Ouray Postcard Sense-of-Place: 
Looking at Words and Reading Pictures

By

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Stephanie Willis

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Geography and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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**Ouray Postcard Sense-of-Place: Looking at Words and Reading Pictures**

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Abstract

To modernize sense-of-place research methods and restore humanistic depth to the field of geography, this research is an exploration into inventive tools and techniques for sense-of-place investigations. A historical postcard GIS was built and analyzed to assess sense of place for Ouray, Colorado. Another GIS was constructed using the results of a Ouray local self-directed photography exercise. These data were analyzed as well to reflect upon the effectiveness of alternative sense-of-place methodologies. This research demonstrates the possibilities for integrating geospatial technologies into qualitative geographic research.
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I am deeply grateful for my sweet little family. We’re a powerful trio of love and support. Thank you, Til and Mahalia Jet! I also know it meant something to my extended family, my late maternal grandparents in particular, that I finish this research about their beloved Ouray. Lastly, I know Mahalia would be upset if I didn’t thank the snuggly pets through this process: Ogden, Lucky, and Madison.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Research Problem and Design

Sense-of-place studies inspect the world through reflection on human sensory experiences. Scholars in this arena typically have pieced together their stories using lenses of remembrance and imagination, but I argue opportunities exist to enrich our understanding through alternative methods. In recent years, geography as a discipline has received acclaim for inventive geospatial technologies. This trend now is extending from the sciences to the humanities (Corrigan et al. 2017, Goodchild and Janelle 2010, Murrieta-Flores et al. 2016), and sense-of-place studies have the potential to lead the movement. To do so, however, they must embrace digital technologies and reimagine themselves by thinking “outside the box.” Sense of place has the capability to enrich the field of geography with humanistic depth while, at the same time, show it is modern, creative, and perhaps most important, uniquely geographic. This dissertation is an exploration into inventive tools and techniques for sense-of-place research, all through the lens of a familiar piece of ephemera, the postcard.

Traditional approaches to sense-of-place study recently have been summarized by Cary de Wit (2013). His article is a useful point of departure for my work, in that he suggests that a lack of clearly articulated methods may have contributed to the infrequency of sense-of-place studies in recent geographic literature. Without a body of work representing methods or cautionary tales of the field, he asserts, a new researcher will be hesitant to begin such research (de Wit 2013).

My master’s thesis research was a traditional sense-of-place investigation of a single town through semi-structured interviews and participant observation (see Appendix A for a list of those interview questions). I struggled initially with field methods, as well as how to analyze
and synthesize such a breadth of information. Like de Wit, I had trouble knowing where to begin, what to ask, and to whom I should ask the questions once I figured them out. Eventually though, I managed to turn my mess of notes into categories and themes. That framework turned into chapters and a story of place was fleshed out (Meador 2010). I believe great value rests in this sort of effort, and I want to see it continue. The ethnographic guidelines provided by de Wit are a good first step in this direction, I now want to add other methods for investigating the subject. After identifying and justifying these approaches, I will apply them to my original master’s thesis field site of Ouray, Colorado. I expect—and hope—to find new aspects of this sense of place I did not expect, but I also want to add depth to my, and others’, existing knowledge of the place and its people. As with Cary De Wit’s recent efforts, perhaps through my own research experiences some of the mysticism of sense of place research can be lifted.

It is important to add here at the outset that the new approaches I suggest continue in the experiential vein that has always characterized sense-of-place research. In this way, my work stands in contrast to other recent efforts that try to reposition sense-of-place research in a positivistic manner. Studies such as Shamai and Ilatov’s “Measuring Sense of Place: Methodological Aspects” (2005) have attempted to demonstrate that humanistic concerns can be measured empirically. Their goal is to ground and classify methods that they perceive to be too lax or unstructured. While superficially an attempt parallel to mine, to make sense-of-place research more programmatic, I feel that this positivist venture actually detracts from the value of sense-of-place itself as it strips it of nuance and depth. It assumes that all measures of place can be fit onto unidimensional scales (i.e. place attachment is either good or bad), and thereby reduces a rich texture of meaning onto a flat numerical scale. I do not believe these efforts will lead to better place studies.
I have chosen Ouray, Colorado, a San Juan mining town of the southwestern Rocky Mountains, because of my familiarity with the region. I believe this longstanding relationship will help me quickly gain contacts and insights for my research. Beginning with a solid foundation and understanding of Ouray, I want to compare my original understandings with the results of new research methods. I propose the use of a common type of tourist ephemera, the postcard, to delve deeper into Ouray’s sense of place. By exploring Ouray postcards through time, a story of place will be built with historical and content analysis. My personal historical postcard collection, along with the collections of a few Ouray locals, will also be scanned, geotagged, and constructed into an interactive historical GIS. Furthermore, I will continue in the familiar realm of ethnographic research and interview Ouray local insiders and outsiders unacquainted with the town regarding the iconic postcard views. In addition to the historical GIS and the interviewing process, this research will entail self-directed photography by the interviewees.

An introduction to the study area, my master’s thesis findings, and each new research approach will be detailed below in the methods section. In addition, I wish to explore the sense-of-place scholar’s use of scale. Facets of this research will explore the San Juans as a cohesive region while others will look at the town of Ouray at a much smaller scale. A trend exists in current research towards the fine scale assessment of place. I argue that nothing is inherently better about research at this level. Moreover, I believe and hope to demonstrate that depth of understanding can be added by considering any particular area with both a microscope and a telescope. Each scale yields its own insights.
1.2: Literature Review

I was inspired early on in my graduate career by William Least Heat-Moon’s *PrairyErth* (1999) and his desire to exchange our modern, thin conceptions of places for “deep maps” rich with detail and experience. It was at this time that I began to consider ways in which one could bend traditional geographic methods towards the experiential and alternative realms. Maps, for instance, are necessary spatial tools that geographers claim as their own, but rarely are they used to depict imaginative, sensual aspects of place. Reimagining the geographic toolbox to restore uniqueness to the discipline necessarily involves expanding the range of traditional mapping.

Academia’s fascination with the topic of place exploded in the 1970s and 1980s, a trend demonstrated by the collection of essays *Place: Experience and Symbol* (Richardson 1984). Even before 1984, humanistic cultural geographers and ethnographers had promoted the importance of attachments to place and argued that rootedness was the determinant feature of such attachments. Miles Richardson and his colleagues, however, reconsidered these limitations. Derelict landscapes, forgotten peoples, and displaced culture offered other possibilities for study, for example, and these alternatives (together with a series of social theory concepts) gradually became the more contemporary foci of place-based studies:

Ethnography’s stories of place and places are increasingly about contestation. And this makes them consistent with a larger narrative in which previously absent “others” are now portrayed as fully present, no longer a presumed and distant “them” removed from a vague and tacit “us” (Feld and Basso 1996, 5).

Attachments to places are not necessarily directly correlated to depth of experience. Modern place-based research examines the complexities within locales and critiques the traditional assumption that it is rootedness and time spent in a landscape that creates attachment. In the modern world, many argue, places themselves are increasingly porous and interconnected.
The older assumptions of cultures fitting into neat and tidy boundaries came under great critique in the 1990s (e.g. Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

Researchers agree that people do indeed attach themselves to places, but not in the predictable, generalizable ways that early place researchers had first concluded. Attachments vary across and within individuals. Furthermore, attachments do not occur only in idyllic landscapes. For many present-day geographers and ethnographers, the choice of investigating conflicted landscapes, “othered,” or marginalized places reflects a particular methodological goal. Therefore, to examine the theory of place, a good place to start is an examination of attachments “in spite of it all,” that is, sense of place in locations considered derelict, decrepit, or finished by mainstream society. In theory, such places should reveal especially credible arguments for the power of the human connection to landscapes.

A handful of geographers have presented frameworks for place investigations that have informed my understanding of the topic today. John Agnew proposes that places may be described by three properties: location, locale, and sense of place (Agnew 1987). Similarly, Robert Sack, whose framework I used as the basis for my master’s research, asserts that issues of place could be broken down into three categories as well: nature, social relations, and meaning (Sack 1997). Both frameworks for understanding look at the physical realities of a place, the social considerations within and about that place, and the meaningful, deeper humanistic properties of place. Despite being somewhat dated, an understanding of these two frameworks will give a place scholar a foundation to build upon for any further research.

Historian and place scholar Tim Cresswell offered a brief exploration into the concept of place in 2004 which became a valuable resource for those wanting casual engagement with the topic. In 2015, a second edition doubled the content and was an effort to pass the subject of
place across disciplinary lines. Cresswell argues that place studies should be considered in everyday homes outside of academia, just as geography’s humanists of the 1970s and 1980s avowed. Cresswell asserts that an interest in place is booming and humanity’s engagement with place is soaring through art, integrative GIS, social media, politics, and other facets of everyday life. Such considerations of place may not be conscious, but nevertheless, the platform for geographic inquiry is set.

Existing studies suggest that former mining communities often harbor pronounced place attachments against all odds (e.g. Marsh 1987, Robertson 2006, Ryden 1993, Stewart 1996). Even after the mines have closed one may see memorabilia, festivals, and high regard for familial ties that relate back to the days of glory. Residents reflect on the past not only to construct meaningful identities of place and self, but also to imagine survival strategies for the town in the future. Often, such communities are in economic transition as they move from an extraction industry to new endeavors. Town identity follows this transition, and a harkening back to mining history can be one means of coping with the uncertainty of modern times.

It is not uncommon within the academy to subject marginalized places to embellished interpretations, either positive or negative. Such portrayals paint with a broad brush, involving grand narratives of pride and survival or danger and dereliction instead of discussing the more interesting and realistic issues of doubt and uncertainty. Researchers see local people working intricately with the land in resource extraction, experiencing places at a very fine scale and endangering themselves daily, perhaps triggering the assumptions that these places should be portrayed in an extreme manner.

Although deep roots in the physical landscape may be responsible for strong attachments to place, they are not the only way in which an individual may make such a connection. As
residents begin to reconsider the changing economy and their community’s relationship to other communities, conceptions of place are reformed and reasserted. Stuck between realities of old ways and projections for the future, people fashion new identities. In fact, this betweenness itself may foster strong place attachments.

Culture and space are inextricably bound, because place is a cultural construction. Connections people form to particular locales assume a variety of forms, some positive and some negative. Theoretical research asserts, “there is a dual focus on how places are given meaning and how people are constituted through place (as well as how they perceive and consume place in everyday social interactions)” (McDowell 1997, 1). According to this view, both the individual and the place itself are manipulated—each constantly shaping the other. Such symbiosis can be examined from both sides of the process, and the relationship should be especially strong in mining communities because of their explicit connection to the natural landscape via raw resource extractive industries.

Borrowing terminology from communications scholar John Shotter, geographer Ben Marsh introduced “means” analysis to place-based studies. In essence, he argued that humans construct their futures and interpret the past through intentional efforts. This action both structures the current environment and is responsible for the future. Therefore, residents within a place not only construct the products of their environments (their means), but they also structure their relationship to those means (through meanings). Marsh furthered this idea by showing that, within mining communities, the means dictate what can be done in the future while the meanings are built out of a reflection on the past (Marsh 1987, 338):

Moment by moment, the two parts to place may look unrelated. But as the means and the meaning of a place become too divergent, the tension between them must draw one toward the other; residents’ beliefs and actions will come to limit the development of the landscape, or the realities of the world will alter the residents’
perception of the existing landscape. Such a tension is apparent today in the anthracite towns, as their economies become increasingly unable to support their self-images (Marsh 1987, 340).

In this way, mining communities, like all places, are made up of intricate connections between the physical environment and its people. Such an analysis could be applied to any sort of place, but the connection between natural environment and attachments to place are particularly striking in mining communities. A constant interpretation of the past and predictions for the future are imperative for survival in such towns.

Realities of places clearly fall somewhere between means and meanings. Although all actions within places are bound by environmental constraints, “places take on the meanings of events and objects that occur there, and their descriptions are fused with human goals, values and intentions” (Entrikin 1991, 11). Entrikin went on to state that places, though made up of both objective and subjective parts, are seen as wholes. The realities of places fall in between the objective and subjective realms. Classical scientific investigation, or positivism, will only illuminate the measureable or countable aspects of the environment while metalevel discussion of what those numbers mean is lost. Likewise, without some basis in physical realities, subjective investigation of place is too abstract, artificial, or unsituated. Given all this, Entrikin argued that incomplete representations of place will either particularize or universalize, but never approach an accurate portrayal of place. Instead, a middle ground is needed, a “betweenness of place” that harbors the human ability to view places as wholes. Somewhere between the objective and the subjective lies the reality of all places.

Entrikin has stated that “a large intellectual gap exists between our sense of being actors in the world, of always being in place, and the “placelessness” that characterizes our attempts to
theorize about human actions and events” (1991, 7). Scientific investigation is too detached, yet subjective investigation alone misses the mark as well.

Philosopher Edward S. Casey (2001a) has explored the “betweenness of place” in slightly different terms, by explaining that it is the relationship between place and self that changes. He, along with many geographers and anthropologists (e.g. Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Relph 1976, Sack 1997), has argued that the differences and fluxes within and among places are cultural constructions humans have attributed to space. Perceived differences between places, Casey stated, are less a matter of places themselves changing, and more about alterations in the relationship between humans and the place. Moreover, in our increasingly mobile, hyperspecialized world, people and places experience desiccation and a loss of meaningful vigor. He then offered a new concept for modern times, an intermediate between place and self that he called the habitus. Through the merging of place and self in a modern, thin world, this habitus grows:

Places come into us lastingly; once having been in a particular place for any considerable time—or even briefly, if our experience there has been intense—we are forever marked by that place which lingers in us indefinitely and in a thousand ways, many too subtle for us to name. The inscription is not of edges or outlines, as if places were some kind of object; it is of the whole brute presence of the place. What lingers most powerfully is this presence and, more particularly, how it felt to be in this presence: how it felt to be in the Crazy Mountains that summer . . . (Casey 2001a, 688).

What Casey is getting at is that human connections to land, be they through current meaningful attributions or reminiscences, will change and grow through time, regardless of physical realities (means) or projections for the future (meanings). But the habitus falls somewhere in between.

Phenomenologist Kathleen Stewart examined culture in an isolated, post-boom mining town in West Virginia (in Feld and Basso 1996, and Stewart 1996). Small towns like hers are often considered to be on the fringes of mainstream American culture, stuck between aspirations.
for a prosperous future and a desire to return to the way it exists in memory (Stewart 1996, 105). Her study conveys place meanings by using language in a diacritical manner drawing on the work of philosophers Mikhail Bakhtin and Walter Benjamin. Moments of clarity and historical insight (i.e. dialectical images) happen through the use of everyday talk. The means of speech, in other words, can be considered as a cultural form and the poetics associated with it create place meaning. Her argument is compelling, as it incorporates fieldwork reflection and first-person experiences of place together in the text. For Stewart, it is what she terms the “space on the side of the road” that best demonstrates the relationship between means and meanings. This space is a vantage point for viewing both physical realities and human abstractions. From the side of the road, one may take in places holistically and experience the betweenness of place.

Stewart reflects on Anthropology’s use of the term “affect” to go further in describing what it is to be in place in her 2017 piece, “In the World that Affect Proposed.” “Affect” gave yet another way to write about the depth of place experience. Stewart explains the term served as a reminder that places are not static entities or fixed bodies, but are continually unfolding and shifting.

In Stewart’s 2013 “Regionality,” she elaborates on the act of writing place. The essence of place is more than a broad-stroked overview, or hasty generalization of place experience. As she writes on 284,

*move beyond the merely representational and the bad habits and bad politics of strong theory’s tendency to beat its objects into submission to its dreamy arguments. It requires some dedramatization of academic thought and some writerly effort to approach its object slowly and enigmatically, looking for the nonobvious ways it registers and what it makes matter.*
The writing of place, argues Stewart, should not fall into nomothetic traps. Place scholarship should follow as closely as possible the way placemaking happens—as an abstract collection of moments and snippets.

Places are constructed via discourse. Whether we call it “habitus” or “betweenness,” true essences of places lie in between means and meanings rather than being a collection of both. Through discourse, knowledge and crafts are combined so places are made of both episteme and techne. Places are not just physical realities; they are also how we interpret them. Similarly, investigations of places are not just forms of knowledge, but are also creative interpretations—in between episteme and techne.

Yi-Fu Tuan’s *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* is a good place to start when exploring the broad theme of experience in place (1977). Tuan began with an examination of environmental relationships during childhood and then followed this theme to mature concepts of place attachment and place meaning. He argued that places are objects and have real means, but require experience to become understood. “An object, or place, achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind” (Tuan 1977, 18).

Anthropologists Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso edited a well-respected collection of sense-of-place works, each at least partly ethnographic in methodology:

Senses of place: the terrain covered here includes the relation of sensation to emplacement; the experiential and expressive ways places are known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived, contested, and struggled over; and the multiple ways places are metonymically and metaphorically tied to identities. We begin by asking how people are dwelling and how ethnographic accounts of their modes of dwelling might enrich our sense of why places, however vague, are lived out in deeply meaningful ways (Feld and Basso 1996, 11).
The emphasis of this text lies in the reciprocal relationship between place and people, across all sorts of different settings. Its power and popularity as a sense-of-place work lie in a combination of the variety of the work it contains plus a common goal of understanding the complex relationship between culture and place. The contributing authors show that discourse creates places as we know them. Ethnographer-linguist Basso clearly demonstrates the power of language in the cultural construction of place through his work with the Western Apache (Basso 1996). It is people, Basso asserts, that create senses of place. Through analysis of language, storytelling, songwriting or writing folklore, discourse drives us to understand places as, once again, existing in between means and meanings.

Geographer John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1994) examined sense of place through investigations of the vernacular landscape. He and his contemporary, D. W. Meinig (1979), encouraged geographers to reflect on everyday experience. The study of place, they believed, should center on day-to-day place constructions. Vernacular, everyday landscapes are as complex as exotic ones, which typically had received ethnographic attention in early years. Roots of such an approach to the study of place run deep in geography and may be attributed to the physical and cultural landscape studies of Carl Sauer (1925). In Sauerian tradition, a landscape should be analyzed physically, then peopled with cultural examinations before a holistic sense of place could be formed. Sauer, while vehemently critiquing the environmental determinism of his time, believed that human existence was inextricably bound to the physical landscape and a true investigation of place should consider both physical and cultural realms. Every place, in the tradition of Sauer and later D. W. Meinig, is laden with historical significance once examined forward in time from its formulation.
The call for investigation of the everyday by D. W. Meinig (1979) has led to some geographical research with ephemera. Richard Schein (2009), for example, used historical marker signage, historical advertisements, and tourist imagery to examine racialized identities within the courthouse square of Lexington, Kentucky.

Edward Relph also recognized the deep complexities within everyday places as he explored psychological connections between people and land. As he argued, “place and sense of place do not lend themselves to scientific analysis for they are inextricably bound up with all the hopes, frustrations, and confusions of life, and possibly because of this, social scientists have avoided these topics” (Relph 1976, preface). To use Marsh’s terminology, Relph called for investigators of place to move beyond the unsatisfactory analysis of the means of places. “Unsatisfactory because the analyses of behavior or of particular problems are so frequently mechanical and abstract, simplifying the world into easily represented structures or models that ignore much of the subtlety and significance of everyday experience” (Relph 1976, 48). Relph, like the other geographers examined here, believed that the significance of place lies in the interrelation of physical settings, activities and meanings:

In our everyday lives places are not experienced as independent, clearly defined entities that can be described simply in terms of their location or appearance. Rather they are sensed in a chiaroscuro of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, other people, personal experiences, care and concern for home, and in the context of other places (Relph 1976, 3).

In stands to reason that the methods used by sense-of-place scholars should echo the plurality of place experiences. Traditional ethnographic field approaches work well, but I argue that other possibilities exist as well. There is no reason, for example, that a sense-of-place researcher should wholly avoid the scientific method or positivism. A scholar could perhaps find direct tests for means and experiment with meanings, instead of relying upon reflection alone
In this dissertation, I propose new ways to investigate means and meanings. These methods all revolve around the simple familiarity of the postcard. All methods are participatory in nature and allow direct study of the actual sensory experiences within places (means) and new ways to investigate the interpretations of those sensory experiences (meanings).

I am aware of recent explorations into the uses of spatial technologies in the humanities (Bodenhamer, Corrigan, and Harris 2010), but am disappointed with their limitations when it comes to demonstrating the concepts of place. New plans exist for qualitative applications for GIS as well, and even immersive geographies in the form of Computer Assisted Virtual Environments (or CAVEs), reminiscent of the entertainment rooms in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. Although these CAVEs may project a virtual environment to “walk” through, it is far from replacing the real experience of place. Booming in popularity currently, as well, are virtual reality headsets whose capabilities allow for even simpler immersion into a geographic representation of space. The ability to transport a user to an alternate space instantly is compelling. However, I find the suggestions that these technologies will be the future of geography reductionist. An overreliance on technology alone could be dangerous territory for the discipline, particularly because of the widespread adoption of spatial technology outside of geography. Virtual environments are a superficial approximation of the “deep maps” of which William Least Heat-Moon spoke. It is important to note here that no method I am suggesting in this research is enough on its own. I am seeking to add tools to the kit. It is a mixture of approaches to sense-of-place that will ultimately provide the needed depth to such investigations.

1.3: Significance of Research

For my master’s research, I conducted twenty-four in-depth interviews in Ouray with the hope of demonstrating local sense of place. Eight interviews were with born-and-raised locals,
eight were with individuals who moved later in life, and eight were part-time locals, or seasonal residents. I found that there was a lot of overlap in the way these locals viewed Ouray, more overlap than I had expected. Inspired by geographer Robert Sack, I divided my findings into three sections: the nature of place, the social relations within place, and the meaning of place. I found Ouray to be “wild” in each category. The rugged terrain, isolation, and extreme conditions contributed to Ouray’s wild nature. Bartering, substance abuse, and a general tendency towards operating in a lawless fashion both historically and today demonstrated Ouray’s wild social relations. And as far as the town’s meaning was concerned, the common theme was that Ouray did not want to be defined by outsiders. My interviewees were more likely to declare what Ouray was not, rather than what it was. Not a ski town. Not a resort town like Vail. Ouray is different and Ouray is still the “Wild West.” A lot of emphasis is placed in town on a sense of belonging, in part because it is a difficult landscape. Born-and-raised locals were surprisingly open to newcomers; that is, if they stayed for more than one winter. Part-timers were the first to declare they absolutely were not local, but those who moved later in life were quick to say they felt they had a lot of work to do before they would be truly local, although never local like the indigenous, multigenerational families. All three groups valued local history and deep place connections profoundly.

My selection of Ouray for this research is grounded in my familiarity with this “insider” town. Because I intimately know Ouray, its people, its sense of place, I have been able to assess what these new methods added to my understanding. Without that background, there would be no comparison for my results. Furthermore, my familiarity with the place allowed for an in-depth examination of historical documents in a way that would be a struggle for an outsider. The postcard collectors I have contacts with are not the sorts of individuals who would be
comfortable sharing with an outside academic. Privacy and local ownership of history are values held in high regard by many Ouray locals. Also, while I do believe that there are ways in which Ouray is unique, I believe these sorts of place attachments exist all over the world and my goal with this research is to investigate a new set of methods that may illuminate sense of place for many communities.

In a general sense, I wanted to conduct this research to show that humanistic study does not necessarily operate without digital spatial methods. A blend of sense of place geography with modern spatial analysis and display techniques is the goal of this research. My study will have local implications for the Ouray community, and I hope will contribute to filling what I perceive to be a hole in geographic research today.

In the formulation of this research project, many local applications of the results were illuminated. The Ouray County Historical Society, for example, is thrilled to now have their disheveled postcard collection organized into a database and preserved digitally. They are also excited that there will be an approachable, interactive way to engage these postcards. The historical society is enthusiastic about the opportunities my research will provide the local community. The organization is aging and losing motivation quickly; I enjoy knowing that my research will revive the local geographical knowledge landscape.

There are also local tourism implications of this research. Since the town is small, I know the owners of the shops selling postcards. I have already heard from the antique store owner that rumors of my postcard research have led to an increase in their historical postcard sales. A central theme of this research is the commodification of Ouray’s image. I foresee that my research will influence the consumption of that commodity. This is particularly true if the historical GIS is publicly advertised, as the Ouray County Historical Society, Ouray Library, and
Ouray Chamber Resort Association all wish to do. The online GIS will act as a force shaping place.

It is also possible that through this research and local participation in it, there will be an increased historical awareness in and of Ouray. Ouray is a place in transition currently—stuck between perceptions as an extraction landscape and a tourist economy. Via participatory research, self-directed photography, and engagement with the historical GIS, deeper understandings of home may be constructed. By working with Ouray locals to uncover history, a new understanding of the sense of place will be illuminated, or at least rejuvenated.

Ultimately, I want to give voice to the community. My research is participatory and reciprocal. Postcards were sometimes outsider views, but many others were “real photo” cards taken and printed locally, representing in situ voices. Those voices have been silenced over time with mass produced cards.

The methodology of using historical postcards to create an interactive GIS could also be used for geographic applications beyond sense of place. Postcards can show development patterns through time and historical infrastructure change. Landscape change, and associated climate variations, can also be shown through historical postcard work. Using this sort of research method as a means to examine historical change could be used to make predictions for the future.

I also hope that this research will serve as a pilot study for other sense of place work. I see the trend of a boom in geospatial technologies while traditional phenomenological fieldwork falls from favor. I can imagine many more sense of place studies that use everyday ephemera like the lowly postcard. I believe the power of the geographic discipline rests in its ability to straddle philosophical approaches and incorporate natural and social science efforts. Geography
can gain strength by doing what is unique to the discipline. I hope to contribute to the restoration of humanistic depth in geography in a modern way and show that technology and humanism are not mutually exclusive.

One of the central questions to my proposed dissertation research is: How do locals view their homes? Being able to engage in what phenomenologists call imaginative self-transposal, or the ability to put yourself in the subject’s shoes, is one of the most challenging aspects of sense of place research. Asking research subjects to tell you about their view of home, or the environment around them, can be useful, but may not elicit the depth of information sought. There are a variety of ways in which the question of the perception of home can be addressed, and my research does suggest several. Here, however, I would like to focus on one methodological approach to the question—self-directed photography.

In my research design, participants were asked to take a series of photos of Ouray. One photo prompt asked for a picture that could be used as a postcard, or visual representation of home to an outside audience. Such a photo not only showed what the participant believes to be integral to their home place, but also demonstrated how he/she would like their home to be perceived to outsiders. I asked the participant for a description of the image they took and why it was chosen, which further illuminated sense of place information. Lastly, the usage of this method gave me a basis for sense of place discussion with the participant.

The issue of insider/outsider relations plagues many scholarly endeavors. How does a researcher overcome the gap between subject and observer? There is a plethora of participatory methods in existence to help overcome such a problem. Self-directed photography, or auto-photography, has often been implemented into methodological designs by cultural geographers. Geography, however, is not the only discipline to use this tool.
Sol Worth, a visual communications scholar, is often credited with the first attempt to use the methodology of self-directed photography to create a platform for social discussion. The photographs Worth’s Navajo subjects (1972) took of themselves and their environment allowed the gap between the researcher and the researched to shrink. The power of this study rested in its ability to reflect on the photographers themselves, the subject matter in the photographs, and on the researcher (Aitken and Wingate 1993).

Many anthropologists, education scholars, and sociologists have used the self-directed photographic method to illuminate children’s views of themselves and their surroundings (e.g. Chalfen 1974, Damico 1985, Werner 1979). As studies like this demonstrate, geographic knowledge and sense of place information can be demonstrated without traditional language exchanges. Studies which use children as participants are particularly representative of the power of the self-directed photographic method because even children, with limited linguistic abilities, can give tremendous insight to a researcher through photography. Nonverbal communication is paramount in the deployment of self-directed photography.

Many researchers that use the method of self-directed photography speak also to its value in allowing for self-reflection for participants. Environmental engineering scholars Moore et al. (2008) found that the photos themselves were valuable sources, but the discussions that followed during their interviews were even more fruitful. The act of taking the photos empowered the photographers, as other researchers also found above, but also helped participants articulate emotions and senses of place that were otherwise too elusive to put into words (Moore et al. 2008, 56). More dramatically, the researchers found that through photography, the participants changed the way they interacted with their place. Participants engaged in new activities, and saw their homes in a new light (Moore et al. 2008, 59-60).
My inclusion of this method in my dissertation research was in line with the scholars from the above disparate disciplines. I ultimately learned more about my participants’ senses of their place, their home. As the above studies have shown, there were reciprocal rewards in this activity. I believe that my participants found they saw their homes in a new light and gained something from the self-reflection of self-directed photography.

Through self-directed photography, local voices were amplified. I believe there is value in giving sense of place a voice in a town like Ouray. As my master’s sense of place research showed, Ouray is the modern “Wild West,” but it is also a charming small American rural place. As a small town, as a mining community, as an isolated place, Ouray fits very well into greater sense-of-place research.

1.4: Introduction to Methodology

The idea of melding cartography and ethnography is certainly not novel within the geographic community. In this approach, a geographer must manipulate imprecise cultural concepts to fit sharp cartographic guidelines. The ability to blend the language of culture to be expressible through cartographic representations is an art. Cartography, though, is a language of its own. Cartography’s “vocabulary” of concepts is a collection of graphic representations of human conceptions of space. Therefore, there is overlap in the words we use to talk about both cultural concepts and cartographic representations.

Scale is both a cartographic representation, i.e., a measured ratio of mapped to real terrain, and a sociopolitical construction. Though it has been used in inherently different ways by quantitative and qualitative geographers, both views of scale should not be considered mutually exclusive. The process of integrating geospatial technologies and ethnographic
methods uses scale in both ways outlined above (Knigge and Cope 2006). Using scale in this way will promote better understanding for both realms of geographic thought.

In a traditional quantitative view, scale is a spatial attribute that refers to the areal extent of a feature, process, or phenomena (Lloyd 2014). Qualitative researchers may view scale in that sense as well, but also acknowledge that scale as a concept needs to be problematized (Marston 2005). The word itself is problematic and generates confusion. Scale is not simply synonymous with size, extent, level, or scope, but it is all that and more. The concept of scale is a political one, and has social implications. Many qualitative theorists have also asserted that scale is a human construction (e. g. Marston, Jones, and Woodward 2005). To understand the concept of scale best by both sides of geography, I believe demonstrations of its use are helpful.

Sarah Elwood (2009) used contemporary digital spatial technology to show multiple levels of local sense of place for a particular neighborhood. In Elwood’s research, a place could be examined at multiple scales; the research goal was to show how GIS technology could be used in an educational setting, thus creating a participatory project benefitting both the neighborhood organizations involved and the GIS students themselves. Elwood chose to use the quantitative meaning of scale while examining place-grounded qualitative scale issues. In addition to illuminating place at multiple scales, the project directly involved both the quantitative and the qualitative definitions.

Daniel Sui and Dydia DeLyser (2012) outlined the possibilities for integrating both conceptions of scale—quantitative and qualitative—in their three-part series in *Progress in Human Geography*. This series, I believe, would be a good place to start for both sides of the geographic divide to communicate with each other better. As Sui and DeLyser carefully cataloged, there are many contemporary geographic efforts to show how GIS can show more
than visualizations of geotagged locations, but may even offer insight towards emotion and affect (e.g. Aitken and Craine 2009).

Like the scholars above, the ultimate goal of my research is to combine qualitative geography with geospatial methods. I hope that in this way, I can reinvigorate the humanist side of geography with contemporary geospatial methods. I, and many other humanist scholars, see a rapid decline in interest in contemporary sense of place research and writing. Therefore, it was imperative that my research used both definitions of scale.

More generally, because the residents of my study area know the town so intimately, presumably a lot of the discussions of place will occur at a small scale. However, through the creation of the interactive historical map, this research integrates historical information at a much larger scale with postcards printed in Europe and sent all over the country over a century’s time. Also, through the dissemination of the historical map, I will be engaging an audience at a larger scale as well.

There is nothing inherently good or bad about research at various scales. Qualitative variables occur at multiple scales simultaneously, therefore scalar attributes are nested. Likewise, a quantitative variable can have multiple scalar attributes concurrently as well, just as a shoreline has micro climatic variations while also stretching across an entire geographical region. Through cross-disciplinary research efforts, all of geography gains understanding.

1.5: Outline of Remainder of Dissertation

The second chapter of the dissertation will provide a historical framework and context for this research. Here I will give an in-depth description of the study area and summarize my prior
research findings. I will also introduce the history of postcards—both generally and within the study area.

Chapters three through five will each address one element of my methodology. While each methodological approach will contribute to the overall goal of illuminating sense of place, ideally each of these chapters could potentially stand alone as a separate study.

First, in chapter 3, I elucidate the creation of the historical postcard GIS. I used the scanned collection of postcards to construct an historical GIS. Using the “Story Map” capability of ArcGIS Online, I was able to build an interactive map of Ouray’s postcards through time. The map created in this way not only presents an in-depth narrative of place, but also it will be easily used and distributed through ArcGIS Online. The goal was to create a map that would allow a user to navigate through town exploring historical images of each location. The photos “pop up” with a click, thus making it an interactive experience. The postcards are organized by decade, allowing a user to explore how views of Ouray changed through time. There were several possible Story Map apps which may have suited my postcard data set. A “Story Map Series” proved to be best, as in this map style, a user is led through town through a virtual “walking tour” of clicks across a series of maps. In this app, a user selects a map (in this case, a decade) and can click through town at their own pace and view thumbnails of each postcard in a running carousel along the side the map. The “Story Map Series” app was selected because it allows for multiple maps to be viewed within tabs across the top of the map. In my map series, there are tabs for each decade of the twentieth century, in an effort to limit confusion and clutter on one map. (With hundreds of postcards available to tag to one map, some geographical areas of town were difficult to distinguish clearly.) The user is also able to see the reverse side of a postcard too, illustrating the texts on the back, so the app was modified to offer a side panel for further
information and views of each postcard—luckily, many of the Story Map apps offered such a feature. Once my Story Map was completed, it became permanently viewable online via a link to ArcGIS Online through my connections to the Ouray County Historical Society and the Ouray Public Library. I believed it was of the utmost importance to this project to allow public access to all results of this research. The presence of the interactive map on their websites was of great interest to both local groups.

Chapter 4 introduces the self-directed photography exercise in greater depth. For this portion of my research, I built upon the framework of Photovoice, a community-based research method (Hergenrather et al. 2009, Wang and Burris 1997). Photovoice is a process that invites participants to photograph their everyday environment in an effort to narrate their lives and create a critical dialog of the world around them. Through participation in Photovoice, community members become storytellers. By employing this methodology, this research problematizes the inevitable issue of positionality and allows for frank discussions of perceived issues of place and community. I asked informants about postcards of Ouray: “What would your postcards of Ouray look like?” and “What would they say?” I asked them to participate in a self-directed photography exercise by going out into the field and taking a photo they would use for a postcard. As if participating in a virtual scavenger hunt, my participants had a series of photos to take. The prompts for Photovoice participation are found both in Appendix C and directly below. Once the informants sent me their photos, I was able to tag the photos geographically (geotagging) and added them to another interactive map (Story Map) showing local sense of place in Ouray. Through this portion of my research, another Story Map Series was created with tabs for each photo prompt. Tabs corresponding to each of the prompts below were created and integrated into one Story Map Series demonstrating Ouray’s local sense of place.
1. A photo that would be used as a postcard for sale in the Ouray Visitor’s Center.

2. A photo representation of your Ouray

3. A photo of problems/issues you perceive in Ouray

4. A photo of something successful in Ouray

5. A photo that represents Ouray’s history

6. A photo that represents Ouray’s future

Although this is not an entirely novel concept within geography, particularly since the adoption of the constant Global Positioning System (GPS) function in smart phones, I believe using the geotagged photos for sense-of-place research to be new. Other geographers have used geotagging as a way to add accessibility to their research (Welsh 2012), but I do not know of a sense-of-place application of this process. I can envision this concept being applied to a variety of human emotions in place, but for my purposes, I had subjects take photos that best represented their perceptions of particular aspects of place, both positive and negative. Furthermore, photos that represented the subjects’ embodiment of the town as if it were to be used in a promotional postcard were obtained. I can imagine geotagged photos, for instance, of terrifying views of a landscape, or intimate shots of building interiors, but the purpose here is to demonstrate the method rather than exhaust its possibilities.

In this facet of my research, I brainstormed with each subject about their sense-of-place, discussed the process outlined in Appendix C, elucidated the prompts for each photo, and then offered to equip them with my GPS unit and a digital camera to document their perceived views of place. Although most people had smart phones with geotagging capabilities built in, I wanted to offer the use of my equipment to allow for more anonymity and greater signal reliability in remote areas, if a participant wanted that option. It should be noted that the geotagged location
was not necessarily the location from which the photo was taken, but rather a reference point on the map demonstrating the photo’s subject. The goal of this portion of my project was the creation of an interactive map showing an aspect of local sense-of-place, but it also offered a contrast to the historical GIS. Each geotagged photo link brings up a photo taken by a subject and a brief description of the view chosen by that particular photographer. Just as the historical map has the front of the postcard and the back text displayed for a user for analysis, the current sense of place map allowed me to analyze a participant’s photo with his/her thoughts on each picture as well.

I had other plans for this Story Map as well. One critique I received of my master’s research was that I did not explore outsider perspectives of Ouray. In this research, I wanted to make sure I included such an exploration. In an effort to accomplish this objective, my Story Map displaying local self-direction photography was shown to Lawrence, Kansas locals to whom Ouray is foreign. With online accessibility to the map, a viewer was able to click through the collection of photos and take a survey about the data. Because the surveying was online and disseminated through social media, one hundred respondents were obtained. A preliminary question asked: “Have you ever been to Ouray, Colorado?” An affirmative answer to this question terminated the survey for that user, because unfamiliarity with the region was ideal here. I asked them to examine the photos and to tell me what they think that place is like. “If you received this postcard from a friend, what would you think about their trip?” I asked them to expand upon the images to imagine a sense of place for a location to which they have never been. The true representational power of the static image was illuminated in this way.

Chapter 4 also became an exploration of themes from the interviews. The ethnographic portion of this research is tied to the imagery of chapters 3 and 4. Discussions within the
interviews focused about the historical photos of postcards and the imagery collected in the self-directed photography exercise. The interviewees were also my participants in the Photovoice activity. Participants in the Photovoice activity had discussions with me both before and after they took their photos. Interviews before the photography activity were important to assure understanding of the process and to get participants thinking about the significance of the project. Before venturing into uncharted territory and testing new methods, like Photovoice, on informants, I began with standard open-ended interviewing methods to unveil his/her local sense of place for Ouray as well as serving as an icebreaker and as a platform upon which the postcard meanings were discussed. During this time, I also let each participant explore the interactive historical postcard map. In this way, a common understanding was established and discussions of sense of place flowed more easily.

Having already conducted interviews in Ouray, it was relatively simple to obtain connections to informants and establish comfortable working relationships with each. I was also able to ask more nuanced questions (see Appendix B), as I have already conducted basic interviews with many Ouray residents (see Appendix A for master’s research questions). As I suspected, there was overlap in informants, though, from my master’s research, so while I understood sense-of-place more generally in town this time around, I was starting out fresh with each informant’s viewpoint. With a year-round local population in Ouray of under one-thousand, I delighted to have twenty-five informants, recognizing the amount of participation each subject would need to contribute. I began with a handful of well-connected community informants, or “gatekeepers” (Kearns 2000), and relied upon a stratified snowballing method from there in an effort to include a more representative sample of the town’s people (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). I first approached known community leaders (e. g. Robert
Stouffer, geologist, book store owner, and Ouray postcard collector; Pam Larson, a former interviewee and re-elected mayor of Ouray; Maureen O’Driscoll, Ouray’s Library Director; Benjy Kueling, local store owner and postcard collector; and several historical society members). After those connections, I reached out to less obvious groups, for example enthusiasts for sports, restaurant workers, and telecommuters. In this way, I believe I obtained a better cross-section of Ouray’s population, knowing that, as is true of most humanistic research efforts, a truly representative sample was not only unfeasible, but also largely irrelevant. To the extent possible, the demographics of my participants matched those of town according to the 2010 U.S. Census. My participants ranged in age from eighteen to eighty-two, from diverse backgrounds. While many chose to remain anonymous, the group does resemble the makeup of town as most of my participants are White (town is 95.2% White) and one participant is Hispanic (8.2% of town is of Hispanic/Latino origin). Town’s mean household income is higher than average at $63,558 and education attainment levels are higher as well, with 25.86% of Ouray’s population holding a graduate degree (U.S. Census Bureau 2010).

As a seasonal resident and worker, I am constantly participating in the local community, and am therefore what Goldstein (1964) and others have referred to as a “participant observer.” These observations clearly influenced my research but, I argue, added depth and understanding rather than bias. Again, following the guidance of Goldstein, I chose not to record my interviews in order to allow for the most open, uninhibited communication. I did, however, take notes during these discussions and filled in details from memory immediately after each session to allow for the most accurate recollection possible.

Follow-up interviews were important as well. These discussions allowed each participant to expand upon the photos they had taken. In these talks, I could place the photos in my Story
Map with the participant’s help. We could also talk through what explanation I would be linking to each photo and write out potential quotes to include on the map. The photos themselves were only half of the story. To fully embrace the Photovoice concept, each participant’s verbal explanation was essential.

There were a few special circumstances that arose during interviews that deserved further exploration. First of all, I knew a couple of collectors who would have particularly deep insight regarding the postcards of Ouray. I took full advantage of their knowledge and spent greater time with such informants. Secondly, I chose to interview a couple of local business owners who sell postcards as well. I asked them about their ordering trends: what sells best, seasonality, trends in sales over time, how they choose what to order, and so on. I believe spending extra time with these such informants was particularly valuable and offered a different, but important, perspective. The function of each these interviews was to further deepen my understanding of local sense of place.

Finally, chapter 5 functions as a conclusion with a discussion of my findings overall. I not only summarize what I found through this research, but also, I address the effectiveness of my new sense-of-place research methods and assess how my results differed from my traditional sense-of-place research in the past. This chapter also delves into opportunities for further research.
Chapter 2: History and Context

2.1: Study Area and Master’s Research

Ouray, Colorado is a picturesque Rocky Mountain town with a mere 1000 residents as of the 2010 census, although that number is likely a generous representation due to second home owners who reside there seasonally. Ouray’s dramatic geographic setting and unusual social relations set it apart from the surrounding geography. The town is situated within a steep sided bowl-shaped valley at an elevation of approximately eight thousand feet surrounded by the jagged peaks of the San Juan volcanic mountain range. Ouray is a second home to me, as I have lived and worked in Ouray for eighteen consecutive summers and nine winters between semesters.

Ouray is now known for outdoor recreational activities and natural sulfur-free hot spring pools. Unlike the other mining towns of the Western Slope of Colorado, summertime is the dominant tourist season for Ouray. Hiking, jeeping, and rock and ice climbing bring most of Ouray’s visitors and residents. Ouray’s story is rooted in dangerous mining and a violent, tumultuous past. The town gets its name from a controversially appointed chief of the Ute nation (1833-1880), a man of partial Apache descent. Chief Ouray is often heralded as a keen negotiator with the United States government, but a deeper look into his life shows a story littered with Euro-American deceit, abrogated agreements, and tribal disappointment (Rockwell 1999 and Wroth 2000). The accounts of the Utes you might hear in Ouray today vary tremendously, but all emphasize “Wild West” stereotypes and themes. There are large swaths of Ouray’s history that are largely undisclosed and are difficult to find in print, which I believe speaks to Ouray’s sense of place and mystique.
Oural is perched atop rich mineral deposits and it experienced a mining boom late in the nineteenth century. An influx of settlement to town brought a range of new services—from a multitude of grocery stores to dance halls. While town today can barely support a single grocery, and there is nowhere to go dancing, casual conversations in town often harken back to the mining heyday. The town feels it owns this mining history and still regularly circulates tidbits of mining lore. Despite developing a volunteer fire department earlier than most Colorado mining towns (in the early 1880s) and pushing for substantially safer and longer lasting brick construction for buildings, a devastating fire in 1911 leveled a large portion of town as silver was exhausted, and the town’s population dwindled. Ouray, however, was fortunate to have some gold deposits scattered throughout the area, and the gold provided Ouray the opportunity to last through the Silver Panic of 1893 and several decades of rebuilding. The position the Ouray Volunteer Fire Department still holds in contemporary Ouray, I believe, demonstrates the value locals place on historical tradition. Today’s fire department is as important to the community as it was in the 1880s. The mining family names on the department roster further demonstrate the historical connection. With modern worries of wildfire sweeping the West, Ouray proudly supports their firemen and women. Today’s Ouray is in limbo between historical and contemporary concerns. While the natural beauty drew settlement early on in human history of Ouray, in modern times this natural beauty has been parlayed into a successful tourist economy.

From mine shaft tours to an “Olde Tyme Portraits” studio where one can dress up as an outlaw bandit, for example, there is some economic effort to appeal to tourists seeking a stereotypical nineteenth century mining town experience. Overall, however, little intentional effort is visible on the landscape towards historical tourism. Remnants of Ouray as the “Wild West” are still evident in the current cultural landscape informally, though. Ouray’s entire
downtown has been named a historic district and is made up of restored historical buildings and
grand Victorian homes. Town’s “Beautification Committee” installs elaborate flower
arrangements in defunct rusty mining equipment on Main Street. Ouray locals love to talk about
the mysteries of centuries past, including tales of ghosts, murders, and brothels. Unconfirmed
town lore proclaims that a network of underground tunnels was once used to facilitate various
illegal activities. The inclination to function in a lawless manner exists today. There are
certainly no more brothels and there has not been a murder since the 1960s, but many aspects of
town proudly function outside the law. As discussed in my master’s thesis (Meador 2010), many
interviewees bragged of selling alcohol to minors, illicit drug use, committing crimes in the
middle of the night knowing when the police are off-duty, and bartering goods and services to
avoid paying taxes. At times, it is simply accepted in Ouray that the locals need to stick together
and cover for each other. For some, turning a blind eye to illegal behavior is as far as they will
go; others participate in it with pride harkening back to the “Wild West” days.

Ouray is not an easy place to live, by any stretch of the imagination. Isolation can take
hold, as Ouray is most certainly a small rural town. The easiest way to survive is to be
independently wealthy. The more common way to make it year-round is to embrace the
insecurities and commit to flexibility. Since summer is Ouray’s primary tourist season, the town
changes abruptly to accommodate the masses. The stores more oriented to tourism close in the
off season, and many stores limit hours or days open during fall and spring. Some stores stay
open while trying to eke out a living with a business presence online. Others tough it out while
serving tables, or manning a hotel front desk, anything to bring in enough cash to survive. More
than anything, Ouray locals know that they have to lean on one another to make it. Bartering,
trading, running “tabs” of credit, and other informal economies are alive and well in Ouray.
There are physical realities of Ouray life that make it a challenge as well. Of course, the rugged terrain and difficult weather are top of the list. Also, locals will tell you the nature of the box canyon Ouray sits in limits the amount of sunlight one can absorb in a day. Vitamin D deficiencies and Seasonal Affective Disorder are no joking matter in Ouray. With such a narrow wedge of sky overhead, even a clear blue-bird Colorado day can be insufficient in boosting mood.

The off-season life in Ouray is much slower. There are tourists through the year trickling in to witness the fall colors as the aspen trees change from green to vivid orange, or to experience back-country winter recreation. The presence of Ouray’s “Ice Park” has caused Ouray to deem itself the “Ice Climbing Capital of the United States.” Ouray locals “ice farm” by flooding local canyon walls to allow for controlled ice climbing. An “Ice Climbing Festival” in January brings hundreds of climbers from every corner of the globe. Service industry workers will tell you this does little for the local economy, however, because climbing is free. Most climbers come to town with limited expendable cash and part with any of it reluctantly on Main Street. Ouray’s proximity to the Telluride Ski Resort does also draw some winter tourists, but it pales in comparison to the summertime boom. Even through all this hardship, Ouray is proud to be the lesser known San Juan valley town, when compared to Telluride. Ouray wears the title of “Colorado’s best kept secret” as a badge of honor, even if it means adversity as a tourist economy.

My master’s research showed that Ouray views itself as terra incognita (Meador 2010). Those who live and work in Ouray—some for many generations—rehearse town lore, history, and, in turn, place attachment over time. A refusal to be defined by the outside world is commonly asserted throughout the landscape of Ouray. Some mining activity has seen a very
recent resurgence, but financial impediments and tragic accidents have led to the mining operations changing hands multiple times. The promises of new local mining careers are tenuous at best. It seems that extraction industry insecurity for the “little guys” is as prevalent now as it was in the nineteenth century. While Ouray struggles to walk the line between a functional mining community and a tourist economy, the only consistent outgoing message of Ouray is that it will not be boxed in by outsiders. Any attempt to be defined by others is shut down with fervor.

Perhaps ironically, contemporary Ouray speaks of the Ute history of the area as a continuation of their own. Many locals speak of Chief Ouray as a modern hero—a man acutely working within his limits to battle larger governmental forces and outsider opinions. I’ve heard reference to the nomadic nature of Ute culture as inspiration for the modern way of living in Ouray. Just as the Utes only stayed in Ouray seasonally, current locals will tell you it is necessary to move around to stay sane. While the census records show Ouray’s Native Peoples population has been zero for many decades, just as in much of the West, there is selective—and improper—adoption of indigenous cultural history in the San Juans.

There is a much richer indigenous history to the area than a cursory favorable depiction of Chief Ouray. The Indigenous Peoples of the greater Ouray area prehistorically were the Eastern, or Colorado, Utes, as they are known now. The Utes today live in three reservations in Colorado and Utah. The more meaningful historical differentiation ties back to cultural and ecological differences and is of Western and Eastern Utes. The Utes have always considered themselves to be hunters primarily. Oral traditions of the Utes document that they were people of the mountains and used such land for game hunting (Goss in Wroth 2000). The tribes moved through the mountains of Colorado, Utah, and a small portion of Northern New Mexico. Their
connection to the territory of modern Ouray lies in the presence of the natural hot springs. These hot springs are held as sacred land. There is a tendency for historians to dismiss oral tradition as legitimate historical record, much to their own detriment. A reductionist view of the history of the Ute peoples has challenged the greater Ouray across generations. Without acknowledgement of oral tradition, the understanding of the history of the area suffers.

There are conflicting theories regarding the prehistorical settlements of Southwestern Colorado. Many anthropologists point to the Numic Theory to explain the spread of Indigenous culture. In this theory, the Utes, Shoshones, Paiutes, and Commanches moved into the area within the last one thousand years, that is, through a recent migration. This diffusion, those scholars say, came from southeastern California. This theory, however, is in competition with the Ute’s own history, which asserts that they were always there, adapting over thousands of years (Goss in Wroth 2000, 29). Furthermore, as many researchers have contested, the Numic theory does not adequately give credit to the Indigenous Peoples’ ability to adjust and adapt over time (Bettinger and Baumhoff 1982). The work of Bettinger and Baumhoff suggests that the cultural history of the area points towards competition between Numic and Prenomic peoples. Complex models and computer simulations have mapped this distinction (Young and Bettinger 1992), but still, many other scholars assert that the in situ approach to Ute history—their own story—is best. Ute historical scholar William Wroth stresses, “We don’t know when the ancestors of the Utes began to live in the mountains of Colorado and eastern Utah, but they were certainly well established there by the time the Spaniards arrived in New Mexico and of course were well known to the Pueblo Indians” (57). The Utes say that the fact that they do not have a migration myth is evidence that they have always been there. Since the Pleistocene, they argue in congruence with Ute ancestral history, Ute Indigenous Peoples have populated and moved
through the intermountain West (Goss in Wroth 2000, 30). Goss argues that the theorists behind the Numic spread did not consider the environmental changes the intermountain West went through in the past ten thousand years. What is a desert landscape today, of basins and ranges, was watery with lakes, mountains, and marshes. Adaptability of Indigenous Peoples, Goss believes, demonstrates that the Utes very well could have lived in the greater Ouray area “always” and were descendants of the Uto-Aztecs (30).

Furthermore, Ute culture of the past and today demonstrates the argument that they have always been intermountain people. For the Utes, their cosmology centers around mountain peaks and higher ground perspectives. From these views, sun-wise movement can be observed (Goss in Wroth 2000, 32). Movement centered about a single scared mountain and was seasonal in a clockwise direction. Broadly speaking, the cosmology of the Utes is similar to that of the Aztecs. The population group referred to themselves as “Nuche.” As is seen repeatedly through Native Peoples’ history, the term Ute comes from a corruption of the Spanish “Yuta” which was mistakenly affixed to the Indigenous Peoples (Goss in Wroth 2000, 35).

The sudden arrival of Europeans and the horse changed Ute culture and territorial movement tremendously. Prior to European arrival, the Utes were so mobile that there was no single territorial area. Once the Europeans were on the scene, the tribal distinctions of today were pinned upon them and new arbitrary boundaries were defined. As Goss outlines, the Utes’ categorization of themselves were based on complex ecological adaptation differentiations (36), this categorization was dramatically different than the way they were groups by the Europeans. Such affixations were terribly damaging to Ute culture.

Written records and ethnographic data confirm that the Eastern Utes of the Ouray greater area held distinct land claims through the eighteenth century. In the mid-1700s Spanish contact
changed Ute way of life in many ways; as stated above, the horse was one major cultural change, but also, the implementation of cross-cultural trading. In exchange for Ute products of furs and skins, Spanish and Mexican goods were integrated into Ute culture (Wroth 2000, 62). The presence of Navajo blankets and Spanish dress, for example, impacted the cultural expression of the Utes into present day. The Utes, like all Native Peoples, were not simply a static entity acted upon, but exerted their power where they could and had agency over much of their lives.

Prior to European settlement into the Ouray area, the Utes only moved to the territory of Ouray seasonally. They believed the natural hot springs of the area to be sacred retreats for healing. These residence patterns were systematically dismantled by European force until their subsequent removal from the landscape entirely.

The presence of the hot springs in the Ouray is due to a unique tectonic and volcanic geological history. Significant fractures, igneous intrusions, dramatic tertiary uplift, overthrust faults, and subsequent orogenies allowed for significant groundwater percolation and geothermal heating in the greater Ouray area. The result is natural, sulfur-free (and therefore fragrance-free) hot springs and unique mineral depositions. The distinctive physical geography of Ouray has set the scene for a tumultuous cultural history.

1776 marked the first encounter between the Utes and the Spanish. The Spanish interacted with the Utes as explorers, missionaries, and as traders (Rockwell 1999, 15). At the conception of the relationship, reciprocal trading was employed by both the Utes and the Spanish. By most accounts, this early contact was mutually beneficial. Local geographic knowledge, skins, and furs were passed to the Spanish in exchange for horses, blankets, and other European commodities. These trading relationships changed after Mexican Independence from Spain in 1821. At this time, increasing Mexican settlement pressure became exerted upon
Ute land. This pressure was even more pronounced with Mexico’s loss of the Mexican War of 1846-1848 (Decker 2004, 23-26). Directly following the United States’ victory in 1848, violent encroachment onto the Ute area of Ouray and forced treaties forever changed Ute way of life. The U.S. government failed to recognize Ute band differences and applied blanket rule across all Ute Indigenous Peoples under the guise of protection (Decker 2004, 26-27). The mid-nineteenth century brought a series of rebellions against said “protection.” These tensions escalated with the discovery of gold in Denver in 1858. Indian agencies were forced upon the Utes in 1868 and the territory of Ouray was lost entirely (Rockwell 1999, 23). The history of the Utes here is an unfortunately common one of forced and arbitrary placement of Indigenous groupings onto smaller and smaller portions of their original ancestral land. The year of 1868 also brought the appointment of Ouray, head of one Ute band and of partial Apache descent (Smith 1986, 43), as chief of the Ute nation as a whole. Chief Ouray was a polarizing figure in Ute history. He grew up in a nontraditional Ute home near Taos, New Mexico and it was this upbringing, many argue, that led to his selection as chief by the U.S. government (Houston 2005, 8). U.S. governmental history paints Chief Ouray in a favorable, cooperative light. “Americanization” efforts began as Ouray signed a treaty confining the Utes to the western third of Colorado (Decker 2004, 36-38).

The first two Indian agencies for the Utes were brutal, with poor living standards that limited the seasonal migration lifestyle of the Utes as well. The White River and Los Piños agencies were both situated in harsh, cold-winter climatic regimes. Later, the U.S. agents believed that the Utes were not contained enough as they were still employing a somewhat nomadic lifestyle. This observation led to the movement of Chief Ouray and his Utes to the Montrose, Colorado area, where farming and adaption for possible survival seemed promising (Rockwell 1999, 23), at least from the standpoint of government officials.
U.S. law prohibited white movement through Ute territory, but enforcement of such law was difficult and sporadic. In 1873, the U.S. government sent Felix Brunot to negotiate a deal with Chief Ouray with the hopes of allowing sale of mining land. Ute history states that Brunot made a false promise to locate a long-lost son of Chief Ouray if he signed (Wroth 2000, 16-17). Such a promise certainly fits in with the historical treatment of the “Indian problem” by the U.S. government. This negotiation forced the Utes to sell potential active mining territory and open the doors to white settlement (Wroth 2000, 76). The Utes faced further removal efforts following the death of an Indian agent—allegedly by a Ute—in 1879 (Rockwell 1999, 27) and they were subsequently moved to northeastern Utah (Rockwell 1999, 31). “The Utes Must Go!” was a prominent slogan of the mid-to-late nineteenth century. And, indeed, by this era, the Utes were gone in southwestern Colorado.

Silver was discovered in the greater Ouray area in 1875 and marked the beginning of tremendous European settlement. Utes were pressed towards further assimilation into white culture through the early twentieth century with the establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (Wroth 2000, 81). Perhaps serendipitously, the territories Utes were forced onto held considerable oil and gas wealth and have allowed for some economic success into the twentieth century (Ellis in Wroth 2000, 86).

The city of Ouray itself became a frontier mining camp nearly overnight in 1875, with men and women of European descent setting out to make a quick fortune. As historian Doris Gregory affirms, the 1880 census of Ouray shows much of the influx to town was directly from Europe. Swedes, Austrians, Italians, and the Swiss settled in the area after moving westward across the U.S. (1995, 9). Gold and silver ore pockets throughout the Ouray area caused the
landscape to be speckled with mining camps connected by toll roads in the 1860s and 1870s (Smith 2009, 63).

The historical landscape of Ouray through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century resembled a typical boom and bust mining town. Brothels, gambling, and substance abuse characterized the town and surrounding area. Ouray was able to survive the Silver Panic of 1893 due to the presence of gold, a lucky break compared to many other mountain mining communities. The economic depression associated with the Silver Panic rippled across the world, and centered upon mining towns in the American West. Over-extraction of silver resulted in abundance and subsequent devaluation. Pressures mounted to push U.S. policy to adopt more silver for coinage. As the value of silver then climbed, gold was artificially undervalued. Investors became insecure, banks failed, silver notes were exchanged for gold, and a U.S. Treasury gold shortage ensued. Thus, with both silver and gold deposits, Ouray was charmed.

As mining dried up in the mid-twentieth century, Ouray hit its nadir. However, the latter half of the century saw a new boom in the economy of tourism which again allowed Ouray to be the exception in the greater regional area. Demographics have changed today with more retirees, second home owners, and telecommuters. Spending time in Ouray shows, however, that it is still a working-class sort of town that survived against the odds thanks to its natural resources and physical beauty.

2.2: Postcard History

The possibilities for new methods in the sense-of-place subdiscipline are virtually limitless. I have restricted myself to a focus on the postcard in an effort to demonstrate the presence of sense of place in everyday life. The decision to study this common souvenir may
seem arbitrary, but I believe the use of the postcard to illuminate sense of place provides a framework that may be extrapolated to other places easily. Postcards, while ephemera and perceived as simple mementos, are indeed cultural artifacts. While oftentimes disposable, they also are connected to a deep geography and a story of mobility. The card itself enframes place, both visually and textually. It is a tool to communicate about place, and furthermore, about an individual situated in place. In many ways, the postcard may become a performative tool. From “Wish you were here” messages and beyond, people may define themselves on a small tangible artifact, declaring themselves to be within a specific place and time. It is a marketable static image of place representation with the power to mold perceptions of a place worldwide. The postcard can define popular expectations through a simple image and tell a deep touristic narrative through a visual form. Also, the postcard may be a way to assess past senses of place, through examination of historical context and content, as it is a glimpse back in time.

Postcard research can even allow for landscape change analysis through time. In line with John K. Wright’s concept of “geosophy” (1947), postcards show us the world as it exists in our imaginary. Their existence apart from the landscape itself may shape perceptions and memories as well. As D. W. Meinig (1979) has shown us, interpretations of ordinary landscapes are valuable efforts. Use of the postcard for such efforts allows us to examine place through the lens of tourism and idealism. Lastly, I believe the postcard provides a means to engage place discussions. It is a method to interact with sense of place.

My dissertation research began with a historical investigation into the world of postcards. The popularity of postcards followed a boom in consumer culture straddling the turn of the twentieth century. As cultural historian Bjarne Rogan (2005) argues, there were both “push” and “pull” forces that led to the boom. The card had great cultural pull as a souvenir and a
collectible, but also was appreciated for the aesthetic value and as a novel means of communication. Meanwhile, it was “pushed” as well, as the manufacturing process ramped up during the “Golden Age” of postcards. Rogan outlines the transformation of the postcard through the twentieth century, in all of its iterations and styles. Despite the popularity of postcard collecting, the history of postcard literature is not voluminous, but what is there is quite thorough (e.g. Bogdan and Weseloh 2006, Klich and Weiss 2012, Meikle 2015, Prochaska and Mendelson 2010, Staff 1966).

Prior to interacting with my informants, I explored historical collections of postcards of Ouray through time. My personal collection spans the twentieth century over approximately one hundred postcards. A handful of locals have granted me access to their personal collections to add to the assessment in my research. I also gained access to the Ouray County Historical Society’s collection of hundreds of postcards, which although very disorganized, was a valuable resource. Once tallied and organized, I proceeded with the historical, contextualized analysis of the collection. Investigations were made into the photographers and the marketing companies used through time. Trends found there will be explored later in this work. Next, I investigated the content of the postcards. The visual (landscape and/or landmark) content and the textual content (both in handwritten messages and printed descriptive text) were given equal consideration. From here I was able to expand upon themes of place promotion. I believe it was valuable to investigate both realities and myths put forward on the postcards. Simply because there are not wolves in Ouray, for example, does not mean it is unimportant to explore the significance of their placement on a souvenir postcard.

There is a collection of postcards from the San Juan region published by a group of historians in an approachable, “coffee table” format (Gulliford 2004). This book casts a wider
net as it is a portrayal of the region, with only eighteen Ouray postcards represented and little
textual reference. This book was helpful in guiding my understanding of what postcard
information was available to the public. The limited collection of postcards in this text furthered
my drive to catalog mine.

To begin assessing the postcard as a data source, I created an inventory database of my
collection. In doing so, I categorized the cards by imagery, text, type, publisher, photographer,
and date. This allowed me to analyze the cards in a variety of ways and was particularly helpful
as I added postcards from other collections into the inventory. The most obvious way to analyze
the cards was by comparing the front imagery. All postcards of one waterfall could have been
compared, for example. An inventory of the features displayed on the front is, of course, helpful.
How many waterfalls are printed on cards? What individual stores are depicted? Are there any
people in the card? What season is the postcard depicting? In what direction is the postcard
oriented? An assessment of images did prove fruitful, as even just a cursory count of various
features says something about place.

I also looked at trends in postcard types. My collection has both color and black and
white photograph cards, “real photo” cards in which an amateur photographer or tourist could
develop their own photograph onto a card, hand-colored (or hand-painted) images, and even a
postcard printed on a wooden shingle. Since many cards do not have a date or postmark on
them, the type of card—along with the publishing information—gave historical clues.

In my collection, there are only about ten known photographers. A historical
examination of these individuals and their connections to the handful of publishing companies
unfortunately did not yield many insights, as documentation was slim. There is quite a bit of
distance covered within the small number of publishers as well. Printing of the cards ranged
from local gift shops to Ireland. There are many illuminating stories to be articulated in that geography alone.

In going through the collection of postcards, I learned the stylistic changes which indicate changes of era. The occasional postmark on a card that was actually mailed allowed for confirmation of uncertain postcard eras. Once one card was dated, then typically a series of others could be puzzled together. The tedious process of sorting hundreds of cards in this manner allowed me a deeper appreciation for the town I love.

At first, during the mid-nineteenth century postcards had no image at all. Each card had an address on one side and a personal message on the reverse. Postcards like these were primarily used for low-cost basic communication, rather than souvenir purchase. I found no such postcards for Ouray. This is likely due to the timing of Ouray’s settlement.

Once the town of Ouray was founded, picture postcards did exist, though, for other Western places. Like the prior style, one entire side of the postcard was designated for the address alone. The image would be on the reverse. Some postcards had a personal message as well, but it had to be contained on the same side as the image. There were styles with space allocated for messages alongside the image (see Postcard 1 front and back), and others where a sender made their own space (see Postcard 2). I found many turn of the century cards like this.
During the 1890s, what is commonly known as the “Pioneer Era” of postcards to collectors, cards were printed by the government and included a one cent stamp. “Privately Printed Souvenir Cards” required a two-cent stamp. Others from this era simply read “Souvenir Mailing Card,” “Mail Card,” or “Souvenir Card” (see Postcard 3).
Postcard 3: Souvenir Mailing Card.

By the turn of the century, government printed cards were replaced by “Private Mailing Cards” (1898-1901) (see Postcard 4). One cent stamps returned, though now they were adhesive (see Postcard 5). These cards often still used the two-word phrase: “Post Card,” as in Postcard 5.

Postcard 4: “Private Mailing Card.”
Collectors refer to the next era as the “Post Card Era,” due to the prevalence of the usage of the phrase. All postcards of this era had an undivided back as well (Postcard 6). Gone was the presence of the governmental cards with printed postage, private mailing cards and others with complex verbiage. At this time, there were governmental cards, but those were now marked “postal cards,” and I found no such cards for Ouray. The postcard was beginning to hit its stride as a common civilian form of communication.

Also at the turn of the century was the introduction of the “Real Photo Card” (see Postcards 7, 8, and 9 below). These cards integrated the usage of amateur photography and in
situ film developing across the country. This technological innovation allowed the cards to be unique to a photographer’s experience, and document a particular sense of a place. Real Photo cards offered a customizable commodity. These cards allowed photographers to express their own voice through the imagery, which was particularly helpful without the introduction of a postcard back with message space. These cards gave senders a card that was distinctively theirs and promoted the development of the postcard as an owned souvenir.

Postcard 7: Real Photo Card of Box Canyon.
Postcard 8: Real Photo Card, north of Ouray, looking south towards town.

Postcard 9: Real Photo Card, showing now defunct tunnel with mine cart track.

With more travel to the West as the twentieth century progressed, more and more cards were produced from the work of famous photographers. The Sanborn Cards (1920s – 1960) are the most prominent to exemplify this era. Harold Sanborn, a commercial photographer, traveled the West, predominantly Colorado and Wyoming, from his home base in Denver. His cards are commonly collected and distinguished by the signature and series listing in the lower right hand
corner of the card. There are numerous Sanborn postcards for Ouray specifically (see Postcards 10 and 11).


Collectors also turn to the edges of the postcards to identify historical setting. The White Border Era (approximately 1915 – 1930) was indicative of the early stages of postcard printing across the United States. The printing process was poor and in its infancy throughout the West. The white border was an ink-saving, and thus cost-effective, measure (see Postcards 12, 13, and 14). The border also helped with ink bleed, which was particularly problematic when a printer was using more than one color (see Postcard 15). These cards are the earliest color cards, even though the color printing was primitive and sometimes clumsily offset.

Postcard 12: White Border Card, Sister Peak adjacent to Twin Peaks, west side of Ouray.

Postcard 14: White Border Card, view of Ouray looking northeast.
Postcard 15: White Border Card, view of Amphitheater, note the offset colors.

Next, collectors distinguish cards with a split space of the back, allowing a space specifically for a written message. Early Divided Back Cards (1907 – 1914 in this collection) comprised the heyday of postcards, known as the postcard “Golden Age.” Postcard 16 below demonstrates one of the earliest divided back styles in my Ouray collection.
Postcard 16: Early “Divided Back” style

Until this time, almost all cards were printed in Germany, as their lithography was the finest in the world. Lithographic skills took time to catch up in the United States and several other stylistic changes reflect this learning curve.

At this time, it was significantly cheaper to use high rag content paper. This style was passed off as an effort to mimic linen through the mid-twentieth century (approximately 1930 – 1945). There are many examples of these “linen” cards in this collection (see Postcards 17 and 18).
Postcard 17: “Linen” style card, “Red Mountain, on the Million Dollar Highway”

Postcard 18: “Linen” style card, Million Dollar Highway
Postcard sales declined in the 1930s, as did all sales of nonessentials. The Great Depression limited all stages of the postcard process: production, sales, postage, and travel itself. This decline occurred even though the price of stamps decreased—historically a rare move—back down to one cent (see Chart 1 below). After a decade of decline, the postcard made a gradual rebound.

The contemporary style of postcard with color (or colorized) photos dates back to the late 1930s (1939 in this collection). Early cards from this era used futuristic terminology as an enticement. Collectors refer to these postcards as being from the “Photochrome Era.” The majority of the vocabulary used on postcards during this time has ties to particular advertising campaigns. For example, Union Oil Company placed postcards in Western service stations using the term “chrome” on them to illuminate the novelty of color. This term caught on and had decades-long staying power. Many of the Ouray postcards in this collection have the term “Spectra-Color” printed on them (see Postcard 19 front and back below).

Through the Photochrome Era it becomes more challenging to date the postcards as there are fewer notable stylistic changes. One help is the trend of scalloped edges that was popular in the 1950s and 1960s. This was another effort to mimic handmade paper. This is known as the “Deckle Edge” (see Postcard 20).
Postcard 20: Deckle Edge postcard, Jeep tour on Camp Bird Road.

When all else failed, I relied on the stamp value to date cards. This is only possible, of course, if a card was mailed and had postage affixed to it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1 cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898 to 1917</td>
<td>2 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 1917</td>
<td>3 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1919</td>
<td>2 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1928</td>
<td>1 cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1952</td>
<td>2 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 1958</td>
<td>3 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1963</td>
<td>4 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1968</td>
<td>5 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1971</td>
<td>6 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1974</td>
<td>8 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1975</td>
<td>7 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1975</td>
<td>9 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1978</td>
<td>10 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1981</td>
<td>12 cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1985</td>
<td>14 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1988</td>
<td>15 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 1991</td>
<td>19 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 1995</td>
<td>20 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2001</td>
<td>21 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2002</td>
<td>23 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2006</td>
<td>24 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>26 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2008</td>
<td>27 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2009</td>
<td>28 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2011</td>
<td>29 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2012</td>
<td>32 cents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1: Stamp Price by Year (adapted from Ellison’s “Tips for Determining When a U.S. Postcard was Published” 2006)

I hoped to find quirky postcard styles, but alas, I struck out. Many other tourist attractions have “mechanical cards” with moving parts, depth and texture with embossment, or “hold-to-lights” with velum transparencies. I have come across many other Colorado cities with sets of cards (also known as “installments”), but none for Ouray, or the Western Slope of Colorado at all. Some places have postcard sets that could be mailed in stages to then be assembled as a puzzle by the recipient. I do not believe such a thing was ever printed for Ouray. There are also postcard folders, which are typically a small envelope with small cards inside, or
an accordion style foldout set. Again, I was not able to find such a collection for Ouray. I did come across a small spiral-bound collection of miniature cards, but they were not intended to be sent. I did, however, find occasional errors and odd cards. As in Postcard 21 below, with the misspelling of Ouray as “Outray.” Or the awkward grammar of Postcard 22 which adds the preposition “in” to Ouray’s title of “Switzerland of America,” stating “Ouray, in the Switzerland of America.” Both postcards, naturally, were not printed in Ouray.

Postcard 21: “Outray” Postcard
Postcard 22: “Ouray, in the Switzerland of America.”
Chapter 3: Historical Postcard GIS

3.1: Geospatial Technologies and Sense of Place

Traditionally, the realms of geospatial technologies and sense of place research did not overlap. Sense of place geographers are trained in the phenomenological philosophy, where a researcher is to enter the field of study without having conducted prior research. A sense of place investigator is to be a “blank slate” and accept information about place only after entering the field. A priori hypotheses are to be avoided, as a researcher should avoid all biases. The goal of this sort of research is imaginative self-transpositional, or the ability to see the world from another’s perspective. Most of the analysis of place and formulation of a “story” is to be done post-field. In situ research consists of observed experience, open-ended interviewing methods, diligent notation skills, and perhaps participant observation and mapping. The work of Yi-Fu Tuan (1977 and 1990), Cary de Wit (2013), and John Van Maanen (2011) are all foundational sense of place methodology pieces.

Beyond the addition of a GIS-constructed map in an ethnographic or sense of place piece for reference, geospatial technologies have not traditionally been integrated. Discussions of maps of meaning, attachment, or feelings are sometimes present in sense of place work, as in the “deep maps” of William Least Heat-Moon’s PrairyErth (1999). The deep maps discussed there, however, are not actual constructions, although through modern geospatial technologies, some could be made. Likewise, humanist geographers Ken Foote and Yi-Fu Tuan have both written of landscapes of fear (Foote 2003, Tuan 2013). Aspects of both of these works could be translated into geospatial data and therefore displayed as visual demonstrations of sensory experiences. Also, maps of the smells of Paris, for example, use geospatial technologies to express sense of place information (McLean 2012). More casual efforts towards nontraditional sense maps do
exist in abundance today, as individuals without formal geographic training become cartographers of sorts. Maps demonstrating things like college football rivalries (Hartwell 2014), or regional dialect differences like the pronunciation of the word “coupon” (Duryee 2011) do offer a glimpse into sense of place, though not presented in an academic manner. The popularity of such unscholarly maps on social media platforms speaks to the need for more integration of geospatial technology into sense of place research.

Ethno-historical approaches to geospatial technology are also bridging the gap between traditional humanistic methods and contemporary digital spatial technologies. A researcher may mine historical novels, for example, for place descriptions to create cartographic representations of imagined literary landscapes. In this case, the researcher is moving away from traditional phenomenological approaches, and moving towards idealism by using historical artifacts as new active data sources. This is what I am calling for with my usage of historical postcards as a data source for a new interactive map. This map, then, becomes the basis for new place discussion with interview subjects.

There is considerable scholarship on the overlap of the historical discipline and geospatial technologies, specifically GIS. Anne Kelly Knowles led the discussion of historical GIS with her 2002 book containing case studies of its usage and analysis of the methodology. Her work within the digital humanities paved the way for many others to integrate geospatial methods with humanistic research.

Of late, there have been more appeals for a unified approach to geographic research (Sui and DeLyser 2012). The terms holistic, hybrid, and synthesis are used to describe where geography needs to go to be a modern social science. The popularity—and sheer increased availability—of digital spatial technology has allowed for a boom in dissemination of
cartographic data. The mere smartphone possesses more spatial technological capabilities than
social scientists a generation ago could ever imagine. From a multitude of geo-tagged data
sources to crowdsourcing data collection methods, the world of cartography has been completed
transformed.

Esri, an internationally leading GIS software company, has offered a relatively new
venue for visualization—Story Maps—a contemporary web-based application within the ArcGIS
Online platform. The appeal of Story Maps rests in its approachability. A user’s “story” can be
displayed with dynamic visuals atop digitized maps. Because the interface is nontechnical, one
does not need to be a cartographer to use the application. Such a platform is valuable because it
can display sense of place information for the everyday viewer. It is a means to translating
cognitive spatial information into visual representations. Furthermore, it allows for the
communication of vernacular and colloquial information to the general public. Users of any of
the ArcGIS Online platforms can share maps and their representative data instantly, and it is a
relatively simple way to compile a map. It is for these reasons that I have chosen to use this
platform in my dissertation research. More practically, for me, the appeal is that I can build
something that will interest a wide audience. I want to present the information in a
contemporary and engaging manner.

This map displays the postcards both temporary and spatially. Limited, of course, by the
actions within the Story Maps application, I was still able to create separate sections for each
decade of postcards and tag each card to a feature on the map.
3.2: Participatory Research Mapping and Participatory Photography

Participatory research methods, including participatory research mapping, have inspired my research. Herlihy and Knapp (2003) introduce the concept of participatory research mapping, analyze five such projects involving twenty indigenous populations, and show the steps involved to create such novel cartographic knowledge, providing a helpful framework for entering participatory mapping researchers. They write, “The methodology combines participatory research with cognitive mapping, fusing spatial and environmental knowledge with technical understanding and cartography. Participatory mapping transforms cognitive knowledge into map, graphic, or written forms,” (307).

This project, because of the collaborative efforts with the local Ouray population, falls into the field of participatory photography. The popularity of participatory research in general is growing, being adopted by more and more social scientists. The value of such a research method is that it employs local knowledge. This sort of knowledge may not be otherwise documented, or only held as cognitive mental maps. Through participatory research methods, such cognitive information can be translated into commonly understood information. Situated learning environments are created and theoretical approaches are grounded in place. By using a participatory approach, a researcher may begin to bridge the gap between “insider” and “outsider” knowledge. In this way, a participatory project is mutually beneficial and creates an end product to answer a common goal. The reciprocal nature of such a methodological tool is at the core of its value.

Many geographers use this mapping technique in combination with other social science methods. It is complementary to many humanist approaches, both in idealism and phenomenology. Its increasing popularity in human geography (Pain 2004, 653) may speak to
the frustrations many feel in the lack of explicit field methods. A participatory research mapping project allows for an equal playing field for human investigations. By building something together, common ground is established. Participatory research mapping also lends itself to postcolonial studies and has been used frequently there (Crang 1992, Hall 1993, Jacobs 2003). Because the effects of colonialism erased centuries of indigenous cartographic knowledge, a participatory mapping project may illuminate lost information. Such research brings locals and investigators together, both with equal investment in the study outcomes. In this way, social science becomes less of a removed process unique to academia, but an applied, shared experience. Participatory research mapping not only allows for demonstration of commonly accepted geographical reference points, but it can creatively display vernacular data. Practical and colloquial information can be integrated to form maps displaying what William Least-Heat Moon would call “deep” meaning.

While participatory research mapping is not necessarily a geographic method exclusively (Herlihy and Knapp 2003), the method has a long connection to geographic inquiry dating back to Carl Sauer who was known to use PRM in the field. Sauer’s legacy in the discipline was founded in his ability to blend cultural and physical geography. Like the work of Sauer, participatory mapping is both humanistic and scientific. It uses natural and social science methods and data.

Social scientists have traditionally conducted participant observation in the field, and the method is hailed as a keystone of humanistic research. Unlike participatory research mapping, though, participant observation does not create a product in the field; observation notes are compiled and analyzed after the fieldwork is done. In this way, the data are still only manipulated by the researcher. One challenge of participatory research mapping is knowing
what activity level is actually considered “participatory” (Herlihy and Knapp 2003). Finding the appropriate balance of input can be challenging, and making sure that knowledge on all sides is given equal weight is difficult. With many parties involved in the research process, fairness and consensus can be hard to achieve, since every individual contributing to the process enters with different expectations and goals and there may even be language barriers to overcome. It is also important to remember that participatory mapping is only a methodological tool. This tool, however, does hold the ability to empower communities and create novel cartographic knowledge.

While participatory research mapping projects were consulted for the historical postcard GIS portion of my research, in the end, my maps are of a different nature. Many aspects of this research, however, are participatory. As I detail in Chapter 4, participatory photography literature shaped my research methods substantially. Sources like “Participatory Photography in Qualitative Research: A Methodological Review” (Bryne et al. 2016) guided the formation of my methods. My participants took their own photographs and were instrumental in putting my maps together—both the historical postcard map and the self-directed photography map of Chapter 4. Bryne et al. look at fifty-three studies employing participatory photography and outline the data collection and analysis methods. The authors also illuminate methodological struggles and other research challenges. Guidance from sources like this helped me structure my research methods to avoid common participatory photography pitfalls.

3.3: Postcard Solicitation, Organization, and Cataloging

I solicited postcard submissions, primarily through word-of-mouth connections, around town for two years prior to the completion of this map. In the end, I gathered over four hundred
postcards from approximately one dozen Ouray residents. I was also asked to present my dissertation research to the Ouray County Historical Society’s “Evenings of History” in July of 2018. This presentation allowed me to expose the community to my topic and methods in a more detailed way. I brought instruction sheets for my self-directed photography project and my Human Subjects forms (see Appendices D and E). The talk was sold out and helped me gain a large number of contacts for my research. While many in the crowd were not particularly technologically savvy and were not likely to participate in the photography exercise, there was great interest in the subject matter and many attendees brought me postcards to scan in the days after my talk.

Once I obtained a postcard, whether given to me or borrowed, I scanned and/or photographed the card’s front and back images. Because many of these cards were handed to me “on the go,” that is, while at work, or on the street in Ouray, the photos and scans were sometimes less than ideal. My iPhone camera does a decent job, but only if I have proper lighting. If the postcard is held askew at all, then it is distorted and impossible to crop. Many of my images ended up somewhat crooked because of this problem. I had to constantly reassure myself that the goal of this research was not perfect scans of images, rather the themes derived from looking at the group of images as a whole.

After acquiring all four hundred or so postcards, then came the task of organizing them by decade. Throughout this entire process, I had to take care to keep the digital images in order so as to keep fronts and backs together. I contemplated “stitching” the front and back images together so there was only one file per postcard, but ultimately decided I would rather see the fronts first on the Story Map and allow a user to click to “flip” the postcard to view the back. To sort the cards, I simply created folders for each decade and clicked through my collection (in
order) to place the cards in the proper place. Then I found my way through adding the images to my Story Map through a process of trial and error. It was during this stage of the process that the participatory nature of the project shined. I am certain I wore out several local stakeholders by quizzesing them on postcard features. “Do you think this is the backside of the Western Hotel?” “Do you remember there being a stone building at that corner?” Many people were passionate about postcards and anxious to look through the collection and offer their help, though.

3.4: Story Map Construction

While this task was challenging, it paled in comparison to building the maps online. Before settling on my current Story Map, I tried a series of other applications. Without knowing anyone local who had ever used the Story Map applications, I had to reach out to distant experts. Ultimately, I became a member of several Esri technical forums and asked many questions. I needed advice on which Story Map application would allow for the sheer volume of images I was working with. In the Story Map, there are two main fields for data: the main stage, and the side panel. The map builder can add interactive features to either field by linking what are called “Story Actions” to text. In my particular map, the main stage is a map of Ouray using the USGS National Map: National Boundaries Dataset as a basemap. On that basemap, I added a layer of shaded shape files for the locations of postcards in my collection.

After organizing all the postcards into decade folders, I had a better sense of what locations needed to be on the main stage map. These locations would be the places to which my Story Actions would link the postcards. I started with the obvious cardinal directions: views to the east, west, north, and south of town, opting to create ovals on the map for the areas, rather than tagging individual features. Then, I chose to add a rectangle for the downtown strip. I
chose the rectangle to be a sharper feature, thus differentiating this manmade feature from the natural physical ones. Then, I added in circles atop several common postcard sites: Box Canyon Falls, Cascade Falls, the Ouray Hot Springs Pool, Yankee Boy Basin, and Red Mountain. Next, I added ovals for other common areas of postcards: along Camp Bird Road and the Million Dollar Highway (U.S. 550).

Along the side panel are tabs—in actuality small circles—for each decade of the twentieth century running vertically. A user can scroll through the decades from 1900 – 1999 and view all the postcards in order, or a user may click shortcut icons to jump to each decade. One frustrating aspect of using this application are the limitations on the basic formatting for things like the circle icons. I could change the color scheme from five pre-chosen themes, but nothing else.

The next obstacle was that I learned there is no way to add multiple images at once to the map, and therefore it was fastest to add each decade folder to an intermediary program (Flickr) before moving them to the Story Map.

Once I set up my Flickr account, I added each decade folder one at a time as albums. Only having one album at a time allowed for faster clicks to import the photos to my Story Map. To add the photos to the map, a series of steps is necessary for every photo. I started by adding the fronts for each decade one at a time. Then, I added text below each photo telling a user where to click to place the postcard on the map and to view the postcard back. This text is necessary because the Story Actions (connecting the postcards on the “side panel” to the map “main stage”) only work if there is text to connect them to.

Once the text runs under each photo, I highlighted the text saying, “Click here to place the postcard on the map” and added a Story Action to connect to a pop up of the corresponding
map area. Then, I highlighted the text saying, “Click here to view postcard back” and added a Story Action to change the mainstage from the map to a larger image of the back of each postcard. This portion of the map building was tedious as it required scrolling through decade folders repeatedly to find the proper image. Again, however, I found using Flickr sped up the process somewhat.

I ran into quite a few little “bugs” along the way, but found belonging to the Esri online help forum community helped tremendously. From issues like perpetually having to adjust font sizes, to glitches with Story Actions, I found the community responsive and knowledgeable.

At this point I had built approximately six different styles of maps, but finally had a finished product. Then, I ran into a major issue with my Flickr account, as the postcard images had to be public on that site to connect to the Story Map application. But, then images that were not my property, as in those that belonged to the Ouray County Historical Society, were being widely shared publicly. This seemed improper to me, as I was given permission to use the images, but not share them on social media without credit. So, I decided to remove them from Flickr, believing they were held in my maps after upload. Just in case, early on I tested Flickr deletion by removing a couple of postcards from the Flickr database and waiting a few days to see if they were still on my maps. Apparently, Flicker gives you a buffer period after deleting files and they remain for a month in case you want to recover deleted the deleted images. So, unbeknownst to me, if you use an intermediary platform such as Flickr to upload images to your map, then once the images are deleted from the intermediary platform, they disappear from your map (they aren't stored in your map if you use an intermediary). Not knowing this at the time, I proceeded to delete all my postcard images from Flicker, but when I logged into my map to work on analysis a month later I discovered that my eight-hundred images displayed as white empty
rectangles. After I confirmed with ESRI that they were indeed gone, they acknowledged that it is a glitch that they do not explain ahead of time. So, I had to completely rebuild, and this time using a much slower procedure.

The completed Story Map is accessible from this link: https://arcg.is/1u9Wbu0. Trends across the map may be explored by scrolling down through the tabs chronologically, or by jumping from decade to decade by clicking the shortcut icons.

3.5: Ouray Postcard Content Variability

There is great seasonal variety in the later years of the postcard collection, i.e., an increase in postcards taken during the colder times of the year. Many factors may contribute to this trend. The most obvious contributing factor is better photographic capabilities and equipment. Likewise, there is better landscape accessibility with improved roadways, trails, recreational outdoor equipment, and transportation.

For those that know Ouray today, there is a noticeable lack of cards depicting winter sports activities. While there is no official ski area in or near Ouray, the importance of backcountry and cross-country skiing is underplayed if only looking at postcards of town. Also, there are no postcards depicting ice climbing, arguably the town’s most important draw in the offseason. I have seen cards with an ice climber on them, but only in very recent years, and beyond the twentieth century cut-off date for this research.

Naturally, there is little time of day variety in the cards, particularly in the early days with photography limitations. For proper nighttime cards, only one old card was found of the Revenue Mine, adjacent to Mount Sneffels, illuminated by a full moon and large lights during the mine’s heyday. While some older cards appear to have been taken at dusk, low light
photography was scarce. The prevalence of night cards steadily increases in this collection through the decades.

While a couple of cards appear to have been shot in the evening, I did not find a single sunrise card. Due to the steep nature of the box canyon in which Ouray is nestled, it is very difficult to get a good perspective on sunrise and sunset. Locals often lament the short period of direct overhead sun in Ouray, but will give up direct sun for the lovely alpenglow of the mountains as light bounces through the valley.

Fireworks are important to Ouray. Naturally, early cards were unable to capture the movement of fireworks in low light, but modern depictions of Ouray’s fireworks on the Fourth of July and on New Year’s Eve are common. Ouray takes these two holidays very seriously with parades of lit Jeeps with flares and holiday lights. This imagery does make an appearance in 1990s cards. A Fourth of July tradition with deeper roots in Ouray is the water fights on Main Street. Locals team up to spray water at each other from fire hoses in the middle of closed Main Street while drenched crowds cheer alongside. The first card in this collection showing the water fights is in 1917.

There are very few cards with people in them. Early twentieth century cards in this collection with people are mostly on the “Ouray Toll Road,” or today’s Million Dollar Highway. Occasionally there is a postcard with a person standing in a mine shaft, or alone railroad tracks. There is one card from the 1920s depicting a mail carrier on skis with a dog. But, most cards with any human presence are from Box Canyon and the Hot Springs Pool. One card from the 1960s shows a little girl in front of the train car that used to be parked next to the Beaumont Hotel. There is a contemporary card with a historical photo of Chief Ouray printed on it, but certainly should be considered a different category than candid shots with individuals in them.
One very early card has a photograph of Chief Ouray, as well. I did include this card in my collection, as it was given to me by a local who deemed it a postcard, but it does not have any of the markings to indicate that it was more than a keepsake historical photo. A handful of early 1900s cards depict horse-drawn carriages with people and one from the 1960s also has a gentleman riding horses on a ranch, but these are the only cards with people and animals.

Only a handful of cards have any wild fauna in them. All the ones that do are contemporary cards. Again, this trend is likely attributable to photography limitations. There are earlier cards with mules and horses, of course, but none with wildlife.

In this collection, I have no cards with more than one image on the front. I searched (and asked) high and low for any quirky Ouray postcards. As discussed above, I found no “mechanical cards” with moving parts, no sets of cards (also known as “installments”), no puzzles, folders, embossed cards, or “hold-to-lights” with velum transparencies. Particularly disappointing to me was that I could not find any cards with maps of any sort on them.

There is tremendous variety in the postcards’ backs through time. As discussed above, the word “postcard” (after 1907), or “post card” (very early 1900s), itself gives significant insight into a card’s origin. The presence of a “split back,” or a dividing line, (1901 - 1907) can tell a lot at a cursory glance. As printing methods improved, the complexity of the postcard backs flourished; for example, as time goes on through my collection, the amount of printed textual information on the back increases. In addition to in-depth text on the upper left-hand side describing the front of the card, postcards in the 1980s and 1990s for Ouray often had color imagery on the backside. An inset, smaller version of the postcard front is common. Many from the 1990s also had a high transparency version of the front image included on the back.
3.6: Ouray Postcard Patterns through Time

After tallying each feature across the decades, interesting patterns arose (Chart 2). To make it simpler to assess patterns through time, I have broken the data into twelve charts—one for each feature (see Charts 3 – 14).

Chart 2: Postcard Features through Time.
Chart 3: Amphitheater in postcards over time.

The amphitheater has always been a photogenic feature of the Ouray landscape. The San Juan Mountain region was once speckled with central-vent volcanoes. Two of these volcanoes collapsed nearly as fast as they formed and their associated calderas rapidly filled with hardened igneous materials. This geologic activity left a beautiful naturally shaped amphitheater framing the east edge of town. The forested amphitheater now contains a network of hiking trails, streams, campground, and one of the town's few paved roads. Snow-capped peaks line the top edge most of the year and year-round recreation activity traverses the landscape.
Alpine glaciation shaped the topography of Ouray. Alpine hanging valleys and dramatic knickpoints create spectacular waterfalls on all edges of the town’s bowl-shape. Box Canyon, at the southwestern corner of town, is a big tourist attraction. Letters approximately twenty feet tall spell (or more accurately misspell) “Box Canon” above this feature. These letters, erected in 1909, have recently been illuminated again by solar LED lights. A local campaign by five community members beautifully restored the dilapidated sign and illuminated it once again. The spelling of the word “canon” is still a contentious subject.

The prevalence of Box Canyon as a subject in early 1910s postcards makes sense as it was then the new, happening space in town with a dance pavilion, skating rink, and one of the world’s first hydroelectric power generators. Due to the feature’s restoration, this has become the source of abundant local attention again, both positive and negative. A community survey in the summer of 2018 found that while the majority of town is thrilled to have the “Old Lady on the Hill” lit again, a handful of residents feel her bulbs are too bright. I suspect this feature would have an upswing in postcard presence, if more postcards were to be printed in the future.
The canyon contains a deep-set eighty-foot waterfall. Unique birds, black swifts, thrive here. The water roars through the rock at thousands of gallons per minute. There is a narrow suspension bridge above the falls that is integrated into a complex perimeter trail that circumnavigates the entire town. Box Canyon’s walls also house Ouray’s ice climbing park. This feature is what gives Ouray its designation of “Ice Climbing Capital of the U.S.”

Chart 5: Camp Bird Road in postcards over time.

This road weaves through high peaks to the southeast of town and is peppered with relics of old gold and silver placer mines of the mid-to-late nineteenth century. A handful of claims have been reopened in recent history. Like the other edges of town, hiking and jeeping trails transect the landscape. As Chart 5 above demonstrates, imagery of this district was most prevalent during the zenith of those local mines.
Chart 6: Cascade Falls in postcards over time.

Cascade Falls puts on a spectacular display year-round. The waterfall consists of multiple levels accessible by hiking trails of varying difficulty. An in-town hike takes a visitor to its base, the last in a series of seven waterfalls. Mine relics sit at the top of the falls harkening back to days past. A deep, uncovered cement trench, or flume, carries the water from this feature through town. I was surprised to see how few postcards there were for this town favorite across all decades. While Box Canyon has a small entrance fee, Cascade Falls is free and open always. Therefore, it is a popular destination, but perhaps less of a concern for Ouray’s tourism board.
The downtown area of town consists of intact historical buildings and large Victorian homes. Many hotels and buildings in town date to the 1880s and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Postcards depicting downtown boomed in the 1960s with many postcards printed by local businesses—particularly hotels.
As discussed earlier the region surrounding town underwent complex geological transformations, resulting in natural, sulfur-free hot springs and unique mineral deposition. The Utes, who once populated the area seasonally, held these springs sacred for healing attributes. Today, the hot springs pool has undergone a multimillion dollar—and long overdue—rebuild, which makes it a popular choice in both positive and negative categories during the self-directed photography exercise (below).

![Chart 9: View of Town Looking North in postcards over time.](image)

The north end of town peters out as the box canyon's steep walls narrow. The Uncompahgre River and US HWY 550 parallel each other running towards the other Ouray County municipality—Ridgway. Postcards from this perspective do not give as dramatic mountain views, but when one stands on the south end of town, along the Million Dollar Highway, it is an easy place to get a near bird’s eye view, even for an amateur photographer. This feature on the map also included postcards that showcased the north end of town without showing town itself. For this reason, this category included imagery like the Uncompahgre
River on the north side of town and ranching depictions as the valley flattens out towards Ridgway.

![Chart 10: View of Town Looking South in postcards over time.](image)

Ouray's Main Street, US HWY 550, zigzags east to west gaining tremendous elevation as it moves south. Views from this end of town are dramatic in all directions due to the road's vantage point on the edge of steep peaks. Mount Abram is the picturesque focal point on these postcards throughout all decades. This view of town also allowed for a display of the infamously rugged Million Dollar Highway. Its stereotypical shape adds to the suggestion of Ouray as the “Switzerland of America,” which I believe accounts for its prevalence in early twentieth century postcards. Ouray’s “Toll Road,” as it was then known, was even more striking than it is today.
Chart 11: View of Town Looking West in postcards over time.

On the western edge of town, 13,000 foot mountains frame Ouray with notable landmarks of Twin Peaks mountain and a rock overhang with rope swing for daring climbers. Numerous hiking trails zigzag across the landscape here and steep jeep roads lead to Telluride on the other side of the mountains. This is tough perspective to photograph. The steep walls of the canyon are hard to capture from town, therefore, there are few postcards that fit into this regional designation.
The steep slope of Highway 550 causes much stress for visitors from the south. This is the so-called “Million Dollar Highway,” named for the cost of its construction early in the twentieth century. Today people sometimes assert that the name comes instead from the road’s “million-dollar” views, or from the “million-dollar” ores discovered in the area. Others say the name is a reference to the cost of brake repairs for those who timidly drive the pass. The peaks in the chart above seem to match up to the opening of the toll road and upsurge in automobile recreation in the 1960s.
The discovery of gold and silver was concentrated on the fringes of the Ouray regional basin in the late nineteenth century. Most of prospectors came from the south via Silverton. Their searching took them along a chain of elusive deposits in veins over Red Mountain Pass. This area was named for the reddish, iron-rich soils exposed in mining scars that stretch down into the watershed of the Uncompahgre River. Numerous mining communities arose throughout the district, each with populations that exceeded that of contemporary Ouray. I believe the resurgence of the mining imagery in postcards in the 1960s and 1970s comes from the overall push for more automobile recreation in the area. Ouray’s Million Dollar Highway, and adjacent historical mining scenery, was a large tourism draw. The history a visitor could take in from the comfort of their automobile made Ouray an appealing choice for outsiders.
Chart 14: Yankee Boy Basin in postcards over time.

Once another active mining district, Yankee Boy Basin is famous for its wildflowers and is also home to Twin Falls, popular site of automotive commercials and the inspiration for the Coors Beer logo. The road leading to this basin, while camera-friendly, is notoriously dangerous and narrow. In the postcard collection, there was overlap between this feature and Camp Bird Road. Most postcards from this section of Ouray depicted mines themselves in the early decades. Yankee Boy Basin as a standalone natural attraction doesn't arise until the 1960s.

As a general overall trend across the postcard collection, early cards had practical purposes like documenting natural disasters, as in the 1909 flood, and historic landmarks. Later cards were designed with touristic and recreational intentions. Promoting automobile travel, ease of highway accessibility of town, and natural aesthetics came in the latter half of the twentieth century.
Chapter 4: Self-directed Photography

Chart 15: Self-directed Photographs by Features and photograph prompt

As discussed above, I sent out my local participants to take photos with the following prompts:

1. A photo that would be used as a postcard for sale in the Ouray Visitor’s Center.
2. A photo representation of your Ouray
3. A photo of problems/issues you perceive in Ouray
4. A photo of something successful in Ouray
5. A photo that represents Ouray’s history
6. A photo that represents Ouray’s future

Once I received these photos back from all the participants, I sorted and added them all into separate tabs within a side panel on my Story Map. The Story Map instructs a user to explore photos taken by locals to learn about their home — Ouray, Colorado. I added layers to the “main stage” map with shape files for each feature that was photographed by my participants. A map user can click the text under each photo to see where that is on the map. Also, each shape
feature has a text description to allow a user to click on features on the map to read about town as well. The amount of information was intentionally kept limited on this map, because it was going to be used for surveying outsiders that are not familiar with Ouray. I wanted to give a basic framework to give enough geographical information to get one’s bearings, but not so much that I tainted the “outsiders” exercise. Furthermore, the photographs were to be the “voice” of my local participants. In that vein, I wanted those to speak for themselves.

This link gives access to the Story Map for the self-directed photography maps.
https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=8e402a7d2adc403081e259da10a87287. In the sections that follow, I will include all of the photos taken by my participants and explore the themes that arose.

4.1: "My" Postcard Photo

![Chart 16: “My” Postcard Photo Prompt by Map Feature](chart.png)
There were not many surprises here for the selection of photographs to be used as theoretical Ouray postcards. The breakdown across features above is very similar to the postcard tallies from the 1990s (see Chart 17 below). While the beautiful landscape of Ouray naturally lends itself to stunning photographs, Ouray has a disproportionately high number of photographers. Backcountry enthusiasts and nature lovers filled my participant pool, and I was lucky to get a handful of professional photographers as well. For many of the photographs below, the theoretical commercial printing of a postcard is not such a stretch at all.

![Chart 17: Historical Collection Postcards from the 1990s.](image)

The photograph below from Mike Boruta (Photograph 1), is a striking aerial view looking up valley towards Montrose to the north. Boruta, a professional photographer—and coincidentally a geographer who studied under Margaret Pearce—is known for his drone photos. His sense of perspective for capturing the drama of the landscape is unparalleled, especially by photographers on the ground. His view looking north stands out because this view is particularly challenging to do justice.
Many interviewees talked about their association with the north more than the south of town. Though the Million Dollar Highway is beautiful, necessities like big box stores and airports make the northern route out of town a more regular journey. I believe participants feel attached to that route because of the frequency of travel. The participant photo directly following Boruta’s (Colleen Bixler, Photograph 2) chose a similar view and discussed her weekly Montrose trip for groceries and essentials. While the errands are tiresome, it is an escape to another place, even if it is summer-swelting Montrose. Locals of Ouray boast of their routes through Montrose to spend the least time, make the least left-hand turns onto Highway 550, and prevent their groceries from melting in their cars. Coolers and dry ice are commonalities. Because it is a thirty-five-mile journey, social media is also frequently used to carpool and place requests for others headed north. The view north, while perhaps less photogenic, is an integral part of Ouray local life.
Just as in the actual postcards, the amphitheater was an obvious picturesque choice (see Photographs 3, 4, 5, 6 below). Interviewees talked about it being the view in town that gives us year-round beauty, lying on the east side, with rainbows always occurring there and with the best alpenglow. The amphitheater is viewable from all angles in Ouray and therefore is a constant fixture of town life.
Photograph 3: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of anonymous participant. Daytime view of amphitheater looking east.

Photograph 4: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of David Huddleston. Nighttime view of amphitheater looking east, with glow stick effects spelling “Ouray.”
Photograph 5: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of anonymous participant 2. Daytime view of Ouray looking northeast towards amphitheater.

Photograph 6: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of anonymous participant 5. Daytime view of Ouray looking northeast towards amphitheater.
Likewise, many participants chose the view to the south as being the best way to showcase Ouray’s dramatic setting. With Mount Abram in the background and Ouray or the winding Million Dollar Highway in the fore, it is hard to beat. Also, several interview discussions led to an acknowledgment of the journey into town from the north as being the best way to show a visitor Ouray. Like the photo by Heather Greisz (7), Photograph 8 from Anonymous Participant 3, and Photograph 9 from Jill Parisi, visitors and locals alike anticipate the winding drive back into Ouray from the flatter lands to the north. One participant told me every time they ride back into Ouray from the north they think, “Why would anyone want to live anywhere else when you could live nestled in those mountains there?” Town is invisible from a distance. You cannot see the city of Ouray until you are right in the middle of it as the highway winds into the tight valley and gains altitude as it goes. A traveler from the north crests town right in the midst of historical charm flanked by steep cliffs. Many interviewees spoke of that invisibility adding to the appeal of Ouray as home. One participant told me they couldn’t decide what was more fun: having a visitor arrive at night and wake up to the stunning setting, or making the meandering drive in during daylight from the north.
Photograph 7: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of Heather Greisz. Daytime view looking towards Ouray from the north, “Welcome to Ouray County” sign in foreground.

Photograph 8: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of anonymous participant 3. Daytime view looking towards Ouray from the north.

David Huddleston’s photo above (Photograph 4) utilized his own photographic skills with long exposure times and glow sticks. Huddleston’s photo exemplifies how a passion for the landscape and artistic expression can merge, particularly in an isolated landscape with offseason downtime. Huddleston is candid about how his time photographing the backcountry is therapeutic for him. Working multiple jobs in the summer to survive in a seasonal tourist town is trying. One local told me it is “death by public interaction.” Locals must give a lot of themselves to provide for the public; for Huddleston, time with his camera and his dogs in the mountains—even if it is the only possible in the wee hours of the night—is a necessity.

Gina Wenger chose a different approach when picking her photograph (10). She told me on August 13, 2018:

I picked the idealized beer photo. I think of Ouray as a town where people visit for 2 things… beer and amazing scenery/activity. When I took this photo I liked it but thought it looked very commercial. It made me think of
the way some breweries have moved away from quality and more toward marketing.

Wenger certainly touches on issues many interviews came around to: how to market Ouray as a town still in transition from extractive to recreational industries.

Photograph 10: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of Gina Wenger. Brewery interior photograph with local pint of beer and reflection on bar.

The minority choice was to pick a view that was not in town proper. Two participants (Katharina Papenbrock’s Photograph 11 and Nancy Nixon’s Photograph 12) took photographs of Crystal Lake, for instance. It is impossible to argue with such beauty for a postcard. These
participants often discussed being torn choosing a site that didn’t show our quaint town, but many saved those choices for Prompt 2.


Other participants also chose to photograph views only reachable from hiking trails. The photographs by Mary Jane Cervone (13), Melissa Cervone (14), and Marc Hitchcox (15) each demonstrate the beauty of the Ouray area that is less publicly accessible.

Photograph 13: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of Mary Jane Cervone. Daytime mountain view from hiking trail, Bridge of Heaven.
Photograph 14: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of Melissa Cervone. Daytime mountain view from hiking trail off Camp Bird Road.

Photograph 15: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of Marc Hitchcox. Sunset mountain view.
Two participants chose to photograph the hot springs pool (Photograph 16 by Eric Funk and Photograph 17 by Kayle Vernon) for their “postcards.” Funk’s photograph, in winter with rising steam, is a beautiful way to take in the drama of Ouray. The highway, Ouray’s Main Street, curves in along the left-hand side of the photo headed south towards Mount Abram, the striking triangular peak in the background. This photo is one that could easily be printed and sold as a postcard today. Kayle Vernon’s photo, though at a much different scale, is equally beautiful. The fish pond Vernon photographed below is the pond on the left-hand side of Funk’s photo. It too is naturally heated year-round and is home to enormous hand-fed koi, turtles, and crawfish. It also has been known to house rejected local pets—many goldfish and at least one nail-polished turtle that I know. This pond is an important part of Ouray’s history, once even housing alligators. Because this water is somewhat-cooled overflow from the pool, it sits at a temperature approximately seventy degrees Fahrenheit. It is a unique landmark in Ouray.

Photograph 16: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of Eric Funk. Daytime winter view looking south with Hot Springs Pool in foreground.
One participant chose another notable tourist attraction for their postcard, Box Canyon. The attraction, as discussed above, features a deafening eighty-foot waterfall deep within damp canyon walls. A sliver of light, as shown in this photograph, is visible even at the base of the falls. Photographing the falls is a challenge for a variety of reasons, which this interviewee and I discussed. They told me between the contrast of the dark, wet rock with a wedge of bright daylight makes the average cell phone snap impossible. The spray from the falls also spatters lenses and makes the ground slick. Then there are the cold temperatures, marking a coat a necessity. These reasons, they told me, made this photo of theirs more treasured. The struggle and danger of this photo added to its significance. This participant has extensively traveled, and felt this landform was the best one to represent Ouray on a postcard.
Showcasing Ouray’s dangerous setting, two participants chose views of the Million Dollar Highway for their fictional promotional photos (Photographs 19 and 20). Both told me that they love many stretches of the highway, but the most dramatic spots are too dangerous to photograph. This highway is consistently ranked high on “most deadly” or “dangerous” roads (e.g. USA Today 2013). Without guardrails and crumbing rock overhead and under-tire, it is indeed an experience to drive the road, even in ideal conditions. My participants told me, however, they are proud that their children learned to drive on those roads. While the USA Today list says locals would only drive it in winter for “a million dollars,” that couldn’t be further from the truth for my participants. The road is respected and warnings of harsh conditions are heeded, but many drive it daily for fun and it is rarely closed.

And, with another card suitable for postcard printing, is Katie Craig’s photograph of Twin Falls at Yankee Boy Basin. Craig spoke of this site’s importance for tourism in town and the iconic nature of the falls. Both these factors contributed to her choice of photo for this prompt. A backcountry hiking and running enthusiast, Craig uses this place as a base camp for more extreme adventures.

Photograph 21: “My” Postcard photograph courtesy of Katie Craig. Daytime view of Twin Falls at Yankee Boy Basin.
4.2: "My" Ouray

In examining the chart above, the most obvious trend in this category was the choice of views of downtown (e.g. Photographs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 below). Whether situated in the center of the photo from an aerial view, or a photograph of downtown from Main Street itself, many locals spoke of their affinity for downtown itself. All they really needed, they often said, could be found in that one-mile stretch of highway.

Chart 18: “My” Ouray Photo Prompt by Map Feature

Photograph 23: “My” Ouray photograph by anonymous participant 7. Daytime view of downtown from a hiking trail, looking northeast.
Photograph 24: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Lea Ann Parden. Daytime view of downtown from Main Street.

Photograph 25: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Mike Boruta. Daytime aerial view of Ouray.
Photograph 26: “My” Ouray photograph by anonymous participant 4. Daytime view of downtown looking north.

Photograph 27: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Marc Hitchcox. Nighttime view of downtown from Main Street.

Those who are familiar with Ouray will not find it surprising that three photos include the participants’ dogs. Ouray is a dog-friendly town; “cat people” certainly live in Ouray too, but with as much predator activity we have in town, cats are rarely outdoor pets.

Photograph 29: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Katharina Papenbrock. Daytime photo of dog sniffing campsite fire on a hike.
In this same vein, two participants included photos of outdoor activities with friends. (The dog owners discussed above would likely be offended that those photos were separated out from the category of “photos with friends!”) My interviewees all discussed needing deep community ties to feel comfortable in an isolated place like Ouray. Whether it be dog or human, everyone needs a buddy to explore the beauty of town during off time and to lean on when times are tough.
Photograph 31: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Katie Craig. Sunrise view atop Mount Sneffels with chain of friends holding hands.

Photograph 32: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Kayle Vernon. Daytime winter photograph of friends snowboarding on town’s ski hill.
Mule deer make appearances in two photos here as well. Ouray locals are intimately familiar with living with wildlife. Many specific animals are recognized as town locals and some even named. There is Tina the Turkey who struts around town throughout the year and a deer with a birth defect that townspeople keep alive with hand-feeding, even though this goes against most everyone’s better judgment when it comes to wildlife.

Photograph 33: “My” Ouray photograph by anonymous participant 3. Daytime autumn view of mule deer traipsing through town.
Photograph 34: “My” Ouray photograph by anonymous participant 6. Daytime view of mule deer bedded down in yard.

Offseason photos were very common in this category too. While locals love the tourist season and bustling Main Street as the life source of town, Ouray breathes a little deeper during autumn and winter. In this set of photos there are seven taken in autumn (e.g. Photographs 35, 36, 37, and 38) and four taken in winter (e.g. Photographs 39 and 40). Participants expressed that they felt more ownership over these times in town. These views of town were more “theirs.”
Photograph 35: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Colleen Bixler. Daytime view of fall colors in aspen grove.

Photograph 36: “My” Ouray photograph by anonymous participant 3. Autumnal sunset view of downtown.
Photograph 37: “My” Ouray photograph by anonymous participant 5. Daytime autumn view of downtown.

Photograph 38: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Glynn Williams. Daytime autumn view of downtown.

Photograph 40: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Eric Funk. Daytime winter view of downtown from Main Street.
Another common theme was the sheer joy participants feel though getting to live in Ouray. Many expressed how they could not believe their luck in getting to call Ouray home. Heather Greisz, for instance, mentioned she has wanted to make Ouray home for decades and is finally able to achieve her lifelong dream. Greisz and two others took photos of their homes for this question (see Photographs 41, 42, and 43).

Photograph 41: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Heather Greisz. Daytime autumn photograph of home.

Photograph 43: “My” Ouray photograph by anonymous participant 4. Autumn evening view of home.

The two photos below (44 and 45) are from participants’ favorite hikes. Each participant spoke of their particular hike photograph choices stating that they wanted less-traveled hikes for
this prompt. While other hike photographs were better suited for touristic purposes, like a postcard, these hikes were ones the photographers said felt like home.

Photograph 44: “My” Ouray photograph by anonymous participant 2. Daytime view of Upper Cascade Falls.

Photograph 45: “My” Ouray photograph courtesy of Melissa Cervone. Daytime view of mountain ridge on Mount Sneffels hike.
4.3: Ouray Problems

The majority of participants chose issues oriented around downtown. Photographs documented social issues including funding for renovation and restoration efforts of local landmarks, as well as the politics of regulating housing and short-term rental properties. Photographers also acknowledged the challenge of physical upkeep of exteriors in the rugged San Juans. And, many took photographs to illustrate the concerns with wildlife, climate change, and environmental degradation.

![Chart 19: Ouray Problems Prompt by Map Feature](image)

Three participants took pictures of the hot springs pool (Photographs 46, 47, and 48), though many more spoke of it as well, citing the cost of the renovation, the construction delays, the issues with heat loss since, and the water treatment stench issues that have arisen with the
new pool drainage system. A pool rebuild was indeed overdue and necessary but the execution of the construction was poorly planned, they contend.


The conversation about town rapidly made its way to problems associated with vacation rental properties. Three of my participants took photos to illustrate this point (Photographs 49, 50, and 51) and many more spoke of it directly. Several interviewees spoke of the trouble finding a place to live, with so much property being used for vacation, or short-term, rentals. One anonymous participant owns a vacation rental, though it is in violation with Ouray’s rules of where such businesses can be. They explained that while they felt some guilt for not renting this home to a local in need, the home rents on the Vacation Rentals By Owners (VRBO) website for $250 per night, even in the offseason. They can make exceptionally more money renting the home sporadically. A mere four nights out of the month exceeds what they got in monthly rent before. They also worried about increases in lodging taxes and how they would be able to
continue to avoid paying. However, they said as long as they continue to operate without notice from the city, they saw no reason to change their ways.

VRBO is not the only property concern voiced by the photos. Several other photos below also addressed connected issues like unaffordable housing and properties in disrepair. Some conversations led to tangential speech along the same lines.

Photograph 49: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Mike Boruta. Daytime view of vacation rental property with many satellite dishes.
Photograph 50: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Katie Craig. Daytime view of vacation rental property.

Photograph 51: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Kayle Vernon. Daytime view of vacation rental property
Many photographs below centered on property in disrepair (Photographs 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59). These discussions centered on residential and commercial properties, and public spaces as well. Participants addressed being frustrated with uninterested property owners, but more often it was circumstantial conditions that led to these “problems.” A lack of historical preservation funding, confusion regarding repair responsibility, floundering downtown business to support upkeep, and so on, were discussed.

The Ouray County Courthouse, made famous by the court scenes of John Wayne’s True Grit, has needed repairs for many years, but the funding to do the work properly has not been there. A bond measure was recently passed in Ouray to pay for the work needed, but many locals, including former county clerk Colleen Bixler whose photo is below (52), are frustrated with the number of additional projects that were lumped into the restoration project. While everyone wanted a waterproof roof and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, many locals were irked by the inclusion of remodeled offices and other cosmetic extras. So, the necessary remodels are being completed, but town is divided on the issue and for many it is problematic.
Photograph 52: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Colleen Bixler. Daytime photograph of the Ouray County Courthouse in need of repairs.

The Historic Western Hotel is the oldest building in Ouray. The owners also run the oldest jeep tour in the world, in the lower right-hand corner of the building photographed below (53). The second-story balcony, also shown in the picture, once was where the hotel’s “girls” could call down to gentlemen strolling by. Today, however, this balcony is off-limits and cannot safely support weight. The owners of the building and businesses (jeep tour, restaurant, hotel, and bar) simply do not have enough incoming revenue to do the historical restoration. So, they limp along like so many other locals and the safely accessible portions of the beautiful building get smaller and smaller. Many local people believe this is a big problem in Ouray. Many locals refer to it as “The Historic Fire Hazard” or “The Historic Matchstick Hotel.” Harsh nicknames like these do nothing to solve the problem, of course, but joking does perhaps ease some of the worries local people have.
Photograph 53: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Heather Greisz. Daytime photograph of Historic Western Hotel in disrepair.

Photograph 54: Ouray Problem photograph by anonymous participant 3. Daytime photograph of a modest house with a high price tag, demonstrating lack of affordable housing.
Photograph 55: Ouray Problem photograph by anonymous participant 4. Daytime photograph of downtown commercial space for rent, demonstrating the difficulties for businesses downtown.

Photograph 56: Ouray Problem photograph by anonymous participant 5. Daytime photograph of downtown commercial space in need of repairs.
It is also important to note that the rugged terrain of Ouray makes upkeep of outdoor spaces challenging. Steep gravel roadways must continually be reshaped. Rock from the bottom of the hills has to be hauled up to the tops on a daily basis in the summertime on the road (8th Avenue) shown in Photograph 57 below. Meltwater runoff and heavy sudden rains in otherwise dry summers create deep trenches alongside the roads. Likewise, repetitive freeze-thaw weather patterns take a toll on sidewalks throughout town (see Photograph 58 below). Cracks and deterioration of cement is a constant battle. It is not just the presence of ice itself that causes damage. In a process similar to the exfoliation of rock on mountainsides, drastic temperature changes cause manmade features to expand and contract, thus breaking down.

Photograph 57: Ouray Problem photograph by anonymous participant 6. Daytime photo of washed out gravel road in town, deep ruts make access to driveways challenging.
Photograph 58: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Lee Ann Parden. Daytime photograph of cracks in the sidewalk along Main Street.

Photograph 59: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Nancy Nixon. Daytime photograph of dilapidated “pickleball” court lines at Ouray’s downtown Fellin Park.
Other participants spoke of town affordability more generally. With an increase of rental properties being used for short term outsider tourism, local space is further and further constrained. Restaurant workers, young families, and descendants of locals, argued the participants, are pushed out of the town they all hold dear in this manner. Gina Wenger (Photograph 60) explained:

For this I’ve put in a photo I took of a child’s toy from the Women’s Club park. In my mind it has to do with the lack of affordable housing and the impact this has on young families in Ouray. I’ve always said that if the school dies, the community will die.

Photograph 60: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Gina Wenger. Daytime winter view of playground equipment at Ouray Women’s Club Park, demonstrating lack of affordable housing for young families.

Climate issues (Photographs 61, 62, and 63) and natural resource management concerns (Photographs 64, 65, 66) were commonly voiced as well as a threat to participants’ beloved home. Wildlife territory encroachment issues are impossible to ignore as bears, mountain lions, and other fauna move in on town spaces more and more each season. From river water
contamination, to water scarcity, as in the bulk of the American West, water is life. Photos 61 - 66 all address concerns of climate change and water access. Many other photos in this series also arguably address climate concerns as many participants spoke of the desperate need for climate protection in a place whose livelihood is dependent upon adequate snowfall, summer monsoons, wildlife protection, and fire mitigation, to name a few issues on the minds of locals. Participant Eric Funk, a volunteer for the citizen science group River Watch and an Electrical Engineering Ph.D., weighed in on some of his environmental concerns,

After working on River Watch and monitoring water quality for more than 12 years and presuming that the major pollutants were from old mining operations, it was very disheartening to learn how negligent the City of Ouray has been in keeping the City’s sewage treatment plant in compliance with state standards recently. Indeed, the pollution of our waterways seems to be treated as lightly now as it was in Ouray’s mining days.

But it isn’t just the obvious changes like lack of water in the reservoir that worried my participants. Locals know as well as scientists that some threats were less physically obvious. Several people mentioned to me that the patterns of snow fall and the types of snow were different than they had ever seen. Born-and-raised locals with deep connections to town told me they felt unable to predict commonplace weather events like avalanches. The way the snow stacks in layers is different, they say. The melting periods stabilizing layers has changed and there is more sediment in the snow changing those melting periods, a factor of albedo. More frequently, they say, locals are surprised by when a known avalanche run will be triggered. This unpredictability is unsettling to locals, particularly those with generational knowledge of snow and intimate first-hand experience with extreme weather. These concerns are being voiced by scientific experts too and my participants mentioned the prevalence of information being shared casually between friends on social media (e.g. Romeo 2018, Thompson 2018). They felt this was remarkable because of the variety of people sharing these articles. Older conservative
friends of theirs, they said, who would not normally talk about climate change, were suddenly using the term. One interviewee told me they knew why it was suddenly hitting home for many—because environmental conditions were now bad enough that the July 4th celebrations are threatened. The potential loss of Ouray’s beloved water fights and fireworks display, they said, pushed many to look deeper into climate science. While I believe this is an oversimplification of local concerns, the fact remains that interest in climate science is growing.

Photograph 61: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Eric Funk. Daytime autumn photo demonstrating low water levels in the Uncompahgre River and watershed contamination.
Photograph 62: Ouray Problem photograph by anonymous participant 2. Daytime view of an unusually warm winter day (January 1, 2018).

Photograph 63: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Glynn Williams. Daytime view of Ouray’s reservoir north of town at all-time low water levels.
Photograph 64: Ouray Problem photograph by anonymous participant 8. Daytime photograph of mule deer in downtown Ouray, demonstrating wildlife territory encroachment.

Photograph 65: Ouray Problem photograph courtesy of Marc Hitchcox. Daytime photograph of big horn sheep along Highway 550, Ouray’s Main Street, demonstrating wildlife territory encroachment.
Photograph 66: Ouray Problem photograph by anonymous participant 7. Daytime photograph along the Million Dollar Highway demonstrating erosion and mining scars.

4.4: Ouray Successes

Once again, the clear majority of participants chose downtown imagery for their pictures representing success in Ouray. Activities that bring community members together were the focus of many photos. Outdoor recreational activities were photographed most in this category, particularly activities with other community members. It is not just outdoor sports getting attention here, though; the school shines in this category as well as local theater. In contrast to responses to the prior prompt, many locals spoke of several historic restoration projects as being successes.
Chart 20: Ouray Successes Prompt by Map Feature

Locals cited trail races throughout town and community volunteering associated with such events in four photographs.

Photograph 67: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Gina Wenger. Daytime photograph of a trail runner after a race.
Photograph 68: Ouray Success photograph anonymous participant 7. Daytime photograph of trail race volunteers.

Photograph 69: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Katie Craig. Daytime photograph of trail runner during race.
Since the majority of my participants are particularly community engaged, it was not surprising to see so many community events listed among Ouray’s successes. From members of the community standing in the middle of Main Street to watch New Year’s Eve fireworks while sharing open bottles of champagne (Photograph 71), to a 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony (Photograph 72), a town as small as Ouray brings disparate groups of people together. Municipal organizations like the school (Photographs 73 and 74), City Hall offices (Photograph 75), and the library (all pictured in Photograph 75), were all discussed for being lynchpins for community success. Ouray’s City Hall building houses administrative offices, the police department, the library, and, lest we forget, the only truly public restrooms downtown. Connected to these spaces are two large Community Center rooms with adjacent kitchen and emergency services including mountain rescue, emergency medical care, and the fire department.
This building is a hot spot of Ouray community activity. Even though all the aforementioned services are under one roof, the only portion discussed in interviews for being successful was the library. Many participants praised the work of Ouray Library Director, Maureen O’Driscoll, directly. Her work securing grants for library renovations, collection expansions, and technological overhauls is unprecedented in the history of the library. O’Driscoll’s work at the library comes up again in the prompt discussing Ouray’s future. Locals feel as though the success of the library is just getting started.

Photograph 71: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of David Huddleston. Nighttime photograph of New Year’s Eve fireworks over Main Street, community members sit in lawn chairs in the middle of the highway.
Photograph 72: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Heather Greisz. Daytime photograph of 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony in the street outside of City Hall and the Fire Department.

Photograph 73: Ouray Success photograph anonymous participant 6. Daytime photograph of the freshly renovated Ouray School building.
Photograph 74: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Melissa Cervone. Daytime photograph of the freshly renovated Ouray School building.

Photograph 75: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Colleen Bixler. Daytime photograph of the City Hall building which also houses the Police Department and Ouray Public Library.
Many interviewees spoke of community-initiated renovation projects, like that of the historic Wright Opera House (Photograph 76). The theater activities there were discussed frequently, too (Photographs 77, 78, and 79). Participants felt that they brought community members together, brought more artistic endeavors to town, and allowed the community to enjoy the beauty of the historical building. Furthermore, they expressed that these events helped break up the monotony of small town life.

Photograph 76: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Glynn Williams. Daytime photograph of Wright Opera House exterior.
Photograph 77: Ouray Success photograph anonymous participant 4. Interior photograph illustrating local theater production.

Photograph 78: Ouray Success photograph anonymous participant 5. Interior photograph illustrating local theater production.
Photograph 79: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Nancy Nixon. Interior photograph illustrating local theater production.

Individual historic restoration projects, as in that of the Beaumont Hotel (Photograph 80) and Citizens State Bank building (Photograph 81), came up in conversations about successful collaborative efforts with the city to restore landmarks to their former glory.

Photograph 81: Ouray Success photograph anonymous participant 8. Daytime photograph of Citizens State Bank, currently undergoing renovations.
The fiber optic cable installation project that is currently in progress also was photographed for this prompt (Photograph 82). Though it may seem like a small thing, this project is life-changing for many Ouray locals who rely upon internet connectivity in contemporary times.

Photograph 82: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Katharina Papenbrock. Daytime photograph showing installation of fiber optic cable.

Internet connectivity is truly a necessity in rural Ouray, but most locals thought of outdoor activities when considering town success. Town’s ski hill (Photograph 83) features a seventy-five foot slope and free rope tow. It is said to be one of only two free ski hills in the nation (backcountry Magazine 2017). The slope itself is packed with highly-skilled children after school, and parents sit around fires in the snow in between their own runs.
Locals literally scale the walls of town as rock climbing is very popular (Photograph 84). A handful of daring local climbers hung and tend to a rope suspension swing from an in-town rock overhang (Photograph 85). There is also a Colorado flag hanging at this site that is periodically replaced by local climbers through crowd-sourced funding. The unique outdoor recreational activities got a lot of attention in our interviews. The Ice Park (Photograph 86) and its Ice Climbing Festival in January was praised as bringing lots of positive attention to town, even though its monetary success is at times contested locally, as discussed earlier. When it comes to Ouray’s successes, the conversations were never far from outdoor recreation.
Photograph 84: Ouray Success photograph anonymous participant 10. Daytime autumn photograph of a local climber on a rope suspension swing from an in-town rock overhang on the west side of town.
Photograph 85: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Mary Jane Cervone. Daytime photograph of local children rock climbing in town.

Photograph 86: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Eric Funk. Daytime winter photograph of ice climber in the Ouray Ice Park, Box Canyon.
One participant chose to document his own victorious fishing trip as being representative of what is successful in Ouray (Photograph 87). Like so many local interviewees expressed, you work hard in summers, so you can get outdoors and enjoy the San Juans. Vernon told me all the late nights bartending seven-days a week were worth it to get your hands on a fish like this.

Photograph 87: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Kayle Vernon. Daytime photograph of a successful fishing day north of Ouray.

Several local photographers spoke more generally about Ouray being a successful community that worked together to keep a high standard of living while accommodating the needs of so many tourists throughout the year. Marc Hitchcox’s photograph (88) of the annual water fights during the July 4th celebration was chosen to illustrate the overlap between touristic spectacle and community tradition. Founded in 1886 like so much of Colorado, Independence Day is serious business in Ouray. As the historical postcards show, the water fights have been
going on in Ouray’s Main Street for over one hundred years.

Photograph 88: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Marc Hitchcox. Daytime photograph of the annual water fights during the July 4th celebration.

Mike Boruta’s aerial town photograph (89) accentuates the bowl-shape of Ouray’s valley. The birds-eye view shows just how small the city of Ouray is. Boruta’s photograph is a reminder of how astonishing it is that a community with so few houses could support a tourist economy as large as Ouray’s.
Photograph 89: Ouray Success photograph courtesy of Mike Boruta. Daytime aerial view of Ouray looking south.

Photograph 90 was also intended to show the overlap between locals and tourists. This participant, who chose to remain anonymous, told me they were proud that Ouray could offer accommodations like those in the photo with wilderness directly adjacent. Likewise, the participant whose photo (91) shows a portion of Main Street, said they wished photographs could capture how intimate the setting of Ouray is. They spoke of the difficulty in getting a good shot of Main Street’s beauty because of the slope of the road. They also said they had never seen a photograph that could demonstrate the difference in scale between downtown businesses and the peaks towering on all sides. They believed it was this incredible setting that allowed Ouray to be successful.
Photograph 90: Ouray Success photograph anonymous participant 9. Daytime photograph of local hotel with naturally heated hot springs pool.

Photograph 91: Ouray Success photograph anonymous participant 2. Daytime photograph of Ouray’s Main Street with shops and Beaumont Hotel in view.
4.5: Ouray’s History

No category speaks more directly to community cohesion than this one. Every single photograph taken was representative of the mining heritage of Ouray. While each photo had its own spin, the overarching theme is impossible to miss. Most photographs’ meanings were explicit in their symbolism in this category, depicting mining equipment, mining monuments, or mine buildings.

Chart 21: Ouray History Prompt by Map Feature

Mining equipment or buildings comprised eight photos directly. Kayle Vernon’s photograph (92) shows a miner’s helmet from a personal collection. We spoke of the significance of helmets like these to so many multigenerational families in town. One doesn’t have to look far back in time to find roots in the mines, and as discussed above, some are still employed by them, though they are not actively extracting ore currently.
Vernon is a bartender at a popular local restaurant on Main Street. We sat at the bar and discussed the photographs as he waited on multiple “old timers,” colloquially called “pards” (short for “partner”). One local, known only as “Bumper” (a term for the supportive role to the “hooker” who is responsible for hoisting loaded cans of rock in hard rock mining), jumped into the conversation about my research to proclaim I ought to give up school to make $30,000 a month to work with the mine maps. Bumper and I have known each other for nearly twenty years and ours is a typical Ouray friendship, in that we have little in common beyond proximity. Bumper comes from a long line of miners and is very good at his job. He is also the sort of storyteller who can engage a whole room. Bumper nearly had us—the entire bar at this point—ready to sign up to be miners when he mentioned it was the deadliest position in the mine due to the threat of poisonous gas exposure. It was this position that killed two men and hospitalized twenty more in 2013, less than a year after the mine reopened for exploration. While we all understand the sacrifice so many make when going underground and we respect the importance those roles hold for many local families, $30,000 per month is not enough. Nevertheless, Vernon chose the helmet for his historical photograph.
Photograph 92: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Kayle Vernon. Photograph of miner’s helmet.

Katie Craig’s photograph (93) looks staged to an outsider’s eye. It is hard to fathom just how much mining equipment was abandoned in situ throughout the area. In many cases, it simply was not worth the journey to get the equipment out. Several of my local participants talked about playing in carts like this, on narrow gauge rails, or in partially-boarded up mine shafts all throughout childhood. Kids are taught to identify explosives, just in case they come across any. “Don’t ever get in the Uncompahgre in town,” a local old timer tells kids, “there are old rusty beaver traps down there and so many pieces of the mines.” I spent my summers in Ouray digging for old pieces of mining equipment, pottery shards, glass bottles, and tin cups—remnants of the Wild West I romanticized like so many others. In a fun daytime usage of a telescope, Photograph 94 shows a group of locals looking at the mining heritage close-up.
Photograph 93: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Katie Craig. Daytime photograph of old mining cart with Craig inside.

Photograph 94: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Gina Wenger. Daytime Holga Polaroid of locals using a telescope near the Ski Hill to look over town’s history and the mining artifacts strewn about.
The following five photographs (95 – 99) are of various dilapidated mine buildings scattered about the Ouray area. Many buildings like these, including Photograph 97, are visible from Main Street. It is challenging to look beyond the legacy of mining when it is so blatantly discernable in town.

Photograph 95: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Colleen Bixler. Daytime photograph of abandoned mine building.
Photograph 96: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Eric Funk. Daytime photograph of abandoned mine building.

Photograph 97: Ouray History photograph by anonymous participant 2. Daytime photograph of abandoned mine building.
Photograph 98: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Katharina Papenbrock. Daytime photograph of abandoned mine building.

Photograph 99: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Marc Hitchcox. Daytime photograph of abandoned mine building.
Two participants chose to take photos of the miner memorial statue at the Hot Springs Pool (Photographs 100 and 101). The juxtaposition of the miner in the foreground of the remodeled pool in the photograph by Heather Greisz (101) could be a metaphor for Ouray today. Two other photographers chose the Chief Ouray monument at the Ouray County Historical Museum and historic district signage to demonstrate Ouray’s past. Chief Ouray’s tragic role in the presence of mining in the area has been white-washed over generations. His history, the photographer indicated, is as imperative to the town’s mining history as anyone’s. As for the choice of the historical district signage, the photographer stated it was plaques like this, which are commonly seen throughout town, that reminded them of the mineral wealth of the past. Mining, they said, represents every aspect of the landscape of Ouray. The town itself could not exist without that original influx of wealth to a select few, creating structures that have lasted until today.
Photograph 100: Ouray History photograph courtesy of David Huddleston. Nighttime photograph of miner memorial statue.

Photograph 101: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Heather Greisz. Daytime photograph of miner memorial statue.
Photograph 102: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Glynn Williams. Daytime photograph of Chief Ouray monument at the Ouray County Historical Museum.

Photograph 103: Ouray History photograph by anonymous participant 3. Daytime photograph of historical district signage.
Many participants selected historic buildings to demonstrate their perception of Ouray’s past. The Ouray County Museum appeared in two photographs (104 and 105). The museum building was once the location of the St. Joseph’s Miners’ Hospital and was recently called “one of the best little museums in the West” by the Smithsonian Institute. The museum has multiple levels dedicated to various aspects of mining history in Ouray and local geology.

Photograph 104: Ouray History photograph by anonymous participant 6. Daytime photograph of the exterior of the Ouray County Museum.
The Wright Opera House appears in four photographs in this section (106 – 109) and the courthouse appears in Photograph 110. These participants considered the buildings representative of the heritage of town. The stories behind these photographs in our interviews centered about what life was like in the early days of Ouray as a town. My participants spoke about how stunning buildings like these must have been to miner newcomers hoping to strike it rich.
Photograph 106: Ouray History photograph by anonymous participant 4. Daytime photograph of the exterior of the historic Wright Opera House.

Photograph 107: Ouray History photograph by anonymous participant 7. Daytime photograph of the exterior of the historic Wright Opera House.
Photograph 108: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Nancy Nixon. Daytime photograph of the exterior of the historic Wright Opera House.

Photograph 109: Ouray History photograph by anonymous participant 5. Interior photograph of the historic Wright Opera House.
Photograph 110: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Lee Ann Parden. Daytime photograph of the exterior of the historic Ouray County Courthouse.

One photo was of the interior of Box Canyon Falls (Photograph 104), and another showing the “Box Canon” sign discussed above. Both photographers related the sign to its place in the mining boom of the early nineteenth century. As the historical postcard collection also showed, this local landmark has been well-loved through the generations: for aesthetics, for social gatherings, and for hydroelectric power.
Photograph 111: Ouray History photograph by anonymous participant 8. Daytime photograph of Box Canyon Falls.

Photograph 112: Ouray History photograph by anonymous participant 9. Evening photograph of the historical “Box Canon” sign on the mountainside above the falls.
The final two photographs for this prompt both demonstrate the physical landscape changes that come with a booming mining town. Mike Boruta’s photograph shows how the land is scarred, long after the mines have closed. Jill Parisi’s view of the ranchland north of Ouray speaks to the regional systems that were in play to keep the mining communities alive. Livestock and agriculture have never been possible in the small box canyon in which Ouray exists, so Parisi’s photograph shows the other associated industries that historically kept the county going.

Photograph 113: Ouray History photograph courtesy of Mike Boruta. Daytime photo showing mining scars.

4.6: Ouray's Future

Once again, these photographs all targeted the downtown area. The reaches of future concerns extended far beyond town’s limits, but the photographs were centrally located. Photographs of children and the school were the most popular response, but there were also photographs of the natural landscape with discussion of its preservation, and photographs of the technological future of Ouray.
Eight participants chose to take photographs of children or the school (Photographs 115 – 122). Community members frequently discuss classroom sizes casually on the street, as a means to gauge the health of the community. Silverton, the mining town to the immediate south, has not fared as well as Ouray and has a mere sixty-five students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. There, school is in constant jeopardy of closing and they must periodically bus students to Durango when there are not enough students. Ouray as a community worries about this in their future as well. The Ouray School (prekindergarten through twelfth grade) has approximately two hundred students. The school does well at the state and national levels, but in a town as small as Ouray, community members focus a lot of attention towards the school’s success whether individuals have children or not. Many interviewees spoke of the other community structures that support children’s growth. Structures discussed included the Ouray Public Library (Photograph 123), City Hall, the Courthouse (Photograph 124), and parks. For small
towns like Ouray, these public spaces serve the community at many levels. Gina Wenger told me:

The polaroid of the Ouray Public Library window speaks to how “woke” I feel that Maureen and the library staff are to the community. They recognize the needs of everyone, not just those who have resources or property. The library serves a strong social function in Ouray. They offer more than books and computers. They give a warm, welcoming and safe environment to those who are in need.


Photograph 117: Ouray Future photograph by anonymous participant 3. Daytime photograph of child on suspension bridge over Box Canyon Falls.
Photograph 118: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Katharina Papenbrock. Nighttime photograph of children and community members caroling and drinking hot chocolate on Main Street.

Photograph 120: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Melissa Cervone. Daytime photograph of local children outside of the Ouray School.

Photograph 122: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Mary Jane Cervone. Photograph of local child making a silly face for the camera.

Photograph 123: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Gina Wenger. Daytime photograph of the exterior door of the Ouray Public Library.
Many discussions about Ouray’s future hinged on preserving the natural environment for future generations. Box Canyon had three photos including the lit sign (Photograph 125), the ice park (Photograph 126), and one with a child on Box Canyon’s suspension bridge (see Photograph 117 above). These photographers told me they chose Box Canyon to be a symbol for protecting nature for future generations. They also were optimistic about the relighting of the sign, an indication that Ouray loves its history, but also has an eye towards the future. The Ice Park was also discussed as a successful way to reframe Ouray’s tourism. Winter tourism is a necessity for so many, and without ski slopes, ice climbing seems like the most likely source of offseason income.
Photograph 125: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Nancy Nixon. Nighttime photograph of the historic “Box Canon” sign, freshly renovated and lit by solar powered LED bulbs.

Photograph 126: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Mike Boruta. Daytime winter aerial photograph of the Ice Park connected to Box Canyon.
Many interviewees mentioned that Ouray needed to look toward the future with respect to its connection with the rest of the world. Ouray is part of a handful of towns participating in a summer music series. Ouray gets Thursdays in June in this series, with national acts performing in downtown’s Fellin Park (see Photograph 127). These sorts of events bring attention to Ouray and regional tourism that wasn’t as prevalent before. Huddleston, the photographer below, chose this event as an indication of Ouray welcoming more outsiders in the future. Many interviewees discussed the participation in the music series as a sign that Ouray was thinking about the future and was willing to adapt.

Photograph 127: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of David Huddleston. Evening photograph with alpenglow of Ouray’s Fellin Park during the summer Mountain Air Music Series.

While discussing Ouray’s future, many interviewees spoke of technological advances. Specifically, with several locals, fiber optic cable installation and connectivity to the surrounding area was discussed (see Photograph 128). There is a tendency to assume rural places like Ouray are encapsulated from the rest of the world, or stuck in the past. These assumptions could not be further from the truth for Ouray. If anything, the rurality pushes many to consider technological advances more critically and stay at the forefront of change.
Photograph 128: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Eric Funk. Daytime photograph demonstrating the new fiber optic cable running through town.

Two participants focused on the retail spaces on Main Street as being the future of Ouray (Photographs 129 and 130). With many specialty boutiques and locally owned restaurants and bars, the Main Street experience in Ouray is like no other. In this way, walking the downtown strip is a tourist activity on its own. For many Ouray tourists, the steepness of Ouray’s Main Street is as far as their hiking experience goes when visiting town. The photographers below felt town ought to focus more of its efforts on the Main Street experience in the future. While the main draw of Ouray will likely always be outdoor recreation, they said, it is the combination of Ouray’s downtown with the stunning natural beauty that sets it apart from other destinations.
Photograph 129: Ouray Future photograph by anonymous participant 2. Photograph of the interior of the Ouray Brewery, on Main Street.

Photograph 130: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Jill Parisi. Interior photograph from a Ouray Main Street boutique.
Following the above theme, Photographs 131 and 132 below resulted in broader discussions of Ouray as the “whole package,” with natural and cultural beauty. Lee Ann Parden’s view of town looking south shows just how tucked away Ouray is. We talked about Ouray’s old tourist slogan, “The Gem of the Rockies,” in the historical postcard collection and how Ouray continues to embody that name. Without the preservation of the natural beauty and limitations on growth, Ouray could lose its sense of uniqueness, she said. Katie Craig’s photograph below, as in the others from mountain tops seen above, gives a near bird’s eye perspective that allows a viewer to think about Ouray at a larger scale. Ouray is isolated and tucked into a grand wilderness, Craig said, but also it is alive and continually adapting.

Photograph 132: Ouray Future photograph courtesy of Katie Craig. Daytime view of Ouray looking northeast.

4.7: Ouray Outsider Survey

After completion of the self-directed photography project, I set up a simple, seven-question open-ended survey for outsiders to complete after perusing the Story Map. The questions asked follow below.
1. Have you ever been to Ouray, Colorado?
2. After flipping through the first set of photos ("My Ouray Postcard"), what would you think about a friend's trip if you received these postcards?
3. After flipping through the second set of photos ("My Ouray"), what do you think it would be like to live here?
4. After flipping through the third set of photos ("Ouray Problems"), what do you think Ouray's problems are?
5. After flipping through the fourth set of photos ("Ouray Successes"), what do you think Ouray's successes are?
6. After flipping through the fifth set of photos ("Ouray's History"), what do you think Ouray was like in the past?
7. After flipping through the sixth set of photos ("Ouray's Future"), what do you think Ouray will be like in the future?

This survey was anonymous and I did not collect any demographic information from my survey participants. The only information I have for these participants is their confirmation that they have never been to Ouray, Colorado. Once one-hundred responses were collected, I turned to a simple content analysis. I read through all the responses for each question separately where I analyzed and systematically coded them for common response themes. For example, I collected all the responses for “What do you think it would be like to live here?” and put them into a separate Word document. From there, I looked for common themes that could be combined into a category, or code. For instance, the responses: “It would be really isolated,” “I’d feel isolated in this rural town,” and “Remote” all were tallied as the same theme that I named: “Remote/Isolated/Rural.” I grouped similar meanings for responses in this way for each question. Once I had them all sorted, into themes, I counted how many answers fit each theme and plugged all the data into an Excel spreadsheet. There were ten different, but thematically similar, answers in the category “Remote/Isolated/Rural” referenced above, for example. I performed a separate analysis and tallied separate codes for each of the open-ended questions (questions two through seven above). The results were surprisingly insightful. It appears that a Story Map such as this does give a user a sense of place, even to an outsider.
4.7.1: Question: “What would you think about a friend’s trip if you received these postcards?”

Chart 23: “What would you think of your friend’s trip?”

Question two seems to have been the easiest question for the respondents with exactly one hundred responses, i.e., a single response per person. Unlike the other prompts where respondents tended to answer with multiple codes (therefore putting the code count over one-hundred), these answers were concise and direct, as if they required less thought and were automatic.

Forty-five respondents commented on the natural beauty. It is no surprise that this was the most common gut reaction. Another thirty-four commented that if they had received these postcards from a friend, they would want to go there, too. Thirteen more answered with some variety of awe for Ouray. And, the final eight answered that they believed a friend’s vacation would seem calm, peaceful, or as one of them answered, “restorative.” I would guess that it is the prevalence of off-season cards that add to the tendency to answer things like “peaceful.” As discussed above, in this category there are seven photos taken in autumn and four taken in winter. Therefore, the photos illustrate less activity than those showing a booming tourist
season, for example. Overall in the category, given the beauty the local photographers captured for town, these answers are predictable.

4.7.2: Question: “What do you think it would be like to live here?”

Chart 24: “What would it be like to live here?”

The next question asked viewers to imagine what it would be like to live in Ouray after viewing the “My Ouray” local photographs. The “peaceful/relaxing” theme cropped up again for question three, second only to the answer of “outdoor sports and recreation.” There are 159 answers in the chart above, meaning most respondents had multifaceted answers with several codes. The natural beauty of Ouray is high on this list as well, but more people answered that life in Ouray would be more about activity in the natural beauty. There were many more answers reflecting social relations in this question. Respondents expressed both positive
thoughts about a small town like Ouray (e.g. “quaint” and “charming”) and negative views (e.g. “isolated,” “remote,” “claustrophobic”).

4.7.3: Question: “What do you think are Ouray’s problems?”

Chart 25: “What are Ouray’s problems?”
I was amazed at how well the local photographs for question 4, “Ouray Problems,” translated to outsiders. The respondents were not only able to decipher Ouray local concerns, but the counts above reflect the varying severity of the problems as they were communicated to me by locals. Indeed, developmental distresses, uncontrolled tourism, politics, and infrastructure decay were the top themes for local photographers. Concerns about climate change and natural habitat disruption were very commonly voiced by locals, but were perhaps harder to communicate through photographs. The outsider responders did seem to understand what locals were voicing through their photos, though, and wrote a staggering 167 problems that they perceived in the photographs. This was the highest response rate for all the questions.
4.7.4: Question: “What do you think are Ouray’s successes?”

During my local interviews, the most common theme for this photo prompt was enjoyment of and respect for the natural environment. Those themes show up high on the chart above, but the answer of “tourism” was the highest. I believe locals are hesitant to answer that tourism is a success because they are so entrenched in it and its problems. It is hard to see the outside perception that Ouray is a wonderful tourist destination when you are trudging through the day-to-day concerns arising from it. Also, local photographers had to choose just one thing
to demonstrate what they thought was successful in Ouray. The outsiders surveyed could write as many things as they wanted in the open-field textboxes. Therefore, this category had 133 answers tallied above.

The outsiders also understood the community photographs and answered that Ouray’s civic engagement was successful. They also answered that community celebrations were a success in Ouray, I know my local participants were trying to express those themes in their photographs, too.

4.7.5: Question: “What do you think Ouray was like in the past?”

Much like the first question, when asked what they thought Ouray was like in the past, outsiders had concise, straightforward answers. There were only 111 answers coded above, so most respondents said one thing only. Most addressed the connotation of the “Wild West.” I separated the term “rugged” from the “hard and tough” category because it seemed that rugged was more often referencing the physical setting. “Hard and tough” responses tended to address social issues as well. The distinctions coded for this question are quite fuzzy, however. There is
tremendous overlap between saying Ouray was the Wild West and saying Ouray was hard and tough. Local photographers chose mining imagery to speak to the larger themes that the outsiders surveyed understood. While fewer people answered about mining directly, I believe the local photographers were not trying to only portray the mining industry, but rather the historical setting in which mining occurred.

4.7.6: Question: “What do you think Ouray will be like in the future?”

Chart 28: “What will Ouray be like in the future?”
When asked what Ouray would be like in the future, there were only 102 answers. The breakdown of answers has “beautiful” as the most common answer and “protecting the beauty” in the future as the second answer. Beyond those two, there is notable diversity in the answers. Many respondents wrote about tourism and economic growth. They wrote that Ouray would be continuing to hold onto its sense of community through those changes. One interesting theme here is that seven people answered that the future would be whatever the younger generation wanted it to be. With so many photos of local children and the school, I suppose this was an expected interpretation.

The outsider surveys surprised me by serving an integral role in interpreting the success of these alternative approaches to sense-of-place research. The self-directed photography and Story Map of the resulting photos largely were successful in communicating the themes put forth by locals in interviews. Locals were able to communicate visually their thoughts about home, and outsiders easily interpreted the media. This survey exercise helped reinforce, for me, the validity of such approaches to local sense-of-place.


Chapter 5: Conclusions

This conclusion will offer a summary of my findings through this research. I will also assess the effectiveness of my methodologies, illustrating what worked and what did not. An exploration for future research will then be outlined. Lastly, I will place my research in the landscape of the geographic discipline.

5.1: Summary

The primary goal of this research was to identify and implement alternative methods for sense-of-place research. I wanted to attempt to modernize sense-of-place research and promote its practice. In order to judge whether the new methods were effective, I needed to compare this research to an established baseline; thus, the decision to test the methods in my prior study area.

There was significant overlap in the sense of place themes revealed between my master’s research and this work. During my prior research, the conclusion was that Ouray is viewed as the “Modern Wild West” in natural, social, and meaningful ways. As the last two chapters of this dissertation show, people still think of Ouray as the “Modern Wild West” to some extent. The historical postcards certainly documented the wild aspects of place by focusing on things like natural disasters and incredible conditions. Newer postcards also focus on the rugged "wild" landscape, but as discussed above the objective of postcards has shifted. In recent history, postcards aim to promote tourism rather than serving as a primary form of communication or as documentation of events and people.

The local self-directed photos did show some overlap with the master's research, also. Many wild aspects of town were shown, but also lots of "every town USA" images. There are many explanations for why there were different results this time around. For one thing, my
mindset has changed over time. I have a deeper understanding of the place and brought that
different lens to my study design and interpretation. The town of Ouray has changed as well
over the past eight years. But, I believe the main differences rest in the methodologies
themselves. The critical distinction between these methods and the traditional approaches was
that the participants had an activity that required active engagement, rather than simply an act of
verbal reflection or remembrance. When asked questions about one’s home, I believe it is easy
to slip into romanticism. It is human nature to want to have a good story. It is not that I believe
my participants in my master's research were untruthful, it is simply that they were telling me
their favorite parts of the story of place—both good and bad. When asked to take photos and
describe them for the present research, local photographers often showed the regular day-to-day
life of Ouray. They showed the story of many small towns. Yes, the stunning setting of
Ouray made for a dramatic backdrop in each photo and locals are filled with pride to show that to
the outside world, but also the photos showed a community with all the same aspirations and
concerns that the rest of rural America have.

The survey results showed that the perception of Ouray is not only often the Modern
Wild West, but also isolated, remote, and rugged. While these concepts were addressed in my
master’s thesis, I believe I now have a better understanding of what that isolation means to locals
this time around. Ouray is indeed remote and can feel isolated, even with the coming new fiber
optic cable, but that isolation is elective. I wrote in my master’s thesis about the local jokes that
Ouray is a rehoming location for those in the Witness Protection Program. While a joke, it is
ture that Ouray is a place that will accept newcomers as they are, in spite of their past, and with
as much anonymity as they like, as long as they do their time and prove themselves a local. But
what my master’s thesis didn’t address, is that even born-and-raised locals put themselves into
their own “Witness Protection Program” from time to time. Locals toggle back and forth between celebrating new efforts towards global connectivity and embracing the poor cell service that makes them periodically “unreachable.” Ouray puts itself into intentional exile intermittently. The reluctance of some to have names on their photos in this research further demonstrates the distrust of the outside world that permeates Ouray.

My master's research said Ouray doesn't want to be defined by outsiders; that the town likes being an enigma. This came up many times throughout varies aspects of this research. There was a lot of reluctance to actually submit photos (even when some people had already taken them and shown them to me!). "Oh, this will be so fun! Like a scavenger hunt,” they said, “But, you can't publish this."

I understand not wanting photographs and quotes published, as a lot of our conversations touched on heavy, emotionally-laden topics. Locals expressed their deepest worries about the futures of their home. They entrusted me with concerns about their peers too—people with whom they share a very close community. It is not difficult to see how they might be worried about their names being attached to their thoughts. It was in this manner that I was reminded of Ouray’s tendency to use joking as a coping mechanism. This came up a lot in my master's research. Joking helps take the edge off stress. And also, joking gives you an “out” when confronted by a peer. “Oh, I was just joking, pard.” Ouray has a highly developed sense of humor. The way locals tease one another reminds me of the way siblings poke fun. Yes, it is a joke, but also, there is significance there that is communicated to the recipient, always a nugget of truth. The jokes between locals continually shape the community’s expectations of each other and guide social relations. Understanding the humor of a place is imperative to gaining access as
a researcher and critical in understanding sense of place. This research project brought me further into the humor of Ouray—a real treat for me as a lifetime part-timer.

5.2: Assessing the New Methodologies

While I assess these new alternative methods to be successful and I believe could be applicable to many other places in the world, I also recognize that part of what made my results different this time around was the fact that traditions are not static. People adjust. People change. People reframe their conceptions of place. People change their stories, too, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that from my perspective. As my favorite English professor, James Hartman, was fond of saying “All stories are true, and some really happened.” What is important to assess here is not necessarily whether the sense of place illuminated in this research matches the prior results, but rather if a deeper understanding of place was gained. I believe these results overlapped just enough with those of the past to give me confidence to say that the new insights are valid. I trust that my understanding of this place is more profound because of these research methods.

That said, the developer experience of the Story Map applications were fraught with problems. For smaller-scale research projects I think it would be a great fit to build a Story Map. The sheer volume of photographs and postcards seemed to push the applications to their limits. Free and approachable are wonderful attributes, but only if they are functional. I found there to be many glitches that I could not overcome. Many of these glitches, like the constant font resizing errors, were frustrating and time consuming. ESRI was some help, but there were many problems they acknowledged and stated they have meant to make clear to users, but haven’t.
I do believe that the end results—the online maps—are effective, though. The end user experience of the Story Maps is successful. The goal was to create a means to preserve and display the decaying paper collection of Ouray postcards, which was ultimately achieved. The maps are approachable and easy to navigate.

The display method was also to be used for analysis, as a means to assess a large collection with a simple scrolling function. I believe this too was achieved through the Story Map applications. Furthermore, the applications were successful in their usage for my local sense of place photographs. The Ouray interviews and survey data support this perceived success. Local voices, of the past and present, were expressed effectively through this methodology and those voices were understood easily by outsiders.

This research has confirmed my hypothesis that there is a place for positivism in humanist geography. Geography has embraced positivism at different points in time, especially in physical and geospatial research, and frequently in the social science aspects of geography, as well. In the 1960s, for example, geography embraced positivistic and quantitative methods, exemplified by work such as that of Arthur Robinson et al. (1961) in “A Correlation and Regression Analysis Applied to Rural Farm Population Densities in the Great Plains.” These positivistic methods were applied to cultural ideas, too, with the employment of distance decay models, applications of central place theory, and quantitative urban studies, to name a few. While positivism made studies more quantitative and measurable, and helped with classification, it also inherently failed to adequately allow for comprehending human interactions with their environment – the world is more complicated than positivism alone allows.

Positivism retains an important role in geographical research, but more philosophical approaches have entered the scene as geographers realized that human geography at the time was
incomplete. There was no philosophy for the abstract, subjective topics, like sense of place, and humanism, for one, as a philosophical approach gained traction. Like many geographers of this era, I found human geography research methods to be incomplete, and I saw sense of place methodologies as incomplete as well. On the other hand, the positivistic tendency to let data rule also was not enough. I argue, that just as positivism is incomplete, so are many humanist efforts. In my research, it was clear to me that traditional sense of place research methods could be enhanced with an appropriate application of positivist methods.

My humanist training, in combination with my experience in positivistic spatial science, allowed me to see the need for more robust methodological approaches. I believe this research demonstrates the benefits of adding some “hard” spatial science back into the equation. I used positivistic processes as a means to organize and comprehend a massive qualitative data set. Likewise, the self-directed photography project gave both participants and me a platform for discussing the intangible aspects of place. Through the initial interviews, the photography exercise, and follow-up engagement with my participants, abundant reflexivity was employed. This reflexivity, or the feedback loop between the researcher and participants, is what made my methods humanist. Furthermore, the outsider survey gave me a tool for additional assessment of the effectiveness of the research methods. Each portion of my research gave me positive feedback that it was indeed functioning in way I had hoped. There was deeper sense of place information elicited through integration of new methodologies and I was able to illuminate deeper conceptions about Ouray, Colorado than in my master’s research with its more limited set of research tools.
5.3 Avenues for Future Research.

There are many possibilities for expanding this research in the future. It would be easy to do similar historical postcard projects with other tourist places. In the process of this research, I acquired lots of other postcards from the region: Telluride, Colorado in particular. I plan to do a similar project for that town and compare their results against Ouray. There are many contrasts between Ouray and Telluride, even though they have very similar settings and mining histories. I believe a project looking at the postcard depictions of the two towns could be quite fruitful.

I have envisioned a regional map as well, that contains all the postcards from the towns of the San Juans. Investigating these results at varying scales would add to the depth of the analysis tremendously.

The historical postcard research could easily be applied to any place, not just former mining tourist towns. Comparing how beach tourist destinations have been portrayed and changed over time would be quite interesting, for example, and would require only a simple extension of these methods. The methods do not require explicit tourist destinations as study areas, though. I have a small collection of postcards from Topeka, Kansas, for example. With access to a larger collection, these cards could produce a compelling look at a capital city’s sense of place over time.

I also hoped to investigate the handwritten messages on the backs of the cards more in this research. This is effort is my next plan for this research agenda. I want to look at where the postcards were sent and what was said and then add this information as a layer to my GIS. This can also be incorporated as part of the research on Telluride as well. I believe there will likely be compelling differences between the two towns.
This methodology would not necessarily have to center upon postcards, either. I could see research with tourist brochures, calendars, matchbooks, pressed pennies, stereopairs, spoons, or thimbles. I have a collection of Ouray pressed pennies; I think a larger regional assessment (e.g. across the Rockies) of the imagery on these could be fascinating.

Just like the historical postcard methodology, I was pleased with the self-directed photography exercise. I think this project could be replicated anywhere that a researcher had connections to local people. I found the most challenging portion of my research was finding locals willing to have their contributions to the research published. Many people wanted to be involved and hear about results, but they were reluctant to have their thoughts be public. I ran into a similar snag in my master’s research. This hesitancy to trust the outside world is no surprise to me. Ouray is careful about its exposure; and rightfully so. This trait is part of what makes Ouray what it is.

5.4: A Personal Afterword: The Place of this Research in the Geographic Discipline

While I believe I am similar to many contemporary geographers in that I am interested in many facets of the discipline, I favor humanism and my research tends to fall within the camps of phenomenology and idealism. My master’s research was a classic phenomenological approach to a sense of place study. My dissertation research overlaps the two camps. True to phenomenology, I resist using a priori hypothesis and favor empathy in my research. Open-ended interview strategies, participant mapping, and self-directed photography all show phenomenological roots to my research. But, like many historical geographers, I am looking at pieces from the past to infer sense of place information. By mining sources of the past to get at meaning, idealism is employed.
I believe that this sort of humanistic research is increasingly important as it has fallen from favor with the trend now towards geospatial technologies. The decline in humanistic geography is gradually more evident to me as my cohort of place scholars dwindles. Abandoning their prior interests for more employable postmodern theoretical inquiry or higher paying geographic techniques, leaves me as the only researcher I know having a single presentation with any mention of “sense of place” in the title at the last annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers I attended. It is disheartening to read that my former advisor also feels this worry too as he concluded his article in 2013 with the statement “Tomorrow does not look bright for the geography I love” (Shortridge 2013). While disheartened, I see this as a challenge to reinvigorate the discipline with new approaches to humanistic research. I believe that humanism and the technological trend do not need to be mutually exclusive. Furthermore, I believe the strength of geographic thought has always been its ability to bridge the gap between its spheres: human, physical, and technological approaches. This is what makes geography unique and powerful in an increasingly hyper-specialized modern world.

When I first came to KU I was a psychology major taking predominately geography classes. Early in my career as a student I was exposed to Yi-Fu Tuan’s work by Chris Brown. Prior to this, I went looking for inspiration in environmental psychology readings and was disappointed. Meanwhile, I took more and more geography courses—both human and physical—and realized this discipline offered the blend of natural and social science I wanted with the advantage of humanism as well. Tuan’s *Space and Place* was revolutionary to me. I read of the concepts of place attachment and placemaking and I was hooked. My drive to approach research phenomenologically comes directly from Tuan.
Chris Brown also gets credit for exposing me to Robert Sack. Sack’s framework of place as an intermingling of nature, social relations, and meaning spoke to me. I found comfort in Sack’s concise approach to nebulous issues of place. Sack’s work takes inherently messy concepts of place and maps them out in a manner that resembles mathematics with geometric diagrams and flowcharts. I also learned of the distinction between thin conceptions of place and thick ones. In our modern, hyperspecialized world, thin meanings exist. I yearned for what Sack would call thick meanings, deeper place connections, and more complex understandings of landscapes.

It was in Pete Shortridge’s classes that I learned of William Least Heat-Moon’s *PrairyErth*. In this book, Heat-Moon takes a single underpopulated county of the Kansas plains and creates a story of place that stretches over six hundred pages. His goal was a deep map—one that examines a place from a multitude of angles. His ability to make the ordinary sing with significance was stirring to me.

Pete Shortridge’s Sense of Place Seminar also exposed me to Ken Foote’s *Shadowed Ground*. Foote analyzes the treatment of violent and tragic sites, demonstrating a dark sense of place. The choice to use landscapes of tragedy was unique and compelling to me. It showed me that ignored and derelict landscapes held just as much meaning as polished and prideful ones. He outlines the different ways humans have manipulated places to memorialize or erase the occurrence of historical tragic events. His use of methods and the capacity to give a classification system to fuzzy concepts was a refreshing technique to me. This book allowed me to formulate similar studies in my mind and it made intangible place studies seem approachable.

Philosopher Edward Casey’s term “habitus” gave me terminology for the perplexing relationship between places and selves. His work, including his discussion of mountain towns,
articulates the ongoing changes of places and people and the relationship between the two. The discourse of place became much more vivid to me through reading Casey.

I broadly consider myself to be a humanist geographer. My research methods are largely phenomenological. I prefer to approach the world without a priori hypotheses. I aspire towards imaginative self-transposal, or the ability to see my research from another perspective. Sense of place phenomenologists guided my development as a geographer. I also, however, believe there is value in idealism as well. With incorporation of historical sources, like the postcard, idealism is employed. In line with place image studies and perceptual geography, idealism gives historical meaning to my dissertation research. I also cannot help but enjoy geography that gives order and rhythm to complex issues of place. I have always aspired to write about place in a way that speaks to broader, relatable themes. Demonstrating connections between disparate places and showing that universal human placemaking behaviors are identifiable anywhere in the world show such themes. Furthermore, by writing about ideographic elements of places, ordinary locations become compelling landscapes of deep meaning. A blend of place writing that is both phenomenological and idealist was the goal of this dissertation. A desire for research methods that are modern, yet rooted in deep geographic tradition pushed this dissertation to completion.
Appendix A

Master’s Research Interview Questions

1. How did you end up in Ouray?
2. How would you define local? Who is local in Ouray?
3. What makes Ouray unique or special to you?
4. How is Ouray like other places? What is universally true about Ouray?
5. Which, if any, other places would you compare Ouray to? Around here? Far away?
6. Are there any characteristics you would use to describe the people of Ouray as a whole?
7. How would you group locals in Ouray if you had to make separate categories?
8. Do you believe Ouray has a cohesive sense of community? If so, do you feel part of it?
9. In what ways do you think Ouray is an easy place to live?
10. In what ways is it difficult?
11. If you had to place Ouray into its regional context, where would you say it belongs?
12. Pick three iconic landmarks that most define Ouray.
13. Pick three activities a person must do to get the true sense of Ouray.
Appendix B

Dissertation Research Interview Questions

1. Walk me through the features you think are significant in Ouray.

2. Why did you include these features? Only natural features?

3. What must one see to get a true Ouray experience?

4. Where would you draw Ouray’s boundaries? Where does Ouray end?

5. How do the images of the postcards demonstrate life in Ouray?

6. What needs to be in an image of Ouray to show what life is like?

7. Are you surprised by any of the postcards? What images did you expect to see?

8. Do you have any Ouray postcards? Ever sent one?

9. If you were to take a photo for a postcard, what would it look like? What would be in it?
   What season would it be? What direction would it face?
Appendix C

Photovoice Self-directed Photography Prompts

Note to participants: Multiple photos are okay. It is also permissible to skip one or more.

After you are done with your photos, we can chat about the photos’ meanings.

7. A photo that would be used as a postcard for sale in the Ouray Visitor’s Center.
8. A photo representation of your Ouray
9. A photo of problems/issues you perceive in Ouray
10. A photo of something successful in Ouray
11. A photo that represents Ouray’s history
12. A photo that represents Ouray’s future
Appendix D
Photography Project Instruction Sheet

STEP 1:
Take a photograph for each of the following prompts:

1. *A photo that would be used as a postcard for sale in the Ouray Visitor’s Center.*
2. *A photo representation of your Ouray*
3. *A photo of problems/issues you perceive in Ouray*
4. *A photo of something successful in Ouray*
5. *A photo that represents Ouray’s history*
6. *A photo that represents Ouray’s future*

STEP 2:
Email the photos to Stephanie Willis at: AbramRae@gmail.com
Or
Text the photos to Stephanie Willis at: (785) 220-3717
Or
Bring them to the Ouray Public Library from 10 – 2 pm on Saturdays this summer

STEP 3:
We can chat about your photos in person, on the phone, or online through the above contacts.

Some discussion questions to get the brainstorming going . . .
1. *Walk me through the physical landscape features you think define Ouray.*
2. *Why did you include these features? Only natural features?*
3. *What must one see to get a true Ouray experience?*
4. *Where would you draw Ouray’s boundaries? Where does Ouray end?*
5. *How do the images of the postcards demonstrate life in Ouray?*
6. *What needs to be in an image of Ouray to show what life is like?*
7. *Are you surprised by any of the postcards? What images did you expect to see?*
8. *Do you have any Ouray postcards? Ever sent one?*
9. *If you were to take a photo for a postcard, what would it look like? What would be in it? What season would it be? What direction would it face?*
Appendix E

Adult Informed Consent Statement

Ouray Postcard Sense of Place: Looking at Words and Reading Pictures

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Geography and Atmospheric Science at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is an exploration into inventive tools and techniques for sense-of-place research, all through the lens of the familiar postcard. Interactive maps, historical and contemporary, will be constructed.

PROCEDURES

Participants will be interviewed about Ouray and postcards of Ouray. They will be shown the historical GIS I have made with hundreds of town postcards mapped through time. (Approximately 1 hour)
1. Walk me through the physical landscape features you think define Ouray.
2. Why did you include these features? Only natural features?
3. What must one see to get a true Ouray experience?
4. Where would you draw Ouray’s boundaries? Where does Ouray end?
5. How do the images of the postcards demonstrate life in Ouray?
6. What needs to be in an image of Ouray to show what life is like?
7. Are you surprised by any of the postcards? What images did you expect to see?
8. Do you have any Ouray postcards? Ever sent one?
9. If you were to take a photo for a postcard, what would it look like? What would be in it? What season would it be? What direction would it face?

They will be sent into the field (at their own pace) to take photos that answer the following prompts:
1. A photo that would be used as a postcard for sale in the Ouray Visitor’s Center.
2. A photo representation of your Ouray
3. A photo of problems/issues you perceive in Ouray
4. A photo of something successful in Ouray
5. A photo that represents Ouray’s history
6. A photo that represents Ouray’s future

Lastly, we will sit together to talk through the photos they took and discuss sense of place. (Approximately 1 hour)

RISKS

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.
BENEFITS

Direct benefits to the community include the creation and utilization of maps of Ouray’s postcards through time.

More generally, I believe there is value in giving sense of place a voice in a town like Ouray. Sense of place has the capability to enrich the field of geography with humanistic depth while, at the same time, show it is modern, creative, and perhaps most important, uniquely geographic.

There, unfortunately, will not be any payment for participation in this study.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study unless you specifically give permission. If you prefer, the researcher will use a study a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form, you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future.

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to:

Stephanie Willis
1475 Jayhawk Blvd.
Lindley Hall, Rm. 500
Lawrence, KS 66045

If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:
I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

_________________________________________
Participant's Signature

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Appendix F: Historical Postcard Charts: Features by Decade
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