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## **Itineraries, Guidebooks, Maps. Guiding Travelers in the Early United States, 1783-1845**

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# ITINERARIES, GUIDEBOOKS, MAPS

Guiding Travelers in the Early United States,  
1783-1845

BY JAMES R. AKERMAN

## ABSTRACT

In the early decades of travel in the United States, the publication of maps, separately or within guidebooks responded slowly and selectively at first to the navigational (or wayfinding) needs of travelers. Travel publications not only facilitated travel but also promoted it. Whether serving migrants or tourists, travelers' maps of course supported geographical comprehension of a territory unfamiliar to a reader, but, like the texts they often accompanied they also promoted an image of the place described, its vastness, its wealth, and its potential for »civilization.« The emergence of a viable American map trade responded especially to the growing market for information about the country west of the Appalachian Mountains and efforts to incorporate western territories into the national geographical identity. Examining in turn early river guidebooks, maps for migrants, and maps for tourists, this chapter argues that the complex motivations for travel in the early United States and the size, complexity, and rapid evolution of the transportation system posed navigational challenges that promoted innovations in map and guidebook design and format.

KEYWORDS: travel maps, guidebooks, migration, tourism, United States

## I. INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hutchins' 1784<sup>1</sup> *Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana, and West-Florida* was among the first regional guides published in an independent United States. Though much of its text was historical and geographical, the book was written to promote American interest in East and West Florida (still in Spanish hands) and the Mississippi Valley (partly American and partly Spanish). Hutchins promised to provide »directions for sailing into all the bays, lakes, harbours and rivers on the north side of the Gulf of Mexico, and for navigating between the islands situated along the coast, and ascending the Mississippi River,« as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Except where noted, the dates cited in the text or in parenthetical narratives are the dates of publication of the first edition of a title. I have not troubled to provide further details of later editions except where relevant.

a description of »the climate, soil, and produce whether animal, vegetable, or mineral.«<sup>2</sup> Notably, Hutchins' book offered information and advice about territories beyond the boundaries of the United States agreed in the Treaty of Paris (1783). It thus began a stream of US publications meant to persuade politicians, investors, and migrants of the benefits of the conquest, settlement, and development of a Transappalachian West. Most also included practical advice, geographical, logistical, and navigational, migrants and other travelers needed to take possession of the continent – in the process, of course, dispossessing its Native inhabitants. Mapping occupies a significant role in these texts, though one that has been little studied, and mostly in respect to single works.<sup>3</sup> But not all of these works included maps. Though Hutchins, for example, made several important contributions to western American cartography, notably the *New Map of the Western Parts of Virginia* (1778)<sup>4</sup> and *Plat of the Seven Ranges of Townships* (1796),<sup>5</sup> his *Historical Narrative* does not include a single map.

An author's or publisher's decision to take on the effort and expense of including a map in their travel guides and narratives reflected their judgment, we must presume, that it added sufficient value to justify the cost. A map's contribution to navigation (or wayfinding) was a consideration, but not only that. Travelers' maps of course supported geographical comprehension of a territory unfamiliar to a reader, but, like the texts they often accompanied they also promoted an image of the place described, its vastness, its wealth, and its potential for »civilization.« The emergence of a viable American map trade in the last decades of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth responded both to an expanding market anxious for information about the western country and the imperative to incorporate western territories into a national geographical identity. In this respect the role of maps for travelers in the expansion and development of the nation in the Transappalachian West deserves particular attention.

The ability of American authors and publishers to include maps in guidebooks and similar publications for western travelers in the early United States before the Anglo-American War of 1812-15 was limited, as American commercial map publishing was in its infancy. Only after the war was the American map trade sufficiently developed and the market for travelers' guides sufficiently large to allow publishers

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- 2 Hutchins: *An Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana, and West-Florida*, title page.
  - 3 The most comprehensive accounts of American commercial cartography for this period are: Ristow: *American Maps and Mapmakers*; Schulten: *Mapping the Nation* and Brueckner: *The Social Life of Maps in America, 1750-1860*.
  - 4 Published when he was still an officer in the British army in Hutchins: *A Topographical Description of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina*.
  - 5 Hutchins et al.: *Plat of the Seven Ranges of Townships*.

to include maps in their guidebooks more purposefully and innovatively.<sup>6</sup> The outcome of the war surely stimulated this growth, as it enabled a flood of non-native migration into the Great Lakes region and the Mississippi Valley. Geographically speaking, the Anglo-American-Indian War of 1812 was essentially a border war, though with existential implications for Native communities, the United States, and British Canada. The peace that followed set both British Canada and the United States on parallel courses of territorial expansion to the west—at the expense of Indigenous peoples, whose power east of the Mississippi was greatly diminished nearly eliminated by the conflict and related wars in both the old north- and south-west.<sup>7</sup> The war extinguished the United States' aspirations for control of the lower St. Lawrence River and its estuary, but it confirmed its control of the southern shore of the Great Lakes and adjacent territories. Most importantly, it eliminated competition from European powers for control of most of the Mississippi watershed.

Publication of American travelers' guides and maps was at first centered in Philadelphia, seat of travel mapping pioneer John Melish and where Henry Schenk Tanner and Samuel Augustus Mitchell were the most prominent map publishers in the later 1820s-1840s. Several New York publishers, including David Burr, John Disturnell, and Joseph Hutchins Colton, also entered the market during the period, and other centers had emerged as well in New Haven, Albany, Buffalo, Baltimore, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Cincinnati, many of them serving distinctly regional markets. The major Philadelphia and New York publishers each issued a great diversity of guidebooks, gazetteers, and directories, along with general maps and atlases of the United States and the world, school geographies and wall maps. By the 1840s they published both under their own names and created maps for individual authors and other publishers, lending a consistency of style to maps across genres. Maps labeled for use by travelers were issued separately, folded in their own bindings or incorporated into narrative and descriptive guidebooks, gazetteers, and other formats. They grew both in variety and number during this period, but until the great annexations of far western lands in the late 1840s, the geographical scope of these publications was roughly bounded in the west by territories that would become the states on the far bank of the Mississippi River, from Louisiana to Minnesota.

Within this geographical frame, commercially published American travelers maps and guides witnessed, promoted, and supported the steady expansion of the United States Public Land Survey; the establishment of territories and new states along the Great Lakes and on the western bank of the Mississippi; the construction of the Erie Canal and of its Midwestern siblings that linked Great Lakes to the Ohio and Mississippi valleys; the emergence of Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Cleveland, Detroit, Toledo, Chicago, and St. Louis as entrepôts of

6 See Brückner: *The Social Life of Maps in America, 1750-1860*; Ristow: *American Maps and Mapmakers*.

7 Gilpin: *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest*; Taylor: *The Civil War of 1812*. Bickham: *The Weight of Vengeance*; Stagg: *The War of 1812*.



settlement and growth anchoring U.S. control and development of the western waterways; and the coming of the steamboat and the first American railroads. While we cannot say that these travelers' maps and guidebooks created this first American West, their role in encouraging migration to and within the United States and in shaping American's conception of the Transappalachian West was considerable. Wayfinding and other practical advice was an important element of this broadly expansionist and colonialist mapping. The motivation to migrate and to settle depended on the assurance that the necessary travel was practical, though difficult, and that the rewards for doing so outweighed the uncertainties and difficulties of the journey. As with modern guidebooks and maps for travelers, the promotion of travel and navigation went hand in hand.

The geographical subjects of these guides and maps in the early republic were eclectic. Samuel L. Mitchell—not to be confused with Samuel Augustus Mitchell—published the earliest American urban guidebook, *A Picture of New-York*, in 1807, complete with a small plan of the city.<sup>8</sup> Guidebooks written for travelers to fashionable resorts at Saratoga Springs and Niagara Falls were already common in the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>9</sup> Map titles and guidebook text reached out to migrants, tourists, business, and vicarious travelers. But from the late eighteenth century to about 1845 mapping (with or without accompanying guidebooks) for travelers and migrants to Transappalachian states and territories—particularly those in what we now call the Midwest—were the most prolific.

## 2. THE FIRST WESTERN TRAVEL GUIDES AND MAPS

Unsurprisingly, the earliest of these guides and maps related to Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio, which became the first Transappalachian states in 1792, 1796, and 1803, respectively. John Filson's *The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke* (1784)<sup>10</sup> epitomizes the eclectic mix of elements found in many works for migrants and travelers published over the next several decades: a historical narrative of the progress of the territory from the time of its first white settlement; generally optimistic assessments of the economic and agricultural potential of the territory for further settlement and development; an account of personal experiences; and practical guidance for migrants and other travelers. Filson's map (Figure 1), published eight years before Kentucky became a state, was the first map published in the independent United States designed explicitly to encourage and enable migration.<sup>11</sup> In support of the traveler, Filson's map delineates several internal roads and trails, as well as »the road from the old settlements in Virginia to Kentucke

8 Mitchell: *A Picture of New-York*.

9 For example, Parsons: *A Guide to Travelers Visiting the Falls of Niagara*, successively enlarged under various titles; and De Veaux: *The Travellers' Own Book to Saratoga Springs, Niagara Falls and Canada*.

10 Filson: *The discovery, settlement, and present state of Kentucke*.

11 Nebenzahl: »Filson Map Re-examined«.

thro' the Great Wilderness« (now known as the Wilderness Road through Cumberland Gap on the boundary between Virginia and Kentucky). These are identified as »cleared« and »uncleared« roads in the map's legend. Wide, navigable rivers seem to flow through the territory in great abundance, and Filson extols the efficacy of river travel to migration and internal communication:

The beautiful river Ohio, bounds Kentucke in its whole length, being a mile and sometimes less in breadth, and is sufficient to carry boats of great burthen.... And in its course it receives numbers of large and small rivers, which pay tribute to its glory. The only disadvantage this fine river has, is a rapid, one mile and a half long, and one mile and a quarter broad, called the Falls of Ohio.... Excepting this place, there is not a finer river in the world for navigation by boats. Besides this, Kentucke is watered by eight smaller rivers, and many large and small creeks, as may be easily seen in the map.... These rivers are navigable for boats almost to their sources, without rapids, for the greatest part of the year.<sup>12</sup>

In support of travel both overland and by waterway an appendix to the volume lists the »stages and distances between Philadelphia and the Falls of the Ohio; from Pittsburg to Pensacola and several other places.«



Figure 1: John Filson, *The discovery, settlement, and present state of Kentucke* (Wilmington: James Adams, 1784). Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

<sup>12</sup> Filson: *The discovery, settlement, and present state of Kentucke*, p. 12-15.

The title of a *Short Description of the Tennessee Government* (1793) declares that Daniel Smith wrote the 20-page tract »to accompany and explain a map of that country.«<sup>13</sup> Here too, rivers are described as important travel routes. In an apparent appeal to river navigators, Smith adopted the highly unusual practice of enumerating the width of rivers at their various point along their courses. The text explicitly addresses the map in its favorable assessment of navigation on Tennessee's rivers:

From the face of the map it appears, that this country is well intersected by rivers, and most of those rivers are navigable by large boats; some of them by sea vessels.... Duck river is navigable in boats about 90 miles. The waters of the Harpeth, Cany-fork, Stones, Roaring, and Red river have uniformly a gentle current towards the mouth, whence they are all navigable in boats for a considerable distance. In a word, no spot can be marked in that country, that is more than 20 miles from a boat-able stream, so great are its advantages of water-conveyance.<sup>14</sup>

While wayfinding on land routes is supported in both these volumes by marking of roads on both maps, both maps and guides make a point of emphasizing the relative ease and extent of river travel. In the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the importance of travel by water to and in the West was made clear by the great interest eastern states had in canal projects, of which the Erie Canal (opened in 1824) is the most famous. Travel maps devoted exclusively to roads met with little success. Christopher Colles's ambitious plan for *A Survey of the Roads of the United States of America* (1789), modeled on similar publications popular in eighteenth-century Britain, mapped the sequence of roads from Williamsburg, Virginia through Georgetown, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and into the Hudson Valley and western Connecticut. But Colles managed to publish only 83 of the proposed 100 sheets.<sup>15</sup> In 1802 and 1804, the prominent Philadelphia publisher Matthew Carey issued an atlas and guide to the same route, the *Traveller's Directory*, by S. S. Moore and Thomas Jones. But again, the reception of this publication apparently did not seem to justify the expense of further republication. Despite the foundational importance of roads and turnpikes to inter-regional travel, few specialized maps, atlases, and guidebooks to specific land routes were published before the 1840s. Rivers, however, were another matter.

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13 Smith: *A short description of the Tennessee government*; republished with an enlarged text in 1796 as *A short description of the state of Tennessee*.

14 Smith: *A Short Description of the State of Tennessee*, p. 26-27.

15 Colles: *Proposals for Publishing a Survey of the Roads of the United States of America* and Colles: *A Survey of the Roads of the United States of America*.

### 3. RIVER GUIDES

The Ohio River was the great interior highway of the West in the first decades of the century. Guidebooks and maps devoted to the navigation of the Ohio and the lower Mississippi River appeared shortly after 1800 and demand for them remained robust well past midcentury. The high level of navigational detail in these early river guides and the rough state of many surviving examples betray an extensive reliance on them; the river waters were treacherous, full of shoals, dangerous currents, and other hazards that troubled even the most experienced pilots. Pittsburgh was the main point of embarkation, and it was there that bookseller Zadok Cramer created and published *The Navigator*, a simple mile-by-mile set of navigating instructions on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. River travel in those days was dominated by flatboats, large box-shaped rafts or barges that were difficult to steer around shoals and other river obstructions, but which could carry large cargoes. Keel boats, somewhat smaller craft, were more easily piloted, but more expensive to build. Much of the downstream traffic—for until the age of steam only keelboats operated by skilled hands could navigate upstream—was undertaken by merchants and migrants with little experience with river craft or navigation. These were Cramer's market.

The main substance of the text concerned practical navigation. The earliest editions consisted mostly of simple instructions indicating the best course downriver; identifying islands and good landing places; and warning of sandbars, obstructions, and other hazards. From the 1814 (eighth) edition comes this guidance on the Ohio, near Loggstown [Logstown], Pennsylvania, 18½ miles from Pittsburgh:

Here is a large sandbar running up from the left shore and approaches near the right, and between the head of it and the right shore are large logs, the first of which keep to the right, the second and third are opposite each other; you may go between these, and as soon as you are past them, incline to the middle of the river.<sup>16</sup>

The first two editions, both published in 1801 and titled *The Ohio Navigator*, carried the traveler only from Pittsburgh to the mouth of the Ohio. Cramer added the Mississippi navigation from there to New Orleans in 1802. At first, a single straight vertical line on the margin of the text block noted the local distances between places distances downstream from Pittsburgh.

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<sup>16</sup> Cramer: *The Navigator*.

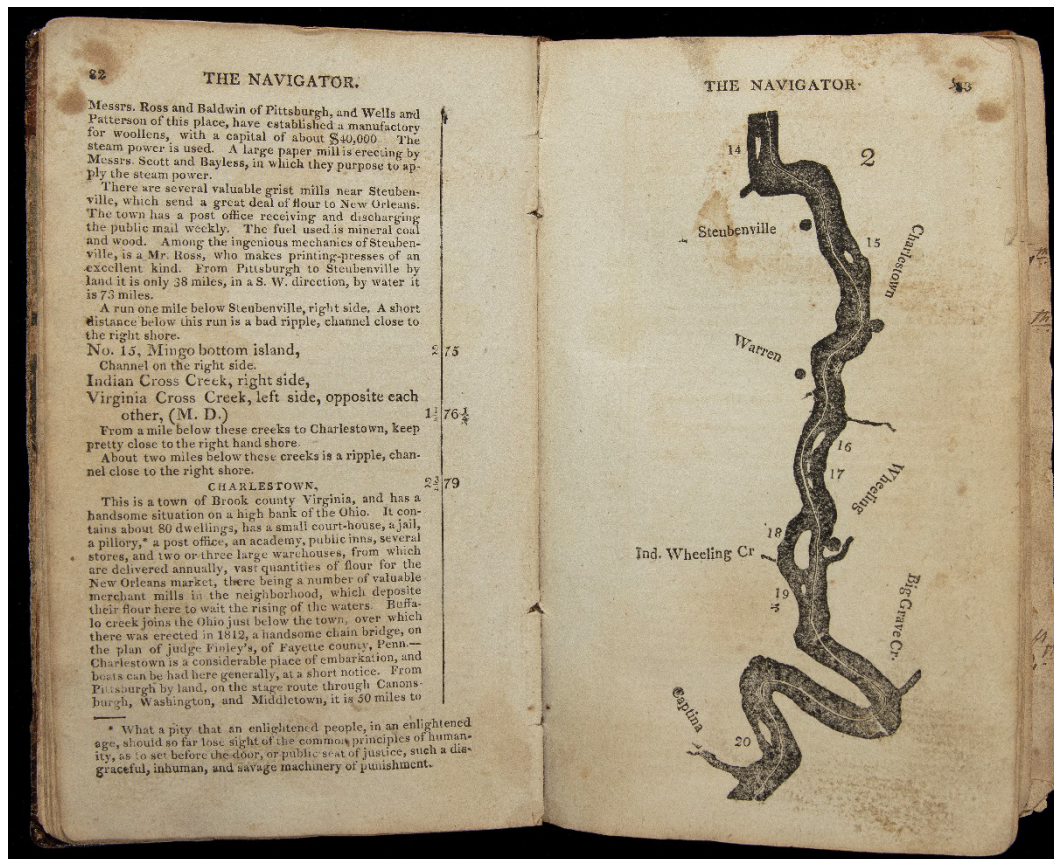


Figure 2: Zadok Cramer, *The Navigator* (Pittsburgh: Cramer, Spear, and Eichbaum, 1814). Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

Maps did not make their appearance until the fifth edition of 1806, covering only the lower Mississippi at first, with the addition of the Ohio in 1808. Cramer's humble wood-engraved maps were hardly elegant (Figure 2), but they were functional and, it seems, reliable. Cramer claims that his Ohio maps were produced by actual survey and the Mississippi by a combination of survey and consultation with existing charts.<sup>17</sup> The symbolic repertoire of the maps was not explained but is easily understood. A white centerline indicates the preferred channel. Islands were numbered successively as encountered on a downstream system (his innovation). Cross-hatched grey areas represent sandbars and shoals. Other symbols and type-set text identify settlements, forts, individual plantations or farmsteads, and the occasional larger town. The maps and the navigational content are in close correspondence, though with some limitations. Most places mentioned appear both on map and text, but the maps relating to specific blocks of text might be separated

17 Yost (ed.): *The Ohio and Mississippi Navigator of Zadok Cramer: Third and Fourth Editions*. Cramer acknowledges a chart of the Mississippi from the mouth of the Ohio to Natchez given him by Mr. Charles Wilkins of Kentucky, other material supplied by a Mr. Chambers of Cincinnati, and other charts taken from an »actual survey« from Natchez to New Orleans, Cramer: *The Navigator*, introduction.

by one or two pages. The maps in the 12 confirmed editions published between 1801 and 1824 were little changed, despite the fact the courses of the rivers themselves were highly volatile. Text could and did change, but the woodcuts are not easily modified, steadily degrading their value as navigational tools.<sup>18</sup>

The popularity of *The Navigator* was bound to inspire imitators and successor publications. Samuel Cumings' *Western Pilot* saw 17 iterations edited by Cumings and his successors from 1822 to 1847. The arc of the publication of Cumings' guide coincided with the blossoming of steamboat traffic on the Mississippi and Ohio. Steamboats opened the river passage to travelers—tourists, we may now call them—who focused on the pleasures of the passing scenery and the novelty of river travel, rather than on navigation. The introduction to *Conclin's New River Guide or Gazetteer* (1848) represented it as a »book for all travellers,« noting that »the travelling community has long demanded a book that would point out to them as they passed up or down over Western waters, the different localities, and give some account of their history, population, commerce, pursuits, etc... and the character of the country in the interior.«<sup>19</sup>

Despite their persistence, by the end of the 1820s river guides had ceded their prominence to guides and maps that offered a wider geographical scope and a more complex picture of American routes of travel. The pacification of the Canadian border and opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 cleared the way for American colonization of northwestern New York and the southern shores of the Great Lakes. Further south, the National Road, the Pennsylvania Canal, and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal eased travel across the Allegheny and Cumberland Mountains, while other north-south canals linked the Great Lakes to the Ohio Valley.<sup>20</sup> Almost as soon as these canals were built they were challenged by railroads, which spread across the Midwest as far as and beyond the Mississippi by the end of the 1850s. None of these developments, however, diminished importance of the turnpike and common road as effective routes of overland trade and travel, both local and long-distance. Quite the contrary, the itineraries and maps in travelers' guides from the 1820s to the 1850s reflect the multiplicity of and competition among different modes of travel, as well as their rough integration.

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18 One exception is this small modification of Mississippi map No. 4 near islands 57 and 58. Associated text in earlier editions warn navigators to stay to the right of these islands, as indicated on the map, and warn of a sandbar on the left bank to be avoided. Later editions identify this sandbar as a suitable landing place and mention a small alternative channel to the left of the islands that provides access to and exit from this landing.

19 Conclin: *New River Guide or Gazetteer*, p. 4. There were seven editions published between 1848 and 1855, published in Cincinnati, first by H.S. & J. Applegate, then by J. A. & U. P. James.

20 These include the Ohio and Erie Canal (built 1825-32) which, in effect, connected the Portsmouth, on the Ohio with Cleveland; Miami and Erie Canal (1825-45), which linked Cincinnati and western Lake Erie at Toledo; the Wabash and Erie Canal (opened in part 1843) from Terre Haute, Indiana, to a junction with the Miami and Erie Canal; and the Illinois and Michigan Canal, a link from Chicago to the Illinois River, which opened in 1848.



The motivations for travel were also becoming more complicated. Mapmakers and guidebook publishers like Conklin found that their products had to appeal not only to migrants but also to tourists. Guidebooks and maps for travelers made little distinction between the two groups. Rightly concluding that the practical needs of both groups were essentially the same, publishers adopted titles that cited both »tourists« and »emigrants,« or neutrally addressed »travelers.«

#### 4. GENERAL TRAVELERS' MAPS AND GUIDES

General guidebooks, covering the entire country or larger swaths of it, offered guidance to multiple destinations and itineraries, providing comprehensive information about major routes, whether by water, road, or (in time) rail. They incorporated variable quantities and types of text, including tabular itineraries, descriptions of towns and other localities, practical travel information (what to bring, what to expect, modes of travel, and costs), and, in many instances, historical sketches. Descriptive text was organized either geographically or alphabetically, in the manner of a gazetteer.

Melish's *Travelers' Directory* (1814) was the archetype: a balance of descriptive text and itineraries, accompanied by general map providing an overview of the United and its transportation system, formatted and bound in a convenient package only 16 cm. high (Figure 3). The first 32 pages offer a brief »Geographical description of the United States,« organized from north to south, then west, accompanied by four small maps of the vicinities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore/Washington, reproduced from Melish's earlier works. A second section, numbering 100 pages, consists of tabular itineraries covering the entire country, beginning with the major cross-country routes, followed by shorter routes organized by state and territory. The accompanying fold-out map of the United States, printed on »bank-note« paper for durability, was no mere afterthought, but was meant to supplement the wayfinding information of the itineraries, reinforcing them through graphic representation, and with the index, adding flexibility to the established routes described by the itineraries.<sup>21</sup>

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21 Melish: *The Travellers' Directory through the United States*.

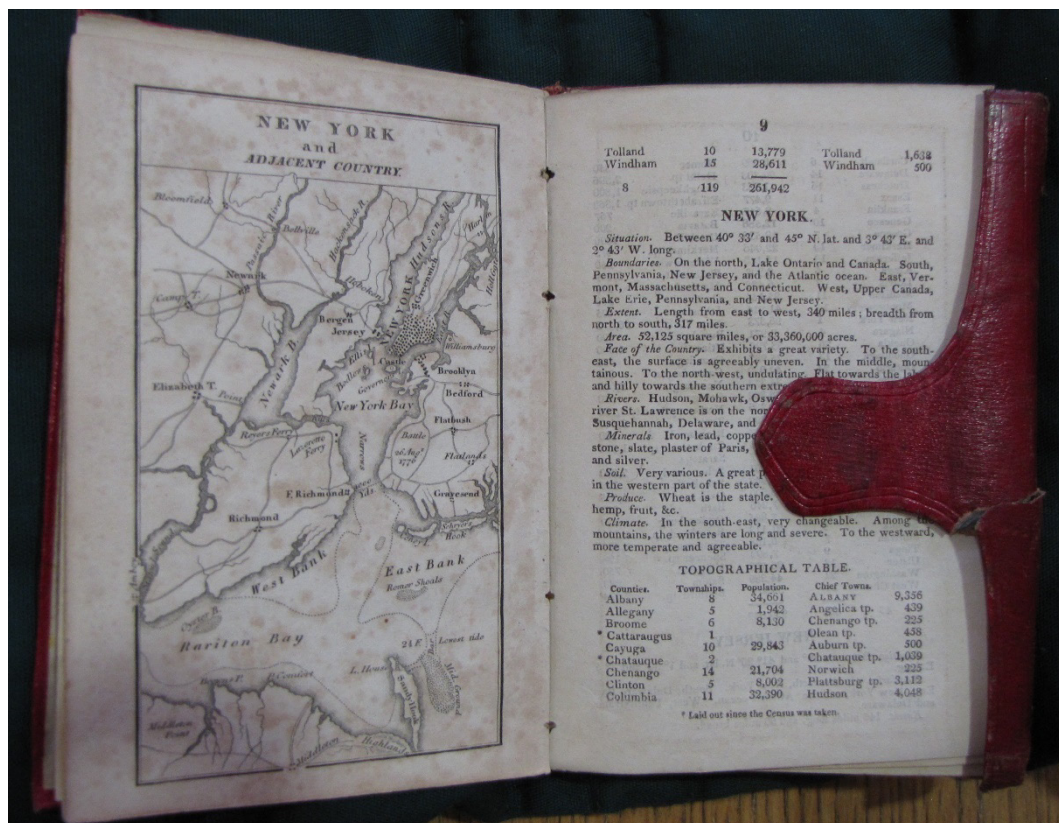


Figure 3: John Melish, *The Travelers' Directory* (Philadelphia: Melish, 1814). Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

The most important innovator in American travel map publication in the 1820s and 1830s was H. S. (Henry Schenk) Tanner. Originally an engraver working for Melish and others, by the mid-1820s he was established as a publisher of general and travelers' maps, atlases, and guidebooks. His 1825 map, *The Traveller's Guide: Map of the roads, canals and steam boat routes of the United States*, advertises that it was specifically »designed for the use of travellers«. (Figure 4) A dense network of turn-pikes (marked by hashed double lines) and »common roads« (marked by hollow lines); bold numbers along each route segment indicate the distances between towns. Major canals (marked with solid lines) are similarly treated. Steamboat routes on navigable rivers, canals, or coastal waters, receive special attention in 22 tabular itineraries enclosed in a cartouche on the lower right corner of the map. To facilitate comparison of these tables with the map, Tanner refers each listed place name to an alphanumeric index provided on the outer margins of the map. It may be inferred that Tanner expected the map, which folded to pocket size, could be effectively used to address most travelers' navigational needs without additional supporting text.



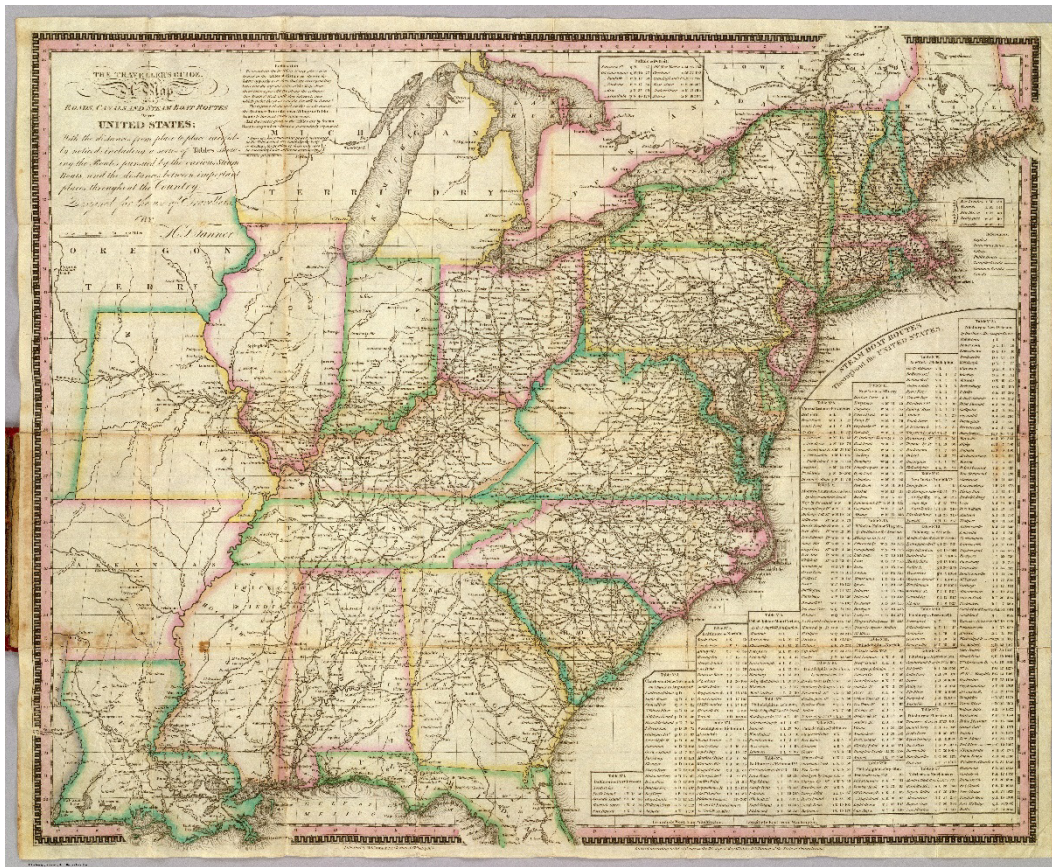


Figure 4: Henry Schenk Tanner, *The Traveller's Guide: Map of the roads, canals and steam boat routes of the United States* (Philadelphia: H. S. Tanner, 1825). Source: David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.

By the early 1830s, the growing complexity of the national transportation network justified Tanner's decision to publish a substantial textual accompaniment to his large travelers' map, titled *The American Traveller*. He approached this text as systematically as he did his maps. The work was arranged according to an unusual gazetteer format, which listed states, major cities and towns, canals, and railroads in a single alphabetical sequence. (Hence »Albany« followed »Alabama.«) Descriptions of major cities and towns were followed by tabular itineraries of routes leading from them; maps of several of the largest cities also accompany their entries. Tanner provided tabular itineraries also for each railroad and canal in their turn in the alphabetical sequence. Smaller places were simply listed in alphabetical sequence, although each was indexed to the map by a number corresponding to a rectangular »rhomb« (quadrilateral) on the map. For example, Monticello, Mississippi could be found in rhomb 296 and Monticello, Alabama in rhomb 301.

Tanner's greatest rival in this market during the 1830s and 1840s was Samuel Augustus Mitchell, whose publications relied more extensively on maps made by others. In 1832 Mitchell issued the first edition of his large folded map, *Mitchell's Traveller's Guide through the United States* (Figure 5), prepared by James Hamilton



Young, with whom Mitchell had a long working relationship.<sup>22</sup> Its publication history closely paralleled Tanner's comparable map: it was initially issued separately under its own cover, but after 1834, it was also published with a booklet, *The Principal Stage, Steam-boat, and Canal Routes in the United States*.<sup>23</sup> The booklet consisted almost entirely of tabular itineraries, arranged by state; unlike Tanner's *American traveler*, it included no local maps. It made up for this in depth. The 1836 edition (986pp.) contained 534 itineraries, of which 478 were stage routes, 33 were rail or canal routes, and the remainder composite long-distance routes.

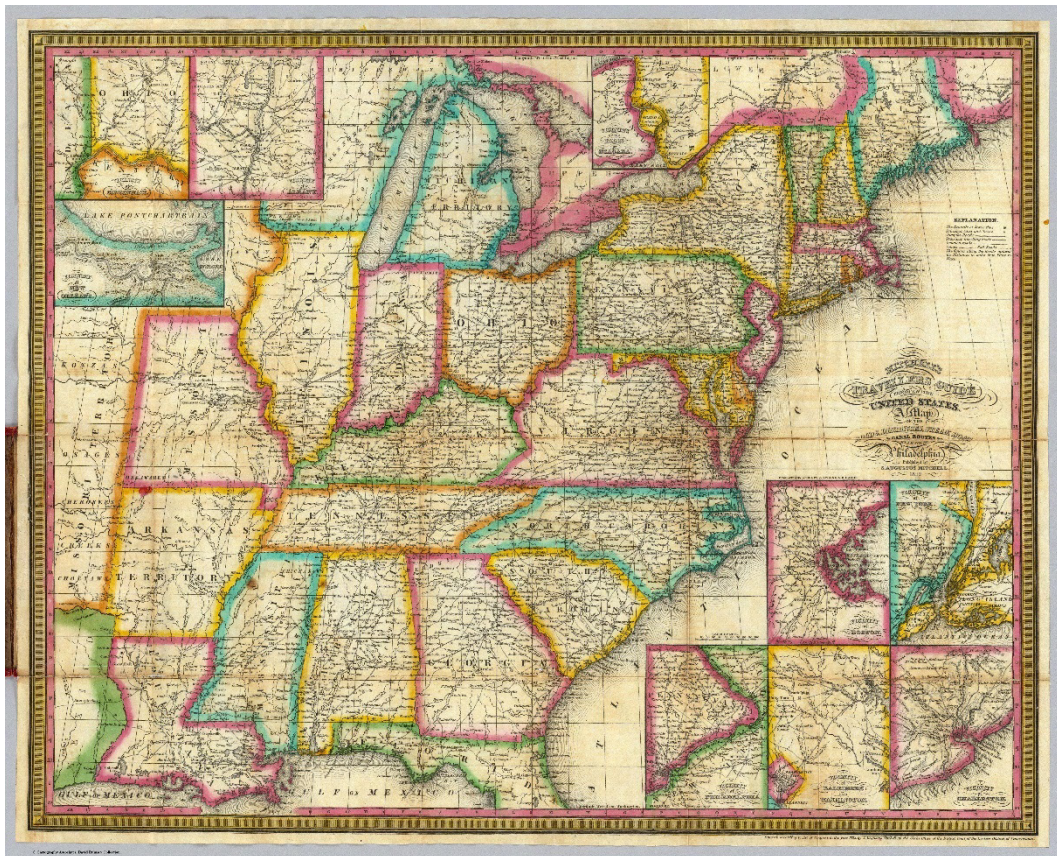


Figure 5: S. Augustus Mitchell, *Mitchell's Traveller's Guide through the United States* (Philadelphia: A.A. Mitchell, 1832). Source: David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.

By 1850, the national route network of stage, water, and rail routes had indeed grown so dense and interconnected, that readers must have required great concentration to follow the maps effectively. Several publishers abandoned the model set by Tanner by publishing maps and guidebooks that mostly ignored roads, instead focusing on steamboat routes, canals, and railroads. One example, *Pratt's*

<sup>22</sup> Young: Mitchell's Travellers guide through the United States.

<sup>23</sup> Mitchell: *The Principal stage, steam-boat, and canal routes in the United States*.

*River and Railroad Guide* (1848), depicts a national transportation network in transition. It did not include a general map of the United States, but featured 26 small maps, primarily of sections of the »Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Illinois and Hudson Rivers,« but with attention to the growing supplement of »connecting lines of railroad between Boston and New Orleans« (Figure 6).<sup>24</sup> A year earlier (New York, 1847) John Doggett had published a general map of the United that showed *only* working railroad lines as an accompaniment to his *United States Railroad & Ocean Steam Guide*.<sup>25</sup> Still more specialized maps and guides to railroads followed the rapid growth of the rail network in the 1850s. This, and American political expansion to the Pacific coast rendered a pocket sized comprehensive national map and/or guidebook to all stage, rail, and water routes, more and more impractical. The general guide pioneered by Melish, Tanner, and Mitchell persisted into the 1850s, but effectively disappeared after the Civil War.

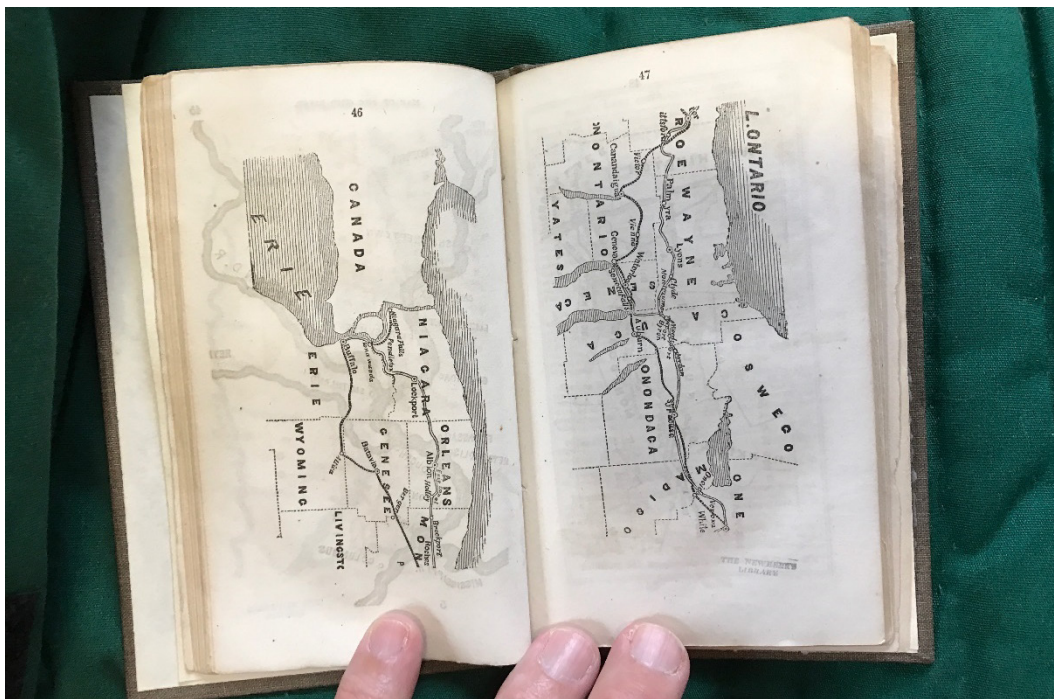


Figure 6: John William Orr, *Pratt's River and Railroad Guide* (New York: F.M. Pratt, 1848). Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

24 Pratt: Pratt's river and railroad guide.

25 »Map of the United States of America to accompany Doggett's rail road guide« in Doggett: Doggett's United States railroad and ocean steam navigation guide.



## 5. MAPPING FOR MIGRANTS

Before the mid-1840s, the great majority of guides and maps targeted at migrants focused on what we now call the Midwest.<sup>26</sup> Though the majority of works in this category were created by map and geographical publishers in major eastern cities, the impetus for publication and much of the content often came from local residents, the recently transplanted, or from easterners with vested interests in the territories in question. The expansion of the American map trade in the intervening years meant that the author-entrepreneurs of the West were less reliant on their own mapmaking skills and resources. For his *Letters from Illinois* (Philadelphia, 1818), Morris Birkbeck turned to John Melish to produce two custom maps. A general map by Melish shows the route of Birkbeck's journey of 1817, from Norfolk, Virginia to southern Illinois, where he intended to found, with fellow Quaker and agricultural reformer George Flower, a semi-utopian farming and pastoral community for English migrants.<sup>27</sup> In addition to documenting Birkbeck's journey they would have served to show how readers could themselves follow him to Illinois, serving both the promotional and practical goals of the publication. A second larger-scale map (Figure 7), »English Prairie,« further supported these goals, showing the location of the proposed settlement relative to the southern Illinois entrepot and government land office at Shawneetown, on the Wabash River and the connecting waters of the Ohio River. This map, like many travel maps of the Midwest, prominently featured the grid of the U.S. Public Land Survey, the system by which most American land west of the Appalachians was subdivided and sold to settlers and land speculators.

For potential migrants, the presence of the survey grid on maps had both iconic and practical significance carrying equal weight with routes of travel. The expanding grid was copied nearly verbatim from General Land Office publications issued by general commercial publishers such as Carey & Lea, and made its way in some form into nearly every travel publication. The maps of the »bounty lands« in western Illinois set aside for veterans of the recent war, published by Nicholas Biddle Van Zandt and Edmund Dana in 1818 and 1819, respectively,<sup>28</sup> were meant

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26 In general, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and adjacent Transmississippi of parts of Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri.

27 See Birkbeck: *Letters from Illinois*. In the previously published account of his journey to Illinois, Birkbeck wrote that »A kind friend put into my hands, just before our departure, a series of geographical works, lately published by Mr. Melish of Philadelphia.« (Birkbeck: *Notes on a journey in America*).

28 Nicholas Biddle Van Zandt's »A general plat of the military lands, between the Mississippi & Illinois Rivers from the official surveys and drawn upon a scale of four miles to the inch,« in Van Zandt: *A full description of the soil, water, timber, and prairies*; and Edmund Dana's »Map of the military bounty lands in the state of Illinois, from actual survey, by Edmund Dana & John McDonald, who surveyed the land,« in Dana: *A description of the Bounty Lands in the State of Illinois*.

both to inspire migration and to orient potential migrants to the district.<sup>29</sup> Van Zandt was a former federal surveyor, and his highly detailed map shows topographic details down the sectional level, gleaned from original Land Office survey plats and notes. Dana's map is much smaller and appears to be based more directly on the 1818 land office plat of the bounty lands by John Gardiner, which was used directly in land transactions. Two thirds of Van Zandt's 127-page text consists of descriptions of the topography, soil, climate, and vegetation of each 36-square mile township, apparently digested from Land Office field notes. Travel instructions, including several itineraries are also provided.

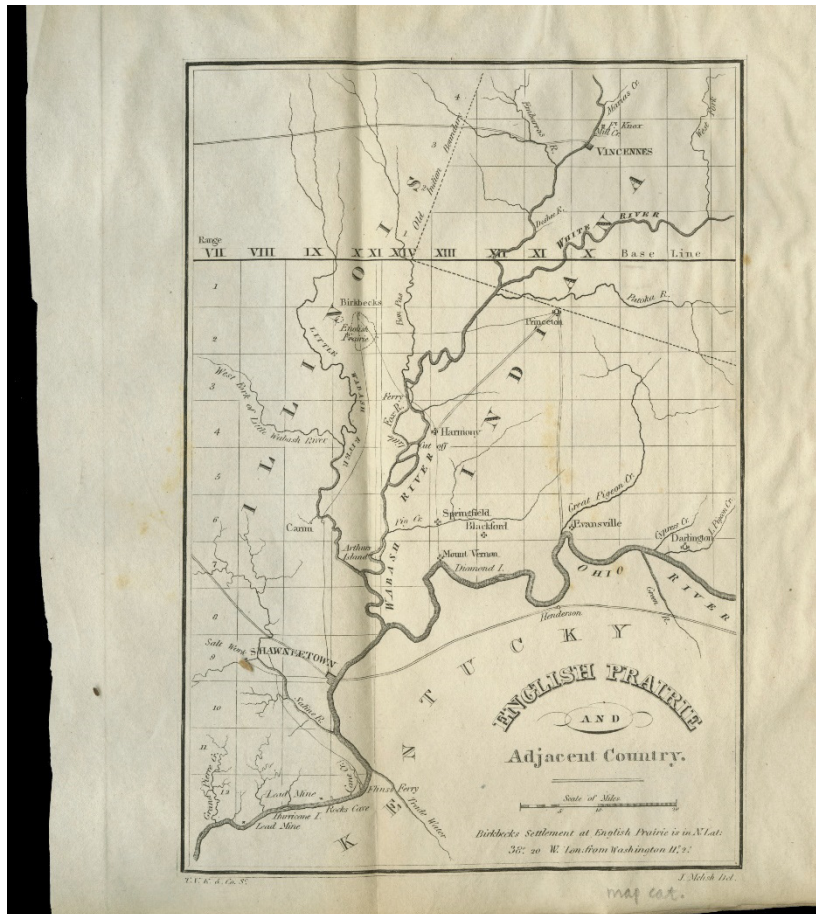


Figure 7: John Melish, »English Prairie,« in Morris Birkbeck, *Letters from Illinois* (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1818). Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

The frontier of surveyed land is clearly visible on most of these maps. Though settlement was effectively limited to what was surveyed, the implication of the obviously unfinished grid on the maps, reinforced by accompanying text, was that new territory was almost continuously opening to non-natives. John Farmer adjusted

<sup>29</sup> As it turned out, much of the charters to parcels were bought up by speculators from veterans who did not intend to redeem them.

the scales and orientations of his several guides and maps to Michigan and Wisconsin territories published between 1826 and 1836 to accommodate the expansion of the Public Land Survey in the territories in the form of county governments. The earliest of these, *Map of the Surveyed Part of the Territory of Michigan on a Scale of 8 miles to an Inch* (1826),<sup>30</sup> included only what is now the southeastern part of the state, within forty miles of Detroit. An »improved« version of this map on the same scale appeared in 1829 incorporating the more recently surveyed southwestern part of the state.<sup>31</sup> Anticipating the needs of market traveling north and west, in 1830 Farmer published a third map, larger in geographical scope but smaller in scale, embracing the whole of Michigan Territory, adopting an unusual odd north-eastern orientation to embrace the Upper Peninsula and Wisconsin (then a part of Michigan Territory; Figure 8).<sup>32</sup>

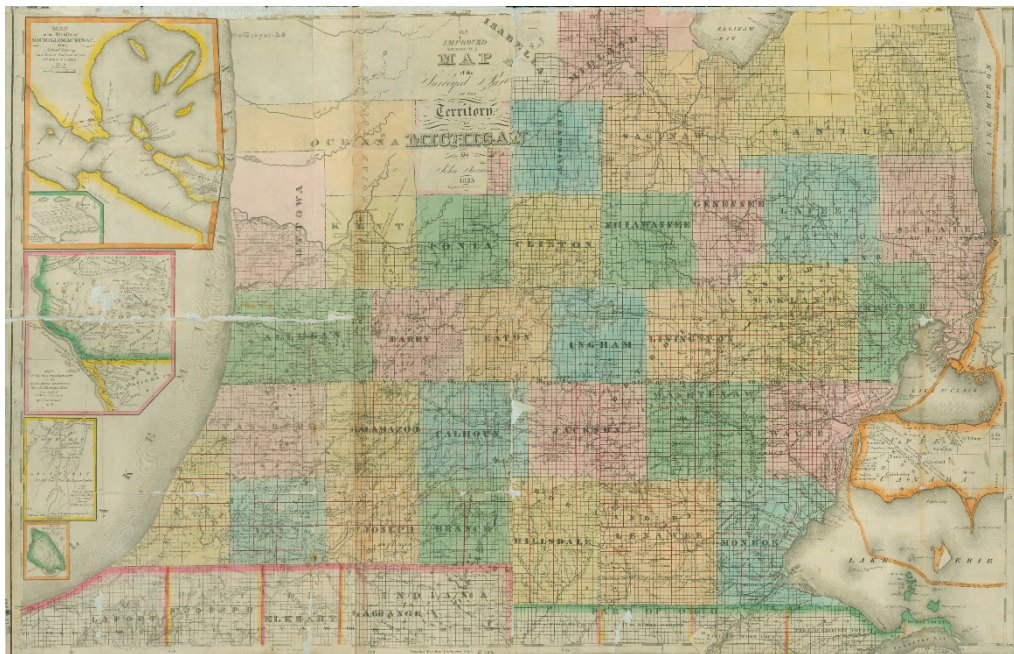


Figure 8: John Farmer, *Improved Map of the Territories of Michigan and Ouisconsin* (pronounced Wisconsin) (New York: J.H. Colton & Co., 1836). Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

Similarly, Henry Abel's *Traveller's & Emigrants Guide to Wisconsin & Iowa* (1838), features a »Map of the settled part of Wisconsin,« prepared by J. H. Young and published by S. Augustus Mitchell. Like John Farmer's early maps of Michigan, it emphasizes only the portions of the new territories that were settled enough to be

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- 30 Farmer: An improved map of the surveyed part of the Territory of Michigan on a scale of 8 miles to an inch. [1826]
  - 31 Farmer: An improved map of the surveyed part of the Territory of Michigan on a scale of 8 miles to an inch. [1828]
  - 32 Farmer: Map of the Territories of Michigan and Ouisconsin on a scale of 30 geographical miles to an inch.



formed into counties. An inset at upper left, however, shows the full extent of the two territories as then defined, anticipating future growth of non-native settlement. The geographical framing of the map is mindful as well of the migrant's need for information about the eastern approaches to the territory by including northern Illinois, northwestern Indiana, and much of Lake Michigan. Finally, it prominently marks two proposed railroads that would afford transportation from Lake Michigan and the then under construction Illinois and Michigan Canal into the interior of the territories from the east.<sup>33</sup>

More comprehensive maps of Midwestern states appeared in the 1830s and 1840s, produced with a high level of detail, suitably large for hanging on a wall, but accompanied by equally ambitious books. The career of John Mason Peck's maps of Illinois was typical of these developments. A Baptist missionary and antislavery activist, Peck's itinerant preaching gave him intimate knowledge of much central and southern Illinois and adjacent Missouri and reason to promote settlement of the region. His *Guide for Emigrants Containing Sketches of Illinois, Missouri, and the adjacent parts* (1831), was accompanied by a small anonymous map of the »Western States« that merely showed the outlines of the states, lakes, and rivers, plus the two canals under construction in Ohio.<sup>34</sup> Dissatisfied with the quality of maps of Illinois available for travelers »issued by publishers in eastern cities,« he engaged the help of prominent surveyor and politician, John Messinger, to prepare an entirely new map based on General Land Office surveys and local observation. A first draft of sorts still modest scale of 1:1,600,000, was published in Cincinnati by Doolittle and Munson in 1835.<sup>35</sup> To bring a still larger map on the scale of 10 inches to the mile to fruition he turned to the New York publisher, J. H. Colton. Peck and Messinger's *New sectional map of the State of Illinois* was published as a separate folded map in 1836, appearing in several further editions all the way to 1869.

Similar large scale »sectional« maps of rapidly colonizing Midwestern states and territories were published in the 1840s and 1850s by several publishers, including Farmer and Milwaukee publisher Silas Chapman who issued maps of Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin.<sup>36</sup> A copy of the 1855 edition of Chapman's map of Wisconsin in the Newberry Library (Figure 9) demonstrates the value of the delineation sectional boundaries to potential migrants or investors. A series of annotations along the western edge of the map describe what was apparently a reconnaissance of lands along the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers all the way to Lake

33 Abel: Traveller's & Emigrants Guide to Wisconsin & Iowa.

34 Peck: A Guide for Emigrants Containing Sketches of Illinois, Missouri.

35 Messinger/Peck: A new map of Illinois and part of the Wisconsin Territory.

36 Chapman: Chapman's New Sectional Map of Minnesota; Chapman: Chapman's New Sectional Map of Illinois; Chapman: Chapman's New Sectional Map of the State of Iowa.

Superior, at the site modern twin cities of Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 9: Silas Chapman, *Wisconsin, a Sectional Map with the Most Recent Surveys* (Milwaukee: S. Chapman 1855). Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

By this time, national and regional publishers were actively publishing maps and guides in support of migration still farther west. Guides to the American colonies in Texas with maps appeared in the years before its declaration of independence in 1836. The first guide and map encouraging American migration to Oregon were published by Hall J. Kelley in 1830 for the Oregon Colonization Society.<sup>38</sup> The response of commercial map and guidebook publishers to the discovery of gold in California was nearly instantaneous and voluminous.<sup>39</sup> Specialized guides and maps for the territories of the western Great Plains would not be far behind.

37 Chapman: *Wisconsin: A Sectional Map with the Most Recent Surveys*. The referenced Newberry Library copy is G 10902 .163

38 Kelley: *A geographical sketch of that part of North America called Oregon*. This was the first of several such productions by Kelley in the 1830s. See Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1861*, vol. 2, p. 98.

39 See Wheat: *Mapping the Transmississippi West, 1540-1861*, vol. 3, pp. 49-91.



## 6. TOURISTS, TOURS, AND DESTINATIONS

Though migration remained the primary motivations for travel map publication for the Middle and Far West until 1860, specialized maps and guidebooks specifically intended for recreational and leisure travel steadily grew in number in the 1830s-1850s. The pacification of the Canadian frontier opened the gates to the development and settlement of northwestern New York, but also to tourists drawn from the major urban centers on the Atlantic coast to Niagara Falls and other inland resorts. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 accelerated these trends, and by the 1830s and early 1840s, Niagara was the subject of several specialized guides, some of which included maps.<sup>40</sup> The Niagara region was also one of several highlights of guidebooks and maps devoted to an emerging »fashionable« northern tour out of New York, Boston, and other eastern centers, which also described the spa towns of Saratoga Springs and Ballston Springs, Lake George, Lake Champlain, the Hudson River, the Finger Lakes, the White Mountains, the Adirondacks, and the Canadian St. Lawrence Valley. Some guidebooks focused exclusively on this tour or its elements, while others coupled it with further tours to the west from Buffalo and the other port cities of Lake Erie. The literature devoted to this region (with some notable exceptions farther west and south) constituted the mainline of American tourist publishing before the Civil War, and incorporated both indifferent and highly innovative cartography.

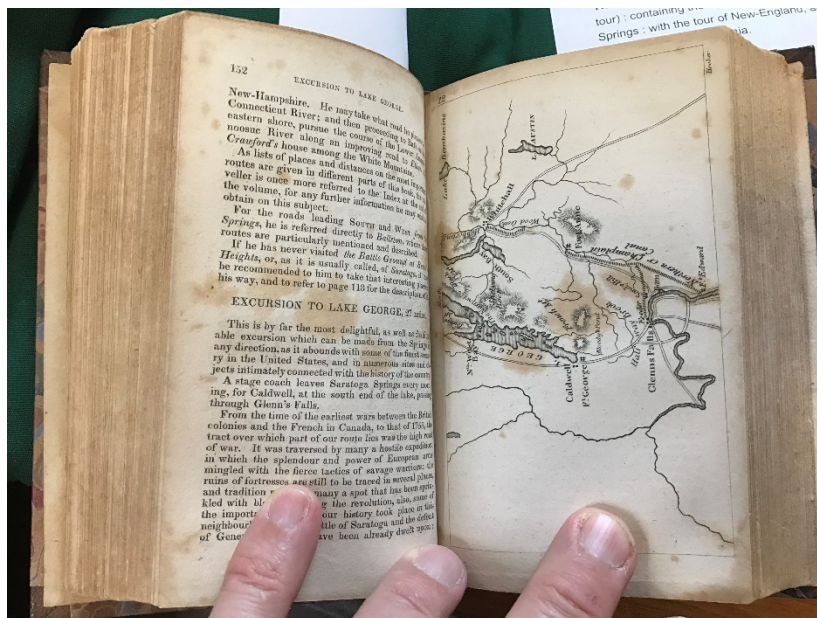


Figure 10: Theodore Dwight, *The Northern Traveller* (New York: G. & C. Carville, 1828). Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

40 For example, Parsons: *A Guide to Travelers Visiting the Niagara Falls*; De Veaux: *The Falls of Niagara*; Orr: *Pictorial Guide to the Falls of Niagara*.

Theodore Dwight's *Northern Traveller*, published for the first time in 1825, was the most successful of these early northern guidebooks, and the most innovative in its use of cartography (Figure 10). The 406-page third edition (1828) consisted of ten narrative itineraries offering guidance on modes of travel and descriptions of points of interest, towns, and accommodations, along popular («From New-York to Niagara,» «From New-York to the springs,» etc.), as well as five chapters on major cities.<sup>41</sup> Tabular itineraries, most importantly for the Erie Canal, were scattered throughout the book. There were nineteen one-page engraved maps: a general map showing the scheme of the main routes and their branches described by the itineraries and eighteen sectional maps organized around portions of the Hudson River, Erie Canal, Lakes George and Champlain, the St. Lawrence River, and the Connecticut Valley. Though centered on the navigable rivers and canals that featured in the state-of-the art transportation technology of the day, the simple and uniformly executed maps also marked intersecting and parallel roads, such as those linking the spas to the Upper Hudson Valley and Lake George.

The Hudson River leg of the northern tour spawned a several separate guidebooks and maps oriented to steamboat excursionists, sometimes supplemented with descriptions of the Erie Canal or north to the St. Lawrence Valley via the Champlain Canal (opened in 1823). The market was sufficiently large by the early 1830s to support rival publications by William Cammeyer, George Fowler, and Thomas Morrison. These were strip maps, mounted either on elongated strips of paper, but all folding to a convenient and portable size inside cloth or heavy paper covers. All three also show the roads that paralleled the river, as well as connecting routes radiating from the river to Saratoga and Ballston Springs, cities and towns off the map, and other places of interest to travelers (Figure 11).<sup>42</sup>

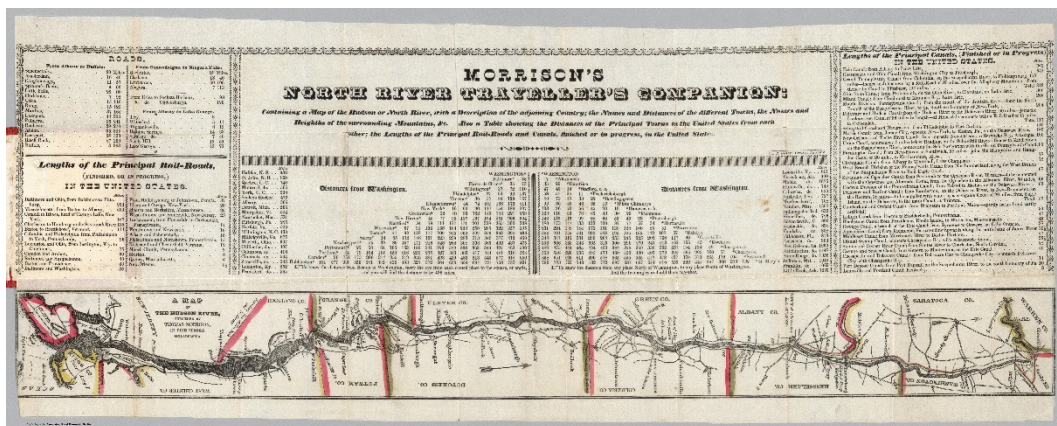


Figure 11: Thomas Morrison, *A Map of the Hudson River* (Philadelphia: Morrison, 1845). Source: David Rumsey Map Collection, David Rumsey Map Center, Stanford Libraries.

41 Dwight: *The Northern Traveller*.

42 Cammeyer: *A new map of the Hudson River*; Fowler: *Fowler's new map of the Hudson River*; Morrison: *Morrison's North River traveller's companion*.

John Disturnell ascended to a leading place among publishers serving the Eastern tourist market during the 1840s, developing titles with varying regional coverage, all of which incorporated elements of the northern tour. These included *The New-York State Guide* (1843), *The Western Traveller* (New York, 1844), *The Northern Traveller* (1844), *The Eastern Tourist* (1848), *Summer Arrangements: Guide through the Middle, Northern, and Eastern states* (1848), and O. L. Holley's *Picturesque Tourist* (1844). New editions of several of these guides were still being published in the 1860s.

The cartographic content of these works varies, with the emphasis put on small size and low cost in all except Holley's book. Not all of these publications included large compliments of maps. *The Western Traveller* (1844), for example focused on travel in western New York, including the Finger Lakes, Niagara, Lake Ontario, and beyond as far as Chicago. Only 15 cm. tall and 90 pages in length, most of it was devoted to descriptions of routes and the towns along them. It lingers only in the Niagara region, the subject of the guide's only maps and illustrations: a plan of the vicinity of the Falls, map of the Niagara »strait« and three views. The narrative portion of the guide is organized geographically and at least one copy, in the Newberry Library, documents how travelers used this narrative as a record of their progress. This copy has more than forty penciled annotations of them, documenting a trip made by a party of tourists in the summer of 1844.<sup>43</sup> These include notes about costs and times of departure for boats that correct the printed information and the dates when the travelers passed through specific localities. A note (p. 45) next to the description of Canandaigua indicates that the travelers visited there »on our return from Niagara, June 28, 1844.« These annotations, we must presume, were made by tourists who were lived comfortably and could afford such a journey in an era when most of the middle and working classes lacked the resources, let alone the leisure time to make such journeys unless they themselves were migrating. In the mid-1840s leisure travel, like leisure itself, was a luxury, and before the Civil War and the coming of railroad travel guidebooks reaching out to tourists remained confined to northeastern subjects and river guides.

## 7. CONCLUSION

After the annexations of the late 1840s the guidebooks and maps for travelers to the Far West proliferated, but the publication of travelers' aids for use in the Old Northwest, adjacent states, and points farther east remained undiminished. There were nevertheless significant changes in their content and character. Already by the end of the 1850s, the standard general guides and maps for travelers published in the United States had become dominated by railroad timetables supplied by the railroads themselves. This shift to railroads became even more pronounced after the Civil War as the railroad network rapidly expanded to nearly 200,000 miles by

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43 Disturnell: *The Western Traveller*. The Newberry Library, Ayer I38 .N7 .D6I4 1844.

1900. New commercial publishers such as Rand McNally entered the market with great success by focusing on railroad maps issued either under their own name or in promotional pamphlets and guidebooks issued by the railroads themselves.

Interestingly, though the railroad system offered travelers many new choices of routes and destinations, the fixed route of the railroad and its speed lessened passenger interest in navigation. The travelers' guides of the first half of the nineteenth century required close reading of navigational narratives and itineraries cross-referenced with generalized maps of route choices. Railroads made travelers captive audiences, who took little active interest in navigation. For wayfinding all they needed was a general map of a railroad or rail network and an accurate timetable. To be sure, this was true to some extent for earlier generations of stagecoach passengers and canal and steamboat passengers. But while these modes of transportation competed with each other and railroads were young, travelers were faced with more complex choices. They had to be more self-reliant in their navigational choices, and more attentive to the passing landscape. Both the complexity of travel maps in this earlier era and the size and detail of accompanying navigational text reflected this self-reliance.

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