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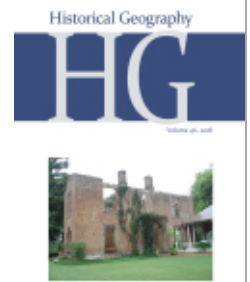
*Post Cards from the Sonora Border: Visualizing Place through
a Popular Lens, 1900–1950s* by Daniel D. Arreola (review)

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Post Cards from the Sonora Border: Visualizing Place through a Popular Lens, 1900–1950s. Daniel D. Arreola. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2017. Pp. xvii+271, maps, illustrations, tables, notes. \$40.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8165-3432-6.

Dan Arreola's latest book is the second of four intended volumes dealing with postcard images of Mexican towns along the border with the United States from Texas to California. Specifically, he treats from east to west those facing Arizona: Agra Prieta (adjacent to Douglas), Naco (some distance south to Bisbee), Nogales (adjacent to the American town of the same name), Sonoyta (south of Lukeville and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument), and San Luis Río Colorado (adjacent to San Luis, but more importantly some twenty miles south of Yuma). His overall purpose is to create a visual history in order to further "understand how a popular image format shaped the way we see these towns as both tourist destinations and lived places" (xv). His emphasis is the built environment as visualized through picture postcard images. In his introduction, Arreola emphasizes how now vintage postcard photos provide important means for analyzing not only how places in the past looked but also how they functioned and what the material culture of landscape symbolized. Implicit, of course, is how photographs taken at successive dates can also inform understanding of change over time. Early in the twentieth century scenic postcards circulated in the mail by the billions annually, making them by far the most accessible, and thus the most used, sources of geographical information available both to Mexican and American publics.

Chapter 1 reviews the history of the Mexican/American border itself and provides historical overview regarding the border towns, both large and small, as a set of urban localities. Thus is the reader made aware of the importance of regional railroad and road development, the impact of the Mexican Revolution (1910–20), the impact of Prohibition in the United States (as a promoter of cross-border tourism), and the important presence of Chinese entrepreneurs in border towns, among other concerns. Chapter 2 offers an excellent review of the scenic postcard's origin and development. Perhaps this is the most important section of the book, certainly for readers interested in postcard art *per se* rather than the specifics of the border towns themselves. It should be emphasized that the 195 black-and-white "real" postcard views

reproduced in the book are for the most part of highest visual quality, leaving the reader with images as good as, if not better than, original postcard prints. Important is his assessment of the known postcard photographers whose images appear in the book (many remain unidentified), and how they worked in the field. Commentary also treats the publishers and their marketing of cards produced. All photos come from Arreola's extensive postcard collection.

Chapters 3 through 7 are case study assessments focused town to town. Questions asked concern the *what*, *why*, *how*, and *when* of the predominant postcard images produced. Each chapter is organized slightly differently depending upon the imagery at hand. For example, for the Agua Prieta case study, postcard images are first used to explain the historical analysis that follows, but for Naco historical analysis largely precedes sample postcard views, which are then used to validate historical interpretation. In both Agua Prieta and Naco the coming of a railroad greatly influenced town morphology and, accordingly, town function as well, border crossings being largely a railroad enterprise until the coming of the automobile and motor truck. Yet in Naco railroading seemed to play an enhanced geographic role regarding street layout, the locating of public plazas, the development of distinctive urban neighborhoods, etc.

Analysis in each of the case study chapters is enhanced by what the author calls a "vignette," a story of interest set aside from preceding general assessment. For the Nogales chapter the story concerns the Cavern Café, a restaurant housed in a cave carved into a bluff, the small city's high-density downtown being contained largely in a narrow valley (almost a canyon) with residential development largely spread up the hillsides. The Cavern Café resonated strongly with me. Taken by rancher cousins whose ranch was located at nearby Patagonia, Arizona, and later with a group attending a National Park Service conference at nearby Tumacacori National Historical Park, I was treated to what for years had represented the quintessential border-crossing tourist experience. Certainly border postcard art was intended primarily for American tourists, although the author might have elaborated more on this circumstance. Americans bought postcards to remember touristic experiences, often organizing views purchased in photo albums. Or, perhaps more commonly, they mailed postcards to relatives and friends thus to prove, if not brag about, border experiences. One also wonders

if, once his four intended volumes are completed, the author might not produce a postcard book that treats selected American and Mexican towns paired along the border. How did scene selection differ north and south of the line? What were the functional emphases one side to the other? What were the symbolic implications? How did postcard art differentiate American from Mexican culture? That, of course, provides rationale for a fifth book.

This book's strength remains the example it sets for scholarly use of vintage postcard images, thus enabling scholars to better understand historic landscapes. The book deals with the presumed realities of localities pictured, at least realities as viewed through photography. Perhaps it is best to say that the book deals with how places were thought to be to the eyes and mental constructs of photographers at work. Of course, postcard photography conditioned viewers to visualize landscapes and places in specific ways. It established what was important to see in a place and, additionally, how that ought to be viewed and thus thought about. It conditioned how viewers came to assess the importance of not only specific places but also kinds of places. After all, seeing and believing do tend to be closely linked.

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A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux, 50th Anniversary Edition.

Amos Bad Heart Bull, Helen H. Blish, and Mari Sandoz. New introduction by Emily Levine and Candace Greene. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017. Pp. 648, black & white illustrations, color illustrations, photographs. \$95.00, hardcover, ISBN 978-1-4962-0359-5.

Born in 1869 in present-day Wyoming, the Oglala Lakota artist Amos Bad Heart Bull was one of the most prolific indigenous artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His medium was ledger art, a genre of Native artwork in which different kinds of books, including ledger books, became drawing surfaces. By the time of his death in 1911, Bad Heart Bull's ledger book contained over four hundred drawings that provide a nearly unparalleled record of Lakota history.

His work first appeared in print in 1967, when the University of Nebraska Press published *A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux*, a