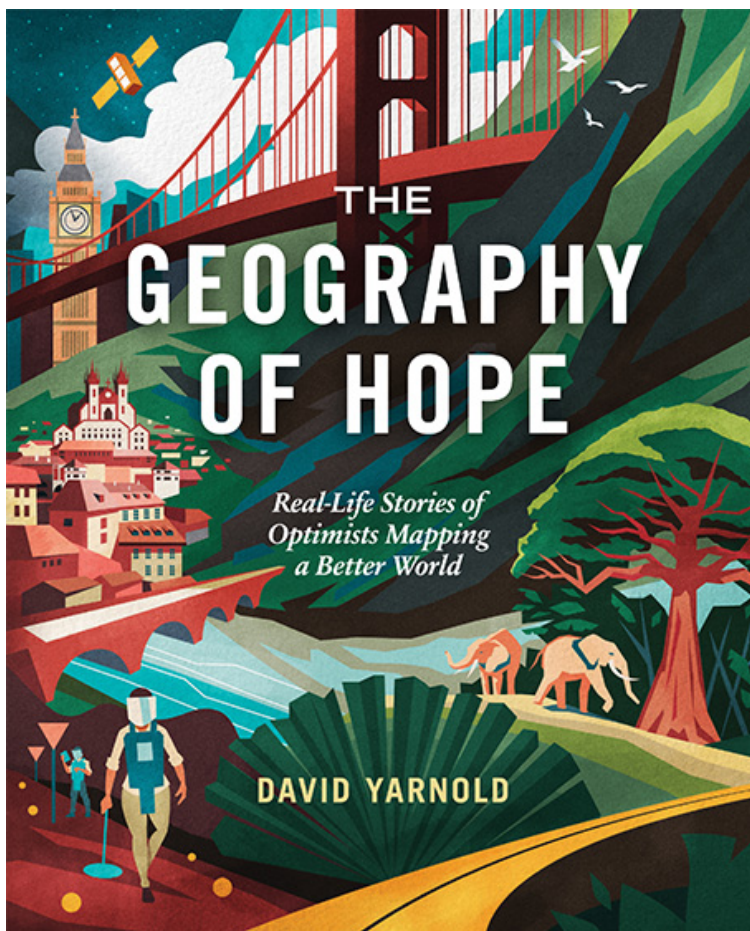




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Book review: The Geography of Hope: Real-Life Stories of Optimists Mapping a Better World

reviewed by William Rafter



The Geography of Hope | Banner

Yarnold, David. *The Geography of Hope: Real-Life Stories of Optimists Mapping a Better World*. Second Edition. New York: Esri Press, 2024. 231 p. \$39.99. LC: 2024932408. ISBN: 9781589487413



The Geography of Hope is not so much a book about geography as it is a book of stories of people trying to change the world. It is less about geography or cartography and more about social movements and how they have in some way made use of GIS. It is a book one wants to like, but at times it can be a bit heavy handed in its social message. There are nine chapters each telling a different story of how GIS was used at least in some part to impact social change. Unfortunately, from the point of view of geography and maps they are not always the central part of the story. Although GIS is the topic that ties the stories together.

The chapter on the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) is one that is more interesting from a mapping or geographic perspective. It tells the story of the NGA and the ways in which it has impacted the United States and the world which would be of interest to early practitioners. Another chapter that might be of special interest is the last chapter on GIS in K-12 education in the United Kingdom. It makes the case of the importance of GIS in early education and shows how educators use GIS in the UK.

The book is a glossy affair with many large photos including many of the people involved in the stories. The book honestly does not have at its core cartography but rather it has the social movements it describes, and the folks involved in them as more of the central theme. This book would not necessarily need to be included in libraries collections but could be. In terms of its value in doing research in cartography I would rate that as low as it adds little regarding cartography that is new. As I mentioned previously it is a book that one wants to like, and it exudes positivity which might inspire some people in the use of GIS. The author comments that he did not write the book as a "...warts-and-all investigations." which makes one question its value as a critical scholarly work as it tells only the positive side of each project. However, some people might consider this a harsh criticism as the title of the book itself describes the book as being "...of Hope" Interestingly the book has neither a bibliography nor is it indexed items typically found in more scholarly works.

William Rafter
University Librarian Emeritus
West Virginia University
Morgantown, WV

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