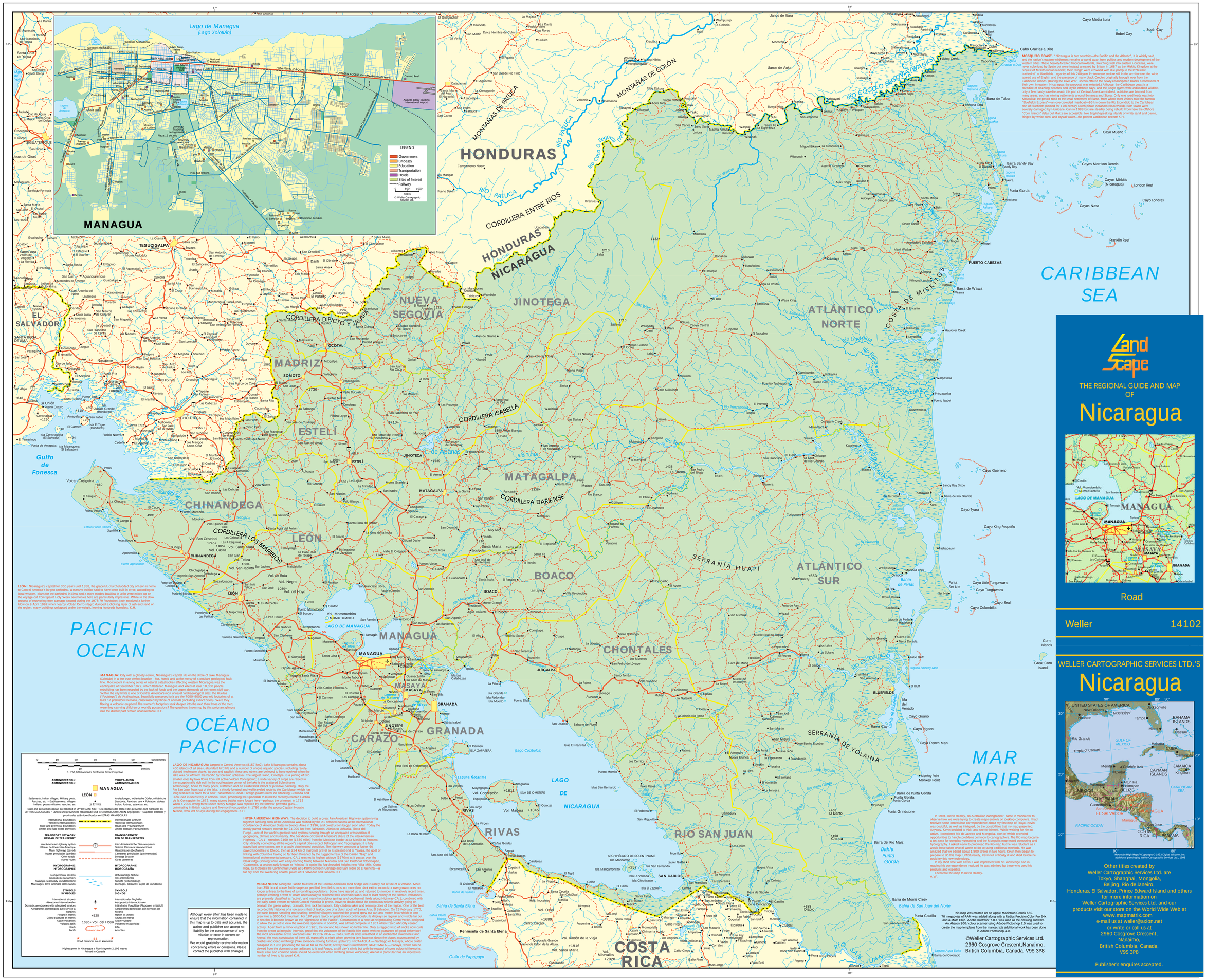

MOSQUITO COAST : "Nicaragua is two countries—the Pacific and the Atlantic", it is widely said, and the nation's eastern wilderness remains a world apart from politics and modern development of the western cities. These heavily-forested tropical lowlands, stretching well into eastern Honduras, were never colonized by Spain but were instead annexed by Britain in 1687 as the Miskito Kingdom at the request of Miskito Indian leaders; their "Kings" were crowned with due pomp in the Protestant "cathedral" at Bluefields. Legacies of this 200-year Protectorate endure still in the architecture, the wide spread use of English and the presence of many black Creoles originally brought over from the Caribbean islands. (During the Civil War, Lincoln offered the newly-emancipated blacks a homeland of their own in eastern Nicaragua; the proposal was rejected.) Although the Caribbean coast is a paradise of dazzling beaches and idyllic offshore cays, and the jungle teems with undisturbed wildlife, only a few hardy travelers reach this part of Central America—indeed, outsiders are banned from many areas, such as mining settlements around Bonanza and Siuna. Only one road leads east into Mosquitia: the paved road to the small settlement of Rama, from where most visitors take the famous "Bluefields Express"—an overcrowded riverboat—96 km down the Río Escondido to the Caribbean port of Bluefields (named for 17th century Dutch pirate Abraham Blauwveld). Both towns were severely damaged by Hurricane Joan in 1988 but are steadily being rebuilt. From here the offshore "Corn Islands" (Islas del Maíz) are accessible: two English-speaking islands of white sand and palms, fringed by white coral and crystal water...the perfect Caribbean retreat! K.H.

LEÓN: Nicaragua's capital for 300 years until 1858, the graceful, church-studded city of León is home to Central America's largest cathedral, a massive edifice said to have been built in error; according to local wisdom, plans for the cathedral in Lima and a more modest basilica in León were mixed up on the voyage out from Spain! Holy Week ceremonies here are particularly impressive. While in the slow process of recovering from damage caused during the 1978-79 Revolution, León received a further blow on 8 April 1992 when nearby Volcán Cerro Negro dumped a choking layer of ash and sand on the region; many buildings collapsed under the weight, leaving hundreds homeless. K.H.

MANAGUA: City with a ghostly centre, Nicaragua's capital sits on the shore of Lake Managua (Xolotlán) in a less-than-perfect location—hot, humid and at the mercy of a petulant geological fault line. Most recent in a long series of natural catastrophes affecting western Nicaragua was the earthquake of December 1972, which flattened Managua and killed at least 18,000 people; rebuilding has been retarded by the lack of funds and the urgent demands of the recent civil war. Within the city limits is one of Central America's most unusual 'archaeological sites; the Huellas ("Footsteps") de Acahualinca. Beautifully preserved tufa are the 7000-5000-year-old footprints of at least 17 prehistoric humans, crisscrossed by those of animals (including extinct bison). Were they fleeing a volcanic eruption? The women's footprints sank deeper into the mud than those of the men; were they carrying children or worldly possessions? The questions thrown up by this poignant glimpse into the distant past remain unanswerable. K.H.

LAGO DE NICARAGUA: Largest in Central America (8157 km2), Lake Nicaragua contains about 400 islands of all sizes, abundant bird life and a number of unique aquatic species, including rarely-sighted freshwater sharks, tarpon and sawfish; these and others are believed to have evolved when the lake was cut off from the Pacific by volcanic upheaval. The largest island, Ometepe, is a joining of two smaller ones by lava flows from still active Volcán Concepción; a wide variety of crops are raised in the exceptionally rich soil. In the southeastern corner of the lake is the scattered Solentiname Archipelago, home to many poets, craftsmen and an established school of primitive painting. Only the Río San Juan flows out of the lake, a thickly-forested and well-traveled route to the Caribbean which has long featured in plans for a new Trans-Isthmus Canal. Foreign pirates intent on attacking Granada and León used it extensively in colonial times, prompting the Spaniards to build the recently-restored Castillo de la Concepción in 1672; many stormy battles were fought here—perhaps the grimmest in 1762 when a 2000-strong force under Henry Morgan was repelled by the fortress' powerful guns—culminating in British capture and five-month occupation in 1780 under the young Captain Horatio Nelson, who lost his eye during this engagement. K.H.

INTER-AMERICAN HIGHWAY: The decision to build a great Pan-American Highway system tying together far-flung ends of the Americas was ratified by the 21 affected nations at the International Conference of American States in Buenos Aires in 1936, and construction began soon after. Today the mostly paved network extends for 24,000 km from Fairbanks, Alaska to Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego—one of the world's greatest road systems running through an unequaled cross-section of geography, climate and humanity. The backbone of Central America's share of the Inter-American Highway—CA1—stretches 2460 km (1530 miles) from the Mexican border at La Mesilla to Panama City, directly connecting all the region's capital cities except Belmopan and Tegucigalpa; it is fully paved but some sectors are in a sadly deteriorated condition. The highway continues a further 60 paved kilometres to Chepo, then as 224 km of marginal gravel to its present end at Yaviza, the goal of linking with Columbia having so far been thwarted by the rugged terrain of the Darién "Gap" and international environmental pressure. CA1 reaches its highest altitude (3670m) as it passes over the bleak ridge (shining white with early-morning frost) between Nahuala and San Cristobal Totonicapán, Guatemala, a section aptly known as "Alaska". It again lifts fog-shrouded heights near Villa Mills, Costa Rica, as it crosses the Continental Divide at 3450m between Cartago and San Isidro de El General—a far cry from the sweltering coastal plains of El Salvador and Panamá. K.H.

VOLCANOES: Along the Pacific fault line of the Central American land bridge one is rarely out of site of a volcano. More than 350 brood above fertile slopes or petrified lava fields, most no more than dark extinct mounds or overgrown cones no longer a threat to the lives of surrounding populations. Some have reared up and returned to slumber in relatively recent times, perhaps emitting a wraft of steam occasionally to reinforce their uncertain status. But at least twenty of the Isthmus' volcanoes are presently classified as "active", and many hot sulphur springs and geothermal fields along Highways CA-1, combined with the daily earth tremors to which Central America is prone, leave no doubt about the continuous seismic activity going on beneath the green valleys, dramatic lava rock formations, lofty caldera lakes and teeming cities of the region. One of the best recorded life histories of a volcano is that of Izalco, one of a clutch south of Santa Ana, El Salvador. On 23 February 1770, the earth began rumbling and shaking; terrified villagers watched the ground spew out ash and molten lava which in time grew into a 6000-foot mountain. For 187 years Izalco erupted almost continuously, its displays so regular and visible far out to sea that it became known as the "Lighthouse of the Pacific". Construction of a hotel at neighbouring Cerro Verde, designed to allow the jet set to view the awesome spectacle in comfort, was almost complete in 1957 when Izalco abruptly ceased activity. Apart from a minor eruption in 1961, the volcano has shown no further life. Only a ragged wisp of smoke now curls from the crater at irregular intervals, proof that the volcanoes of the Pacific Rim come with no guarantee of good behaviour! The most accessible active volcanoes are: COSTA RICA — Poás, with its sides wreathed in an enchanted cloud forest and Arenal, the most spectacular of them all, especially at night when glowing lava bounces down the slopes accompanied by crashes and deep rumblings ("like someone moving furniture upstairs"); NICARAGUA — Santiago or Masaya, whose crater collapsed in 1986 poisoning the soil as far as the coast; activity now is intermittent; GUATEMALA — Pacaya, which can be viewed from the dormant crater adjacent to it and Fuego, a stiff day's climb but with the reward of some colourful fireworks. Great care and common sense should be exercised when climbing active volcanoes; Arenal in particular has an impressive number of lives to its score! K.H.

Although every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this map is up to date and accurate, the author and publisher can accept no liability for the consequence of any mistake or error in content or representation.
We would gratefully receive information concerning errors or omissions. Please contact the publisher with changes.

0 10 20 30 40 50 60kilometres
0 10 20 30miles
1: 750,000 Lambert's Conformal Conic Projection

ADMINISTRATION
ADMINISTRATION
VERWALTUNG
ADMINISTRACIÓN

MANAGUA
LEÓN
La Ermita

Settlements, Indian villages, Military posts, Ranches, etc. • Établissements, villages indiens, postes militaires, ranches, etc
Ansiedlungen, indianische Dörfer, militärische Standorte, Ranchen, usw • Poblados, aldeas indios, fortines, estancias, etc.
State and provincial capitals are labelled in UPPER CASE type • Les capitales des états et des provinces sont marquées en LETTRES MAJUSCULES • Landes und provinzielle Hauptstädte sind in GROSSBUCHSTABEN angegeben • Capitales estatales y provinciales están identificadas en LETRAS MAYÚSCULAS

International boundaries
Frontières internationales
State and provincial boundaries
Limites des états et des provinces
Internationales Grenzen
Fronteras internacionales
Staats und Provinzgrenzen
Límites estatales y provinciales

TRANSPORT NETWORK
RÉSEAU DE TRANSPORT
TRANSPORTNETZ
RED DE TRANSPORTES

Inter-American Highway system
Réseau de route Inter-Amérique
Main highways (paved)
Routes principales (pavées)
Other roads
Autres routes
Inter Amerikanischer Strassensystem
Sistema Carretera Interamericana
Hauptstrasen (Bepflastert)
Carretera principales (pavimentadas)
Sonstige Strassen
Otras carreteras

HYDROGRAPHIC
HYDROGRAPHY
HYDROGRAPHIE
HIDROGRAFÍA

Non-perennial streams
Cours d'eau saisonnaires
Swamps, seasonally inundated land
Marécages, terre inondée selon saison
Unbeständige Ströme
Rios intermitentes
Sümpfe (wetterbedingt)
Ciénagas, pantanos; sujeto de inundación

SYMBOLS
SYMBOLES
SIGNOS

International airports
Aéroportes internationaux
Domestic aerodromes with scheduled services
Aerodromes domestiques avec service a horaire
Height in metres
Côtes d'altitude en mètres
Active volcanoes
Volcans actifs
Reefs
Récifs
Internationaler Flughäfen
Aeropuertos internacionales
Inländische Flugplätze (Regelsten erhältlich)
Aeródromos domésticos con servicios de horario
Höhen in Metern
Alturas en metros
Aktive Vulkane
Volcanes en actividad
Riffe
Arrecifes
+525
1080+ Vol. del Hoyo
55
Road distances are in kilometres
Highest point in Nicaragua is Pico Megatón 2,106 metres
Printed in Canada

In 1994, Kevin Healey, an Australian cartographer, came to Vancouver to observe how we were trying to create maps entirely on desktop computers. I had received some incredulous correspondence about my first map of Tokyo. Kevin was doubtful, as well as intrigued, by the possibilities that my map presented. Anyway, Kevin decided to visit and see for himself. While waiting for him to arrive, I completed Rio de Janeiro and Mongolia, both of which provided opportunities to handle problems common to cartographers. The Rio map became a test case for complex typesetting and the Mongolia map tested contouring and hydrography. I asked Kevin to proofread the Rio map but he was reluctant as it would have taken several weeks to do so using traditional methods. He was amazed that we edited about 1,800 streets in two hours. Kevin then began to prepare to do this map. Unfortunately, Kevin fell critically ill and died before he could try this new technology.
In my short time with Kevin, I was impressed with his knowledge and in reading his correspondence realized he was admired by those who used his products and expertise.
I dedicate this map to Kevin Healey.
A. W.

This map was created on an Apple Macintosh Centris 650.
70 megabytes of RAM was added along with a Radius PrecisionColor Pro 24x and a Math Chip. Adobe Illustrator 7.0.1 was used as the drawing software. An Abaton 300/colour scanner using Adobe Photoshop 2.5 was used to create the map templates from the manuscripts additional work has been done in Adobe Photoshop 4.0.

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LandScape

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