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Review of *Historical Atlas of the American West: With Original Maps* by Derek Hayes

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*Historical Atlas of the American West: With Original Maps.* By Derek Hayes. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 288 pp. Maps, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

The *Historical Atlas of the American West* is a visually appealing and well-organized representation of cartographic works thoughtfully selected from several centuries of map making. As demarcated for the *Atlas*, the American West extends from the eastern borders of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas to the Pacific coasts of California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. While some of the included maps show the entire American West, most depict smaller subregions of interest such as one or a few states or even individual cities or towns. The cartographic scales, map themes, and graphical styles of the maps reproduced vary greatly, which promotes visual variety but also demands careful map reading in order to avoid confusion about the geographical features or areas depicted on each map.

A note in the acknowledgments indicates that an initial emphasis on “just exploration”

came to be “expanded to include all aspects of the history of the American west.” But while the scope of the work is indeed awe inspiring for its breadth, the initial emphasis can still be ascertained in the finished volume. According to a rough tabulation undertaken by this reviewer, the original source dates of the 600-plus maps and other graphics selected for reproduction in the *Atlas* break down chronologically more or less as follows: 35 from before 1700; 71 from 1700–1799; 80 from 1800–1849; 255 from 1850–1899; 170 from 1900–1949; 43 from 1950–1999; and 5 from 2000 or later. Maps from the important formative era of American western exploration and early settlement thus comprise about two-thirds of the cartographical contents. The expansion of railroads west of the Missouri River is especially well covered in the *Atlas*, but early town plans for what are now major cities, water resource developments, mining and mineral exploitation, agriculture, and ranching also receive very effective coverage.

Among the real highlights of the *Atlas* are exquisitely done reproductions of well-chosen and sometimes rare maps originally created through Spanish, French, Russian, British, or Mexican exploration and mapping before the United States gained sovereignty over the trans-Mississippi West in the early nineteenth century. But there are also well-done reproductions of many early American maps, including important maps from the Lewis and Clark and the Frémont expeditions. Westward movements along interior waterways, including the Missouri River, and along the Santa Fe, Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails are well depicted through period maps. Important military campaigns, from the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, the Texas and California Annexations, and the Civil War to conflicts with Native Americans through the late nineteenth century, are also well represented using selections of contemporary maps. And a somewhat whimsical tone is added through a well-chosen sampling of “western tourist” maps which span the travel eras of railroads, automobiles, and airplanes.

This *Atlas* thus captures and displays myriad cartographic images of the American West, from perspectives as varied as those of Spanish Conquistadores, French Voyagers, American fur traders, steamboat captains, railroad builders, mining engineers, town planners, water systems engineers, grain farmers, cattle ranchers, federal, state, and local government officials, surveyors, and, yes, even the tenderfoot tourists who ride a stagecoach in old Dodge City, Kansas, or gaze in awe over the Grand Canyon.

The “nuts-and-bolts” aspects of the *Atlas* deserve commendation. An average of about two-thirds of each page is used to reproduce one or more maps, which leaves about one-third for accompanying verbal explanation and exposition. Although many readers are likely to focus on particular sections of the *Atlas*, the entire accompanying text is well written and informative. The page size is about 13½ inches high by 10 inches wide, which allows for printing at generally legible scales, although many of the maps are republished smaller than their original sizes. The quality of the full-color printing on good quality paper is excellent. Map readers using a magnifying glass to examine details closely or to read small print on a replica map are unlikely to be disappointed. Several dozen libraries, universities, and museums are recognized in the acknowledgments as sources, and a detailed “Map Catalog” presents specific documentation for each map or illustration reproduced. In short, Derek Hayes’s *Historical Atlas of the American West* takes the reader on a visually and intellectually stimulating tour of the American West across several hundred years of map making. The volume is well worth its incredibly low price.

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