

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

---

2004

## Book Review: One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West Before Lewis and Clark

W. Raymond Wood

University of Missouri - Columbia, woodw@missouri.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

Wood, W. Raymond, "Book Review: One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West Before Lewis and Clark" (2004). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 287.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/287>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

*One Vast Winter Count: The Native American West before Lewis and Clark.* By Colin G. Calloway. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. xvii + 631 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

This is the first of a projected six-volume "History of the American West" to be published by the University of Nebraska Press and edited by Richard W. Etulain, a specialist in the history and literature of the West. Scholarly and soundly documented, *One Vast Winter Count* is a well-written and easily read narrative of the interrelated events that give substance and meaning to the story of the western United States from prehistory to 1800 C.E.

It is perhaps as difficult for a single individual to review this book as it was to have written it, for the canvas is both broad and detailed. The narrative begins with what we know of the arrival of Native Americans in this hemisphere, and includes "the area between the Appalachians and the Mississippi, the territory that constituted 'the West' for generations of colonial Anglo-Americans." Calloway has given us a somewhat patchwork history of the West and Midwest, heavily focused on the Southern Plains and American Southwest. California and the Great Basin are the least-covered areas of concern to the story. But the story adheres.

Calloway's narrative provides in-depth studies of crucial regions and topics, reflecting recent scholarship on complex and often debated issues. It is current and delves deeply into both place and process, revising our outlook as well as exposing the dark side of western history. The West is a complex area, both physiographically and historically, and Calloway brings these disparate components together in a story the general reader and scholar alike will enjoy. The volume should also serve equally well as a college text.

Calloway succeeds in making the point that the story of the West after the arrival of Europeans is a very short one. Earlier and complex prehistoric Native American societies—

Hopewell, Mississippian, Caddoan, and Ancestral Puebloan cultures—have risen and vanished in the midcontinent. The European-American "phase," "gauged against the long span of human history in the West . . . is still a baby; its chances of surviving its infancy are not good. Automobiles and oil may not be that different from horses and buffalo." Calloway concludes by warning that "In many ways a historian is the slave in the chariot—the one who warns the leader, and the rest of us, of the transient and cyclical nature of human affairs.

W. RAYMOND WOOD  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Missouri-Columbia