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Review of *The American West: New Perspectives, New Dimensions* Edited by Jerome O. Steffen

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disparate that an editor can write of an encompassing theme only by using the vaguest of terms. Using these points as criteria, *The American West* is a better-than-average collection. Editor Jerome Steffen does not say how the eight essays were assembled, but, with one exception, the quality is very good and, with another exception, an important central theme is followed. Steffen asserts that western history needs new and enlarged perspectives if it is to escape its label of provincialism. Seven examples follow. If the perspectives offered are not wholly new, they certainly are ones in need of pointed, summary treatment such as they receive here. In brief the authors and issues are as follows: John Opie, ecological perspectives on frontier history; John Hudson, demographic theory and spatial perspectives on frontier populations; Roger Barker, environmental psychology theory and frontier character; Jerome Steffen, classification of frontiers based on number of links with parent culture; Richard Etulain, a plea for more attention to a rapidly maturing western literature; Ronald Davis, industrial capitalism as a context for urban development; and Gene Gressley, the regionalism concept and natural resource dynamics. Only Reginald Horsman deviates from the theme, but his review essay on trends in Native American history is excellent in its own right.

Space prohibits detailed discussion of the essays, but several deserve comment. Roger Barker has spent a lifetime exploring behavior settings, gradually evolving his theory about the relationship between environment and behavior. This theory has largely been ignored by students in other disciplines, but it has application to the Turner thesis and many other problems commonly pursued by geographers, historians, and others. Perhaps this essay will lead to wider readership of Barker's many works. Two essays are somewhat flawed, in my view, by being too pretentious. Davis's exploitation concept provides considerable insight into American urban development, but he occasionally tries to make it a more encompassing theory than it is. Steffen argues his thesis of linkages between frontiers and parent cultures primarily by assertion.

The American West: New Perspectives, New Dimensions. Edited by Jerome O. Steffen. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979. Figures, maps, tables, index. ix + 238 pp. \$14.95.

One learns to be suspicious of essay collections. Not only does article quality usually vary, but often the issues addressed are so

His essay suffers from banalities and a feeling of self-importance, and stands as an example of why editors should not contribute to their own volumes. Numerous typographical errors constitute another negative aspect of the book, especially in the Horsman, Barker, and Steffen pieces.

Geographers generally will find this a satisfying book. Not only is one of their own included (Hudson), but three other writers concentrate on traditional geographic concerns (Opie, Barker, and Gressley), and two more (Davis and Steffen) cite geographic sources. If *The American West* is any indication, history and geography again seem to be realizing their interdependency after decades of going their separate ways.

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