The WHA Newsletter: Teaching the West, A Special Edition

The WHA Newsletter is a Semi-Annual Publication of the Western History Association.

Inside This Issue:

Teaching the West on the Conservative-Liberal Divide

By Andrea Radke-Moss

With the cultural wars once again in full swing during this presidential election, the schoolroom has become a battlefield perhaps just as politicized as the debate stage. On the one hand, conservatives have long sought to recapture secondary education from what they perceive as increasing liberalism in the schools. And on the other hand, liberals attempt to forward progressive versions of diversity education in the face of perceived racial, gendered and sexual biases. In fact, as various state legislatures have adapted to the extremities in secondary education, they have sometimes offered reactionary solutions of their own. Whether from the right or the left, critics have decried partisan attempts to impose political agendas in the classroom.

Few disciplines have been free from these debates. From unrelenting battles over the teaching of evolution, to Utah's recent abstinence-only sex education bill, to a recent Arizona law specifically targeting Mexican-American Studies classes, because they "promote resentment towards a race or class of people,"[1] divisive forces are hard at work in the clash over history and social studies education. Two recent examples stand out in particular.

In 2010, the Texas State Board of Education, led by a majority faction of ultraconservatives, announced sweeping changes to the Texas curriculum. These included removing Thomas Jefferson from discussions of the Enlightenment and downplaying any "philosophical rationale for the separation of church and state."[2] In fact, the Board refused a requirement that "students learn that the Constitution prevents the U.S. government from promoting one religion over all the others." The Board rejected efforts to include Hip-Hop as a significant cultural movement in the U.S., and banned the use of "capitalism," because of its negative connotations, in favor of the most positive "free enterprise." And in a move more particular to western history, the Board rejected an effort "to specifically mention that Tejanos were among the fallen heroes of the Alamo."[3] The fallout from these curriculum changes was merciless. In 2011, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) accused the Texas Board of Education of trying to "handcuff history teachers, impede learning by muddling the differences between original and secondary sources, and confuse rhetoric with fact."[4] While conservatives were justifiably concerned

[1] Debbie Reese, "What did Curtis Acosta teach in his Mexican American Course?" on American Indians in Children's Literature blog; at http://networkedblogs.com/tCWAM.

[2] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/03/13/texas-textbook-massacre-u_n_498003.html#s73775&title=Hispanics_died_at.

[3] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/03/13/texas-textbook-massacre-u_n_498003.html#s73775&title=Hispanics_died_at.

[4] "Poor History Curriculum Threatens Texas' Future," at http://www.statesman.com/opinion/poor-history-curriculum-threatens-texas-future-1959698.html?printArticle=y.

Header image: Winslow Homer, American, 1836–1910; *The Country School*, 1871; oil on canvas; 21 ¼ x 38 ¼ in. (54 x 97.2 cm); Saint Louis Art Museum, Museum Purchase 123:1946.

Andrea G. Radke-Moss is a professor of history at Brigham Young University-Idaho, where she has taught courses in U.S. West, American Women's History, U.S. Industrial Age, Mormon Women's History, and Secondary Methods for History and Social Studies Teachers. Her book, *Bright Epoch: Women and Coeducation in the American West*, was published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2008. She is a recent contributor on western women's history topics to *Women on the North American Plains*, edited by Renee M. Laegreid and Sandra K. Mathews; *Women of Faith in the Latter Days*, edited by Richard E. Turley Jr. and Brittany A. Chapman; *Mormonism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by W. Paul Reeve and Ardis E. Parshall; and *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*, edited by TJ Boisseau and Abigail M. Markwyn. She is currently researching Montana women's participation at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, LDS birthday celebrations in the 19th century, and Mormon women's experiences with violence in the Missouri War of 1838-39. She lives in Rexburg, Idaho, with her husband, Stephen and two children.

with Texas students' abysmal performance on standardized history tests and their poor college readiness, still the THECB suggested that in revising state standards, the Board acted as "political ideologues who are more interested in twisting history to conform to their agenda than enlightening students."[5]

In a similar move by the political left, in 2011, the state of California mandated the teaching of a required gay and lesbian history course.[6] Originally vetoed in 2006 by then-governor Schwarzenegger, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) course proposal had since benefitted from renewed interest by a majority Democratic legislature and governor. Still, it met with much criticism from social conservatives in both parties who argued that gay rights groups were trying to push an acceptance of homosexual lifestyle onto impressionable schoolchildren, and that any type of group-specific curriculum should be determined by individual school districts. One Republican state assemblyman argued that preventing teachers from teaching about gays and lesbians "in anything other than a positive light," amounted to "censorship."[7] In spite of heated criticism, LGBT supporters maintained that the course was necessary to improve sensitivity and understanding, coming as it did on the wake of Prop 8 in California and the rash of highly publicized gay suicides and anti-gay bullying.

Both the Texas and California examples demonstrate the implicit risk when groups try to force their political agenda onto the canvas of public education. When sometimes well-intentioned groups haggle over their competing truths, the impassable divide leaves little wiggle room for exploring complex differences and promoting critical analysis. Inevitably these battles pit activists who want to control the historical message to their benefit against the interest of groups who conversely claim their own rights to differ based upon freedom of conscience. Another risk in mandating curriculum on strictly political or religious motives is that those in disagreement are predictably condemned for being on the wrong end of the argument. Resolution seems almost impossible. One history advisor even argued that history and social studies standards are "probably the hardest set of standards to get right, because you're getting into social debates about whose history matters . . ."[8]

The Texas and Arizona case studies remind us, as Jonathan Zimmerman has described, that liberal and conservative educational reformers are on "two separate roads" toward achieving the American experiment.[9] And the California situation is no less fraught with irreconcilable problems. California's guidelines also state that "No religious belief or practice may be held up to ridicule and no religious group may be portrayed as inferior."[10] Thus, as California prepares to enforce the mandate on gay and lesbian history, it must also prepare for inevitable responses by religious students, who claim rights to disagree without being "held up to ridicule."

As a member of a historically persecuted religious minority in the West, I am keenly mindful of the desires of every group to have its story told fairly, with all of the

[5] "Poor History Curriculum," at http://www.statesman.com/opinion/poor-history-curriculum-threatens-texas-future-1959698.html?printArticle=y.

[6] http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2011/07/15/should-children-learn-gay-history-in-public-schools.

[7] Ian Lovett, "California to Require Gay History in Schools," *NY Times* 14 July 2011; http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/15/us/15gay.html.

[8] Erik W. Robelen, "History as a Flash Point as States Debate Standards," *Education Week*, at http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/03/25/27socialstudies_ep.h29.html.

[9] Jim Carl, review of Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2002); for H-Education, at http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=heducation&month=0312&week=e&msg=4dUNBKjVQH9DdMIiACpbuw&user=&pw=.

[10] California Department of Education, Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content 2000, p. 7; http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/socialcontent.pdf.

[11] Jan Shipps, "Gentiles, Mormons, and the History of the American West," in *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty years Among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 21.

complexities explored. The history of my own religion, central as it is to the West, is often ignored completely (the "doughnut hole")[11], or described only in the most derisive terms. No one wants to be left out of the historical narrative. I sympathize with religious or ethnic groups who desire to express opposition without being labeled as bigoted and hateful. Hypothetically, if the buffalo soldiers were a mandated subject for teaching African-American contributions to the West, Native Americans might certainly take issue with the positive emphasis on a group that played a role in their own removal. It's the common conservative-liberal divide: Some would argue that any attempt to legislate an agenda-based curriculum is what creates divisions to begin with; others would counter that ONLY by mandating curriculum can we stave off whatever undesirable political direction we are opposed to.

So as states seek to meet the demands of establishing acceptable curricula in history and social studies, while also avoiding the extremities, they need to aim for reasonable solutions. State standards should require foundational competencies in history, while allowing freedom of interpretation and adaptation by individual school districts. The Common Core curriculum program has recently gained much support among states for exactly these reasons, but part of what makes it so attractive is that "standards dictate nothing related to political views or social agendas."[12] Efforts should be directed toward giving local districts more autonomy over curriculum and some leeway to implement topic-specific courses.[13]

I firmly recognize that there are no easy solutions to these struggles, especially in a highly-charged political climate where so many groups see far-reaching implications of history for government policy. But I am hopeful for moderation: "The reform process must be done with a healing spirit, not one that is tainted with a simplistic 'government is bad' mentality, angry politics…and moral and intellectual absolutism."[14] In this current national environment, where forces of anti-intellectualism ring loudly on the campaign trail, perhaps no effort is more important than to find consensus on state history standards—meeting the needs of diverse groups, challenging students to see the complexities in history, reminding them honestly of where we've been as a nation, and helping them to project where we can go in the future.

[12] "Common Core," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 February 2012; at http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/opinion/53566953-82/common-core-standards-utah.html.csp.

[13] In one national poll on whether school districts should be required to teach GLBT studies, 64.19% said yes, 30.36% said no, with only 5.46% voting that it should be up to local districts. I'm most fascinated by how few respondents supported granting local sovereignty to school districts for determining their own curriculum.

[14] Alonzo Smith, "The Politics of Teaching History," at http://www.uucr.org/sermons/teachinghistory.html.

Cowboys, Aliens, and Other Folks: Teaching the West in Popular Culture

By Richard Aquila

I teach an undergraduate course that examines images of the American West in popular culture. Based on a book that I co-wrote and edited entitled *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* (1996), the course is a good example of how one's research can be brought into the classroom.

The official title of the course in the Penn State University catalogue is American Studies 491 (American Eras and Themes). I use a western theme, focusing on movies, novels, and other areas of the "pop culture West" as sources of social and cultural history. Required readings include: Owen Wister, *The Virginian;* Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth;* Joy S. Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History;* Richard W. Etulain, *Re-imagining the Modern American West: A Century of Fiction, History, and Art*; and John H. Lenihan, *Showdown: Confronting Modern America in the Western Film.* Course requirements include three essay exams, several position papers on assigned readings,

Richard Aquila is professor of history at Penn State University-Erie and serves as an *OAH Distinguished Lecturer*. He specializes in U.S. social and cultural history, particularly the American West, American Indians, popular culture, and recent America. His publications include *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture; Home Front Soldier: The Story of a G.I. and His Italian American Family During World War II; That Old Time Rock and Roll: A Chronicle of An Era, 1954-63; and The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701-1754*. Aquila has also written, produced, and hosted numerous documentaries on public radio. His weekly radio show, *Rock & Roll America*, was syndicated on NPR and NPR Worldwide. He is currently working on a cultural history of western movies.

Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill. **Digital Image. Available from: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SittingBull%26BuffaloBill.jpg**

and a longer research paper that analyzes the historical significance of how the West is portrayed in a particular type of popular culture (students may choose topics from any area of the pop culture West).

We start off with a unit on *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*. Today's students – like earlier audiences – are fascinated by William F. Cody's showmanship and subjects. Not only does Buffalo Bill provide a great hook to attract their attention, but the *Wild West* clearly demonstrates the connections between the West and popular entertainment. Modern teaching technologies bring the *Wild West* back to life. On-line resources provide provocative images of Wild West posters, programs, performers, products, and routines. Also to be found on the Internet are early moving pictures of Buffalo Bill, Wild West parades, the music played by Buffalo Bill's Cowboy Band, and film clips of Annie Oakley and other Wild West performers. There is even an on-line snippet of Buffalo Bill's voice. Students are equally fascinated by YouTube videos of modern-day performances of *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* (which still plays to packed crowds at Disneyland Paris).

After establishing the connections between the American West and pop culture, we explore both concepts in greater detail. Students learn that the roots of the mythic West as an exotic land of happiness and opportunity run deep in the past. They begin by reading excerpts from Horace and Plutarch, followed by accounts of European explorers, American settlers, and later writers armed with nationalistic phrases like "Manifest Destiny" and "Go West, young man." These diverse images lead to an important question: what is the *American West?* A class discussion illustrates the difficulty of trying to come up with a precise definition and invariably introduces a further complication – the word *frontier* – which results in additional questions: Is the frontier the same as the West? Where is the frontier located? Where is the West?

Our focus then shifts to how historians have approached the subject. We discuss Frederick Jackson Turner and then zero in on Turner's critics and New Western History, all the while trying to clarify distinctions between the "Frontier/West" as a process and place. By the end of the discussion, students not only understand the difficulty of trying to define the West and/or frontier, but they realize that the West may be as much an idea as it is an actual place or process.

Once we have thrashed out working definitions of the *West* and *frontier*, we do the same for *popular culture*, tracking attitudes toward the topic from Matthew Arnold through the Cultural Studies Approach. Along the way, we evaluate how critics have viewed elite, folk, and popular culture. Students come away not only with a better understanding of what constitutes pop culture, but also a more sophisticated approach to the subject. Considerations such as selective perception, contested terrain, subcultures, and collective memory provide students with additional ways to make the connections between pop culture and history.

After spending the first week or so clarifying definitions and establishing an analytical framework, we turn our attention to how the West has been portrayed throughout American history. We begin with a brief look at popular culture before 1800, analyzing Colonial American folklore, captivity narratives, and other popular accounts. Most of the course, however, focuses on images of the West in popular culture since 1800. To demonstrate the vastness of the pop culture West, I ask students to describe pop culture products with western themes. They quickly identify well-known western movies, TV shows, novels, and songs, and eventually broaden their examples to include western art, photogra-

phy, comic books, magazines, Broadway musicals, dude ranches, toys, outdoor dramas, living museums, historical reenactments, fashions, folklore, advertising, video games, and other areas of the pop culture West.

Since it is impossible to cover all those topics in one course, we focus on several case studies (although students are encouraged to choose other areas of the pop culture West for their research papers). First up is a unit on popular writing. Building on the pioneering work of Henry Nash Smith, we analyze how dime novels, popular history, historical novels, and other forms of popular writing intersect with American myths and history. Then, we look at images of the West in popular art, from early artists such as Karl Bodmer and George Catlin through more contemporary western artists. Continuing in the direction of visual representations of the West, we come next to movies and TV shows.

The unit on western movies begins with Edwin S. Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903). The seminal film – only 12 minutes long and available on YouTube – offers a revealing look at attitudes about the West and America at the turn of the century. The changing images of the West found in subsequent westerns – from early silent films through recent movies such as *Cowboys and Aliens* – provide innumerable opportunities to discuss American history and important issues involving politics, race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Similarly, popular TV Westerns – from kids' westerns like *Hopalong Cassidy* or adult westerns such as *Gunsmoke* to more recent fare like *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman* – allow us to track historical trends from the late 1940s through the turn of the century.

The Beach Boys on Ed Sullivan. **Digital image. Available from: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sullivan_Beach_Boys.jpg (accessed on March 31, 2012).**

Students are similarly intrigued by the myriad connections between the American West and popular music. Changing images of the West in pop, rock, country, and rap allow us to examine corresponding changes in American history and culture. For example, early ballads such as "Home Home on the Range" and "I Ride an Old Paint" offer traditional images of the mythic West popular during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Later songs such as the Beachboys' "Surfin' U.S.A." (1963) and Bruce Springsteen's "Outlaw Pete" (2009) reflect the persistence of traditional western images, while revisionist hits like the Eagles' "Hotel California" (1976) and Paula Cole's "Where Have All the Cowboy's Gone? (1997) demonstrate how traditional western imagery can be used to comment on changing times.

By the end of the semester, most students have a better understanding of not just the pop culture West, but also American history and culture. They can think critically about all forms of popular culture. And, they realize that representations of the West in pop culture offer revealing glimpses of the nation's history and self-identity, as well as insights into how a national myth can be stretched and reshaped to meet the needs of different generations. One student complaint inadvertently confirmed that the lessons were getting through. As he turned in his final exam, he looked at me and said, "I just want you to know that you ruined it for me. Before I took this class, I simply watched western movies for fun. Now, I have to think. When I saw *Cowboys and Aliens,* I found myself asking, 'what does this tell us about American history and culture?'"

Confronting the Mythic West in U.S. High School History Classes

By
Christi Carlson, Katie Piehl, Heather Walker, Lori Wright, and Paula Wright

Christi Carlson
Flagstaff High School,
Flagstaff, Arizona

Katie Piehl
Coconino High School,
Flagstaff, Arizona

Heather Walker
Williams High School,
Williams, Arizona

Walking down a dirt-covered Main Street, a lone tumbleweed blows across the road. The sheriff follows slowly, his spurs clinking with each step. Off in the distance, a group of Native Americans sit in a circle wearing long, feathered headdresses. A cowboy rides his sorrel horse off into the sunset, with silhouettes of saguaros dark against the twilight sky.

Movies, periodicals, and the Internet often portray the West through these stereotypes. In fact, the cover of the February 14, 2012 Special Centennial Edition of the *Arizona Republic* featured a silhouetted cowboy posed with an air of rugged individualism on a dusty road in front of a golden sunset.[1] From examples such as these, students are exposed to exaggerated and often incorrect viewpoints of Western history. In addition, many students do not learn much about the West in their standard social studies curriculum—at least not in the detail we would like to see. In Arizona, only a very few high schools offer Arizona history; so one of our goals in teaching United States history is to "bring the West in." The purpose of this article is to offer a few ways this can be done.

Our first suggestion is to address stereotypical assumptions and myths "head-on." Teachers can capture the students' attention by starting with something to which the students can relate: teenagers. Therefore, we begin by asking students, "What are some stereotypes that people have about teenagers?" Soon, students understand how categorizations can be erroneous and sometimes unjust. Moving from their world to asking how they imagine the west and exploring what they know offers opportunities to reinforce reality or correct misperceptions. For example, Williams, Arizona is the "Gateway to the Grand Canyon" and survives on tourism and the railroad industry. This quintessential Route 66 town is home to about 3,000 people. When Heather Walker asked her student, Casey, what she knew about the West, Casey responded, "Not much really. Just the fact cowboys originated here and all the old western movies seem to be what the West was about." Having moved to Williams from Rhode Island in 2011, Casey had no recollection of spending much time learning about the West. The main stereotype Casey found to be true was in people's relationship to the land. She explained how people in Williams appear connected to the "wilderness" in a way she never experienced in the East. Besides hunting or hiking,

***South to the picturesque village of Wolpi, first mesa, Hopi Indian Reseravation, Arizona*. Digital Image. Available from: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_to_the_picturesque_village_of_Wolpi_(Walpi),_first_mesa,_Hopi_Indian_Reservation,_Arizona,_by_Underwood_%26_Underwood.jpg (accessed March 31, 2012)**

[1] Special Centennial Edition, *Arizona Republic*, February 14, 2012. The page was designed by Amy King and the photo was done by Michael Chow. For a discussion and an image of the paper's front page, see Charles Apple, "A Look at the Arizona Repblic's Special Centennial Statehood Edition," *American Copy Editors Society* at http://apple.copydesk.org/2012/02/14/a-look-at-the-arizona-republics-special-centennial-statehood-edition/ (accessed March 17, 2012).

she was shocked at how some people chose to live in remote areas, drive 4x4 vehicles, and own cattle or horses. As far as debunked myths, Casey expected people to talk with a cowboy accent, but soon realized that the movies had this wrong.

How else might teachers help their students to distinguish between fact and fiction? One way is to ditch the typical starting point of Jamestown in a course in U.S. history. Especially in Arizona, we find it more effective to begin with one of the longest inhabited settlements in the Americas. The Hopi people in northern Arizona have lived in the same place since about 1150. With digital resources at Northern Arizona University's Cline library, we can explore the place through old photographs and the people through oral histories (http://library.nau.edu/speccoll/exhibits/indigenous_voices/hopi/places.html). Digitized sources offer a terrific supplement to textbooks. If possible, a field trip—or maybe just a virtual field trip—to the Hopi Mesas would capture these people's lives even more.

While students recognize that American history started prior to the arrival of Spanish explorers or English settlers, they often bring ideas about the Americas before the arrival of Europeans as a land of pristine wilderness, and Native American groups as homogeneous, simple people with little or no technology. Showing students some of the sophisticated ways that the Hopi raised crops in their arid home helps dispel this myth. Exposing them to the Hohokam people a little further south offers another key example. The canals that deliver water to contemporary Phoenicians are built over the top of an elaborate canal system constructed by the ancient Hohokam people.

Wupatki pueblo in Wupatki National Monument. Digital image. Available from:© Megasquib | Stock Free Images & <a (accchref="http://www.dreamstime.com/">Dreamstime Stock Photos (accessed March, 31, 2012)

Several national parks in northern Arizona, such as the old Pueblo and the cultural crossroads Wupatki, also offer students a chance to see old garden plots, housing, stoneware, former ball courts, and remnants of a large trading system. The National Park Service provides a good online site (http://www.nps.gov/wupa/index.htm) to help students imagine life 800 years ago. To connect this past to the present, oral histories from indigenous peoples in the area help students see that many Native peoples are still here and vibrant members of our community. Or better yet, we like to bring Native Americans into our classroom to share their heritage. For Casey, exposure to this history would help her understand her new home.

Yet more local topics provide relevance and confront stereotypes. Assimilation and Indian boarding schools; mining, labor, and immigration; air conditioning and the Sunbelt; and the Harvey Girls and tourism are just a few. But all of us especially like to examine one of the most celebrated figures in Western history: the Navajo Code Talker of World War II. This topic is of high interest to our many Navajo students, many of who can share stories of grandfathers and great-uncles who served as Code Talkers.

Two of us developed a historical investigation that asked students the question, "Were the Navajo Code Talkers treated as heroes?" We asked them to conduct research regarding the post-war experiences of this select group of individuals. We began by asking the students to explore the concept of heroism: what classifies a hero? What characteristics does a hero exhibit? Most concluded that the Code Talkers were "heroes," but we wanted the students to dig deeper and confront a more complex and complicated story. We also wanted them to think historically so we presented them with a series of documents showing how Code Talkers were treated over time. Students found that, while other soldiers came home to ticker-tape parades and large celebrations, this group returned under a shroud of secrecy, instructed not to talk about their participation in the war effort. Code Talkers also

Lori Wright
Coconino High School, Flagstaff, Arizona

Paula Wright
Coconino High School, Flagstaff, Arizona

came back to reservations plagued by poverty and disenfranchisement. Some benefitted from the GI Bill, but many cultural and economic factors prohibited most from taking full advantage of the opportunity. Later, the code was declassified and word travelled about what these soldiers had done during the war. In the 2000s, they were honored with a Congressional Medal.

Student responses to this treatment varied as much as the sources. Some expressed that the recognition received by the Code Talkers was adequate; others felt that they had in no way been treated as heroes when they returned in 1945; and others expressed that the treatment is a moot point because true heroes do not expect recognition. Most understood though that changes in treatment reflected changed historical contexts. In total, the lesson challenged current myths that the Code Talkers were always revered and helped our students think more historically.

As history educators, we have the responsibility of helping our students shape a more accurate and complex story than a simple stereotype affords. As we have seen, this is extremely evident in teaching the West. While some western myths are in fact realities (i.e. cowboys, horses, saguaro cacti, and dusty sunsets really do exist in the West!) and while these realities are an important piece of history, more must be done on the part of the educator to add to a one-sided narrative. Helping students to distinguish myth from reality, fact from fiction, the exception and the rule, is what lies at the heart of our profession. Teaching western history provides us the perfect vehicle to bridge these gaps, while also engaging our students in critical thinking and assisting them in making better-informed judgments and opinions.

Durwood Ball is an Associate Professor of History at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, where he edits the *New Mexico Historical Review*. He is the author of *Army Regular on the Western Frontier, 1848-1861* (2001), and co-editor, with Paul Andrew Hutton, of the *Soldiers West: Biographies from the Military Frontier* (2009). He is currently researching a biography of Maj. Gen. Edwin V. Sumner.

Establishing a Baseline in Western Historiography: The Graduate Reading Seminar

By Durwood Ball

I have taught the graduate reading seminar in western history at the University of New Mexico five times since 2000. The course is popular among graduate students preparing for their comprehensive exams in the field of western history. Over the course of sixteen weeks, the seminar surveys four or five generations of scholarship in frontier and western history beginning with Frederick Jackson Turner and ending with Ned Blackhawk and Thomas Andrews. To beef up their book lists and hone their analytical skills, seminarians write five six-page essays comparing two additional books and a course text. I model my reading seminar on the western historiography course that Dr. Richard Etulain offered my graduate cohort at UNM in the mid 1980s. My object is to familiarize graduate students with the five major frameworks—frontier, region, borderlands, myth, and environment—through which historians have studied the American frontier or West since 1893, with major intellectual benchmarks and critical currents in the frontier or western field during a century of practice. A decade of feedback suggests that seminarians take away a history of the frontier or western field in which they can place monographs read in other western seminars and with which they can explain their own educational and professional development.

Personal experience informs the intellectual content and critical direction of my seminar. First, my father, a western scholar, once identified Earl Pomeroy as the historian who most influenced him and his graduate peers at the University of Colorado during the 1960s. Their major western professors, Robert Athearn and Clifford P. Westermeier, generally ignored Turner, whom they had left behind in the 1930s and 1940s. According to my father, Pomeroy's scholarship offered his generation a productive framework through which to explore the intersection of capitalism, federalism, urbanism, and western region. Second, when the New Western History rose to challenge the field in the mid to late 1980s, its critique often labeled "Turnerian" much of the frontier- or western-history scholarship published before roughly 1980. Etulain's seminar, conversations with my father and his peers, and later editorial work at the University of New Mexico Press, however, had introduced me to frontier or western historians as diverse as Frederick Paxson, Paul W. Gates, Walter P. Webb, Joseph Kinsey Howard, James Malin, Juanita Brooks, Ray Allen Billington, Allan Bogue, Robert Hine, Wilbur Jacobs, Sandra Myers, and

David Weber, among others. Behind their scholarship lay an intellectual universe every bit as rich and complex as the one informing the development of my generation in the 1980s and 1990s. My western reading seminar ultimately explores the social and intellectual history of the frontier and western fields with the goals that first, seminarians both understand that the historians who predate 1980 were also intellectuals responding to powerful forces of their day; and second, that they see the productive critical revisions and departures made by the New Western and postmodern historians who followed them.

As a longtime publishing professional, I try to bring the critical eye of an acquisitions editor to the syntheses and monographs assigned in my seminar. First, I want to make graduate students aware of the components most valuable to the construction of a significant scholarly article or book: topic, thesis, conceptual framework, research problem, primary sources and methodology, arguments, and conclusions—as well as clear, readable prose. These editorial categories provide a framework or guide for the discussion of, say, Billington's *Frontier Heritage* or Sarah Duetsch's *No Separate Refuge*. Second, deploying this same critical framework, I suggest that to shift or revise scholarly inquiry in any field, a historian must introduce significant departures in a majority of those critical categories. As my seminarians and I evaluate books, we discuss how major historians such as Turner, Herbert Eugene Bolton, or James Malin compelled the field to change direction or to pursue new areas of inquiry and how they left a profound and long-lasting impression on its practitioners. Third, my hope is that through the application of this critical framework, graduate students develop sound scholarly process, habits that they will apply to the origination, elaboration, and composition of their theses or dissertations.

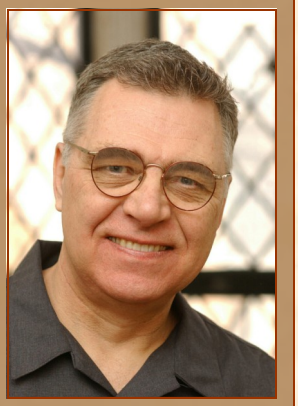
In this seminar, I propose that the principal challenge faced by frontier or western historians is to define and organize space in North America's frontiers and Wests—geographic and cultural. In that space, their analysis must model human formations, describe their processes, and define relationships between humans, culture, and nature. I have found Turner's "Significance of the Frontier in American History" the ideal baseline from which to begin this discussion. In this landmark monograph, he iterates the West as frontier, region, borderland, environment, and myth, and formally creates our field and defines its historical and cultural significance in the process. The seminar then explores the evolution and application of those five frameworks in classic monographs over several generations of scholars such as Bolton, Walter P. Webb, Henry Nash Smith, William Goetzmann, and others. After 1980, it is fascinating to see how the insertion of race, class, and gender reanimate these five basic frameworks and revise the histories told through them.

Over the years, I have altered the seminar reading list, but after Turner's "Significance of the Frontier," my ideal declension unfolds along the following lines: Billington, Myers, and David Weber on frontier; Turner, Webb, Pomeroy, and Elliott West on region; Bolton, David Montejano, Sarah Duetsch, and James Brooks on borderlands; James Malin, William deBuys, and Thomas Andrews on environment; and Henry Nash Smith, William Goetzmann, Richard Slotkin, and Martha Sandweiss on myth and culture. Discussions of these historians also introduce seminarians to basic themes of place, process, continuity, discontinuity, exceptionalism, and others. To help students extract the conceptual bones from these histories, I scrawl math-like equations on the board, for example: Free Land + Mobility + Time = Frontier; or Geography + Mode of Production + Time = Region. During the semester, we break down the large concepts into smaller constituent units and discuss why and how later historians revise the equations.

I supplement the weekly critical texts with articles that provide biographical, social, and intellectual context. Biographical essays in Richard Etulain's *Writing Western History* and John Wunder's *Historians of the American Frontier*, go a long way toward tying together the first two-thirds of the seminar. Other useful collections are Patricia Limerick et al's *Trails*, and Clyde Millner II's *A New Significance*. I also assign historiographical articles such as Weber's "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands," Elizabeth Jameson's "Connecting the Women's Wests," and James Sherow's introduction to *A Sense of the American West*. I hope that my reading seminar prepares graduate students to critically debate the intellectual and professional arc of the frontier and western field in oral exams, with their graduate peers, and minted professionals; and that they comprehend their place in a long tradition of historical scholarship.

Forty Years with Bob Hine and the Textbook, *The American West: An Interpretive History*

By John Mack Faragher



John Mack Faragher was born in Phoenix, Arizona and raised in southern California, where he attended the University of California, Riverside (BA 1967), and spent several years as a social worker in Los Angeles before going east to study the West at Yale (PhD, 1977). In 1993, after fifteen years as a professor at Mount Holyoke College, Johnny returned to Yale as the Arthur Unobskey Professor of American History. His books include *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (1979); *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (1986); *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer* (1992); *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (2000), with Robert V. Hine; and *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland* (2005). He teaches the history of the North American West and directs the Howard R. Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders at Yale University. He is currently completing a history of violence and justice in frontier Los Angeles, 1836 to 1876.

In 1992 Yale University Press agreed to publish a new edition of Robert V. Hine's *The American West: An Interpretive History*, and I joined Bob as co-author. For two decades, the book, first published in 1973 and revised in 1984, was widely adopted by professors teaching western history courses in colleges and universities throughout the country. In the early nineties, however, Little, Brown and Company (then part of Time-Warner) was culling its backlist in anticipation of publishing "big books," and was no longer interested in modest, if steady, sellers. That seemed such a shame. The "new western history" was getting a lot of attention, and it occurred to both of us that with some revision, Bob's approach to the history of the west—continental in scope, liberal in sentiment, and focused on the experience and the stories of ordinary people—could continue to find an audience.

My involvement with *The American West* went back to the late 1960s when, as a graduate student at the University of California, Riverside, I took a job as Bob's research assistant. With joints stiffened by rheumatoid arthritis and eyes blinded by cataracts, he was no longer able to work in the archives. For the two years we worked on the book, Bob sent me in search of monographs and documents which I read to him while he took notes on his brailler. What an invaluable lesson in the skill of doing historical research! When Bob finished the draft of a chapter, he had me read it back to him and he would edit it orally. This became a lifelong practice for me—reading my work aloud as a critical step in the process of rewriting. Bob welcomed me as a virtual partner in the enterprise. Becoming an actual partner when we signed the contract with Yale was sweet indeed.

By 1992, when we made that deal, I was a tenured professor at Mount Holyoke College with several publications of my own and fifteen years experience as an undergraduate teacher. Every year I was responsible for the American history survey, and I had quickly learned that assigning a good textbook made the teaching better and easier. It kept me from having to worry so much about "coverage" and provided me with the opportunity to delve into favorite topics—digging post holes, as we used to say, rather than stringing fence. But dissatisfaction with the available texts led me and my department colleague Dan Czitrom to the conclusion that we ought to try writing one of our own. With the historians Mari Jo Buhl and Susan Armitage we did precisely that, finishing the book, *Out of Many: A History of the American People* (now in its seventh edition), the same year I agreed to revise *The American West* with Bob. So when I took on that assignment I already knew something about writing textbooks, about the necessity of covering both the history and the historiography, about the ruthless prioritizing (for everything that goes in, something must go out, in strict zero-sum accounting), and about the need for large themes that hold the book together and mark it as distinctive.

But *The American West* was a different sort of textbook—one intended not merely for the classroom, but for the general, non-specialist reader; written in an engaging and informal style that emphasized the telling anecdote and the representative actor. It was, Bob insisted, an "interpretive" history, by which he meant a history rich in ideas rather than encyclopedic in facts. America's frontier past, as Bob interpreted it, was continental, comparative, and connective, linking the history of the trans-Mississippi region with earlier Wests and with other frontiers around the world. Frontier history offered a unifying theme and a way of telling the story of America.

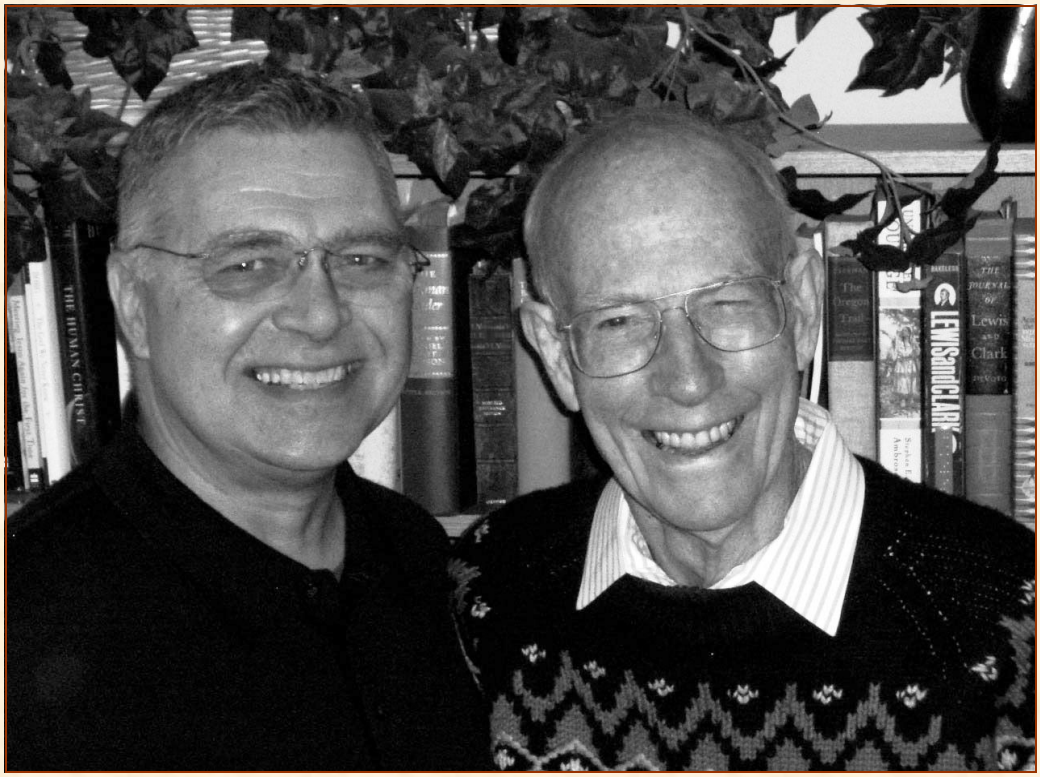
I knew the work of revision would be challenging. The explosion of historical scholarship in western and frontier history would require an enormous amount of reading and synthesizing. We would need to incorporate much more on the history of American Indian people, on race and ethnicity, on women's experience, and on the environment. I wanted to add considerably more first-hand testimony, allowing a multiplicity of voices to speak to the reader directly from experience. All this would require a reorganized table of contents as well as reorganized chapters. Our editor, Chuck Grench, agreed to greatly expand the number of

illustrations and maps. My insistence on images that were contemporaneous with the topics under discussion, and that all maps had to be reconceived and redrawn, meant the graphic program would require a considerable amount of attention.

But these tasks amounted to a straightforward "job of work" compared to the difficult task of writing in a way that preserved as much of Bob's original narrative as possible, while at the same time incorporating new material and introducing new interpretations. As I experimented with merging our voices, it dawned on me that I was about the same age Bob had been when he began working on the book and that I was as eager as he had been to try out this kind of general historical writing. So once again Bob helped me to become a better writer. Needless to say, it took much longer than I had anticipated—seven years rather than the three we had agreed to. *The American West: A New Interpretive History* was published in 2000.

We couldn't have been more pleased with its reception. It was well-reviewed, won the Caughey Western History Association Prize as well as the Western Heritage Award of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, an indication of its success with both academic and ordinary readers. More important, after nearly a decade out of print, it was again widely adopted for use in western history courses. *The American West* is a "frontiers" book (indeed, an abridged and slightly revised edition was published under the title, *Frontiers* in 2007), and might not be the choice of those who teach the course from a regional perspective. Our book extends from the Caribbean to Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, telling the story of the frontier as a site of hope and reinvention as well as defeat and oppression, as a struggle between possibility and power.

The current edition of the unabridged book is now twelve years old and certainly ripe for another revision. Scholarship has moved on and new interpretive frameworks have emerged. In particular, the twentieth-century West is at last beginning to come into focus. Bob Hine is fit and happy at ninety years of age, but sadly he has written his last book. We are now planning a revision and a new edition with the full participation of historian Jon Coleman of the University of Notre Dame, who will become a new partner in this collaborative project that stretches across several generations of western historians.



Johnny Faragher and Bob Hine on the Occasion of the Publication of *Frontiers*, the Abridged Version of *The American West* in 2007 (Photo taken by Michele Hoffnung).

Teaching the Environmental History of the North American West

By Jay Taylor

Joseph E. Taylor III is professor of history at Simon Fraser University. His *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (1999) received the George Perkins Marsh Prize for best book in environmental history, and *Pilgrims of the Vertical: Yosemite Rock Climbers and Nature at Risk* (2010) received the National Outdoor Book Award for best book in history and biography. He is currently researching the interplay of public lands and rural history for *Nestucca '75: Rural America in the Age of Globalism* and writing a biography of the Taylor Grazing Act titled *Saving the Range: Edward Thomas Taylor and the Modern West*.

Richard White let me down exactly once. It happened right after I was hired by Iowa State University. I asked my mentor how to teach a course on environmental history, and he replied: "I don't know. I've never taught the course." If life was a movie, this was the moment when the camera zoomed in on my face to accentuate feelings of panic. I think I even heard those violins from *Psycho*. Although it was not a good moment, it passed. I quickly learned that teaching environmental history is burdensome only because I had to choose among a surfeit of resources. *Environmental Review* had published a collection of sample syllabi in 1984, and its successor *Environmental History Review* did so in 1992.[1] Unfortunately, none of these syllabi matched my take on the field. My grad school cohort had rejected "declensionist" ecological narratives and the whiggish history of environmental activism. Taking our cues from Arthur McEvoy's *The Fisherman's Problem* (1986) and the rise of the environmental justice movement, we challenged tales about progressive scientific conservation and the enlightened rise of modern environmentalism by historicizing their ecological and social consequences. The published syllabi did not account for this trend, yet they were immensely helpful in clarifying what *I* wanted to teach as opposed to what had been taught.

Over time I have deemphasized advocacy and instead stressed the challenge of thinking contextually about human relations with nature. My hope is to get students to recognize both the human history that inheres in nature and the nature that inheres in human history.[2] I do this by splitting the course thematically, focusing at first on aboriginal land use, contact epidemics, and resettlement patterns. I have assigned William Cronon's *Changes in the Land* (1983), Timothy Silver's *A New Face on the Countryside* (1990), Pekka Hamäläinen's *The Comanche Empire* (2008), and Coll Thrush's *Native Seattle* (2008) to help students see how human actions shaped what we call "wilderness." The second half shifts to modern cities, where lectures on energy, food, health, and transportation systems help students to identify nature in what, reflexively, seem like deracinated environments.

By the time I first taught this course in fall 1996 there was a broad set of texts to assign that were, I noticed, inordinately about the American West. It has seemingly always been so. Ever since environmental history's founding in the 1970s, the West has been a favored setting, but then the environment has been an explanatory device for western historians since Turner. From Bolton to Bogue, Malin to Meinig, and Webb to Worster, nature has served as setting, prize, and force in our narratives. In the 1980s and 1990s, WHA debates about what made the West distinct often stressed climate and landscapes, turning the region into what Susan Neel called "A Place of Extremes."[3] Nature remains central to recent discussions about the "New West," but in these debates Real Nature and Real West converge upon that even more distinctively western landscape, the public lands.[4]

The happiest part about being an environmental historian is that the scholarship only gets richer and more nuanced. If tasked to teach the subject, the challenge is not to overload on the West. Need something on urban environments? Lean on Jared Orsi's

[1] Both are now eclipsed by vast, multi-continental online repositories: American Society for Environmental History, http://aseh.net/teaching-research; Environmental History, Explore the Field, http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/departments/espm/env-hist/; Environmental History Resources, http://www.eh-resources.org/links/index.html; Forest History Society, http://www.foresthistory.org/Education/index.html; Network in Canadian History & Environment, http://niche-canada.org/ResourcesTeaching (all accessed 10 March 2012).

[2] Ellen Stroud, "Postcards from the Edges of a Field," *Environmental History* 10 (January 2005), 96-97; and Mark Fiege, *The Republic of Nature: An Environmental History of the United States* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).

[3] Susan Rhodes Neel, "A Place of Extremes: Nature, History, and the American West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 25 (Winter 1994), 489-505.

Hazardous Metropolis (2004), William Deverell's and Greg Hise's *Land of Sunshine* (2005), Michael Logan's *Desert Cities* (2006), Matthew Klingle's *Emerald City* (2007), Connie Chiang's *Shaping the Shoreline* (2008), or Lawrence Culver's *The Frontier of Leisure* (2010). Want to explore how cities organized hinterlands? Choose from William Kahrl's *Water and Power* (1982), William Cronon's *Nature's Metropolis* (1991), Sarah Elkind's *Bay Cities and Water Politics* (1998), Kathleen Brosnan's *Uniting Mountain and Plain* (2002), and Richard Walker's *The Country in the City* (2007). There is a ridiculous amount on agriculture, water, dams, and power, among the best of which are Donald Worster's *Dust Bowl* (1979) and *Rivers of Empire* (1985), John Opie's *Ogallala* (1993), Richard White's *The Organic Machine* (1995), William deBuys *Salt Dreams* (1999), Mark Fiege's *Irrigated Eden* (1999), Paul Sabin's *Crude Politics* (2005), and Robert Righter's *The Battle Over Hetch Hetchy* (2005).

***Washington State Pollution Sign*. Digital Image. Available from: http://www.flickr.com/photos/gregtuke/4502900537/sizes/z/in/photostream/ (accessed April 1, 2012).**

My own research, which forced me to follow first salmon and then rock climbers across borders, led me to frame the course continentally. Works such as Louis Warren's *The Hunter's Game* (1997), Mark Spence's *Dispossessing the Wilderness* (1999), Karl Jacoby's *Crimes Against Nature* (2001), and Marsha Weisiger's *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country* (2009) have traced environmental contests on western public and tribal lands. But what makes this a North American tale is that Tina Loo's *States of Nature* (2007), John Sandlos's *Hunters at the Margins* (2007), and Douglas Harris's *Landing Native Fisheries* (2008) reveal the continuity of conservation's legacy of social inequity beyond the 49th parallel.[5] In fact, much of the best scholarship makes transnational relations central to the analysis. This began with Ian Tyrrell's *True Gardens of the Gods* (1999) and includes John Wirth's *Smelter Smoke in North America* (2000), Kathryn Morse's *The Nature of Gold* (2003), Samuel Truett's *Fugitive Landscapes* (2006), Thomas Andrews's *Killing for Coal* (2008), Rachel St. John's *Line in the Sand* (2011), and Lissa Wadewitz's *The Nature of Borders* (2012). I adore how Matthew Evenden's *Fish versus Power* (2004) links the fate of the wild Fraser River to the transnational politics that tamed the Columbia River. All show how nature transgressed a socially constructed boundary in ways that simultaneously made and unmade western borders.

Indeed, categorical porosity and instability are dominant themes these days, and the best work is still western. For example, I use Linda Nash's *Inescapable Ecologies* (2006) because it shows how climate, science, agriculture, and bodies in California's Central Valley were anything but stable, and why we must pay attention to this history to understand the valley's economic and social geography. In varying ways similar dynamism informs Nancy Langston's *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares* (1996), Susan Davis's *Spectacular Nature* (1997), Paul Sutter's *Driven Wild* (2002), Conevery Valençius's *The Health of the Country* (2002), David Louter's *Windshield Wilderness* (2006), and Timothy LeCain's *Mass Destruction* (2010). Each takes a seemingly stable subject—animals, forests, wilderness, bodies, parks, and mines—and deconstructs it so readers may see how nature and culture interacted to shape the past. The caveat, and it is one for which I have no surefire solution, is that assigning this scholarship tends to unmoor students' ideas about the stability of nature. This is rarely comforting, but it is ultimately necessary and worthwhile, and nowhere is better suited to tell these stories than the North American West.

[4] Joseph E. Taylor III, "The Many Lives of the New West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 35 (Summer 2004), 141-65; William E. Riebsame, ed., *Atlas of the New West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 58-65, 112-49.

[5] For contrasting examples see Theodore Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness: Indians, Eskimos and National Parks in Alaska* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); Emily Wakild, *Revolutionary Parks: Conservation, Social Justice, and Mexico's National Parks, 1910-1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011).

Yes, Virginia, Indians Are Still Here: Teaching Native American History

By Andrew Fisher

Andrew Fisher received his B.A. from the University of Oregon in 1992 and his Ph.D. from Arizona State University in 2003. Currently living in exile on the East Coast, he is an associate professor of History at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. His research and teaching interests focus on modern Native American history, environmental history, and the American West. His first book, *Shadow Tribe: The Making of Columbia River Indian Identity* (University of Washington Press, 2010), examines off-reservation communities and processes of tribal ethnogenesis in the Columbia Basin. His current project is a biography of the Yakama actor, technical advisor, and activist Nipo Strongheart.

As an impressionable, young graduate student, I attended a research presentation during which a member of my department asked the job candidate whether he considered himself an Indian historian or a colonial historian. He gamely replied that he was both and saw no essential separation between the fields, but I'm not sure his inquisitor was convinced. The question's implication seemed clear to me: Native American history was somehow different from and less than American history. Fortunately, that wasn't the lesson I took away from my graduate training, and Indians remain integral to everything I teach.

My modern U.S. survey starts with the Nez Perce War (not the Compromise of 1877) and I periodically revisit Native issues throughout the semester. The first major episode we examine in my modern American West course is the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre, with the point being that it marked neither the end of the "frontier" nor the culmination of Native American history. During my twelve years in the profession, I've also offered a variety of topical courses with titles such as Lewis and Clark in History and Memory, Native Americans and Nature, and American Indians in Popular Culture (Comparative Indigenous History is on my "To Do" list). Most of what I'll say here is drawn from my experience teaching a one-semester survey of Native American history since 1763. The early starting date is a concession to the culture of The College of William & Mary, where colonial history rules, but more than half the course deals with the twentieth century. My mentor, Peter Iverson, would disown me were it otherwise.

The first day of any college class is generally devoted to expectations, from assignments and assessment to content and conduct. In courses on Native American history, I've found it equally important to address the expectations that many students bring to the subject itself. "As consumers of global mass-mediated culture," reminds Philip Deloria, "we are all subject to expectations. They sneak into our minds and down into our hearts when we aren't looking."[1] They also sneak into our classrooms, and part of our job as teachers is to identify and interrogate them. Primitivism, poverty, spirituality, alcoholism, environmentalism, special rights; and the list goes on. I begin chipping away at these expectations in a humorous way, aiming to elicit the "chuckle" that reveals broader cultural assumptions about Native Americans. One of my favorite devices for doing so is the scene from Chris Eyre's film *Smoke Signals* in which Victor coaches his friend Thomas to "get stoic" and show his "warrior face." I've also used a Letterman-style list (sent by a friend from the Yakama nation) entitled "The Top Ten Things Indians Should Say to White People," featuring such gems as "Funny, you don't look white" and "Where's your powdered wig and knickers?" The inversion of familiar stereotypes immediately gets the students talking and thinking about popular discourses that so powerfully shape the Native American past, present, and future.

To be satisfactory intellectual exercises, however, Indian history courses should go beyond merely debunking myths and challenging misconceptions. They should also strive to make Native Americans relevant to American history in every period and in places our students usually don't expect them. Besides Deloria, a partial list of scholars pushing the field in this direction includes Tiya Miles (*Ties That Bind*), Claudio Saunt (*Black, White, and Indian*), Brian DeLay (*War of a Thousand Deserts*), Elliott West (*The Contested Plains* and *The Last Indian War*), William Bauer (*We Were All Like Migrant Workers Here*), John Troutman (*Indian Blues*), Alexandra Harmon (*Rich Indians*), Paige Raibmon (*Authentic Indians*), Daniel Usner (*Indian Work*), Myla Vicenti Carpio (*Indigenous Albuquerque*), James LaGrand (*Indian Metropolis*), Coll Thrush (*Native Seattle*), Daniel Cobb (*Native Activism in Cold War America*), and Paul Rosier (*Serving Their Country*). Whether assigned as texts or pillaged for lectures, books like theirs help break the grip of federal policy, transcend the binary framework of Indian-white relations, and show students how Native Americans have been significant players in broader national and international narratives. At their best, these studies also pre-

[1] Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas,

sent history in all its messy complexity, avoiding morality plays in favor of stories that depict Indians as human beings with human vices as well as virtues.

Of course, scholarly voices can't be the only ones heard in the classroom if students are to fully grasp the core themes of agency, adaptation, diversity, and survivance. Native people from all walks of life must be allowed to speak through the incorporation of primary documents, oral histories, journalism, literature, film, music, guest speakers, and field trips. Let's face it, most students enjoy reading poetry and fiction more than they do our monographs—especially if the author is as funny as Sherman Alexie, as eloquent as N. Scott Momaday, or as evocative as Leslie Marmon Silko. Their words reach other levels of truth and reveal the richness of individual lives in a way that thesis-driven books rarely do.

Good memoirs can serve the same purpose, while also forcing students to engage in the hard work of historical analysis. Among those readily accessible are the lives of Black Hawk, Sarah Winnemucca, Chief Joseph, Luther Standing Bear, Charles Eastman, Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Bonnin), Ignatia Broker, Mary Crow Dog, Dennis Banks, Russell Means, Woody Kipp, and Wilma Mankiller. Music and movies furnish additional sources for discussion and help bring history to life for students who often have no direct experience of Native cultures and communities. It's one thing to talk about powwows, another thing entirely to hear the drums and see the regalia. With the help of Chris Scales, a former Music professor here, I even got students to sing a powwow song once! (Sort of).

Blackfeet Tipi at the National Museum of the American Indian. **Digital image. Available from: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Museum_of_the_American_Indian_DC_2007_001.jpg (accessed March, 13, 2012).**

Whatever the text at hand, I prefer assignments that require undergraduates to engage imaginatively with the experiences and perspectives of Native people. For example, after reading Colin Calloway's *The Shawnees and the War for America*, I've asked students to write a response in which they advocate a particular strategy—fight, flight, or accommodation—for dealing with the "Long Knives." Similarly, for a paper on Brenda Child's *Boarding School Seasons*, I've instructed them to adopt the persona of a school graduate and use examples from the text to answer these questions: "How would you portray your time at boarding school and its impact on your later life? What message(s) would you want readers to take away from your account? Would it be an endorsement of the system, a call for reform, a demand for closing the schools?" This approach does have drawbacks, most notably the inclination of some students to pontificate about Native choices in the present. (I've been tempted more than once to write things like "Guys named Chad don't get to tell Indians what to do" in the margin of a paper). On the whole, though, I think such exercises make history less abstract and compel students to wrestle with the very difficult choices that Native Americans have been forced to confront.

Arguably, the most important thing an Indian history course should do—or any history course, for that matter—is draw connections between the past and the present. To highlight the legacies of conquest and colonialism, I use Blackboard's e-mail function to spam students mercilessly with current news items pertinent to the course content. I've also required them to write position papers or prepare group presentations that contextualize controversial issues such as tribal gaming, Makah whaling, repatriation, and Indian mascots (always a favorite with the William & Mary Tribe). Periodic guest speakers and field trips help make the continuity of Indian history still more tangible to students. During my eight years in Virginia, I've taken seminar classes to the state-recognized Pamunkey reservation, the Hampton University Museum, and the National Museum of the American Indian. I've also hosted campus visits from members of the Chickahominy Tribe, the Yakama Nation, and the Tohono O'odham Nation. Although long trips and invited talks can be expensive and nerve-wracking (I'll never forget that van safety video I had to watch), they pay huge dividends when all goes well. Especially back East, where students are more likely to forget, it's important to remind them that Indians are still here.

Both Sides Now: Teaching the West North of the 49th Parallel

By Betsy Jameson

Betsy Jameson teaches history at the University of Calgary, where she holds the Imperial Oil – Lincoln McKay Chair in American Studies. Her publications include "Dancing on the Rim, Tiptoeing through the Minefields: Challenges and Promises of Borderlands," (*Pacific Historical Review* 75:1, 2006); (with Jeremy Mouat) "Telling Differences: The Forty-Ninth Parallel and Historiographies of the West and Nation" (*Pacific Historical Review,* 75:2, 2006) and (co-edited with Sheila McManus) *One Step Over the Line: Toward a History of Women in the North American Wests.* She has served on the Councils of the Western History Association, the Canadian Historical Association, and the Labor and Working Class History Association and as President of the Pacific Coast Branch – American Historical Association.

Since coming to Calgary in 1999, I have taught comparative western history—either implicitly or by design. My classrooms are historical borderlands, where I encounter students' concepts of a benign Canadian West contrasted to an imagined Wild West to the south. Context is everything. Most Canadians live within a few hundred miles of a border that looms large here however inconsequential it seems to Americans. When I taught U.S. students, I tried to access their own western history in all its messy diversity. In Canada, I work to unsettle skewed simplistic images of both Wests, to explore what has linked and separated their histories.

I arrived here knowing far less Canadian history than my colleagues knew of U.S. scholarship. As a history geek, I don't feel at home anywhere until I know its past. Partly to locate myself in Canada, and partly to locate my work in relationship to Canadian scholarship and Canadian students, I developed classes that explored how both nations claimed their Wests and forged their borderlands. In the process, I accumulated huge intellectual debts to generous and patient Canadian colleagues, particularly to Jeremy Mouat and Sarah Carter. Much of what I learned about the historiography of the Canadian West came from working with Jeremy on "Telling Differences." I learned more history from Sarah Carter as we developed and co-taught our undergraduate course, "Wild West/Mild West?: Comparative History of the U.S. and Canadian Wests." I still teach it, regrettably without Sarah, now at the University of Alberta. I also teach a graduate seminar, "Frontiers and Borderlands," which explores the connected and distinct historiographies of both Wests and their borderlands. I focus here on "Wild/Mild," and will share the syllabi for both courses on request.

My intention in both is to push the national frameworks of western history while respecting national differences, identities, and policies. Culturally, economically, geographically, and historically, the Canadian and U.S. Wests have been linked, but are hardly identical. Their development and settlement involved similar policies, promises, and challenges: claiming an already-inhabited land; the ownership and use of natural resources; relationships with native peoples and among diverse immigrants; trade and transportation; forging communities; the relationships of regional and national governments. "Wild/Mild" tackles national myths, the ways western narratives have functioned in national histories, and what and who have crossed the national and social boundaries of both Wests. To a lesser extent it compares how the Canadian and Mexican borders have been created, policed, and imagined.

I operate within the constraints of a thirteen-week semester. The course cannot be encyclopedic, but examines key events, topics, and social movements. I begin with competing frameworks erected in western and continental narratives, starting with Frederick Jackson Turner and Harold Adams Innis, both of whom located national formation on a series of resource frontiers. Innis's "staples frontiers," however, did not forge national character but were managed and controlled from distant metropoles. (Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*). Walter Sage and Paul Sharp crossed national borders to introduce continental frontiers—Sage's snaked back and forth across the border beginning with the Loyalists during the American Revolution; Sharp's mostly started in the US and moved north. In contrast, in 1940 George F. G. Stanley drew a line of difference at the 49th parallel; etched as the North West Mounted Police rode West in 1874 to bring peace, order and good government—separating Canadian civilization from the savagery of U.S. violence and whiskey traders.

To further unsettle the national narratives, I spend about five weeks on the period before Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. established their borders in western North America. I begin before European colonization, introducing Puebloan and Plains people, and then trace European claims to the continent before there was a Canadian or U.S. West. This establishes a place that was diverse, transnational, and contested long before 1821-1867 when three North American nations drew their boundaries, at least on maps. By then it is apparent that national borders always bisected native territories. Then we turn to the more stock stories of parallel nation-building: laying railroad

49th parallel north at Waterton Lake eastern shore line. July 2007. **Digital image. Available from: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:49_parellel_waterton.jpg (accessed on March 31, 2012).**

tracks westward to link national economies and disrupt north-south trade, land grabs, gold rushes, cattle frontiers, and homesteading. We simultaneously explore transnational economies and movements—the literal movements of capital and workers back and forth across "the Medicine Line"; the ideas, institutions, and organizing experiences that informed organized labor; and agrarian and women's movements in both Wests. The appropriation of native lands returns us to the question mark in the course title, to interrogate and complicate the wild/mild binary, recognizing the agency of indigenous peoples who resisted conquest and who, in Canada, initiated treaties to avoid the carnage they witnessed to the South.

We spend only a third of our time on the resource frontiers and "pioneer" colonial settlement that dominate national creation narratives. Then I move on to the 20th century, to distinct national responses to drought and depression, the separate western economies and linked Japanese relocation policies of World War II, and the tourist economies based in mythic pasts. We examine how the border has operated recently, in the wake of 9/11, as a 600 percent increase in border patrol agents and the specter of Minutemen patrolling the Montana border for rogue Canadians challenged the happy image of "the longest unpoliced border in the world." If I were teaching the course this semester, we would discuss the Keystone Pipeline. The border remains a historical construct: sometimes open to miners, farmers, and railroad construction labor; sometimes filtering out Chinese, Japanese, indigenous peoples, or African Americans; sometimes allowing entry to Vietnam draft resisters, Louis Riel, or Sitting Bull; and sometimes banning political "undesirables." There is no dearth of juicy topics.

Selecting texts is harder. There is no comparative textbook; scholarship on the Canada-U.S. borderlands is newer and less developed than for the Mexican borderlands. I use Hine and Faragher, *Frontiers: A Short History of the American West* and John Herd Thompson, *Forging the Prairie Wes*—two shorter texts that usefully juxtapose frontier and regional frameworks. Thompson, like most Canadian historians, divides the Prairie Provinces from British Columbia, so Oregon Country and the Pacific Northwest require supplementary readings and lectures. I assign additional articles drawing heavily from Sterling Evans, *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian West*; John M. Findlay and Ken S. Coates, *Parallel Destinies*; and R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, *The Prairie West.*

My paper assignments vary, and always involve comparative frameworks. I have asked students to analyze press coverage from opposite sides of the border about key comparative events like Louis Riel's exile in Montana and Sitting Bull's in Manitoba, or Japanese internment in both countries. Or I ask them to analyze a memoir considering how the experience might have compared on the other side of the border. For instance, to analyze *Letters of a Woman Homesteader* one must address the fact that single women could not homestead in Canada, a difference that drew Canadian women south to claim land.

Context is everything. I might never have confronted this richly challenging historical terrain if I hadn't moved to Calgary. Teaching across borders pushes boundaries—intellectual, national and social. My ethical compass in these borderlands points to an imagined West where we recognize humanity across borders, and respect the power imbalances and differences that lurk in our histories and in our classrooms.

Teaching Borderlands History for a New Generation

By Samuel Truett

Sam Truett is a historian of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands with affiliated interests in western U.S., environmental, Native American, Mexican, and comparative borderlands histories. He is the author of *Fugitive Landscapes: The Forgotten History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Yale, 2006), and co-editor of *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History* (Duke, 2004). He is currently working on two book projects. *Empire's Castaway: The Travels and Tangled Tales of an English Globetrotter who Became a Mexican Villager* tracks the global entanglements of a nineteenth-century British sailor who drifted through the maritime borderlands of the China Seas and Indian and Pacific Oceans before becoming a peasant villager in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. *America's Ghosts: Ruins, Lost Worlds, and the Borderlands of Empire* explores the centuries-old fascination with ruins and lost worlds on borderlands of U.S. expansion west across North America and south into Latin America.

Fifteen years ago, when I started at the University of New Mexico, borderlands history was entering its fourth generation. France Scholes, our pioneer, began teaching in the 1920s—soon after Herbert Eugene Bolton named the field. Donald Cutter replaced Scholes in the 1960s, Cutter welcomed John Kessell in the 1980s; and in 1998 it was my turn.

Until then, the field had passed from generation to generation in an orderly way. For three-quarters of a century, borderlands history at UNM was indisputably a history of early America, with an emphasis on things Spanish. But by 1998, the field was starting to drift. Fewer students of early American borderlands knew Spanish institutions as Scholes, Cutter, or Kessell did: they had turned more than ever to Indian history. Then there were those of us trained in later borderlands, after the Spanish had abandoned places like New Mexico to the fates of nations and citizens. "How might you teach the Spanish period?" they asked me during my interview. Change wasn't necessarily good. A seventy-five-year legacy hung in the balance.

As I learned, there were harder questions. Teaching the Spanish period turned out to be the easy part, due to David Weber's newly-published *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. I created a two-semester borderlands history sequence, with 1848 as a breaking point, and organized the first semester around Weber's plotline. We began with sixteenth-century encounters, charted the rise of colonial outposts in the seventeenth century, explored contests among eighteenth-century empires and Indians, and finished in the early nineteenth century with the rise of new national borderlands. Weber's *Mexican Frontier* picked up where his *Spanish Frontier* ended, taking us to 1848. I couldn't have asked for a kinder, more gentlemanly guide than David Weber.

Teaching borderland history after 1848 in the second semester proved to be a much bigger challenge. Although I knew this era better, I had to start from scratch. There wasn't, and still isn't, a later-borderlands text like Weber's *Spanish Frontier*. And creating a core narrative for a region that now found itself pulled in two different national directions was far from easy. When teaching history prior to 1848, it was fairly straightforward to map diverse legacies against what was, for the most part, a Spanish colonial backdrop. Comanches and Tejanos had little in common with German Jesuits and Ópatas in Sonora, but students could connect them all to a larger tale of Spain's rise and fall in America. It was a much harder task to find a shared plotline for the U.S. and Mexico after 1848, especially when one complicated this binational framework even further by focusing (as I did) on multi-directional migrations and border crossings.

In the end, I did two things. I began with a pep talk about the need to move beyond national narratives to better understand our global world. Thus, our border crossings became a sort of adventure, a search for a more useable past. I then sought a handful of common strands that I felt would help make this adventure less disorienting. I sought not to craft a new master narrative, but rather to deal with the fact that students often comprehend narrative complexity better—and come to see and critique the blind spots of narratives better—if they can begin with a simplified storyline.

My post-1848 borderlands storyline starts with Mexican independence and the rise of new links to the U.S.—events that both pull nations together and drive new wedges between them. This culminates in the U.S.-Mexico War and the subsequent rise of new visions of empire, profit-making, and modernity. These lead to new economic entanglements, and new social movements. With the Mexican Revolution and World War I, we find new lines in the sand. Political and social contests, boundary-making, xenophobia, and Mexican repatriation anchor a new plotline that takes us into World War II. With post-war economic growth and the emergence of new migration patterns, we see fresh entanglements. At this point, I shift to border-crossing *communities*—Mexicans and ethnic Mexicans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, etc.—as a way to take stock. How have borderlands changed and how do they continue to reflect older patterns—leading back to 1848, or even before? I try to complicate those endings

and turning points that carried us through the class, to get them to question the stories we've used to give the borderlands meaning.

Indeed, one of the most exciting and challenging features of borderlands history is its ability to de-center and destabilize traditional narratives. Western histories tend to be histories of place—whether seen as regions or frontiers, fully-formed or information—whereas borderlands histories tend to be histories of entanglements *among* places. Over time, I found myself taking in more actors and expanding my stage. I did it first out of necessity, then out of curiosity. Chinese newcomers, for instance, set up shop on both sides of my border. To understand their border crossings and the ways their places entangled, I tracked them north into Canada, south to Peru, west to China. As we drifted out into the Pacific basin, we found ourselves spending less time in the U.S. -Mexican borderlands, and more time—in the words of William Cronon—on the paths out of town.

All of this globetrotting has led me to expand my borderlands history repertoire. During the past three years, I've begun to replace the first half of my borderlands sequence—my semester-long tribute to the "Spanish borderlands" of Scholes, Cutter, and Kessell—with a broader course on early North American borderlands. It also starts in the sixteenth century and ends in 1848, but it pulls in a full continent and its maritime borderlands—reaching without shame from the African coast to the ports of Asia. In my graduate seminars, I'm most likely to teach borderlands history as a global, comparative undertaking. And even in my undergraduate seminars, we're just as likely to mull over Mughals and Mongolia as we are the Métis or Mexico. Borderlands history has become—both for me and for my students—a way of seeing the world.

The traditional charm of borderlands history at the University of New Mexico was its focus on a unique place, where New Mexico stood tall. That version of borderlands history spoke a place-specific language, similar to that still spoken today by most western historians. Today, borderlands history is spending more time on the road and less at home—less time, some might say, leveraging the power of its native soil. As I pass by Scholes Hall to give another lecture on global borderlands, I often imagine my UNM progenitor turning in his grave.

But New Mexico has always also been a passing-through place, a gateway province, a land of unforeseen entanglements. The work of borderlands history, wherever it may be taught, is to teach us how to make sense of these entanglements. Borderlands history teaches us how to see the world in unexpected places. To this extent, borderlands history can be found everywhere. It can begin in Spain, the American West, on the road to Siberia, even in a subway in New York or Mexico City. But it's how you get there that makes all the difference.

At some point, you will reach the crossing-over place. It's the place where your language is no longer spoken, where your history is no longer only your own. Some end up on the other side, charting a new path. Others will eventually return home. But few will ever see the world in quite the same way again.

U.S.-Mexico Border at the Pacific Ocean. **Digital image. Available from: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TJ_Border_Fence_Closeup.jpg http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TJ_Border_Fence_Closeup.jpg (accessed on March 31, 2012).**

The WHA Office Goes West

As of July 1st, 2012, the WHA office will no longer be located on the campus of the University of Missouri, St. Louis. Its new home will be found in the Ernest Gruening Building on the campus of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Along with a change in location comes a change in directorship, as Kevin Fernlund steps down after six years at the post of Executive Director and hands the reins over to the new Executive Director, John Heaton.

Introductions to UAF Chancellor Brian Rogers, whose support of this move was critical, and future Executive Director John Heaton are featured below.

The WHA's New Home—the Ernest Gruening Building on the Campus of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (Photo taken by Kevin Fernlund).

Brian Rogers was named chancellor of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks by University President Mark Hamilton in May 2009 after serving for an academic year as interim chancellor. A longtime Fairbanks resident and state leader, Rogers served for seven years as the UA system's finance vice president, four years in the Alaska State House and eight years as a member of the UA Board of Regents, with three of those years as chair.

A former UAF student, he attended Trinity College and Brown University before receiving his master's degree in public administration from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. In 1996 Rogers formed on of Alaska's leading economic and public policy consulting firms, Information Insights, serving as principal consultant and chief financial officer.

Rogers, 61, is married to UAF alumna Sherry Modrow. They have two grown sons, both of whom hold degrees from UAF. Rogers is a member of numerous community organizations including, The Nature Conservancy Alaska Trustees, the Foraker Group Governance Board, the University of the Arctic Board of Trustees, the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Fairbanks Downtown Rotary and several others.

John Heaton is currently an associate professor and chair of the History Department at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. A lifelong westerner, he grew up in Portland, Oregon and spent several summers working on his father's seventy acre alfalfa farm in Terrebonne (about thirty miles north of Bend, Oregon). In the summer of 1991, he earned a BA in History at the rainy campus of Portland State University. A few weeks after graduating, he headed east on I-84 to study the West and earn a MA in the high altitude of northern Utah's mountains at Utah State University. Days after successfully defending his thesis in the summer of 1993 found him heading south on I-15 to begin his PhD at the sizzling Arizona State University campus in Tempe. After completing his exams in 1995 at ASU he trekked back to the mountains and purple sage to teach at USU, work at the *Western Historical Quarterly*, and write his dissertation. With the Ph.D. granted by ASU in 1999, Heaton landed a job on the frozen far north campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He drove the Alaska Highway during the summer of 2000 in a U-Haul with six barking dogs in the back of a pickup hitched behind. Upon his promotion to associate professor in 2006,

Heaton became the chair of the History Department and has served in that post ever since.

Throughout his years of graduate training in the history of the American West and American Indians, Heaton was privileged to work with some of the brightest lights in Western history. These included Anne M. Butler, Clyde A. Milner II, and David Rich Lewis at USU and Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson at ASU. They shared their knowledge and provided a broad introduction to history, its practitioners, and professional practices. These mentors also introduced him to the Western History Association.

After the publication of his book *The Shoshone-Bannocks: Culture and Commerce at Fort Hall, 1870-1940* (U. Press of Kansas, 2005) Heaton began a NSF funded research project on Athabascans of the Interior Alaska. The first publication to come from this effort will be an article in the 2012 summer issue of the *Western Historical Quarterly* titled "Athabascan Village Stores: Subsistence Shopping in Interior Alaska, 1850-1950."

The Heaton family currently lives in a log home in the boreal forest a few miles outside of Fairbanks near the historic Ester mining camp. John and Rebecca and their three children Cassidy, Samuel, and Sophia have survived twelve arctic winters now. Among the many hard lessons of life in Alaska that Heaton has learned is that it is preferable to avoid changing flat tires at minus forty-five degrees Fahrenheit.

Farewell from Kevin Fernlund

Dear WHA Members,

This is my last message to you, as your executive director. I want to tell you what an honor and privilege it has been these past six years to serve you and this great organization.

And during this time we have accomplished a great deal. I have had the opportunity to plan and direct six great meetings—St. Louis, Oklahoma City, Salt Lake, Denver, Incline Village (Lake Tahoe), and Oakland. (I'm planning Denver 2012 but John Heaton, the next executive director, will direct that meeting). In terms of total registrations and sessions, what does all of this add up to? I think it comes to something like 4,500 registrations and 360 or so sessions, which does not count numerous banquet and special events. And I scouted the next two conference sites—Tucson (the "Old Pueblo" as well as my hometown) and Newport Beach.

Of course, when I say "I" did this I mean I did this with the help of a terrific staff (over the years the WHA staff included Betty Ditmeyer, Laura Diel, Pat Barge, Valenda Curtis, Adam Michalski, Erin O'Malley, Angela Scheer, Matthew Morris, Berta Simic, Danielle Demarest, Ashley Lock, and Aaron Bashirian), with the help of the local arrangements committees, with the help of the program committees, with the help of the Council, and, of course, with the help of the WHA presidents.

I must say that the very best thing about being director is that you get to work closely with the presidents—great people and scholars all. There is a good reason why they are our presidents. I got to know well Walter Nugent, Dave Edmunds, Virginia Scharff, Sherry Smith, John Wunder, Quintard Taylor, Al Hurtado, and Donald Worster.

Along the way, we did a lot of good things. We made progress on endowing our awards. But we need to raise more money for this purpose. And I'm very pleased to see how much progress the Teaching Committee, under the able leadership of Brian Collier and Lindsey Passenger Wieck, has made in reaching out to K-12 teachers; to making what teachers do important to what all of us do.

This edition of the WHA newsletter is dedicated to the importance of teaching, at every level.

WHA Council Members

President

Albert Hurtado (2014)
University of Oklahoma

President-Elect

Donald Worster (2015)
University of Kansas

Executive Director

Kevin Fernlund (2014)
University of Missouri, St. Louis

WHA Council

Dan Flores (2012)
University of Montana

Karen Merrill (2012)
Williams College

John Wunder (2012)
University of Nebraska

Louis Warren (2013)
University of California, Davis

Sandra Schackel (2013)
Santa Fe, New Mexico

George Miles (2013)
Beinecke Library

Quintard Taylor (2013)
University of Washington

Mark Fiege (2014)
Colorado State University

Marsha Weisiger (2014)
University of Oregon

Nominating Committee

Alessandra Tamulevich (2012)
University of Oklahoma Press

Durwood Ball (2012)
University of New Mexico

Thomas Andrews (2012)
University of Colorado, Denver

Kathleen Brosnan (2013)
University of Houston

Margaret Jacobs (2013)
University of Nebraska, Lincoln

As for our finances, I'm very pleased to report that there is more money in the endowment today than when I started – nearly fifty thousand dollars more. We are actually in very good shape financially. But we do live year to year. We count on your dues, on making money on our conferences, and getting a decent return on our investments. In short, we need your continual support to survive and to realize our mission—promoting the study of the North American West. Together, we succeed.

On the other hand, the national financial crisis that started in 2008 took a heavy toll on us—this is a fact. My university, which was hardly alone in this regard, was hard hit and is now going into its fourth year of austerity and paralyzing budget cuts. This grim situation forced us to reexamine the model we had been using to support the office. In the past, we had counted on a university to support the office. But in these difficult times this is simply no longer realistic.

And so we decided to develop a new model in which we, as an organization, would partner with our host institution, and share a significant portion of the costs. To do that, we had to reallocate the funds previously used to provide what was a great membership benefit, *Montana The Magazine of Western History*. I'm convinced this change was the right decision for the organization. But it was hardly an easy one.

Anyway, that was then. Now we have a new director soon to take over (on July 1, 2012) and a new WHA office in Fairbanks, Alaska—on the last frontier.

The WHA is resilient. We are in very good hands. The future simply could not be brighter.

Happy Trails to You,

Kevin

Kevin Jon Fernlund
Executive Director, WHA

Kevin Fernlund in the WHA Office at the University of Missouri, St. Louis in 2011 (Photo taken by Daniel Rust).

President Al Hurtado's Letter on Tucson

Dear Colleagues in Western History:

Several of you have raised questions about the WHA meeting in Tucson, Arizona, in 2013. We share your concerns and realize that Senate Bill 1070 (SB 1070) is highly offensive to many of our members. Once SB 1070 was passed the WHA leadership immediately began to consider what the association should do under these new circumstances. The short history of events that follows outlines our response.

One month before SB 1070 was enacted the WHA signed a contract with the Westin La Paloma Hotel for our 2013 annual meeting. This contract (which is similar to all such convention hotel agreements) provides for substantial financial penalties if the WHA does not meet its obligations. Because of the recession we negotiated especially good terms for our members, but we would have to pay a large penalty –nearly $70,000–if the WHA withdrew from the contract, or if we failed to book enough rooms and food and beverage events.

In October 2010 President John Wunder asked Council members Katherine Morrissey and Peter Blodgett to examine the ramifications of the Arizona legislation, and their report was made to the full Council in the spring of 2011 after consultation with the Committee on Race and other WHA members. The report noted that the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association and the American Society for Environmental History were going ahead with scheduled meetings in the state. Because of the substantial costs involved the Council decided to keep the 2013 meeting in Arizona. Moreover, the law is being challenged in court and it remains uncertain that it will be on the books by the time we meet there.

Nevertheless, the WHA leadership recognized that meeting in Arizona would be controversial. The theme of the 2012 meeting in Denver is "Boundary Markers and Border Crossers: Finding the West and Westerners." President Al Hurtado organized a presidential session on immigration in the West, "Boundary Markers and Border Crossers: Histories of Immigration in the American West," that features historians who are recognized authorities. This plenary session will be held in the evening so that all members can attend. We have invited C-Span to cover this event.

At the spring Council meeting last Saturday the officers of the WHA talked at length about the venue, politics, and program. No one on the Council , however, proposed to move the annual meeting to another state, a move that would be ruinous to the financial health of the organization. We believe that we can best deal with SB 1070 by thoughtfully analyzing the history of immigration in the West. Perhaps, we can encourage citizens and politicians to develop a historical perspective on the immigration issue.

Members who want the association to take a position on SB 1070 and other Arizona political issues should recognize that the WHA is a registered 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, which means that in return for freedom from federal taxes the WHA agrees to refrain from advocating political positions. Individual members, of course, are free to advocate for whatever cause they support.

We are confident that we can have a great meeting in Tucson. We can enjoy intellectual stimulation, warmth and collegiality, inspiring field trips, and at the same time have an important dialogue about the politics of ethnicity in the West today—a dialogue that may do more good for the state than staying away would do. We realize that some members who are passionate about this issue are considering not attending the Tucson meeting, but we invite them to reconsider. Be assured that we will address in our Tucson program—through panels and field trips and through invited speakers—all the immigration and ethnic issues that are being fiercely debated through the West today. The program committee and the local arrangements committee are exploring ways to bring those issues into the convention and to connect our conference discussions with the public.

Finding an alternative site at this late date might raise the cost of meeting to our members and the Association. As it is, many members are finding it difficult to pay for conference travel. We don't want to make it harder than ever and exclude those who might not be able to afford even higher room costs that would result from breaking our hotel contract. Nor would it be fair to punish the hotel and its workers, who have done nothing wrong. And where is the American state that is free of controversy, injustice, or other social problems and can assure us that it will never pass any controversial legislation?

We are determined to make the Tucson meeting a superb learning experience for all. Our primary mission is to educate. Tucson will provide us an important place and moment to pursue that mission among ourselves and in dialogue with others across the diverse community of Arizona.

President Al Hurtado

Past President Quintard Taylor

President-elect Donald Worster

2013 Call For Papers
53rd Annual Conference of the Western History Association
9-12 October 2013, Tucson, Arizona
VITAL SIGNS: EARTH, POWER, LIVES

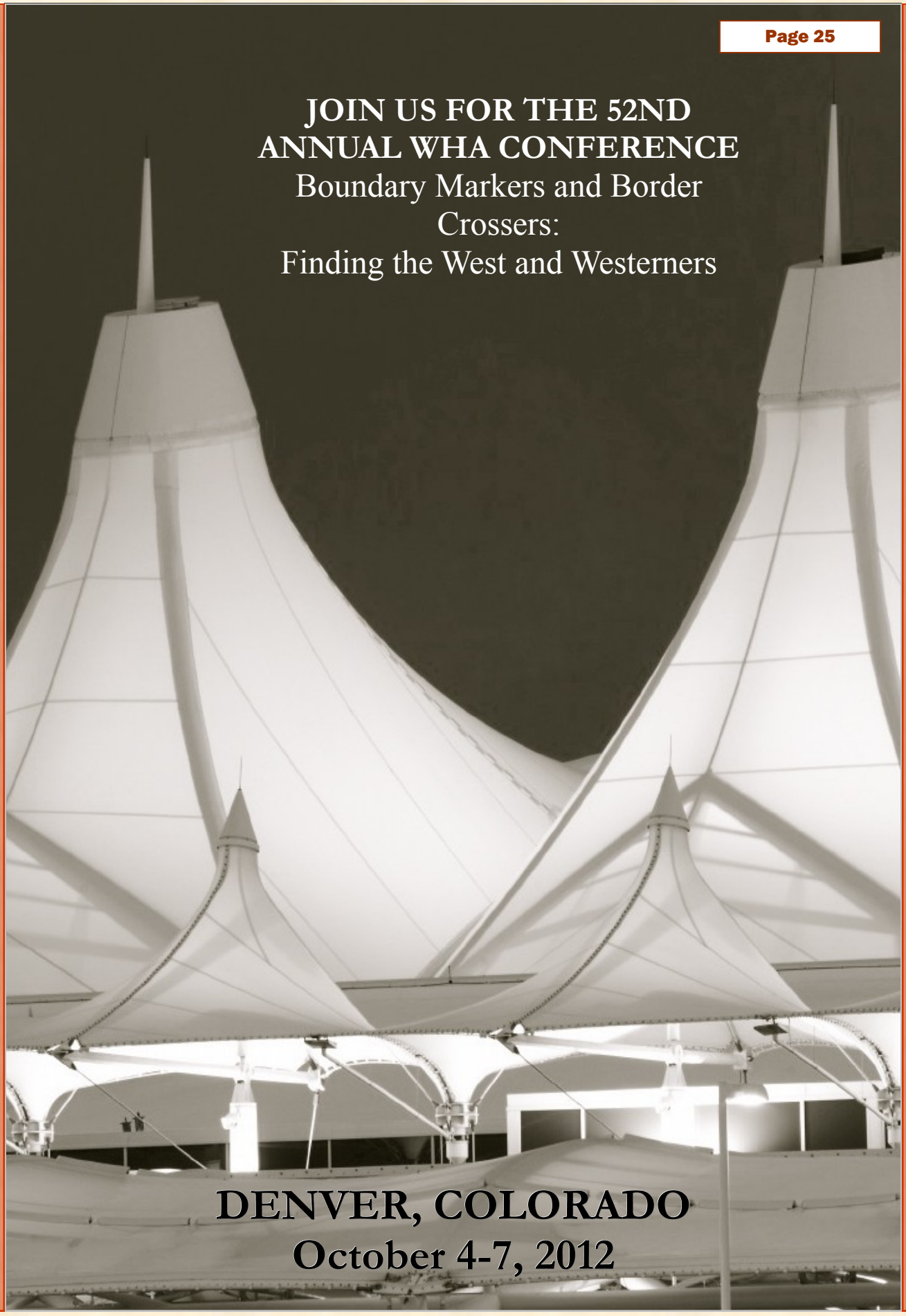
No region of the world has been more important than the West of North America in encouraging historians to take an environmental perspective on the past. Today that perspective has become global in scale and significance, and it is time to bring it back home for reassessing ourselves. The 2013 program committee invites proposals on the theme of checking the "vital signs," those indicators of health and illness that societies as well as individuals need. They include such measures of well being as energy supplies and consumption, ecological and cultural diversity, the distribution of wealth and power, the ups and downs of climate, and the resilience of ecosystems and human communities.

Once sought for its therapeutic promise, the West is experienced with death as well as life. Think of border migrants expiring in the desert, species lost to urban sprawl, or gunfights over contested animals. At the same time westerners have enjoyed inspiring vistas, productive soils, and outdoor recreation of uncommon quality. For the program we encourage you to address such issues, along with eco-justice, forests and fisheries, dams and suburban malls. Their scope may stretch across national borders or oceans, linking resources to producers and consumers and creating empires. Proposals for interdisciplinary panels (including at least one participant from a field other than history) are especially welcome.

The program committee strongly encourages full panel submissions and will consider single papers only when they can be reasonably matched with other panels or papers. When submitting an entire session or panel, include a brief abstract (250 words) that outlines the purpose of the session. Your designated contact person should submit the proposal. Each paper proposal, whether individual or part of a session, should include a one- paragraph abstract and a one-page c.v., with address, phone, and email for each participant. Indicate equipment needs, if any. The committee assumes that all listed individuals have agreed to participate. Electronic submissions are required and should be sent, with supporting materials, as a single document (PDF) to wha2013call@gmail.com.

SUBMISSIONS SHOULD BE SENT BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2012. The 2013 Program Committee Co-chairs are Kathleen Brosnan, University of Houston, and Douglas Cazaux Sackman, University of Puget Sound.

For more information on the WHA's 53rd Annual Conference, visit www.westernhistoryassociation.org



JOIN US FOR THE 52ND ANNUAL WHA CONFERENCE

Boundary Markers and Border Crossers:
Finding the West and Westerners

DENVER, COLORADO
October 4-7, 2012