NAME:_____ October 2018

SECTION LEADER:_____

HISTORY / GEOGRAPHY / ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 469, MIDTERM EXAM

I. **MAPPING SECTION (10 points)**

Below are 12 geographical features that can be located on a map. Select 10 of these and label the map on the other side of this sheet of paper, using whatever marker is most appropriate for indicating the site of the feature you are labeling (e.g., a point for a city, a line for a river, a polygon for a state or province, etc.) If multiple labels appear in close proximity to each other, please make sure your marks and labels are legible. You are required to do ten, with each answer being worth one point. There is no extra credit for doing more than ten, and all wrong answers count against you...so ***don't do more than 10!!!***

1. Mississippi River
2. Lake Ontario
3. Sierra Nevada
4. Montreal
5. North Dakota
6. St. Louis
7. Mohawk River
8. line of 20" rainfall
9. San Francisco
10. Missouri River
11. Boston
12. St. Lawrence River

II. WHICH CAME FIRST? IMAGE PAIRS ANALYSIS SECTION (10 points)

On pages 3 and 4 of this exam, you'll find five pairs of images. Analyze each pair, and indicate beneath each image whether it is "earlier" or "later" than the other image of the pair. Then, write a single sentence in the space beneath each pair indicating your most important historical evidence for chronologically ordering the two images as you have.

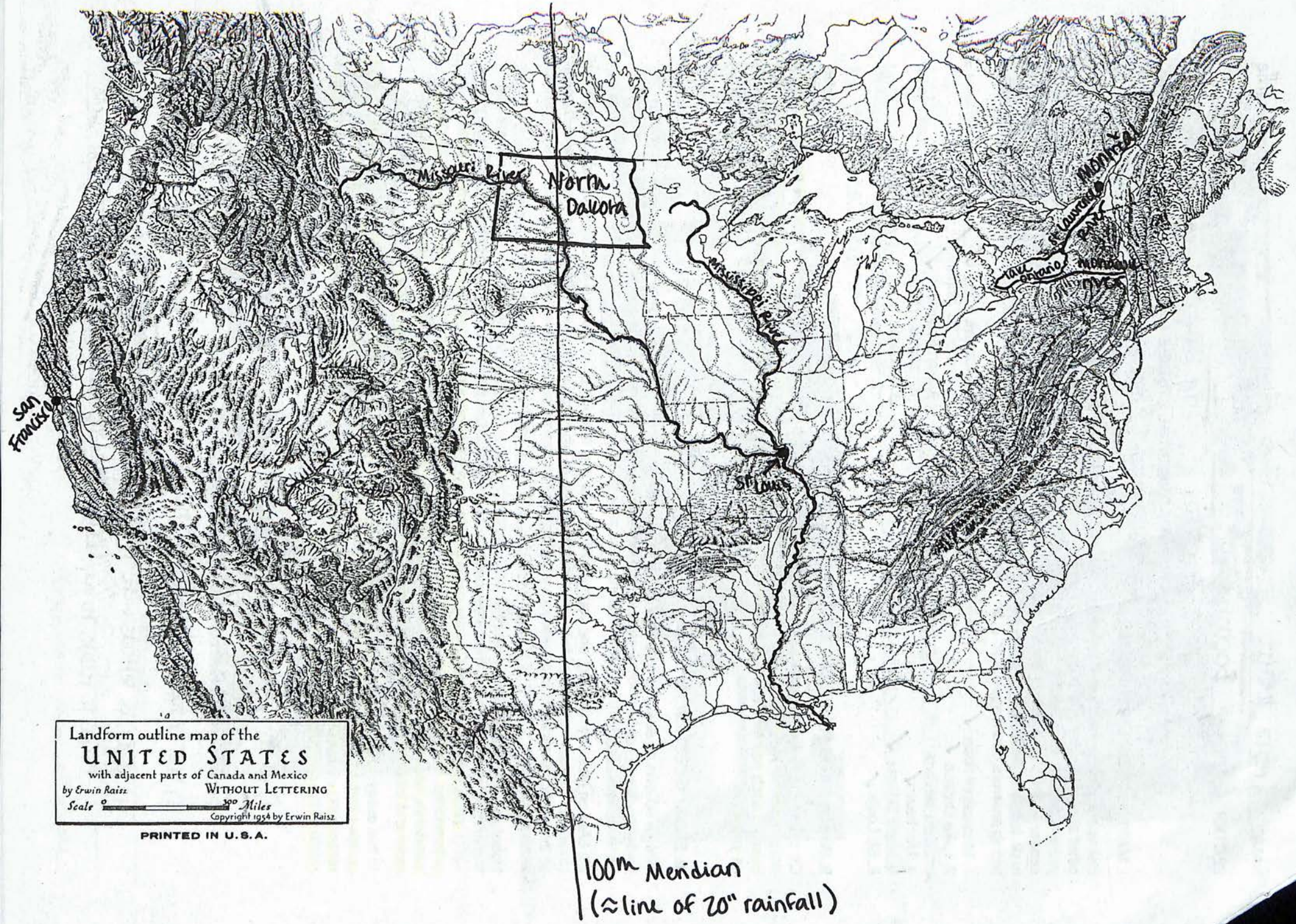
III. ESSAY QUESTION (80 points)

Write a 60-minute essay in response to the following question. Be sure whenever possible to use detailed evidence drawn not just from lectures, but from the readings and discussion sections as well. Remember that it's worth spending 5-10 minutes outlining your answer, and please leave your outline in the blue book.

It's 8AM on Monday morning, and you're making your way through East Campus Mall across East Johnson and University Avenue to Library Mall with a friend. As you're crossing University Avenue, your friend says, "Look at all this traffic! Americans must really love their cars. It makes no sense to me. We get along just fine on campus without them."

Hopefully, your reading of Christopher Wells's *Car Country* has persuaded you that your friend's remark that "Americans must really love their cars" can't by itself explain how the United States became "Car Country" by 1960. Wells argues that Car Country came into being not just because Americans were drawn to private automobiles, but also because of changes in technology, government subsidies, car-oriented development standards, car-based transportation policies, and other large-scale forces that gradually made the car seem more and more desirable, even essential, for life in many parts of the United States.

In this essay, identify what you regard as four of the most important technologies, laws, subsidies, standards, or policies that contributed to the creation of Car Country. For each, explain when it emerged; what problem it was responding to; how it helped transform the landscape; and what its effects were for the ways Americans came to relate to the changing landscape around them.

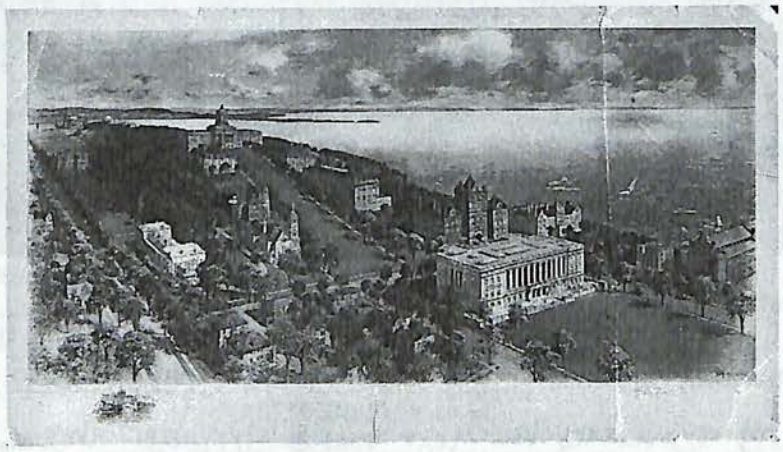


Landform outline map of the
UNITED STATES
with adjacent parts of Canada and Mexico
by Erwin Raisz WITHOUT LETTERING
Scale 0 300 Miles

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

II. WHICH CAME FIRST? IMAGE PAIRS ANALYSIS SECTION (10 points)

On the following two pages, you'll find five pairs of images. Analyze each of the five pairs, and write beneath each image whether it is "earlier" or "later" than the other image of the pair. Then, write a single sentence in the space beneath each pair indicating the piece of historical evidence that seems to you most persuasive for chronologically ordering the two images as you have.



Earlier or later? earlier later

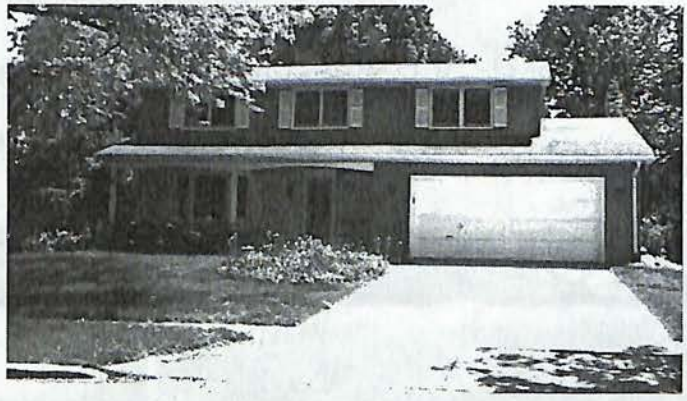
What's your evidence? The State Historical Society appears only in the second (right-hand) image, and was built in 1900, so the left-hand image was taken at an earlier time.

Earlier or later? later earlier

What's your evidence? The image to the left conveys a post-frontier, environmentalist consciousness and de-romanticization of the "progress" narrative whereas the image to the right depicts a mythic scene of "manifest destiny" and distinctly romanticizes the frontier, such narrative agendas were typical of the early-mid 19th century whereas the left-hand picture's themes were of later chronological incidence.

Earlier or later? later earlier

What's your evidence? The right-hand image depicts Picnic Point as agricultural land whereas the left-hand image shows dense foliage as is characteristic of the area's current land-use.



Earlier or later? earlier later

What's your evidence? The incorporation of the garage into the original architectural plan of the right-hand house identifies it as a later build during a time when "car country" was firmly established in the American lifestyle.

Earlier or later? later earlier

What's your evidence? ~~The construction of railroad bridges~~ Mining for materials made the construction of cars possible.

lighter, faster, more affordable

also, the development of the railroad industry preceded the auto industry.

Technology: Model T ford

A) 1908 → 1912 → 1920s
debut us. affordable peak pop.

B) need for "universal car"
- affordable - adapted to landscape (poor rds)
- reliable

C) ↑ # cars on landscape/roads → ↑ need for good roads

D) Δ attitudes toward:
- space/time, nature, ROADS ← technology, space for cars
boost Road reform mvmt

~~post~~ inter-war gas tax

A) need for funding for hwy construction

B)

1916 fed aid road act → 1921 revision

postwar suburban boom (GI bill)
- mortgage rates
→ consolidation/decentralization, white flight, low-dens. dev.

1956 fed. aid hwy. act + 1956 revenue

①

79 Great essay!

The emergence of Car Country in the United States resulted from a symphony of interrelated and overlapping movements, policies, technological changes, and reactions to large-scale events. The affection or appreciation most Americans likely feel for their cars likely results from ~~the~~ appreciation for its functionality, flexibility, and facilitation of everyday activities which cars have evolved to effect. Car Country certainly reinforces these attitudes and benefits ~~hurt~~from, but did not evolve to or seek precipitate feelings of affection. Indeed, the bulk of the causal forces behind the emergence of Car Country ~~concerned far more~~ concerned economic, social, and logistical ~~concern~~ matters above all else. Four major forces which contributed to the development of Car Country include the Model T ford (and the related Fordist manufacturing policy), the 1921 federal aid road act update from the original 1916 act, the postwar suburban development boom under GI mortgage rates, and the 1956 federal aid highway act. While these four phenomena by no means encompass the entirety of the major changes which took place on the proverbial "road to" car country, they constitute a few key

benchmarks which allow us historians to anchor broader themes and come to a more comprehensive understanding of the auto-centric landscape of the modern United States.

The Model T Ford certainly garnered a ~~following~~ consumer base following its debut in 1908, but the benchmark year for the Model T dates to 1912, when the company's product became affordable to a much broader ~~constituent~~ socio-economic echelon than ever before. The 1912 Model-T Ford encompassed the "capstone" technologies of Ford's earlier models, but with manufacturing techniques that rendered its price tag more palatable for the average consumer. Ford created a "universal car," an affordable, reliable motor which addressed some of the key issues facing auto manufacturers of the time. With the introduction of the five-dollar workday in 1914, Ford created an even broader market for his product - one which included his own manufacturers. The Model-T allowed the everyman to overcome the poor roads still common in the early 20th century. ~~Despite~~ Despite the best efforts of road reformers, the campaign to "get the farmer out of the mud" was a lengthy process, and cars of the era required high carriages and good suspension systems to navigate ruts and mud on unpaved roads. The Model-T was an American car made for American roads, and as such, its popularity drew new attention to the need for road improvements. Swelling numbers of motorists began demanding or requiring new street/road technologies that included and surpassed smooth, paved surfaces. New measures of traffic control such as signposts emerged, and streets dedicated to or which prioritized automobile traffic increased in number as the first two decades of the 20th century progressed. Americans grew to recognize the street as a space for traffic - automobile traffic - and the sidewalk or pedestrian malls as the proper locale for the commerce and daily living that had previously commandeered the cobblestones. The Model T also introduced people to new ways of conceptualizing the broader world around themselves. Attitudes toward nature began to change as motorists adopted "go and see" mentalities toward tourism and "country drives." Future models of cars, based off of Ford's pioneering example, would go on

to further alter the mental relationship between space (distance) and time in the American consciousness, especially as the landscape changed both independently of and in reaction to the newfound, affordable American mobility.

While the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act had an enhancing effect on road construction in the second decade of the 20th century, the 1921 update of the Federal Aid Road Act constituted a veritable "boom" in road mileage construction and improvement. Bolstered by the gasoline taxes of the 1920s, mileage proliferated and the Public Roads Bureau assisted states in attempts to coordinate construction efforts. However, the fragmented construction of the 1916 and WWI periods left a realm of opportunity for improvement, and the numerous gas taxes and other federal revenues kept State Highway construction efforts viable through the Great Depression. The result was a system of improved inter-state and inter-county highways which enabled motorists to capitalize upon the "go out and do" and "go out and see" mentalities which burgeoned before the war and in the early 1920s. The Federal Aid Road Act and the numerous gas/excise taxes used to fund road construction ~~pointed~~ indicate a larger trend of ~~power~~ federal investment and interest in road construction and maintenance, and a decline in the influence of local needs/communities in the determination of routes and construction. Farm-to-market roads and tourist roads which were once an issue became less so under federal policies which mandated specific types of road construction during the interwar period. Connecting cities through the country created arterial routes that would eventually foreshadow the superhighway systems of the later 20th century. However, turnpikes, highways, and toll roads were in their heyday - the government gleaned benefit from taxes and tolls which kept road improvements moving for a swelling number of motorists. This example of a quasi-positive-feedback loop had marked impact upon the American consciousness and the mental relationship between distance and time. Good roads from one major location to another decreased distance/time and allowed people to take part in recreational activities in far-flung natural areas with

greater ease. Nature became accessible by car, and so did amenities and so did free, (unoccupied) undeveloped land. As development generally followed routes out of cities (such as with railroads, streetcars, etc.) first developed the "Great American Roadside" to cater to travelers and, as economic opportunity increased outside of urban centers and the city grew more crowded, better roads constructed with federal funds led the way to new tracts of suburban lands primed for development.

Although the suburban housing market increased during the interwar period, especially the 1930s, the post-WWII increase constituted yet another veritable "boom" as returning GI's were seduced by generous mortgage rates and contract-ready suburban developers. The urban decentralization begun during the interwar period continued as predominantly white, affluent, car-owning citizens took advantage of low land costs and moved toward their own piece of the "American Dream" in suburbia. Low-density development permeated suburbs in the postwar era, and coupled with zoning laws which insulated residential areas from amenities such as public transportation, shopping and entertainment, even social events. Car ownership became increasingly necessary to travel distances to centralized shopping centers, schools, and churches. As the urban centers had de-centralized beginning in the interwar period, the rural areas had consolidated, centralized districts that remained somewhat isolated from residential and/or agricultural lands. Yet the pattern of suburban development increased its prevalence and new tracts of low-density, insulated neighborhoods sprawled outward from cities. Distances between home and, practically, anywhere else had increased in actual measure, but speed and ease of car travel had offset that increase - born reinforcing existing development concurrently and providing model for future development. Americans, particularly suburban Americans, began to refer to distance in terms of the time of travel between points rather than the mileage quantity.

Perhaps the hallmark movement ~~of~~ which solidified "Car Country's" existence in the United States was the 1956

Federal Aid Highway Act (freeway act) which, coupled with a revenue act of the same year, funded a massive standardized network of superhighways across the face of the nation. The Act sought to shuttle cars from one place to another at the highest speeds and maximum efficiency possible, as well as to direct traffic to areas of interest, particularly downtown. The superhighways divided and segregated and transected the landscape like no other roads before. They sought to revitalize downtown, but instead disrupted established neighborhoods and decreased property values in predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged sectors. Meanwhile, these systems facilitated car-commuters whose lives (including consumer activities) occurred outside of the cities and who traveled downtown only for work, thereby allowing Americans to travel from the suburban "home" landscape to the urban "work" landscape and back with sufficient ease.

The overarching theme across all causal forces which contributed to the creation of Car Country lies in the alteration of the Americans' concepts of distance and time. The Model-T Ford bolstered car ownership and began the automotive technological developments which enabled people to drive faster, farther, and more safely over the course of the 20th Century. Road construction initiatives such as the 1916, 1921, and 1956 federal Aid acts contributed to each era's progressive development of maximum speed and efficiency. Changing land-use patterns, particularly suburban development, altered how the American public integrated automobiles into the fabric of their lives. The geography, both mental and physical, of the United States has been significantly altered by the installation of "Car Country."