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[History Description Of Vintage Postcards](#)

PHOTOCHROME ERA (1939 to present)

Photochromes (also known as Modern Chromes) first came into being in 1939. Their colors were particularly appealing to collectors. The famous movie, *The Wizard of Oz*, affirmed America's love for color images. These "Chrome" postcards started to dominate the scene soon after they were launched by the Union Oil Company in their western service stations in 1939. They were easily produced, of high photo quality and most importantly, they were in color. Their spread was momentarily slowed down during WWII due to supply shortages, but they replaced both linen and black & white postcards by 1945 in the roadside postcard racks. Linen firms converted to photochrome postcards or went out of business. Black and white postcard firms merged with larger companies or disappeared completely.

REAL PHOTO POSTCARDS (1900 to present)

Real Photo Postcards were used as early as 1900. They can be particularly difficult to date unless they have a postmark or a date from the photographer. They must be carefully examined to ensure they are not reproductions which can be a problem.

There is much confusion on what "Real Photo" postcards are and how to identify them. Real Photo postcards are reproduced photographs developed onto photographic paper. With the size and weight of postcards with a postcard back. There are many postcards that reproduce photos by various printing methods that aren't "real photos." Instead are the same methods used to reproduce photos in magazines and newspapers. The best way to tell the difference is to look at the postcard with a magnifying glass. If the photo is printed you will see that it is made up of a lot of little dots, the same as a photo printed in a newspaper. A "real photo" postcard is solid, no dots.

Sometimes the most important aspects of a subject are not immediately obvious. Keep reading to get the complete picture.

Helpful Hint: Most real photo postcards have identifying marks on the back usually in the stampbox corner, that identifies the manufacturer of the photographic paper. You can approximate the age of the Real Photo by knowing when the paper manufacturer was in business

ART DECO ERA (1910 to early '30s)

Art Decos are known mainly for their vibrant colors. Art Deco is usually concerned with things of the past including pictures done by the ancient Greeks. Also copies with a twist of Middle Eastern subjects, variations on Egyptian artifacts, a natural extension of Art Nouveau and a whole variety of other influences not so directly related. They often depict pretty ladies in fancy clothes vogue style. Also of note are the sharp angles and straight lines. They have gained in popularity over the years and now have a very strong following.

The Art Deco period began around 1900 and ended around 1930. If in fact it ever did have an ending. At least however, this is the period during which the greatest volume of work was produced. What finally ended the movement? Most likely it suffered an untimely demise due to the financial crash of 1929 plus a worldwide depression. Then the second World War interrupted any recovery

About the Author

By Anders Eriksson, feel free to visit his top ranked GVO affiliate site: [GVO](#)

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