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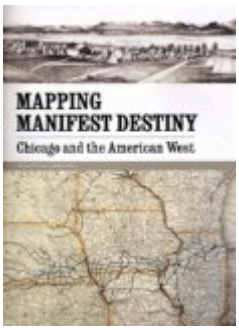

Michael P. Conzen, Diane Dillon, eds. *Mapping Manifest Destiny: Chicago and the American West.* Chicago: Newberry Library, 2007. Illustrations. 119 pp. $27.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-911028-81-2.

Reviewed by Todd Kerstetter

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Commissioned by Sharon L. Irish (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)

This beautiful, challenging, thought-provoking catalog of an exhibition at Chicago's Newberry Library should command attention from H-Urban readers for at least three reasons. First, its Chicago-oriented approach adds insights to that city's history. Second, echoing themes sounded by William Cronon in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991), it explores Chicago's role in developing the trans-Mississippi West. Here the authors argue that as Chicago became the prime producer of the region's maps, it exercised an outsized influence on the region's settlement and economic development and literally mapped the world's understanding of the West. Third, the collection of maps contains several fascinating representations of urban places from Illinois to Alaska to Texas.

Michael P. Conzen, the co-curator of the exhibition behind the catalog, deftly introduces the reader to the project in his essay, "Cities and the Mapping of Frontiers: The View from Chicago." Conzen argues persuasively that maps had unique and powerful abilities to communicate information about the West and about the societies that sought to colonize it. Although the book includes maps from the sixteenth century through the twentieth, it focuses on maps produced in the United States during the nineteenth century, when such documents served as valuable tools in the United States' pursuit of manifest destiny. The catalog emphasizes changes in perspective and message that depended upon where maps were produced. By the late nineteenth century, Chicago had become a powerhouse in cartography and by the twentieth century it reigned as the national leader in mass-produced and mass-marketed maps. This meant that Chicago's productions significantly shaped how the rest of the nation, if not the rest of the world, viewed the West and its cities. Much of that perspective depended on Chicago's role as a gateway to the West and a processor of its resources.

The catalog presents its maps in four categories, each with Chicago having a place. "Maps for Empire" contains the oldest maps and includes representations of the Native American

landscape as well as Spanish, French, British, and Russian depictions of the West. This section includes a study of how maps from 1688 through 1851 depicted the settlement that would become Chicago. In "Mapping to Serve the New Nation," the volume focuses on how exploration produced new maps and the roles maps played in Indian removal and taking stock of the West's natural resources. A subsection, "Chicago Becomes Official," emphasizes the city's history as a part of the United States via a map showing the first legal plat for the site and federally sponsored infrastructure improvements that contributed to the city's phenomenal nineteenth-century growth. "Mapping for Enlightenment" focuses on maps used to teach about the West and to promote its settlement and includes "Made in Chicago: Envisioning Western Settlements," which presents nineteenth-century Chicago mapmakers as boosters of Iowa and Minnesota. The last section, "Maps for Business," features maps used by railroads, real estate developers, and tourism boosters to stimulate economic development in and of the West. It also presents the story of Chicago's cartographers cornering the market for commercial mapping.

Curators Conzen and Diane Dillon deserve praise on several counts. Their inclusion of several images related to Russia's colonization of North America's Pacific coast provides a partial remedy to a long-neglected aspect of colonialism in North America. Their inclusiveness with respect to genre allowed them to include traditional maps, those showing state boundaries within the nation for example, as well as bird's-eye views, which seem to occupy a gray area between map and landscape. These different styles work especially well when presented together, as in the discussion of illustrated atlases published for DeKalb County, Illinois, and the state of Minnesota. In a related vein, the inclusion of insurance maps of Chicago from 1865 allows the reader to conceptualize Chicago from the scale of a city down to the scale of a city block to the scale of a single city building. This inspires the viewer to consider urban geography and development as well as the nature of Chicago's relationships with its hinterlands. The full-page diagram of a grain elevator, with a gentle prompt from the text, vividly illustrates how Chicago connected Western and Midwestern farmers and national markets.

The book's greatest strength also holds its greatest weakness. It presents beautiful maps with wonderful detail and color; many should be considered works of art. But, even though the book measures nine inches by twelve inches, many of the maps can hardly be deciphered. The book ought to come with a magnifying glass and even readers with good eyesight would be advised to have one handy for examining this lovely volume. That aside, the book should appeal to a wide audience. Social studies teachers, historians, geographers, map lovers, and lovers of Chicago all would find utility, if not joy, in these pages. Conzen's and Dillon's insightful descriptions and analysis make clear that cities played a vital role in manifest destiny, although urban areas rarely star in the imagination's tableau of westward expansion. Chicago, through its widely acknowledged work of processing, retailing, and manufacturing, spurred that expansion, but it may have been more important for its less widely acknowledged work of mapmaking, which shaped minds about what did, could, and should happen in the West.

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