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**Review of *This Remarkable Continent: An Atlas of United States and Canadian Society and Cultures* Edited by John F. Rooney, Jr., Wilbur Zelinsky, and Dean R. Louder**

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*This Remarkable Continent: An Atlas of United States and Canadian Society and Cultures.* Edited by John F. Rooney, Jr., Wilbur Zelinsky, and Dean R. Louder. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982. Illustrations, maps, references, index. viii + 316 pp. \$45.00.

What would you like to know about the cultural geography of the United States and Canada? Many aspects of society and culture in North America are displayed on the 387 maps and drawings in this fine atlas, which is a major landmark in the development of cultural geography.

The atlas is an outgrowth of the work of the Society for the North American Cultural Survey, which has as its long-term goal the production of a definitive atlas of contemporary American cultures based on fieldwork and surveys. *This Remarkable Continent* is an interim report that represents the extent of existing knowledge. It draws from the best work of geographers, folklorists, historians, and a wide variety of other specialists. If the interim report is any indication, the final product will be a great achievement.

The format of the atlas is simple and effective. Thirteen topics are represented: General Cultural and Popular Regions, Settlement, Division of the Land, Structures, Social Organization and Behavior, Language and Place Names, Ethnicity, Religion, Politics, Foodways, Music and Dance, Sports and Games, and Place Perception. Each topic is introduced with an essay written by one or more of fourteen geographers. The essays vary in quality but are generally good, and some, such as Terry Jordan's intro-

duction to the chapter Division of the Land, are excellent. In addition, every map and drawing has a caption that provides a brief interpretation of the patterns. The maps range in scale from the continental and national levels down to townships and city blocks. The cartography is plain (black and white) but clear and easy to interpret for nonspecialists as well as geographers.

The concentrations of regional representation in the atlas reflect the work of the leading practitioners and schools of cultural geography. Louisiana (with twenty maps at the state or local levels), Texas (eighteen maps), and Pennsylvania (seventeen maps) are heavily emphasized, largely because of the scholarship produced over the years in those states. Canada is not slighted, but the total of thirty-five national and regional maps and drawings is hardly equal representation.

What does the atlas reveal about the Great Plains? More than anything, it suggests that there is much work to do, because the region is greatly underrepresented. In fact, the Great Plains are not even recognized in Zelinsky's chapter General Cultural and Popular Regions but are subsumed by the West and the Midwest. Only six maps deal specifically with parts of the Great Plains, including C. Barron McIntosh's map of the Sandhills in 1895, John Hudson's maps of migration patterns on the North Dakota frontier, and William C. Sherman's map of ethnic distributions in northeastern North Dakota. The comparatively late settlement of the North American Great Plains and the persistence of ethnic affiliations provide rich opportunities for the study of cultures, although the increasing uniformity of the landscape, as old buildings fade from the scene, and as small farmers are forced from the land and the hamlets that depend upon them dwindle and die, points to the fact that opportunities have already been missed.

In the introduction to the atlas, the editors write that their objective is to reach "as broad and varied an audience" as possible. Without a doubt, the atlas deserves to be widely read. It will be a valuable aid for teachers at both the

university and high school levels. More than this, however, the atlas should be placed on a convenient table and browsed in at leisure.

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