

Book Reviews and Notices

Mapping the West: America's Westward Movement, 1524-1890, by Paul E. Cohen. New York: Rizzoli, 2002. ix, 208 pp. Color illustrations and maps, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth.

Reviewer W. Raymond Wood is professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Missouri-Columbia and the author of *An Atlas of Early Maps of the American Midwest* (1983). His most recent book is *Prologue to Lewis and Clark: The Mackay and Evans Expedition* (2003).

David Rumsey comments in his introduction to *Mapping the West* that "maps are among our most basic documents, and when we examine them, we are at the roots of history" (14). Indeed, history without maps is inconceivable. Maps chart the timeline of history and reveal the growth of knowledge as well as of human institutions. In this beautiful volume, Paul Cohen and his 17 coauthors provide a capsule of cartographic history interleaved with the complex history of the trans-Mississippi West.

The dust jacket assertion that this is "a stunning collection of the finest maps ever made of the American West" is not hyperbole: the collection is beautifully reproduced, and although one might argue the relative merits of many maps, the ones chosen for this volume clearly are among the most important historical ones. The authors drew on 24 institutional and private collections on both sides of the Atlantic for important one-of-a-kind manuscript maps and rare published maps.

The 65 maps are on high-quality paper in glorious color. Unless one purchases a calendar of old and unannotated charts, map reproductions in most books are invariably in black-and-white. Yet maps, especially some of the earlier ones, were usually accentuated in color, sometimes vivid. Reproduction in this book is excellent. Quality printing and paper assure that most details can be read on all but the very largest maps. A descriptive essay by an authority on the map or the period accompanies each map.

Iowans will find the first depiction of their state amid a great blank space. Not until the Delisle map in 1702 does the first sketchy outline of Iowa begin to appear. The geography of the region is reasonably accurate by 1755.

It has been a long time since anything comparable has appeared in print, and all are now long out of print. Adrian Johnson's *America Ex-*

plored (1974) is the most closely comparable study, and it covers all of North America. The classic work—a point of departure for any cartographic study of the West—is Carl Irving Wheat's encyclopedic five-volume *Mapping the Transmississippi West* (1957–1963), but it is exorbitantly priced even when you can find a set. Cohen's book is, if you will, a pocket version of that monumental study.

The most distressing aspect of any such atlas is that some maps are simply too large to reduce to page size and still remain readable. Only a few maps in this collection are of such a size. A more cogent criticism: the selected bibliography is distressingly short, although the book is meant for a general audience, not an academic one.

These maps are basic documents of the history of the West, and they affected the future actions of those who saw and used them, as did those maps prepared for Lewis and Clark. Other maps encapsulate the activities of hundreds of individuals, such as the final plate in the book, the 1890 map of the United States as determined by the General Land Office surveys.

One could describe this book as an illustrated "History of the West"—one in which narrative and graphics have been reversed. The real "narrative" lies in the roster of maps, which are illustrated and supplemented by the words of the authors. It is a book with wide appeal; residents of any part of the trans-Mississippi West will be mesmerized by the unfolding history of their state or region as revealed in these maps.

Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark, edited by James J. Holmberg. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. xxx, 311 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix, chronology, sources, index. \$35.00 cloth.

Reviewer David A. Walker is professor of history and associate graduate dean for faculty scholarship at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of *Iron Frontier: The Discovery and Early Development of Minnesota's Three Ranges* (1979) and coauthor of the *Biographical Directory of American Territorial Governors* (1984).

In October 1988 family members found a cache of letters from William Clark (of Lewis and Clark fame) to his older brother Jonathan and donated them to the Filson Historical Society in Louisville, Kentucky. Yale University Press has now published 55 of the letters, covering the years 1792–1811. Many are published here for the first time. They are organized in five chapters. Each chapter begins with a historical overview, and all of the documents are thoroughly annotated.

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