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 ...

Coronado’s Exploration

Napoleon had no idea what he had sold for $15 M; Jefferson had no idea what he had bought.
John Wesley Powell

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

Exploration of Lower Colorado

Powell and Thomas Moran paintings

Glen Canyon

Eliot Porter
Rapids!

Opening of the West

Homestead Act

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