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Review of Historical Atlas of Kansas

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Historical Atlas of Kansas. By Homer E. Socolofsky and Huber Self. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. Second edition. Preface, references, 74 maps with explanations, index. xxxiv + 192 pp. \$24.95.

The University of Oklahoma Press, which has published a series of state historical atlases, has now issued a revision of its Kansas atlas, first published in 1972. The authors, historian Homer Socolofsky and geographer Huber Self, have updated their earlier work on the basis of 1984 state and federal government estimates.

The atlas offers a wealth of information that will be of use to persons interested in the study of Kansas and the Great Plains. Kansas buffs, if they do not already own the earlier edition, will find much material for hours of browsing.

The problem with this atlas is that it lacks balance. Nearly half the maps treat topics selected from the territorial and early statehood periods. The remainder treat either the geography of the state (such as landforms, precipitation, native flora, average annual growing season) or contemporary characteristics based on recently gathered data. But a sense of the history of Kansas as change over time does not emerge readily from this atlas. For example, changes in the state's economy, agricultural production, occupational structures, political behavior, or population distribution are not treated. In short, the content of the atlas seems fragmentary or idiosyncratic, not the product of rigorous and systematic selection.

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