

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Maps of the American West**

"Mapping of the Trans-Mississippi West" by Carl I. Wheat was announced as a living publication late last year by the Institute of Historical Cartography. Vol. I centers on the Spanish Entrada to the Louisiana Purchase, 1850-1854. Vol. II will deal with the period between 1540-1804.

Carl I. Wheat, the editor of this monumental, five-volume work, past president of the Book Club of California, is a widely known lawyer whose avocation over many years has been the pursuit of early Western material, especially the cartographic reflection of Western history.

He has also been a director of the California Historical Society and a former editor of that society's publications, including *The Quarterly*. He has edited numerous early journals and source documents relating to California and the West. His book of the gold rush was commemorative of the California Centennial, but he is best known for his contributions in the field of biblio-cartography. His "Maps of the California Gold Region, 1848-1849," published by the Grabhorn Press in 1942, is already a classic, and his "Mapping the American West, 1540-1847," is even more impressive.

It was while, making a systematic search for the possibilities of the great institutional collections of Western maps that Mr. Wheat uncovered the remarkable "Fremont-Gibbs-Smith" which brought about this most recent publication, designed by Edwin and Robert Grabhorn of San Francisco, and printed by the Grabhorn Press in an edition limited to 1,000 copies.

The extensive undertaking of Mr. Wheat is the result of research and stems directly from the author's early examination of maps relating to the gold rush period. This book "California Gold Rush," long out of print, is now rare and much sought after by collectors of Californiana. He is very much alive, and on his toes, collecting new material each day for new publications relative to the West, the country he loves.

This column, we realize, has become an eulogy of Carl I. Wheat, a delightful gentleman as well as a great historian in the preservation of the West's past and present. As a lawyer he has written widely in the field of administrative law, for years he has followed historical

pursuits purely for pleasure, but of late has devoted more and more active attention to problems surrounding the cartographic background of the American West.

In addition to book clubs and historical societies. Mr. Wheat is a member of the State Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee, as well as the Federal Advisory Board on National Parks, Historical Sites, Building and Monuments.

Mr. Wheat is known on the Monterey Peninsula as well as in San Francisco. He has many friends and admirers here, and a few family connections.