

POULTRY IN OUR PAST

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to the 1916 Fourth of July celebration in Petaluma. There was a tradition of great parades on that day and this is another promotional item. The label may have had multiple uses, one of which was to place it on the front of a letter (but not where the stamp was to be placed), or on the back flap. The use of ancillary labels on letters started in 1907 with the first of the Christmas seals sold by the American National Red Cross. I cannot confirm the rooster graced any envelopes as this is the only copy I have ever seen. At the time this item was produced, annual egg shipments had increased to 11,681,134 dozen according to a Chamber of Commerce brochure.

The last item (Figure 4) is a colorful 4" piece of cardboard with a string attached. I purchased this several years ago. While it clearly boosted the 1923 Egg Day, what did it represent and how was it used? First I thought it was simply a fancy design with a couple of oranges on it. Looking at it now, I see it represents a

frying pan with two sunny-side eggs – the orange being the yolks!

The city of Petaluma hired H.W. "Bert" Kerrigan, a publicist, in 1918. He created the annual "National Egg Day" celebrations. Ultimately the celebrations would include more than just a parade but also hot air balloon rides, tug-of-war contests, egg-shelling contests, livestock auctions, etc. Increasing costs ended the celebrations in the late 1920's, and Kerrigan was through. Egg production in the 1920's varied from 35,000,000 – 50,000,000 dozen, but went into a decline in the Depression, only to have a final burst of success during World War II.

I haven't answered my second question above – how

was this last item used? I can only speculate, and that is why I call these items "curious". My wife, Brigitte, wonders if they might have been tied to pieces of merchandise in local stores to promote Egg Day. As this happened 90 years ago, it may never be clear but I certainly would appreciate ideas, directed to the Editor.

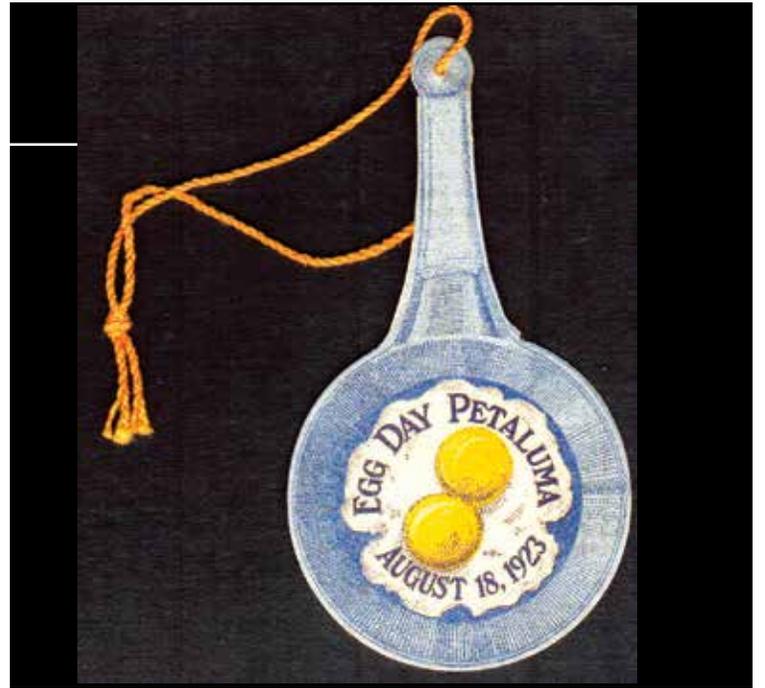


Figure 4. 1923 cardboard frying pan

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