Book Reviews

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A dissertation revised and published many years after the original research was done, Always a Rebel purports to be a biography of Ricardo Flores Magón, with an emphasis on his activities in the United States prior to the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution. Ward Albro’s main contention is that “a genuine radical revolutionary movement” (xiii) did not develop under Flores Magón’s leadership for three fundamental reasons: because Flores Magón never returned to Mexico after taking refuge in the United States in 1904; because the time he spent in prison in the United States limited his effectiveness; and because of his growing radicalism, which alienated potential followers.

In developing this thesis, Albro provides the reader with solid detail on Flores Magón’s anti-Díaz agitation and on the legal difficulties that ensued. His capsule biographies of key members of the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM) are useful; his writing is clear and his basic conclusions sensible. Unfortunately, Albro often strays from Flores Magón—the time he spent in Canada, for example, is completely ignored—into such familiar questions as the influence of the PLM at Cananea and Rio Blanco. This is problematic, first, because it demonstrates Albro’s tendency to engage in the tired debate over whether Flores Magón was a “precur­ sor” of the Mexican Revolution—despite his recognition that it is not among the most relevant of topics. On this issue Albro argues, largely by assertion, that Flores Magón was successful in helping to undermine the Díaz regime. Secondly, the ease with which Albro leaves his biographical subject behind suggests that he is really more interested in the PLM than in Flores Magón, the man. In fact, it is not until the end of the book that he discusses Flores Magón’s volatile personality in any depth. As a result, he misses the opportunity to describe—as he moves through his material—how character, ideology and the necessity of winning revolutionary support interacted. We never get a clear feeling for how Flores Magón’s personality contributed to PLM failures.

While this is certainly able work, many of the questions raised here were of greater moment when Albro wrote his dissertation than when he revised it for publication. Surely more could now be done with Ricardo Flores Magón.

Samuel Brunk
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

423
Neither a history of the Bank of America nor a full-scale biography of its founder, A.P. Giannini, Gerald Nash provides his readers with a study of the point at which Giannini, banking, and the West intersect and interact. The Californian, born of Italian immigrants, who broke western dependence on eastern banking, built his own financial empire by reaching out to the untapped resources of the "little fellow." For A.P. Giannini, who catered to an immigrant and working class clientele, no deposit or loan was too small to be handled courteously and efficiently by his bank.

Armed with an eye for opportunity, a driving ambition, and a vision of a nationwide bank system, Giannini saw potential in his Western surroundings. In a mutually reinforcing relationship, Giannini's enterprise developed rapidly while fostering the economic growth of California and the West. By embracing branch banking and aggressively expanding to encompass 517 branch offices at the time of Giannini's death in 1949, Bank of America became the largest financial institution in the world. Despite the phenomenal rise of Bank of America, Giannini experienced numerous setbacks and obstacles. His innovative methods and desire to expand threatened traditional bankers and brought him into conflict with banking authorities, who attempted to curb his acquisitive ambitions. Giannini also took on J.P. Morgan, Jr. and the eastern banking establishment, when they sought to control him and put his far-reaching plans on hold, while shepherding his beloved enterprise through the Great Depression.

The author leaves the reader wanting a more complete picture of Giannini's personal and public life. Nash suggests that Giannini's opponents viewed him as monopolistic and ruthless, but does not address these accusations, which fall well within the stated scope of Nash's study. Although the author readily points out Giannini's negative characteristics, he chooses not to explain them or what drove his insatiable ambition. The book does include "A Note on Sources," but it stands as a poor substitute for footnotes or endnotes. Nevertheless, Nash takes a giant step toward a complete biography by breathing life into Giannini and the emergence of the Bank of America as a financial powerhouse, and places them both particularly well within the context of western history in this lively, informative, and readable book.

Susanne Teepe Gaskins
Orange Coast College
The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: June 10—September 26, 1806. Vol. 8. Edited by Gary E. Moulton. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. x + 456 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. $55.00.)

One presumes this is the last volume of Gary Moulton’s march with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. In this tome, we accompany the Great Captains from Camp Chopunnish near present-day Kamiak, Idaho, which they left on June 10, 1806, all the way to St. Louis, where they arrive in triumph on September 23, 1806. It would be a mistake to assume that their return over relatively familiar territory, like that of the descent of mountain climbers, was easy. On the contrary. They had to turn back once on the Lochsa River route to Lo Lo Pass across the Bitterroot Mountains due to snows as deep as ten feet in late June. They had frequent confrontations with the natives. Lewis and a small band met up with Blackfeet on the Marias River, killing one of their number and incurring the wrath of the tribe evermore. At the same time, Lewis was nearly killed by a bullet that whistled through his hair. Some of the men fell sick, Gibson seriously wounded himself, and even Lewis was accidentally shot just below the buttocks by one of his own men, who could not see well because he was blind in one eye. Boats overturned, and once out of the high mountains, both horses and men were continually plagued by clouds of “musquetors,” as Clark put it.

But these are intriguing details of interest mainly to fur trade historians or historians of exploration. With this concluding volume of Lewis and Clark’s Journals, one has to ask “so what?” Was this long, expensive project worth the effort, especially given the existence of edited versions by Elliott Coues and Reuben Gold Thwaites, as well as Donald Jackson’s monumental The Letters of Lewis and Clark? Has this been an exercise in pedantry? And has it been perhaps a victim of footnote overkill? Beyond this, why, with all the meticulous attention to plant and animal species as well as Indian and geologic nomenclature, did Moulton neglect some of the classic studies of the region and sometimes depend on potboilers as sources? Why did he not realize that Clark had made the first discovery of dinosaur remains in the U.S., perhaps in geologic history? How useful is much of this undigested information, which is anecdotal rather than ecosystemic? What difference does a minute knowledge of Lewis and Clark’s everyday experience make, since the main story line and the route of their trek has been known for more than 100 years? The editor never makes this clear. He gives no historical meaning to the Expedition. One can learn more about meaning from Jurassic Park than one can from these eight large volumes.

Perhaps the greatest service of this project has been the sorting out and the bringing together of a multitude of Lewis and Clark “codexes” or documents, especially the maps connected with, or made on, their trip. However, if one is looking for a good modern route map of Lewis and Clark’s journey to and from the Pacific, this is not the work to consult. Such a simple need is generally buried beneath an avalanche of antiquarianism, which includes identification of the two-cent postage stamp that Coues used to repair a torn document. For purposes of
comparison, one should consult J.C. Beagelhole’s thoughtful editions of Captain Cook’s journals—or any publication of the Hakluyt Society.

William H. Goetzmann
University of Texas, Austin

Flooding the Courtrooms: Law and Water in the Far West. By M. Catherine Miller. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. 255 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. $45.00.)

This fourth volume in the University of Nebraska’s Law in the American West series provides a detailed study over a long time period of the water-based legal activities of one of the architects of California water law and policy. The Miller and Lux Company emerged early in the post-1848 agricultural and ranching life of California’s fantastically rich central valley. It stayed late. As Flooding the Courtrooms shows, the company fought hard for almost a century to secure and then protect its access to scarce California water.

As much as any other California institution, the Miller and Lux company gave California water law its peculiar tilt and patina among western states. Water lawyers will instantly recognize Lux for having lent his name to the seminal Lux v. Haggin (1885) case. According to adherents of the more hidebound “Colorado doctrine” of prior appropriation, Lux started California on the road to the present hell of its mixed riparian/prior appropriation water law system. But, this good book goes well beyond that one case and shows in great detail how one powerful private institution—the Miller and Lux company—over a long period of time used the courts to define and shape California water law.

The portrait that emerges from these details is particularly important for two reasons. First, the detailed accounts of the company’s efforts to secure and protect its access to water and to limit the access of other potential competitors shows an entirely pragmatic, instrumental view of law at work. Miller and Lux used whatever legal theories were available to shore up its control of scarce California water resources.

As author Miller shows, the company over nearly a century of litigation sometimes claimed riparian rights, sometimes claimed appropriative rights, never worried about the contradiction between the two theories, and always went to court. The public California water law that we know today emerged from the private efforts of one company to maintain its privileged access to a critical, scarce natural resource. This book traces those efforts in great detail.

In addition, Flooding the Courtrooms adds an important element to our understanding of the historical development of western water law institutions. The details of this fine study stand environmental historians like Donald Worcester and Marc Riesman on their heads. Miller’s study shows that the great federal efforts early in the 20th century to develop more available water out of the unappropriated flood flows of the west’s wild rivers responded not so much to the iron-grip of an existing water oligopoly as to the efforts of those who had no water to gain first access to it.
Flooding the Courtrooms is sometimes turgid, sometimes overwrought and sometimes over-conceptualized. But, author Miller builds the book on the bedrock of hard data provided over a long period of time by the major private player in the early formation of public California water law and policy. Like Donald Pisani's To Reclaim A Divided West: Water, Law, and Public Policy 1848–1902, the story that Flooding the Courtroom tells is full of contradictions, false starts, and inconclusive endings. But the portrait that emerges is three-dimensional and critical to our understanding of the water institutions that haunt California and the west to this day.

Em Hall
University of New Mexico


Almost every belligerent nation of World War II organized massive scientific efforts to develop weapons that they believed would alter the course of the conflict. Among other projects, the Germans built and launched several thousand V-2 rockets against London and other European cities. The Japanese worked on an ill conceived and unrealizable “death ray.” Only the American effort to build the atomic bomb, however, fulfilled the promise of a truly revolutionary weapon that had the potential for changing the war’s outcome. The history of the Manhattan Project—as well as both the significance and terror of the nuclear weapons that emerged from the effort—has been exhaustively documented since 1945. While most knowledgeable readers are aware that there were also efforts to develop nuclear weapons by other nations, notably in Germany, the making of the atom bomb has largely been told as an American story with the far-ranging efforts of the Manhattan Project taking center stage. But atomic science was an international endeavor and even the Manhattan Project was more of an allied effort than most have traditionally understood. Ferenc Morton Szasz’s British Scientists and the Manhattan Project serves as a useful corrective to many earlier accounts that have all but buried any knowledge of the British role in the project.

Beginning in December 1943, the British government sent a small group that eventually numbered about 30 scientists to the remote New Mexico site of Los Alamos, where J. Robert Oppenheimer was presiding over a cadre of physicists and other scientists and technicians to design an atomic weapon. They worked long hours side-by-side with the Americans, witnessed the explosion at Trinity site, and viewed the success with the same horror and amazement as their American colleagues. Most of their names are unknown to all but a few specialists in the history of high energy physics, and the one that is not—Klaus Fuchs—is remembered only as an atomic spy for the Soviet Union. This short book does
much to rescue the group from obscurity, as well as to set the record straight on Fuchs. It is an important addition to the literature of Los Alamos and the Manhattan Project.

Roger D. Launius
NASA Chief Historian


This book is concerned more about myth than history. It reveals what a powerful force the myth of the garden, along with the yeoman farmer as essential to the flowering of American democracy, has been throughout the course of American history. Almost from the outset, and most assuredly by the 1870s there was growing anxiety among intellectuals and others about the disappearance of the frontier and its impact on the quality of life in America and on democratic thought. The census of 1880 dramatically indicated that the end of the frontier was near so that when Frederick Jackson Turner delivered his famous paper, he was articulating in classic form what already was a distinct segment of American thought.

David Wrobel devotes most of his masterful study to examining this theme. In parts one and two, five chapters in all, he examines prophecies of gloom and doom before the closing of the frontier, and the crisis that engulfed the nation in the 1890s. The remaining chapters examine what Wrobel calls "post frontier anxiety" from the end of the 19th century on into the New Deal.

While he does not claim that frontier anxiety was directly responsible for immigration restriction, the acquisition of territory overseas, conservation, the progressive reform movement, or the growth of a welfare state, among other themes, he does show, through an analysis of the writings and remarks of numerous individuals in all walks of American life, that in many instances the closing of the frontier was involved in their reasoning. Particularly interesting is his discussion of the literary response and the debate as to whether extra-continental expansion was really necessary after the nation's internal expansion was completed. The Jeffersonian fear that a large urban proletariat would be fatal to American democracy was an underlying aspect of much of the anxiety over the end of American exceptionalism.

Wrobel examines these themes and others largely within a chronological framework and, in doing so, parallels and complements, at least from the nineties on into the New Deal, Gerald Nash's provocative Creating the West, which also examines historical interpretations within a chronological structure. Both authors examine many of the same writings and individuals within their respective frameworks. Wrobel's covers a broad swath of American intellectual history that provides a refreshing review to more knowledgeable readers and an impressive introduction to others.

Richard Lowitt
University of Oklahoma
Malaspina & Galiano: Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast, 1791 & 1792.
By Donald C. Cutter. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991. viii + 160 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. $34.95.)

The recent bicentennial marking European expansion into the Pacific Northwest has fostered numerous new works on the subject, amongst them Donald C. Cutter's study of two prominent Spanish explorations: those conducted by Alejandro Malaspina and Jose Bustamante y Guerra in the corvettes Descubierta and Atrevida during the summer of 1791, and those of Dionisio Alcala Galiano and Cayetano Valdes in the schooners Sutil and Mexicana the following year. Although the Spaniards' presence off present-day Alaska, British Columbia, and Washington State was to prove but fleeting, it has nevertheless been undervalued.

Cutter draws upon a lifetime's experience in Spanish naval archives to help rectify this imbalance. The five-year voyage of Malaspina's party, in particular, ranks as one of the great epics of the sea, too long neglected. The present title naturally concentrates on the two visits made to the American Northwest, and offers a wealth of detail about first contact with the native peoples. The Spanish government's decision to include professional artists with the expedition further proves advantageous, as the text is accompanied by numerous eyewitness renderings that are extremely insightful.

The layout and design of the book are most attractive, sure to appeal to general readers. Specialists may discover a few nuggets scattered amongst the citations quoted in the endnotes, although the bibliography is too limited to be of much help. General readers may find Cutter's prose a tad dry and academic, although the vivid adventures shine through despite punctilious handling. All in all, Malaspina and Galiano provides an excellent history for English-language readers.

David F. Marley
Windsor, Ontario

The Finishing Touch: A History of the Texas Cattle Feeders Association and Cattle Feeding in the Southwest.
By Charles E. Ball. (Amarillo, Texas: Texas Cattle Feeders Association, 1992. 191 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. $35.00.)

In celebration of its twenty-fifth anniversary the Texas Cattle Feeders Association (TCFA), headquartered in Amarillo, Texas, has published a history of the organization and of the feedlot industry on the southern plains. The author, Charles E. Ball, a former Executive Vice President of the Association and an agricultural journalist who has studied the topic for many years, is well qualified as an observer and participant to write this first book-length study of the subject. His sources include interviews of many key individuals, TCFA records, his own experiences and previous research, and a sample of secondary works.

The book begins with a very sketchy chapter on early cattle feeding from colonial times to the end of the 1800s. The next six chapters detail the arrival of a new generation of cattlemen who built feedlots in the plains study area during
the present century, because of the favorable dry climate and abundant local supplies of cattle and feed. These chapters discuss such developments as increasing the organization's size and structure, the impact of government, technological change, entrepreneurial leadership, economic fluctuations, and business failures. In the final five chapters the author is at his best in describing the founding of the TCFA in 1967, its subsequent separation from the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers' Association, the evolving functions (e.g., advertising, lobbying, market information), and the changing personnel of the new organization which has grown to a membership of about 2,600 individuals and 177 feedyards in 1992 in Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

The author adequately describes the dealings and problems between feeders and meat packing plants and their buyers. However, many readers, not already knowledgeable about the topic, will want to know more than they are told about the relationships of feedlots to other farmers and ranchers, who supply cattle and feed to these operators, and about comparisons of the feedlots to those in other parts of the nation.

In addition to persons already engaged in the business, researchers wishing to learn about this industry in the Southwest as well as those studying feedlots in other states and regions will want to consult this important, well written, and lavishly illustrated book.

Larry A. McFarlane
Northern Arizona University


The Sahagún oeuvre is renowned as a corpus of precious information about the ethnography and natural history of the Nahuas of sixteenth-century Mexico. With the collaboration of learned indigenous survivors of early encounters with Europeans, fray Bernardino de Sahagún collected, recorded, and polished autochthonous data for what eventually became the twelve-volume Nahuatl and Spanish *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*. As a treasure trove for researchers, the *Historia* overwhelms, and thus obscurces its original design—to provide intelligence about Indians and their cultures in order to facilitate their conversion to Catholicism.

Less known and hardly studied are the numerous Christian doctrinal and devotional texts that Sahagún composed and translated to Nahuatl as tools for evangelization. Appreciating the importance of ritual song and dance in native ceremony, Sahagún expected to substitute new Christian–Nahuatl songs for the ancient song–poem in the recitation and dance tradition. The *Psalmodia Christiana* is one such classic example of "putting the new religious message into the same vessels that made the old religion attractive" (p. x).

It was no easy task to transform literal Latin Catholic dogma to subtle Nahuatl meanings and practice, especially when the Nahua were already quite comfortable with their own world view and religious system. The result was a Sahagún–styled collection of Nahuatl canticles incorporating Spanish and Latin
loanwords along with familiar *difrasismos*, metaphors, and other forms of speech. The symbolism was select and safe, i.e., intended to not evoke pagan memories: employing just certain stones, minerals, birds, and flowers as common links between the two literary forms. Thus, we have a full calendar year of psalms, or songs, and sermons for the festivals and the glorification of the Catholic deity and saints. Sometimes it worked, sometimes not.

Generated during a time of great uncertainty about the appropriateness of writing texts in native languages, the *Psalmodia* was nevertheless published in 1583, and circulated among priests as well as Indians for at least a century. Now available in fine Nahuatl–English translation, Arthur Anderson, who along with Charles Dibble devoted thirty years to the masterpiece publication of the *Historia*, brings to light one more critical dimension of Sahaguntine riches—another trove for scholars interested in the complexities of indigenous–European cultural exchange.

Susan Schroeder
*Loyola University, Chicago*


At the close of the twentieth century, the field of Southwestern history is undergoing a process of maturation and vitality that augurs well for the future. Publication of such diverse volumes as Ramon Gutierrez's *When Jesus Came, The Corn Mothers Went Away* (1991), Mario T. Garcia's *Mexican Americans* (1989) and Sarah J. Deutsch's *No Separate Refuge* (1987) demonstrates, to paraphrase Frederick Jackson Turner, the significance of the southwestern frontier in American history.

To this growing shelf of interdisciplinary, multicultural literature must be added a cultural geographer's contribution. Richard Nostrand dramatizes in a new way the well-known story of Hispano cultural maintenance in the high-mountain corridor from Socorro, New Mexico, to Pueblo and Denver, Colorado. The long-time professor of geography from the University of Oklahoma utilized the complete listing of personal names from the U.S. census of 1900 for parts of five states, and also the newly fashioned categorization of self-identified ethnic groups in America, first collected by the Census Bureau in 1980.

By focusing so closely on twentieth-century sources of names, Nostrand fills a yawning gap in New Mexican and southwestern history created by the market for romance, fantasy, biography, and tourism promotion. He also brings to the region the sophisticated social–science modeling techniques of the geographer, becoming the first such scholar since his mentor at Syracuse University, D. W. Meinig, to explore the meaning of the Hispano Southwest via population distribution, economic status, and regional mobility.

What Nostrand uncovers is often striking in its spareness and simple graphics. A wandering people from Spain found compatible landscape in the seventeenth–century "Rio Arriba" country from Santa Fe to San Luis. Through intermarriage with native peoples, they established small but vibrant village centers over the centuries, isolated from both Spain and Mexico. Their willingness
to travel made them buffalo hunters, Santa Fe traders, California farmers and stock-raisers, and more recently miners, railroad hands, and farm laborers along Colorado's Front Range.

Where Sarah Deutsch sees twentieth-century gender and ethnic exploitation; and economic historians a pattern of dependence, Nostrand argues instead for the resilience of the Hispano, despite the dual process of encroachment on the "homeland" and the diaspora from it. For this reviewer, Nostrand's pragmatic assessments are most revealing (if all too brief) when analyzing the generation from 1917-1945. Seeking the better life away from the villages generated by the Anglo economy during and after World War I, homelanders depopulated their communities at certain seasons, but sent back money and returned themselves after harvests or layoffs. Then in the 1930s the villages reclaimed their sons and daughters, only with less income and land to spare. From this came the abject poverty addressed by New Deal programs, and criticized as paternalistic by such works as Suzanne Forrest, *The Preservation of the Village* (1989). Lured away once more by the prosperity of war in the 1940s, homelanders did not return this time, leaving near-ghost towns along the bank of New Mexico's and Colorado's mountain streams.

Those curious about the consequences of ethnic persistences amidst depopulation might be disappointed in Nostrand's quantitative approach. Yet his numbers suggest more than merely the haunting power of "la patria chica" in the minds of its long-time residents. *The Hispano Homeland* also challenges scholars of the "Land of Enchantment" to cultivate the daunting field of statistics, and to fashion for twenty-first century New Mexico a narrative that explains the years in which culture and ethnicity diffused and survived amidst urbanization, modernization, and the imperatives to leave home.

Michael Welsh

*University of Northern Colorado*
**Book Notes**


*Cartooning Texas: One Hundred Years of Cartoon Art in the Lone Star State.* By Maury Forman and Robert A. Calvert. (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1993. xii + 193 pp. Illustrations. $16.95 paper.)


Victory in World War II: The New Mexico Story. Edited by Gerald W. Thomas, Monroe L. Billington, and Roger D. Walker. (Las Cruces: Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, 1994. xi + 156 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $32.50 cloth, $22.95 paper.)


