

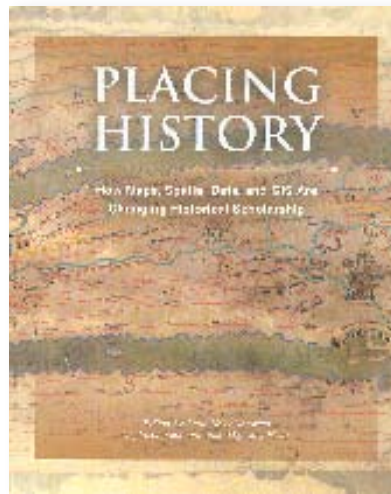
Placing History comes in two parts: A text, and a digital supplement. The text comprises five essays that cover such issues as the advantages and challenges of using GIS to study history; why it's important to apply spatial statistics when working with GIS; and how future historical research may be supported through the use of object-oriented databases, which better handle information related to time and space. The obvious audience for this discourse are historians and history students.

The digital supplement provided on CD-ROM includes PowerPoint presentations, videos, descriptions of GIS projects, and various map layers. Also included is GIS software, ArcExplorer—Java Edition for Education, which can be used in conjunction with the GIS projects.

The various parts of the book work in unison to inspire educators, students, and professionals in history-related fields to think geographically about the past and to imagine how GIS might help them pursue interesting questions.

The book is more than three hundred pages long and has copious visuals and bibliographies scattered throughout. The essays each cover a research project using GIS technology to represent historical data visually, instead of in the traditional form of a narrative. The aim is to provide a more objective view into history, by allowing data to speak for themselves, and drawing more comprehensive conclusions based on the information that a GIS can hold.

In *Placing History*, GIS is used to study such aspects of history as the 1930s Dust Bowl in



Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS are Changing Historical Scholarship, edited by Anne Kelly Knowles and Amy Hillier; ESRI Press, ISBN: 978-1-58948-013-1; 333 pp. plus CD, \$49.95.

the American Great Plains, the Civil War battle of Gettysburg in 1863, China from 222 B.C. to 1911 A.D., and even colonial New England husbandry.

In the process of the research, a different picture may emerge from the one once painted. This is perhaps the most exciting aspect of this book, encouraging the reader to wonder how much our history books would change if GIS were to be implemented to

all periods of our past.

On another note, it is commendable that arguments against the use of GIS in such research are not brushed aside. Using GIS in this manner is [still] labor intensive and time consuming, and it's definitely not cheap.

The book and its CD are valuable as a resource for educators teaching beginner to intermediate college classes. However, GIS technicians and students of GIS or history, or even those of us who are "armchair historians" would greatly benefit from reading the book. Historical GIS is an emerging field, and this book gives those who want to be more knowledgeable in the subject something to sink their teeth into.

Although I recommend this book to professional surveyors as well, I'm fully aware of fact that the knowledge it contains is not indispensable for our work.

Dissecting previous thousands of years of changing political and cultural boundaries, locating the city of an extinct civilization from fragmented evidence, or collecting and entering volumes of tabular data from the 1930s would not necessarily help the surveyor to run a traverse or set up an efficient RTK network. We'd be better off brushing up on our trigonometry skills or reviewing Property Law. This notwithstanding, it is in our interest to keep abreast of any development touching on our profession.

Reviewed by Jon Douglas Goldenrod, Florida

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