

Old German PPC Export Printer IDENTIFIED

Okay, the heading is a bit misleading. I did know that this firm was big in picture postcard printing for export in pre-1910 years for sure, but had almost no idea of how many their cards looked like.

The firm in question is **August Frey** from **Frankfurt/Main** and was already subject of research in TPA 17 p 20. Frankfurt had also been a center of German ppc printers during the golden postcard era and is sometimes a bit underestimated. Companies like *Adolf Rosenblatt*, *Gerhard Blümlein*, *Philipp Frey* were around very early, produced great numbers of the colourful chromolitho cards collectors today like so much. *Boch & Kirsch*, *J.C. Berke*, *Kornsand & Co*, *Kumpf & Wiesbaden* are unknown greats so far. And, there was **August Frey**, which I believe to come from the *Philipp Frey* family. August started off with a chromolitho printing business in late 1888 and soon specialized in picture post cards and (souvenir) album printing, mainly for customers abroad. Not long after the turn of the century, A. Frey added collotype printing process to his production line.

The only definite August Frey printing process sample card (collotype with litho colouring) I had, is a view from Great Britain (Old Wolverton - Cottages and Inn) with a "Phototyped in Frankfort" imprint in stampbox and full name imprinted onto picture.

I used to collect cards which show specific characteristics like a special designed "Post Card" design, certain printing style, captions etc. hoping to find out one day who the

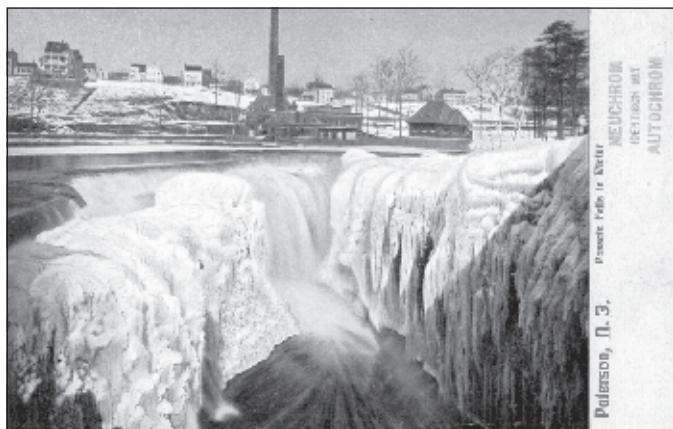
printer was. I had noticed a special "Post Card" design in red-brown ink, ornamented and quite big in size on a couple of (undivided) views from the USA (see ill. below). Captions also imprinted in red ink, usually in sort of art nouveau type style, identical with that of Wolverton. Then I got hold of two more cards which show an additional promotional rubberstamp imprint that reads 'NEUCHROM identisch mit AUTOCHROM'. Now it became interesting. A not named printer told the public that his "Neuchrom" (halftone) process was of the same (high) quality as the "Autochrom" process which at that time was a protected brand name of famous *Louis Glaser* company from Leipzig. Well, the quality of early Neuchrom cards is indeed very alike, the same sharp details and exact, clean colouring. I strongly believed that August Frey was the source (also because of the type used from captions) but had no definite proof. I looked out for more cards with "Neuchrom" mention, but failed. Researching long gone ppc printers and publishers just by using their old cards is pretty difficult. You need (trade) literature, especially periodicals, directories from that time, too. But I had not expected to find the answer who stood behind "Neuchrom" in a small

photography paper, the content aiming mostly at the amateur photographers scene (see advert). Now it is clear that "Neuchrom" was the process name of **August Frey, Frankfurt**, and on offer from c. early 1900 onwards.

My samples all show views from places in New York and New Jersey. Some have no publisher imprint at all. Two (later - p/u 1904) views from New York, already less good printed, show a tiny imprint that reads "E. Frey & Co., Publishers, New York". It appears that a local family member co-ordinated the printing activities of August Frey in the US. Another card popped up, again with captions in the typical type and printed in red ink. Again from New Jersey (see ill. below) but this time (fine) printed by sepia duotone collotype process. It shows the same address side layout, undivided era, but all imprints done in black ink. On picture side two rubberstamp imprints describe the view to be printed by collotype process. This is also a Frey product. But were his activities in the USA limited to the east coast only?

Besides the (oversized) Post Card design another detail is always identical. The 4-digit card number is found in lower left corner position, arranged vertically.

Perhaps not only the competition on the US postcard market limited August Frey's operations there. An entry in Klinsch 1913 directory leaves the impression that August Frey had passed away in 1905. Since that year the owners were: Widow K. Frey and a Richard Reutlinger.



Advert from: "Der Photograph", No. 19 (May), 1900
 ↙ Paterson, N.J. - Passaic Falls in Winter with "Neuchrom/Autochrom" rubberstamp imprint. Frey no. 3305. No publisher imprint. The typical address side layout shown below.
 ↓ Jersey City, N.J. - Public School No. 25. Collotype, Frey no. 4398. Published by Voigt & Staeb, Jersey City. Card no. 12. Not p/u.

