THE AMERICAN WEST

The Gendered West

Edited by
Gordon Morris Bakken and
Brenda Farrington
The American West

*Interactions, Intersections, and Injunctions*

Series Editors

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Series Contents

1. Where is the West?
2. Racial Encounters in the Multi-Cultural West
3. The Gendered West
4. Environmental Problems in America’s Garden of Eden
5. The Urban West
6. Law in the West
The Gendered West

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Contents

vii Series Dedication
ix Series Introduction
xxi Volume Dedication
xxiii Volume Introduction

1 Women and Men in Western History: A Stereoptical Vision
   Susan Armitage

17 Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History:
   The Discourse, Politics, and Decolonization of History
   Antonia I. Castañeda

51 Else Surely We Shall All Hang Separately:
   The Politics of Western Women's History
   Virginia Scharff

73 Race, Sex, and Region:
   Black Women in the American West, 1850–1920
   Lawrence deGraff

102 What's Old about the New Western History:
   Race and Gender, Part 1
   John R. Wunder

112 American Daughters: Black Women in the West
   Glenda Riley

127 Women and Intercultural Relations:
   The Case of Hispanic New Mexico and Colorado
   Sarah Deutsch

149 Laura Ingalls Wilder and Rose Wilder Lane:
   The Politics of a Mother-Daughter Relationship
   Anita Clair Fellman

177 Toward a Multicultural History of Women
   in the Western United States
   Elizabeth Jameson

209 Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization
   in California, 1915–1920
   Gayle Gullet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>Work, Gender, and Power in the American West</td>
<td>Karen Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253</td>
<td>Single Women Homesteaders: The Perplexing Case of Elinore Pruitt Stewart</td>
<td>Sherry L. Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769–1848: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family</td>
<td>Antonia I. Castañeda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304</td>
<td>“We are Women Irish”: Gender, Class, Religious, and Ethnic Identity in Anaconda, Montana</td>
<td>Laurie K. Mercier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>319</td>
<td>Amerika Nadeshiko: Japanese Immigrant Women in the United States, 1900–1924</td>
<td>Yuji Ichioka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>339</td>
<td>“The Liberty of Self-Degradation”: Polygamy, Woman Suffrage, and Consent in Nineteenth Century America</td>
<td>Sara Barringer Gordon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>373</td>
<td>Constitutional Convention Debates in the West: Racism, Religion, and Gender</td>
<td>Gordon M. Bakken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>405</td>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To Erika Lyn Henderson
Yorba Linda, California
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Series Introduction

This anthology of western history articles emphasizes the New Western History that emerged in the 1980s and adds to it a heavy dose of legal history, a field frequently ignored or misunderstood by the New Western historians. The New Western History rejects the “Frontier Thesis” of Frederick Jackson Turner announced in 1893 and replaces it with a new set of questions. Because the New Western historians believe that place more than process facilitates historical analysis, the question of where the West can be located is an on-going debate. Because the New Western historians reject a Euro-centric process orientation of waves of pioneers civilizing western peoples red and brown in successive frontier experiences, we favor multi-cultural historical approach. We recognize that gender is a category of analysis necessary for any western history inquiry. Looking from the West at these issues we see multi-cultural interactions, and intersections of significant meaning. Further, we accord the legal system a far more important role than do most New Western historians. In legal conflict we find gender, race, and place. In the urban West with its unique environment dependent upon limited water supplies for all phases of economic life, the law of place changed as did the peoples that populated this dynamic landscape.

When Frederick Jackson Turner announced his frontier thesis in 1893, most Americans had no doubt where the West was. It was simply all of the land west of the Mississippi River. It was simply the “Wild West” of Indians and cowboys riding horses and you could see those Indians and cowboys when the Wild West show came to town. But that Wild West was not part of San Francisco in 1893 or Denver. Those instant cities had acquired the degree of civilization based on wealth, commerce, and culture to make them part of a greater American urban landscape.

Turner’s frontier thesis positing that the process of civilizing the West from the colonial period until 1890 produced both American democracy and the American character started historians down the path of proof to find evidence supporting or debunking Turner’s thesis. The debate continues. Early supporters of Turner found settlers from the East finding greater democracy in the West. Detractors found evidence that eastern urban factory workers did not migrate to the West in any great numbers and the West was not a safety value for labor unrest. So it went. Books and articles offered proof on both sides until the New Western Historians arrived with publication of Patricia Nelson Limerick’s *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*
Limerick shifted the debate by noting Turner’s Euro-centric focus on an east to west process whose vision was strictly limited to that of the pioneers, not those experiencing the process and seeing the pioneers as conquerors from their perspective of looking to the east from the west.

Limerick’s call for inclusion in western history was not the first, but clearly the most noticed. Herbert Eugene Bolton already had suggested the utility of borderland studies noting the richness of cultural interaction in New Spain’s northern territories in several books including *The Colonization of North America, 1492–1783* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1920), *Coronado, Knight of Pueblos and Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1949), and *Spain’s Northern Frontier, 1763–1800* (Chicago: Denoyer-Geppert Co., 1967). Bolton appreciated the fact that Europeans and Indians had occupied lands together for generations in the American Southwest. Limerick’s argument acknowledges the need for such studies, but rejects Bolton’s emphasis on the opening and closing of Spanish and English empires in favor of the continuity of conquest. Further, Limerick tapped into the scholarly dissatisfaction of the 1960s with the political synthesis in American history and joined the legions of historians including women, persons of color, and marginalized classes in the general fabric of American history. Most importantly, Limerick called for studies of place. Here the West as a region needed recognition and definition.

Scholars more easily accepted the concept of the West as place or region than they were able to identify exactly what made any geographic area the “West.” The most ambitious attempt to do so was William E. Riebsame’s *Atlas of the New West: Portrait of a Changing Region* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1997). This beautifully executed volume offers a variety of definitions of region noting that the West keeps moving around in time and space, if not the mind. Geographers, historians, artists, and writers have defined the West by certain marks. The West is characterized by its extractive industries such as mining, logging, ranching, and irrigated farming. It is rooted in natural resources and their exploitation. The West is more urbanized than the East. From space at night, it is clear to any observer that the East shimmers and the West has spots of brilliance. The West contains more public land administered by the federal government resulting in jurisdictional boundaries drawn by the Bureau of Reclamation and United States Forest Service gridding the mapscape. Huge portions of this mapscape represent American Indian reservation lands. Indian country in the West is recognizable and substantial in space. These lands were developed with capital from the East, by corporations housed in the East, and managed by executives living in the East but visiting the West. The West remains Turner’s, but it is Ted rather than Frederick Jackson that now defines the present reality.

The *Atlas* has its critics because much of what many consider the West is hacked off, even the Pacific coast and the Dakotas. But there is little to replace it excepting alternative concepts of how to define the West and where to fix its boundaries.

It is not difficult to start identifying regions and subregions. Earl Pomeroy’s *The Pacific Slope: a History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York: Knopf, 1965) identified region crying out for analysis and demonstrated the utility of such analysis. But can the Pacific Northwest stand scrutiny as a region? What ties the states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho together, much less California, Utah, and
Nevada? They all have extractive industries and logging clearly characterized Washington and Oregon. Idaho had logging, but mining and potato farming seem clearer markers of identity. Perhaps the salmon would be a better regional icon. The whiteness of the present population of Oregon and Idaho set them apart from the multi-racial West of the borderlands. The Great Basin Kingdom belongs to Leonard Arrington’s *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), but his economic history of the Mormons in Utah gives religion a central part in identity. For Limerick, Mormon history was very much a part of the history of the West and today Mormon history has multiplied from many scholarly parents. But is the Great Basin a region? If we look to the people who live there, they thought so. If we look at it ecologically, it does have a hydraulic identity. What about the Rocky Mountains? Do the people of these majestic peaks see themselves linked to others? Would John Denver’s calling upon the mountains for inspiration equally move people to see unity? Are they clearly not linked to the people of Omaha? Is the Great Plains different and if so how? These are the kinds of questions that flow from the issue of regional identity and their exploration will continue into the next century.

Western Legal history has come of age with the work of John Phillip Reid and others guiding a research agenda finding the familiar in American law in the West and identifying the unique flowing from water and mining law development. In addition, Professor Reid and others have identified a research agenda including multicultural legal analysis that should prove to illuminate the vitality of western legal history. Reid suggested that there were numerous layers of western legal history, most only partially explored. They included the development of law during the westward expansion, the law of Indian Territory, the law of cattle drives and the open range, the law of the Mormons, mining law, water law, the law of American Indian nations, violence and the law, and transboundary law. His observations in "The Layers of Western Legal History" contained in John McLaren, Harmar Foster, and Chet Orloff, eds., *Law for the Elephant, Law for the Beaver: Essay in the Legal History of North America (Pasadena, C.A.: Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society, 1992)* clearly delineate a topical and conceptual agenda for research. The work in western legal history is extensive, but as Reid suggests a great deal of scholarly opportunity awaits researchers.

In addition to Reid’s research agenda, the “New Western Historians” have offered some insights on law in the American West. Howard Lamar made the following observation in 1992 in “Westering in the Twenty-first Century: Speculations on the Future of the Western Past” in William Cronon, George Miles and Jay Gilin, eds., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1992): “Bureaucracy thrives on rules. Rules suggest laws, and laws lead to litigation. In the past fifty years both citizens and the state and federal governments have hired armies of lawyers to fight their battles in legislative halls or in courts. The current debate over water needs, pollution, the environment, and development has been cast in legal terms. In addition to studying the history of these endless litigations, we should ask why the debate has taken this form. Are we a legal-minded people, or, as one suspects, have Americans become so accustomed to using the law as a selfish manipulative tool — from the time of the first Indian treaty on through two centuries of abuse of public lands — that it is a fundamental part of our culture? The new bureaucracy itself now seems to
be using the law, sometimes callously, to achieve its own ends. The point is not to condemn but to ask how we came to this litigiousness and why we continue it. 

Lamar's formulation of the research question is confrontational. Are the American people, particularly those that people the West, law-minded as John Phillip Reid found on the overland trail, or is the law a tool of capitalistic oppression as the critical legal studies school would have us believe.

Patricia Nelson Limerick writing in the same volume finds the West a place of opportunity for legal history research. "Western history is full of . . . examples of words consulted and puzzled over as if they were Scripture. When mining law awarded ownership of all the "angles, dips, spurs, and variations" of a vein to the person who claimed the "apex" of that vein, lawyers took on the trying task of translating a verbal construction into a geological reality." Limerick also found lawyers representing "forests and rivers, antelope and coyotes." She offered that "when inarticulate nature found voice in legal proceedings, the world of words had reached its peak of inclusiveness."

Further, "legal words provide abundant opportunities for cross-cultural comparisons." Finally, "written or oral, legal tradition is transmitted in words, by which power and influence flow toward the appointed custodians and interpreters of those words. The study of law and verbal behavior also provides important information on intergroup relations in the West." The research opportunities according to Limerick and Reid are abundant.

In the recent past, historians have started the process of recovering the gendered past of the American West. The stereotypes of western women as civilizers in sunbonnets have yielded to the complexity of western women's history. First, historians have recognized that the West was the most multi-cultural region of the country. Ethnic and racial backgrounds played a significant part in the roles of women on the West's varied stages. Migration experiences were formative for many, but varied widely in time, place, and manner of migration. Women formed bonds with other women of like and dramatically different cultural heritages. The contributions of women to the success of families varied with time, place, and class as well as race. American Indian women were, for example, in charge of economic transactions and the means of production such as Navaho sheep. Women struggled for rights, but in the West we can see variation found in few other regions. While white women marched for the vote in California, they already had the vote in Wyoming Territory in 1869. American Indian women found it hard to contemplate the vote without citizenship and they would wait until 1924 to become citizens. Asian women would wait until World War II to gain rights to citizenship. Black women in Kansas would suffer the indignities of racial discrimination in public accommodations while women of color in the San Francisco Bay Area would be riding local street cars in the 1860s and attending desegregated schools thirty years later. The similarities as well as the differences in female experience because of race further complicate the West.

Race also impacted women's outlook on the future and the range of choice in the past. In many ways, these choices had to do with relationships with men. Men obviously wanted women in the West particularly when gender balances were out of center in the 1850s and 1860s. Henry Halleck stood on the floor of the 1849 California Constitutional convention advocating women's legal rights as a lure to bring them west.
Wyoming's female franchise found advocates because of another form of lure. When they arrived, women varied by marital status, sexual preference, religion, race, class, and culture. Some came from rural America, others the factories of the East. Some came west to escape religious persecution in the east and find Zion in Utah or Idaho. All of these factors molded a woman's perception of the West. While the men of the West looking for women frequently did not recognize these distinctions, historians have done so recognizing the diversity of the women of the West. Rather than marginalizing women because of a distinction, historians have found it necessary to account for difference in critically analyzing the experiences of western women.

The contact of peoples in the American West was a multi-cultural event with national implications. The contact was necessarily local or regional, but historians have found numerous issues of race and gender in this multi-cultural tapestry. This is a field of inquiry in the formative stage of development, but holding great promise for social and institutional history.

Contact among the tribes of the West was, in part, a product of contact among tribes in the East. Clearly, the tribes of the East jockeyed for hunting and planting territory, established migration patterns, and pushed others out of homelands onto new homelands. Most significant tribe for the West was the Sioux, a name given to them by those attacked, displaced, and slaughtered in their wake. To themselves, they were Lakota, the people. To other American Indians, they were the mobile troops of a tribe seeking increased hunting ground, their hunting ground. The Sioux were not the only tribe pushing their territorial limits. The West before settlement was a dynamic ground of contact.

Contact with the American Indian in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was bi-coastal. In the East, the English, Spanish, Dutch, and French would encounter the tribes, trade with them, make war, peace, and alliances. Some personal alliances, even formal marriage, cemented relationships of trade and cultures. In the West, the Spanish had the greatest impact settling much of the Southwest with missions and military fortifications. Missions and presidios would give way to pueblos and ranchos. New generations of American Indians and Spanish speaking residents would continue the process of contact in new economic and cultural circumstances. Both East and West, European diseases devastated native populations. Yet, Indians actively resisted the economic, military, and cultural assaults upon their persons and tribes. This resistance took many forms including female agency accepting trade goods that improved the lives of families yet refusing the cultural incursions of the Europeans. Other forms of resistance included graffiti on mission walls and the maintenance of tribal rituals despite church membership and attendance.

African American contact dates to 1528 when Esteban washed ashore on the Texas coast. As a slave of the Spanish, he had already encountered Europeans and with Indian contact, Esteban continued in slavery to the Indians. With the expansion of New Spain, the black-Indian and black-Spanish population rose to 369,790 by 1793. Quintard Taylor's *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1998) begins with this familiar tale and paints a detailed but nuanced portrait of a multi-cultural West. It was a West where Asian and Hispanic alliances played a critical role in the achievement of civil rights. Albert S.
Broussard's *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900–1954* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993) puts the personal and organizational puzzle together focusing upon political action, church oriented activity, and local politics as part of the black struggle in the West. The story of black San Francisco finds similarity across the Bay. Delores Nason McBroome’s *Parallel Communities: African Americans in California’s East Bay: 1850—1963* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993) demonstrates how World War II changed the black community and moved its interests forward. Interestingly, all three authors note that Charlotte Brown’s lawsuits in San Francisco resulted in the desegregation of the transit system in 1866. This common-law assault upon discrimination was separate from the Civil Rights Act of 1866 emerging from the United States Congress according black Americans equal access to property among other rights. While San Francisco would have desegregated transit in the 1860s and desegregated schools in the 1890s, this was not true for the West in general. The struggle of African Americans for civil rights would continue for a century.

Asians would find the struggle equally daunting, but their resolve unshaken. Charles J. McClain’s *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) carefully documents and analyzes how the Chinese used law to achieve rights. Legislation dramatically restricting Asian access to property and outright de jure discrimination was prevalent from the 1850s. Yet the Chinese were remarkably successful in American courts overturning many of these statutes. The Chinese prevailed in court because they had resources. Many of the Chinese were employed and some were prosperous merchants. Their community was highly organized and had access to pooled resources to pay legal fees. After 1878 the Chinese consulate played an increasingly significant role in protecting rights and contributing funds for litigation. The Chinese were careful to employ competent counsel to represent them in court. Finally, the legal climate favored Chinese legal success. America was committed to the rule of law. The Civil Rights Act of 1870 contained specific provisions protecting the Chinese from state action hostile to their interests across the nation. Politicians in the West knew this and opposed the legislation. The Chinese had treaty rights under the Burlingame Treaty of 1868, and reconfirmed in 1880, that guaranteed them the same rights as citizens or subjects of any most favored nation. The Chinese also had the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution to argue in court. That amendment guaranteed them due process of law and equal protection just as it did all others in this nation. These were powerful arguments for rights and the Chinese used them. The African-American struggle for rights followed a similar path using the law to gain access to public transportation and accommodations. The civil rights campaigns in the West were often fought in courts.

female agency in the movement of Chinese women from the home and shop to the public sphere. The movement of the Chinese community in the West was not a singular one from courthouse to equality.


Most recently, Elliott West's *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998) takes contact history to another level of refinement. West paints a portrait of the plains as rich in pre-contact history with the tribes of the plains, woodlands, and pacific coast interacting through trade and warfare. Interaction of the Pueblo and plains tribes occurred because of the Spanish invasion from the south and west. From the east, fur trappers and traders reach the Cheyenne, now out of their settlements in Minnesota and mounted on horses courtesy of the Spanish. The Cheyenne decision to adopt a horse culture and to pursue the bison put them in contest with other tribes and white men moving onto the contested plains. In addition to contact by fur men and Overland Trail emigrants, the Cheyenne faced the onslaught of gold seekers in the Pike’s Peak rush. Denver city builders contested for the land with Cheyenne dog soldiers. Aided by the strong arm of the federal government and territorial militia, the land was made safe for capital,
land developers, and a hydraulic society. Choices made by all participants had consequences in pre-contact and contact phases of historical development. This second layer of analysis forms a new and exciting basis for the historical work that is sure to come from West's insights.

Looking at the West in the 1990s, we find the most urbanized region of America. Over eighty percent of the people live in cities and if we exclude Texas and the Plains states, the West contains almost half the American Indian and Hispanic population, and more than one half of the Asian population. The West is urban and diverse. Some of these cities were instant cities; that is, they were created by a boom, grew from nothing to city size in months, and took on the trappings of urban America within a few years. San Francisco, Denver, and Butte fit into this category. Many of the small cities and villages revolved around booms of another sort. The cattle trails out of Texas gave Kansas cities along the railroad instant business and instant economic distress when the herds no longer visited. Many of the cities reached out along routes of transportation for business and population. All sought to prosper and survive, some did not. The West also is a place for ghost towns like Bodie, California, now a tourist destination rather than a place of homes and families. The urban West was many things over time. It continues to change with population shifts and telecommuting.

San Francisco was a diverse community from its origins in the gold rush. The flood of humanity that docked there and stayed there produced a city with clear cultural and ethnic diversity. The Irish and the Chinese were the labor that built the Transcontinental Railroad and populated the city. The Irish moved into politics and the Chinese into Chinatown. Jews, Irish, and Italians moved into the imbedded mercantile elite. African-Americans formed a small but vibrant community. Chinese and blacks sought legal counsel when threatened within their communities and on the streets. Charlotte Brown's lawsuits in the 1860s would ultimately desegregate the San Francisco transit system in the 1890s. Mary Frances Ward's suit against Noah Flood in 1872 would lead to a California Supreme Court case requiring San Francisco to establish separate but equal schools for black children. In 1875 the San Francisco Board of Education would end segregation and allow black children to attend any public school. Anti-Chinese zoning ordinances would be challenged in court and overturned by the United States Supreme Court. Accommodations had rough spots, but diversity and accommodation became the mark of the city. Not so in Los Angeles or many other cities of the West that maintain segregated public facilities. Remember that Brown v. Board of Education (1954) was a Kansas case, Sweatt v. Painter (1950) was a decision attacking segregation in a Texas state law school. McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents (1950) outlawed the admission of blacks to graduate school but segregated them within classrooms and other facilities. The racial liberalism of San Francisco was not followed throughout the West.

On our southern borders, America has a clear Mexican-American West that is both very urban and very sparsely settled. El Paso and San Diego are examples of our binational borderland of intensive interaction with a large cultural region of Hispanic settlement and enterprise. But border cities and borders have a long reach due to cross border migration and economic and family ties. Los Angeles in the twentieth century was the designation of many Mexican workers. Beyond the factories in the fields that
characterized agriculture in California's Imperial Valley, urban jobs constituted a substantial lure.

Cities in the West, in turn, have relationships with other western cities. Carl Abbott’s *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993) describes a nested hierarchy of smaller cities and towns with strong regional, economic linkages. Most large economic regions are subdivided with one or more of these cities controlling significant economic interests. Denver’s junior economic partner is Salt Lake City. Stockton and Fresno serve the interests of San Francisco. Phoenix and El Paso share economic territory not gobbled up by Dallas on the east or Los Angeles on the west. Much of this territoriality is historical. Dallas, for example, retains a long-term commitment to serving as a comprehensive trading and financial center while its sister city, Fort Worth, early concentrated upon and continues to serve the West Texas cattle business. Beyond the reach of these trading and financial giants, smaller regional cities serve smaller markets. Lincoln, Nebraska, Bismark, North Dakota, and Billings, Montana are such centers of regional economic activity. The cities of the West live by these economic relationships that transportation made possible and the computer sustains with invisible speed.

Other western cities rose with industry and fell with industry. Butte, Montana is perhaps the most colorful example. Anyone visiting the World Mining Museum or the M & M Bar knows that you are not in Kansas anymore. Mary Murphy’s *Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-41* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997) is the most insightful book on the subject. Butte was another instant city growing from three thousand in 1880 to 90,000 in 1916 on the wealth of its copper deposit, the mining and milling operations, and the diversity of its people. Copper mining was the lifeblood of the city with three shifts of workers tramping from home to mine every eight hours and back again. By the 1920s, men continued to work in the mines but women dominated clerical work. Unions protected the interests of both. The prosperity of Butte rode on copper wires and the demands of World War I. When the war ended, Butte’s economic fortunes turned sour and one-third of its population left by 1921. Prohibition and the crusade to save the world for democracy went hand in hand, but in Butte, the former opened new doors for women. In addition to jobs, the clandestine entertainment industry welcomed women with leisure time and money. Nightclubs encouraged women to attend. Roadhouses encouraged women to pass through their door and some women became owner/operators.

Butte was an ethnically diverse city. The Irish dominated the city and its union, but Finntown was the dominant ethnic neighborhood. The East Side of Butte also was home to Lebanese, Serbs, Croatians, Slovenes, Montenegrins, and Slavs. Further east in Meaderville and McQueen, Austro-Hungarians, Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, and French lived together. These diverse groups organized their social life around the complexities of class and ethnicity. A clear blue-collar normative behavior characterized these neighborhoods with the challenges of mining and the harsh environment of Montana pasting diverse peoples into a western pastiche.

Beyond the common law, western legislatures were busy dealing with some of the same problems. In 1852 the California legislature passed an “Act to prevent certain public nuisances.” This statute declared it a public nuisance and a misdemeanor to
pollute any creek, stream, pond, road, alley or highway. The same session passed a law to protect salmon runs. In 1862 the solons regulated trout fishing. The next year their legislative hands moved to protect seals and sea lions. In 1872 they banned the killing of Mocking Birds. Six years later they banned fishing on Lake Bigler. In 1877 the Montana Territorial Legislature outlawed the dumping of coal slack in the waters. As early as *Nelson v. O'Neal*, 1 Montana 284 (1871) the Montana Territorial Supreme Court would declare in a trespass case that there was "no right to fill the channel of a creek with tailings and debris." California's high Court would make a similar decision in *California v. Gold Run Ditch and Mining Company*, 66 California 318 (1884). As Robert Bunting points out in his *The Pacific Raincoast: Environment and Culture in an American Eden, 1778-1900* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997), Washington and Oregon passed laws to forbid the dumping of sawdust in streams to protect fish. State lawmakers were busy providing piecemeal for environmental protection. Some of this legislation had environmental protection in mind to increase the profits of farmers. Mark Fiege's *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999) surveys water law as well as Idaho seed purity law finding that the reach of law was not always as intended.

The federal government got into the pollution control business late in the century. In 1899 the Congress passed the Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act that came to be known as the Refuse Act of 1899. This act facilitated the Corps of Engineers mission of keeping navigation channels free of obstructions. Section 407 forbade the dumping of refuse in any navigable stream or on the banks so as to be washed into the waters without a permit. Section 411 contained criminal penalties and a reward for informants who reported violations. The enforcement of this act federalized pollution control on our nation's waterways and made industry change its ways in part. The Clean Water Act of 1972 created tougher standards and a bureaucracy to put permitting into practice. The Clean Air Act of 1970 created modern federal regulatory control law, a bureaucracy to administer it, and continuing administrative law and congressional tinkering with emissions standards. The federal bureaucracies in the environmental field must follow the procedures set out in the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946. This statute sets out procedures for agency rulemaking and adjudication. Implicit in these procedures is public notice and citizen participation in many of the stages of rulemaking.

The biodiversity of the West was furthered by another federal statute, the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This legislation was in line with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. The federal Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service administer the program. Under the statute, the Services place endangered and threatened species on the federal endangered species list. They also prepare recovery programs. Most importantly, the law forbids all federal agencies to act in a manner that would jeopardize the existence of a listed species or destroy critical habitat of a listed species. In 1978 the Congress created a cabinet-level "God Committee" with the power to issue exemptions after findings of necessity and lack of alternatives. An amendment in 1982 further weakened the statute by allowing petitioners to obtain "incidental take" permits from the Secretaries. These petitioners must go through an extensive labyrinth of procedures
including Habitat Conservation Plans that can include strict controls of private projects. The statute includes civil penalties and criminal sanctions for violation. The success of the program can been seen by all Americans in the return of the Bald Eagle in our skies.

In the federal courts, the United States Supreme Court in a 1907 Georgia case involving interstate air pollution recognized that the states have a legally enforceable interest in stopping pollution. Copper heaps and smelting such as Montana witnessed in Butte was producing acid rain wiping out forests and crops. This doctrine was dormant until Texas v. Pankey, 441 F.2d 236 (1971). These cases recognized that states have a right to protect ecological interests from impairment by polluters. Because such pollution is interstate in nature and the federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over commerce under the commerce clause of the constitution, this judicial recognition of state authority to sue to abate pollution when other governmental entities have not was significant. Questions of federal pre-emption of state action were raised in California Tahoe Regional Planning Agency v. Jennings, 594 F. 2d 181 (1979). The court found that the Clean Air Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act did not preempt state action to protect the environment under the federal nuisance law doctrine.

Unfortunately, a comprehensive history of these legal developments has not seen print. The shear breadth of such a study and its technical nature may mean that another decade of articles will be needed to form a secondary source foundation for interpretation.

Although federal and state environmental law draws scholars to the public policy and politics aspects of history, other historians have found biodiversity and its science to be equally illuminating. Mark Fiege's *Irrigated Eden*, Peter Boag's *Environment and Experience: Settlement Culture in Nineteenth-Century Oregon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), and Robert Bunting's *Pacific Rainforest* demonstrate the limits of man's control of the environment through careful discussion of biodiversity and man's impact. Different kinds of grass, insects, rodents, and rabbits inhabit their pages and give readers basic ecology to nuance the narrative. Introduced species conflict with native plants and animals often to their detriment. Science produces insecticide, fungicide, and rodenticide to further alter nature's course. Again, the science that is applied to nature may have unintended consequences further diminishing nature's economy. The stories vary in time and place but the consequences frequently converge in human error.

Finally, historians have started the process of understanding that there is no more a singular West than there was an American Indian. Region and section in the Turnerian world of yesterday and the regional location of the West in the eyes of "New Western Historians" has been further refined by environmental historians who recognize micro-climates, watersheds, and arroyos. Again this is an interdisciplinary enterprise as Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb's *Climate and History: Studies in Interdisciplinary History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) demonstrated. Beyond history, these scholars must include biology, chemistry, geography, and geology in their quiver of inquiry.

The best analytic work using law in the New West questions is Debra L. Donahue's *The Western Range Revisited: Removing Livestock from Public Lands to Conserve Native Biodiversity* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999). Professor Donahue brings extensive training and experience in rangeland science together with a law
professor's analytic quiver of tools to suggest the "unthinkable": the removal of livestock from many western rangelands on the grounds that it make economic sense, is ecologically wise, and clearly is legally justifiable. In the process of arriving at this politically explosive suggestion, Professor Donahue analyzes why the cattle industry has been able to retain such political and bureaucratic clout despite clear evidence that their grazing practices are destroying the region's grasslands. It was most fitting that the press released this book in the last month of the millennium because it brings the New Western History into an analytic framework that both informs and convicts public policy.

The collection of articles that follow are designed to do the same: inform and convict. The impact of the New Western History is evident in many, yet grounded in what has come before in the literature. We hope that students of the American West will use these book in that spirit. We need to recognize a new point of view from West to East to see both process and place.

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Brenda Farrington
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To Barbara Farrington, Esq.
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From first contact, American Indians knew that Europeans did not understand the
gendered nature of America. Confusion regarding the role of women within tribes and
bands continued from first contact well into the late nineteenth century. European
willingness to conflate the 500 tribes and bands into a singular American Indian further
confused a growing populace that moved west seeking opportunity on lands long
inhabited by native peoples. In the process of moving to a region that we now call the
West, gender played a major role in changing the society that confronted a changing
environment and splendidly varied landscape.

The mistaken role of women in American Indian societies opens Sara Evans'
clear the narrow vision of Euro-Americans from the seventeenth century to the recent
past. Many early Euro-American overlooked the complex and nuanced cultural
complexity of American Indian societies and the dimensions of women's economic,
social and religious roles. Rather they saw a corrupted, uncivilized people who allowed
women to perform men's tasks such as chopping wood, building dwellings, planting
fields, harvesting crops, and leading war parties. Missionaries wanted their neophytes
to become white Indians in the image of a white Christ. White eyes could not see
women at the center of creation myths. God was white and male in white eyes. They
could not see American Indian women as Mother Earth, the Keepers of the Game, or
the Double Woman Dreamer. God, a white male, created the earth, put men in charge
of animal husbandry, and ordained that men alone were in touch with the Holy Spirit.
The divisions between American Indian reality and white eyes were manifest despite
the facts that were clearly at hand.

In the recent past, historians have started the process of recovering the
gendered past of the American West and recognizing the complexity of western women's
history. The stereotypes of western women as civilizers in sunbonnets have yielded to
the complexity of western women's history. First, historians have recognized that the
West was the most multi-cultural region of the country. Ethnic and racial backgrounds
played a significant part in the roles of women on the West's varied stages. Migration
experiences were formative for many, but varied widely in time, place, and manner of
migration. Women formed bonds with other women of like and dramatically different
cultural heritages. The contributions of women to the success of families varied with
time, place, and class as well as race. American Indian women were, for example, in charge of economic transactions and the means of production such as Navaho sheep. Women struggled for rights, but in the West we can see variation found in few other regions. While white women marched for the vote in California, they already had the vote in Wyoming Territory in 1869. American Indian women found it hard to contemplate the vote without citizenship and they would wait until 1924 to become citizens. Asian women would wait until World War II to gain rights to citizenship. Black women in Kansas would suffer the indignities of racial discrimination in public accommodations while women of color in the San Francisco Bay Area would be riding local street cars in the 1860s and attending desegregated schools thirty years later. The similarities as well as the differences in female experience because of race further complicate the West.

Race also impacted women's outlook on the future and the range of choice in the past. In many ways, these choices had to do with relationships with men. Men obviously wanted women in the West particularly when gender balances were out of center in the 1850s and 1860s. Henry Halleck stood on the floor of the 1849 California Constitutional convention advocating women's legal rights as a lure to bring them west. Wyoming's female franchise found advocates because of another form of lure. When they arrived, women varied by marital status, sexual preference, religion, race, class, and culture. Some came from rural America, others the factories of the East. Some came west to escape religious persecution in the east and find Zion in Utah or Idaho. All of these factors molded a woman's perception of the West. While the men of the West looking for women frequently did not recognize these distinctions, historians have done so recognizing the diversity of the women of the West. Rather than marginalizing women because of a distinction, historians have found it necessary to account for difference in critically analyzing the experiences of western women.

The journal articles that follow give readers a true sense of the gendered West. Racial and ethnic heritage played a role in female experience whether Hispanic, Japanese or Irish. Women's work was part western history, but women did not confine themselves to plow handles or brothels. Women were very much a part of most occupations or in the process of breaking down barriers of access. They worked in the fields for wages as well as for family welfare and prosperity. Women demanded access to the professions whether teaching or law, accounting or medicine. The process of eliminating barriers varied in time and space, but the struggle was constant. Yet the story of women in polygamous Utah or Idaho was different and an integral part of the fabric of western history. Because of their beliefs and practices these women suffered at the hands of the federal government and persevered.

One method of illuminating women's lives in a multicultural West is looking from their point of view and analyzing their experiences in their own context before placing their story in the larger West. Rosalina Mendez Gonzalez, Deena J. Gonzalez, and Antonia Castenada have been very successful with this method. In particular, Deena J. Gonzalez's *Refusing the Favor: The Spanish-Mexican Women of Santa Fe, 1820-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) situates women and gender issues within the debate on conquest and colonization as New Mexico politically transforms itself from Mexico to America. More generally, historians Joan Jensen and Darlis Miller have
turned to women's documents to look at context through the eyes of nineteenth-century women. Sarah Deutsch traced Hispanic women within families and communities across the West. These women seasonally migrated north following the ripening of various crops. They worked fields, maintained families, and created communities. Other Hispanic women remained in traditional villages seasonally re-gendered and took on expanded responsibilities for institutions and social relations. Antonia L. Casteneda found similar struggles without the migrating males in Alta California from 1769 to 1848. Amerindian and mestiza women carved out space for themselves and their families, were active agents in their spheres, and resisted Spanish military and clerical power. Laurie K. Mercier looked at women's documents and preserved women's voices with oral history in reconstructing the lives of Irish women in Anaconda, Montana. A town created by the Anaconda Copper Mining Company smelting facility, Anaconda was twenty-five percent Irish. These women constructed a community with economic, social and political security that persisted until the 1950s. For comparative purposes, readers should consult Mary Murphy's *Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-41* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997). Murphy, like Mercier, looks at community through the experiences of women in a very multi-cultural gendered community in the American West.

Perhaps the best book on the multi-cultural West in women's eyes is Glenda Riley's *A Place to Grow: Women in the American West* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1992) putting synthesis and documents in the hands of students of western women. Riley's work is foundational in this field of western history. *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984) opened the issue of women pioneers and their attitudes concerning the West and American Indians in time and place. Riley's *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women and the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988) analyzed the lives of women during the nineteenth century living lives in dramatically different places. Importantly, their voices play a large role in the analysis. Her *Building and Breaking Families in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996) took her study of divorce on a national level to the West and included the process of courting, committing, marrying, intermarrying, separating, and deserting. Open space and opportunity in the American West as well as divorce law allowed the creation of a fluid society. Riley's *Prairie Voices: Iowa's Pioneering Women* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1996) brought nineteenth century voices to life for twentieth century ears and eyes. In *By Grit & Grace: Eleven Women Who Shaped the American West* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Press, 1997), Professor Riley teamed with Professor Richard W. Etulain to provide readers with biographies of significant women. Riley summarized her *The Life and Legend of Annie Oakley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994) in tandem with the other authors' biographies. Riley's attention turned to the conservation movement in *Women and Nature: Saving the ‘Wild’ West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999) and recovers botanists, ornithologists, naturalists, authors, photographers, and outdoor enthusiasts whom supported the environmental movement. The gendered West owes a great debt to this intrepid historian.

Clearly, the history of gender in the West has a literature basis awaiting new questions and insights. Readers will note that the articles that follow contain in-depth
analysis of the lives of women in the West and should be read with other articles on
gender in the legal history and interaction volumes in this series. Gender is a critical
element of analysis of the history of the West.

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In Victorian parlors one could often find a small viewer, called a stereopticon, and accompanying cards of photographs. Each card seems to contain two identical pictures, but when you place the card in the device, look through the eyepiece, and adjust the focus, a three-dimensional picture appears. The images on the card are not, after all, identical. When combined, they produce a fuller, deeper picture than one can obtain from a single image.

So it is with the new field of western women's history. The slightly different perspective of women's history can add a significant dimension to western history that has heretofore been lacking. As Joan Jensen and Darlis Miller noted in their article, "Gentle Tamers Revisited," western women's history has experienced remarkable growth and development in the past ten years. Jensen and Miller surveyed the subfield and suggested many fruitful areas for future research, but they did not attempt to show how new research in western women's history might modify western history as a whole.1 That is my intention.

Western history has always been a diverse and prolific field. Today, however, it is widely acknowledged that the diversity indicates some theoretical disarray. The old masters—Turner, Bolton, and Webb—no longer dominate, but no new general themes have gained widespread acceptance. There is a growing interest in the creation of syntheses that will incorporate new approaches to western history while retaining older ones.2 The following observations on the perspective of women's history are offered in that spirit—as part of a general effort to contribute to the new western history.

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Many of the observations to follow are not unique to women's history but are shared with other historians who wish to see new topics considered in western history. However, among them all, women's history is exceptional because it raises more than the question of including neglected minority groups or neglected issues. Women are not a minority group; women are everywhere. Women of all colors, religions, and classes live side by side with men, some as members of the dominant groups, some as members of subordinate ones. The women's perspective, then, was a part of every historical reality. But although men and women participated in the same historical event (such as, for example, the journey west on the Overland Trail), their actual experiences and feelings about the event were not the same. The West looked different through women's eyes. If we seek to understand all of western history, we must be able, as in the stereopticon, to see through women's eyes as well as those of men.

Before exploring the stereoptical vision, I want first to discuss the claim of difference in some detail, because this is a controversial point. Why is there a distinctive female perspective? The difference exists because women were—and still are today—socialized differently from men. Women have been trained to care for the values of home and family—the private, emotional, intimate side of life. Men also care about those things, but they are socialized in ways that will help them to function effectively in the public realm of competition and controversy and to deal with strangers and impersonal forces. Furthermore, the life experience of men and women is determined, at least in part, by gender, for events have different consequences for each sex. There is a spectrum of difference ranging from major events like war (men go away and fight, women keep the homefires burning) to commonplace gendered division of labor in the home or in the workplace. In every aspect of our lives, gender matters; sex role socialization, expectations, and experience combine to create gender-specific worldviews. If this is true today, when sex stereotyping is breaking down, how much truer it must have been in the past, when gender-linked patterns of life and labor were everywhere the norm.

Certainly men and women of the same race, economic class, and general background will agree in several areas; however, the interests and viewpoints of men and women are not identical. The difference does not mean that women, as a group, secretly disagree with everything men do but are too submissive or manipulative to say so. It does mean that there is a women's
view of every issue and event. This may not always be obvious, for in most cultures, including the nineteenth-century American West, women deferred publicly to men. Consequently, gender differences are rarely a matter of public record.

What does this fact of difference mean to historians? Basically, it means that there is a gap between a man's ideas about a woman and the woman's sense of herself and her world. We may not always be able to specify the difference between men's and women's attitudes, because for both sexes they are so basic that they are often unconscious and undeclared. As historians, we will not always be able to document the difference, given the natural difficulty with sources. But we must assume that there is a difference and that if we rely on male sources to learn about women's lives, the story will be inadequate.4

What does this mean for western history? Bluntly stated, much of our existing history is incomplete, because men failed to consider the female experience. But it is facile to criticize older western history for failure to be inclusive. After all, that history is already written. The most useful step, surely, is to show in what ways the recognition of a female perspective can shape future research.

The virtual omission of women from western history was a result of Turner's fundamental insight that the story of the frontier was the struggle with the physical environment. Following Turner, historians have believed that although women were present in the West, they did not participate in the making of its history because they were "hidden in the household"—engrossed in domestic chores and childrearing. The "real" life of the West—the subduing of the environment—was men's work that went on in public spaces, away from the household.5 In contrast, women's history asserts that what women did within the household was important far beyond that household, and, further, that women did not remain encapsulated within the household as the model suggests. Furthermore, a close study of women's lives in the West yields not only new information but some new theoretical perspectives.

4The pathbreaking article establishing the difference was Joan Kelly-Gadol, "The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Implications of Women's History," Signs, 1 (Summer 1976), 809-23. For a more recent example of the importance of gender difference, see Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice (Cambridge, MA, 1982).

5As T. A. Larson said, "Women, after all, did not lead expeditions, command troops, build railroads, drive cattle or ride Pony Express ... " in short, do any of the important work of the West. See T. A. Larson, "Women's Role in the American West," Montana the Magazine of Western History, XXIV (Summer 1974), 2-11. Sandra L. Myres provides a good survey of Larson and earlier historians in her review essay "Women in the West," in Malone, Historians and the American West, 369-86, but her review of recent work by women's historians is brief and often unfriendly.
Let us look at Turner's frontier through women's eyes. We notice that there were two distinct groups of women: women in families, and single women who were members of larger women's groups with a definite occupation (schoolteachers, nuns, prostitutes). The first important thing to realize is that unlike many men in western history, women were not solitary individuals "going it alone." The vast majority of women saw themselves as members of groups, and to understand their experience we need to see them in the group context. Further, we must recognize how different these group contexts were from each other and how the differences affected women's lives.

What insights emerge from consideration of women in family and groups that can be applied to the field of western history as a whole? In the following pages I will discuss: (1) the need to move away from a concentration on individuals to a consideration of individuals in the group context; (2) the importance of families in western settlement and the need to look at kinship links in migration and development; (3) the need to consider the family, not just the man, as a producing economic unit; (4) the need, even in areas dominated by male work groups, to consider the female perspective and women's work activities in particular; (5) the consideration of sex role ideology as an indicator of frontier adaptation; and (6) the value of a multicultural approach.

The different experiences of men and women within the family have been most carefully studied on the Overland Trail. John Faragher has analyzed the different patterns of work roles within the family: adult men and women had different tasks, rhythms of activity, and attitudes. In contrast to at-home roles, on the trail men's activities were constant (driving and herding) and women's activities sporadic (cooking at night for the next day, washing only on infrequent, sometimes unscheduled, layover days). Attitudinally, for adult men, the journey west was a test and a challenge; for women it was primarily housekeeping under much more difficult circumstances than at home. This is not a trivial point. Men were challenged constantly by change: choices about route, equipment, care of animals, and speed of travel were directly affected by the changing environment. On the other hand, women had the job of holding the fabric of daily life together, of providing continuity—a job that got harder and harder as the trip lengthened and exhaustion deepened. Given these task differences, it would be genuinely extraordinary if male and female perspectives on the experience were identical.\(^4\)

The second issue emerging most clearly in Lillian Schlissel's work on the Overland Trail is the importance of families in the migration. As we know, thousands of single men rushed to California, but if we look at the intending settlers, rather than the sojourners, kinship ties become a topic

of major importance. Those kinship ties, although important to both sexes, loomed larger in women's lives than they did in the lives of men. This should not surprise us, for women were the keepers of kin networks. Women sent the family letters, remembered the birthdays and occasions, nursed the sick, and mourned the dead. They "kept in touch" and thus provided support for themselves and for men who were busy doing other things.  

Moving from the personal to a more general level, the new attention to families has provided historians with an important, new analytic tool. We can look at the role of kinship networks in migration and settlement; in many cases we will find that the first settlers were often followed later by family and neighbors. All except the first were following a path eased by familiar kin. They were not loners facing a strange world—they were going to join their father, mother, sister, or brother. The importance of kinship has been acknowledged by historians of immigration and is commonplace in studies of certain ethnic groups that settled in the West (for example, the German-Russians and Scandinavians), but it has not been generally applied to the study of American settlers. Perhaps the Turnerian emphasis on the heroic individual is to blame for the neglect of family groups. Yet the importance of kinship in migration is a recurring theme in women's writings: Mollie Dorsey Sanford and her husband, "gold-rushers" to Colorado in 1859, were soon followed by her sister and brother-in-law; Abigail Scott Duniway was part of a large migration of the Scott clan to Oregon that constituted a vital support network for her all her life; and Phoebe and Harlan Judson were the connection in the chain of migration to Washington Territory begun by her parents and siblings and ended by his relatives. Considering kinship networks in our studies gives us a new way to put individuals and families in a wider context, to place them in the broad social movement of people moving west.  

In the early stages of settlement, women's household activities often made a crucial contribution to the family economy. Duniway produced thousands of pounds of butter in every year of her early married life. Sanford cooked for an entire mining camp in Colorado, thus literally "grubstaking" her husband's search for gold. The wives of young professional men

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in Nevada City took in boarders to augment the family income. All of those women would have been categorized as "at home" by the census taker, for they were not engaged in wage work. Yet obviously their work made an economic contribution to the household income. Women's work must have contributed significantly to regional economic development, but until now, this work has been overlooked. Did the obviously important household work of western women lead to an appreciation of women's activities and a rough notion of equality? Or rather, was it true, as Duniway charged, that Oregon farmers ignored the fact that their wives were exhausted by overwork and too-frequent childbearing?

For western women were not only producers, but reproducers both of people and of social conditions. Childrearing, a virtually unexplored topic nationally, is especially important to consider in the West, for surely adaptation to the West must have been a multigenerational experience. How and when did one become a "westerner"? Who first developed a sense of a new regional identity—the pioneers or their children? How, to ask a more general question, does the environment affect the generational transmission of ideology? These questions would seem to be central to an understanding of the development of a sense of regional identity. Western historians have heretofore thought of regional identity largely in political terms. But most western women were barred from direct participation in politics until the 1890s or even later. How did they develop a sense of regional identity and transmit it to their children? To answer these questions, we can look for models in the work of immigration historians and political sociologists. Surely we will find that for everyone—male and female—the development of a sense of regional identity was a psychological matter as well as a political one.

Because of their children, western women defined as family concerns a whole range of issues we might consider public: the establishment of schools

10Moynihan, Abigail Scott Duniway; Danker, Mollie; and Ralph Mann, After the Gold Rush: Society in Grass Valley and Nevada City, California, 1849-1870 (Stanford, 1982), 44-46, 107-14.
11Moynihan, Abigail Scott Duniway, 69.
12Elliott West, "Heathens and Angels: Childhood in the Rocky Mountain Mining Towns," Western Historical Quarterly, XIV (April 1983), 145-64. West is working on a book-length study.
13See Luebke's discussion of assimilation in "Ethnic Minority Groups," 395-96. Political sociologists, whose attention was drawn to generational transmission when confronted by the "generation gap" of the 1960s, have concluded that "parent-child similarity is most noticeable in religious and political areas, least in sex roles and lifestyle characteristics," Lillian Troll and Vern Bengston, "Generations in the Family," in Wesley R. Burr et al., eds., Contemporary Theories about the Family, vol. 1 (New York, 1979), 139. Another issue, just emerging in feminist scholarship, is women's attitudes toward the land. Literary critic Annette Kolodny suggests that women had a domestic view of the land very different from male attitudes, but she has not yet published her work on the trans-Mississippi West. For earlier frontiers, see Annette Kolodny, The Land before Her (Raleigh, NC, 1984).
and churches, issues of public morality, health and social welfare issues, and political issues such as prohibition and the vote. We know that women were involved in all of these issues at different times and places in the West and that they used slogans like the WCTU's "Home Protection" to fight for political causes. By the late nineteenth century, women were willing to challenge male dominance of politics, at least on certain issues. Although individual women rarely spoke out alone, groups of women began to work together for political goals. The central role played by western women's organizations in welfare and reform activities is beginning to be documented, but another layer of informal activity lies beneath that. Oral histories have made us aware of how frequently twentieth-century women worked "behind the scenes" to lay the groundwork for community projects or to nudge the influential men of their communities toward action on a particular matter. In one early twentieth-century Colorado farming community, a farm wife proposed to establish a state park at a favorite local gathering place. She and her husband both worked to get the support of friends and neighbors. But when a delegation traveled to Denver to get political approval, it was composed solely of men. Lacking the information available through oral history, a historian might easily suppose that women had had no part at all in the undertaking. This mistake can be traced back to the Turnerian assumption that women were solely domestic and had no larger concerns. But that is only an assumption, and an illogical one to boot. Indeed, the stereotype of woman as "gentle tamer" of the West stressed her concern for schools, churches, culture, and reform. But because the stereotype evolved along with the Turnerian notion that action was reserved solely to men, the result has been a misapprehension of women's actual role in community building. Much of this activity has not yet been fully documented. When it is, we will need to revise the view of women as entirely private, domestic creatures. Women were not "hidden in the household"; nor was the household that isolated from the outside world.

The issue of power and decision making within the family, although difficult to explore because of reticence and scanty sources, is also enlightening. Upon careful examination, the family, often seen as a harmonious refuge from a harsh world, was sometimes a pretty horrible place itself. Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth* makes a dear connection between the economic exploitation in the coal mines of Colorado and the brutalities of family lives.


15 Interview with Betty Lundy about Walk's Camp Park, Genoa, Colorado, by Sue Armitage, August 13, 1978. Interview deposited at the Genoa Public Library, Genoa, CO.
life. Mari Sandoz explores the domestic violence that stained her childhood in *Old Jules* and claims that in her region of Nebraska male brutality toward wives and children was a community norm. These two examples take us far indeed from the idealized portrait of the frontier family we find, for example, in Laura Ingalls Wilder. Yet they are also part of the western experience, and they point to the need to delve deeper into the power dynamics within western families than we have done in the past. 16

There are other ways in which women’s sources can contribute to our understanding of western violence. This theme, which has attracted considerable attention in recent years, has been viewed exclusively from a male perspective. As a result, one aspect that has been omitted is violence against women, both public (rapes and killings) and private (domestic violence). The emergence of a distinctive female perspective will add a new dimension to our discussion of violence in the West. As we understand the ways in which women were affected by violence, our focus will likely shift from a concentration on violent actions to a greater consideration of the effects of violence upon both victim and perpetrator.

The women’s perspective may help us to assess the “underside” of western history—the brutal, unpleasant, and harsh aspects we know to be there, although we would like to ignore them. One fruitful approach has been the use of court records. Studies of divorce in different parts of the West are beginning to provide us with new glimpses into the family and social attitudes toward marriage. 17 Another extremely useful tool is that of literary analysis. As the earlier example of domestic violence indicated, study of regional fiction (much of it written by women) can yield insights into hidden emotions. Elizabeth Hampsten opens up another new approach with her careful reading of the commonplace letters of ordinary men and women. Scorned by English scholars because they are “nonliterary,” these writings can nevertheless tell us much about the lives and feelings of the multitude of unnoticeable people who settled the West. 18 And then of course there are the thousands of diaries of the Overland Trail and settlement kept by women and men alike. Women’s historians have assumed that women’s diaries


18 Elizabeth Hampsten, *Read This Only to Yourself* (Bloomington, 1982).
were more likely to be expressive and emotional than those of men. There is evidence that women, while publicly supporting their men, used their diaries as places to admit the fears and hardships of pioneering that they could not confide anywhere else. But whether we can assume that all—or even most—men stoically ignored their difficulties and repressed tender feelings is another matter. A study of men's diaries and personal writings, similar to that undertaken with women's diaries, would provide new information about men's attitudes. In the past, the dominant theme of western settlement as a success story has obscured knowledge of failures and disappointment. But today, as we seek a fuller psychological sense of the stresses and tensions as well as the joys and pleasures of pioneering, we will need to draw fully on the personal writings of both women and men.

There are still other ways in which the woman's perspective can give us a fuller sense of the western experience. Research in women's sources may affect older historical writings about some celebrated all-male work groups such as fur trappers, soldiers, and miners. Canadian scholars have shown that native women played a vital part in the Northwest fur trade. European men married Indian women to assure themselves of both a work partner and friendly access to local tribes. Whether interracial marriage was common in the much smaller and shorter western American fur trade is still to be seen. Preliminary research seems to indicate the much greater importance of family and community groups than earlier researchers, focusing on the solitary trapper, had perceived. Military life is another area of potential enrichment. A number of accounts by army wives have been published or recently republished. As a group, these privileged and educated women provided interesting accounts of landscape and local Indians and detailed pictures of the day-to-day domestic life in western military establishments. When these accounts are synthesized and integrated into the existing histories, our understanding of western military life will be richer. Recovering the experience of miners' wives is more difficult, for working-class women did not ordinarily write memoirs. Work with census records, local newspapers, court records, and other primary sources is slowly building up a sense of mining-town women as active and integrated members of their communities. By focusing on women, we can see an aspect of the

19Schlissel, Women's Diaries; and Susan Armitage, "Reluctant Pioneers," in Helen Winter Stauffer and Susan J. Rosowski, eds., Women and Western Literature (New York, 1982), 40-51.
22Sandra L. Myres provides an excellent introduction and bibliography on army wives in Teresa Griffen Viele, Following the Drum (Lincoln, 1984).
mining town that has been neglected until now—not men's work, nor the sordid leisure of saloon and whorehouse, but the lives of ordinary people learning to live in an extraordinary environment.23

In the most general sense, attention to women's activities within the family provides us with a new vantage point from which to view the activities and attitudes of other family members, to consider questions like what it meant to be a child in the West or the ways in which men balanced public and family roles. Surely the challenge of coming to terms with a new environment was experienced by everyone, not just the men. A study of family strategies of adaptation, in particular family work roles, gives us a way to reask Turner's basic question with today's tools and insights.

Work and its meaning was also the central question faced by our second category of women—single women in occupational groups. At the moment much less is known about these women because there has been so little research. Would that schoolteachers had attracted the attention paid to cowboys over the years! In contrast to much of the writing on cowboys, however, recent studies of women's groups have tried to fit women and their occupations into a wider social context. Miriam Goldman's study of prostitution on the Comstock Lode not only described the organization of the trade itself but went on to show how prostitution was an integral part of the social life on the lode, affecting everyone—men, women, and children.24 Other studies of more "respectable" working women have shown how the occupational opportunities for women were structured by the nature of the local industry. If, for example, we look at male-dominated industries like mining, the job opportunities for women were very few and specific—they were domestic or sexual. The spectrum ranged from the respectable "private" housewife, followed by a range of domestic jobs (domestic servant, cook, laundress) to the semisexual, semidomestic jobs (waitress, bargirl, etc.) ending with the bad "public" woman—the prostitute. This narrow spectrum of occupations for women characterized male industry towns other than mining, such as lumber-dominated Seattle.25 Other towns with other


25For mining towns, see Goldman, Gold Diggers. See also Elizabeth Jameson, "Impar-
mixes of industry had different patterns. As these patterns of women's employment are deciphered, we will have a new way of seeing the social organization of western towns.

In addition to overall work patterns, a number of other issues emerge from a study of women in occupational groups. Among them are questions about the nature and ideology of the occupation; conditions of recruitment, employment, and work; relations with people being served; and group support, or lack thereof. For schoolteachers, group support was valued. As Polly Kaufman's study of pioneer teachers shows, the feeling of group support and group purpose gave the often lonely teacher the feeling of belonging to a larger enterprise. But the extent of such sisterly feeling in another all-female group—prostitutes—is more problematic.

Kathleen Underwood has argued that teaching offered genuine opportunity for western women, both in terms of paid employment and by expanding personal options (the choice not to marry, for example) in socially acceptable ways. Teaching may well have been unique. Other historians from David Potter onward have been much less inclined to view the West as a place of opportunity for women. Does this mean, to mention the oldest Turnerian chestnut of them all, that the West did not liberate women? Was the West a land of opportunity only for men? Women's historians have sought at least partial answers to this question by examining sex-role ideology in the West. Julie Roy Jeffrey was among the first to argue that pioneer women did not wish to be liberated from Victorian notions about women's proper role. Her women were civilizers who saw the Victorian cult of True Womanhood as central to their personal identities. The freedom of the West did not liberate the women she studied from the constraints of eastern custom.

Jeffrey employed the widely used formulation of early nineteenth century women's roles developed by Barbara Welter in "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," American Quarterly, XVIII (Summer 1966), 151-74, in which ideal women are described as pious, pure, domestic, and submissive.
Some western historians have seen this evidence as a significant illustration of Earl Pomeroy's argument that continuity, rather than Turnerian adaptation, characterized the frontier. But recent studies are beginning to reveal a more complex picture. Northeastern Colorado farm women found ways to make sex role stereotyping compatible with lives that were characterized by a high degree of mutuality and sharing, while miners' wives in Cripple Creek shared a female subculture that was a good deal more authentic than the cult of True Womanhood allowed. These examples show that even in matters of ideology, economic class cannot be ignored. Furthermore, there is suggestive evidence that even within the middle class, change rather than continuity was the rule. We have known for some time that twentieth-century western women were "freer" in their attitudes than their eastern sisters, but this difference has not been analyzed historically. Women's writings suggest that although the first generation of western women may have clung to Victorian stereotypes, some of their daughters did not. We need to think generationally, not just of the pioneers. Perhaps much significant change in the west happened at the slow pace of "family time" rather than the faster-paced political time to which we are accustomed.

This is one example of the way in which women's history encourages us to look into the twentieth century and to identify long patterns of continuity or change. Within western history today many voices (among them urban historians, ethnic historians, and historians of transportation, land policy, and water use) are urging us to look beyond the frontier. Perhaps it is time to subsume Turner's famous frontier markerpoints into a larger, longer time frame. To this widened view of western history, women's history can bring a valuable multicultural perspective. Women's historians are interested in the history of all women and seek to distinguish female experience in all races, not just in the European pioneers. Whether in our own research, or by drawing on the work of anthropologists and ethnic studies

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31 Katharine Harris, "Homesteading in Northeastern Colorado, 1873-1920: Sex Roles and Women's Experience," *Frontiers*, VII (Summer 1984), 43-45; and Betsy Jameson, "Women as Workers."

32 D'Ann Campbell, "Was the West Different? Values and Attitudes of Young Women in 1943," *Pacific Historical Review*, XLVII (August 1978), 453-63. One significant contribution to the present lack of historical analysis is Sandra L. Myres's chapter on female entrepreneurship in *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915* (Albuquerque, 1982). Two articles have made beginning approaches to the mother-daughter question: Lillian Schissel, "Mothers and Daughters on the Western Frontier," *Frontiers*, III (Summer 1978), 29-33, and Eliane Silverman, "In Their Own Words: Mothers and Daughters on the Alberta Frontier, 1890-1929," *Frontiers*, II (Summer 1977), 37-44. The difficulty of understanding the relationship between political change and change in family patterns was discussed by Peter Laslett, "The Family and the Collectivity," *Sociology and Social Research*, special issue on Historical Change in Marriage and the Family, 63 (April 1979), 432-42.
scholars, we are working to understand the experience of American Indian, Hispanic, black, and Asian women in their own right.

This multicultural perspective means that women's history has much to contribute to the study of race relations in the West. First, there is the question of relationships between white men and American Indian and Hispanic women in the exploration and fur-trading eras of western history. We know that there is a history of sexual contact; we are beginning to be able to assess that contact from the women's perspective. 33

With the arrival of numbers of white settlers, the topic of race relations, as experienced by women of all races, becomes more complex. Indian wars and removals have long been among the setpieces of western history. The history of white-Indian culture contact has been a violent one, and it has been told mostly by white males. Our search for women's experience makes it imperative that we view culture contact through the eyes of women in both cultures. From the Indian viewpoint, the story is one of cultural upheaval and destruction. This story has not yet been told, at least not from the perspective of Indian women, but as American Indian history develops as a field, this will surely change. 34

We know more about Indian-white culture contact as it was experienced by white women. The story is a revealing one. Glenda Riley has shown that in white-Indian relations, both on the Overland Trail and in later settlement, white women were more placating, more peaceful than white men. Women offered food, made some friendships with Indian women, and were less likely to resort to threats and violence than were white men. Furthermore, white women captured by Indians were not necessarily eager to return to white culture. Certainly many women were afraid of Indians, and certainly other women used force to repel an Indian move. But we must reject the picture of helpless women who always feared Indian attack, especially of a sexual nature. This stereotype is largely a white male response arising from fear and uncertainty, not a female reality. 35


34 An example of this new perspective can be found in Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine, The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women (Washington, D.C., 1983).

The story of race relations in the West is a complex one. To tell it without women, or with women as passive bodies to be protected, is to tell only half of the story. Women of all races had parts to play as victors and victims, friends and enemies, missionaries, and resisters. The perspective of women of all races completes the picture, as in the stereopticon.

As we move into the twentieth century, we will want to look at women who were part of in-migrating groups (Mexican, Japanese, German-Russian, and black, among others) and their roles in family and group adaptation. A recent study of Italian women in California revealed a different pattern of adaptation than for immigrant Italian women in the East. Was this true for other groups? Another recent study of Chicanas and Sunbelt industrialization argued that job opportunities are as important as cultural ideals in determining family survival strategies. Diverse research is just beginning to be published in quantity, but it is already clear that multicultural twentieth-century western women's history has much to contribute to the fields of labor and immigration history as well as to western history itself.

Multicultural research allows us to expand our focus and develop a wider framework that will be appropriate to all the different racial and ethnic groups that inhabit the West. We ought to work toward the development of inclusive, rather than exclusive paradigms. This will certainly mean less emphasis on Turner's frontier and more on the long continuities of western history, reaching as far back into American Indian history as possible and forward to include the most recent twentieth-century immigrant groups. The mythic figure of the solitary individual confronting the environment can no longer encompass the complex history of the West. We must move to larger themes. One theme that crosses racial and time barriers is that of family and group adaptation to both the physical environment and to the presence of other groups.

All this takes us a long way from the simple, dramatic story of the pioneers and raises questions about the conceptualization and writing of western history. The majority of women's sources do not convey the sense of adventure and drama that we have come to associate with "westering." Women's sources convey instead a sense of everyday life, of "dailiness." Some people find the story of daily life tedious, even dull. Today, however, it seems that one of the things we most lack in western history is a detailed picture of pioneer adaptation and development, of the ordinary, daily building of a new society. Much of that story is there in the writings of western women. When it is put together with the picture we already have of the public,

male-dominated events, a fuller and more complete sense of the West will emerge.

Western historians are committed to producing readable history. Some have wondered whether the addition of social history (including women's) materials will make the story so complex that the story line and narrative flow will suffer. The answer must be that we all prize good writing, but that our conceptual framework must shape the narrative, not vice versa. Good style that is achieved by simplification or by focusing on one viewpoint at the expense of other important perspectives is still bad history. Western history that includes multicultural and gendered perspectives will inevitably be more complex than some past versions have been. But, as in the stereopticon, it will gain in richness and depth. The challenge will be to write the new history clearly and well.

What, in summary, does the stereoptical picture look like? What might be the contours of the new western history? Some old landmarks such as the opening and closing of the frontier would recede into the background. Other topics, especially culture contact (both peaceful and violent) and migration would become more prominent. The new, overarching theme might well be family and community adaptation to a new environment, considered psychologically, politically, and economically. It would be possible within this framework to compare adaptation across cultures and across centuries. Initially at least, there would be greater emphasis on groups than on individuals. This might change as accumulating research allowed us to identify representative characters to replace the old romantic figures of mountain man, cowboy, and outlaw. The new history would certainly be much more mundane than the Wild West of popular legend. But because it would speak to unchanging concerns (adaptation at the group and community level), the new history would have genuine relevance to the lives of westerners today. The great popular audience for western history should be able to find topics in the new history that are just as engrossing as the old ones. Finally, recognition of the distinct women's perspective offers an opportunity to scholars. Historians can now incorporate the insights of women's history into new syntheses of western history, thus more completely portraying our shared, but different, heritage.

37 See, for example, Rodman Paul, "Foreword," in Malone, Historians and the American West, vii.
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