Conference to Focus on Significance of Western Railroads

Beginning about the mid-nineteenth century, railroads started to spin their steel webs across the Western landscape. The railroads built Westward with the idea of bringing civilization to the West, and forever transformed the region’s environment and peoples in the process. How did the railroad affect the West? How does it continue to affect the region? How will it shape it in the future? These are the questions that will be addressed at a major conference entitled “The Railroads and the West,” which will be held both at The University of Texas at Arlington and the Ramada Hotel in Fort Worth on September 26-28, 1996. The conference is jointly sponsored by UTA’s Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and Special Collections, as well as the Lexington Group in Transportation History. The topics and speakers include:

- The Railroads of Texas—Historical Interpretations
  “The Second Texas Revolution: The Railroads & Society in the Lone Star State” — Keith Bryant, Jr. (University of Akron)
  “Along Came a Spider: Visions and Realities of Railroad Expansion in Ft. Worth” — Jill Jackson (UTA)

- The Role of the Railroads in Shaping Regional Identity
  “Sunsets and Enchantment: The Southwest as Marketed by the Santa Fe and the Southern Pacific Railroads” — Richard Francaviglia (UTA)
  “Railroad Signatures in the Pacific Northwest” — Carlos Schwantes (University of Idaho)

- The Social History of Western Railroads
  “The Iron Horse and The People: A Social History of Western Railroads” — H. Roger Grant (Clemson University)
  “The Railroads and the Growth of Western Labor” — George Green (UTA)

- Antagonism and Cooperation: Railroads and Society in the West
  “Californians Versus the Iron Horse in the 19th Century” — William Deverell (California Institute of Technology-Pasadena)
  “Watering the Flower: The Laguna Pueblo Indians and the Santa Fe Railroad” — Kurt Peters (California State University)

- Western Railroads and Public Policy
  “Railroads and the Future of Free Trade” — Pat Krick (The Kingsley Group)
  “The Railroad’s Role in the Development and Promotion of Western National Parks” — Patrick Nolan (Sam Houston Memorial Museum)

- The Passenger Train in the West-I
  “Different Approaches to Western Rail Passenger Traffic in the 1950s-1960s: A Comparison of the Santa Fe and the Southern Pacific” — John McCall (UTA)
  “‘A hog can travel across the country by rail...but you can’t’ — Behind the Scenes Correspondence on the Development of Transcontinental Passenger Trains in Post World War II” — Richard L. Tower (Chief of Rail Studies, Wilbur Smith Associates)

- The Passenger Train in the West-II
  “Up Close and Personal: Two First-hand Interpretations of USA vs. S.P.” — Rollin Bredenberg (BNSF) and James Larson (Amtrak)

- Railroad Building and the Taming of the West
  “The Santa Fe Across Northern Arizona” — David Myrick (Independent Historian from Santa Barbara, California)
  “Our Search for the Elusive Railroad Chapel Cars in the West” — Wilma and Norman Taylor (Independent Historians from Morrisstown, Indiana)

- Railroad Preservation in the West
  “Researching Western Railroad History in the Union Pacific Archives” — Don Snoddy (Director, Union Pacific Museum, Omaha, Nebraska)
  “The Challenge of Preserving Western Railroad History: The Age of Steam Railroad Museum” — Robert LaPrelle (Age of Steam Railroad Museum, Dallas)
  “Preserving Operating Railroad History: The Tarantula Train of the Fort Worth and Western Railway” — Robert Roberson (Fort Worth and Western Railway)

The first two days of the three day conference (Thursday and Friday) will be held at the Ramada Hotel. The Friday evening reception and special exhibit at UTA that evening will also feature a keynote address entitled “Western Railroading: Past, Present, and Future” by Robert D. Kebes, President and CEO of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe. On Saturday, field trips will take attendees to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe’s new communication center and Alliance yard in Fort Worth, as well as other railroad-related sites in the area. The conference is sponsored by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific Railroads. Registration will be limited, so it is advised that anyone interested contact the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies at The University of Texas at Arlington, Box 19497, Arlington, Texas 76019-0497. The phone number is (817) 272-3997 and fax number (817) 272-5797. E-mail: center@library.uta.edu.

Illustration of Frank Leslie’s special Texas train from the September 27, 1890 issue of Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, first Texas edition (Courtesy Special Collections Division, The University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, Arlington, Texas).
Almost two decades ago, while reading TEXAS IN MAPS by James P. Bryan and Walter Hanak in the then-new Cartographic History Library at The University of Texas at Arlington, the following sentence caught my eye and was my introduction to the British cartographer Herman Moll (1654?-1732):

Aside from this outstanding misrepresentation, Moll contributed little to Texas cartography.

The “outstanding misrepresentation” referred to above by the offended Texan authors was the depiction of the border between Spanish Texas and French Louisiana on Moll’s various North American maps as the Rio Grande rather than the Red and/or Sabine rivers. As I learned somewhat later, this distortion was lifted rather carelessly by Moll from the maps of the eminent, imperialist French cartographers of the day (the Sansons, Coronelli, and Delisle). But the question in my mind, concerning this passage, remained: if this was all for which this Herman Moll was notable, then why bother to mention him at all in what is a relatively brief overview of Texas cartography? I decided to find out for myself. So, I pulled out all of the copies of Moll’s atlases and maps (of which there were a considerable number!) from our collection and began to look at them closely. I was enchanted, and have been ever since!

Moll’s maps clearly were the work of a true master of the engraver’s art. The lines were crisp and clean and the lettering captivatingly unique. The maps spoke with authority and commanded attention. Reading Moll’s characteristic annotations quickly became a joy. The subject matter was interesting and incredibly diverse. And it was all complimented by the simplicity of Enlightenment style with very tasteful original outline color. Historians normally are enthusiastic about maps, especially older ones, but I was enraptured. Obviously, I had also found the answer to my question.

Within the apparently limited confines of the history of cartography, Herman Moll is well-known. Although of German origin, and born in the declining Hanseatic city-state of Bremen, Moll is Britain’s most celebrated geographer and mapmaker of the first half of the eighteenth century—and he gained this distinction already during his own lifetime. His fame rests upon a long and fertile career of almost sixty years. Through his numerous geographies, atlases, maps, charts, and globes, Moll had an impact beyond geography and cartography on his adopted country and its future.

After arriving in Restoration London in the early 1670s, Moll first established himself as a fine engraver of maps in the employ of others until the late 1680s, when he set out on his own and flourished as a mapmaker, geographer, businessman, and intellectual entrepreneur. He also was a denizen of the newly fashionable coffeehouses, favoring Jonathan’s in Change Alley, Cornhill, where he freely associated with a circle of friends that included the writers Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, the scientist Robert Hooke, the philosopher John Locke, the antiquarian William Stukeley, and the buccaneers William Dampier and Woodes Rogers, among others. Moll fully integrated into London’s growing middle-class society and became part of its intellectual-cultural elite. He was a part of the city’s rebirth from plague and fire, and his work reflected the expansion of and popular worldview of the British Empire.

While Moll was not the originator of the Texas-Louisiana border “misrepresentation,” given the numbers and repute of his maps, he was one of its most significant popularizers, especially to the dismay of the Spanish. In the early-eighteenth century, rather than being a distinct perimeter, the border between Texas and Louisiana was actually more a zonal frontier at the northeastern extremity of Spain’s gradually declining empire in the Americas. The area was poorly explored, mapped, and manned by Spain. And what Spain did know about the region it did not publish freely on maps so as not to give its European imperial rivals any easy advantage. Almost from the time of Columbus’ first landing, detailed Spanish maps of the New World were closely-guarded, secret state documents. Hence, Spain’s claims in the region in actuality and on paper were becoming more tenuous—and increasingly challenged by France.

Undoubtedly, Moll’s depiction of the boundary on maps such as his two-sheet “A New Map of the North Parts of America Claimed by France...” from his most important work, the folio THE WORLD DESCRIBED... (London: 1720-1754 and Dublin: 1730 and 1741) is based upon the maps of aggressive French imperial cartographers of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries like Vincenzo Maria Coronelli, a Franciscan and the Cosmographer of the Republic of Venice, who also worked for Louis XIV in the 1680s. While the French officially claimed only the territory east of the lower Red River, Coronelli, Moll, and others drew the line from the Pecos River south to the Rio Grande and on to the Gulf of Mexico. Whether Coronelli’s incorrect portrayal was intentional to please his royal master and expand French New World domains on paper at the expense of the Spanish and/or a mistake derived from the misinformation stemming from LaSalle’s exploration of the Gulf of Mexico continues to be open to interpretation. But in the absence of reliable Spanish maps and with British interests now directly concerned in the area, Moll readily relied on the major French cartographers like Coronelli and even enhanced their portrayals. For example, Moll
clearly indicated LaSalle’s “French Fort” on “St. Bernard or St. Lewis Bay” (Galveston Bay instead of Matagorda Bay) and place the site of LaSalle’s murder (“here Mons. de la Salle was murdered”) incorrectly, far inland to the south of the Rio Grande instead of near the Trinity River in east Texas.

On the same map of French America from THE WORLD DESCRIBED... and elsewhere, Moll also traced the routes of the French explorer St. Denis from Natchitoches in Louisiana across Texas to the “R. del Norte” in 1713-1716. The St. Denis information probably came from Guillaume Delisle’s famous 1718 map of Louisiana on which the name Texas (“Tejas”) first appeared. Delisle, the premier French cartographer of his day, produced some of the most accurate maps of North America, but his delineations of the often vague boundaries between the European empires on this continent created quite a furor in this era of early nationalism. His 1718 map not only incorporated part of the Spanish Southwest into French Louisiana in the west, but also claimed the Carolinas in the east for France. Moll was willing to accept French paper claims to Texas, though the Spanish rejected such maps, but he took exception to French claims to the Carolinas. On his “A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America”... and “...North America...” in THE WORLD DESCRIBED,... Moll retaliated by moving the borders of the Carolinas deep into French and Spanish territory. The second map specifically attached Delisle’s 1718 map and the French claims in the east, yet left the Spanish-French boundary in the west unchanged.

As Tony Campbell indicated in his book, EARLY MAPS, “the seeds of the Anglo-French rivalry that were to lead to the French and Indian War of 1754 had clearly already been sown” (p. 37). This heated war of cartographic imperialism, fanned by the widely-viewed maps of Herman Moll and pointing to new foreign challenges to its North American empire, also encouraged Spain further to explore and more publicly map the territory coming under dispute and to re-evaluate its colonial policies there in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

Another one of the more distinctive features of Moll’s American Southwest maps is the portrayal of California as an island. While this misconception was not unique to Moll’s work, for he most likely took this too from relatively current French maps like those of Nicolas Sanson, Moll was the last major cartographer to perpetuate it. In 1698, a Jesuit, Father Eusebio Kino, journeyed overland from Baja California to Arizona and dispelled the myth with his map, published in 1705. Nevertheless, Moll’s work con-

continued to show an insular California in still-popular editions published more than thirty years after his death. Once, when pressed why he continued to perpetuate this now-obvious myth of California as an island, Moll even boldly commented, “Why, I have had in my office mariners who have sailed around it.” Again, and as with the Texas-Louisiana border, British interests were not directly concerned. Moll also was shrewd, a businessman at the center of an emerging empire and the very competitive London map trade, and the re-engraving of copperplates for new maps was costly and time-consuming; a passion for accuracy about yet somewhat obscure parts of the world might hamper profits.

Herman Moll worked at the dawn of an era of dynamic change in British and European history and in the history of cartography as well. The body of his work demonstrates that he was serious about, and dedicated to, his craft as an engraver and as a geographer-cartographer. His fascinating inaccuracies and inconsistencies were common to the age and the state of the art, and often were derivative from the works of others. In this he certainly was not atypical, but he was nevertheless one of the most prominent European cartographers of the early-eighteenth century. Moll’s cartography reflected, and even on occasion epitomized, an amazing age. At the same time, through his activities, and especially through his influential graphic images at a still-largely-illiterate time, Moll abetted and helped shape the changes that influenced the future.

For further reading:


Editor’s Note: Dennis Reinhartz is Associate Professor of History at UTA, where he joined the faculty in 1973. Formerly President of the Society for the History of Discoveries, he has written and edited numerous books and written numerous articles on the history of cartography.
Texas Map Society to be Formed

Texans interested in historic maps will be pleased to learn that plans are underway to develop a Texas Map Society. Membership will include people with both academic and collecting interests in historic maps. According to those who met to create the Texas Map Society, one’s interest in maps need not be restricted to Texas, as all historic maps of all areas of the world may be of interest to map collectors and historians in Texas. A day-long meeting of the Texas Map Society is scheduled on Saturday, November 23rd at the University of Texas at Arlington. For more information, contact Katherine Goodwin, Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington, Box 19497, Arlington, Texas 76019; (817) 272-5329, FAX (817) 272-3360.

Mexican War Symposium to be Held at UTA

Readers of Fronteras are reminded that a major two day symposium on “The U.S. Mexican War” will be held at The University of Texas at Arlington on October 25-26. Topics to be covered include: The Causes of the Mexican War; The Military Perspective; U.S. and Mexican Attitudes Toward the War; The Mexican War in Historical Perspective; The War in Words, Images and Artifacts; The Regional/Cultural Impact of the War; Women in the War; and The Legacy of the War. For more information, please contact The Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, The University of Texas at Arlington, Box 19497, Arlington, Texas 76019-0497, (817) 272-3997.

New Books

Two New Books Document the Mapping of Texas

Two books from the Texas A&M University Press document Texas boundaries and their impact on daily life. One looks at the subject internally and the other externally....

In Texas Boundaries: Evolution of the State’s Counties, Luke Gournay discusses and interprets the changing internal political geography of Texas by mapping the changing shape of Texas counties from their inception in the 1830s to the present day. Gournay’s book contains many maps of Texas that permit the reader to see the evolution of counties from their development on the metes and bounds system, which is common in the east, to the later rectangular counties in West Texas that are more typical of the American west. Texas Boundaries can serve as a guide to the phenomenal changes that have transformed the state’s political geography over more than two centuries, while underscoring the enduring aspects of certain boundaries that have existed since Spanish times.

In The Shape of Texas: Maps as Metaphors, Richard Francaviglia is concerned with the familiar map of Texas as both an outline and a silhouette. How and why the map of Texas is so widely used to convey a sense of the state’s historic and geographic identity is the focus of this book. Francaviglia concludes that no state uses its map more aggressively than does Texas, and, not coincidentally, that no state outline is more radiant than that of Texas. The Shape of Texas is the first book to investigate how familiar geographic shapes become symbols in both folk culture and popular culture/advertising. Both books are available from the Texas A&M University Press, Drawer “C”, College Station, TX 77843; (409) 845-1436.
Meet the Center Faculty

Jay C. Henry received his B.Arch. from the Catholic University of America in 1962. Following five years in the Air Force, he returned to graduate school in 1967, receiving his Ph.D. in architectural history from the University of California at Berkeley in 1974. He has taught in the School of Architecture at UTA since 1972, and was appointed an Associate Fellow of the Center in 1995. Dr. Henry’s courses in the history of architecture and design have ranged from basic surveys to specialized electives, graduate seminars and field courses abroad. His research interests concern American and Twentieth Century European Architecture and Urban Form. He is the author of ARCHITECTURE IN TEXAS 1895-1945, published in 1993 by the University of Texas Press, and is presently working on a corollary topic: Texas Architecture of the Great Depression, 1929-1941. Dr. Henry has also presented lectures on the architecture of Texas and Arlington at the Center’s conferences on local and regional history.

New Southwestern History Course To Be Offered

Students of Southwestern Studies will be interested in a new history course—*The Southwest*—that will be offered for the first time during the Spring semester in 1997. History 3352 is a three-credit undergraduate course that provides a comprehensive multicultural history of the region from pre-Columbian times to the present; it emphasizes the changing relationship between three major cultures (Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo American) and the environment of the region. Major topics include cultural adaptation to the environment; cultural contact, conflict and cooperation; political social and economic changes. For more information contact Dr. Richard Francaviglia, Center for Southwestern Studies, The University of Texas at Arlington, Box 19497-Main Library, Arlington, TX 76019-0497, phone: (817) 272-3997.

Center Fellows: Evan Anders, Associate Professor of History; Brooks Ellwood, Professor of Geology; Bob Fairbanks, Associate Professor of History; George Green, Associate Professor of History; Sam Haynes, Assistant Professor of History; David Narrett, Associate Professor of History; Elizabeth Ordóñez, Professor of Foreign Languages; Dennis Reinhartz, Associate Professor of History; Doug Richmond, Professor of History; and Ken Roemer, Professor of English. Associate Center Fellows: David Buissenen, Endowed Chair for Southwestern Studies; José Gutiérrez, Associate Professor of Political Science; Jeff Hanson, Associate Professor of Anthropology; and Jay Henry, Professor of Architecture.