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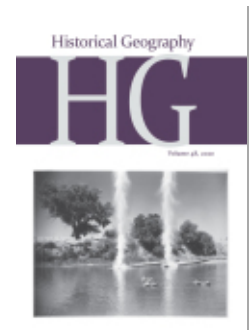
Peter Fidler: From York Factory to the Rocky Mountains ed.
by Barbara Belyea (review)

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had pushed further into the sociocultural discourses that were present in the postcard images but were only touched upon in the writing. The author only glides over the role of gender in shaping the landscape. The postcards reveal a great deal about “masculine” tourist attractions, but was this because there were inequalities in the selection of attractions, or inequality in the eyes of photographers or consumers? It also makes the reader question, did women not engage in cross-border travel? Or were they intentionally misrepresented or “erased” from the visual record? Likewise, the author does not seem to interpret repetitions of a subject—like the Mission of Guadalupe church—or its persistent promotion, as an expression of power. Finally, while Ciudad Juárez appeared to have successfully carried the torch for distillers of alcohol during Prohibition, a deeper investigation into the effects of such actions on the Mexican society and culture is warranted.

Postcards from the Chihuahua Border is a good example of how photographic postcards can represent the story of a changing landscape. To see how this border community takes shape historically is to realize the importance of mobility for a sustainable future, as well as the possibility of respectful coexistence, even symbiosis. Rather than mourning for a past landscape, perhaps we should look to the visual evidence that exists for the knowledge and the hope required to bring down walls and encourage a more inclusive border culture.

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Peter Fidler: From York Factory to the Rocky Mountains. Barbara Belyea, ed. Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2020. Pp. vii+359, sketches, maps, notes, index. \$52.00, hardcover, ISBN 978-1-64642-015-5.

Hudson Bay Company (hereafter HBC) surveyor Peter Fidler (1769–1822) is one of the more obscure figures of the Canadian fur trade. In *Peter Fidler: From York Factory to the Rocky Mountains*, Barbara Belyea ensures his greater prominence through masterfully editing two of Fidler’s journals (“From York Factory to Buckingham House” and “From Buckingham House to the Rocky Mountains”), which he wrote over a nine-month period traveling the Canadian interior between 1792 and 1793. This volume is an admirable addition to any North American

historical geographer's bookshelf, for the text is a useful primer in understanding not only Peter Fidler's journeys but also the Hudson Bay Company's historical development, its literary practices, and its contributions to Canadian geographical knowledge.

Belyea demonstrates how editors play essential roles in making primary sources legible to lay audiences. Her original contributions include an introductory chapter titled "Peter Fidler in Context" and extensive endnotes. I recommend that readers who are unfamiliar with the Hudson Bay Company (or those encountering Fidler for the first time) read these sections prior to diving into the journals, as Belyea provides essential contextual information. These sections outline Fidler's life, explain his obscurity among HBC historians, and provide necessary historical and geographical contexts to his journals. Moreover, Belyea demonstrates how HBC documents like Fidler's journals reflect a conservative literary culture that was developed to efficiently conduct business transactions across a geographically far-flung social network that had both North American and European participants. To modern eyes more accustomed to reading explorers' accounts published for general audiences, Fidler's journals are a challenging read—yet Belyea serves as an exemplary guide to the unfamiliar world of an eighteenth-century surveyor navigating vast tracts of the Canadian interior.

Peter Fidler was a meticulous chronicler. His journals exhibit all the qualities required of an HBC surveyor. Fidler's daily entries are written in a form of shorthand akin to a captain's log. The journals' terse narrative structure—employing dashes instead of punctuation to indicate distinct ideas or temporal breaks—reflect wider writing practices adopted by literate HBC employees, who were required to produce standardized manuscript forms. Standardized lists, letters, journals, and maps were common HBC business documents. They often lost their utilitarian structure, however, when folded into memoirs by those who sought to profit off their HBC experiences by selling them to armchair geographers. In contrast, the two journals reproduced in this volume are the unedited entries of a skilled HBC employee in the field, designed for field navigation and use. Devoid of literary flourishes or sentiment, they document key events as perceived by someone accustomed to surveying, hard travel, and interacting with unfamiliar cultures for extended periods.

Belyea's choice to reproduce Fidler's field notes in their original

structure is a key strength of the volume. Fidler seamlessly transitions between prose narrative, survey measurements, and sketched maps. Belyea chose to reproduce the latter as photocopies, inserting them wherever they appeared in the journals in their relative positions. Often these sketch maps leave Fidler's script legible, though others' small size—sometimes less than a sixteenth of a page—leave readers squinting at Fidler's annotations in vain. I found that the maps' positions on the page visually broke up Fidler's prose and sometimes left me disoriented, at least until I identified the correct narrative thread to pick up reading again (53). At other times, I wished for editorial annotations or captions for the more obscure sketches. Occasional disorientations aside, I applaud Belyea's decision to leave these elements of Fidler's journals untouched, because she rightly notes that to do so retains a sense of "how Fidler and other fur-trade writers perceived and mentally organized events and situations" (28).

An important contribution of this volume is its ability to reflect how Euro-American geographical knowledge of the Canadian interior developed in the eighteenth century. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a surveyor participating in extended journeys, Fidler is an astute observer of his physical environment, including landforms and weather patterns. Furthermore, he is pragmatic. Much of his prose is devoted to documenting water and fuel sources, as well as the quality and availability of fish and game. He also, however, extensively records observations on the Indigenous cultures he encounters. Fidler comments on diverse customs and day-to-day patterns of Indigenous travel, trade, and hunting, particularly those of the Piikani peoples he traveled with during his journey to the Rocky Mountains. These are valuable firsthand accounts of Indigenous lifeways. For example, Fidler's descriptions of a buffalo jump site (105) and his depiction of mounted Piikani hunters mopping up lamed bison after a successful jump (111) are unique windows into Plains life during a period of rapid cultural transition.

What struck me most about Fidler's journals, however, was the way his geographical knowledge connected to wider entangled networks of HBC and Indigenous geographies. Hundreds of Indigenous, French, and English toponyms punctuate Fidler's texts. Importantly, Fidler explains how toponyms connect to past people and events. In doing so he subtly reveals how HBC members relied heavily on extensive commu-

nication networks to make sense of landscapes in the Canadian interior. For example, Fidler notes that a once-busy river passage became “seldom frequented by the Indians” after a 1781 smallpox epidemic devastated the local area (66). Similarly, he later records how an HBC portage point developed after three men drowned in a particularly hazardous set of river rapids (69). Such changes in transportation networks subtly reflect historical geographies of communication networks but also shed light on how *remembrance* was an essential part of constructing eighteenth-century Euro-American geographical knowledge. For Fidler and the HBC, Canada’s interior was not a wilderness bereft of meaning, but instead a world richly textured by social memory.

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Big Water: The Making of the Borderlands between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. Jacob Blanc and Frederico Freitas, eds. Foreword by Zephyr Frank. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018. Pp. xii+329, black and white illustrations, maps, notes. \$55.00, hardcover, ISBN 978-0-8165-3714-3.

Big Water: The Making of the Borderlands between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay successfully utilizes borderland theory and transnationality as its framework. This allows for a deeper level of understanding when viewing a regional historical and geographical study. The study effectively expands the scholarship on South America and exposes the limitations of trying to impose political boundaries onto physical boundaries. By employing a transnational approach, the editors and authors provide a compelling argument for the merits of borderland analysis at a local level, demonstrating the fluidity of a frontier borderland.

Big Water is an edited compilation of work by various scholars. It explores a wide range of scholarly topics such as geography, anthropology, economics, and history as it examines the Triple Frontier, the common borderlands of Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. The book is well organized, and rather than following a more common chronological approach, the editors adopted a thematic one that was based on the key concepts of adaptation, environment, belonging, and development. This novel approach allows for the voice of each author to be heard, but