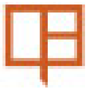

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The Gentle Tamers Revisited: New Approaches to the History of Women in the American West

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OVER TWENTY YEARS AGO, the University of Nebraska Press published Dee Brown's *The Gentle Tamers*, one of the first books to attempt an overview and analysis of the roles of women in the West. *The Gentle Tamers* elaborated and codified the assumption that the white male "tamed" the West in its physical aspects and that white women, who followed the men, gently tamed the social conditions (including, of course, white men). By focusing on women as a group, Brown filled a major gap in western historiography, and because he provided a thesis and a framework, his book remains the most widely read book on women in the West. This essay is an attempt to place the concept of the "gentle tamers" in its larger historiographical context, to examine the ways in which women in the West have been viewed by historians, and to explore new possibilities for analysis.[1]

[1] We will use the following terms in distinguishing among various ethnic groups of women: Native American or Indian; Hispanic, Mexicana, or Chicana depending on the context; Afro-American or black; Asian-American; and Euro-American. We have included only published material in this survey.

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Brown's book essentially provided an elaboration of an older male image of western women, one which still dominates literature and the classroom. A newer, ethnically broader and more varied image of women in the West is today challenging that older view. This view rests on a multicultural approach which calls for an evaluation of the experiences of all ethnic groups of women within a historical framework incorporating women's history into western history.[2] This process will necessitate the rewriting of western history, a task which should be undertaken with an eye to other work now being done in women's history.

Since Frederick Jackson Turner first presented his famous thesis to fellow historians in 1893, studies of the American frontier and westward expansion have issued forth in a steady stream. Although the master himself virtually ignored women's roles in conquering the frontier, other historians have made some attempt to include women in their studies of the American pioneering experience.[3] It is, of course, difficult to generalize

[2]The recent bibliography by Sheryll and Gene Patterson-Black, *Western Women* (Crawford, Neb., 1978) is the most complete available. There is no bibliography on Native American women in the West, but Beatrice Medicine, "The Role of Women in Native American Societies: A Bibliography," *Indian Historian*, VIII (1975), 50–54, contains a preliminary listing. For Chicanas, see Robert Cabello-Arandona, Juan Gómez-Quinoñes, and Patricia Herrera Duran, *The Chicana: A Comprehensive Study* (Los Angeles, 1975). For black women, see Lenwood G. Davis, *The Black Women in American Society: A Selected Annotated Bibliography* (Boston, 1975). There is no published bibliography on Asian women, but see Verna Abe *et al.*, *Asian American Women* (Palo Alto, 1976); *Asian Women* (Berkeley, 1971); and Emma Gee *et al.*, *Counterpoints* (Asian American Studies Center, University of California, Los Angeles, 1979). Rodman W. Paul and Richard W. Etulain, comps., *The Frontier and the American West* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1977) has a useful section on "Women, the Family, and Women's Rights in the West," 130–134.

[3]Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920), pp. 1–38. Some writers prior to 1893 attempted to emphasize women's contributions on the frontier. See Elizabeth F. Ellet, *Pioneer Women of the West* (New York, 1852); William W. Fowler, *Woman on the American Frontier* (1879; reprinted, Detroit, 1974). Among the earliest attempts in the twentieth century to write histories of women in the West are Nancy Wilson Ross, *Westward the Women* (New York, 1944) and William Forrest Sprague, *Women and the West: A Short Social History* (Boston, 1940). See also Mattie Lloyd Wooten, ed., *Women Tell the Story of the Southwest* (San Antonio, 1940). Among the first to question the application of Turner's thesis to women's experiences was David M. Potter in "American Women and the American Character," a lecture presented at Stetson University in 1959. In his lecture, Potter asked significant questions about male and female work roles in American society. See Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *History and American Society: Essays of David M. Potter* (New York, 1973), 277–303. For a recent account, see Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840–1880* (New York, 1979).

about women on the frontier. The term has been used to refer to a sparsely populated area on the edge of settlement with its particular location changing as Euro-American settlement moved west across the continent.[4] For over three hundred years there were men and women in America experiencing frontier conditions. The frontier of Jamestown settlers was beyond the fall line; that of revolutionary America was beyond the Appalachians; and that for Americans living in mid-nineteenth century was beyond the Mississippi. So temporal and spatial considerations have complicated efforts to generalize about frontier women. Then, too, the frontier has been defined as process—the process through which a relatively primitive society is transformed into a more complex society.[5] It is generally in this area—frontier as process—that historians have inserted their comments about frontier women.

But students of American expansion and the pioneering process have never come to grips with terminology. "Frontier" and the "West" are terms frequently interchanged, and their temporal and spatial delineations remain imprecise and shrouded in confusion. There is general consensus among some observers that the trans-Mississippi region—or more specifically the area west of the ninety-eighth meridian—is the "real West," perhaps because it developed in more recent times or more likely because its physical and cultural characteristics differed so dramatically from areas to the east. Hence this vast territory is frequently referred to as the Far West or the New West to distinguish it from the earlier wests of colonial times.[6] When historians have turned their attention to western women, typically they have focused on women in this geographical region west of the Mississippi, though here again terminology and delineations are imprecise.[7]

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[4]Ray Allen Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage* (New York, 1966), 25.

[5]*Ibid.*

[6]Walter Rundell, Jr., "Concepts of the 'Frontier' and the 'West,'" *Arizona and the West*, I (1959), 15–19; Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The West in the Life of the Nation* (Lexington, Mass., 1976), ix, 5–6.

[7]Dee Brown, *The Gentle Tamers: Women of the Old Wild West* (Lincoln, 1958); Dorothy Gray, *Women of the West* (Millbrae, Calif., 1976). Some historians are beginning to include Hawaii and Alaska in their definitions of the American West. Although most histories of these areas place little emphasis on women and their contributions, two authors—Gavan Daws and Ted Hinckley—include scattered references to women

After Herbert E. Bolton made borderland studies popular, the Spanish Southwest became a major field for study within the broader context of American western and frontier studies. Although Bolton was at ease in crossing the modern international boundary in his studies, later students of the Southwest generally limited their focus to Texas and the Mexican cession lands—New Mexico west to California. So southwestern women became a theme—really a whisper—in general studies of the American Southwest.[8]

Regardless of theme or approaches used by western historians, frontier women of the West and Southwest share certain characteristics as portrayed in traditional studies. They are invisible, few in number, and not important in the process of taming a wilderness. Or conversely, their role has been sentimentalized and given a rhetorical mystical importance approaching sainthood. As T. A. Larson pointed out in 1974, standard college textbooks used for courses in western history virtually ignore women, though they were written by men with impeccable professional credentials.[9] As recently as 1976, a textbook on the West listed only three women in the index: Helen Hunt Jackson, Queen Liliuokalani, and Sacajewea. The index also included an entry for frontier family, and, indeed, within the text one could find the better part of one page devoted to the life of women and children on the frontier. Characteristically, although the author elsewhere discussed George Rapp, Robert Owen, and utopian communities which they established in the Old West, he failed to mention Mother Ann Lee, founder of the well-known Shaker communities.[10]

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missionaries and wives of missionaries. See Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (New York, 1968) and Ted C. Hinckley, *The Americanization of Alaska* (Palo Alto, 1972). For an interesting account of one woman's life in central Alaska during the first four decades of the twentieth century, see Jo Anne Wold, *This Old House: The Story of Clara Rust* (Anchorage, 1976).

[8]See, for example, Lynn I. Perrigo, *The American Southwest: Its Peoples and Cultures* (New York, 1971), 9–13, 85, 196, 226, 318, 378, 379, 407–408.

[9]T. A. Larson, "Women's Role in the American West," *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*, XXIV (Summer 1974), 4.

[10]Gibson, *The West in the Life of the Nation*, 207. Many textbooks are male-oriented and have only scattered references to women. See, for instance, Robert Athearn and Robert Riegel, *America Moves West* (5th ed., New York, 1971); Thomas D. Clark, *Frontier America* (New York, 1969); Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion* (4th ed., New York, 1974); LeRoy Hafen, W. Eugene Hollon, and Carl C. Rister, *Western America* (3rd ed., Englewood Cliffs, 1970). Texts by John Hawgood, *America's Western Frontiers* (New

Although women have remained invisible to most writers of western history, their scant numbers on the frontier have compelled a few historians to give them at least passing attention.[11] Richard A. Bartlett, who has published the most recent social history of the American frontier, emphasized the "overwhelming preponderance of males" in frontier regions. "No one has ever questioned, let alone analyzed," he stated, "the masculinity of the frontier society. Since it is as obvious as the sun in the daytime, the subject has not been discussed."[12] Moreover, chroniclers of mining and cattle frontiers invariably noted the scarcity of women and attributed the prestige and distinction accorded western women to that very scarcity.[13] As an example of special treatment allotted to women, one writer noted that bylaws were enacted in a Montana mining camp of 300 men and 15 women which decreed the death penalty "for murder, thieving, or for insulting a woman."[14]

York, 1967) and Robert V. Hine, *The American West: An Interpretive History* (Boston, 1973) are slightly better than others and include in their indices the activities and names of several women. Specialized studies of the West which are frequently used in college classrooms are also male-oriented and depict women in traditional roles. See particularly two books by Everett Dick, *The Sod House Frontier* (Lincoln, 1954) and *Vanguards of the Frontier* (1941; reprinted, Lincoln, 1965).

[11] Larson, "Women's Role in the American West," 5.

[12] Richard A. Bartlett, *The New Country: A Social History of the American Frontier, 1776–1890* (London, 1974), 343.

[13] Lewis Atherton, *The Cattle Kings* (Lincoln, 1961), 80; Duane Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington, 1967), 22, 188. Numerous works are available, however, describing the hardships, experiences, and adjustments of women who settled on cattle or sheep ranches in the West. Among the better examples of this genre are Nannie T. Alderson and Helena Huntington Smith, *A Bride Goes West* (Lincoln, 1942); Mary Hudson Brothers, *A Pecos Pioneer* (Albuquerque, 1943); Junietta Claridge, "We Tried to Stay Refined: Pioneering in the Mineral Strip," *Journal of Arizona History*, XVI (1975), 405–426; Agnes Morley Cleaveland, *No Life for a Lady* (1941; reprinted, Lincoln, 1977); Sallie Reynolds Matthews, *Interwoven: A Pioneer Chronicle* (3rd ed., Austin, 1974); Dorothy Ross, *Stranger to the Desert* (New York, 1959). Two good accounts of women who entered the cattle business are Emily J. Shelton's "Lizzie E. Johnson: A Cattle Queen of Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, L (1947), 349–366; and Carrie Miller Townley's "Helen J. Stewart: First Lady of Las Vegas," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, XVI (1973), 214–244, XVII (1974), 2–32. For the story of a woman who operated and expanded a sheep ranch in northwestern Colorado over a period of half a century, see Margaret D. Brown, *Shepherdess of Elk River Valley* (Denver, 1967).

[14] Bartlett, *The New Country*, 349. Although their numbers may have been few, women did go to the mines and on occasion prospected and mined themselves. Harriet Rochlin tells the story of Nellie Cashman who became the West's most famous woman mining expert in "The Amazing Adventures of a Good Woman," *Journal of the West*, XII (1973), 281–295; while Duane A. Smith tells the story of Elizabeth "Baby Doe" Tabor with compassion in *Horace Tabor: His Life and the Legend* (Boulder, 1973). Many women participated in the Klondike Gold Rush in the 1890s and they are ably described by

By virtually excluding women from western studies on the one hand, and emphasizing their rareness on the other, the impression is left that women played insignificant roles in settling the American West. As the frontier advances with all its romance and color across the pages of Ray Allen Billington's monumental *Westward Expansion*, it is a robust masculine domain that emerges, and the few women who appear, Calamity Jane and Mary Lease, for example, do so on a masculine stage.[15] It has been observed by more than one investigator that women were not fur trappers, miners, assayers, explorers, pony express riders, cattle riders, military commanders, politicians, railroad builders, or Indian traders, and therefore presumably nonessential in the development of the West.[16] On the other hand, there has been a strong tendency to replace solid research on women's roles with lofty rhetoric distorting western women beyond recognition. In speaking of such women, Dee Brown wrote that "they attracted little attention individually . . . but as a mass maternal force their power was unmatched in the domestication process that transformed the wild frontiersmen into ordinary placid citizens."[17] Page Smith described women as "the shock-troops of Western migration."[18]

Where anything more specific has been attempted, investigators have described western women in stereotyped images and symbols. Although variations are many, these images can be assembled for convenience into four major categories: gentle

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Laurie Alberts, "Petticoats and Pickaxes," *Alaska Journal*, VII (1977), 146–159. Some of the most perceptive first-person accounts of life in mining camps have been written by women, including Dame Shirley [Louise A.K.S. Clapp], *The Shirley Letters from California Mines in 1851–52* (San Francisco, 1922); Ralph Henry Gabriel, ed., *Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and Early California* (New Haven, 1932); Rodman W. Paul, ed., *A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West: The Reminiscences of Mary Hallock Foote* (San Marino, 1972); Mollie D. Sanford, *Mollie: The Journal of Mollie Dorsey Sanford in Nebraska and Colorado Territories, 1856–1866* (Lincoln, 1959); James L. Thane, Jr., *A Governor's Wife on the Mining Frontier: The Letters of Mary Edgerton from Montana, 1863–1865* (Salt Lake City, 1976). For additional information on the Montana gold rush, see S. Lyman Tyler, ed., *The Montana Gold Rush Diary of Kate Dunlap* (Denver, 1969). On the mining regions of Central Nevada, see Marvin Lewis, *Martha and the Doctor: A Frontier Family in Central Nevada* (Reno, 1977). Memoirs of life as a miner's wife in Telluride, British Columbia, Idaho, and Leadville are presented by Harriet Fish Backus in *Tomboy Bride* (Boulder, 1969).

[15] Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion* (4th ed., New York, 1974).

[16] Larson, "Women's Role in the American West," 4; Barlett, *The New Country*, 344.

[17] Brown, *The Gentle Tamers*, 284.

[18] Page Smith, *Daughters of the Promised Land* (Boston, 1970), 223.

tamers, sunbonneted helpmates, hell-raisers, and bad women. The gentle tamer category encompasses western women as civilizers, ladies, and suffragists. Countless students of western history identify women as the chief civilizing agents on the frontier, whether they lived in mining camps, ranches, or sod-house prairie shanties. They carried with them to their new homes as much of the trappings of civilization as possible and subsequently assumed major responsibility for establishing the social and cultural values once known in former homes. Dee Brown declared that the Wild West was tamed by its petticoated pioneers, while another writer observed that it was women who "reminded the men of the world of literature and arts."[19]

[19]Brown, *The Gentle Tamers*, 297; Bartlett, *The New Country*, 356. Rarely do authors of western textbooks view women as writers and artists in their own right, yet the literature on such women is extensive. On Helen Hunt Jackson as writer and reformer, see Evelyn I. Banning, *Helen Hunt Jackson* (New York, 1973); John R. Byers, "Helen Hunt Jackson," *American Literary Realism*, VI (1973), 197–241; Virginia McConnell, " 'H.H.,' Colorado, and the Indian Problem," *Journal of the West*, XII (1973), 272–280. Mary Hallock Foote as writer and illustrator is treated with understanding and insight in Rodman W. Paul's introduction to *A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West.* But see also Mary Lou Benn, "Mary Hallock Foote, Early Leadville Writer," *Colorado Magazine*, XXXIII (1956), 93–108; and Richard W. Etulain, "Mary Hallock Foote (1847–1938)," *American Literary Realism*, V (1972), 144–150. For novelist Gertrude Atherton, see Carolyn Forrey, "Gertrude Atherton and the New Woman," *California Historical Quarterly*, LV (1976), 194–209; and Elinor Richey, "The Flappers Were Her Daughters: The Liberated, Literary World of Gertrude Atherton," *American West*, XI (July 1974), 4–10. For Mary Hunter Austin's career as a journalist and novelist, see J. Wilkes Berry, "Mary Hunter Austin (1868–1934)," *American Literary Realism*, II (1969), 125–131; T.M. Pearce, *Mary Hunter Austin* (New York, 1965); and Donald P. Ringler, "Mary Austin: Kern County Days, 1882–1892," *Southern California Quarterly*, VL (1963), 25–63. Writings on novelist and short-story writer Willa Cather are numerous, but see E.K. Brown and Leon Edel, *Willa Cather: A Critical Biography* (New York, 1953); David Daiches, *Willa Cather: A Critical Introduction* (New York, 1962); Bernice Slote and Virginia Faulkner, eds., *The Art of Willa Cather* (Lincoln, 1974); and James L. Woodress, *Willa Cather: Her Life and Art* (New York, 1970). For a fine discussion of Mari Sandoz and her writing, see Mamie J. Meredith, "Mari Sandoz," in Virginia Faulkner, ed., *Roundup: A Nebraska Reader* (Lincoln, 1957), 382–386. Ina Agnes Graham sketches the life of San Francisco's pioneer poet-laureate in "My Aunt, Ina Coolbrith," *Pacific Historian*, XVII (1973), 12–19; while Rebecca Smith Lee presents the life of the woman who wrote the first history of Texas in English in *Mary Austin Holley: A Biography* (Austin, 1962). For a sketch of Arizona poet and historian Sharlot Hall, see Lawrence Clark Powell, "Letter from the Southwest," *Westways*, LXVII (January 1975), 24–27; and for one of H. H. Bancroft's writers, see Hazel Emery Mills, "Frances Fuller Victor, 1826–1902," *Arizona and the West*, XII (1970), 111–114. For additional writers and poets of the Southwest, see Miriam B. Murphy, "Sarah Elizabeth Carmichael: Poetic Genius of Pioneer Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XLIII (1975), 52–66; Paul T. Nolan, "The Boomers: Oklahoma Playwrights Opened the Territory," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XLI (1963), 248–252; Thomas M. Pearce, *Alice Corbin Henderson* (Austin, 1969); and Raye Rice, "Utah's Leading Ladies of the Arts," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1970), 65–85. Twentieth-century Native American artists are described by Judy Casey

Moreover, habits of language, dress, cleanliness, and morality were all reportedly improved once women arrived on the frontier.

Sometimes the gentle tamer was a lady—a chaste beautiful creature which cowboys placed on a pedestal and worshipped from afar—who received credit for improving manners and morals. Pious, pure, and submissive, the refined lady nevertheless administered constant pressure to respect the Sabbath, inhibit cursing and drinking, promote better grooming and more diversified diet, and in general smooth rough edges from frontier society.[20] On the other hand, refined ladies frequently are depicted as having difficulty adjusting to new and rough surroundings, and those who could not adapt suffered intense mental and physical anguish.[21]

Suffragists are also depicted as women who, though not as gentle as their sisters, are still portrayed as improving the quality of frontier society. At the very least, suffragists argued, voting rights would induce women to migrate west, replacing a transient bachelor society with a stable family community. Moreover, it could be argued that enfranchised women would support legislation curbing less attractive appetites of strong-willed and undisciplined westerners.[22]

Undoubtedly the most popular and enduring image of frontier woman is the sunbonneted helpmate so movingly depicted in 1921 by Emerson Hough who wrote:

> The chief figure of the American West, the figure of the ages, is not the long-haired, fringed-legging man riding a rawboned pony, but the gaunt and sad-faced woman sitting on the front seat of the wagon,

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in "She Speaks in Poetry," *Nevada Magazine*, XXXV (1975), 22–23, a sketch of Mabel Fillmore, Washo-Paiute basketweaver; and by Alice Marriott in *María: The Potter of San Ildefonso* (Norman, 1948), the story of María Martínez. For other artists and writers in twentieth-century New Mexico, see Dorothy Brett, "Autobiography: My Long and Beautiful Journey," *South Dakota Review*, V (1967), 11–72; Emily Hahn, *Mabel: A Biography of Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Boston, 1977); Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Movers and Shakers* (New York, 1936); Claire Morrill, "Three Women of Taos: Frieda Lawrence, Mabel Luhan, and Dorothy Brett," *South Dakota Review*, II (1965), 3–22; Claire Morrill, *A Taos Mosiac* (Albuquerque, 1973); and Georgia O'Keefe, *Georgia O'Keefe* (New York, 1976).

[20] Beverly J. Stoeltje, " 'A Helpmate for Man Indeed': The Image of the Frontier Woman," *Journal of American Folklore*, LXXXVIII (1975), 27–31; Atherton, *The Cattle Kings*, 81–82.

[21] Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," 31.

[22] Brown, *The Gentle Tamers*, 247–248, 251.

following her lord where he might lead, her face hidden in the same ragged sunbonnet which had crossed the Appalachians and the Missouri long before. . . . There was the seed of America's wealth. There was the great romance of all America—the woman in the sunbonnet; and not after all, the hero with the rifle across his saddle horn.[23]

As helpmates, women carried out routine chores in addition to doing men's work when emergencies arose or their men were away. Virtuous and strong both emotionally and physically, they endured pain and hardship with little complaint. As one researcher succinctly stated, "the primary defining feature of this group of women was their ability to fulfill their duties which enabled their men to succeed."[24]

Women as hell-raisers were not very common but they were widely talked about. These were the super cowgirls, the Calamity Janes, who acted more like men than women and became heroes of dime novels and wild west shows. James D. Horan called them "Desperate Women," while a second author called them "Wiley Women of the West."[25] Although they violated the mores of proper society and on occasion entered the criminal world, they were often depicted as good-looking and well-educated women who could outride, outshoot, and outcuss the best cowboys in the West.

The image of western women as bad women appears in a variety of forms, overlapping with the hell-raiser image, but generally associated with sex and raw nature. These were prostitutes, the soiled doves of all nationalities, who inhabited gambling saloons, dance halls, local cribs, and areas referred to as hogtowns. A variation on this theme is the harlot with a heart

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[23]Emerson Hough, *The Passing of the Frontier* (New Haven, 1921), 93.

[24]Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," 32.

[25]James D. Horan, *Desperate Women* (New York, 1952); Grace Ernestine Ray, *Wily Women of the West* (San Antonio, 1972). Other works of this genre include Duncan Aikman, *Calamity Jane and the Lady Wildcats* (New York, 1927); Harry Sinclair Drago, *Notorious Ladies of the Frontier* (New York, 1969); Richard Kyle Fox, *Belle Starr, the Bandit Queen, or the Female Jesse James* (1889; reprinted, Austin, 1960); John Marvin Hunter, *The Story of Lottie Deno* (Bandera, Texas, 1959); and Burton Rascoe, *Belle Starr, The Bandit Queen* (New York, 1941). Peggy Robbins shows, however, in her study of Calamity Jane that women could assert themselves in male-dominated society by establishing a unique character. Peggy Robbins, "Calamity Jane: 'Hellcat in Leather Britches'," *American History Illustrated*, X (June 1975), 12–21.

of gold—honest, loyal, generous, compassionate, and revered by admirers who accorded her status as a great lady.[26]

A new approach to women in the West has emerged in the past few years which refuses to accept the images of western women as portrayed by earlier historians and therefore promises a more accurate interpretation of this part of women's history. These scholars have attempted to analyze critically the images of western women: the authors have challenged the old images in various ways, either with literary criticism, by testing the reality of these images, or by attempting to create a new image through careful quantitative and archival research. The first method treats images in literature as just that, literary images to be examined with the tools of literary criticism. The second method tests the image against the reality of women's lives. The third approach, in careful case studies, provides new images which emerge from a large number of documents for a very limited geographical area.

A number of articles in literary criticism, especially those by Beverly Stoeltje and Beverly Trulio, have used the first method. Analyzing the accounts, primarily those by males, these authors have shown that what men described may have had no necessary relation to women but that their images reflected either literary types or cultural attitudes. Much can be gained from looking at literature in its literary and cultural context and from pointing out as Trulio did, for example, that racial stereotypes of New Mexico women were very pronounced in the writings of Euro-American men.[27] To analyze the types of frontier female

[26]Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," 38; Brown, *The Gentle Tamers*, 81–85. For popular accounts of prostitution in the West, see Kay Reynolds Blair, *Ladies of the Lamplight* (Leadville, 1971); Curt Gentry, *The Madams of San Francisco* (Garden City, 1964); Ronald Dean Miller, *Shady Ladies of the West* (Los Angeles, 1964); and Joseph W. Snell, "Painted Ladies of the Cowtown Frontier," *The Trail Guide*, X (Dec. 1965), 3–24. Cy Martin's *Whiskey and Wild Women: An Amusing Account of the Saloons and Bawds of the Old West* (New York, 1974) is marred by its sexist overtones and callous treatment of women. In "An Inning for Sin: Chicago Joe and Her Hurdy-Gurdy Girls," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, XXVII (Spring 1977), 24–33, Rex C. Myers points out that Montana dance hall girls were rarely prostitutes—most hoped to marry and become respected members of the community. For an interesting account of women depicted as temptresses in western songs, see Austin and Alta Fife, "Pug-Nosed Lil and the Girl in the Blue Velvet Band: A Brief Medley of Women in Western Song," *American West*, VII (March 1970), 32–37.

[27]Beverly Trulio, "Anglo-American Attitudes toward New Mexican Women," *Journal of the West*, XII (1973), 229–239.

images and to show how they parallel and are defined by male frontier images, as Stoeltje has done, is also valuable.[28]

While these literary studies sharpen our perception about the context and limitation of these images, they do little to answer the question of how accurate these images are or to what extent they reflect the reality of women's lives. The studies which do attempt to test images against realities seem to conclude that congruence between image and reality is almost nonexistent. Using various sources, authors have come up with uniformly consistent results. T. A. Larson, in analyzing women in relation to jobs, has concluded that if the reality of women's jobs outside the home was reflected in western literature, the western woman would be portrayed as a "domestic servant," an image almost never present.[29] Sheryll Patterson-Black, in examining the image of the reluctant woman pioneer, has found that, at least in Nebraska and Colorado, there is much contradictory evidence showing that a variety of pioneer women flourished on the frontier. Because under the Homestead Act of 1862, women could be homesteaders in their own right, many women enthusiastically pioneered alone or with sisters and mothers. In some areas of Colorado women were able to prove up, that is to establish a homestead and maintain occupancy for a certain number of months, more often than did men.[30]

In a recent review of Iowa pioneer women, Glenda Riley attempted to find four types of women often portrayed in western literature: the Calamity Janeite, the sex object, the frontier suffragist, and the saint in the sunbonnet. The women could not be found in Iowa. Looking at the period from 1833 to

[28]Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," 25–41.

[29]Larson, "Women's Role in the American West," 3–11.

[30]Sheryll Patterson-Black, "Women Homesteaders on the Great Plains Frontier," *Frontiers*, I (Spring 1976), 67–88. For additional accounts of women homesteaders, see Eliza W. Farnham, *California In-Doors and Out: Or, How We Farm, Mine and Live Generally in the Golden State* (1856; reprinted, 1973); Joseph W. Snell, ed., "Roughing It on Her Kansas Claim: The Diary of Abbie Bright," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (1971), 223–268, 394–428; Elinore Pruitt Stewart, *Letters of a Woman Homesteader* (Boston, 1914). Women not infrequently made "runs" to acquire land for themselves. See Lonnie E. Underhill and Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., "Women Homeseekers in Oklahoma Territory, 1889–1901," *Pacific Historian*, XVII (1973), 36–47; Lynette Wert, "The Lady Stakes a Claim," *Persimmon Hill*, VI (Spring 1976), 18–23. The latter tells the story of Laura Crews, who made an 1893 Oklahoma run; her mother had made a similar race into Iowa in earlier years.

1870, Riley found that while Iowa women may have been handy with a gun, they did this as part of their everyday life and not as Calamity Janes. Nor were women often defined strictly as "sexual women." Frontier suffragists all came from the East. And the image of the sunbonnet saint, the pioneer woman as wife and mother, was far too narrow to encompass the variety of women who homesteaded with other women, shared the enforcement of societal norms with men, and often wore eastern fashions rather than calico and sunbonnets.[31]

These studies are basically revisions of old images. The case study approach has produced at least three carefully researched and argued articles which attempt to create new images. Two quantitative studies have dealt with family structure. For Los Angeles, R. Griswold del Castillo has argued that disintegration of the Chicano extended family followed the Euro-American invasion, and there were many female headed households in the years after the Civil War.[32] In San Antonio, according to Jane Dysart's research, daughters of more wealthy Chicano families often intermarried with Euro-Americans and their children passed into that culture, detaching themselves from the Hispanic heritage.[33] A third study examined the attitudes toward work of the Euro-American women on the trail to Oregon and California. It found the eastern traditions resilient to western experience. Women temporarily performed jobs traditionally assigned to males but refused to abandon permanently "women's work."[34]

Each of these case studies presents an important new image of women—moving out of the Chicano extended family, moving

[31]Glenda Riley, "Images of the Frontierswomen: Iowa as a Case Study," *Western Historical Quarterly*, VIII (1977), 198–202. Riley has been extremely active in recovering the history of Iowa pioneer women. See particularly her "The Memoirs of Matilde Peitzke Paul," *Palimpsest*, LVII (March/April 1976), 54–62; "Women Pioneers in Iowa," *ibid.*, 34–53; "Family Life on the Frontier: The Diary of Kitturah Penton Belknap," *Annals of Iowa*, XLIV (1977), 31–51; "A Prairie Diary," *ibid.*, (1977), 102–117; "Pioneer Migration: The Diary of Mary Alice Shutes," *ibid.*, XLIII (1977), 487–514; and "Civil War Wife: The Letters of Harriet Jane Thompson," *ibid.*, XLIV (1978), 214–231.

[32]R. Griswold del Castillo, "La Familia Chicana: Social Changes in the Chicano Family of Los Angeles, 1850–1880," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, III (Spring 1975), 41–58.

[33]Jane Dysart, "Mexican Women in San Antonio, 1830–1860: The Assimilation Process," *Western Historical Quarterly*, VII (1976), 365–375.

[34]Johnny Faragher and Christine Stansell, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail to California and Oregon, 1842–1867," *Feminist Studies*, II (1975), 150–166; John Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven, 1979).

into the Euro-American culture, and refusing to abandon women's traditional work roles. Yet these new images are isolated images, like snapshots of single cultures without the context of relationships among them. Moreover, they remain nineteenth-century images with little attempt to link the nineteenth to the twentieth century. It is a nineteenth-century picture album of women in the West.[35] What we would like to propose here is a new multicultural framework as a focus for western women. Once refocused on cultures, many new insights, approaches, and questions immediately appear. We have chosen migration west; demography on both the rural and the urban frontier; relations among women of different cultures; politics; and occupations as examples of the possibilities for reevaluating the history of women in the West.

[35] Traditional biographies and autobiographies which contribute to this picture album of women are nonetheless valuable and available in relatively large quantity. In addition to works already cited, see two books on pioneer women in New Mexico: Lily Klasner and Eve Ball, eds., *My Girlhood among Outlaws* (Tucson, 1972); and Eve Ball, *Ma'am Jones of the Pecos* (Tucson, 1969). Fabiola Cabeza de Baca writes of four generations of the Cabeza de Baca family living on the Llano Estacado of New Mexico in *We Fed Them Cactus* (Albuquerque, 1954). DeWitt Bodeen and Horace Wyndham have concentrated on biographies of famous western actresses: Bodeen, *Ladies of the Footlights* (Pasadena, 1937); and Wyndham, *The Magnificent Montez* (New York, 1935). Short sketches of professional women in the West include Malcolm H. Clark, Jr., "The Lady and the Law: A Portrait of Mary Leonard," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, LVI (1955), 126–139, concerning the first woman lawyer in Oregon; G. Thomas Edwards, "Dr. Ada M. Weed: Northwest Reformer," *ibid.*, LXXVIII (1977), 5–40, about a doctor and advocate for women's rights; Douglas C. Jones, "Teresa Dean: Lady Correspondent among the Sioux Indians," *Journalism Quarterly*, XLIX (1972), 656–662, about the only woman correspondent to cover the Ghost Dance phenomenon in South Dakota and the aftermath of the Wounded Knee Massacre; James C. Malin, *Doctors, Devils and the Woman* (Lawrence, Kan., 1975), focusing on Sarah C. Hall and the fight to enlarge rights of women generally and in the professions. For a survey of women as journalists in Missouri, see Alma Vaughan, "Pioneer Women of the Missouri Press," *Missouri Historical Review*, LXIV (1970), 289–305. Mildred Crowl Martin, *Chinatown's Angry Angel: The Story of Donaldina Cameron* (Palo Alto, 1977) tells the story of a woman who fought the slave trade in Asian women in San Francisco. Several state history journals have included "First Ladies Series" concerning wives of governors. See particularly "The First Ladies of South Dakota," *South Dakota History*, III (1973), 156–168; and Helen Cannon, "First Ladies of Colorado: Nellie Martin Orman," *Colorado Magazine*, L (1973), 57–65.

Short sketches of western women as well as their recollections have been collected in a number of volumes. See especially Cora M. Beach, *Women of Wyoming* (2 vols., Casper, Wyo., 1927–29); Elinor Bluemel, *One Hundred Years of Colorado Women* (N.p., 1973); Vicky Burgess-Olson, *Sister Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1978); James Day, *et al.*, *Women of Texas* (Waco, 1972); Christiane Fischer, ed., *Let Them Speak for Themselves: Women in the American West* (Hamden, Conn., 1977); Dorothy Gray, *Women of the West* (Millbrae, Calif., 1976); Anne D. Pickrell, *Pioneer Women in Texas* (Austin, 1970); and Elinor Richey, *Eminent Women of the West* (Berkeley, 1975). This list of biographies and vignettes of western women is by no means exhaustive.

The term migration west, indeed the term "West" itself, masks the reality that for many western women the West was North or East. The major nineteenth-century migration westward followed a great increase in literacy rates for women in the Northeast. As a consequence, women left a trail of words behind. The accounts left by Euro-American women going West must number in the thousands. Southern white women and recent European immigrant women were much less literate and left far fewer accounts.[36] Even fewer are the written accounts by Hispanic women who moved north from Mexico and Asian women who later traveled east across the Pacific. Historians may never know what going north meant for Hispanic women of the earlier period but they can still document immigration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through oral history. The moving accounts by Chinese women who arrived at Angel Island in the 1930s indicate the importance of employing oral history to document the recent immigration process for western women.[37]

[36] Maris A. Vinovskis and Richard M. Bernard, "Beyond Catherine Beecher: Female Education in the Antebellum Period," *Signs*, III (1978), 856–869. For an overview of ethnic group settlement on the Great Plains, consult Frederick C. Luebke, "Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains," *Western Historical Quarterly*, VIII (1977), 405–430. Leubke notes that there are almost no studies of Irish immigrants on the plains; similarly, there are few studies focusing on immigrant women. Helen Z. Papanikolas, however, tells the fascinating story of a Greek woman immigrant who became a midwife and legend in Utah in "Magerou, the Greek Midwife," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1970), 50–60. Scattered references to Italian women in the West can be found in Andrew F. Rolle's *The Immigrant Upraised: Italian Adventurers and Colonists in an Expanding America* (Norman, 1968), whereas little or no emphasis is given to German women in Terry G. Jordan's *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin, 1966). Works which provide insight into the western experiences of Scandinavian women immigrants are Janice Reiff Webster, "Domestication and Americanization: Scandinavian Women in Seattle, 1888 to 1900," *Journal of Urban History*, IV (1978), 275–290; Arnold H. Barton, "Scandinavian Immigrant Women's Encounter with America," *Swedish Pioneer History Quarterly*, XXV (1974), 37–42; Theodore Blegen, *Land of Their Choice: The Immigrants Write Home* (Minneapolis, 1955); and Olaf H. Olseth, *Mama Came from Norway* (New York, 1955). Robert E. Levinson provides a good overview of western Jewish settlement in "American Jews in the West," *Western Historical Quarterly*, V (1974), 285–294; while Harold Sharfman presents a patriarchal history in his *Jews on the Frontier* (Chicago, 1977). The *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* frequently publishes articles describing activities and experiences of western Jewish women. See, for example, Al Alschular, "The Colmans and others of Deadwood, South Dakota," IX (1977), 291–298; Henry and Lea Fine, "North Dakota Memories," *ibid.*, 331–340; Alice G. Friedlander, "A Portland Girl on Women's Rights—1893," X (1978), 146–150; and Michael L. Lawson, "Flora Langermann Spiegelberg: Grand Lady of Santa Fe," VIII (1976), 291–308.

[37] Judy Yung, " 'A Bowlful of Tears': Chinese Women Immigrants on Angel Island," *Frontiers*, II (Summer 1977), 52–55. Historical material on Asian women is still scarce, partly because earlier researchers explicitly excluded women. See for example, John

Although the experience of women traveling to a new home was different for each group, accounts of Euro-American women from the nineteenth century may suggest questions to be asked about migration by women of all cultures. These accounts indicate that work roles were often temporarily taken over by women on the way West, but women seldom moved into male work roles permanently.[38] Women with heavy family responsibilities went more reluctantly than daughters, the unmarried, or young married women.[39] Wives may have gone reluctantly because husbands made the decision to move while a wife may have preferred other alternatives, but single women often saw migration as an opportunity to better their condition.[40] The strain of peopling a new frontier may have caused tensions which were resolved by increasing traditional bonds between mothers and daughters. It may have also tightened the bonds of immigrant daughters to families as they moved into wage labor to help support foreign born parents and siblings.[41] Lillian Schlissel has concluded that obedience and obligation "thrust daughters into the only frontier they were to know, the frontier of the wage-working class."[42] For Hispanic women,

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Modell, "Japanese American Family: A Perspective for Future Investigations," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXXVII (1968), 70, who explained that women were omitted in a sample of 1,047 interviews with Issei because men had to confront American institutions to a greater extent than women. A recent exception is Lucie Cheng Hirata, "Chinese Immigrant Women in Nineteenth-Century California," in Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, eds., *Women of America: A History* (Boston, 1979), 223–244. See also the sections on Asian American women in *Bridge: An Asian American Perspective*, VI (Fall-Winter 1978), 16–53, VII (Spring-Summer 1979), 9–48.

[38] Faragher and Stansell, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail," 150–166.

[39] Ruth Barnes Moynihan, "Children and Young People on the Overland Trail," *Western Historical Quarterly*, VI (1975), 279–294; and Lillian Schlissel, "Mothers and Daughters on the Western Frontier," *Frontiers*, III (Summer 1978), 29–33. See also Barbara Laslett, "Social Change and the Family: Los Angeles, California, 1850–1870," *American Sociological Review*, XLII (1977), 268–291. The fictional portrayal of mother-daughter ties by several western authors is perceptively analyzed in Judith Kegan Gardiner, "Wake for Mother: The Maternal Deathbed in Women's Fiction," *Feminist Studies*, IV (1978), 146–165; and Gardiner, "The Heroine as Her Author's Daughter," in Dana V. Hiller and Robin Ann Sheets, eds., *Women and Men: The Consequences of Power* (Cincinnati, 1977), 140–148. For Asian mother-daughter relations, see Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (New York, 1976); and Woon-Ping Chin Holaday, "From Ezra Pound and Maxine Hong Kingston: Expressions of Chinese Thought," *Melus*, V (Summer 1978), 15–24.

[40] Patterson-Black, "Women Homesteaders on the Great Plains Frontier," 67–88.

[41] Elaine Silverman, "In Their Own Words: Mothers and Daughters on the Alberta Frontier, 1890–1929," *Frontiers*, II (Summer 1977), 37–44.

[42] Schlissel, "Mothers and Daughters," 32.

Asian women, and black women who arrived in the West in the largest numbers during the twentieth century, a place in the wage market was even more crucial.[43]

The study of twentieth century immigration history would make the lives of Hispanic and Asian women much more visible in western history. Male-female ratios were high for Asians until after 1910. Then the number and proportion of women increased rapidly and Asian communities became increasingly urban. Today, immigration from most Asian countries is fairly balanced sexually and predominantly urban. With Hispanic immigration, the balance has even swung toward women. Early twentieth century immigration reports show predominantly male groups migrating to the United States from Mexico. That situation had begun to change by World War II. By the 1970s, Hispanic women outnumbered men as newcomers. More than two-thirds of the immigrants from Central and South America were women by 1977. Leaving children to be cared for by other females in their extended families, women came north by the thousands seeking urban wages as household and garment workers. They sent money home to support households left behind much as men had done earlier.[44]

Like reevaluation of the process by which women migrated west, demography or the study of population change can be an essential check on distorted western history. Density of population, gender balance, life cycle (especially marriage, age, and fertility) can tell us much about women's lives in the West, question old interpretations, and give direction to new studies. There have been almost no careful demographic studies on the far western states, but there have been studies on the rural frontier, especially for the West North Central states. Most of the studies deal with the nineteenth century, and many of them use only one census year rather than following a process through several decades. Nevertheless, they provide important information on women in the West.

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[43] See, for example, Maria Linda Apodaca, "The Chicana Woman: An Historical Materialist Perspective," *Latin American Perspectives*, IV (Winter & Spring 1977), 70–89; various essays in *Asian Women*; and Sue Armitage, Theresa Banfield, and Sarah Jacobus, "Black Women and Their Communities in Colorado," *Frontiers*, II (Summer 1977), 45–51.

[44] Lucy M. Cohen, "The Female Factor in Resettlement," *Sociology*, XIV (Sept./Oct. 1977), 27.

Demographic studies do not support the common assumption made most often about women in the West, that they were scarce with single men far outnumbering them. Rather, studies show that gender balance differed according to area and time, indicating that the above generalization must always be qualified. Studies of the rural frontier (usually defined as an area with a density of two to five people per square mile) from Indiana to Nebraska show that these areas were most often settled by families and that there was not a large excess of single men. In studying a sample from 1840 to 1860 in a series of western frontiers, Jack Eblen concluded that not more than 25 percent of the adult males were single.[45] In Nebraska, in 1850, newly settled areas had a ratio of three men to two women.[46] Studies of Kansas and Iowa indicate a similar ratio.[47] While the earliest mining frontiers in Colorado and California do confirm a great sexual imbalance (23 to 1 in California and 34 to 1 in Colorado in 1860), this condition disappeared rather quickly. By 1870, the ratio of men to women in California was two to one. The same ratio existed in 1870 for the state of Oregon.[48] Because of the settled Hispanic population and the family migrations of Mormons, New Mexico and Utah had a sexually balanced population during most of the nineteenth century.[49] In other far western states, a gender imbalance still existed in 1870. The proportion was 4 to 1 in Arizona, 5 to 1 in Nevada, 6 to 1 in Wyoming, and 8 to 1 in Idaho and Montana. This great disparity by state indicates that a tendency still common in discussions of women in the West is to make a generalization based on an area or a time when males did predominate and then to exclude other areas and times as not typical of the West.

[45] Jack E. Eblen, "An Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Frontier Populations," *Demography*, II (1965), 413.

[46] David J. Wishart, "Age and Sex Composition of the Population on the Nebraska Frontier, 1860–1880," *Nebraska History*, LIV (1973), 109.

[47] James C. Malin, "The Turnover of Farm Population in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, IV (1935), 339–372; and Mildred Throne, "A Population Study of an Iowa County in 1850," *Iowa Journal of History*, LVII (1959), 305–330.

[48] Larson, "Women's Role in the American West," 5.

[49] *Ibid.* Orval F. Baldwin II, "A Mormon Bride in the Great Migration," *Nebraska History*, LVIII (1977), 53–71, describes the migration of 1852 when ten thousand people, most of them in family groups, migrated en masse to Utah. For later sexual balance, see Dean L. May, "People on the Mormon Frontier: Kanab's Families of 1874," *Journal of Family History*, I (1976), 169–192.

Demographic facts also disprove generalizations related to sexual imbalance. While births tended to be rather balanced in the second generation on the frontier, economic changes could affect the normal process of equalization of the sexes. Thus, a study of Iowa showed that the number of single males increased rather than decreased in the decades after settlement.[50] Migration of males to work in predominantly male industries or in agriculture may have changed the sex balance fairly drastically not only among immigrant groups like the Chinese or the Mexicans, but also among the native born population.[51]

A third set of generalizations often made about women in the West, which demographic studies have qualified, is that because they were so out-numbered by males, they invariably married, usually younger than women in the East, and quickly remarried when widowed. By 1900, at least 1 in 4 women between 25 and 29 remained unmarried in the Far West. California had one of the highest rates of single women aged 25 to 29 in the country (33 percent), much higher than the national average (27.5 percent). On the other hand, New Mexico had a low 12 percent of women remaining single in this age group in 1900.[52] One study for Texas in 1850 indicates that even in the early settlement process many young people may have remained unmarried.[53] Such differences reflect a great variety in life styles of women in different areas.

If some women did not marry at all, others did not marry

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[50] Rodney O. Davis, "Prairie Emporium: Clarence, Iowa, 1860–1880: A Study in Population Trends," *Mid America*, LI (1969), 133.

[51] Mexican immigrants had a sex ratio of 135.8 males to 100 females in the West North Central States in 1930. Wilson Cape, "Population Changes in the West North Central States, 1900–1930," *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, VI (1932), 280. In Texas in 1910, the ratio among Chinese immigrants was 4,476 males to 100 females. Edward J. M. Rhoads, "The Chinese in Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXXI (1977), 5. See also Norman S. Haynor and Charles N. Reynolds, "Chinese Family Life in America," *American Sociological Review*, II (1937), 630–637; and Rose Hum Lee, "The Recent Immigrant Chinese Families of the San Francisco-Oakland Area," *Journal of Marriage and Family Living*, XVIII (1956), 14–24. In California, first generation East Indian males married Hispanic women, but after immigration of East Indian women was allowed, the next generation married back into the East Indian culture. Husuf Dadabhay, "Circuitious Assimilation among Rural Hindustanis in California," *Social Forces*, XXXIII (1954), 138–141. See also *Asian Women* (Berkeley, 1971).

[52] Larson, "Women's Role," 9.

[53] Blaine T. Williams, "The Frontier Family: Demographic Fact and Historical Myth," in Harold M. Hollingsworth and Sandra L. Myres, eds., *Essays on the American West* (Austin, 1969), 55.

until they were much older than has been assumed. Many of the couples settling on farms were between 30 and 40.[54] The study of Texas in 1850 showed the average age for women to marry as 22 and the average age for men as 26.[55] The presence of eligible partners and presumably even the availability of land were not the only factors in determining the age at marriage in the West.

Although these western women may not have married as young as once assumed, two earlier generalizations seem to hold true—that women on the frontier had higher fertility rates than women behind the frontier, and that there were few older women in frontier areas.[56] These facts indicate that the subjects of childbearing and childrearing in the rural West are important and unexplored areas needing examination. What did it mean for the frontier mother to have no older women nearby to assist in child birth and child care? Such generational discontinuity must have had a great affect on the first women in the West and may have affected the second generation as well. With more children to care for, both mothers and daughters had an extra burden without grandmothers. The presence of an older female generation and an extended family pattern for many Native American and Hispanic women may have made their experiences quite different from this first generation of eastern settlers and from later Hispanic and Asian immigrants.

There is some evidence that fertility rates may have increased rather than declined once an area became improved in the region behind the frontier. Thus, rural women in newly settled areas behind the frontier deserve more attention than they have received from historians.[57] Perhaps the frontier still exerted pressures on mothers, pressures no longer present for the daughters; or the availability of nearby land combined with improved farms made it desirable for women to have more children. Once land became less available, apparently the fertility rates dropped. Studies indicate that in some areas in the

[54]Throne, "Population Study," 305–330.

[55]Williams, "The Frontier Family," 64.

[56]John Modell, "Family and Fertility on the Indiana Frontier, 1820," *American Quarterly*, XXIII (1971), 625; and Richard A. Easterlin, "Factors in the Decline of Farm Family Fertility in the United States: Some Preliminary Research Results," *Journal of American History*, LXIII (1976), 603.

[57]*Ibid.*, 604.

late nineteenth century, more children may have remained on the farms and parents may have spaced the birth of their children more closely.[58] Finally, at least one study shows that widows did not invariably remarry, especially when they held land in rural western areas.[59]

These studies can, of course, only question older generalizations. Before a new framework can be established, far more demographic analysis is necessary. But the studies cited above do indicate the large numbers of women present on the rural frontier, the variations in their life cycles, and the importance of future studies being well grounded in demography.

In addition to questioning old generalizations, demographic data on women of different ethnic groups can be utilized more effectively. The Spanish government conducted censuses in the late eighteenth century which can provide information on the living arrangements of early Hispanic women, and American censuses exist from 1850.[60] There were separate censuses taken of Native Americans in 1890 which tell much about women's life styles.[61] Other sources exist to identify the location of women of different cultures. There is no reason for historians to assume that the first Euro-American woman in an area was more important as a woman than the thousands of Native American women or Mexicanas who were already there. Estimates of the number of criollas, mestizas, and Native American women are available for the early nineteenth century and need to be refined.[62] It is not enough to write about Sister Monica and the French nuns who arrived in Arizona in 1870. We need to know about the culture of the hundreds of Hispanic women already there, 79 of whom entered the convent which the nuns opened that year.[63]

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[58]Susan E. Bloomberg, *et al.*, "A Census Probe into Nineteenth Century Family History: Southern Michigan, 1850–1880," *Journal of Social History*, V (1971), 26–45.

[59]Williams, "The Frontier Family," 59.

[60]Gilberto Espinosa and Tibo J. Chávez, *El Rio Abajo* (Pampa, Tex., 1967) contains an example of one of these early censuses.

[61]U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed* (Washington, D.C., 1894). Earlier census returns often included some of the Native Americans, and mission records also included numbers for early settlements.

[62]Oscar Martínez, "On the Size of the Chicano Population: New Estimates, 1850–1900," *Aztlán*, VI (1975), 43–67.

[63]According to the *Arizona Citizen*, Oct. 4, 1879, p. 4, Tucson had a population of seven to eight thousand by 1879, three-fourths of it Mexicano, of which almost half

Demography can also remind historians that the rural frontier was not necessarily the destination of migrants to the West. Many women headed for the urban rather than the rural frontier. If a rural frontier is defined by low population density, an urban area is defined most simply by its high density. The importance of towns in settling the West has often been noted by historians but the relation of women to this urban process has seldom been studied. Gender is a basic element in any study of the urban process.[64] As early as 1899, Adna Weber noted that women migrated over short distances more often than men, particularly to nearby towns, and had longer lives than men once they arrived.[65] Sixty years later, Richard C. Wade, in *The Urban Frontier*, offered a view of the upper-middle-class woman's life in western cities.[66] Yet few historians have followed Wade's example in describing the lives of urban western women, and no theoretical framework has been developed which would include women as an integral part of urbanization in the West. If the Pacific states have been more urban than the nation as a whole since the 1860s, as Earl Pomeroy notes, then women's urban history should certainly begin with these cities, even if the ratio of women to men in the major far western cities was low.[67] A state which had a predominance of men over women could still have cities in which proportionately more women than men lived.

The presence of "female cities" in the West—where females outnumbered males or where women were a higher percentage than in the state as a whole—needs to be studied. By 1900, St. Louis had a balanced sex ratio; Denver had 99 women for every 100 men and Los Angeles 97. For reasons we do not know, the

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must have been Mexicanas. In the Euro-American population there were very few women. Josephene B. Hughes, who arrived shortly after the nuns, also opened a school in 1873 for young Mexicanas. The role of nuns as teachers and health-care workers needs careful reevaluation. Much material is available. See Beth Hill, "The Sisters of St. Ann," *Alaska Journal*, VII (1977), 40–45; Sytha Motto, "The Sisters of Charity," *New Mexico Historical Review*, LII (1977), 228–236; Thomas Richter, ed., "Sister Catherine Mollon's Journal," *New Mexico Historical Review*, LII (1977), 135–155, 237–250.

[64] Eric E. Lampard, "The Dimensions of Urban History: A Footnote to the 'Urban Crisis,'" *Pacific Historical Review*, XXXIX (1970), 272.

[65] Adna Weber, *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century* (1895; reprinted, Ithaca, N.Y., 1965), 276.

[66] Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier* (1959; reprinted, Chicago, 1964), 207–209.

[67] Earl Pomeroy, "The Urban Frontier of the Far West," in John G. Clark, ed., *The Frontier Challenge: Responses to the Trans-Mississippi West* (Lawrence, Kan., 1971), 13.

male fraction of the population increased rather than decreased between 1900 and 1910 in the major far western cities but it again dropped rapidly after 1910.[68] In the West North Central states, Kansas City, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Des Moines became "female cities" between 1900 and 1930.[69]

Long before 1930, women were abandoning the country for the city in the Far West. In the nineteenth century, summer trips to San Francisco by the wives of army officers brought them into an urban center where, according to tourists, women seemed to display much more independence than women in the East.[70] When Gertrude Atherton began to describe women in her hometown of San Francisco at the end of the nineteenth century, easterners found her writing obscene and immoral. She wrote about independent young women who flaunted Victorian values.[71] Were these western urban women the same in their marital relations, life styles, and morals as women in the East? Or was Atherton's life and the lives of her heroines reflective of a different society in the West? Did these women already display a cluster of attitudes which foretold a western view of morals, which as one historian has recently suggested, later became the vanguard for the rest of the nation.[72]

Not only urban but small town life remains unexplored in the history of women in the West. Few historians have attempted to explain the effect which ecological changes, like lumbering in northern New Mexico or mining in southern Colorado and Arizona, had on women's lives.[73] A woman's life in a twentieth-century company mining town in the West may have been very different from either city or farm life. Agnes Smedley, in *Daughter of Earth*, gave a devastating view of women's lives in

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[68] Figures in Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850–1930* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 82–83.

[69] Cape, "Population Changes," 281.

[70] Oscar Lewis, ed., *This Was San Francisco* (New York, 1962), 167–254.

[71] Richey, "The Flappers Were Her Daughters," 4–10, 60–63. For an argument that the Portland Community was conservative, see Paul G. Merriam, "Urban Elite in the Far West: Portland, Oregon, 1870–1890," *Arizona and the West*, XVIII (1976), 41–52.

[72] D'Ann Campbell, "Was the West Different? Values and Attitudes of Young Women in 1943," *Pacific Historical Review*, XLVII (1978), 453–463.

[73] Olen E. Leonard, *The Role of the Land Grant in the Social Organization and Social Process of a Spanish-American Village in New Mexico* (Albuquerque, 1970), 150. Marriott, *María, the Potter of San Ildefonso*, describes the disruption caused by lumbering, one result of which was to encourage women to make pottery for the market.

Trinidad, Colorado, and Raton, New Mexico, but no one has tried to gauge its accuracy.[74] Only recently has there been sufficient interest in examining the lives of Chicanas who won the mine strike portrayed in the movie *Salt of the Earth.*[75] We still do not know how Chicanas in other mining towns lived or responded to conditions where wage labor existed primarily for males.

Black women in the West have also become increasingly urban during the twentieth century. Eliza, a cook who followed Elizabeth Custer west to Kansas after the Civil War, complained that she missed the picnics, the church socials, and the burials of the black community.[76] One look at the census records will explain why she was lonely. There were many black women in Louisiana, Texas, Missouri, and Arkansas: state estimates for 1900 range from 80,000 to 328,000 for these states. As one looks west, however, the number of black women drops and the proportion of black males goes up. In Kansas and Oklahoma, where many black families homesteaded after the Civil War, there were only 25,000 and 27,000 black women, respectively. California and Colorado had 4,000 and 5,000. The rest of the far western states had less than a thousand black women and the ratio of men to women reached a high of 281 men per 100 women in Arizona where many black soldiers and cowboys worked.[77]

Arizona is thus clearly not the place to look for black women in the Far West either in 1900 or later, although by 1930 there were over 4,000 there. The predominantly female black population in Colorado was also only slightly over 6,000 by 1930. The

[74] Agnes Smedley, *Daughter of Earth* (New York, 1973), 100–101, for Trinidad; and 123–136 for Raton, which she calls "Tercio" in her account.

[75] Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt, ed., *Salt of the Earth* (New York, 1978) contains the film script and a commentary. For other accounts of mining towns, see Elizabeth Jameson, "Imperfect Unions: Class and Gender in Cripple Creek, 1894–1904," *Frontiers*, I (Spring 1976), 89–117; Philip Stevenson, "Deporting Jesus," *Nation*, CXLIII (July 18, 1936), 67–69; and Margerie Lloyd, "This Was Madrid," *New Mexico Magazine*, XLII (Nov./Dec. 1964), 14–16, 44.

[76] Elizabeth B. Custer, *Following the Guidon* (Norman, 1966), 238. Earlier black families in the West were often enslaved, killed, or forced to flee. Daniel F. Littlefield and Mary Ann Littlefield, "The Beams Family: Free Blacks in Indian Territory," *Journal of Negro History*, VI (1976), 16–35.

[77] The statistics on black population are from Charles E. Hall, *Negroes in the United States* (1935; reprinted, New York, 1969).

place to look for black women in the Far West is in California where the population reached 10,000 by 1910, almost 19,000 by 1920, and nearly 41,000 by 1930. And the place to look for black women in the Far West is in the cities. In 1930, black women in Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma were still 60 to 80 percent rural, and in Missouri and Kansas only 60 to 80 percent urban. In most Mountain and Pacific states (with the exception of Arizona and New Mexico where a majority of black women remained rural), the percentage reached 73 to 90 percent urban, with Colorado and California having the most urban population. Oral histories being conducted in Colorado are beginning to show the important role of women in small black communities, and in the highly segregated existence black families faced in cities like Denver.[78] Particularly after 1930, the historical frontier for black women lies in cities like Los Angeles.[79]

Even more neglected than demography as a subject of historical inquiry are relationships among women of different cultures. Euro-American women who lived among Native American women as captives, missionaries, army and trading women, and anthropologists have left numerous if not unbiased accounts of their experiences. Captivity was perhaps the closest prolonged contact of Euro-American women with Native American cultures. Women were often allowed to live when men were killed because they were noncombatants who might be ransomed or who could perhaps be put to work without danger. Long before the Euro-American pioneers crossed the Mississippi

[78] Armitage, Banfield, and Jacobus, "Black Women and Their Communities in Colorado," 45–52; and George H. Wayne, "Negro Migration and Colonization in Colorado, 1870–1930," *Journal of the West,* XV (1976), 102–120. Works by William Loren Katz, *The Black West* (New York, 1971); Glen Schwendermann, "Nicodemus: Negro Haven on the Solomon," *Kansas Historical Quarterly,* XXXIV (1968), 10–31; Mozell C. Hill, "The All-Negro Communities of Oklahoma: The Natural History of a Social Movement," *Journal of Negro History,* XXXI (1946), 254–268; and W. Sherman Savage, *Blacks in the West* (Westport, Conn., 1976) discuss the hopes and motivations of western migrants. For small town Texas, see Adah DeBlanc Simon, "The Discovery of Being Black: A Recollection," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly,* LXXVI (1973), 440–447.

[79] Julia Kirk Blackwelder, "Women in the Work Force: Atlanta, New Orleans, and San Antonio, 1930 to 1940," *Journal of Urban History,* IV (1978), 331–358; Lawrence B. de Graff, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890–1930," *Pacific Historical Review,* XXXIX (1970), 323–352, does not mention women. An article on Los Angeles which examines the social role of black women is badly needed.

these contacts had given rise to a large literature of captivity narratives, largely stylized accounts of indignities.[80] Some of these accounts were not told by the women captives themselves but by military officers, publicists, or others interested in convincing the public that any policy of leniency toward Indians was mistaken.[81] Others, however, are accounts by women themselves. Awareness of context, literary and political styles, and differences in Native American tribes is essential for any effective analysis of these accounts, but they remain an important source for cross-cultural contact. Some Euro-American women emphasized the cruelty of Native American women to those captured; other accounts, like those of the Oatman girls in Arizona, indicated that relations between women could be very good when they worked together in the fields.[82] Many difficulties of women prisoners may have stemmed from life styles rather than simply being prisoners. Euro-American women were often expected to carry water and gather wood, chores which they could not or would not perform as efficiently as was expected of them. Studying patterns of expectation and response may be possible after careful examination of documents. Also, times changed. Indians who were friendly in the 1840s or 1850s were not as friendly after more contact with eastern settlers, a fact which needs to be considered in any analysis of Indian-white relations.[83]

Even more helpful, however, would be an attempt to compare the experiences of Native American and Euro-American women caught in the cross-fire between desperate warriors and determined soldiers. To juxtapose, for example, the account by the Norwegian Guri Olsdatter, who escaped capture but left letters describing with horror her escape, against the account by the Cheyenne woman Iron Teeth, who saw soldiers killing women and children, may give a more balanced idea of the fortunes of

[80] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, Conn., 1973).

[81] Lonnie J. White, "White Women Captives of Southern Plains Indians, 1866–1875," *Journal of the West*, VIII (1969), 327–354.

[82] A. L. Kroeber and Clifton B. Kroeber, "Olive Oatman's First Account of Captivity," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XLI (1962), 309–317.

[83] White, "White Women Captives," 333, 342; Moynihan, "Children and Young People on the Overland Trail," 279–294.

women caught in the war zone than a view from only the side of Euro-American women.[84] Comparisons of how the women of white, Native American, and Mexican cultures were treated by men of war, how warfare affected their lives, and how they explained such actions will tell us more about the women and men of each culture than looking only at white women as captives.

Peaceful contacts between white women and Native American women need to be explored more carefully. Mormon women were one large group of white women who had contact for over a century with Native American women in the West. Although Mormon women did not function as official missionaries in the nineteenth century, their interactions with Native Americans were often important for peaceful relations. They acted as doctors and midwives to Native American women and took Indian children into their families. Adopting Native American orphans was not always a pleasure for Mormon women but most considered it a duty. These children were usually raised as a part of the family, although they often died young because of the changes of diet and life style.[85] From these contacts and others, Mormon women learned Indian dialects. Women performed an important role in feeding visiting delegations: visiting whites might be told to wait while this important courtesy was completed, and women had often to deal with the demands of small groups of Native American males who overstepped the bounds of courtesy. It seems evident that Mormon women preferred dealing with Indian women rather than men. Women normally repaid Mormon sisters for food by carrying water or helping with chores while men simply expected to be fed. Once relief socieities were formed in the 1860s, women developed programs to help Indian women in their regions. Such missionary work contributed to serious splits in Indian groups and

[84]Theodore C. Blegen, "Immigrant Women and the American Frontier," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records*, V (1930), 26–29; and Thomas B. Marquis, "Red Ripe's Squaw: Recollections of a Long Life," *Century Magazine*, CXVIII (June 1929), 201–202, 206–207.

[85]Elizabeth Wood Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Succession on a Journey through Utah to Arizona* (Salt Lake City, 1974), 13, 33; Juanita Brooks, "Indian Relations on the Mormon Frontier," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, VII (1939), 27–47; and Beverly P. Smaby, "The Mormons and the Indians: Conflicting Ecological Systems in the Great Basin," *American Studies*, XVI (1975), 35–48.

sometimes provoked hostility, but some Native American women undoubtedly welcomed the efforts of the Mormon sisters.[86]

Mormon women also went into Native American villages to minister to Indian women as doctors and midwives. The church encouraged medical training for women and was anxious to convince Indians that their medicine was more powerful than that of the Indians. One Mormon woman returned elated after spending several days treating an Indian woman because of the good effect this was expected to have on relations with the tribe.[87] These scattered examples indicate that a reexamination of the voluminous material on Mormon women would reveal additional cross-cultural contacts.

Although numerous published accounts exist by women of both Catholic and Protestant missions in the West, their role in cross-cultural relations has yet to be examined critically. This missionary work was, of course, a continuation of work done east of the Mississippi. Published accounts exist from the 1830s for the West, many by women who were teachers or wives of male missionaries but who functioned as essential members of the overall missionary programs.[88]

Some early army women, like Mary H. Eastman, wrote books about the cultures of the Native Americans among whom they

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[86]Leonard J. Arrington, "Blessed Damozels: Women in Mormon History," *Dialogue,* VI (1971), 24.

[87]Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes,* 38.

[88]See, for example, Cornelia Pelham, *Letters on the Chickasaw and Osage Missions* (Boston, 1833); and T. F. Morrison, "Mission Neosho: the First Kansas Mission," *Kansas Historical Quarterly,* IV (1935), 227–234. Standard sources for the Oregon missions are two works by Clifford Drury: *First White Women over the Rockies* (3 vols., Glendale, Calif., 1963–66); and *Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and the Opening of Old Oregon* (Glendale, Calif., 1973). The experiences of Margaret Jewett Bailey at the Oregon missions is explored in Janice K. Duncan, " 'Ruth Rover'—Vindicative Falsehood or Historical Truth?" *Journal of the West,* XII (1973), 240–253. See also Michael C. Coleman, "Christianizing and Americanizing the Nez Perce: Sue L. McBeth and Her Attitudes to the Indians," *Journal of Presbyterian History,* LIII (1975), 339–361. Insight into women's missionary work elsewhere in the West can be gained from the following: Elizabeth H. Hunt, ed., "Two Letters from Pine Ridge Mission," *Chronicles of Oklahoma,* L (1972), 219–225; Amy Passmore Hurt, "Life among the Apaches," *New Mexico Magazine,* XL (March 1962), 15–17, 35; Lilah Denton Lindsey, "Memories of the Indian Territory Mission Field," *Chronicles of Oklahoma,* XXXVI (1958), 181–198; Sister Blandina Segale, *At the End of the Santa Fe Trail* (Columbus, Ohio, 1932); and Sytha Motto, *No Banners Waving* (New York, 1966), 38–39. For an interesting account of a black woman's experiences as missionary to Hawaii, see John A. Andrew III, "Betsey Stockton: Stranger in a Strange Land," *Journal of Presbyterian History,* LII (1974), 157–166.

lived. Many, like Martha Summerhayes, wrote memoirs which included references to Native American women. Alice Blackwood Baldwin, stationed with her husband at Fort Wingate, New Mexico, in 1868 noted that she made firm friends with nearby Navajo women and also established friendly relations with Hispanic women living in proximity to the fort.[89] Women traders, like Louisa Wade Wetherill, were early ethnologists. After the army and the trading women came women anthropologists whose work among Native Americans has influenced greatly the entire historical picture of Native American women.[90]

References to cross-cultural contacts in other situations need to be reexamined. Dee Brown, for example, who seldom mentioned Native American women in *The Gentle Tamers*, included one incident where Euro-American women pleaded with men of their party to save a starving Indian girl. The men (with

[89] Mary H. Eastman, *Dahcotah; or, Life and Legends of the Sioux around Fort Snelling* (New York, 1849); Martha Summerhayes, *Vanished Arizona: Recollections of My Army Life* (1908; reprinted, Glorieta, N.M. 1976); and Robert C. and Eleanor R. Carriker, eds., *An Army Wife on the Frontier: The Memoirs of Alice Blackwood Baldwin, 1867–1877* (Salt Lake City. 1975), 68, 79. Among other valuable memoirs written by military women are the following: Ellen M. Biddle, *Reminiscences of a Soldier's Wife* (Philadelphia, 1907); Mrs. Orsemus B. Boyd, *Cavalry Life in Tent and Field* (New York, 1894); Frances Carrington, *My Army Life and the Fort Phil Kearney Massacre* (Philadelphia, 1910); Lydia Spencer Lane, *I Married a Soldier* (Albuquerque, 1964); Sandra L. Myres, ed., *Cavalry Wife: The Diary of Eveline M. Alexander, 1866–1867* (College Station, Texas, 1977); Frances Roe, *Army Letters from an Officer's Wife* (New York, 1909); Mrs. Hal Russell, "Memoirs of Marian Russell," *Colorado Magazine*, XX (1943), 81–94, 140–154, 181–196, 226–238, XXI (1944), 29–37, 62–74, 101–112; and Teresa Viele, *Following the Drum: A Glimpse of Frontier Life* (New York, 1846). In addition to *Following the Guidon*, Elizabeth B. Custer wrote two books: *"Boots and Saddles," or Life in Dakota with General Custer* (1885; Norman, 1961); and *Tenting on the Plains, or General Custer in Kansas and Texas* (1889; Norman, 1971). Merrill J. Mattes tells of a frontier officer's wife in Wyoming and Montana in *Indians, Infants, and Infantry: Andrew and Elizabeth Burt on the Frontier* (Denver, 1960); while John R. Sibbald provides a summary of the lives of army women, including information on laundresses, in "Camp Followers All: Army Women of the West," *American West*, III (Spring 1966), 56–67. Other works which provide some insight into relations between Anglo women and Native American women include Donald K. Adams, ed., "Journal of Ada A. Vogdes, 1868–1871," *Montana*, XIII (Summer 1963), 2–17; Catharine Weaver Collins," An Army Wife Comes West," *Colorado Magazine*, XXXI (1954), 241–273; and Alice M. Shields, "Army Life on the Wyoming Frontier," *Annals of Wyoming*, XIII (1941), 331–343.

[90] Frances Gillmore and Louisa Wade Wetherill, *Traders to the Navajos: The Story of the Wetherills of Kayenta* (Albuquerque, 1953); and Hilda Faunce, *Desert Wife* (Boston, 1934). We have made no attempt to review the vast amount of material written by women anthropologists, but several studies are especially valuable. See Laura Thompson, "Exploring American Indian Communities in Depth," in Peggy Golde, ed., *Women in the Field: Anthropological Experiences* (Chicago, 1970), 47–66; Margaret Mead, *Blackberry Winter* (New York, 1972); and Helen Addison Howard, "Literary Translators and Interpreters of Indian Songs," *Journal of the West*, XII (1973), 214–217.

one dissenting vote) determined to abandon the girl and the women stayed behind for a while to nurse her. Later one man went back and shot the girl.[91] Such incidents tell us a considerable amount about the difficulty of practicing female charity in situations dominated by male decisions. On the other hand, Dee Brown omitted a significant incident related by Martha Summerhayes in her memoir of army life. She described a visit from Native American women who brought a cradle board for her firstborn, cuddled the child, and then placed it gently in the cradle board.[92] Summerhayes noted that these were the "important" women in the tribe, but did not comment upon the expectations of these women. Did they expect sororal relations similar to the fraternal relations sometimes developed between male chiefs and officers?

Relations between Native American women and Hispanic women varied by area and circumstance. In some New Mexico villages, for example, Native Americans and Hispanos merged their cultures and intermarried forming an early Chicano population. In others, Native Americans and Hispanos remained separate and continued to identify primarily with one or the other culture.[93] Class may have cut across cultures bringing the rich Hispanic woman closer to wealthy American born women or an Indian woman with high status in her community than to poor Hispanic sisters.

Hispanic traders, cooks, *curanderas*, and laundresses also interacted with American born women. Many Native Americans and Mexicanas sold or traded with American women in the nineteenth century and some of these commercial relations can still be traced. Native American women and Mexicanas taught Americanas about the use of herbs which they often collected and sold. Agnes Cleaveland, in *No Life for a Lady*, described

[91]Brown, *Gentle Tamers*, 217. See Fred Lockley, "Recollections of Benjamin Franklin Bonney," *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly*, XXIV (1923), 50–51, for the original account.

[92]Summerhayes, *Vanished Arizona*, 112–113.

[93]Evon Z. Vogt and John M. Roberts, "A Study of Values," *Scientific American*, CXCV (July 1956), 25–32, remains one of the best attempts to compare values of different southwestern cultures, but it does not explore gender differences or change over time. For cultural contact, see Marta Weigle, ed., *Hispanic Villages of Northern New Mexico* (1935; reprinted, Santa Fe, 1975). Military pension records housed in the National Archives contain information relating to intermarriage, particularly marriages involving Euro-American men and Hispanic women.

herself working under the direction of a Mexicana who lived at her ranch to save the gangrened arm of a man. Work relations can be traced through oral histories of both employers and the employed. Questions of this type may lead not only to more careful analysis of interactions but also to greater precision in describing various cultures and how they changed. None of the cultures was timeless. They all changed in some ways over time.[94]

If relations among women of different cultures have been neglected, the politics of middle-class women in the West certainly has not. Suffrage has consistently engaged the interest of historians for almost a decade because its progress seems unique in the West. By 1914, women had gained suffrage in ten of the eleven states in the Far West and the Territory of Alaska. Such a clearcut western success in electoral politics at a time when women's suffrage was receiving resounding defeats in the East was certain to evoke attempts at explanation. State studies have been published on some aspects of the suffrage battle for all of the western suffrage states with the exception of Oregon, Nevada, and the wayward New Mexico which did not endorse woman suffrage until 1920.[95]

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[94] Despite her negative stereotyping, Susan E. Wallace, in *The Land of the Pueblos* (New York, 1888), 68, has a fine description of the Santa Fe washerwomen. Cleaveland, *No Life for a Lady*, 147–148.

[95] Alan P. Grimes, *The Puritan Ethic and Woman Suffrage* (New York, 1967); and T. A. Larson, "Woman Suffrage in Western America," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1970), 7–19, have attempted to survey the entire West, but neither are detailed studies. T. A. Larson, "Dolls, Vassals, and Drudges—Pioneer Women in the West," *Western Historical Quarterly*, III (1972), 5–16, is primarily a study of Wyoming and Utah. For studies of individual states consult the following: *Wyoming*—T. A. Larson, "Woman Suffrage in Wyoming," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, LVI (1965), 57–66; *Utah*—Thomas G. Alexander, "An Experiment in Progressive Legislation: The Granting of Woman Suffrage in Utah in 1870," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1970), 20–30; Jean Bickmore White, "Woman's Place Is in the Constitution: The Struggle for Equal Rights in Utah in 1895," in Thomas G. Alexander, ed., *Essays on the American West, 1973–1974* (Provo, 1975), 81–104; and Beverly Beeton, "Woman Suffrage in Territorial Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXXVI (1978), 100–120; *Colorado*—Billie Barnes Jensen, "Colorado Woman Suffrage Campaigns of the 1870's," *Journal of the West*, XII (1973), 254–271; and Jensen, "Let the Women Vote," *Colorado Magazine* XLI (1964), 13–25; *Idaho*—T. A. Larson, "The Women's Rights Movement in Idaho," *Idaho Yes*, XVI (Spring 1972), 2–15, 18–19; "Idaho's Role in America's Woman Suffrage Crusade," *Idaho Yes*, XVIII (Spring 1974), 2–15; *Washington*—T. A. Larson, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Washington," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, LXVII (1976), 49–62; *California*—Ronald Schaffer, "The Problem of Consciousness in the Woman Suffrage Movement: A California Perspective," *Pacific Historical Review*, XLV (1976), 469–493; and Jean Loewy, "Katherine Philips Edson and the California Suffragette Movement,

There are three ways in which historians have interpreted the success of women's suffrage in the West: through analysis of economics, of ideas, and of political structures. Rather surprisingly, few historians have looked carefully at economics. The history of the West as a whole has had few Marxist interpreters. The weighing of economic considerations, except the availability of land and water, does not occur often in accounts of the West as a crucial factor in historical change. It has sometimes been argued that women were scarce, hence their economic value was greater; or that frontier women participated more than eastern women in agricultural production, but this argument is most often made as an assumption rather than as part of a thorough analysis. T. A. Larson dismissed out of hand the idea of frontier partnership in production with a reference to Abigail Scott Duniway's complaint that farmers were killing their wives with neglect and overwork. Even in Utah, where the link between the economic importance of Mormon women and the support which the Mormon church gave women's suffrage seems most evident, that link is not discussed by historians. Most historians prefer to discuss suffrage in the context of social relations or ideology.[96]

Ideology was, for a long time, the favorite explanation for western suffrage. Early accounts of western suffrage often assumed a positive frontier ideology as the cause. In the West, a "frontier spirit" promoted a sense of equality, of chivalry, or of women's role as "civilizer." This frontier spirit has been notoriously difficult to document and few recent historians have attempted to do so. Rather, they have usually questioned these assumptions and, when looking at ideology, have tended to find

1919–1920," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XLVII (1968), 343–350; *Oregon*—Abigail Scott Duniway, *Path Breaking: An Autobiographical History of the Equal Suffrage Movement in Pacific Coast States* (1914; reprinted, New York, 1971) remains the best available source; *Arizona*—Meridith Snapp, "Defeat the Democrats: The Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage in Arizona, 1914 and 1916," *Journal of the West*, XIV (1975), 131–159; *Montana*—Ronald Schaffer, "The Montana Woman Suffrage Campaign, 1911–14," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, LV (1964), 9–15; T. A. Larson, "Montana Women and the Battle for the Ballot," *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*, XXIII (Jan. 1973), 24–41; John C. Board, "Jeannette Rankin: The Lady from Montana," *ibid.*, XVII (July 1967), 2–17; *New Mexico*—the best source is Ida Husted Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage* (6 vols., New York, 1969), VI, 434–439.

[96]Larson, "Dolls, Vassals, and Drudges," 13. Leonard Arrington, "The Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women," *Western Humanities Review* IX (1955), 145–164, does not relate economic roles to political participation.

more conservative attitudes involved—as ideological underpinnings for suffrage in the West. A few have considered western progressive ideology as a positive force and recently Ronald Schaffer, in looking at California, has stressed the importance of ideological change for suffrage tactics. In California, suffragists developed a new belief that only if women themselves wanted to vote could suffrage be obtained and a campaign was explicitly designed to inculcate that belief in masses of California women.[97]

More often, however, historians have looked carefully at western political structures for clues to the success of suffrage. One of the most important points made by T. A. Larson and others in their examination of early suffrage is that small elite groups of males were most influential in the nineteenth-century territories which finally adopted suffrage. There was a strong movement in a number of territories for suffrage: in most it failed. In Montana, Utah, and Idaho, where it succeeded, religious and party politics most often determined success. The fluid political situation in the West made suffrage a possibility at a time when it could not be considered in the East.[98]

How the masses of western men reacted to demands for suffrage became much more important when state suffrage became an issue. Third party movements like the Populists and Progressives, general discontent or political apathy, the position of unions on suffrage, temperance issues, rural-urban splits, immigrants, and religious differences, all affected campaigns for state suffrage. What seems to have occurred in the West, earlier than in the East, was an urban swing to support suffrage which carried unions, middle-class reform leaders, and Socialists into the suffrage ranks. This swing began soon enough to undercut movements to repeal or restrict earlier suffrage extension by territorial governments and at the same time to push state suffrage through.[99]

Most important for carrying suffrage in the West, however, was the emergence of the women's movement as a mass move-

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[97]Grimes, *The Puritan Ethic*, 101; Schaffer, "Problem of Consciousness," 469–493.

[98]Larson, "Woman Suffrage in Western America," 10.

[99]White, "Woman's Place," 84–104; Grimes, *The Puritan Ethic*, 101; Schaffer, "Problem of Consciousness," 483; Jensen, "Let the Women Vote," 23; and Larson, "Dolls, Vassals, and Drudges," 16.

ment among western urban middle-class women, who elaborated social group structures and then political structures. The active leadership and organizational activities of Mormon women in state suffrage campaigns in Utah, Idaho, and Arizona had important implications not only for the suffrage movement but also for the later movement for the equal rights amendment in the West. Mormon women had their own societies committed to women's suffrage, a widely read newspaper which supported suffrage, and allies in the male Mormon hierarchy. During the suffrage campaigns Mormon women worked with gentile (non-Mormon) women in important coalitions: in Utah, they campaigned hard to retain suffrage in 1895; in Idaho, they helped swing an entire section of the state to suffrage in 1896; and in Arizona, they provided leadership for the suffrage success in 1912. The absence of Mormon women from the pro-ERA ranks has drastically changed the pattern of the women's movement in the West more recently and weakened it considerably.[100]

Women's clubs, temperance unions, and eventually Equal Suffrage Leagues paralleled Mormon organizational structures. These groups had enough money and expertise to launch widespread media campaigns which included newspapers with large circulations, vast numbers of pamphlets, and posters. Assistance from eastern suffrage organizations, either in the form of money or leadership or both, was often crucial. The establishment of political formations organized at the precinct level accounted for the final success in a number of states. Highly sophisticated political planning carried California, the first urban industrial state to enact women's suffrage.[101]

The richness of these suffrage studies seems to hide their limitations. Suffrage is virtually the only aspect of western women's political history yet studied in depth. This focus on suffrage as the most important aspect of the western women's

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[100] White, "Woman's Place," 81–104; Larson, "Women's Rights Movement in Idaho," 15; and Judith Rasmussen Dushku, "Feminists," in Claudia L. Bushman, ed., *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), 177–198. It seems likely that Mormon women also influenced the suffrage movement in Nevada.

[101] See the following articles by Larson: "Women's Rights Movement in Idaho," 15; "Woman Suffrage in Western America," 19; and "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Washington," 61. In addition, consult Schaffer, "Problem of Consciousness," 482–483; and Schaffer, "The Montana Woman Suffrage Campaign," 9; as well as Jensen, "Let the Women Vote," 18.

movement has excluded a broader approach to women and politics in the West. It has excluded, for example, the question of what happened to the women's movement after suffrage. There are hints in several of the works on suffrage that coalitions which emerged early in the West to bring suffrage as a part of progressive politics also disintegrated early. Support for women's suffrage in the East and ratification of the nineteenth amendment were not easily obtained in the West once success at the state level had been achieved there. Repression of Socialist and militant labor movements in the 1920s sheared off potential support for women's issues.[102] Californians Annette Abbott Adams and Katharine Edson held federal offices in the 1920s, but we have no analysis of how many women held federal office and what this meant in terms of political power.[103] In some western states, women fought in the 1920s for other rights still not granted by state laws. They also held a large number of state offices. The careers of Nellie Ross, first woman governor of Wyoming and first woman to hold gubernatorial office in the United States, and Miriam Ferguson, who was elected governor of Texas in 1924, need to be studied in the context of political activities of women in the West, not just in relation to the political careers of their husbands.[104]

Focus on suffrage has also led to neglect of other political movements in the West which interested women. Many were active in the pacifist movement in the 1920s and 1930s. Hard battles were fought by women in political movements and in political parties on issues which were, at least in part, women's issues. The movement of women into the Republican and

[102]Snapp, "Defeat the Democrats," 159; Larson, "Idaho's Role," 13. There is no study of the ratification of the nineteenth amendment in the West. Utah, Montana, California, and Colorado ratified it before January 1, 1920. Idaho, Arizona and New Mexico ratified it early in 1920.

[103]Loewy, "Katherine Philips Edson," 343; Joan M. Jensen, "Annette Abbott Adams, Politician," *Pacific Historical Review* XXXV (1966), 185–201. New Mexico progressives finally pushed through an amendment to the New Mexico constitution in 1921 which gave women the right to hold office at the state and local level. Frank D. Reeve, *History of New Mexico* (3 vols., New York, 1961), II, 353. See also Necah Stewart Furman, "Women's Campaign for Equality: A National and State Perspective," *New Mexico Historical Review*, LIII (1978), 370.

[104]Carol Easton, "Honorable Nellie," *Westways*, LXVIII (Nov. 1976), 22–25, 70–71. See also Ingrid Winther Scobie, "Helen Gahagan Douglas and her 1950 Senate Race with Richard M. Nixon," *Southern California Quarterly*, LVIII (1976), 113–126.

Democratic parties during the 1930s, and the activities of women in the Socialist and Communist parties, all need to be considered more carefully before any type of overall appraisal can be made about women's political power in the West.[105]

Political analysis has yet to go beyond the activities of the middle-class women in the West to include Afro-American, Hispanic, or Native American women. During the Montana suffrage campaign a woman dressed as Sacajawea, the woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark on their expedition to the Pacific, and marched in a parade of suffragists who had adopted Sacajawea as a symbol of Native American women's importance in the early West. Yet the interest of Euro-American women seemed seldom to extend beyond interest in Sacajawea as a symbol to the political realities of Indian women who, as a whole, were disfranchised until 1924 or much later in western states. Western Native American women played important roles within their own tribes and in the last decade have emerged as political leaders in the West, but their political activities have yet to be studied systematically.[106]

Hispanic women are almost never discussed in relation to women's rights. Historians have sometimes attributed the lack of suffrage in New Mexico to Hispanic males, the assumption being that if they were opposed, then certainly the women were inactive. Male New Mexico politicians used the argument that Hispanic males would not accept women's suffrage to defeat a Populist women's suffrage resolution in the 1890s, but it is by no means clear that their argument was true. The governor later responsible for calling a special legislative session in 1920 to ratify the women's suffrage amendment was Hispanic. Although the Equal Suffrage League in New Mexico was dominated by women with non-Spanish surnames, Hispanic women were already active in local politics. How Hispanic women worked within the political structure with men of their culture needs to be more carefully analyzed. While economic and

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[105] Although large numbers of women joined the Communist party in California (and Mary Inman made important contributions to Socialist feminism), this movement has been neglected. For a brief discussion of Inman's work, see Ronald Schaffer, "Women and the Communist Party, USA," *Socialist Review*, XLV (May–June 1979), 83–87.

[106] Carolyn Niethammer, *Daughters of the Earth: The Lives and Legends of American Indian Women* (New York, 1977), 143–145, discusses early western chiefs.

political repression of the Hispanic population in most states obviously retarded the movement of women into electoral politics, they have emerged in more recent campaigns as an important element in achieving political equality.[107]

The role of black women is equally neglected. The political tradition which allowed a Barbara Jordan in Texas and a Yvonne Braithwaite Burke in California may be different from the tradition in the eastern and southern states. Studies of the crucial years between 1930 and 1960 may reveal the base of black women's political power in these states.[108]

While historians have found middle class women an important and obvious part of western history, the history of labor politics is still dominated by male unionization. In the early twentieth century, garment manufacturers migrated into the Southwest specifically to take advantage of low wages being paid to Hispanic and Asian women in factories and sweatshops. The politicization of this industrialized female work force began in the depression. Hispanic women struck and attempted to organize, often fighting union leaders from the East and union structures with which they could not identify. Although women emerged as leaders in the garment industry as well as in farm worker struggles, in food processing strikes, and even occasionally in male miner's strikes, they could seldom maintain decision-making positions in the male dominated labor movement as long as its power base remained in industries utilizing primarily male labor. The lack of success of western working class women in molding unions into instruments for their own needs undoubtedly delayed the political education of larger groups of women to long term political activity.[109]

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[107]Cabeza de Baca, *We Fed Them Cactus*, discusses participation in local politics. William B. Faherty, "Regional Suffrage and the Woman Suffrage Struggle," *Colorado Magazine*, XXXIII (1956), 212–217, has argued that the Mexican vote had little effect on the outcome of the unsuccessful 1877 woman suffrage campaign in Colorado.

[108]For Texas, see Elizabeth W. Fernea and Marilyn P. Duncan, *Texas Women in Politics* (Austin, 1977); and Wendy Watriss, "It's Something Inside You," *Southern Exposure*, IV (1977), 76–81. For California, see Gerald R. Gill, "Win or Lose—We Win: The 1952 Vice Presidential Campaign of Charlotta A. Bass," in Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, eds., *The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images* (New York, 1978), 109–118.

[109]Victor B. Nelson-Cisneros, "La clase trabajadora en Tejas, 1920–1940," *Aztlán*, VI (1975), 239–265; George N. Green, "ILGWU in Texas, 1930–1970," *Journal of Mexican American History*, I (1971), 144–163; Rose Pesotta, *Bread upon the Waters* (New York, 1945); Dean Lan, "The Chinatown Sweatships: Oppression and an Alternative,"

What is most needed is a picture of how women fit into the economic structure in the West through their labor. Occupational or labor history is inadequately or insufficiently described by historians. This neglect is due only in part to the concentration on industries utilizing primarily male labor in the West, such as mining. It is also due to defects in the census system which often failed to record women's work, to an ideological framework which has devalued women's work, and to the absence of conceptual frameworks to study women's labor history in the West.

Rural western women seem to have been particularly industrious yet were often excluded from census returns because their work on the farm was not considered a full-time occupation in the nineteenth century. Mormon women are one group of western women noted for their industriousness on the early frontier. Within a church which emphasized "busyness," Mormon women worked industriously in many occupations to contribute their share to the household economy.[110] Plural marriages, large families, and a religious community with an almost mercantilistic economic theory led women into hard and steady work during the nineteenth century, often at jobs not visible to the census takers. Not only census takers, but the ideology of an ethnic group itself could mask the work of women. Among Italian eastern urban immigrants, for example, a woman's work was often not defined as work at all. Among Polish immigrants, on the other hand, women proudly claimed the title of "worker." Such differences must have existed in the West as well.[111]

A variety of women's rural production activities never appeared on the census returns. Labor performed in the home for use and production of small quantities of goods for local markets continued far longer in the West than in the East. Butter production in the Midwest, sales of eggs, poultry, and

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Amerasia Journal, I (1971), 40–57; Victor Nee and Brett DeBary Nee, *Longtime California: A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown* (New York, 1972); Patricia M. Fong, "The 1938 National Dollar Store Strike," *Asian American Review*, II (1975). For a recent account of Chicanas in the garment industry, see Laurie Coyle, Gail Hershatter, and Emily Honig, *Women at Farah: An Unfinished Story* (El Paso, 1979).

[110] Arrington, "Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women," 145–164.

[111] Corinne Azen Krause, "Italian, Jewish, and Slavic Grandmothers in Pittsburgh: Their Economic Roles," *Frontiers*, II (Summer 1977), 18–28.

vegetables gave farm families precious cash they needed to survive and to buy farm equipment and additional land.[112] Health care likewise continued to be handled by women in parts of the West. Mormon midwives, Hispanic *curanderas*, and Native American herbalists carried this tradition into the twentieth century.[113] The work of prostitutes who crowded into western mining and railroad towns was usually not enumerated as "wage-labor," yet thousands worked in San Francisco, in Denver, and in El Paso as well as in smaller towns. Often prostitutes were forced to pay "fines" to continue to practice. They provided thousands of dollars in revenues to cities. Like the foreign miner's tax which supported the state of California for nearly a decade, the fines on prostitutes allowed officials to avoid taxing the more affluent classes while maintaining control over a group of social outcasts. Immigrant women, especially Asian women, were condemned for this type of work, but foreign prostitutes were only a small proportion of the total number of women employed in this occupation in the West.[114]

Other kinds of work, like elementary school teaching, could also be underenumerated because of the high turnover. Historians have over-emphasized the higher education of women, neglecting to document the spread of elementary education and the teaching of elementary education by women. Far larger numbers of women had experiences in teaching than census returns indicate because they moved into and out of the teacher work force fairly rapidly. By the late nineteenth century, normal schools were beginning to appear in the West, and Euro-American women were moving into the last male teaching domains in the Southwest. Their dominance in the teaching profession, in an area where the federal and state governments were attempting to create political and cultural dominance for

[112]Viola I. Paradise, "Maternity Care and Welfare of Young Children in a Homesteading County in Montana," in *Child Care in Rural America* (New York, 1972).

[113]Chris Rigby Arrington, "Pioneer Midwives," in Bushman, ed., *Mormon Sisters*, 43–66; and Joan Jensen, "Politics and the American Midwife Controversy," *Frontiers*, I (Spring 1976), 19–33.

[114]Martin, *Whiskey and Wild Women*, mentions in a number of places the high fines paid by prostitutes in western towns. See also George M. Blackburn and Sherman L. Ricards, "The Prostitutes and Gamblers of Virginia City, Nevada: 1870," *Pacific Historical Review*, XLVIII (1979), 239–258.

Euro-Americans, involved them in highly volatile situations. Segregation, the suppression of Native American and Spanish languages in the schools, and the substitution of eastern unified educational norms for community control were all part of a western educational system in which women were dominant at the lowest level.[115]

Of the jobs enumerated, historians agree that women in the West were little different in job patterns than women in the East. The easiest job for a woman to get was that of household worker, and if there was a typical western woman by occupation, she would be a woman who worked in a rural or urban household for another woman. No one has yet studied these most typical of western women who were of all ethnic backgrounds.[116]

In the West there were few female towns, like the textile mill towns of the East, where women sometimes composed 30 to 40 percent of the labor force or southern towns, where black women had high labor participation rates. In towns like Denver, Kansas City, and San Francisco, 10 to 14 percent of the labor force was female by 1880, while in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and St. Louis, 15 to 19 percent of the labor force was female. Towns in the West remained service-based far longer than towns in the East, thus ensuring that a high proportion of employed women would remain in service industries, but the extent to which women have moved into the western labor force in the twentieth century is still often underestimated.[117] The range of work of Hispanic women has been particularly misrepresented by popular sterotypes. Today in the Far West there is little difference in the urban labor force participation of women of different ethnic groups. In Los Angeles in 1975, employment statistics showed there was virtually no difference in the percentage of Hispanic,

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[115]Jill C. Mulvay, "Zion's Schoolmarms," in Bushman, ed., *Mormon Sisters*, 67–87; Ronald E. Butchart, "The Frontier Teacher: Arizona, 1875–1925," *Journal of the West*, XVI (1977), 54–67; Joan M. Jensen, "Women Teachers, Class, and Ethnicity: New Mexico, 1900–1950," *Southwest Economy and Society*, IV (Winter 1978/79), 1–13; David B. Tyack, "The Tribe and the Common School: Community Control in Rural Education," *American Quarterly*, XXIV (1972), 2–19.

[116]Blackwelder, "Women in the Work Force," 331–358.

[117]Ronald L. Davis and Harry D. Holmes, "Studies in Western Urbanization," *Journal of the West*, XIII (1974), 1–5.

"white," and black women working. The main difference was that proportionately far more Hispanic women worked as operatives in manufacturing industries than did other women.[118]

Older working women can still fill in the context of their working lives through oral history programs now in progress. In New Mexico, for example, women who homesteaded in 1908 are describing their experiences. Chicanas who ran farms while their husbands worked in the mines before World War I and Apache women who tanned and sold hides are telling their stories. One Navajo woman interviewed recently talked about her grandmother's work as a medicine woman, her mother's work as a weaver, and her own work as a cook after being forced to attend a government boarding school.[119] The experiences of women in the West are alive in the memories of women living today, and through these experiences historians can begin to know the women of each of the cultures and how they together became the women of the West.

A multicultural approach need not eliminate class or politics from western women's history. Rather, it can insure that the problems of political power and the political dimensions of social history are not ignored.[120] Women of the West were divided not only by culture but also by the conflicts among cultures. The point where women crossed boundaries to share common interests as women can be as carefully noted and analyzed as the points at which they remained separate. With a broader comparative perspective, many of the previous assumptions and generalizations about western history may be questioned. Some generalizations will prove adequate and survive;

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[118] Calif. Dept. of Employment Development, *Los Angeles County: Manpower Information for Affirmative Action Programs* (Mimeographed, March 1975), gave the percentages as white 43.6, Spanish surname 42.7, black 50. Spanish surname women had much higher unemployment rates than white women. See also Laura Arroyo, "Industrial and Occupational Distribution of Chicana Workers," *Aztlán*, IV (1973), 343–381.

[119] Yvonne Ashley, "That's the Way We Were Raised: An Oral Interview with Ada Damon," *Frontiers*, II (Summer 1977), 59–62. See also Sherna Gluck, "What's So Special about Women? Women's Oral History," *Frontiers*, II (Summer 1977), 3–17.

[120] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese, "The Political Crisis of Social History: A Marxian Perspective," *Journal of Social History*, X (1976), 205–219; Laurence Veysey, "The 'New' Social History in the Context of American Historical Writing," *Reviews in American History*, VII (1979), 1–12. Both of these essays warn about the dangers of a social history which is not integrated into the larger political and economic context of history.

others will undoubtedly have to be abandoned. But out of the testing will come a more representative history of both men and women in the West.

The objection is still sometimes made to historians of women, as it was to historians of the black experience in America a decade ago, that the materials to answer questions about women simply do not exist. One does have to know where and how to look for material, but the documents and artifacts left by women are immense. Oral history is rapidly expanding the body of documentary evidence. Interdisciplinary approaches, particularly anthropology and sociology, are providing methods by which the economic activities and social relations of large numbers of women who left no personal documents can become a part of written history. The case-study approach will continue to provide valuable insights about western women, but we need, above all else, studies firmly based on a comparative multicultural approach to women's history in order to understand fully the western experience. Women's history has developed sophisticated techniques of dealing with the reality of women's past. It is ready now to cross the reef and be anchored in the harbor of historical studies. Much of this work will have to take place in that historiographical area west of the Mississippi which we still designate western history.