Do you have an interest in historic maps? Have you ever thought about studying or collecting them for pleasure or profit? If so, then you will want to attend the Spring meeting of the Texas Map Society on April 5 and 6, 2002. The Texas Map Society — TMS for short — has been active for more than five years and now has about 120 members.

Like other spring TMS meetings, this meeting will not be held at UTA, but elsewhere in Texas. This year’s meeting will be held in Tyler, which offers many interesting local sites including the Caldwell Zoo, Hudnall Planetarium, McClendon House, Smith County Historical Museum, Tyler Rose Museum, and the Tyler Museum of Art. Tyler in spring is known for its natural beauty — mile after mile of azaleas, dogwood trees and spring flowers. Tyler’s Azalea and Spring Flower Trail has been praised by visitors as “a floral wonderland and a photographer’s paradise.”

The TMS meeting will be equally fascinating. On Friday evening, attendees will meet at the home of Marvin and Shirley Applewhite for a delightful reception and conversation about historic maps. On Saturday, there is a full agenda. Topics include:

- “Maps of Conquest — Indian and Spanish Maps of Meso-America,” by Gary Spurr (Archivist, UTA)
- “Texas’s ‘Adopt a Map Program,’” by Joan Kilpatrick (Texas General Land Office, Austin, Texas)
- “Using Geographic Information Systems to Map Historic Sites,” by Darrell McDonald (Steven F. Austin State University)
- “Two Perspectives on Map Collecting: The Dealer and A Collector,” by Royd Riddell and George Tobolowsky (Dallas, Texas)
- “Can You Fix This?” by Gayle Young (Map Conservator, Weatherford, Texas)

The meeting concludes with a discussion about the importance of map collecting to historical interpretation. For more information, contact Kit Goodwin, The University of Texas at Arlington, University Libraries, Special Collections, Box 19497, Arlington, Texas 76019, (Phone 817-272-5329), (FAX 817-272-3360), goodwin@uta.edu.
Historian Interprets
Religion in the Modern
American West

This book by Ferenc Morton Szasz (professor of History at the University of Mexico) has an interesting premise: Religion plays a major role in our lives, but is often neglected by scholars. Szasz describes and interprets religion's impact on the western United States from the 1890s to the present. That beginning date is important, for it popularly signifies the end of the frontier and the rising dominance of cities. Consider for a moment the daunting task facing Szasz. He had to address dozens of religious denominations, often using original church records and other documents to tell the story of mainstream religions like the Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and Baptists. He also covers other religions — Asian and Near Eastern faiths, including Buddhism and Islam — that are, as Szasz puts it, “here to stay.” Szasz also does not overlook the region's earliest religions — that of the Native Americans — whose non-Judeo Christian religion was once threatened but is now protected under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. But this book covers more than just organized religion: Szasz also covers the quasi religious movements like Dianetics and “new age” religions that have thrived in the region since the early to mid Twentieth Century. Focusing in part on the religious leaders who embody many diverse beliefs, Szasz provides a fascinating look at an often overlooked subject. Strongly recommended to students of western history, Religion in the Modern American West is available from the University of Arizona Press, 355 S. Euclid, Suite 103, Tucson, AZ 85719, Phone: 520-621-1441, Fax: 520-621-8899, www.uapress.arizona.edu.

Geographer and Sociologist publish fascinating
Atlas of American Religion

Religion not only has a rich history in our nation, but also an equally interesting geography. This is as evident in the distribution of church members, for religious affiliation varies regionally. Consider for a moment the Southwest, which has a startling diversity of religions — each religion a result of the interplay between geography and history. Billed as an atlas, this fascinating book contains considerable historical information. Authors William Newman and Peter Halvorson interpret American religion in what they call “The Denominational Era, 1776-1990.” After describing the organizing religions in U.S. history, the authors then discuss the challenges in counting the faithful and in understanding America's many denominations and sects. This remarkable book illustrates these and other developments using more than fifty tables and more than ninety maps. By consulting these illustrations and the text, it is easy to discern regional patterns — including the West and Southwest in relation to broader national patterns. Moreover, by comparing maps of different religions in different time periods, like the Mormons in 1890 and 1990, one can see how their distributions have changed (or remained similar) through time. This Atlas's synergy is a welcome result of a partnership between a sociologist (Newman) and a geographer (Halvorson). Highly recommended to students of American history, sociology, and geography, The Atlas of American Religion is available from AltaMira Press, a division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1630 N. Main St., Suite 367, Walnut Creek, CA 94596, http://www.altamirapress.com.
Lessons From “Natural Encounters . . .”
by Richard Francaviglia

Here at UTA's Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, we frequently host conferences of interest to the public. Over the last ten years, we've held a dozen such events about the Southwest and its history. In October of 2001, we hosted our biggest (and longest) conference yet — a three-day event called “Natural Encounters: Understanding Habitat and Society in North Texas.” Featuring two days of conference presentations and a day of field trips, this event was also one of our most popular. Most attendees were quite pleased; some have already asked us to “do another conference on the environment — soon!”

Now that the dust has settled, so to speak, I'd like to share some “behind the scenes” experiences that helped make the “Natural Encounters” conference so successful. To do so, I'll draw upon some of the comments from the evaluation sheets that attendees filled out, and also recall what individuals told me at the conference. I'll also share some personal observations about the event.

Begin in Your Own Backyard

KXAS' Television meteorologist David Finnrock helped kick off the conference by sharing his excitement about Texas' natural habitats. One of David's comments about how his own backyard features native plants inspired me to begin my presentation with a challenging premise — “to be really educated, a person needs to not only know about what is going on in the world, but to also understand the intricacies of his or her own backyard.” Like our neighborhoods, our yards are shaped worlds — artifacts that reveal a partnership between nature and humankind. Continuing with this theme of understanding our immediate surroundings, the conference presenters repeatedly stressed the importance of vegetation patterns and habitats that we've come to overlook because of their familiarity. In our area, this includes the remnants of magnificent prairie, the mosaic of intriguing Cross Timbers forests, and the ribbons of dense riparian vegetation along streams and rivers. These are all landscapes of the familiar that help sustain life in our region.

Think Comprehensively

Given our highly compartmentalized lives — we rush here and there, taking in a fragment of landscape here, a fragment there — it is easy to forget that there is an underlying pattern to our landscapes. In our part of Texas, the climate becomes increasingly drier to the west, with about 45 inches of rain in east Texas, but only about 25 inches just 100 miles to our west. This precipitation variation affects the vegetation: Forests are common in the eastern part of our area, but scrub vegetation becomes more common as one moves westward. But another factor — geology — also affects the look of the land hereabouts. The underlying rock units that stretch across our area vary in age from Carboniferous (about 225 million years old) in the west to the Cretaceous (about 65 million years of age) in the east. Moreover, some of this underlying bedrock is sandstone, some limestone, and both yield different soils: The sandy soils in turn help support the growth of oak trees, notably the Cross Timbers, while the limestone-derived soils sustain the prairie grasses. Along the streams and rivers, rich soil and available moisture helps support water-loving plants like cattails, willows, and cottonwoods. If you open your eyes to the habitats around you, you'll begin to decipher a beautiful tapestry unfolding before you.

Recognize the Hand of Humankind

It is tempting to think of nature and humankind as separate, but they are interconnected. For perhaps more than 10,000 years, humans have had an impact on portions of Texas. They burned vegetation, hunted animals, and harvested plants. This means that the concept of a "natural" landscape — that is, one people have never affected — although interesting to imagine, is not particularly realistic. For millennia, fires have seared and sustained the prairie grasses. Some were started by lightning and some by the native peoples. With the arrival of European settlers about two hundred years ago, these fires were suppressed. This led to increases in scrubby growth and forested areas. Then, too, settlers brought livestock with them. When these animals grazed the land, they frequently encouraged the growth of scrubby vegetation like mesquite — a native plant that has spread like wildfire since about 1850. To add to the complexity, settlers often felled trees for firewood, and for the construction of fences, barns, and homes. These settlers also brought a wide variety of non-native plants (like cotton and wheat) with them. The more sensitive of these settlers were ever-aware of the basic patterns of prairie, forest, and riparian habitats. A look at the letters and journals that these settlers left reveals their uncanny knowledge about which lands were good to settle (the prairie), which to avoid (the dense Cross Timbers forest, which required cutting down trees and clearing stumps), and which to respect (the low-lying areas subject to flooding); yet, the settlement of our area involved the utilization of all three habitats.

Understand Urban Habitats

In the last 150 years, cities have become a major factor in transforming Texas' habitats. In our area, for example, the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex has now grown to over four million inhabitants and covers about a dozen counties. Presenters at our conference noted that urban and suburban growth has completely transformed the “natural” environment in some places. Fly into the Metroplex and you will see everywhere the works of engineering that sustain these cities. These include not only dense webs of highways and streets, but also large areas of water impounded behind dams. These huge lakes serve as sources of water, places of recreation, and provide flood control, but they
frequently obliterate terrestrial habitats and increase ambient humidity.

Our cities are a fact of life, and it is futile to rail against them: After all, they help to sustain the networks of friends, family, and associates that we know and love. They create jobs, and also help sustain diverse institutions, like UTA and conservation groups that engage in serious, sometimes passionate, study of our region. These cities frequently need guidance on how to best develop, and several of our conference presenters specialize in making sure that development is accomplished with as much sensitivity toward the environment as is possible. UTA landscape architect Pat Taylor shared some of his observations about how development can be directed to yield better habitats for creatures and humankind. Although it is easy to find environmental problem areas, our conference attendees were also shown the good examples as inspiration. These led us to the conclusion that sensitive development often pays off in the long run; in other words, it is ultimately not only more ethical, but also makes better business sense, to develop areas as sensitively as possible.

Sensitive development was one of the conference’s watchwords. One of our presenters, humanities director Gail Thomas, urged that we re-examine our values and develop a greater sympathy and appreciation for the way things around us — like the rivers we take for granted — function. Using Dr. Thomas’ perspective, it is easy to see that we have channeled the Trinity River into a straightjacket when the river seeks to meander; small wonder, then, that we are rudely surprised when downpours swell the river and it jumps its banks, inundating our settlements. One major lesson from the conference is that we should all be more observant and sensitive to the way nature works, for we are part of it and ignore these lessons at great expense to life and property.

Open a Dialogue
If our conference had one major goal, it was to bring together thinkers from both the sciences and the humanities. We thank the Texas Council for the Humanities (TCH) and private sponsors for their assistance and vision in supporting this dialogue. TCH’s support helped us bring in speakers to discuss the early naturalists who pored over Texas in the nineteenth century. These naturalists communicated with diverse people in an effort to better understand our surroundings. Many of them were in contact with native peoples who shared their considerable knowledge about flora, fauna, and landscapes. These naturalists were frequently the kind of people who used the tools of both the scientist and artist. A look at the writings of early naturalists like Dr. Gideon Linecum or Jacob Boll reveals their sensitivity to both science and the arts. By the late nine-
teenth century, however, those interested in science and those interested in aesthetics began to move in separate circles. By the mid twentieth century, the separation had found scientists speaking on one side of issues, and philosophers on the other. The point of our conference was that both sides offer important perspectives and need to be integrated. As educated people, we need to do all we can to bring science and the arts into closer harmony. To that end, Juana Paduño provided a Comanche Indian artist’s perspective on natural Texas, while scientists like botanist George Diggs helped us better understand how scientists conceptualize the environment. Our conference also featured a special exhibit that included illustrations from some of the region’s most important scientific reports, like the one from William Emory’s U.S.-Mexican Border Survey (1857) shown here.

Some Closing Thoughts
“Natural Encounters” taught us many lessons, but I’d like to leave you with four. First, both the scientists and the humanities scholars had far more in common than we originally anticipated. It is easy to stereotype scientists as narrow or specialized thinkers, and artists as visionary dreamers, but they often have a deeper respect for each other’s views than we recognize. Secondly, the environments of Texas are easy to ignore because we’ve become so used to them: by studying our region’s natural history, however, we enrich ourselves immeasurably. The shape of a post oak leaf, the texture of cottonwood bark, the sweep of a prairie vista, all unite us with our larger environment. These features are as much our companions as the associates and friends we know — if only we’ll take the time and effort to seek them out. Thirdly, we came away realizing that human settlements can be judged by how well they relate to their surroundings. Although the word habitat is normally associated with nature, we showed that our human habitats are part of it. Fourth, and lastly, we realized that we are not the first (nor will we be the last) people to inquire about our relationship to our habitats. People long before us studied and interpreted the environment, and we have much to learn from them. By studying how they wrote about the environment and depicted it in sketches and early reports, we can better understand — and acknowledge — our debt to those who came before us.

Editors Note: Richard Francaviglia is Professor of History and Geography at UTA, where he also directs the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography. His most recent book, The Cast Iron Forest, is a natural and cultural history of the Cross Timbers region.
Center News

Center Fellows Updates

Sam Haynes recently co-edited *Major Problems in Texas History* — an anthology of documents and essays — for Houghton-Mifflin. He continues to work on his manuscript on early nineteenth century American Anglophobia.


Dennis Reinhartz presented a paper, “The New World Cartographic Legacy in the Atlases and Maps of Tomás López,” at the XIX International Conference on the History of Cartography in Madrid, Spain in July 2001. He was also elected President of the Arid Lands Studies Association for 2001-2002.

Ken Roemer has been named the co-editor of the *Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, also his 1999 article on Leslie Marmon Silko will appear in a revised version in Oxford University Press’s *Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony: A Casebook*. His personal narrative about his family’s experiences in Japan was accepted for publication by Shairyusha in Tokyo. It will appear in Japanese with the title *Michibata de Deatte Nippon (Japan Encountered at the Roadside)* or in a more literary translation, *A Sidewalker’s Japan*.

Roberto Treviño focuses on religion in Mexican-American history. His essay, “More Pluribus than Unum: Ethnicity and Religion in American History,” will be published in a forthcoming volume from the University of California Press. At the last meeting of the Texas State Historical Association, Professor Treviño presented a paper titled “La fe y la crisis: Catholicism, the Great Depression, and Mexican-American Community Building in Houston.” His review of Jorge Ibe’s *Hispánicos in the Mormon Zion, 1912-1999* recently appeared in the journal, *Catholic Southwest*. Oxford University Press is reviewing Dr. Treviño’s book manuscript, “From Parias to Participants: Ethno-Catholicism in Mexican-American Houston, 1911-1972.”

Hall-Kohfeldt Scholarship Awarded

*Linda Pelon* has again received the Ida Hall & George Kohfeldt Scholarship. The scholarship awards are based on a number of factors, including a student’s experience with Native American culture. Ms. Pelon continues studying Native American history, and recently made a presentation on places associated with Comanche history.

Center E-Mail Addresses Change

Effective immediately, the Center’s e-mail addresses have changed. We no longer use the word “library” in the address as we are now using a different server. Please note the following new e-mail addresses:

- For all general Center business and inquiries, use <swcenter@uta.edu>;
- To contact Secretary Ann Jennings, use <jennings@uta.edu>; and
- To contact Center Director Richard Francaviglia, use <francaviglia@uta.edu>.
Meet the Center Faculty

Douglas W. Richmond is a Professor in the History Department, where he teaches courses on Mexico, Modern Latin America, Colonial Latin America, Spain and Portugal, Introduction to Historical Methodology, and World War II as well as transatlantic graduate courses. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 1976, Richmond began teaching at UT Arlington the same year. He has authored, edited, or co-edited seven books, twenty articles/essays, and numerous book reviews. Richmond has presented many conference papers in Mexico, his main research specialty. His latest book, The Mexican Nation: Historical Continuity and Modern Change, published by Prentice-Hall in 2001, is the culmination of 17 years of writing and research. It was completed with the help of four Center Graduate Research Assistants.

SWTSU Program Named Regional Humanities Center

Since its creation in 1991, UTA's Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography has worked closely with several similar centers at other universities throughout the region. One of these centers — the Center for the Study of the Southwest at Southwest Texas State University — was recently selected by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to be a Regional Humanities Center. Our center will coordinate its activities with SWTSU's new humanities center as a way of reaching an even larger audience of people interested in the Southwest and cartographic history.

Center Fellows: Bob Fairbanks, Professor of History; George Green, Professor of History; Sam Haynes, Associate Professor of History; David Narrett, Associate Professor of History; Kenneth Philp, Professor of History; Dennis Reinhartz, Professor of History; Judy Reinhartz, Professor of Education; Doug Richmond, Professor of History; Ken Roemer, Professor of English; and Roberta Tovilla, Associate Professor of History.

Associate Center Fellows: David Busse, Jenkins and Virginia Garrett Endowed Chair for Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography; Manuel Garcia y Griego, Director, Center for Mexican-American Studies; and Jay Henry, Professor of Architecture.