



The Mountain West: Interpreting the Folk Landscape (Creating the North American Landscape)

Professor Terry G. Jordan, Professor Jon T. Kilpinen, Professor Charles F. Gritzner

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Why is the West--both in the United States and Canada--not like the East? Traditionally, two answers have been given to the question: Either the West is a pioneer culture--the old frontier moved westward from what we now call the East--or the West is a unique subculture originating in a human response to the demands of a dry, rugged physical environment.

In this groundbreaking volume, Terry Jordan and his co-authors look to the log folk buildings of the Mountain West, from New Mexico to Alaska, to explain why the West is "the West." Arguing that artifacts such as dwellings, barns, and fences can, if correctly interpreted, reveal much about the origins and character of the regional culture, they set forth not only the first comprehensive description and analysis of Western folk architecture but also a systematic explanation of the culture of the West.

"The West," the authors conclude, "is at once indigenous and imported, innovative and ultraconservative, Anglo-American and ethnic, unitary and plural." Westerners tinkered, invented, modified, and diversified. No single adaptive strategy brought to the West worked flawlessly in the new habitat. By extensive field investigation of still-extant folk houses, fences, barns, hay derricks, and cabins--all elements of material culture--they explain what the land tells us about the West.

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