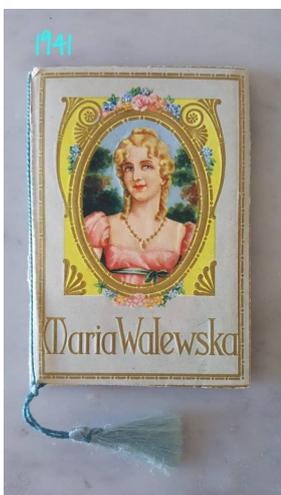
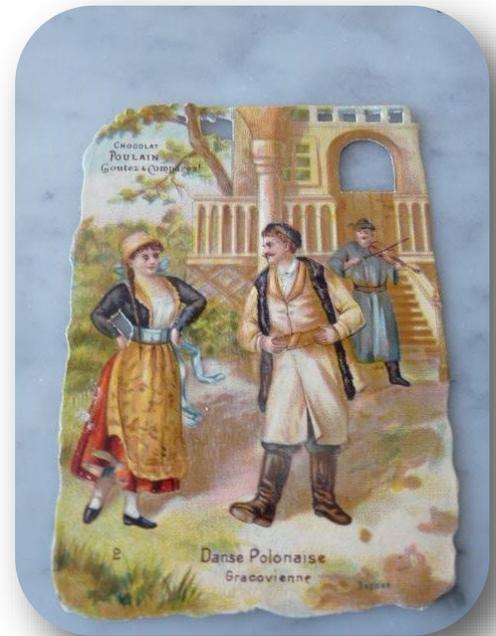


Picturing Poland

Chromolithographies, also called chromos, are small images that were produced en masse over a century from 1850's to the early 1960's. These images have different names. They are called chromos in France, trade cards in the UK and US, Sammelbild in Germany.

Chromos have different sizes and forms. Some are in cardboard, others are in paper. When they require additional cutting to improve the perspective or the background, they are called découpis in France and cut-outs in the US. The most sophisticated can be folded and unfolded.



Some chromos had a useful purpose. The best example remains these miniature calendars that smelt violets or rose - small goodies from the local hairdresser.



Picturing Poland

The 19th century was a golden age for cut-out chromos. Scrapbooking became a popular hobby. Germany and the UK produced the best quality images with several layers of intense colours over a resistant embossed paper.

In France, Epinal prints (*Imagerie d'Epinal*) were using a specific lithography process. Pellerin, the leading company launched a mass production of big boards during the Napoleon regime. Many themes were available, either framed or cut-out. Military uniforms were very popular. With *decoupiés*, children could command over a paper army cheaper than lead toy soldiers.



We have completed the cut-out paper soldiers of our family collection (c. 1870) with the original full board from Pellerin.



Picturing Poland

► Small is Beautiful

Chromo are neither postcards nor leaflets. Their size is usually 25% of a standard postcard and the largest do not exceed 50%. Some collectors consider that “smaller is better”. Without entering this debate, we can only remark that most of our chromos are below the 25% mentioned above.

Usually coming in series of 4, 6, 8 or 12 pictures, chromos were offered to children by popular brands or department stores. The purpose was to capture interest and build client loyalty. Some were also produced by local manufacturers as advertising trade cards specifying address and services.

Frequently, the brand is mentioned on the front picture and a small text provides related explanations or a story on the back. The interest of the topic, the quality of the drawings and the relevance of the texts are adding value to many collections.



Picturing Poland



The quality of these two chromos is exceptional. They picture Warsaw with the traffic on the road to the Kierbedzia Bridge. During the partition of Poland (1792-1918), Warsaw was in the territories occupied by Russia. This bridge was named Alexander, from the Russian tsar. Destroyed in 1915 and 1944, the Kierbedzia Bridge was replaced by the Śląsko-Dąbrowski Bridge in 1949. Today, the walk across the Vistula River offers a wonderful view.

Picturing Poland

► Target Audience

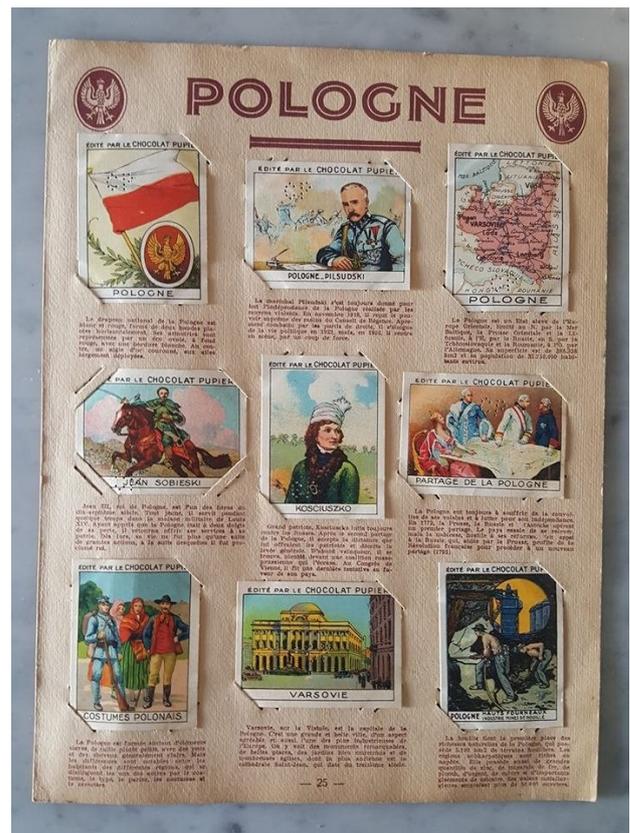
The food sector was the most prolific in chromos production. During the 1880s, this interest was caused by the emergence of new products such as concentrated milk, meat extract, baby cereals, chocolate bars, or powder chicory. Giant company Liebig has produced 11,500 different images. French chocolate producer Poulain has produced some 25,000. This production was part of the brand strategy: penetrate household kitchen and establish as a reference product for the family.

Either with entertaining or educational contents, chromos were very popular with children. In schoolyards, chromos were displayed, commented, exchanged or stolen with passion. Chromos are somewhat the ancestors of today Panini cards and stickers.

Very early, many producers have proposed beautiful albums encouraging children to build a collection. Therefore, completing an

album with full series was a great achievement. Albums were proudly displayed to visiting guests and admiring grandparents.

Some chocolate and candy manufacturers cleverly proposed free products and goodies when a series was completed. Hence, the small perforated hallmarks on many chromos that were validated in the grocery.



Picturing Poland



The flag with the White Eagle and the Saint Andrew Cross was initially used by Polish merchant ships before the division of Poland between Austria, Prussia and Russia. The flag was officialised after 1815 in the Congress Kingdom, the part of Poland under Russian occupation. Before the recovery of Independence in 1918, Poland was frequently represented with this “Russian flag”.



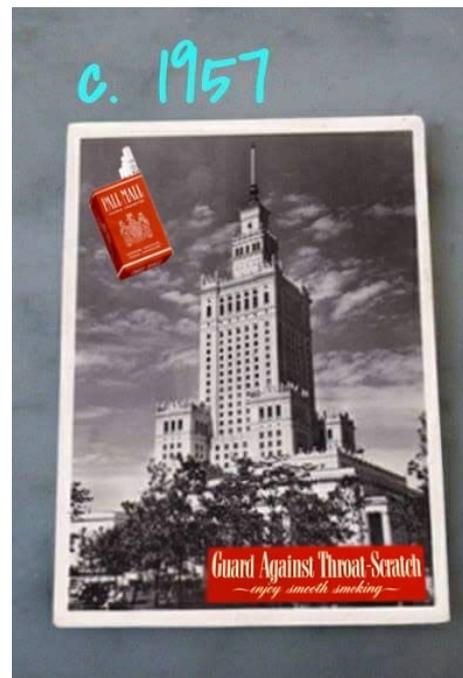
Picturing Poland

► Popular Success

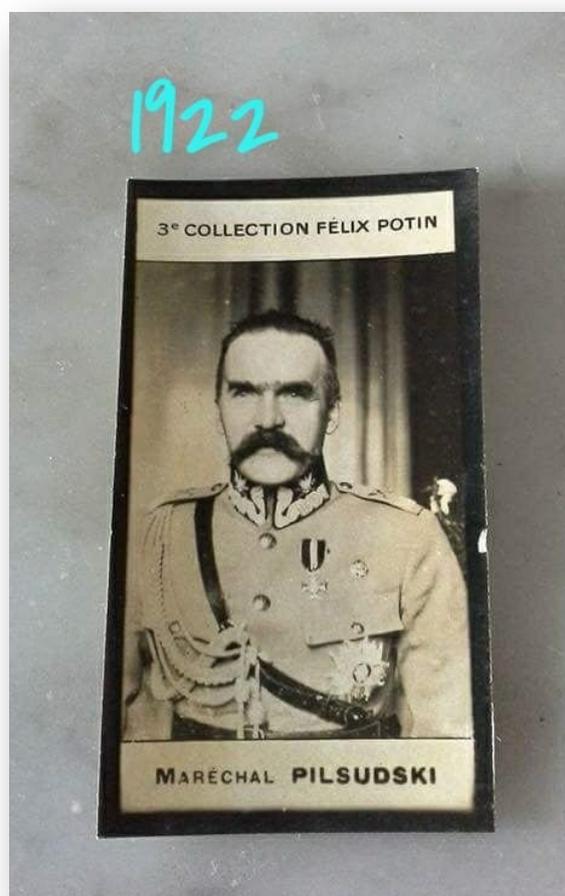
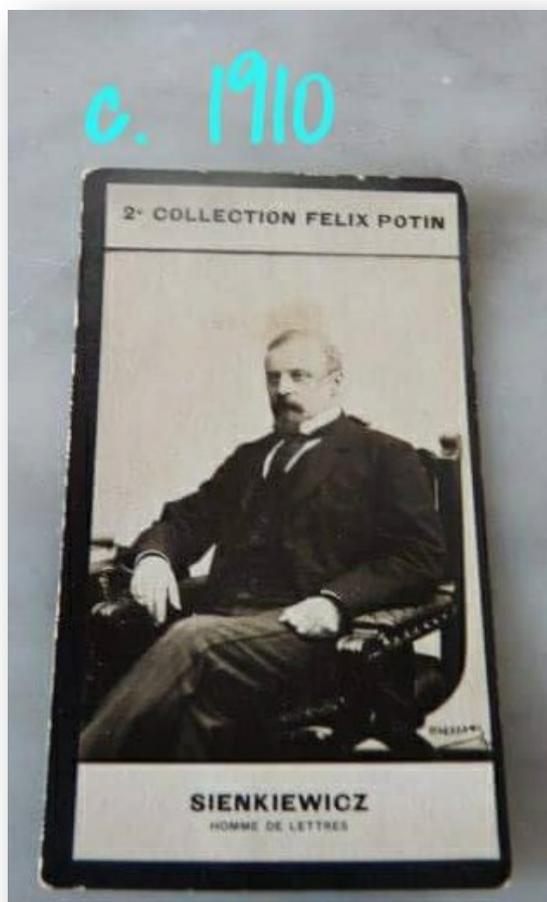
Many of our chromos are parts of wider collections about countries, towns, or folklore of the world. Most of them have no dating. In addition, one single image could be used by different publishers over a longer period of time.

Blogs of collectors and experts are helpful resources. They highlight that some elements can indicate the period of production. Such identification requires a careful examination of the chromolithography process, paper quality, colour resistance, drawing style, and typography. Landscapes, architecture and clothing are also important to put a date. We use the letter "c." (circa) to indicate an approximate dating.

After WWII, chromos lost attractiveness. The evolution of advertising made them an out-of-date commercial vector. However, some brands have sustained a small production. Trade cards pioneer Liebig has produced chromos until 1975.



Picturing Poland



The collection « Modern Celebrities » was published by French grocery Felix Potin from 1898 to 1922. Distributed with chocolate bars, the 3 series include some 1500 portraits of famous people from all countries.

There is no biography on the backside. In the 1920s, these chromos had a very sophisticated quality. An analogy photography was pasted on a cardboard support before receiving a mat gloss. This process creates an amazing contrast for black and white pictures.

In this collection, Poland is represented by Henryk Sienkiewicz, Marie Curie, Pr. Galezowski and Marshal Pilsudski.

Picturing Poland

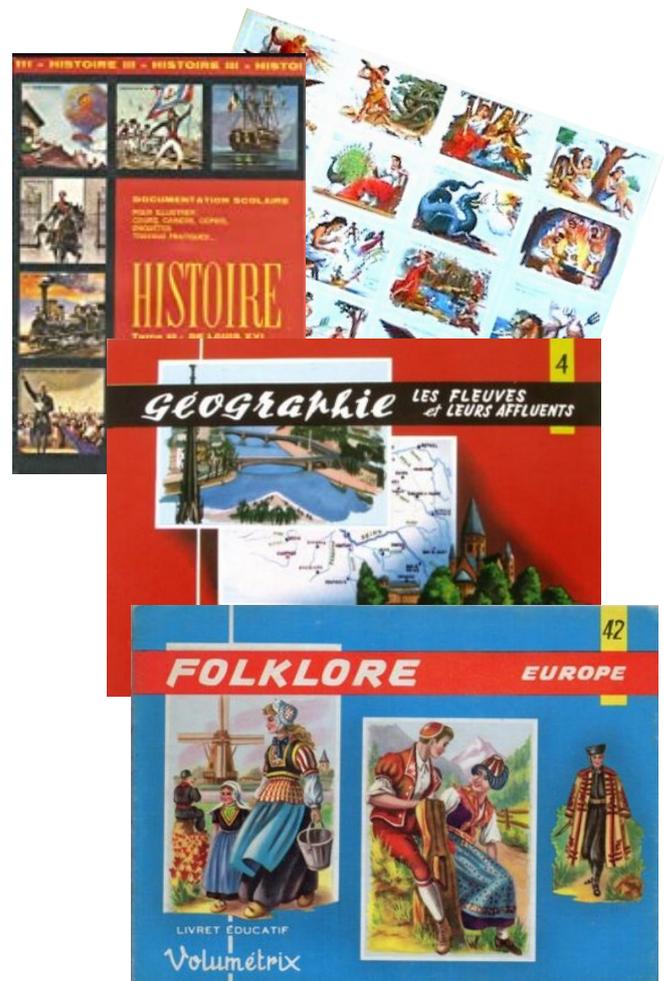
► Educative Value

Chromos had unlimited themes and many were presented in series, as a small encyclopaedia.

Before WWI, when most children couldn't access books outside schools or local libraries, owning chromo series was some kind of compensation. School teachers were aware of this educational value. They collected chromos as a recompense. In France, an image was given for every 10 or 50 *bon-points* (good marks), depending on the severity of the teacher.

After the mid-50's, a new support for popular images surfaced: educational booklets with cut-out image boards. Many topics were available. Sciences, animals, plants, history, and geography were the most popular. These booklets were the indispensable support for many school works that included researches and presentations.

A new generation of chromos emerged with this evolution. The paper became thinner with a glossy front and a pre-glued "just-one-lick" backside.



In France, Livrets Volumetrix and Cahier Arnaud were the most representative of these products.

Picturing Poland

► Focus

Over three decades from the early 1950s to the late 1970s, the collection *Around the World* met a global success. Published by American company Nelson Doubleday, Inc. this collection was produced in cooperation with the American Geographical Society. The French version was published in 1965 by Jules Tallandier.

Booklets had 64 pages and 2 folding boards with a total 24 chromos pictures. Chromos were presented as pre-cut lick-on stamps. The subscription allowed kids to “travel at home” and almost all countries were represented.

The booklet *Pologne* published in 1965 pictures a modern country, in line with the propaganda of the mid 1960s. During the Gomułka era, the regime strived to export the success of the socialist model. The image board presents a thriving agriculture, an ambitious industry, vibrant cities and a bright future.



Picturing Poland

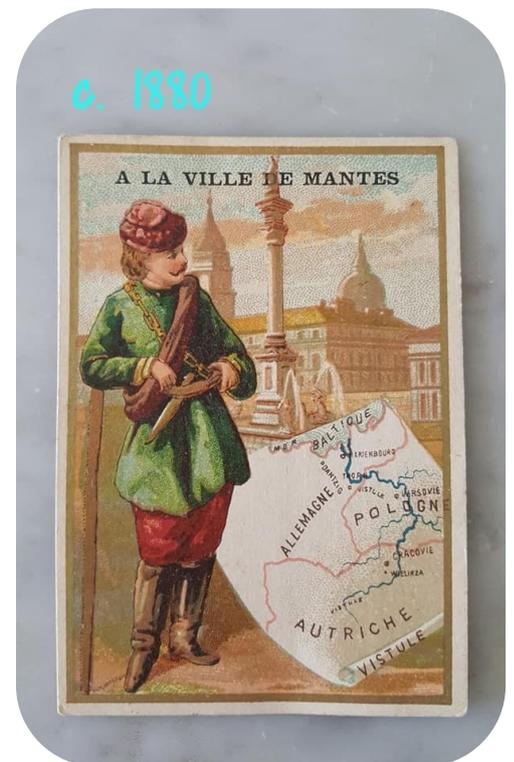
► Polish Culture

Our chromos collection reflects the popular culture of Poland. These small images convey all the expected stereotypes: dancing Mazurka, open-sleigh rides, old Jew haggling, mine workers in Silesia, noble men wearing *kontusz*, courageous lancers charging enemies.

Historical figures are also pictured in symbolic situations. Copernic watches the Moon. Poniatowski dies in a river. Sobieski has a long sword. Pilsudski escapes from the Warsaw Citadel.

There is no doubt that such naive representations were also a powerful vehicle of the Polish culture. Still, chromos are much more than just a delightful assortment of clichés.

Some chromos tell History beyond the anecdote. From 1792 to 1918, during 126 years, Poland was wiped out of the map of Europe. During the last decades of the partition, chromos were a visual confirmation of the existence of this country as a nation, a people and a culture.



Picturing Poland



Maria Skłodowska Curie (1867-1934) is the most present figure in our chromos collection.

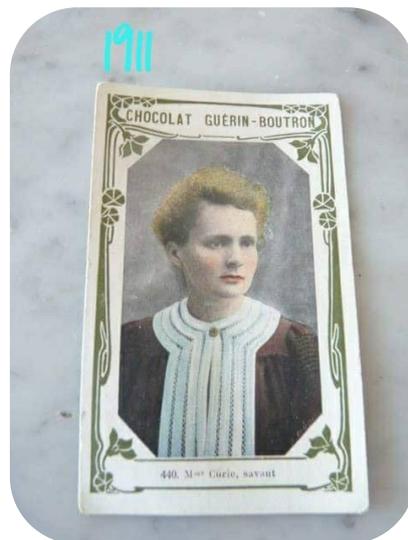
Born in Warsaw, Marie Skłodowska came to Paris in 1891. In spite of great material hardship, she got her degrees in Physics and married Pierre Curie in 1894. In 1903, together they received the Nobel Prize for their pioneering researches on radioactivity. I

n 1911, Maria Skłodowska Curie received a second Nobel Prize in chemistry for the discovery of polonium and radium. Her discovery was an

unprecedented step forward in medicine. She paved the way to further development in radiology and future radiation therapies.

Maria Skłodowska Curie was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize and the first laureate to receive this Prize twice. She is also the only person awarded in two different sciences.

Maria Skłodowska Curie was the first woman to become a professor at the University of Paris. In 1995, she was the first woman to enter the national Panthéon. Memorial in Paris.



Picturing Poland



In the 20's, **Pola Negri** (1897-1987) was the diva absoluta of silent movies produced in Hollywood. Born Apolonia Chalupiec, she began her career in Warsaw. From 1914 to 1923, she starred in 9 Polish and 24 German movies.

In 1922, Pola Negri was the first European film star invited in America. She recorded 21 films with Paramount in 5 years (1923-1928). Her long career from 1914 to 1964 includes 65 films.

These chromos were produced by Bunte Filmbilder. This German collection also pictured Jan Kiepura, the famous Polish tenor. All these art deco miniature images have bright colours and an elegant golden frame.



Picturing Poland

► Sentimental Value

Chromos about Poland have a very special value. They should not be considered as any other old advertising papers.

For many Polish people from the Diaspora living in France and in the USA, chromos pictured (with more or less accuracy) the environment they had left behind. Before the early 1920s, Poland was not “in the news” and whenever it was, there were only few pictures in newspapers.

Some elements of the Polish culture were transmitted by mothers and grandmothers. But frequently, children of the second or third migrant generation had no references. They had to build a mental picture of their origins by themselves.

There is no doubt that many chromos were collected by Polish people who cherished the memory of the past. For this reason, our collection is a precious demonstration of our fidelity and attachment to Poland.



Picturing Poland

► Focus

Based in Philadelphia, **Bowman Gums** has produced one of the most popular chromo series ever collected in the USA. The cards were in bubble gums packs. This extensive production ranges over a very short period of time from 1938 to 1940.

In 1938, “*Horrors of the War*” was the first series produced with 240 chromos. It was followed in 1939 by “*War News Pictures*” and “*The World in Arms*” with a total 140 chromos.

The purpose was to inform the Americans about the escalation in Europe and the risk of an imminent war. In 1940, the objective was to develop awareness about the value of peace and liberties. But the main purpose was to prepare families.



Picturing Poland



The Roosevelt Administration would not declare war against Germany before 11 December 1941 but authorities were encouraging initiatives promoting patriotism.



Anticipating a strong success in schoolyards, the publisher has favoured the quality of the material with a strong and compact paper that cannot easily be folded or chipped. The colours are limited to different tones of black, grey and orange. Some pictures are real photos, most of them are drawings. The visual effect is impressive. One single card can depict five different scenes.



Interestingly, many drawings are inspired by real events reported in the press of the time. The Three series have produced a total of 25 chromos about Poland. This is a completed series in our collection and arguably our favourite.

Picturing Poland

In the War News Pictures series, the chromo #84 “*Warsaw’s Last Stand*” pictures a scene from the film produced by American journalist Julien Bryan.

This war reporter was in Warsaw from 7 to 21 September 1939. During this time, he experienced heavy German bombings. His short documentary “*Siege*” reports the suffering of the population. The photos from this report were published in *Life* and *Look* magazines.

This chromo pictures Kazimiera Mika, a 10-year girl crying beside Andzia, her dead sister. Bryan took this photo on 13 September 1939 in Warsaw, near Jana Ostroroga street. The picture became one of the most iconic image of WWII.

Kazimiera survived the war. Julien Bryan came back to Poland in 1959 and they met for a second time. She died in 2020.



Picturing Poland



#	GUM Inc. - "WAR NEWS PICTURES " - 1939-40	
2	Polish troops	X
6	Gdynia bombed	X
7	Polish « big Bertha »	X
10	Russians drop propaganda	X
12	Polish troops on the march	X
23	Polish war tanks	X
26	President Moscicki	X
28	Poles attack German radio station	X
29	Ridz-Smigly	X
34	Danzig harbour	X
36	War Map	X
38	Polish bombing planes	X
40	Aerial view of Warsaw	X
42	The siege of Westerplatte	X
44	Polish massed military might	X
77	Nazi machine gunners slay Polish Cavalry	X
79	Polish franc-tireur	X
83	Russia's Red Army moves into Poland	X
84	Warsaw last stand	X
87	Poles capture tanks with flaming grenades	X
88	Polish soldiers and refugees	X
90	Hela Peninsula finally surrenders	X
97	Terror in the Carpathians	X
101	Russians dump propaganda in Poland	X
108	Warsaw sorrow	X
132	S.S. Pilsudski is sunk	X