

Private Gazetteer of JJ and JW Abert (US Topographical Corps)

This set of six very fat notebooks and journals is essentially the esoteric explorer's equivalent of El Dorado -- a description of which can be found in volume 3, pages 56-59. Lt. James Abert rather liked it; lovely climate and excellent cuisine. They even had *coffee*, which had been blessedly brought in by a previous explorer a century before. One of his better places to have a visit, all in all.

What? Oh, sorry. John James Abert was head of the US Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers, prior to the start of the American Civil War. He and his son (James William Abert) had a certain *knack* for finding things, very much including places that aren't on any mundane maps. They also both discovered, early on, that they had a variant of Cassandra Syndrome: nobody would ever believe a word of the tales about their more fantastical adventures and discovery, no matter how much evidence that either had.

This condition has caused many a good person to slip into resentful madness; but in this case, both father and son simply shrugged it off. After all, the mundane survey information that they discovered on their travels was still

valid. Plus, it turned out that the city fathers of places like Cibola or Kvenland themselves typically keep excellent records of the surrounding area, and both of the Aberts were rather good at getting access to civic archives.

That information could later be checked and incorporated into the US government's maps without too much trouble, and it saved *ever* so much time. Note that most of the entries involving the East Coast were originally written by the father, who was increasingly stuck in Washington DC while his son went traipsing around the West. Also note that more than a few of these entries involve places outside of the continental USA. There is no explanation for this, anywhere in the text.

Anyone who gets his hands on even one of the six books in the Gazetteer will be able to track down any number of Lost Cities, Lands That Time Forgot, Strange Far Places, and other holes in the map; having all six will give enough travel locations for a human lifetime. Good luck getting the Gazetteer from its current owner, though. Today, the Gazetteer is in the hands of a very rich, slightly crazed, and resolutely mundane collector, who will not give the books up (or even have them duplicated) at any price. It's not that he understands the value of the Gazetteer; it's just that he never sells anything that he acquires.

Honestly, it's probably simpler -- and maybe even more ethical, in its way -- to just steal the blessed things.

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