Cadillac Desert
by Marc Reisner
1986

Chapter 1
A Country of Illusion
Discussion

• How does Reisner structure this chapter?

• What is the main theme in this chapter?

• Based on what you have read so far, what does Reisner’s think about western development and what are some key clues from the text that support this assessment?
Best quotes

• The country Lewis and Clark saw amazed, appalled, and enchanted them. Above all it bewildered them.
• This enormous gush of humanity pouring into a region still marked on some maps as the Great American Desert was encouraged by wishful thinking, by salesmanship and by natural caprice.
• 160 ac. If anything unifies the story of the American West ...it is this mythical allotment of land.
• In Europe, an enormous harvest of souls was waiting to be converted. To newly arrived immigrants ... America was not such a democratic utopia as it was a gold mine.
• ...the West’s yeoman farmer became the embodiment of the welfare state ...

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Coronado’s Exploration

Coronado Army March to the North

1540
Napoleon had no idea what he had sold for $15 M; Jefferson had no idea what he had bought.
Exploration & Expansion

www.nps.gov/jeff/LewisClark2/HomePage/HomePage.htm
John Wesley Powell

Line drawing from *Canyons of the Colorado* by John Wesley Powell, 1875

Water in the West
Aug. 26, 2003

[www.powellmuseum.org](http://www.powellmuseum.org)
Exploration of Lower Colorado

Powell and Thomas Moran paintings
Glen Canyon

Photo by Gus Scott, 1938. From “Glen Canyon Before Lake Powell,” a book by Eleanor Inskip.
Eliot Porter
Rapids!
Opening of the West
Homestead Act
Discussion

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