

REPORT ON THE SYLLABUS TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE, PACIFIC NORTHWEST HISTORY CONFERENCE

For years the Pacific Northwest History conference has tried to induce publishers to issue the extensive syllabus on Northwest history prepared by C. S. Kingston and J. O. Oliphant, but none responded. Thus precluded from adopting the best available syllabus, the conference has attempted to work out a new and much briefer one. Since such a task involved considerable correspondence, it was necessary to have a common starting point upon which to base further discussion. For this reason the Topical Outline of the History of the State of Washington (definitely not a syllabus), prepared for temporary use by Herman Deutsch of The State College of Washington, was sent to thirty teachers of Pacific Northwest History at the various institutions of higher learning in the region. Fourteen responded, of which five were from Idaho, three from Oregon, two from Montana, three from Washington and one from British Columbia.

A comparison of the various responses has led to the following generalizations about changes necessary in the original Topical Outline:

1. A general syllabus for the region will serve the needs of every state and province; there is no need for special state editions.
2. Certain topics should be worded in such general fashion that they will likely be pertinent to the entire region and to any particular state or province (E.G.: Expansion of the Electorate; Growth of the Legislature.)
3. Earlier topics should be considerably condensed and the recent period should be treated more adequately.
4. The committee on the syllabus should decide upon a terminal date (such as 1930 or 1950) for the course.
5. The committee should decide whether the outline should reflect an awareness of national and world trends or whether that should remain the responsibility of the individual instructor.
6. The entire syllabus should be kept small enough so that its reproduction would not be too expensive; likely about twenty pages would be the proper limit.

In considering the bibliography, those who responded did not consider the difficulty of using valuable and scarce material in large classes, resulting in the destruction of irreplaceable items. The syllabus should stress books which are in print and in ample supply available at reasonable prices. Perhaps page references in the syllabus should be made to the general histories of the west, such as those of Billington, Clark, Riegel, and Hafen and Rister. Some of the classics available in popular editions, such as Irving's Astoria and Bonneville and Parkman's Oregon Trail, should also be cited. The thirteen books cited by Deutsch for Washington might be supplemented by references to such other local works as Beal's A History of Southeastern Idaho and Howard's Montana Margins. A few other works of a somewhat broader scope, such as Mirksy's The Westward Crossings and Warren's The Farthest Frontier, should also be included. To keep the whole syllabus within the limits suggested, the bibliography should not exceed a reasonable number of items.

The conference should appoint a new committee to prepare the final draft of the syllabus and present it to the next meeting of the conference. The fourteen responses cited above will be available to the new committee. A number of those who responded showed that they would be excellent nominations for membership on the committee.

The steering committee should recommend to the conference which should come first: the completion of the syllabus or negotiations for complete reciprocity of credits on required courses in regional history as needed to secure certification for teaching in the Pacific Northwest states.