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## Review of Mapping the North American Plains: Essays in the History of Cartography.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Mapping the North American Plains: Essays in the History of Cartography.* Edited By Frederick C. Luebke, Frances W. Kaye, and Gary E. Moulton. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987. Maps, illustrations, notes, index. xiii + 239 pp. \$39.50.

The adventure of exploration and discovery, as well as the history of mapping, inevitably comes through in this volume of eleven scholarly contributions to the history of the cartography of the North American Plains. The 8 1/2 x 11 inch size allows for an easy-to-read two column format and excellent black and white map reproductions, most of which are full page size.

Eight of the essays contained in this work were originally presented at the symposium "Mapping the North American Plains," held in April 1983 by the Center for Great Plains Studies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The others were written specifically for this work. A scholarly contribution of interest to cartographers, geographers, and historians, the work can be enjoyed as well by the casual reader of Western Americana.

Gary Moulton sets the stage for all that follows in his excellent introduction. "Exploratory Mapping of the Great Plains before 1800," by Ralph Ehrenberg, describes the mapping

that was done by the French, British, and Spanish prior to the American period. This thread of early history is picked up by W. Raymond Wood's essay, "Mapping the Missouri River through the Great Plains, 1673-1895," in his discussion of French, Spanish, and American contributions relating to their respective periods of control of the Missouri River. "Patterns of Promise: Mapping the Plains and Prairies, 1800-1860," by John L. Allen, expounds upon how little was actually known about the plains and prairies environment, even though much progress had been made in mapping the region by 1860. Two essays are of particular interest in a little known field: "Indian Maps: Their Place in the History of Plains Cartography," by G. Malcolm Lewis, and "'A Chart in His Way': Indian Cartography and the Lewis and Clark Expedition," by James P. Ronda, are both excellent.

Silvio A. Bedini provides a fascinating look at the Lewis and Clark expedition from the point of view of the instruments used and the training and expertise developed in their use in "The Scientific Instruments of the Lewis and Clark Expedition." Government cartographers occupy two excellent chapters. John B. Garver, Jr.'s "Practical Military Geographers and Mappers of the Trans-Missouri West,

1820–1860” features the works of many lesser known cartographers and geographers; “Mapping Kansas and Nebraska: The Role of the General Land Office,” by Ronald E. Grim, describes the work of that office and its surveyors in the field.

Richard I. Ruggles discusses the Canadian West in “Mapping the Interior Plains of Rupert’s Land by the Hudson’s Bay Company to 1870,” in which many previously unpublished maps from the Hudson’s Bay Company files are featured. James M. Richtik, in “Mapping the Quality of Land for Agriculture in Western Canada,” brings us into the twentieth century with a look at soil and patterns of agricultural settlement.

The final chapter, also by Ralph E. Ehrenberg, is a fine catalog of seventy-seven historic maps that were assembled for the symposium exhibition. Neatly classified into eight categories by time, contributing country, and type of map, each entry includes a brief synopsis or chronology followed by complete map title, cartographer, physical description, place and date of production, and a description of the map. This is followed by the map’s provenance and references to it in the literature. Twenty-eight of the cataloged maps are reproduced in the volume.

Frederick C. Luebke states in his preface that one purpose of the symposium was to compensate for the imbalance that seems to exist between exploration as romantic adventure and exploration as accomplishment. This book is an outstanding example of exploration as both. It is impossible to read it without feeling the excitement of adventure and discovery, but one also marvels at the accomplishments, made against great odds and at great personal risk, by these early explorers, geographers, and cartographers. This collection of essays portrays very well the achievements of early cartography on the North American Plains.

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