

BOOK REVIEW

Martis, Kenneth C. and Ruth Anderson Rowles (eds.). *The Historical Atlas of United States Congressional Districts: 1789 - 1983*. New York: The Free Press, 1982. xii + 302pp.

The history of this massive volume dates to 1936 when it was initiated as a long-range WPA project. After a desultory beginning, it was eventually abandoned and the files housed at Columbia University. Professor Martis inherited the task when circumstances again required transferral of the records to the University of Michigan. In essence, it consists of numerous maps depicting yea-and-nay roll call votes in both houses of Congress, much expanded and updated from its antecedents in *The Atlas of Congressional Roll Calls* published in 1943.

For those historians, sociologists, political scientists, geographers and classroom teachers in general who are concerned about the distribution of congressional sentiment on political issues, this atlas becomes the key research reference. Since it is a complete representative history of voting behavior for every city, county, and state of the United States by means of congressional districts, it is certain to become a standard reference on Congress and its activities.

Divided into three parts, the first of which is concerned with origins and representation of Congressional Districts, this atlas includes sections on malapportionment and gerrymandering as well. Other sections treat spatial aspects of "Roll-Call Voting Behavior" and something called "The Geography of Congress." A very wide variety of subject matter, most of which will be of interest to the political scientist, is found in the section entitled "Mapping the Geographical Aspects of the United States Congress." Part four on Methodology and Construction actually deals with some other things as well, including the historical development of pertinent maps and atlases.

Martis acknowledges that his assistant editor and cartographer, Rowles, eventually became the only member of the research group who fully understood all the aspects of this mammoth project and with whom he could discuss details. Be this as it may, the cartography, by the very nature of the data base, is rather pedestrian and uninspired. Only two maps are in color, the remainder (ca. 105) being the familiar state-county outlines with numerical designations for representatives from each district.

Thorough bibliographical references appear in the text and an index contains the names of more than 10,200 congressmen who have served their districts over the years encompassed.

As a specialized research tool the Martis-Rowles atlas is not recommended for the average academic's personal library. Whatever the circumstances, it is best placed on a low shelf; at approximately fifteen pounds it becomes dangerous if dislodged from above and may have a greater impact than the authors intended.

Alan Craig

The cover of this Florida Geographer shows a detail of the map of Congressional Districts of the Ninety-seventh Congress (1981-1983) taken from p. 215 of this book.