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Review of *Conquests & Consequences: The American West from Frontier to Region* by Carol L. Higham and William H. Katerberg

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Conquests & Consequences: The American West from Frontier to Region. By Carol L. Higham and William H. Katerberg. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc.; Cody, WY: The Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 2009. xii + 475 pp. Maps, photographs, illustrations, suggested readings, index. \$44.95 paper.

The textbook *Conquests & Consequences* provides a cohesive narrative framed by the question: How does a historical perspective of cultures, empires, and environments in the American West inform and influence understandings of the West as a frontier, colony, region, borderland, or “center of power in its own right”? To engage undergraduate history students, Carol L. Higham and William H. Katerberg employ a folksy, conversational style (Native pit houses are “roughly the length of an average single dormitory room”). The text also contains an impressive number of photographs and illustrations. Most importantly, Higham and Katerberg introduce terms and content in the context of their broader critical questions, encouraging students to reflect upon and challenge conventional narratives.

Chapter 1 introduces Native peoples and cultures, beginning primarily in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, though Native Americans are discussed throughout the book. Subsequent chapters depict the Spanish and French empires before turning to English settlement and conquest and to American history. Nearly 180 pages are devoted to the twentieth century. Following the lead of New Western Historians, the authors discuss extensively the federal government’s influence in the West, as well as politics, natural resources, diverse populations, globalization, and the cost of growth.

I was pleased to note that the book includes much information on the Great Plains, beginning with

Plains Indians and including Long’s and Frémont’s explorations, the Cherokees’ and other Southern tribes’ adaptation to the Plains, the Exodusters, the Fort Laramie Treaty, progressivism in the politics of Plains states, and South Dakota tourism. Higham and Katerberg emphasize the post–World War II (and ongoing) population migration from the Great Plains into the West and South, as well as migration within the Plains from small towns to cities and from urban to suburban residences. Plains readers may wish, though, that the text did not imply this migration to be inevitable, and that the ideas of those who oppose this trend were also mentioned.

The book’s ending questions the sustainability of the American empire in the West: “What has our history wrought and what will it bring?” Higham and Katerberg invite students to consider history’s relevance to their lives as global citizens and to examine what hope they have for the future. Whether or not they agree that in the West change is “the only thing we can be sure of,” readers of *Conquests & Consequences* will enjoy and learn from this provocative textbook.

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