the next day. Interesting imprint of two (short) lines on address side in lower left corner position. For a short sender's address, imprinted later by Garte. Postal regulation to write nothing but "address only" on what we call today "undivided back" began to fall in 1904 already. From Feb. 1905 the dividing line came in use.

✦ **Gruss aus Schwarzburg** (Thuringia) with "Lith. Kunstanstalt Carl Garte, Leipzig" imprint. chromolitho, 2-3 colours black/grey, a so-called "Photographieton". Often the same view also found in full colour. P/u May 1894 with "Deutsche Reichspost" address side.

✦ **Gruss aus Rathenow** (Brandenburg/Prussia), typical chromolitho card, not too colourful however, mailed to Bavaria in Feb. 1899, but surely published 2-3 years earlier.

Owners of the grown Garte business in 1909 were: *Anna Marg. Garte* and *Carl Hans Garte* (both Leipzig), *Marie Elisabeth Garte* (Munich) and *Carl Schulze*, Leipzig. Another source just refers to the "*Geschwister Garte*" (brothers and sisters) together with Carl Schulze as owners. The business seems to had been well running. By 1913 it also occupied Seeburgstr. 39. Owner now was *Carl Hans Garte* and a not named limited partner. All three houses were three floors high and this meant quite some room for a printing / publishing business available.

Garte had specialized in printing (quality) postcards and not much else. The last dated card I could find is a 1919 artist dated card (see ill please). Some time in late 1919 or 1920 the printing business was would up. There was no future in postcard printing. The business did not went broke and the name Carl Garte did not disappear completely. All three houses were owned now by "Carl Garte Verlag" who resided at Seeburgstr. 35. The publishing business was run by Carl Hans Garte and stayed in business until WW2 years. Co-owner according a entry in the 1939 Leipzig trade register was *Prof. Dr. phil. Carl Hanjörg Garte* (son to Hans?). House Seeburgstr. 39 became a block of flats and no. 37 housed different printing firms over the years. The rooms seemed to had been very suitable for printing (trade) firms. In 1921 we find here the 1906 established firm Grasmück & Karnahl, specialized in maps and letterheads.



This firm moved to Carolinenstr. 22 after a few years. Already by 1928 another firm had moved into Seeburgstr. 37. Th. Kirsten & John, working in the pre-press business, preparing illustrations for chromo- and photolitho process as well as for offset. In 1939 we have, besides the Garte book publishing business, a chromolitho printing firm named W. Bertold and a music publisher named Domkowsky & Co. at Seeburgstr. 35-37. No information found if this housing area has survived WW2 air raids, or if C. Garte Verlag was in business again later. Think this is also not much of interest as their postcard printing/publishing history ended in c. 1920.

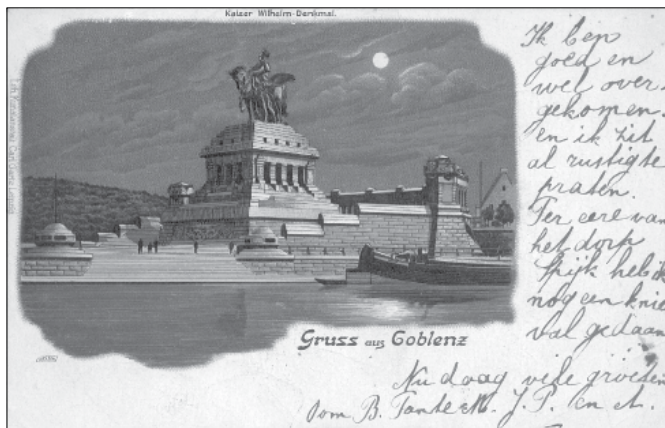
CARL GARTE CARDS

Garte printed/published cards are both, easy and quite difficult to identify. All early, mostly *Gruss aus* type of cards bear an imprint on picture side that reads "Lith. Kunstanstalt Carl Garte, Leipzig". These cards are printed by lithography or more likely by chromolithography (coloured). Some show a small card or job number, but most not. I understand the company of Carl Garte not only to be the printer but also the publisher of most cards. Two *Gruss aus* examples are shown on previous page. The earliest card I have at hand dates from 1894. I have heard of cards postally used in 1892, but none from pre-1890 years. Okay, this is rare material and not often seen. Besides the traditional *Gruss aus* type of cards we have a big series of "by night with full moon" type of cards as I use to call them. All cards I have seen show a small number. See ill of card no. 5055 please. Most look very alike although some have a monochrome background and others not.

The managers of Carl Garte were clever enough not to stick to (chromo)lithography process for postcard printing to long. Halftone printing for illustration together with colour overlays was used from about 1902-03 on, like all other bigger German postcard printers did. The general German term for this process was "Chromo-Autotypie" (see ill). The (small) imprint found on picture side reads now "Kunstanstalt Carl Garte, Leipzig". Garte had a well skilled staff of lithographers and their accurate work, careful colour arrangements can still be noticed on the pre-1906 halftone printed cards.



C. Garte had also many customers in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His name normally doesn't appear on the cards but



↙ *Gruss aus Coblenz* - Kaiser Wilhelm monument. From a huge series of chromolitho cards of similar arranged "by night with full moon" views. Shows a tiny '5055' on picture side. Mailed to Netherlands but stamp and postmark missing, c. 1898-99.



Hochfeine Ansichts-Postkarten

Ausführung: **Bunt** pro 100 Stück sortirt Mark 5.-
 " **Photogr. Ton** " 100 " " " " " " " " " " " " " 4.-
 Unter 100 Stück " wird nicht abgegeben.

**Lithographische Kunstanstalt Carl Garte
 Leipzig, Seeburgstrasse 15.**



Advert from "Monatsschrift für Postkartensammler", vol. 1 no. 5/6 (editorial dated Jan. 1, 1896). Nice Prices! 100 different chromolitho cards für 5 Marks!

sometimes the initials C.G.L. on address side next to a characteristic meander frame. See enlarged illustration.

But the best known logo of Garte is the C.G.L. inside a modified lithographer crest. Usually printed in green ink, sometimes also in grey or brown. I strongly believe that all cards with this crest logo on were also published by Garte. I have not yet seen a another publishers name on it.



Carl Garte's early postcard production consists more or less of cards of topographical nature. From about 1906-07 other subjects like romance, military, flowers etc turn up on Garte cards. Competition was hard at that time and led to ruinous prices. Also topo's were now often arranged in frames/special artwork and glossy (gelatine) finish added. Customers wanted 'novelties' and postcards producers tried to please all only to stay in business somehow.

Military related cards, views from manoeuvres, barracks life to typical greetings/humour are seen often. Also quite many Carl Garte cards dating from 1914-16 years. The Great War was a 'great gift' for the German postcard publishing and printing industry and created a short-lived but massive boom again. Until paper and other supplies became short and more and more workers were called to the fronts. The luxury propaganda type cards and other colourful heroric topics were replaced by monochrome collotype/gravure process printed cards and (bromide) photo cards.



↑ Promotional imprint superimposed on regular Austro-Hungarian address side. The picture shows a view from the city park in *Karlsbad*, Bohemia. Garte asks potential customers to send in quality, sharp photographs only for postcard printing. Many photos of that time were not suitable for reproduction and printers had really problems to make the best of it. The extra retouche work was seldom paid in full.

↓ *Reichstag, Berlin* - carefully done background, excellent printed coloured view but the wooden frame looks not that good. A popular design for some time however. Thick (gelatine) glossy finish. Garte crest logo with no. 156 found on address side. P/u June 1910.



Identification of Garte cards

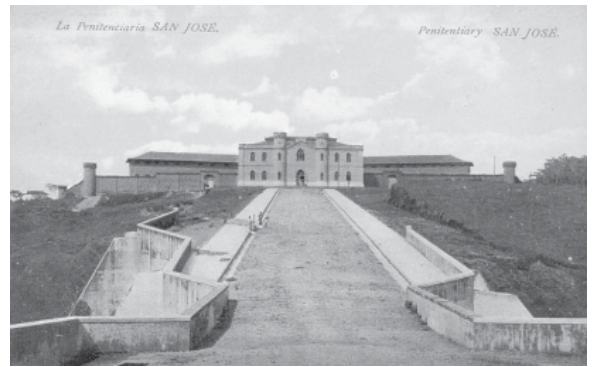
You might wonder how to find out if you have Garte printed cards in your collection. Unless you find the name imprinted or the initials or at least the crest logo, you have almost NO chance to identify cards printed by Carl Garte, Leipzig. Other printers of that time had favourite typestyles, a characteristically designed "Postcard" or a easy to identify address side layout (writing lines size and arrangement, size and position of dividing line, imprints etc). Garte however, changed the look of their address sides over and over again, used various mostly common typestyles for captions. The only thing which appears to be identical on all my samples is the size of the stampbox. In case you have a good eye for printing details and a sufficient stock of cards to compare with, you might be able to identify some cards printed by Carl Garte company. Many of them, also post-1910 issues, are of good to very good printing quality. See the Costa Rica card for more information.

Remarks

I was not able so far to find detailed information on Garte's printing activities, workforce, number of cards published under own name etc. Their business grew a great deal between 1895-1905, so did the room the company had available in Seeburgstr. A mention in literature from 1906 states Garte's firm among others (Eismann, Ludewig, Glaser, Forker - all from Leipzig) to employ about 100 workers and to have modern printing/production equipment. A printing directory entry from 1913 states the workforce to be about 75. Nothing on number of presses. When I look at some cards from WW1 years I tend to believe that Garte also used gravure process and not only traditional halftone etchings. Very fine screen widths used. What I know for sure is that Carl Garte had specialized fully on post-card production, produced a great numbers of the today wanted "Gruss aus" chromolitho cards and continued with quality halftone process until they decided to close down.

→ The lack of typical identification marks, unless the Carl Garte name or logo is imprinted, makes it difficult to find out if this company was a bigger export printer. You need examples like this card from Costa Rica which shows a rubberstamp imprint of Garte with process name "Photolithochrom" and a handwritten roman number 'III'. I have two other cards with such imprints and pencilled roman numbers (II + IV). Guess the roman no's stood for quality grade and/or price groups. The "II" marked card is of much better quality as the Costa Rica view. Of course the quality of the photo provided by the customer was also much decisive.

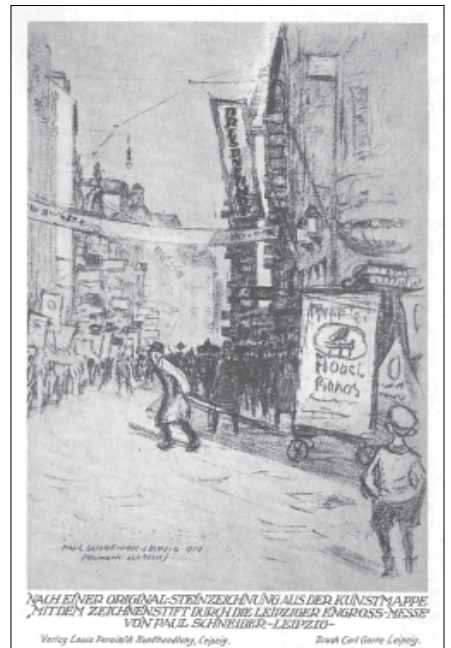
Publisher line reads: *Editadas por Maria V. de Lines San José & Limón.* Caption in Spanish and English: **Penitentiary San José.** Address side imprint in green ink. This sample would be good to identify other Garte cards from Central America.



→ **Camp life** - soldiers cooking a meal. Garte card 280, mailed as fieldpost card in March 1916. This card however was published in pre-1914 years. There is another encampment series already with "Feldpostkarte" imprint and different numbering which was produced in WW1. Soldiers everywhere were always good postcard buyers.



→ **The last Garte** printed card I found. View of "Neumarkt" during the trade fair. Signed by *Paul Schneider, Leipzig 1919.* Monochrome printed, dark green on light yellow card. Official trade fair card (1920. Publ. by local firm *Louis Pernitzsch* (establ. 1853)



↓ **Flowers in vase,** (carnation) common multipurpose greeting card without special imprint. Garte card no. 975. P/u Dec. 1918.



↑ **"The captain says the soldier must go to bed and leave his girl alone now".** Garte card 560/I (from a set of?) P/u Nov., 1912.

↑ **Romance? Folklore? National Customs?** All in one somehow... No caption or greetings imprint. Couple sitting in front of painted background. Well coloured. Not p/u. Post-1905. Garte logo together with (card) no. 939.

