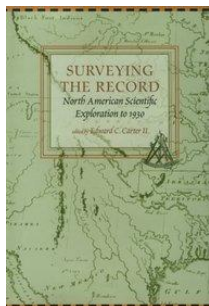




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*Surveying the Record: North American Scientific Exploration to 1930*

Carter, Edward C., III, ed.



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Carter, Edward C., III, ed. *Surveying the Record: North American Scientific Exploration to 1930*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1999. A group of historians, art historians, geographers, anthropologists, archaeologists, and biologists met for a three day conference in 1997 at the Library of the American Philosophical Society with the program goal to “illuminate new historical approaches to [American] scientific expeditions and surveys” (xi). Of the twenty-six papers delivered, sixteen have been reproduced in the recently published APS Memoir, *Surveying the Record*. Accordingly, *Surveying the Record* reads like a refurbished conference proceedings volume. Read as a book, the reader will be hard pressed to synthesize a unifying vision of what American exploration has been all about and most readers will find that the conference had only limited success in unearthing any “new historical approaches.” The value of the text lies not as a whole, but rather in the individual articles that tackle the subject of exploration from a broad range of disciplines: environmental history, institutional history, western history, history of science, and art history. As such, *Surveying the Record* has re-articulated American exploration as a thoroughly multidisciplinary affair. This seemingly trite point actually directs us to an innovative historical approach, namely, the best way to get at the heart of exploration is by simultaneously looking through a variety of disciplinary lenses. (Text adapted from an [H-Net review by Gary Kroll](#).)

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