



## The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History, Volume 3: Transcontinental America, 1850-1915

By D. W. Meinig, D.W. Meinig

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The book begins with the struggle over where to build the Pacific railway and fix the nation's first transcontinental axis. Meinig portrays in detail the settlement of the diverse regions of the American West and how these many "Wests" were incorporated into the growing nation. He then examines the South as an imperial province and the dominance of the American Core over an increasingly consolidated nation. In conclusion, the author considers America's imperial pressures upon Canada and Mexico, the country's overt expansions in the Caribbean and the Pacific, and the Panama Canal as a transcontinental completion.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

"Meinig has written a major scholarly work with this first volume in a projected three-volume study . . . a fresh look at history," wrote PW of this examination into the geographical nuances, political upheavals and historical phenomena that created America. Illustrated.

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From Library Journal

These two volumes herald important new interpretations of America's development. Both are the first of projected multivolume efforts by distinguished scholars. Bailyn will cover the period 1500 to the Industrial Revolution, and Meinig will deal with the years 1492 to 1990. The volumes reviewed here cover roughly the same time period. They are complementary, portraying early America in a larger context, as an outpost of civilization and subject to continual change in these formative years. Bailyn sketches the main themes of his series. "Peopling" is used in its broadest sense, making reference to old country mobility, its "spillover" to America, America's highly differentiated settlement, and the importance of labor scarcity and land speculation in creating "the powerful American magnet." Bailyn views this early America as an exotic "Western borderland world of Britain," combining "primitivism" (e.g., Indian wars and slavery) and "progressive civilization." Meinig's work differs considerably from Bailyn's in scope and approach, going well beyond British North America and employing a geographer's perspective to explore "social and cultural patterns." In doing this, Meinig ably proves that geography has been seriously "undervalued" in the study of America's development. Especially noteworthy is Meinig's major theme that America has been "created by massive aggression against a long succession of peoples." Both books are very highly recommended for academic and large public libraries. Roy H. Tryon, Delaware State Archives, Dover

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Review

"The author of *Atlantic America* and *Continental America* gives us another extraordinary book, this one about the impact of the acquisition of a western empire upon the U.S. and how railways 'a space-conquering instrument of revolutionary possibilities' helped to reknit the nation, fractured by Civil War, back together again...In characteristically powerful prose, Meinig offers a major retelling of the nation's emergence to world power." Kirkus Reviews (starred review) "The doyen of North American historical geography, Meinig offers a distinctive interpretation that depends much on his literary skill, spatial imagination, and flair for profound simplification...[His] arguments are sustained by [numerous] maps and...illustrations, which act as didactic devices for Meinig's insightful analysis." Choice

## **Users Review**

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