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Review of Contours of Discovery: Printed Maps Delineating the Texas and Southwestern Chapters in the Cartographic History of North America, 1513- 1930

Frederick C. Luebke

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, fredluebke@comcast.net

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Contours of Discovery: Printed Maps Delineating the Texas and Southwestern Chapters in the Cartographic History of North America, 1513-1930. User's Guide by Robert Sidney Martin and James C. Martin. Foreword by J. Conrad Dunagan. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1981. Maps, foreword, illustrations, suggestions for further reading, glossary. viii + 66 pp. \$39.95.

It is unusual to review a book that is a decade old, as *Contours of Discovery* is, but this is an unusual publication. As fresh and vital today as it was ten years ago, it consists of two parts: The first is a portfolio of twenty-two historical maps reproduced in color, all of which relate to Texas history; the second is a paper-bound "user's guide" that offers both an essay on cartographic history as it pertains to Texas and a section of commentaries on each of the maps included in the portfolio.

The maps range from a Martin Waldseemüller map of 1513, *Tabula Terre Nova*, to a

set of four maps of Texas counties published in 1935. There are examples of the work of master cartographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Nicolas Sanson, Nicholas de Fer, and Guillaume Delisle. Texas first appears in this collection as a province of Mexico on a 1768 map by José Antonio Alzate. Students of the Great Plains region will be especially attracted by a John Melish map of the United States, published in 1816, even though it is reproduced here in a much reduced size. Texans will particularly enjoy the detail of several maps produced by Stephen Austin, John Arrowsmith, and John Disturnell. The reproductions are of high quality, though their sizes do not correspond to the originals. Information about each map is summarized in the user's guide.

The guide also includes a carefully written essay that serves as a lucid and concise introduction to historical cartography. Complicated concepts and processes are rendered accessible to the neophyte. Instruments for determining locations on the globe such as the astrolabe and theodolite are described with economy and clarity, as are such methods of printing as the relief (woodcuts), intaglio (engravings), and planographic (lithographs) processes. The authors, Robert and James Martin, then move on to an instructive summary of five periods in the cartographic history of Texas that places mapmaking into specific contexts of time and place. Their text is enriched by the inclusion of eleven additional maps and by illustrations, with explanatory comments, of the tools of the mapmaker in past centuries. The essay thus provides all the basic information a reader must have to understand and appreciate the portfolio of map reproductions.

Although this publication was obviously intended primarily for map lovers in Texas, it has a broad appeal. It is the product of an intelligent and informed collaboration.

FREDERICK C. LUEBKE
Department of History
University of Nebraska-Lincoln