



PARAMOUNT  
**CALIFORNIA**  
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**The Public Face of History:  
The New Western History from the Academy to  
Southwestern History Museum Exhibits**

For the PhD Degree

In

History

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines history museums in Arizona and New Mexico to determine whether New Western History themes are prevalent, twenty years after the term was conceived. Patricia Limerick is credited with using the expression in the 1980s, but she had to promote the concept frequently and for many years. There was resistance to changing from the Frederick Jackson Turner thesis of looking at the frontier as an expansion from the East, even while others were already writing more current historiography.

Limerick's four "Cs"—continuity, convergence, conquest, and complexity—took a view of the West from the West, worthy of a separate perspective. These themes also allowed historians to reflect on what was happening locally, how and why various people were interacting, how there was less of a benevolent imbuing of European culture on Native Americans than there was a conquest of indigenous people, and how resource extraction created complex situations for all living things. While scholarly works were changing to provide relevant material based on these themes, museums were receiving thousands of visitors every year and may have been providing the Anglo-centric view of events or creating more inclusive displays. Label texts could have been either clarifying or confusing to a history loving audience.

Three types of museums were visited to determine whether there was a difference in display based on governing body. National Park Service sites, state sponsored institutions, and local city-based museums served as the study material. The age of the existing long-term exhibits ranged from brand new to fifty-one years extant. As important

to the use of New Western History themes as the term of the current exhibit was the type of governing body.

Monographs, essays, and museum exhibits are all important to the dissemination of history. How they relate and how current they are to each other creates an opportunity for both academic and museum professional historians to reflect on the delivery systems used to enlighten a history-loving public.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*Some history is learned in the schools and universities, to be sure, but some through motion pictures and television as well.<sup>2</sup>*  
--John Hope Franklin, 1980

While trying to correct a misconception about how farmers milked cows in the 1880s at a living history museum one day a few years ago, the docents were stopped by a woman who said she could not pay attention to what we were saying because a rooster was crowing too loudly. She wanted us to turn it down! This very live rooster was providing a living history learning opportunity for us all, but it needed to be interpreted to the urban dweller who could not directly relate her past experiences with the current situation. When she was able to hold a chick and see the rooster strutting around the yard, calling his hens to point out a potential meal, the visitor's world expanded quite a bit. She was learning the history of her ancestors who moved west for economic and social opportunities, but she had never read about or experienced what their lives would have been like until that moment.

Presenting history to a public audience is a challenge, one met in different ways by academic and museum historians. One museum professional stated,

Academic historians and museum professionals need to see it from both sides. When you are writing a book you have the ability and the liberty to make your point with an abundance of words. The exact opposite occurs in an exhibit. In an exhibit, as studies have shown, people will only stand in front of a given space for a certain percentage of time. They will only read a certain amount of words at any one time before moving on. The ideas have to be communicated in the least amount of words. That dichotomy is one that most academic professionals do not understand.

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<sup>2</sup> John Hope Franklin, "Forward," in *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, Michael Kammen, ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 14–15.

They are given the ability to make their point overt and subtle and perhaps nuanced with many words. In a museum exhibit nuance is lost.<sup>3</sup>

Nuance may be lost, but the general concept being communicated is typically aided by the object or image that is the focal point of the museum exhibit. This is different than either a scholarly work or one written by an academic historian for public consumption. Different, but neither better nor worse. Working in history museums has always been an enjoyable experience for me. When people ask questions about some aspect of history, they are engaged in the topic and show a genuine interest in learning. Many of these people are adults and seniors who still enjoy lifelong, informal learning. Sometimes they recall how life was different when they were kids, or visits to the grandparent's house and how different the times were then. The best times are when children or grandchildren look at the adult with quizzical expressions on their faces and ask for more information, not from the docent, but from their parent or grandparent.

It is probably a rare instance when one of these adults has sat in a university class in recent years, but they do display an active interest in learning more about the history of the site they are visiting. Thousands of people visit history museums in the Southwest annually<sup>4</sup> and while some will indicate that they enjoy reading a popular work on the

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<sup>3</sup> Conversation with a museum professional, September 2010. The identities of personnel with whom oral interviews were conducted are being kept confidential, per the Arizona State University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance.

<sup>4</sup> There are no records kept specifically for history museums of the Southwest, and the individual museums visited for this study did not reveal their specific attendance records. However, according to the American Alliance of Museums website, "There are approximately 850 million visits each year to American museums, more than the attendance for all major league sporting events and theme parks combined (483 million in 2011). By 2006, museums already received an additional 524 million online visits a year just from adults, a number that continues to grow" (<http://www.aam-us.org/about-museums/museum-facts> [accessed May 27, 2014]). The National Park Service website indicated that there were 10,103,264 visits to all the parks in 2013 (<http://www.nps.gov/state/az/index.htm?program=parks> [accessed May 27, 2014]). A conversation with a spokesperson at the American Association for State and

subject matter, most visit because they simply want to know more about the location, buildings, or people. Academic monographs, or even articles, are generally not finding their way onto the reading lists of these intellectually curious adults. They may be reading popular works of history, but these are few and far between. In 1980 Michael Kammen, professor of history at Cornell University, edited a collection of essays that reflected the changes to American historiography in the 1970s. Coming as it did shortly after the history boom of the American bicentennial, historians were finding a lot of public interest in history in general and personal history specifically. That learning of history was coming from many places, however:

As readers of this volume become acquainted with the areas of interest of today's professional historians, they would do well to reflect upon the relationship between these historians and the general public. Surely, the influence of the professionals is direct and important. In due course what they discover, write about, and teach will affect the average person's understanding of history in the United States and elsewhere. Meanwhile, other influences—government, historical societies, museums, historic sites, television, motion pictures, and even historical fiction—will also affect the manner in which the average person perceives and appreciates the role of the professional historian. If distortions and misperception occur as a result of the wealth and variety of sources of historical information, the professional historian can be expected once again to correct and clarify the picture.<sup>5</sup>

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Local History on May 27, 2014, indicated that it does not track attendance records. However, the Institute for Museum and Library Science issued a report listing the number of U.S.-based museums on May 19, 2014. The report indicated that fifty-five and one half (55.5) percent are history based. It can therefore be safely assumed that even if twenty-five percent of all visits are to history museum that would equal 212.5 million in attendance. The museums under study would represent at least several thousand of these visits (<http://blogs.aaslh.org/history-organizations-represent-over-half-of-americas-active-museums/> [accessed May 28, 2014]).

<sup>5</sup> Franklin, "Forward," 15.

When new ideas or changing interpretations of old ideas occur in the academic world these ideas may face a long period of peer review and acceptance. Change is rarely without controversy. It may be generations before a consensus is reached and the new approach to presenting a historical view becomes the norm. Simultaneously, societal changes occur that create the opportunity for these changing ideas and aid in their acceptance. Pointing out that change is occurring is what usually causes the issue to be hotly debated.

When Patricia Nelson Limerick, Faculty Director and Chair of the Board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado, boldly stated what had been quietly occurring for years in the history field it caused a flurry of comment. Her 1987 work *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, and the subsequent travelling exhibit “Trails through Time,” provided a new look at the writing of United States Western History and attracted significant media attention so as to have a lasting impact.<sup>6</sup> She proposed a “New Western History” to take the place of what we knew as traditional history, first promoted by Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893 in his essay titled “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” Turner was a professor of American History at the University of Wisconsin. Turner’s “frontier thesis” had stated an idea that every Western historian for the next one hundred years has had to address. But in 1987 Limerick proposed a history that, rather than being written from the view of the conquering white European, now would include all the ethnic players of the West—Europeans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asians—and women. In addition, a view

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<sup>6</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Legacies of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987); and Limerick, *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 15–16.

of the West from the West, rather than as a continuation of settlement from Europe to the eastern shores of America, would provide a new perspective.

However, between Turner and Limerick many other historians debated the merits of the “frontier thesis.” It appeared that each generation was writing to discuss the issues of its day, topics that may or may not be important to prior or later generations. The historiography of Western history published in these intervening years is also important as it is the stage upon which the concepts of history are performed, and allows an analysis of what Limerick may have been reading when she conceived of the need for a change of scene, a New Western History. The first chapter examines this historiography and discusses the ideas behind New Western History.

Although the phrase “New Western History” was simply giving a name to a movement that had started many years earlier, gathering a consensus for the definition of the term proved difficult for Limerick. Many academics clung to the old ways, the traditional Anglo-centered approach to history, while others, already writing in the new style, did not see Western History as a distinctive region worthy of its own narrative. Academics fought, and some still fight, the verbalization of that change.

One point of contention might be the definition of “the West.” Turner points out that everything past the Atlantic seacoast was at one time the frontier, the West for anyone looking for new lands to settle. “That any clues to its probable location remained vague was suggested by an eastern magazine when it answered its own question ‘Where is the West?’ by saying that it was a place where a man presently was and that the East

was where he or his father had come from.”<sup>7</sup> This is a traditional, Anglo-centric definition as it takes an East to West view and leaves out Native Americans, Spanish and Mexican settlers, and even French Canadians who migrated south. Generally, historical works refer to the land west of the Mississippi as “the West,” and this is the approach this study will use. However, history is promoted not only through academic works but in the many ways enumerated by Michael Kammen in *The Past Before Us*, including museum exhibitions. Museum displays are typically available for viewing and unchanged for many years, making a review of their displays as a historiographical point in time difficult.

Museums face the challenge of presenting current historiography to the pre- and post-collegiate world. This study examines permanent exhibitions in Southwestern history museums to determine whether the themes of New Western History are on display. For purposes of this study, select history museums in Arizona and New Mexico will represent the Southwest. The permanent exhibition, rather than the changing galleries, will be the primary object of the study as these exhibitions are the public depiction of the museum’s mission statement, and as such, the long-term message the museum conveys.

Museums in the United States are visited by thousands of people annually. History museums offer an interpretation of objects appropriate to their mission and hope to engage visitors in learning how the past is relevant to the present.<sup>8</sup> History museums

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<sup>7</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1920, 1947), 205–208; and Robert G. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1986), 16.

<sup>8</sup> On May 19, 2014, the Institute of Museum and Library Services released a press announcement indicting that it tabulated 35,000 museums operational in the United States, double its previous estimate.

receive visitors of many levels of education, age, interest, and cultural background, so the same object and interpretation can have multiple meanings for the same group of guests. Depending on the curator and the date of opening of the exhibition, the research conducted for this study may or may not reflect what historiography was available. Therefore, an examination of select history museums in Arizona and New Mexico will determine whether or not the New Western History is overtly being used, is subtle in its presentation, or is missing from the language and diversity of topics offered.

Historians are in the business of writing historiographical essays and many have been written about the New Western History. The essays reveal consensus about the broad topics included in modern views of Western history, but historians do not always agree on the findings within those topics. This is good, in that it provides a direction for the education of Americans while allowing for various interpretations within that direction. It appears that in-depth research and clarity of expression are necessary to sway others to the authors' paths of thought and towards their conclusions. While this might appear to be an obvious statement, consider it for museum exhibition writers. They have only seconds to attract a lifelong learner who may have been taught a different conclusion about the topic. The museum has the option of showing one or many interpretations; of providing popular beliefs or adding new information to the intellectual pursuits of the visitor; or of declaring that the visitor's beliefs about the past are wrong and shouting a new version of history.

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([http://www.imls.gov/government\\_doubles\\_official\\_estimate.aspx](http://www.imls.gov/government_doubles_official_estimate.aspx) [accessed on June 9, 2014]). Of these, forty-eight percent are classified as Historical Societies, Historic Preservation, and Historic Houses and Sites. Another seven and one-half percent are listed as History Museums. So 19,425 or fifty-five percent of all the museum in the United States are history related. In Arizona 238 of the 466 listed, or fifty-one percent, are history related; in New Mexico 109, or thirty-seven percent, of the 296 museums are history related.

During this period of change in historical interpretation, museums were also finding new ways of adopting their exhibitions to the changing views of society. While the artifacts often remained the same, the significance of common items grew and curators reinterpreted previously revered objects. This New Museology questioned past museum practices and placed more emphasis on the “increasing recognition of the inseparability of the museum’s interpretative and exhibition functions.”<sup>9</sup> This shifts the purpose of the museum from that of dictating knowledge to one of opening communication between the visitor and the collection, and no longer being “exclusive and socially divisive institutions.”<sup>10</sup>

History museums have not been as quick to reflect this change, just as not all historians have accepted the New Western History:

Historically, however, museum exhibition interpretation has lagged that of cutting-edge historical revisionism. Expensive exhibit installations and the traditions and myths that undergird their interpretation are not easily uprooted in favor of the avant-garde. Practical constraints like time, space, format, patronage, and collections also abet the resistance to change, as does the current fluidity of the field. Thus, the conventional, monolithic view of the West as a romantic and triumphant adventure in the Turnerian mold lingers in many dated displays.<sup>11</sup>

The study of the subject museum’s exhibitions will determine if this is still true. If it is true, one reason may be restrictions placed on the museum staff in the formation of

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<sup>9</sup> Stephen E. Weil, “Rethinking the Museum: An Emerging New Paradigm” (1990), in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, Gail Anderson, ed. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2004), 77.

<sup>10</sup> Max Ross, “Interpreting the New Museology,” *Museum and Society* 2, no. 2 (July 2004): 84.

<sup>11</sup> B. Byron Price, “‘Cutting for Sign’: Museums and Western Revisionism,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (May 1993): 230.

exhibitions, so-called permanent exhibitions especially. These restrictions might come from board members or directors who control the mission statement of the museum and from the lack of funds needed to make desired changes. Additionally, the time needed to develop and open an exhibition makes the interpretive content out-of-date quickly when compared against the most recent academic thoughts on the subject. There are also “powerful images that inform a protected narrative imbedded in the national psyche,” typically from special interest groups who may have specific agendas they wish to see depicted that academics and museum professionals alike must confront.<sup>12</sup> Should the research confirm this view, it will provide two opportunities:

- First, for academically-based historians to reflect on the delivery method of their texts to include a non-academically based audience.
- Second, for museums to consider the value of a “permanent” exhibition in an age where ideas are discussed among a wider population and with greater speed than in the past.<sup>13</sup>

In order to see the public effect of this change in academic thought, this dissertation will take the approach used by Tony Bennett in *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism*.<sup>14</sup> Bennett, a professor of Sociology in the United

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<sup>12</sup> William Deverell, “Fighting Words: The Significance of the American West in the History of the United States,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 205.

<sup>13</sup> The public does not figure into the dissemination of most academic works. A recent example of this is the Presidential Address to the annual meeting of the Western Historical Association by Virginia Schaff. The address describes how graduate school robs students of creativity in their writing, but at no time does it consider the audience of the works produced. Virginia Schaff, “What’s Love Got to Do With It? A New Turner Thesis,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 5–22.

<sup>14</sup> Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

Kingdom, focused his studies on the sociology and history of culture, and the theory of museums. He traced the change in museum displays of natural history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Britain, Australia, and the United States by looking at writings concerning exhibitions about evolution. The concept of evolution changed not only the way academics and the public thought about society, but also how museums displayed artifacts. Unlike previous display methods, visitors were no longer to view objects on a stand-alone basis without accompanying interpretive materials allowing the nature of the item to be a matter of personal discovery. Now curators placed the artifacts in relation to other objects that broadened the story and required some interpretation to create a learning environment for the visitor.<sup>15</sup>

Bennett used philosopher Michel Foucault's views of governmentality as his theoretical framework. Governmentality is the view that government, or those who exercise the greatest influence over society, such as the rising top layers of the new middle class, utilize public institutions to influence and regulate the behavior of the lower classes. Bennett specifically addressed the issues of class and gender domination, finding the Anglo male to be the only voice heard in all museum exhibitions and used to reinforce the rules of their society.<sup>16</sup>

The role of museums in the changing environment of the 1880s through the 1920s was similar to the changing attitudes of the 1970s through today. Museums carry the message that "just as 'nature makes no jumps,' so progress in society and culture could

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<sup>15</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 39.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 5, 118.

only come about slowly,” but exhibits still reflect the colonial values of their curators—and Anglo, male visitors.<sup>17</sup>

Bennett examined the processes and practices within museums to emphasize that change was slow and not always readily accepted. He compared scholarly thought with the social goals of the museums in light of the changing practices and the influence of the new evolutionary thinking in society. Examples of management attempts to align the internal structure of museums to the new ideas were given, along with the realization that although the vocabulary stayed the same, the use of the words to describe the vision, roles, and processes within the museums changed from the Enlightenment period museum to the evolutionary museum period.<sup>18</sup>

Just as Bennett discerned the changing purpose of museums over one hundred years ago, this dissertation will take a similar approach, by analyzing both the interpretation of history in the museums to see if the “traditional” model or the “New Western History” model is more prevalent, and the influence of the processes the museums exercise to keep or change the exhibits it has on display. A review of exhibitions will determine the amount of change in history museums in the fifty years since the intellectual spark that marked a new beginning in the way society in the United States views itself.

Conversations with curators and personal observations reveal that permanent exhibitions may take several years to develop, and these exhibitions may stay up for

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<sup>17</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 152.

many years with no adjustment to their content.<sup>19</sup> Curators typically design permanent exhibitions<sup>20</sup> to remain on display for seven to ten years, but some at the National Park Service have been up, unchanged, for over forty years.<sup>21</sup>

Museums may use a smaller space for more frequently-changing exhibitions and incorporate more recent academically-developed concepts into these shows. However, the permanent exhibition is the public depiction of the museum's mission statement and as such the long-term message the museum conveys. That message can become dated and no longer reflect current attitudes of society or a potentially changing visitor demographic. Mixed signals may result if the permanent and changing exhibitions present differing viewpoints. Certainly as newly graduated students of public history and museum studies who were trained in new museology entered the museum field in the late 1970s, exhibits began to reflect the changes persistent in some areas of society and promoted by the academy.<sup>22</sup>

History is the record of change over time. This record can be revealed in documents or the interpretation of objects. The interpretation will change with each new

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Roger Lidman, Director of Pueblo Grande Museum, Phoenix, Arizona, October 30, 2009, who indicates he plans on seven to ten years (unless funding is not available, at which point the exhibit stays up even longer), and with the curator of the Heard Museum during a tour of the "Native People of the Southwest" permanent exhibition in January, 2008, who indicated that the exhibition would remain up and unchanged for at least ten years.

<sup>20</sup> I use "exhibit(s)" to refer to individual displays of objects or visual depictions of a concept and "exhibition(s)" to refer to an entire gallery of related exhibits.

<sup>21</sup> The National Park Service Fort Laramie exhibition is such an example, per a conversation with Bob Spude, Cultural Resources Historian, National Park Service Intermountain Region, New Mexico, private conversation, September 11, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History: Reflections on What Local Historians Do, Why, and What It Means* (Nashville, TN: The American Association for State and Local History, 1986), 172.

generation as that generation's ideas and worldview develop. Although many historians in the latter twentieth century produced significant works that were "welcome correctives to omissions and distortions made by previous historians," many of these were in the form of monographs that were not absorbed into textbooks for elementary and high school students.<sup>23</sup> Still, the classroom is the primary place of learning history and the place where new ideas are first discussed. Older generations have to find different resources to satisfy their desire for intellectual stimulation. One possible venue for the broad dissemination of scholarly works is through history museums, for "Unlike much of the work of the academy, the work of museums reaches a large and vocal audience, one which attributes great authority to what museums say."<sup>24</sup>

Chapter two of this study sets the stage for the New Western History concepts through a review of historiography about the West. The New Western History themes as proposed by Patricia Limerick are explained. The history of museums and how they form an exhibition are discussed in chapter three. Since many theories of interpretation and methods of display may exist at the same time, the review of the museums in the study may show various ways of presenting the same subject matter. Explaining how museums operate is the goal of this chapter.

Three chapters revealing the degree of application of these New Western History concepts as found in history museums follows. For this study, a history museum is defined as an institution open to the public on a regular basis, with one or more paid staff

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<sup>23</sup> Gerald D. Nash, "The Great Adventure: Western History, 1890–1990," *Western Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (February 1991): 10; and Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 104.

<sup>24</sup> Frank Jewell, "Audience and Museum: Reflections about Fruitful Conversations," *The Public Historian* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 55.

members, that has indoor or outdoor displays concerning the history of people, a place, an event, or a theme, with some form of interpretation available without the aid of a docent. The field of study will be limited to museums in Arizona and New Mexico as representative of the Southwestern United States. This study will review more than one museum of each of the following types: National Park Service sites, state operated sites, and local or city museums. One privately owned site was visited in New Mexico for comparison purposes.

These federal, state, and local organizational structures or supervisory authorities, represent the majority of general history museums. Other history museums, most notably historic houses, might be privately owned, but are typically specific to the story of a person or family, rather than a broader interpretation of western history. Therefore, historic houses were not included in the criteria for this study. Museums are of different sizes based on annual budget and paid staff. Those with access to a greater supply of resources, a larger budget and staff, should have a greater opportunity to practice new museology and research current historiography than smaller organizations given the potential for more work hours per week to be spent on research. However, it will not surprise if the distinction for more current thinking is determined by those with more supervisory latitude and an active visitor community rather than by size.

The National Park Service categorizes its various sites around the country based on the nature of the location. According to its website, in 2014 “The National Park System comprises 84 million acres and is comprised of 401 parks. These include 125 historical parks or sites, 78 national monuments, 59 national parks, 18 preserves, 18

recreational areas, 10 seashores, four parkways, four lakeshores, and two reserves.”<sup>25</sup>

Currently operating under the auspices of the United States Department of the Interior, the National Park Service provides resources for its staff to utilize both for learning about interpretation as part of professional development, and for assistance in creating new exhibitions. It does not require that the staff use these resources when creating exhibitions, however. While the National Park Service has a large budget relative to state and local museums, \$2.4 billion in 2013,<sup>26</sup> these monies are not allocated specifically to new exhibit creation. Nor are the staff members at the National Parks historical sites required to be historians.

Two National Park Service sites in each state were visited: Fort Union National Monument, Watrous, New Mexico; Pecos National Historical Park, Pecos, New Mexico; Pipe Spring National Monument, Fredonia, Arizona; and Tumacácori National Historical Park, Tumacácori, Arizona. These sites offered a variety of topics including Spanish colonization (conquest) of Native Americans, and pioneer movement into and military occupation of the Southwest. The opportunity to express New Western History concepts is rife, but whether recent or aged, the exhibitions may not embrace these ideas with enthusiasm. Located within the subject states, these sites of national significance complement the story told by the state and local organizations, yet from a mission statement standpoint are not coordinated with these other sites. The operational systems are materially different. National Park sites are administered through a national

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<sup>25</sup> [http://www.nps.gov/news/upload/NPS-Overview-2014\\_04-21-2014.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/news/upload/NPS-Overview-2014_04-21-2014.pdf) g/ (accessed November 13, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.nps.gov/news/upload/NPS-Overview-2014\\_04-21-2014.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/news/upload/NPS-Overview-2014_04-21-2014.pdf) g/ (accessed November 13, 2014).

bureaucratic top-down system that ultimately answers to Congress and a director appointed by the President of the United States.

Both the Arizona Historical Society and New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs operate multiple museum sites. Ultimately answering to the state legislatures, these institutions have boards of directors responsible for the overall strategic direction. The Arizona society not only has a main board, but also local boards for each of its sites.<sup>27</sup> These institutions are created to collect, preserve, and interpret various aspects of the history of their states. The Arizona Historical Society was 150 years old in 2014, while the Historical Society of New Mexico, one of the predecessors of the Department of Cultural Affairs, has been pursuing similar goals for over 155 years.<sup>28</sup> These are state created and supported organizations. The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs was created in 1978, supports eight museums, several historic sites, and other arts and cultural-related divisions with an approximately \$45 million budget. There are about five hundred employees and one thousand volunteers that operate this department. The Arizona society, with its more narrow focus, operates on approximately \$4.2 million and a staff of forty-three.<sup>29</sup>

Three sites in Arizona were visited for purposes of this study: the Arizona Historical Society in Tempe, the Arizona History Museum in Tucson, and the Pioneer

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/welcome-to-the-board-of-directors/> (accessed November 13, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/executive-director-letter/> and <http://www.hsnm.org/about/> (accessed November 13, 2014).

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.newmexicoculture.org/welcome.html> and [http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/Membership\\_2014-Annual-Report\\_All-Pages.pdf](http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/Membership_2014-Annual-Report_All-Pages.pdf) (accessed November 14, 2014).

Museum in Flagstaff. Two sites in New Mexico serve to reflect the study: New Mexico History Museum and the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, and the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum located in Las Cruces. Some of the exhibitions visited were created very recently. A greater effort was made to be more inclusive of various peoples within the states than at the National Park Service sites, but the level of inclusiveness is still a small percentage when compared to the story of Anglos.

Local museums are primarily operated as part of city sponsored programs, but two of the museums visited had their start as privately funded organizations. These sites have boards of directors, and generally fall under the direction of city government. The level of financial assistance differs with the community. The exhibitions act as promoters of the local communities. They further narrow the focus of research and collecting to the experiences of the residents in the history of local business, education, immigration, and art. These sites offered the most inclusive views of New Western History concepts of the three organizational structures. While mostly being celebratory and demonstrating “boosterism” for the communities, there are more references to the unpleasant aspects of daily life in these local museums than in the national and state sites.

Local museums visited include the Albuquerque Museums of Art and History, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, Bisbee, Arizona; The Hubbard Museum of the American West, Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico; Peoria Historical Society, Peoria, Arizona; the Raton Museum, Raton, New Mexico; and the newly rebuilt Tempe History Museum, Tempe, Arizona.

## Funding Sources for Exhibitions

The National Park Service sites visited were considered smaller sites in the Park system based on annual revenue. This provided two avenues open to these sites to fund new or changing exhibitions. The first is their annual budget. They can request a certain portion of their operating budget be used for exhibitions, identified as projects that directly benefit visitors. Monies approved for that use will typically have to be used in that fiscal year. Also, since 2004, smaller sites can petition for funds from a general fund created under the Federal Lands and Recreation Enhancement Act. Larger parks must now put twenty percent of their revenue into this general fund designated for the use by smaller parks.<sup>30</sup>

While private funds are not usually involved in the creation of National Park Service sites, the sites may benefit from the grants of land or cooperative efforts with local partners. For instance, at Pecos in New Mexico a prior exhibition was partially funded by actress Greer Garson and her husband, Buddy Fogelson, who had lived in and supported the site. At Pipe Spring, the local Native American community had funds available to build a new visitor center, which is not on federal land. Activities in the visitor center are coordinated with the Park Service staff.<sup>31</sup>

The State supported sites operate in a different manner. State funds approved though operating budgets may indeed be utilized, but foundation funds and grants

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<sup>30</sup> Email conversation with a park ranger, Tumacácori, Arizona, May 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Conversations with park rangers, at Pecos and Pipe Spring National Parks, September 2010.

privately raised may also be applied.<sup>32</sup> Gifts of artifacts, appropriate to the site mission, may be accepted, which help the museum make presentations.

City operated local institutions are much like the state sites. They have to use their approved operating budgets, but can also benefit from “friends” groups or local historical societies that raise funds for the benefit of museum efforts. The use of these private funds is usually approved by the board of the friends group, but applied toward an exhibition idea approved by the staff of the institution.<sup>33</sup> Privately run local organizations rely on admissions, donations, and grants to fund their exhibitions, acquisitions, and operations. Private donors play a large role in the choices made about these displays. While the state- and city-operated organizations can keep an “arms-length” distance from the private funders, the private sites must be more cognizant of the likes and dislikes of their donors if they wish to continue receiving their largesse.

While the funding amounts may vary, the costs of building certain features of an exhibition are static and high. Creativity accounts for many presentation methods and the ability to spread the available funds as far as possible. Generally, the three groups of sites visited all faced the same issues—not enough funds or other resources to do what the curators knew was possible, and the need to get approval to spend any funds on exhibitions. This accounts for much of the reason long-term galleries do not change more rapidly than they do.

Funding does not appear to be a significant factor in the determination of whether or not New Western History is presented in the exhibitions. Rather, the timing of the

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<sup>32</sup> Email conversation with a museum professional, April 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Conversation with a museum professional, Tempe, Arizona, May 2014.

creation of the displays compared to the introduction of New Western History as a concept, and the consideration of making changes to existing exhibits are the factors.

## Methodology and Sources

A review of scholarly literature conducted by subject headings of “History Museums,” “Southwest Historiography,” and “Museum Practices” did not reveal studies that conducted similar research to that proposed here. More specific searches on WorldCat and other electronic resources produced the same result. However, one work was discovered with a similar intent as this study by reading relevant book reviews in *The Public Historian*. Philip Burnham, who earned a PhD in American Studies from the University of New Mexico and worked as a freelance journalist, traveled to many museums across America approximately twenty years ago.<sup>34</sup> He asked a few pointed questions that were relevant to this study, specifically, “In short, open to today’s public, are historic sites open to interpreting the public of the past as well?” Burnham saw social history, especially the interaction between racial and ethnic groups, as material that history museums should readily display.<sup>35</sup> The author believed museums pay more attention to the demographics of visitors and cater to these groups, rather than viewing the larger historical picture and all of the actors that may have influenced an event. *How the Other Half Lived* touched on a few of the themes of importance in this study—Native Americans, missions, and women—but only once briefly explored a site in the Southwest

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<sup>34</sup> Philip Burnham, *How the Other Half Lived: A People’s Guide to American Historic Sites* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., xi.

that was visited in this study. The work was not an exact model of the research conducted for this dissertation, and later authors do not appear to cite the work.<sup>36</sup>

This study examined the exhibitions through the lens of New Western History. It asked if the exhibitions reflect the four “C’s” of Patricia Limerick’s themes: continuity, convergence, conquest, and complexity. Current curators or related staff at each site were asked questions about the thinking behind the message of the reviewed permanent exhibition. Specifically, curators were asked the following questions and then follow-up questions as appropriate to the answers.

- When did the museum open the current permanent exhibition?
- How long has the current permanent exhibition been in place unchanged?
- Who was on the development team for this exhibition?
- How long have you been curating exhibitions?
- What kind of training or preparation did you have for the curation of these exhibits?
- Do you alone normally lay out an exhibition or do you work with others? Who?
- Do you use design firms or other consultants in the formulation of an exhibition?
- Who or what influences your decision about the content of an exhibition?
- Where would you go for content experts?
- Is there a delivery platform other than the exhibition that you think is effective for developing interpretive material, such as a website?
- As you are developing any kind of interpretive materials do you consider who your intended audience is? Do you have material for different ages, for different ethnic groups?
- How does the interpretive material reach a wider audience than those physically visiting the permanent exhibition?
- What professional development are you personally able to do to keep current with your museums mission statement?
- If money or time were no object, what would change about the permanent exhibition that is up now?
- Is there anything on this topic that I didn’t ask that you think would be important?

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<sup>36</sup> A search was conducted on the Web of Science, February 1, 2010, with no records (citations) found.

The research included oral interviews conducted with subject matter academics when they were named and available. Their opinions about the content of the exhibitions, and if that message reflected current historiography, was solicited. The regulations governing these interviews and approval to conduct them came from Arizona State University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance. The identities of personnel with whom oral interviews were conducted are being kept confidential under these requirements.

## Literature Review

Historiography presents us with many works on the same topic over time. Historians are fortunate to be able to present their own view of an event or life of a person so it reflects the needs of the society in which the historian lives. The old works sit beside the newer works and are themselves a reflection of the changes a person may experience in their own lifetime. Interpreting history through the lens of New Western History reflected changes already taking place in society. Producing that literature and having it gain acceptance was a generation's work; one that continues through today and will never be completed. This literature review summarizes the most influential works consulted. The historiography of the New Western History concept and Turner Thesis, along with studies relating to museology, play the prominent role. Other works were consulted on specific topics as the subject matter of the museum displays required and are discussed in the appropriate chapters.

### *New Western History*

Patricia Nelson Limerick is credited with first bringing the New Western History ideas to the academy. Older works espousing one or more of her themes undoubtedly gave her the incentive to combine the work into a cohesive package. And the debate began. *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, published in 1987, formed the basis for the New Western History concept.<sup>37</sup> Limerick described the history of the Western United States from the viewpoint of a westerner and discussed how destructive the Anglo movement into the western U.S. was to the existing populations and environment. It took many works and much of her time to promote the concept, and she sometimes complained that the historical academy, and the general populous, was not appreciating the new interpretations brought forth by New Western Historians. Rather, they were clinging to myths about the glory days of Anglo pioneers.<sup>38</sup> She therefore reiterated her ideas about the elements that current writings of western history should include to make them relevant to the twenty-first century. This was especially and specifically voiced in *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West*, published in 2000.<sup>39</sup> Another collection that sought to redefine the meaning of New Western History and provide a venue for Limerick to advocate her concept was *Old*

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<sup>37</sup> Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, 1987.

<sup>38</sup> Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 91–94.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 91–94.

*West/New West: Quo Vadis?*, edited by historian Gene M. Gressley in 1994.<sup>40</sup> Another historian, Richard White, in his 1997 work “*It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own*”: *A History of the American West*, utilized the New Western History concepts.<sup>41</sup> His writings also could be found in several of the collections of essays discussing this new approach to viewing Western history.

Professor of Geopolitics Gerry Kearns, acknowledged the advancement of New Western History into various disciplines due to the changing environment in social history brought about by societal changes in the 1960s and 1970s in “The Virtuous Circle of Facts and Values in the New Western History,” published in 1998.<sup>42</sup> However, as pointed out in chapter one, the acceptance of changing ideas about Western history took a long time. Ten years after Kearns, historian Douglas W. Dodd examined the slow advance of the concept of New Western History into textbooks and the public view in “Legacy of Conquest and Trails Twenty Years Later: Public Historians and the New Western History.”<sup>43</sup>

In 2011, Marsha Weisiger, an environmental historian, looked at several Western museums to determine whether they were incorporating the New Western History ideas.

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<sup>40</sup> Gene M. Gressley, ed., *Old West/New West: Quo Vadis?* (Worland, WY: High Plains Publishing Company, 1994).

<sup>41</sup> Richard White, “*It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own*”: *A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

<sup>42</sup> Gerry Kearns, “The Virtuous Circle of Facts and Values in the New Western History,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 3 (September 1998): 377–409.

<sup>43</sup> Douglas W. Dodd, “Legacy of Conquest and Trails Twenty Years Later: Public Historians and the New Western History. Introduction,” *The Public Historian* 31, no. 4 (November 2009): 67–70.

She explored the idea that academic public history programs provide quality training in displaying history concepts, but do not necessarily promote classes in the American West. She found that many sites were providing a more critical, inclusive approach than the hero worship of the past. She believed the public was also now ready to accept a complex reality, although not all museums have embraced these new methods of interpretation.<sup>44</sup>

### *The Turner Thesis*

Frederick Jackson Turner preferred to write using the essay format. *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays*, collected in 1961, contained nine selected Turner essays.<sup>45</sup> Five of these were included in the 1920 *The Frontier in American History*, but this work focused on Turner's theories of teaching and the idea of "sections."<sup>46</sup> In *The Frontier in American History*, thirteen selected writings discussed Turner's concept of the significance of the West. Turner's paper as presented to the American Historical Association at the Chicago Exposition in 1893 can be found in "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*.<sup>47</sup> This edited edition by historian George Rogers Taylor from 1972

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<sup>44</sup> Marsha Weisiger, "No More Heroes: Western History in Public Places," *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 289–296.

<sup>45</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1961).

<sup>46</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*.

<sup>47</sup> George Rogers Taylor, ed., *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*, 3rd ed. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972).

also presented arguments about the thesis, both pro and con. The essays ranged in date from 1933 to 1966.

Historian Richard Hofstadter, in his 1968 *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington*, discussed Turner and the frontier thesis in detail as it made its way through history.<sup>48</sup> First it was accepted, then rejected, then brought back in part. John C. Almack, a historian at Stanford University, wrote the first attack on the Turner thesis in “The Shibboleth of the Frontier,” dated from 1925.<sup>49</sup> Almack concluded that the pioneers had the strength and skills needed to make America a better place and they would have done so whether they were on the frontier or not. Historians Louis M. Hacker, Benjamin F. Wright, Jr., George Wilson Pierson, and Carlton J. H. Hayes were some of the other early critics of the Turner thesis.<sup>50</sup> Writing for their own times, the 1930s and 1940s, they found that the Frontier Thesis was specific to the time of Turner and did not address their own worldviews thirty and more years later.

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<sup>48</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians: Turner, Beard, Parrington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968).

<sup>49</sup> John C. Almack, “The Shibboleth of the Frontier,” *Historical Outlook* XVI, no. 5 (May 1925): 197–202.

<sup>50</sup> Louis M. Hacker, “Sections—or Classes?” *The Nation* 137 (July 26, 1933): 108–110; Benjamin F. Wright, Jr., “Political Institutions and the Frontier,” in *Sources of Culture in the Middle West: Backgrounds versus Frontier*, Dixon Ryan Fox, ed. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), 15–38; George Wilson Pierson, “The Frontier and American Institutions: A Criticism of the Turner Theory,” *The New England Quarterly* XV, no. 2 (June, 1942): 224–255; Carlton J. H. Hayes, “The American Frontier—Frontier of What?” *American Historical Review* LI, no. 2 (January, 1946): 199–216.

### *The Middle Years*

Perhaps the most acknowledged proponent of seeing something good in all things Turner while agreeing that the thesis was far from perfect was Ray Billington, historian and research associate at the Huntington Library. He wrote the introduction to both books of essays from a conference on Western history held in Santa Fe in 1961. Historian Ross Toole and others edited the first set of these papers in *Probing the American West: Papers from the Santa Fe Conference*.<sup>51</sup> This work created the middle ground between Turner and the New Western History. It represented the acknowledged change from the Turner thesis (traditional Western history) to histories that were concerned with broad interpretations and the usable aspects of the past. The 1962 follow-up was *The American West: An Appraisal*.<sup>52</sup> In this volume, edited by historian Robert Ferris, Billington laid the foundation for the direction of the third generation of western historians after Turner. Later, in his 1966 *America's Frontier Heritage*, Billington explained how the Turner thesis still had value.<sup>53</sup> In more definite terms than Turner had, he described the good and bad social and economic qualities of pioneers that helped shape a world image of America as being a unique place.

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<sup>51</sup> K. Ross Toole, John Alexander Carroll, Robert M. Utley, A. R. Mortenson, eds. Introduction by Ray A. Billington, *Probing the American West: Papers from the Santa Fe Conference* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 1962).

<sup>52</sup> Robert G. Ferris, ed., Introduction by Ray A. Billington, *The American West: An Appraisal* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1962).

<sup>53</sup> Ray Allen Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).

### *The Next Western History*

Ty Cashion, a historian in Texas, in a published version of his class lecture titled “Place, Process, and the New, the Old, and the Next of Western History, A Primer,” provided a professor’s take on the New Western History and the changes its evolution since Limerick wrote *Legacy of Conquest*.<sup>54</sup> Cashion provided some historiography and gave an opinion about the ongoing debate between traditional and New Western History. He was already looking at “the Next Western History,” an appraisal of new essays which revealed that the articles would be slightly different from, and yet retain elements of, both Turner and Limerick. Cashion referred to the 1992 *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* by environmental historian William Cronon and others as an example of the Next Western History.<sup>55</sup>

### *Bibliographies and Historiographies*

Historian Michael P. Malone’s *Historians and the American West* was a historiography of the West by subject.<sup>56</sup> This edited volume from 1983 was useful as an update to the Toole book. It explored new thoughts as the Turner thesis was again investigated. A complement the work of Malone, another historian, Roger L. Nichols’s

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<sup>54</sup> Ty Cashion, “Place, Process, and the New, the Old, and the Next of Western History, A Primer,” from a lecture titled “Reconciling Frontier History with the New Western History,” date uncertain, but after Autumn 2002. [shsu.edu/~his RTC/New%20Western%20History.htm](http://shsu.edu/~his RTC/New%20Western%20History.htm) (accessed February 16, 2014).

<sup>55</sup> William Cronon, George Miles, Jay Gitlin, eds. *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992).

<sup>56</sup> Michael P. Malone, ed., *Historians and the American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

edited *American Frontier and Western Issues: A Historiographical Review*<sup>57</sup> focused on government and politics, social history, and mostly, economic issues. It was available in 1986. While the frontier was alive and well in these essays, the use of modern scholarly techniques to evaluate more relevant issues was evident.

Oscar Osburn Winther, history professor at Indiana University, authored *A Classified Bibliography of the Periodical Literature of the Trans-Mississippi West (1811–1957)* in 1961.<sup>58</sup> This large volume was sorted by subject and provided the type of document listed (i.e. article, diary, newspaper, etc.). This volume included all the listings in an earlier 1942 edition. An index by author was appended. Working with historian Richard A. Van Orman a few years later, Winther produced *A Classified Bibliography of the Periodical Literature of the Trans-Mississippi West: A Supplement (1957–1967)* in 1970.<sup>59</sup> This supplement to the 1961 work added 4,500 entries to the previous 9,244. Some of the subject matter was changed to reflect current historiography.

Historians Gary Nash and Richard Etulain, edited a series of articles in 1989, the same time Limerick was promoting New Western History themes. The work covered several topics that fit those themes: people, including articles about women, Mexican Americans, and Indians, the economy, the environment, politics, and culture. The prologue, “A New Historiographical Frontier” by Richard Etulain, was first written in

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<sup>57</sup> Roger L. Nichols, ed., *American Frontier and Western Issues: A Historiographical Review* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

<sup>58</sup> Oscar Osburn Winther, *A Classified Bibliography of the Periodical Literature of the Trans-Mississippi West (1811-1957)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961).

<sup>59</sup> Oscar Osburn Winther and Richard A. Van Orman, *A Classified Bibliography of the Periodical Literature of the Trans-Mississippi West: A Supplement (1957–1967)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970).

1985. He cited Gerald Nash's *The West in the Twentieth Century* as the first new scholarly discussion of the New West. This provided a fresh look that differed in interpretation from earlier historians. The focus could now be on Western social institutions (in-the-West historiography versus of-the-West historiography). Etulain described the voluminous historiography written after 1960 as focusing on the twentieth-century West. He cited books published in the 1960s that were concerned with the West and Southwest issues of water and the environment, urbanization, economics, and the influence of the eastern establishment on the West. Others looked at the involvement of the federal government in the development of the West and the role of agriculture. Much credit was given to Gerald Nash for writing about the various groups of people, their cultures, and the changes brought about by World War II in the development of the West.<sup>60</sup> The term "New Western History" was not used, of course, but the groundwork for those themes was explicit in the essays presented.

Richard Etulain and others contributed titles to a 1994 view of the historiography of Western history. *The American West in the Twentieth Century: A Bibliography* contained 8,187 entries and an index by author through 1992.<sup>61</sup> It provided listings to scholarly works, with the exception of master's theses, and combed several major journals as well as monographs. All were listed by subject and may be cross-listed if the topics were relevant. To help understand the historians who wrote about the frontier, look to legal scholar John R. Wunder who edited *Historians of the American Frontier: A Bio-*

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<sup>60</sup> Gary D. Nash and Richard W. Etulain, eds., *The Twentieth-Century West: Historical Interpretations* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 2, 15.

<sup>61</sup> Richard W. Etulain, Pat Devejian, Jon Hunner, and Jacqueline Etulian Partch, *The American West in the Twentieth Century: A Bibliography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

*Bibliographical Sourcebook* in 1988.<sup>62</sup> This work presented biographical information of many historians who wrote about various subjects and their influence on and by the frontier from colonial times to the 1980s.

### *Museology*

Tony Bennett's 2004 book *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* formed the foundation for this study.<sup>63</sup> Bennett examined how museum exhibitions changed with the new ideas of evolution at the turn of the twentieth century. A comparison can be made with how Southwestern museums were potentially making changes to their exhibitions to accommodate the New Western History as the current thinking in historiography. Graham Burchell and others edited *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, with Two Lectures and an Interview with Michel Foucault*.<sup>64</sup> Printed in 1991, it presented the 1978–1979 lectures by Michel Foucault and his concept of government and its action on, and how it was affected by, society. The work of Foucault was the basis of the theory used by Tony Bennett in *Pasts Beyond Memory*.

In 2006, Hugh H. Genoways, professor at the Nebraska State Museum, edited *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century* to provide a look at the twenty-first century and the possibilities for museums, to determine whether they are aware of and

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<sup>62</sup> John R. Wunder, ed., *Historians of the American Frontier: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

<sup>63</sup> Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*.

<sup>64</sup> Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, with Two Lectures and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

react to, certain major twentieth century issues.<sup>65</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, scholar of performance and Jewish Studies as well as a museum professional, presented her observations concerning the role of museums in several countries. Her perspective was based on ethnography and ethnicity and how various exhibitions presented their topics. The author presented her 1998 work in a most thoughtful, and complex manner in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*.<sup>66</sup> William Ray, professor of Humanities, wrote *The Logic of Culture: Authority and Identity in the Modern Era* in 2001.<sup>67</sup> This work viewed the French Revolution and subsequent Enlightenment concepts as agents of modern culture. The museum was an integral part of the formation of this culture as it both forced individuals to identify their role in society and to obey the laws of society.

The work of public historians is important to museums. “What a public history graduate brings is that thinking about how you convey that and communicate it, which is not something that a traditional academic department is doing.”<sup>68</sup> In 1986 Barbara Howe and Emory L. Kemp, historians, edited *Public History: An Introduction*.<sup>69</sup> This was an early work from the historiography on public history. It addressed the role of public

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<sup>65</sup> Hugh H. Genoways, ed., *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006).

<sup>66</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>67</sup> William Ray, *The Logic of Culture: Authority and Identity in the Modern Era* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc. 2001).

<sup>68</sup> Conversation with a senior official at a national institution, February 9, 2011.

<sup>69</sup> Barbara Howe and Emory L. Kemp, eds., *Public History: An Introduction* (Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1986).

historians both in and out of the academy. The essays provided insight into the varied tasks historians could perform and the myriad ways they could reach the public, including through museums.<sup>70</sup> *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed* by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, all associated with the Museum Studies program at the University of Leicester, acknowledged major changes to the way museums shape the perception of visitors and the way museums have been changed over the twenty years prior to this compilation.<sup>71</sup> Released in 2007, it took an international approach, recognized the influx of new media for dissemination of displays, and examined the social consequences of exhibitions. Historians Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig provided essays in their 1989 edited volume *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment* as a reflection of their concern for the lack of critical reviews of museum exhibitions even though these exhibits were visited by thousands of people each year.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, they sought to begin a discussion about the meaning and importance of historical interpretation at museums. The essays were in two sections, the first put history-related museums in context, the second looked at the effects of the New History on exhibits.

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<sup>70</sup> Later works that speak to public history as a field include *Public History: Essays from the Field* by James B. Gardner and Peter S. LaPaglia, and *People and Their Past*; *Public History Today* edited by Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean. The Gardner and LaPaglia revised edition of 2004 continued to justify the role of public historians in the academy, but also updated the tasks performed by historians in many venues, including museums and archives. The Ashton and Kean book, published in 2009, moved beyond the debate on the value of public history. Instead it emphasized the role of history in community-based settings.

<sup>71</sup> Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, eds., *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>72</sup> Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1989).

In 1989 Peter Vergo, art historian, edited *The New Museology* as a declaration of how museum professionals should identify with the changing cultural values of the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>73</sup> It promoted a more complex discussion of exhibition topics. Additionally, in 2002, Stephen E. Weil looked at the qualities good museums possess and how they position themselves for the future in *Making Museums Matter*.<sup>74</sup> He considered the uniqueness of museums to be their ability to provide a rich experience regardless of site or subject.

### *The History of Museums*

*Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* published in 1998 and authored by historian Steven Conn, considered this fifty–year period to be pivotal in the formation and change in place of museums.<sup>75</sup> This, the latter part of the Victorian era, was a period of creating and formalizing institutions and a time given to the fascination of collecting and displaying all manner of goods. Historians Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar penned *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* in 1992.<sup>76</sup> The authors examined the creation, management, and changing uses of the park from the 1860s through the 1980s. They discussed the relationship of the museums on the park to the elite class that created the museums and the working class that visited them.

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<sup>73</sup> Peter Vergo, ed., *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion, 1989).

<sup>74</sup> Stephen E. Weil, *Making Museums Matter* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2002).

<sup>75</sup> Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

<sup>76</sup> Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

Andrea Dennett, professor of performance at Long Island University, published a history of the dime museum, an institution that was very popular in the late nineteenth century. Her 1997 work's title, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America*, tells something of the exhibition subject matter.<sup>77</sup>

Historians Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt's *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* explored conflicts of control over museum exhibition subjects and diversity of viewpoint consult.<sup>78</sup> It was published in 1996. In it historian Mike Wallace and others discussed the attack on the proposed Smithsonian exhibitions about the *Enola Gay* and the plane's role in World War II, primarily by the Air Force Association (AFA). The AFA wrote that the curators were anti-American and writing revisionist, politically correct exhibitions. Similarly, Mike Wallace's 1996 *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* examined several of the contested history exhibitions and proposed exhibitions in recent years. It was an affirmation that the academy, the government, and the public had a vested interest in what was displayed in museums.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Andrea Stulman Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

<sup>78</sup> Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996).

<sup>79</sup> Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

### *Free Choice Learning Theory*

John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking are co-founders and directors of the Institute for Learning Innovation in Annapolis, Maryland. They used surveys of the museum-going audience to determine how museums can better engage their visitors. *The Museum Experience Revisited*, published in 2013, emphasized the learning aspect of the museum visit and promoted the Contextual Model of Learning.<sup>80</sup> This updated version of their earlier work reflected on newer, electronic modes of communication and provided suggestions for effective delivery of a quality museum experience.

Professor of Educational Studies George E. Hein wrote *Learning in the Museum*. It reviewed the role of education in museums from the 1970s through the 1990s.<sup>81</sup> Written in 1998, it sought to find ways to turn a brief encounter with an exhibition into a constructivist learning opportunity. This could only happen if the museum presented its material in a way that made the exhibition physically, socially, and intellectually accessible to all visitors so they could personally construct knowledge from the experience.

*Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century* and *Museum Revolutions*, mentioned earlier, offered discussions of many topics, several of which covered how people learn during a museum experience.<sup>82</sup> Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, professor of

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<sup>80</sup> John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2013).

<sup>81</sup> George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>82</sup> Hugh H. Genoways, ed., *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006); Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, eds., *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

Museum Studies, contributed essays to both works that deal specifically with learning theory.

### *The National Park Service*

For a review of the history of the National Park Service see *The National Parks: Shaping the System*.<sup>83</sup> Published in 2005, it was the third rendition of this work. It included the terms used for various sites, the history of the Service and of some of the parks within the system, along with a historical atlas, a directory of directors, and dates of the creation of each site. It was a compact and indexed work that made this overview easy to use for research purposes. An article by Edwin Bearss, a National Park Historian, published in 1987 provided a similar view of the history of Park Service, its notable personnel, significant legislation, triumphs and disappointments. This brief article was “The National Park Service and Its History Program: 1864–1986—An Overview,” found in *The Public Historian*.<sup>84</sup>

Additionally, Barry Mackintosh’s *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* was a worthwhile and quick read.<sup>85</sup> Mackintosh was a park historian and author of several works on the Park Service. Unfortunately, this 1986 work

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<sup>83</sup> *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Washington, DC: Harpers Ferry Center, Department of the Interior, 2005), online access at [http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/LPS63815/LPS63815/www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/shaping/contents.pdf](http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/LPS63815/LPS63815/www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/shaping/contents.pdf) (accessed November 28, 2014).

<sup>84</sup> Edwin C. Bearss, “The National Park Service and Its History Program: 1864–1986—An Overview,” *The Public Historian* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 10–18.

<sup>85</sup> Barry Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service: A Historical Perspective* (Washington, DC: History Division of the National Park Service, 1986).

only reflected the park history of interpretation up to the middle 1980s, but that included the important changes brought about by MISSION 66. Since it has been forty-plus years since its publication, and there have been several changes to governmental focus and priorities, along with at least one major recession hampering all levels of cultural funding, an updated edition would be welcome.

Another work, published in 1993 by a National Park Curator, was Ralph Lewis's *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service, 1904–1982*.<sup>86</sup> This more extensive work provided a history of the development of museums in the Park Service as well as furnished historic sites and collection policy and management. Lewis also wrote the *Manual for Museums* for Park Service employees in 1976.<sup>87</sup> Although his works are now several years old, they appeared to be the basis for the National Park Service web site manuals, reissued in 1990, and updated regularly since.

*Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* by Denise Meringolo, public historian, released in 2012, was not specific to this dissertation. However, it provided another view of the field of public history and the work of the National Park Service in providing historical interpretation for its multitude of visitors. This book, written by an associate professor of history at the University of Maryland, examined the emergence of the public history movement in the federal government. It used the Smithsonian and the National Park Service to explore how

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<sup>86</sup> Ralph Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service, 1904–1982* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Curatorial Services Division, 1993), <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951p00493455d;view=1up;seq=1> (accessed December 11, 2014).

<sup>87</sup> Ralph H. Lewis, *Manual for Museums* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1976).

history was established as a public service. It focused on the late nineteenth century up through the 1930s. The book sought to “shift debates regarding public history away from matters of definition and toward questions regarding the larger value of history practiced as public service.”<sup>88</sup>

*Landscapes of Fraud* by Thomas Sheridan, professor of Anthropology, was the only scholarly work specifically about Tumacácori discovered while researching this topic.<sup>89</sup> His 2006 study encompassed more than just the museum site. It addressed the Spanish attempts at control over the Akimel O’odham (Pima) Indians in the Upper San Carlos River region, and then instances of fraud committed later and condoned by the American legal system. The book was critical of Anglo use of the land and treatment of the O’odham people.

### *State Histories*

Early works of state history provided the basis for later interpretations. Initial works were published with the founding of the historical societies, around the turn of the nineteenth century. Examples of these early works included that of Hubert Howe Bancroft, an early historian of the American West. His *History of Arizona and New Mexico* was written in 1889 and provided a view of the territories of the west at a pivotal time in their formation. Other early multi-volume histories of Arizona were James McClintock’s 1916 two volume set, *Arizona*. McClintock was a Rough Rider and

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<sup>88</sup> Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), xxxii.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas E. Sheridan, *Landscapes of Fraud: Mission Tumacácori, The Baca Float, and the Betrayal of the O’odham* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006).

journalist. These works were followed in 1930 by Territorial Governor Richard Sloan's biographical histories of Arizonans in three volumes, and the three volume *History of Arizona* by historian Edward Peplow in 1958. New Mexico had at least one early two volume set from the vice president of the New Mexico Historical Society in Ralph Twitchell's 1911 *The Leading Facts of New Mexican History*.<sup>90</sup> Modern interpretations study much of the same source data, but use new lenses to present new views.

Lawrence Powell, a university librarian, wrote a bicentennial history of Arizona in 1976. The author used New Western History themes ten years before the term was used, acknowledging his work was but one version of the story.<sup>91</sup> References to New Western History themes can be found throughout this book. Along with the idea of conquest, he recognized the concept of complexity when he pointed out "the Spaniards stayed and intermarried the Indians. This admixture gave New Mexico its character, which endures to this day, an Hispano-Catholic-Indian culture not established in the adjoining land of Arizona except among Pimas and Papagos."<sup>92</sup> New Mexican histories also made this Native-Euro connection.

Powell continued to view both sides of the Spanish invasion when he later discussed the Yuma leader Palma, indicating that "although his abused people were to

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<sup>90</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Arizona and New Mexico*, 3 vols (San Francisco: The History Company, 1889); James H. McClintock, *Arizona: Prehistoric, Aboriginal, Pioneer, Modern: The Nation's Youngest Commonwealth within a Land of Ancient Culture*, 2 vols (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916); Richard E. Sloan, ed., *History of Arizona*, 3 vols (Phoenix: Record Publishing Company, 1930); Edward Hadduck Peplow, *History of Arizona*, 3 vols (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1958); and Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *The Leading Facts of New Mexican History*, 2 vols (Cedar Rapids, IA: The Torch Press, 1911).

<sup>91</sup> Lawrence Clark Powell, *Arizona: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1976).

<sup>92</sup> Powell, *Arizona*, 19.

rise a decade later and massacre the rapacious colonists at Yuma, it was Palma who sought in vain to spare the life of his friend Garcés who had founded the mission there.”<sup>93</sup> Whites also were guilty of having a heavy hand. Powell stated “It was a time of treachery, violence, and bloodshed. There were massacres by Anglos,” and “The 1820s and 1830s were decades of cruel conflict throughout the Southwest, only rarely lightened by and incidents of pathos and compassion.”<sup>94</sup> The Indians had a history to be told as well as the European-centric view commonly read. He concluded this section commenting that the Indians “fought long and hard to hold their land and feed their gnawing bellies.”<sup>95</sup> This concern for the Indian point of view in a bicentennial edition might have been objectionable to those holding Western white heroes in high regard. Powell then brought up how myth played a part in our common stories. “Today the Apache chieftains are enshrined in the pantheon of folklore more by fiction, movies, and TV than by history.”<sup>96</sup>

Powell looked to the past to divine what could be in the future. He said the greatest problem facing Arizona is “that of a rising flood of people into a land naturally unsuited to large numbers of people.”<sup>97</sup> If we cool the air with current technologies, he prophesized, the life span of Arizona will be shorter as fossil fuel sources and water supplies are running out. Those accustomed to making accommodations to their

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<sup>93</sup> Powell, *Arizona*, 23–24.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

environment will survive. He concluded his look forward with “Plants and animals, upland and desert creatures, and the native peoples will go on living here world (nearly) without end.”<sup>98</sup> Powell had good insight into the writing of history that gave equal voice to environmental issues. Although designed to be a popular history, this history of Arizona fit with the New Western History scholarly themes espoused ten years later.

Thomas Sheridan authored a scholarly review of the history of Arizona. *Arizona: A History*, first published in 1995, promoted various sides of historical events, so it exemplified New Western History concepts. For example, in discussing a murderous altercation near Tumacácori in 1859, Sheridan wrote, “During the late 1850s and early 1860s, Mexicans murdered twenty-five people in Arizona, causing Anglo observers and later historians like Hubert Howe Bancroft to rail against that ‘vicious class’ of Mexicans who were ‘always plotting to rob and kill.’ Yet Anglos—a small minority of Arizona’s population—killed thirty-nine people during the same period, twenty-three of whom were Mexican.”<sup>99</sup> Sheridan presented his study in a manner consistent with all four New Western History themes. He wrote of the extractive period of Arizona history, discussed the meeting of Indians, Hispanics, and Anglo Americans, examined the interplay of global political and economic forces with local cultural, demographic, and ecological factors, discussed nature as being the “ultimate Other,” and offered several chapters on Indian versus European conflicts and women in their various roles.<sup>100</sup> Sheridan updated

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<sup>98</sup> Powell, *Arizona*, 140, 142.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas E. Sheridan, *Arizona: A History*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 66.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

this book in 2012 and continued the continuity theme by addressing land use, water rights, border issues, and the fast growing population.

Historians Calvin and Susan Roberts wrote a concise history of the area that is now New Mexico in 2000. The book started with a description of the land and the first people to settle the region, up through the Pueblo culture. Several chapters discussed the Spanish “explorers” and life under Mexican rule. The territorial days and statehood were also outlined. The work ended with the period of World War II up to the 1990s. Native American and Mexican culture, the environment, and local artists and their work were discussed throughout the book. The authors provided a description of political leaders and a general sweep of events that created the unique history of the area. While not written with New Western History themes in mind, the work did offer insight into non-European views of living in New Mexico.<sup>101</sup>

A useful, modern tool for the student of New Mexico history was a timeline with brief descriptions of events by a Hispanic author. Rubén Sálaz Márquez published *New Mexico: A Brief Multi-History* in 2005. The author used a few sentences to describe a large number of people and happenings in chronological order.<sup>102</sup>

Historians and curators, James Kelly and Barbara Smith edited *Jamestown, Québec, Santa Fe: Three North American Beginnings*. Published in 2007, too late to be used as part of the historiography for most of the sites in the study, this book nevertheless reflected a synthesis of the work of historians such as Turner, Parkman, Webb, and

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<sup>101</sup> Calvin A. Roberts and Susan A. Roberts, *New Mexico*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

<sup>102</sup> Rubén Sálaz Márquez, *New Mexico: A Brief Multi-History* (Albuquerque: Cosmic House, 2005).

Bolton. It showed how the three cities, founded by three European states in rapid succession, 1607, 1608, and 1609, were vastly different in their approaches to establishing new settlements in what was to become the United States. It was a scholarly work presented like a coffee table book with glossy pictures and is available through the New Mexico History Museum bookstore. It contributed a quick and easily digested history of the conquest of North America from different points of view, and includes the Native American reaction to this incursion.<sup>103</sup>

The most recent exploration of current interpretation of the state was *New Mexico: A History*. The authors, all historians, considered their work “as a sourcebook: not only an introduction to the chronology of events in New Mexico history, but also a narrative source that presents up-to-date information and accepted interpretations of related events.” They also examined New Mexico in a global context, which many other works did not.<sup>104</sup> They paid tribute to Native American culture, recognized its place in the state’s history, and mentioned the movement to indigenize place names as a sophisticated way to reclaim their culture. The global aspect of the work was revealed when the role of the state in all the wars since the Civil War was shown.<sup>105</sup>

The language used was not explicit in New Western History themes, but the ideas of complexity and continuity were evident. From Spanish settlement, mining and the related labor and social classes were explored. The authors moved to more recent history

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<sup>103</sup> James C. Kelly and Barbara Clark Smith, eds., *Jamestown, Québec, Santa Fe: Three North American Beginnings* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2007).

<sup>104</sup> Joseph P. Sánchez, Robert L. Spude, and Art Gómez, *New Mexico: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), xii.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., xiii–xiv.

and continued these themes. In the 1960s, a civil rights movement for land ownership that originated with Spanish land grants was literally fought in northern New Mexico. The Alianza movement was a form of political activism with over 20,000 followers. The movement was unsuccessful, and not typical of other civil rights movements in the United States at the time, but it had its basis in history and showed the power of research—and a loaded rifle. An issue of continuity, urbanization of the state, was discussed in some detail. The reasons for population shifts continue up to today. Military base closings removed the need for civilian populations in that area. As new methods of mineral extraction were promoted, select counties saw a population boom, and then subsequent bust. Additionally, the influx of Anglos caused land prices to increase, forcing Hispanic families to have to move from ancestral homes in some areas. Environmental issues, and the latest innovation, a spaceport for Virgin Galactic Airways, concluded the author's view toward the future of the state.<sup>106</sup>

### *Related Topics*

Since the late 1980s and the implementation of the term New Western History, many works have been published that covered several of the topics shown in the visited museums. The following were prominent in the review of these topics.

Historians Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson edited *The Women's West* in 1987, the same year Patricia Limerick set the New Western History paradigm in writing. The topics included myths surrounding the role of women in the West, Native American

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<sup>106</sup> Sánchez, Spude, and Gómez, *New Mexico*, 308–341.

women and their roles, violence, marriage and child rearing, the jobs held by women including prostitution and as domestic servants, and how Chicanas were impacted by Sun Belt industrialization. All of these topics broadened the field of study from the previous white, male perspective of western history. This older image, “like most other stereotypes, is one-dimensional and historically inaccurate and incomplete. It leaves out most westerners, including the original inhabitants of the land, American Indians, and Hispanics; men who came West, not as loners, but with their kin; and women of all ethnic groups and social classes.”<sup>107</sup> This work presented changes to sex roles forced by the pioneer existence and opened up new avenues of historiography for all subjects of Western history. These essays were based on a conference held in 1983 to discuss Western women’s history. It again appears that Limerick was not creating a new concept, but perhaps trying to emphasize what was already happening so the hangers-on to older viewpoints would take notice of the changing historiography.

The topic of urbanization was well reflected in *The Metropolitan Frontier* by historian Carl Abbott. This 1993 book reflected on the beginning of World War II, a time when the West began to see a very large increase in population, up through 1990. It concentrated on the urban centers of the West. Abbott had two premises: “First, it is Western cities that organize the region’s vast spaces and connect them to the even larger sphere of the world economy. Second, urban growth since 1940 has constituted a distinct era in which Western cities have become national and even international pacesetters.”<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, eds., *The Women’s West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 3–4.

<sup>108</sup> Carl Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), xii.

Approximately ninety percent of the population in the Western states lived in cities or towns “leaving only one Westerner in ten for the ‘real West’ of farms, ranches, lonely desert gas stations, and railroad hamlets clustered around the gray columns of grain elevators.” By 1990, “One out of every four Americans now lives in a Western metropolitan area, up from one out of eleven in 1940.”<sup>109</sup> Western politics, pro-business legislation, international trade, and immigration were equally important in this discussion. This work provided a view of the West from the West, and idea that Limerick thought important. The major cities of both Arizona and New Mexico were mentioned often in the book.

Historian Hal Rothman provided an edited collection of essays in 1998 that were “a genuine reopening, a post-new western history approach to the environmental history of the American West, a series of articles that delve into the premise that underpin not only an older generation of scholars and thinkers, but also those who have redefined the field in the past two decades.”<sup>110</sup> Identifying the Turner concept of the West as limited in scope and ethnocentric, this reopening view “describes not an event or series of events but an ongoing process without beginning or end, one that involves all of the people of the region no matter what their ethnic, racial, cultural, or religious heritage.” Expanding the concepts Limerick promoted, these essays were “building from the insights of the new western history, the authors here accept the continuity of regional history, seeing no clear demarcation in the Census of 1890.”<sup>111</sup> Primarily, this collection focused on the

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<sup>109</sup> Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier*, xix.

<sup>110</sup> Hal K. Rothman, ed., *Reopening the American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998), x.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

environmental changes wrought on the American West. These changes were presented in three sections: place, pasts, and understanding. The theme of continuity was very evident. The authors used places that would be recognized by people of the past as well as the present “that address the problems of the moment in historical context,” while the understanding section reviewed the choices made in the past to see how they are affecting our present.<sup>112</sup>

Many of the museums visited offered Arcadia Press books about their site, town, or the people of their town. The Arcadia books provide images with a paragraph of explanation. They were not referenced in this study, but can certainly lead a researcher to archival sources of historical data about a particular place. Arcadia books are available at most historic sites in the United States.

Historiographical works available for the curators to utilize in the development of their exhibitions are referenced at the end of each of the following chapters. It is not known whether or not the curators used these works, as most curators currently working at the sites and consulted were not present when the exhibitions were created. The list is not exhaustive; additional works were certainly available.

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<sup>112</sup> Rothman, ed., *Reopening the American West*, xiv.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE OLD, THE NEW, AND THE NEXT WESTERN HISTORY

*We go eastward to realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race; we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure.<sup>113</sup>*

--Henry David Thoreau, "Walking" (1862)

#### The Turner Thesis

Historians tend to write about topics that are relevant to their times and in a manner that fits the society in which they live. Richard Hofstadter discussed famous historians, writing "they took their cues from the intellectual ferment of the period."<sup>114</sup> In this case it was historians Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles A. Beard, and V. L. Parrington who were taking their cues from the times and events surrounding them. Turner confirmed this idea when he said, "*Each age writes the history of the past anew with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time.*"<sup>115</sup> Other historians, such as Patricia Nelson Limerick, promoted the same concept in later years. To understand what historiographical changes Professor Limerick espoused, and to assess the potential resources available for museum professionals to use as research, we need to review the contemporary thinking in the field. This chapter looks at the historiography from the time of Turner through Limerick to put New Western History into context.

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<sup>113</sup> Lewis Hyde, ed., *The Essays of Henry David Thoreau* (New York: North Point Press, 2002), 158.

<sup>114</sup> Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians*, xii.

<sup>115</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of History," *Wisconsin Journal of Education*, XXI (October and November 1891): 233. Emphasis is that of Frederick Jackson Turner.

Frederick Jackson Turner, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, made a presentation to the American Historical Association meeting at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The World's Columbian Exposition, as it was officially known, was created to honor the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing in America.<sup>116</sup> Turner concluded his paper by stating, "And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier is gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American History."<sup>117</sup> The Turner thesis, the idea that wide open spaces pioneers could occupy and bend to their own wills, became a mainstay of American historical thought for the next eighty years. While it was eventually "to have a more profound influence on thought about American history than any other essay or volume ever written on the subject,"<sup>118</sup> the thesis also became contested shortly after it was published.

In fact, Turner did not think his thesis would be recognized by his peers at all, or that it would take a long time to gain acceptance. In addition to reading his paper to a group of fellow professionals, he also sent it to several others hoping to get their opinions. Some thought the title interesting, and would read his work when they had time. Turner was discouraged years later when he wrote a friend for an opinion about a new concept, probably regionalism; "Judging from my experience in getting the Frontier

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<sup>116</sup> Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 4.

<sup>117</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*, George Rogers Taylor, ed. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 256.

<sup>118</sup> Charles A. Beard, "Turner's 'The Frontier in American History,'" in *Books That Changed Our Mind*, 59-71, Malcom Cowley and Bernard Smith, eds. (New York: The Kelmscott Editions, 1939), 61.

idea a hearing, this will take twenty years, and I shall have to lean over the battlements to hear it spoken of as a trite conception.” None the less, Turner wrote about the frontier and the ideas he first espoused in 1893 for another twenty-five years, all the while reminding his readers about the elements of the frontier.<sup>119</sup>

According to Charles A. Beard, Turner’s thesis had twelve main elements. They are synthesized here as it is these elements that cause much consternation in the twentieth century. They are (1) The movement westward into the free land explains American development; (2) “American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier”; (3) “The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization”; (4) The frontier allowed for an American national identity to be created and promoted; (5) Americans were less dependent on England as they moved further from the east coast; (6) Because of the frontier, national legislation was developed; (7) The Constitution was reimagined as the frontier moved westward; (8) The frontier shaped legislative thinking concerning land, tariffs, and internal improvements; (9) The frontier produced individualism that moved America from the agricultural “democracy of Jefferson into the national republicanism of Monroe and the democracy of Andrew Jackson”; (10) Free land created an economic power that translated into political power; (11) “The frontier developed the essentially American traits—coarseness and strength, acuteness, inventiveness, restless energy, the masterful grasp of material things,

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<sup>119</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, “Forward” by Ray Allen Billington (1962), ix, and “Middle Western Pioneer Democracy,” (the address given in 1918), 335-359.

lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends”; and (12) The first period of American history closed with that of the frontier.<sup>120</sup>

Historians debated these elements, either in part or as a whole, for the next one hundred years. While Turner was not a prolific writer, he did defend his thesis in later articles and books. More importantly, he was an influential teacher, and many of his students take up his cause and continue its themes. Charles Beard, being somewhat frustrated by the overarching admiration for Turner by his followers, could not explain their failure to read the works of others. Turner, in his paper “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” “said flatly that free land and the westward advance ‘explain American development,’ and his disciples, failing to heed fully his other writings, overworked this categorical declaration and did not give due space to other features of American civilization, especially the planting and capitalistic aspects. How they could have read the Fathers and missed these considerations is for me among the seven wonders of American historiography.”<sup>121</sup>

Yet, Turner did promote some of the ideas Limerick would focus on later, but from an Anglo-centric viewpoint. Turner acknowledged that it was time to study the common man.

The focal point of modern interest is the fourth estate, the great mass of the people. In it we read the brilliant annals of the few. The intrigues of courts, knightly valor, palaces and pyramids, the lovers of ladies, the songs of minstrels, and the chants from cathedrals pall like a pageant, or linger like a strain of music as we turn the pages. But history has its tragedy as well, which tells of the degraded tillers of the soil, toiling what others might dream, the slavery that rendered possible the ‘glory that was

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<sup>120</sup> Beard, “Turner’s ‘The Frontier in American History,’” 64-65.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 69.

Greece,’ the serfdom into which decayed the ‘grandeur that was Rome’—these as well demand their annals.<sup>122</sup>

Although the Turner thesis took an Anglo-centric and east-to-west view of American history, he moved the gaze of historians away from the Atlantic and out onto the frontier. Prior to this time American history was written primarily by historians from the East and South who took little notice of the land, people, or events west of the colonial states. Turner complained that historians placed too much emphasis on European influence, specifically Germanic, and not enough on the American environment.<sup>123</sup> This frontier environment was unique, he argued, it challenged individuals, promoted democracy, and provided for opportunities to grow and create a new life.<sup>124</sup> Going forward there was no longer free land for the taking by emigrants and immigrants in the open lands of western America. This would mean new governmental models of handing a growing population and the industrialization of society had to be developed, the beginnings of which were evidenced in immigration policies of the 1880s.<sup>125</sup> Then, using terms that to Turner could convey a positive experience and the necessary progression of pioneers moving onto the frontier, but were the language used by historians of later periods as catalysts for historiographical change, Turner states, “The exploitation of the beasts took hunter and trader to the west, the exploitation of the grasses took the rancher west, and the exploitation of the virgin soil of the river valleys and prairies attracted the

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<sup>122</sup> Turner, “The Significance of History,” 231-232.

<sup>123</sup> Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 4-5.

<sup>124</sup> Hofstadter, *Progressive Historians*, 52-53.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 60.

farmer.”<sup>126</sup> Although Turner used the term “exploitation” as a positive economic benefit, it has more of a negative connotation today. It is perhaps not a strong enough term to describe the total reshaping of the land and society when considered by historians after Turner. While Turner pointed out the potential negative aspects of the closing of the West, what he did not do, which was of concern to New Western historians, is see the attendant ethnic and environmental conflicts. Turner’s vision was narrow and told only part of the story. Although it helped broaden the focus of the history of the United States to now include the western territories, it did not include the voices of non-Anglo inhabitants or women.

Turner’s paper did not immediately turn heads and cause a flourish of new research. This may have been because the historians listening to his talk “were already sympathetically aware of the Western cultural reaction and because they greeted Turner’s assertions as part of the growing concern for the historical study of the West.”<sup>127</sup> The same can be said of Limerick’s thesis ninety-four years later. Just as the *Legacy of Conquest* made a statement about what was perceived to be the growing focus of historiography in the 1980s, Turner’s statement also reflected the ideas of others who had come before. In 1885 at the second meeting of the American Historical Association, the attendees recognized that Western history materials needed to be archived. Shortly after that, W. F. Poole, the new president of the same organization complained that Eastern historians needed to “grow tall enough to look over the Appalachian range and see what

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<sup>126</sup> Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 14.

<sup>127</sup> Hofstadter, *Progressive Historians*, 54.

was happening on the other side.”<sup>128</sup> Even if they did, they would have seen that people in the West saw the changes that were taking place.

Many historians may have read the newspaper editor and humorist Edgar Wilson Nye, called Bill Nye by most. He lived for a time, and did his best writing, in Laramie, Wyoming Territory, from 1876 to 1883. By the mid-1880s he had gained a national syndication and had written a few books. Nye wrote an article entitled “No More Frontier” during this time. He complained that the pioneer had worked to hew wood, cooked over an open flame, and drew water from wells for the betterment of his children. However, “The system of building railroads into the wilderness, and then allowing the wilderness to develop afterwards, had knocked the essential joy out of the life of the pioneer.”<sup>129</sup> Some people recognized the open spaces of the West were fast disappearing.

Turner did not base his thesis on free land alone. In his view other issues helped create American democracy. He also promoted the idea of the West as a section, or region, of America.<sup>130</sup> This gave the West a place in American history without conflicting with other geographic areas or times. Additionally, Turner believed a broader view should be taken. “Turner realized that not one but a variety of differing environments modified imported cultures as they spread across the continent. In each successive ‘section’ the basic pattern was altered; the historian must recognize these differences, just

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<sup>128</sup> W. F. Poole, “The Early Northwest,” American Historical Association, *Papers*, 3 (1889): 278.

<sup>129</sup> T. A. Larson, ed., *Bill Nye’s Western Humor*, selected and with an introduction by T. A. Larson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), 182. The exact date of the article and its place of publication is not discussed in this text, but its placement in the text would put it closer to 1883 than 1876.

<sup>130</sup> Ray Allen Billington, introduction to *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays*, by Frederick Jackson Turner (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1961), 7.

as he must note the rivalry and interplay of section with section, and the impact of these conflicts on national development.”<sup>131</sup> This is a good starting point for developing a new western history.

Still, these concepts alone cannot account for all of Western history. Turner promoted these ideas because they were being neglected by his contemporaries. By 1910, when he delivered his presidential address to the American Historical Association, he saw the opportunity to further expand the fields of historical study. His topic was “Social Forces in American History.” He discussed the changing social and economic structure of the country, and how “the fundamental forces which have shaped their society up to the present are disappearing.”<sup>132</sup> It behooved historians to acknowledge these changing times, recognize the complexity of society, and borrow the tools of other disciplines, so they might explore the variables that make up society, such as economics, politics, and culture.<sup>133</sup>

Within fifteen years of Turner’s address many historians were using his ideas to write new histories “somewhat proportionate to the place the West had long occupied in the American imagination.”<sup>134</sup> Texas historian Walter Prescott Webb explored new topics about the West in his well-received early work, *The Great Plains*, published in 1931. Webb discussed the limited water supply as a topic, for example, demonstrating a consideration for new ideas, but he also was a traditional historian in his Anglo views of

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<sup>131</sup> Billington, introduction to *Frontier and Section*, 4-5.

<sup>132</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 311.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 331-334.

<sup>134</sup> Hofstadter, *Progressive Historians*, 83.

Indians and Hispanics.<sup>135</sup> Webb saw the Plains Indian as an influence upon Anglo settlers, and the challenging environment of the land, materially different from the wooded Eastern third of the country, as offering peculiar problems. Unfortunately, Webb also presented the idea that the pioneers only interacted with Native Americans when they were at war. The culture of the Indian was of little concern to the Anglos. “It was only the Indian in war paint and feathers and on the warpath that ever gave the pioneer—the only one who faced the problem in a practical way—anything serious to think about; therefore, as far as the Indian goes, the historical problem comes down to the single issue of his ways in war—his methods and his weapons.”<sup>136</sup> Although different and more inclusive than the histories that had come before, this interpretation was still not a view of the West that included all the groups that formed it.

### The Next Generation – the 1930s and 1940s

Although these concepts appear to throw the field open to many interpretations, by the 1930s a large body of work criticized Turner’s approach to history. Again, historians were writing to their time. Society had changed from a predominantly rural one to a largely urban population contending with the Great Depression and the Second World War. This generation of historians found the glorification and mystery of rural America to be “only a phenomenon in the books.”<sup>137</sup> By this time, “most Americans lived where there *had been* a frontier, but only a very small minority actually lived on a

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<sup>135</sup> Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1931), 17-27.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>137</sup> Hofstadter, *Progressive Historians*, 92.

frontier or lived through the frontier process themselves.”<sup>138</sup> In 1925 John C. Almack became the first to directly criticize the Turner approach. He contended that while the frontier was important in the formation of American culture, it did not contribute to the idea of progress in any manner. Additionally, the followers of the Turner thesis did not perform comparative studies of other frontiers.<sup>139</sup> Others quickly followed Almack, writing for their time. Lewis Hacker in 1933, a period after both a world war and a depression, wanted historians to study capitalism and imperialism, to examine the complexity of the sources of the issues of the day, and not focus on the American frontier.<sup>140</sup> A year later, Benjamin F. Wright, Jr., made a case for a more worldwide interpretation but also allowed that Turner, like all historians, wrote for his time.

If, in his zeal for his cause, he overstated his case, that is more than pardonable, it was probably necessary. But the desirability of unquestioning acceptance of his sweeping doctrine vanished long ago. His thesis has, like previous interpretations, served its purpose. Continued reliance upon his unclarified and unmodified doctrine is more an indication of imaginative poverty than of loyalty to a dead leader. It has been many times said that each generation must reinterpret history to suit its own preconceptions. If we today find Turner’s thesis of forty years ago to have been narrow and provincial, to have emphasized unduly the characteristic peculiar to some sections and some frontiers, to have elevated to the stature of universal principles values which are beginning to be found something less than perfect, we are simply doing for our time what he did for his.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Hofstadter, *Progressive Historians*, 141.

<sup>139</sup> Almack, “The Shibboleth of the Frontier,” 197-202.

<sup>140</sup> Hacker, “Sections—or Classes?,” 108-110.

<sup>141</sup> Wright, Jr., “Political Institutions and the Frontier,” 37.

Historian Carlton Hayes, writing twelve years later, and after the Second World War, agreed with Wright that a comparative worldview was the current need in historiography. Yet, he used terms perhaps common to his day, but that would have been objectionable to Limerick and limiting to us today. He stated, “All our original white ancestors on this continent knew they came from Europe,” and “the Atlantic community has lost none of its potential importance for us and for the world.” However, he did strike the same chord as Limerick in looking at the continuity of historical themes. He was more inclusive of all the groups involved in the settlement of the West than his predecessors, but less than Limerick will be in her time. Hayes said “To this end the historical guild in America can immeasurably contribute by extending the use of the comparative method, by emphasizing the continuity of history, and by stressing cultural and social, equally with political and economic, history.”<sup>142</sup>

Not everyone agreed. Avery Craven, a student of Turner’s, defended the thesis and the further writings of Turner as early as 1937. He pointed out that Turner declared the thesis was not intended to be an exhaustive dissertation on the subject, but rather a suggestion that more, and different, work should be done to promote a new version of American history. “He was calling attention to factors which others had neglected. Nor was he dictating results. He was only pointing out the need for research and indicating new approaches which might yield profit.”<sup>143</sup> Craven then directs us to the work of the

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<sup>142</sup> Hayes, “The American Frontier—Frontier of What?,” 216.

<sup>143</sup> Avery Craven, “Frederick Jackson Turner,” in *The Marcus W. Jernegan Essays in American Historiography*, William T. Hutchinson, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 253-254. In “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” Turner said, “This paper will make no attempt to treat the subject exhaustively; its aim is simply to call attention to the frontier as a fertile field for investigation and to suggest some of the problems which arise in connection with it” (5).

students of Turner, stating that they pushed the study of America history into new fields with broader interpretations, fields that Hayes promoted. “Some contributed to economic and social history on subjects that ranged from agriculture to industry, centered on finances or transportation, on primitive Indian tribes, or on the efforts of mature societies to end wars. Some wrote local history—state or regional. Others dealt with the sections. Diplomatic and political events, well set on their economic foundations, attracted a few.”<sup>144</sup>

While Turner’s students were exploring new ground, their interpretation would not be appropriate for following generations. Turner and his followers did not write history from the perspective of the local Westerner, they did not emphasize the decimation of Native Americans for both economic and racist reasons, they did not explore the contradictory attitudes toward Mexicans who were accepted into Anglo societies until there were enough white women in the territory, they did not focus on exclusionary immigration policies toward Asians who helped build the Western infrastructure but who also took jobs away from Anglos, and they did not include the perspective of women. The latter point is interesting given a picture of his students showing his senior studies class of 1894-1894; it has twice the number of women as men.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Craven, “Frederick Jackson Turner,” 267-268. For a list of many of his students and others influenced by Turner’s teachings and writings, see Stuart A. Rice, ed., *Methods in Social Science: A Case Book* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), 359-367.

<sup>145</sup> Frederick J. Turner’s Senior History Seminar, 1893-4. Original owned by the University of Wisconsin Archives: Series No. 11/2 Turner, F.J. <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/wireader/Images/WER0563.html> (Accessed May 27, 2014). Image courtesy of the UW-Madison Archives.



*#1 Turner and his students*

Still, the new history of this period is more inclusive than that of Turner's day. As each generation made its interpretation to be different from the one before it, so later generations of historians would do the same, reviewing and criticizing that had come before as being irrelevant to their own time period and needs.

### The West as Myth

George Pierson, professor of history at Yale University, had a slightly different concern in 1942. He recognized that Americans had identified with the heroes of the West. The addition of other voices, those left out of the Anglo interpretation, Pierson challenged the idea that Westerners were heroes. It is a dilemma that still resonates. Forty-five years before Limerick wrote about the same issues, Pierson stated, "For frontier legends of one kind or another have now so permeated American thought as to

threaten drastic consequences.”<sup>146</sup> The legends start early and are even found in historical journals, making their inclusion in the history of the West a point with which to be reckoned. This is a typical poem from 1932, published in Montana.

Pioneers, by H. Jason Bolles  
Barbers hearkened across the prairie;  
Lawyers squinted beyond the years;  
Doers all, uprose the merry  
Pioneers.

They crossed their streams in a miller’s hopper,  
They built their roads with a farmer’s hoe,  
They fought their foes with a butcher’s chopper,  
And hung their thieves with a latigo.

They cast their bullets of tinker’s metal,  
They nailed their houses with cobbler’s brads,  
They panned their gold in a brewer’s kettle,  
And drove their drifts with a cooper’s adze.  
They have served a writ on the bare, bright acres;  
They have shaved the mountains behind the ears—  
Heroes, adventures, doctors, bakers,  
Pioneers.<sup>147</sup>

The image of the strong pioneer is made both personal and factual in anthropologist Oscar Lewis’s 1958 *The Autobiography of the West: Personal Narratives of Discovery and Settlement of the American West*. “So here have been gathered a series of eye-witness accounts of how the primitive lands that once comprised our far-western frontier were discovered, explored, steeled, and over the years converted into the enterprising and venturesome region we know today.”<sup>148</sup> These legends, always from the

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<sup>146</sup> George Wilson Pierson, “The Frontier and American Institutions: A Criticism of the Turner Theory,” *The New England Quarterly*, XV, no. 2 (June, 1942): 224.

<sup>147</sup> Jason Bolles, “Pioneers,” *Frontier* XII, no. 3 (March 1932): 211.

<sup>148</sup> Oscar Lewis, *The Autobiography of the West: Personal Narratives of Discovery and Settlement of the American West* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958), i-ii.

Anglo point of view, allow no favorable aspect of the voiceless others to be revealed. A chapter on the Southwest contains notes from James Ohio Pattie, a fur trapper in Santa Fe, written in the 1820s. "This time the savages—a numerous band of Comanches—killed a number of ranchers, drove off several hundred sheep, and made captive five young women."<sup>149</sup> In speaking of the frontier life, Lewis H. Gerrard, then about eighteen years of age, published an account of his travels in approximately 1853, called *Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail*. It speaks to the myth and excitement of the frontier image. "Here, with mule and gun, and a few faithful friends, one experiences such a grand sensation of liberty and a total absence of fear; nobody to say what one shall do; costumed as fancy of comfort dictates; one's blanket one's house the prairie one's home—money he needs not, except to buy coffee, ammunition, and 'Touse' [i.e. the Taos brandy]."<sup>150</sup> His words express a wildness and freedom; words which could inspire many others to want to explore the same experiences. Starting in 1863, journalist J. Ross Browne travelled into Arizona Territory. He recounts stories of Indian attacks, "Most feared of the Indian tribes of the region, and indeed among the most warlike in the entire nation, were the Apaches, of whose treacherous attacks both on the whites and on their fellow redskins." Brown describes Arizona as a land of contradictions in 1863-1864, "No country that I have yet visited presented so many striking anomalies...With millions of acres of the finest arable lands, there was not at the time of our visit a single farm under cultivation in the Territory."<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Lewis, *The Autobiography of the West*, 234.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>151</sup> Lewis, *The Autobiography of the West*, 263-265.

Henry Nash Smith, co-founder of American Studies as a discipline, wrote an often quoted and highly influential book, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* in 1950. Smith considered the Turner thesis a spark that ignited a debate about what Americans think, and perhaps more strongly, feel, about the history of the West. “It concerns the image of themselves which many—perhaps most—Americans of the present day cherish, an image that defines what Americans think of their past, and therefore what they propose to make of themselves in the future.”<sup>152</sup> Smith examined both American and European imaginative views of the West, incorporating subjects such as America as a passage to India, the heroes and heroines of dime novels, and the West as an agricultural garden, so as to determine how these representations fit into intellectual history. The most important image for Turner, and by extension Smith, was the myth of the West as a garden; “The master symbol of the garden embraced a cluster of metaphors expressing fecundity, growth, increase, and blissful labor in the earth, all centering about the heroic figure of the idealized frontier farmer armed with that supreme agrarian weapon, the sacred plow.”<sup>153</sup> Turner’s thesis placed “its emphasis on agricultural settlement” traced back from Turner’s own life experience through Thomas Jefferson to eighteenth-century England and France.<sup>154</sup> From these foundations would come the theories of democracy, that all individuals have rights to freedoms and ownership, especially of land. These

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<sup>152</sup> Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950), 4.

<sup>153</sup> Smith, *Virgin Land*, 138.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 292.

powerful symbols had become part of the history of the frontier so they had to be dealt with by historians.

In 1986, fifty-four years after the poem “Pioneers” was written, and almost four decades after Smith’s *Virgin Land*, noted Western historian Robert Athearn, a contemporary of Patricia Limerick, was still concerned about the power of the myth in Western history. “The region that once seemed endlessly bountiful and forever wild has become a land of narrowing limits. With this realization, popular feelings about the West, ‘the most American part of America,’ have swung erratically between hope and disillusionment, affection and anger. Yet the myth has survived, however battered and bent into new shapes. Any political, economic, or social history of the modern West, Athearn is saying, must take that myth into account.”<sup>155</sup> This is especially demonstrated by the image of the cowboy. Twenty-three years later, in 2009, historian Jay Price wrote that the myth still had a strong hold on the imagination. He acknowledged the power of public perception and indicated that popular characters and events hold more interest than do the hard facts of the frontier conquest. “Being in the trenches of the culture wars, perhaps it is the public historians who realized that the most formidable obstacle to the new western history is not Frederick Jackson Turner (who is unknown outside of a select circle of scholars and writers), but John Wayne.”<sup>156</sup> The myth of the West as shown in entertainment media makes a powerful impression on the public’s imagination.

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<sup>155</sup> Elliott West, “Forward” in *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America*, by Robert G. Athearn (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1986), ix.

<sup>156</sup> Jay M. Price, “Still Facing John Wayne After All These Years: Bringing New Western History to Larger Audiences,” *The Public Historian* 31, no. 4 (November 2009): 81-82.

Even while Turner was giving his 1893 speech he would have had the opportunity to see the dwindling frontier presented as entertainment, and making a mighty impression on the future, right across the street. Not allowed to be part of the fairgrounds itself, Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World show brought twelve thousand people a day through its gate. This gate "featured Columbus on one side, under a banner 'Pilot of the Ocean, The First Pioneer,' and Buffalo Bill on the other, identified as 'Pilot of the Prairie, The Last Pioneer.'" These are strong symbols occurring at the same time Turner was using his frontier and pioneer analogies. William Cody was a showman and knew the value of promoting an image. When Susan B. Anthony attended his show, Cody road up to her box and bowed to her. She returned the bow. "The significance of the moment escaped no one. Here was one of the greatest heroes of America's past saluting one of the foremost heroes of its future. The encounter brought the audience to its feet in a thunder of applause and cheers."<sup>157</sup> Audiences are still applauding the supposed heroes of the West, making the true story one that is hard to tell.

In a 1992 essay, historian Ann Fabian suggested historians not fight the myths of the West, but rather work with them. Scholars should ask "not only why stories about the West have had such appeal but also how western materials have been marketed, to whom and why. Who has told the story of the West?" The story has been told by many people in many ways. "Like prospectors who took over abandoned claims, the entrepreneurs of

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<sup>157</sup> Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 222, 285-286. Almost four million people attended the Wild West shows, while 27.5 million went to the Columbian Exposition over the six months that both were open. This was at a time when there were only 65 million people in America (Larson, 5).

western imagery continue to eke wealth from well-mined sites.”<sup>158</sup> Billy the Kid and Geronimo still play a part in the museum interpretation of the west. They, and the stories told about them, are not common examples of everyday life for the vast majority of even the Anglos who settled in the southwest. While these larger-than-life individuals are real characters of Western history, and the stories told in museums are perhaps more factual and more mundane than the legendary tales would have us believe, their names help draw a visitor audience that might otherwise not have entered the museum’s doors. As long as there is an emotional, and economic, benefit to do so, these popular versions of Western history will be found everywhere.

#### New Issues Mean New Interpretations – the 1950s and 1960s

As another generation took over the seats in the academy, new issues were ready to be addressed. By the 1950s “came attempts at substantial extensions and reinterpretations of the hypothesis.”<sup>159</sup> In 1951 Walter Prescott Webb endorsed the Turner thesis, but applied it more broadly to the Western European movement across the globe. He called this movement the Great Frontier. Europeans settled around the world, colonizing and taking all the gifts the Great Frontier had to offer from about 1500 until 1820 when most of what they had conquered was lost to them.<sup>160</sup> However, in reviewing

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<sup>158</sup> Ann Fabian, “History for the Masses: Commercializing the Western Past,” in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past*, William Cronon, George Miles, Jay Gitlin, eds. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), 226 and 238.

<sup>159</sup> Taylor, ed., *The Turner Thesis*, ix.

<sup>160</sup> This may not be ‘settler colonialism,’ at least in the Southwest of North America, if that term is defined as having a goal of “eliminating” the native by any means, including assimilation. See <http://nativeamericanhistory.about.com/od/nativeconceptsandperspectives/a/American-Colonialism->

the history of this period the spotlight had been on the individual; people who wanted to rule, enrich, and save their own souls. “These three freedoms were institutionalized in Protestantism, capitalism, and democracy—whose basic assumption is that they exist for the individual, and that the individual must be free in order to make them work.”<sup>161</sup> In this work, Webb, like Turner, used sweeping and abstract terms to make his case. While the individual is important, Webb only references Anglos. It is up to other historians to include individuals from all ethnic and socio-economic groups.

Lee Benson was a lesser known but influential historian from Columbia University. The same year Webb was using Turner’s thesis as the basis for his work, Benson was criticizing the economic aspects of the frontier idea. Benson believed Turner’s sense of geographic place accounted for his intellectual bent. Benson saw much of European Old World economic theory in this American New World approach.<sup>162</sup> He analyzed the sources and the context of Turner’s frontier essay to attempt to clarify some of its concepts. Benson also considered that the time between Turner’s birth in 1861 and the delivery of his address in 1893 “roughly parallels a series of remarkable developments which may rightly be judged as unprecedented in all history.”<sup>163</sup>

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101.htm (accessed October 2, 2014) I believe the Spanish wished the Native American to be subjugated, but to remain as slaves or of inferior status, even if they converted to Catholicism.

<sup>161</sup> Walter Prescott Webb, “The Frontier and the 400 Year Boom, Reflections on the Age of the Frontier,” *Harper’s Magazine* CCIII (October 1951): 26-33.

<sup>162</sup> Lee Benson, *Turner and Beard: American Historical Writing Reconsidered* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1960), viii.

<sup>163</sup> Lee Benson, “The Historical Background of Turner’s Frontier Essay,” *Agricultural History* 25, no. 2 (April 1951): 59.

These massive cultural changes include significant improvements in all manner of transportation and communication, materials for making more efficient engines, inventions, and managerial consolidations caused by new technologies. This led to a new global economy, but also caused global disturbances as an influx of new goods into previously paled systems changed markets. The disturbances were so great that a “Great Depression” as it was called at the time, ensued from 1873 to 1896. This caused the government to assume a greater role in the coordination of economic affairs; and, in Turner’s view, a realization that agriculture in “free lands” was being replaced by towns and industry.<sup>164</sup>

The lack of free land was a concern for some Americans, who looked at immigration trends and through national legislation began to restrict certain groups of people. There was a fear of certain ethnic groups who were moving onto farms and taking jobs in Eastern cities. Acculturation was one option for the Anglo-centric majority, but it became ineffective when a growing number of immigrant newcomers stayed in ethnic enclaves. Society was moving from the ideal agricultural state to one based on manufacturing. Thomas Jefferson was a firm believer in the benefits of working the earth and many still believed in that ideal. He said “Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue.”<sup>165</sup> Turner was aware of these issues as he prepared for his Columbian Exposition address. What was of interest to Benson was the

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<sup>164</sup> Benson. “Historical Background,” 60-61, and Turner, “Significance of the Frontier,” 9.

<sup>165</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, William Pedeu, ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1954), 164-165.

rapid acceptance by historians of Turner's thesis, yet without any evidence that the American public accepted the concept of a closed frontier. Yet public perception is forged from what they have access to, and that is influenced in part by what scholars produce. Turner helped his own cause when he was asked by the *Atlantic Monthly* to publish an essay about the frontier and the West in time for the 1896 elections where the Populists were causing heated arguments that pitted the South and West against the Northeast.<sup>166</sup>

A few years after the Benson article was published historians Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, proposed that much of the controversy of the Turner thesis was based on the words he chose, but suggested that few researchers had looked at the internal logic of the argument. In 1954 Elkins and McKittrick tested the concept of the democracy-forming value of the thesis against actual situations. They looked at the uniqueness of the political structure of the West to see if it could be applied to other regions to make the concept truly American. As examples, they used the Old Northwest states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois to see if the Turner thesis held there as well and found that it did. They asserted that communities were formed to combat shared trials found on the frontier. As the towns grew in number and size, the focus of the political development moved from a shared subsistence to a capitalistic promotion.<sup>167</sup> Individuals made contributions to society, but as part of a community.

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<sup>166</sup> Benson, "Historical Background," 77-81.

<sup>167</sup> Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, "A Meaning for Turner's Frontier, Part 1: Democracy in the Old Northwest," *Political Science Quarterly* LXIX (September 1954): 323-339.

Ray Allen Billington, perhaps the most avid promoter of the basic tenants of the Turner thesis, also focused his essays on individualism. Billington sought to reconcile those who argued that all of Turner's work was invalid with those who found pieces of the thesis to have value. He added equality among settlers as a component worthy of study. Billington wrote in the Cold War era and looked for world harmony. He stressed that the Turner thesis, if valid, was vital to recognizing the similarities and differences in people from around the world. He put high hopes in the reason of mankind when he stated in 1966, "If people everywhere can recognize that other peoples must behave in differing ways world frictions will be lessened."<sup>168</sup>

Billington believed Turner's view of the frontier held lessons for the public and historians. He opined that what one historian called the "third generation of the frontier hypothesis" was true. While doubt exists, it was reasonable to test various aspects of the thesis rather than reject all of it outright. Billington thought Turner would approve of this method since Turner believed in retesting theories periodically, especially as new scholarly techniques became available.<sup>169</sup>

Mirroring Elkins and McKittrick, Billington explained the importance of individualism. "Actually, the legend of frontier individualism rested on what people thought should be true, rather than what was true. The West was in truth an area where cooperation was just as essential as in the more thickly settled East. The danger of Indian attack, the joint efforts needed to clear the forests or break the prairie sod, the community

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<sup>168</sup> Ray Allen Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), xi.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., xii.

of labor required for the variety of enterprises necessary in establishing a settlement, all decreed that new communities be occupied by groups, and never by solitary individuals.” He then discussed equality, but it was an equality among Anglos. Billington stated “Basically, frontier individualism stemmed from the belief that all men were equal (excluding Negroes, Indians, Orientals, and other minority groups), and that all should have a chance to prove their personal capabilities without restraint from society.”<sup>170</sup>

The frontier, according to Billington, attracted the kind of people who were either adventurers or who had a great need to move from their situations in the East. These were followed by those who provided for a community, the farmers and town folk who needed others with whom to transact business. The English were better at this than the Spanish, Billington believed, because they were used to private ownership of land and had more economic and political freedoms. However, all came for potential economic advancement, which could provide upward social mobility. Eventually, frontier life so modified the community patterns that far-removed European visitors found the pioneers to be a distinct group in their experience. Servants were replaced with helpers who shared the family’s resources. Potential could be realized soon, so all were “ladies and gentlemen” regardless of prior class. Mobility in locale could also signify upward mobility through society. As long as there was room to move, the frontier was a place of limitless opportunity. Once the frontier was historically acknowledged as being “closed” by Frederick Jackson Turner, adjustments to the pace and types of change would need to

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<sup>170</sup> Billington, *America’s Frontier Heritage*, 143 and 150.

occur. People continued to move West and agriculture eventually gave way to industry.<sup>171</sup>

Today it is success in an industrial state that provides upward mobility, but in America, as opposed to the Old World of Europe, it was believed that anyone could achieve that level of success, regardless of occupation. According to Billington, the relics of pioneer relations on the frontier can be found only in America. Some of the relics are negatives, such as wastefulness of resources and favoring the new ways of doing things over the old ways, some just old-fashioned, like holding doors for “ladies,” some are positive, like a belief in equality and the opportunity to move up in social standing. All of these traits got a start three hundred years ago on the American frontier.<sup>172</sup>

### Western History Gets a New Perspective

Billington helped organize a conference called The Santa Fe Conference on the History of Western America, in 1961. The last such conference had been held thirty years earlier in Boulder, Colorado. The number of interested scholars surprised the Santa Fe conference organizers; they expected ninety people, but over three hundred attended. The purpose of the conference was to assess the scholarship of the Trans-Mississippi West.<sup>173</sup> The timing of the conference was good:

For in 1961 the time was ripe for a new surge of interest in the history of the West, just as in 1929 when the first “Conference on the History of Western America” assembled at Boulder the first

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<sup>171</sup> For a graphic of the movement of people from East to West in America, from 1790 to 1890 see <https://www.census.gov/dataviz/visualizations/001/>. (Accessed May 27, 2014).

<sup>172</sup> Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage*, 219-235.

<sup>173</sup> K. Ross Toole, John Alexander Carroll, Robert M. Utley, A. R. Mortenson, eds., *Probing the American West: Papers from the Santa Fe Conference* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 1962), vii and 1.

wave of enthusiasm for frontier studies was about to ebb. For thirty years before that 1929 meeting, western history had been the rage, Frederick Jackson Turner the idol of all Americanists, and environmentalism the universally accepted tool needed to unlock the secrets of the past. For thirty years after 1929 frontier studies had been gradually discredited, Frederick Jackson Turner subjected to scathing criticism, and the environmental determinism that he was supposed to advocate cast into disrepute. By 1961 this tide of criticism had run its course, and a new generation of scholars was busily testing the “frontier hypothesis” with encouraging results.<sup>174</sup>

By this time, more research material and better tools to analyze any thesis were available. New magazines with an interest in Western history were being published and general and specific topic monographs were available. Various papers were read at the conference that revealed the new types of historiography and probed broad interpretations with a concern for relevance in the present as opposed to the thrilling and glamorous myth.<sup>175</sup> The essays were published the next year. The conference also produced a major development in Western history.

“One [western historian] wrote after the 1961 Santa Fe conference: ‘So many who have felt apologetic about their historical endeavors—historians described as regionalists, museum people, state historians, and the like—came away with the feeling that they really belonged. They came away inspired to do better things.’”<sup>176</sup> The attendees were so pleased with the response to the conference that they saw the opportunity to establish an organization that would promote this interest. In 1962 the Western History

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<sup>174</sup> Toole, et al, *Probing the American West*, 2.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 7-15. For a comparison of topics covered in this volume and other works published in the late twentieth century that reveals the changing historiography of the time see Appendix A.

<sup>176</sup> Ray A. Billington, “The New Western Social Order and the Synthesis of Western Scholarship,” In *The American West: An Appraisal*, 3–12. Robert G. Ferris, ed. (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1962), 6.

Association was formed with Ray Billington as the first president. There was enough excitement about the subject that an additional volume of essays was published that same year. It was recognized that the history of the West had a place in solving modern problems. There were two schools of Western history at the time, and Billington hoped they could be blended to provide a greater benefit to a public that was viewing itself now on an international scene. The two schools came out of the Turner tradition; the “History of the West” school had a regional orientation emphasizing local events at the expense of national concerns. The “History of the Frontier” school studied the westward advancement of the population rather than accounting for any localized environment, and included an obsession of testing the Turner thesis.<sup>177</sup> “As a recent writer has suggested, we are entering the third generation in our appraisal of the frontier as a molding force in our civilization; complete acceptance that was universal during the first generation, or unreasoning rejection that sufficed during the second, have already been outmoded. Already there are signs that a healthy new viewpoint is gaining strength.”<sup>178</sup> The Turner thesis was still alive, although weakened from its many years of historiographical ebbing and surging.

The next generation of scholars then set about to do some of their own testing of the thesis. In 1983 another assessment of the state of the scholarly literature of the West was published. The authors “took their doctoral degrees in the 1960s or earlier. That means that they were trained too soon to catch the full force of the new ideas and new

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<sup>177</sup> Billington, “The New Western Social Order,” 8-11.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 12.

methodologies that were then fighting for recognition. It would be interesting to solicit the views of scholars who are now in their thirties or even late twenties—the oncoming generation so to speak,” wrote Michael P. Malone, professor of history and Dean of Graduate Studies at Montana State University, Bozeman in 1983. “It would seem then, that while none of these modern western historians view Turner, Bolton, and Webb with the scorn shown by some critics of a generation ago, most find serious lacks now that western history has produced a whole congeries of subfields that seem to demand attention.”<sup>179</sup> Patricia Limerick earned her doctorate in 1980. She would be in the “oncoming generation” of historians and saw the opportunity for more directed attention.

A few contemporary historians had long shown their concern for a purely Anglo approach to Western history. For example, Edward Spicer published *Cycles of Conquest* in 1962. He took a very modern approach to European colonization. The first sentence of his book uses the word “conquest,” and the idea of Anglo power holding dominance over local peoples is used throughout the work. “The scope of the modern European expansion which began in the fifteenth century far exceeded that of any previous ‘world’ conquest. During the 1500’s and 1600’s it proceeded to enmesh in its web of domination the natives of the Americas, Africa, southern Asia, and the islands of the South Seas.” Spicer continued his criticism of European invaders, “In most cases, after the native people were subjugated, strong sentiment grew up in the conquering nation regarding the injustice of the original conquest.”<sup>180</sup> This phraseology is what Limerick wanted to see twenty-five

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<sup>179</sup> Michael P. Malone, ed., *Historians and the American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), viii and ix.

<sup>180</sup> Edward Holland Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest; the Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1962), 1 and 1-2.

years later, only on a more widely used scale by her fellow historians. She had her work cut out for her, for, according to Malone, “in fact, many western historians continue to embrace his (Turner’s) interpretation in one form or another.” He also found fault with those who did not embrace new methodologies. Malone stated, “Historians of the West have been noticeably slow in taking up the newer methodologies that became popular during the 1970s.”<sup>181</sup>

### The New Western History

Patricia Nelson Limerick wrote *Legacy of Conquest* in 1987. She got the idea for the book at a 1981 conference called “The American West: Colonies in Revolt.” At that conference many of the speakers talked of the current problems of the West and gave the impression that these were new issues.<sup>182</sup> Professor Limerick was of the opinion that there was a great deal of continuity in the history of the western United States. However, first and foremost to her thesis, was the idea that the West was a place of conquest.

Limerick opened her manuscript with a quote from Frederick Jackson Turner as an epigraph, citing his words in “The Significance of History” that each age writes for its own time and that historians write for the present. She called this chapter “Closing the Frontier and Opening Western History.”<sup>183</sup> Professor Limerick is critical of the Turner thesis early in her work, although she created the impression that more than joining the

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<sup>181</sup> Malone, *Historians and the American West*, 8 and 10.

<sup>182</sup> Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 9.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 17.

many who criticize or applaud Turner's theses, what she wanted to do was use new methodologies to expand the story of the West and be inclusive of its many people and issues to make a broad history relevant to her time.

Limerick discussed the idea of conquest and its effect on shaping the image of the American West. She compared it to slavery, writing, "Conquest deeply affected both the conqueror and the conquered, just as slavery shaped slaveholder and slave." Slavery is an issue that is important in American history, and society. "Here, however, we reach a principal difference: to most twentieth-century Americans, the legacy of slavery was serious business, while the legacy of conquest was not."<sup>184</sup> Because we fought a war between Anglo brothers, the idea of slavery in the American imagination is repugnant. However, concerning the war against Native Americans, a people who were considered savages and not on the same cultural plain as Anglos, there is less sensitivity to them as equals. "Children happily played 'cowboys and Indians, but stopped short of 'masters and slaves.'"<sup>185</sup> The idea of conquest was one for the movies and thrilling novels meant for entertainment, but not serious public consideration.

At the time Limerick was writing this text in the late 1980s the subject of Western history was declining in universities and colleges. There was no Western event that marked a watershed in its history like the American Revolution in the East and the Civil War for the South so history departments did not consider 'the West' as a viable topic needing separate study. New methodologies were being used to test the frontier thesis,

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<sup>184</sup> Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 18.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 19. In early 2014, while giving a tour of a historic home in Arizona, this author met an American-born guest who suggested that Indians were still taking scalps in the West.

but since the “frontier” was a moving target across all of America, the West did not need to be singled out. The 1961 conference on Western history created a transitional period for historians. The post-war historians rejected the distinctive nature of the West in favor of “the story of American economic enterprise written over and over again in new terrain.” . . . “The key words for this postwar generation remained the standard clichés of ‘expansion,’ development,’ and ‘growth.’”<sup>186</sup> Those who did subscribe to the themes of what would become the New Western History confronted the violence and imperialism of the past. Their first goal was to give a voice to the invaded people of the region and secondly to recognize that the primary purpose of the region was to provide the raw materials for the industrial complex of the East. This led to environmental disasters and the eventual movement from conservation to preservation. The third issue for the early New Western-leaning Historians was to proclaim, “The West has in fact been a scene of intense struggles over power and hierarchy, not only between the races but also between classes, genders, and other groups within white society.”<sup>187</sup> The frontier began to take on a new look, the stories now not just the myth, but more of the whole story from multiple perspectives. It begins to be the story of “an ordinary people moving into an extraordinary land.”<sup>188</sup>

Limerick did not dispute the powerful force of the frontier as a concept. However, she found it to be too broad a term for the subtle concepts that pervade Western history.

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<sup>186</sup> Donald Worster, “Beyond the Agrarian Myth” in *Trails: Toward a New Western History*, Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles R. Rankin, eds. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 11.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 16-21.

<sup>188</sup> Athearn, *The Mythic West*, 273.

She would rather have us look at the continuity of Western American history to find new approaches and models for study. For instance, Turner looked from the East toward the West. Limerick stands in the West and looks East. It is a matter of perspective: “Reorganized, the history of the West is a study of place undergoing conquest and never fully escaping its consequences. In these terms, it has distinctive features as well as features it shares with the histories of other parts of the nation and the planet. Under the Turner thesis, Western history stood alone. An exciting trend in modern scholarship leads toward comparative history—toward Western American history as one chapter in the global story of Europe’s expansion.”<sup>189</sup>

Turning away from Turner’s idea of the West as a process and focusing on it as a place provided a new perspective. For one thing, it included many people. First, it was the intersecting point for Indian Americans, Latin Americans, Anglo-Americans, and Asians. “Second, the workings of conquest tied these diverse groups into the same story.” Many of the stories have similar trails and endings but can be viewed from their different ethnic backgrounds. It made for a consistent theme, and, according to Limerick, the theme of the history of the West is one of conquest. “Conquest also involved a struggle over languages, cultures, and religions; the pursuit of legitimacy in property overlapped with the pursuit of legitimacy in a way of life and point of view.” The idea of conquest was the historical basis of all of America. The American West was a prime example of multiple types of conquest and its consequences.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 20-26.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

Limerick drew on the work of others for her thesis that conquest is a preeminent element in American history. She acknowledged that her argument is based on secondary sources, just as we have seen that the ideas for Turner's essay had been developed loosely by others before him. She cited Earl Pomeroy and a 1959 essay by John Caughey that "carefully explored the distinction between the West as frontier and the West as place or region." With these and other historians preceding the themes of New Western History, Limerick asked an important question before her critics can do so. "Why repeat their arguments? Because the message has not gotten through. The public holds to the idea of a great discontinuity between frontier and the Western present."<sup>191</sup> Limerick found the need to repeat these arguments in several later manuscripts. Throughout them all she compares her concepts to Turner's evolving ideas through his essays that started with the frontier being instrumental in the political development of America and then as he moved to the concept of the West as a separate region of the country.

The pioneers went west to improve their own lives, not to change or destroy the lives of those already there. However, if there was good soil, green grazing land, or natural resources available that could be exploited Anglo-Americans did not hesitate to take control from the Indians occupying that land. Property and the profits derived from it were "the emotional center of Western history." A point of conflict arose when western individuals needed help from the federal government. On the one hand, settlers had no problem asking for help in controlling the Native Americans and taking federal land. Oddly, "Local Indian hostilities were a mixed blessing; forts and soldiers meant markets

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<sup>191</sup> Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 30-31, and John Walton Caughey, "The American West: Frontier and Region," *Arizona and the West* (1959): 7-12.

for local products and business for local merchants. Similarly, once conquered and dependent on rations, Indians on reservations became a market for local grain and beef.”<sup>192</sup>

On the other hand, locals resisted intervention into the regulation of resources and often found ways to circumvent federal demands. In New Mexico, a group of local businessmen, lawyers and politicians known as the Santa Fe Ring, made several fortunes from the distribution of territory land holdings. The West was able to expand its economy by relying on, and resisting, federal aid. As the natural recourses of the region were converted to commodities for shipment east, the creativity of the frontier people created a region with some political power and a new force in the economy. It was not as easily done as the dime novels and heroic movies led the public to believe, however. Limerick wrote, “This was the elemental fact obscured by the myths and romances: in its essence, Western expansion was a lot of work.”<sup>193</sup>

Professor Limerick used many specific examples of the reasons why the history of the West is one of conflict and continuity. Several of these will be cited in the following chapters concerning the various museum displays to show examples of what could have been, and based on Limerick’s emphasis, should have been, on exhibit. In *Legacy of Conquest*, she made the point that the historiography of the West should undergo some changes if the real stories of the time and land were to be told. Speaking of the then-pending 1992 five hundredth anniversary of Columbus’ arrival in the Americas, Limerick

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<sup>192</sup> Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 55 and 82.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 85-89 and 97.

wrote, “In an age of attempted civility toward minorities, it seems poor taste, at best, to celebrate an invasion, a demographic catastrophe, and a conquest.”<sup>194</sup> She also likened the history of the West to watching a play. There may be many actors in the play, but usually the audience can keep track of them all. We may identify with one or more of the characters and see how they relate to or are in conflict with others; “The ethnic diversity of Western history asks only that: pay attention to the parts, and pay attention to the whole.”<sup>195</sup>

A few years after publishing *Legacy of Conquest* Patricia Limerick had the opportunity to put her ideas to the test, something Frederick Jackson Turner never did himself. In 1989 she organized a symposium and curated a travelling exhibit call “Trails through Time” at the behest of the Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming State Endowments or Councils for the Humanities. The exhibit consisted of twenty-four panels and was first displayed at the symposium held in Santa Fe, where the term “New Western History” was first used. The name came to describe all the changes that had occurred over the prior few years.<sup>196</sup> This was Limerick’s opportunity to germinate the ideas promoted in *Legacy of Conquest*. Just like in the aftermath of Turner’s thesis, some agreed, but some did not.

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<sup>194</sup> Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 179.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>196</sup> Limerick, *Trails*, ix and 59. Turner gave his presentation that initiated the examination of the West as a region in 1893. Thirty-six years later there was a conference on Western history in 1929 in Colorado, then another thirty-two years after that in Santa Fe in 1961. The *Trails* conference was again close to thirty years from that prior major one. These generational changes have offered significant adjustments to the historiography of the West. The Western History Association offers an annual conference, but perhaps we will see another major shift within the next five to ten years.

None of the participants would argue that the 1960s started a period of change in society that was then reflected in the historiography. Ethnic and racial diversity moved America beyond the “melting pot.” Environmental issues and cultural and social pluralism became recognized as political forces. Women’s issues played an increasing role in all facets of life. The New Western Historians took Turner to task for being too Anglo-centric and not providing a broad and balanced view of the past. Limerick wrote, “Rather than seeing a single Anglo wave moving west across a continent, we see one set of waves, predominantly but not wholly Anglo, encountering other waves: one Hispanic from the South, another Asian from the Far West, and amid it all, we find enduring yet dynamic Native American cultures.” The New Western History, at the least, looked at old issues in new ways.<sup>197</sup>

There were many historiographical transitions between the time of Turner and Limerick. Turner’s thesis took a strong hold on the direction of writing until the late 1920s. Then it was discussed and discarded in the 1930s and 1940s, but Ray Allen Billington and others redressed it later. In The 1950s and 1960s historians saw a frontier being changed by English-speaking white males. As new subfields took hold across the humanities greater explorations of the frontier thesis were exercised causing the concept to be further challenged. Limerick espoused that, “The frontier model, in other words, worked against a recognition of the American West as a real place, as a region of significance with a serious history.”<sup>198</sup> Turner’s frontier thesis was being challenged once again, this time by the New Western History.

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<sup>197</sup> Limerick, *Trails*, x-xii.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

The term “New Western History” got the attention of the press, including T. R. Reid of the *Washington Post* and Mark Trahant of the *Arizona Republic*.<sup>199</sup> Others used the term as well, like *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Denver Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *New Republic*, and the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. In 1989 *Arizona Republic* columnist Phil Sunkel asked “Why can’t the revisionists simply leave our myths alone?” Again, the imagination and entertainment had control of the popular image of the West as a vital, violent and hard pioneer life. “Westerners—and most other Americans, for that matter—are quite content with our storied past, even if it tends to fib a bit.”<sup>200</sup> There was a concern that the West, which for this reporter was full of heroes and hard-riding cowboys, would pass out of the consciousness of the American people. The public has a long memory, however. Reminded often by popular entertainment they are not likely to forget John Wayne or Disneyland’s Frontierland Shooting Exposition. In Limerick’s opinion, the academy pulled back from the public at this time as well. Limerick wrote, “In nearly every field of academic inquiry, the twentieth century has seen a retreat to the university. Professors write for other professors; specialization, jargon, and academic timidity have placed a canyon between public audiences and intellectuals. The Trails symposium, and the improbable publicity that followed it, built a bridge across that canyon.”<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> T. R. Reid, “Shootout in Academia Over History of U. S. West: New Generation Confronts Frontier Tradition,” *The Washington Post*, October 10, 1989, and Mark Trahant, “Frontier West ‘Myth’ is Debunked,” *Arizona Republic*, October 1, 1989.

<sup>200</sup> Limerick, *Trails*, 61 and 87. Phil Sunkel, “Some Old West Advice for New-Wave Historians: Go East,” *Arizona Republic*, October 23, 1989.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 76.

The bridge was a narrow one and not yet built on a firm foundation. In 1991 the National Museum of American Art curated a show titled “The West As America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920.” The show examined how the iconic scenes of the American West contributed to its conquering by expansion from Easterners. It created a considerable degree of controversy and emphasized the gap between the academic and popular versions of Western history, but mostly because of the words used in the label texts, not because of the images. Interpretation by the curators who were reflecting quite strongly the New Western History attitudes pointed toward conquest and gender and ethnic inequalities. One reviewer wondered why it caused such a controversy, but concluded that when you politicize the past you invite trouble.<sup>202</sup> Three years later, the Newberry Library in Chicago held an exhibition of their archival items comparing Frederick Jackson Turner to William “Buffalo Bill” Cody. Both were influential in shaping the image of the American West. Limerick, along with Richard White, produced articles for a slim volume called *The Frontier in American Culture*, the name of the show. Limerick once again had an opportunity to use a museum display to demonstrate the New Western History. However, she was less than optimistic that the work of the academy, whether it took the traditional or new form, was making an impact on the public. “Scholars who are holding on to the use of the word ‘frontier’ and scholars who

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<sup>202</sup> Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 117; Roger B. Stein, “Visualizing Conflict in ‘The West as America,’” *The Public Historian* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 86 - 90; and Robert Hughes, “Art, Morals and Politics,” *The New York Review of Books* (April 23, 1991).

have rejected it hold one thing in common: the public is paying absolutely no attention to either of us,” she wrote.<sup>203</sup>

Patricia Limerick was not done trying to get recognition for the concepts of the New Western History. She was working in the public sphere through her exhibit work, by giving public lectures, and by using popular magazines to disseminate a new view of the West. She also continued to promote the ideas in academic circles. Acceptance of new ideas takes time, as Turner found out. *Something in the Soil* was published in 2000. Here Limerick referenced the four “C” words that she first used in a 1991 *People* magazine article.<sup>204</sup> These words described the focus of the New Western History: continuity, convergence, conquest, and complexity.

Continuity: Turner’s work stopped historians from distinguishing the West as a separate region in 1893. However, the little movements of the nineteenth century continued and expanded in the twentieth century. Continuity topics from the 1890s through the present for research consideration by New Western Historians included homesteading, extractive industries—timber, oil, coal and uranium—water use, public lands, boom/bust economies, local authority versus federal authority, relations with Mexico, Indian land and water claims, and freedom of religious practice.

Convergence: This was defined as the West as meeting place for many groups, including, but not exclusively, white men. Others came to the region and had an influence

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<sup>203</sup> James R. Grossman., ed. *The Frontier in American Culture: An Exhibition at the Newberry Library, August 26, 1994-January 7, 1995*. Need the rest of the date here (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 79.

<sup>204</sup> Vickie Bane, “Calling ‘Dances with Wolves’ Fantasy, a Historian Sounds a Charge Against the Mythic Past of the American West,” *People*, April 22, 1991.

upon it, such as African Americans from the east, Hispanics who moved north from Mexico, Asians from the West, and included in all these groups were women.

Conquest: This word is used by Limerick to reposition American history into a global context. It meant that Europeans seized nature's bounty, dominated the daily lives of others living on the occupied territories of America, and refashioned the culture of native peoples. This word replaced "frontier" in the New Western History. "Frontier" had the connotation that the United States was different from the rest of the world, that the vast frontier afforded Anglo settlers opportunities, freedom, and a fresh start in life. Native Americans would disagree.

Complexity: Many myths of the West avoid the complexity of humanity by making people either good guys or bad guys with nobody in between. That is not reality. Humans tend to both love and hate, they can fight and have compassion, be petty and display grace and dignity.<sup>205</sup> One example of this theme is Jared Diamond's reflection in his work *Collapse* on the presidency of Joaquin Balaguer of Haiti. Diamond, a professor of physiology, indicated that Balaguer used torture to gain political power. He also appeared to care a great deal about the environment. Diamond considered this complexity when he wrote, "it is difficult for us to acknowledge that people are not consistent, but are instead mosaics of traits formed by different sets of experiences that often do not correlate with each other."<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 18-21.

<sup>206</sup> Jared Diamond, *Collapse; How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York; Penguin Books, 2005), 348-349.

Limerick believed all four of these themes should be reflected in histories to provide relevance for viewing our modern day circumstances. Although progress was being made to tell the fuller story of all the people of the West, Limerick repeated her message stated in her previous works, that “These careful requests to stretch the term ‘frontier’ to accommodate ethnic diversity have not carried far beyond walls of universities.”<sup>207</sup> Once again, she decried the slow evolution of breaking free from an Anglo-centric interpretation and painted a disheartening picture for public acceptance of historical reality when she wrote, “Standing in the way of a full reckoning with those lessons is, however, this fact: in the late *twentieth* century, the scholarly understanding formed in the last *nineteenth* century still governs most of the public, rhetorical uses of the word ‘frontier.’ If the velocity of the movement of ideas from frontier historians to popular culture remains constant, somewhere in the next century, we might expect the popular usage of the work to begin to reckon with the complexity of the westward movement and its consequences.”<sup>208</sup>

Hofstader wrote, “We have seen that many aspects of the Turner thesis were stated by other writers before Turner; but we identify him with this idea not simply because he stated it more fully but also because he hammered away at it with a certain obsessive grandeur until everyone had to take account of it.”<sup>209</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick spent thirteen years, at least four books, and several essays making her point that a change needed to be recognized in writing about the West. She might find very limiting

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<sup>207</sup> Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 79.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>209</sup> Hofstadter, *Progressive Historians*, 120.

the sentiment of Ray Allen Billington when he said, “Today the frontier hypothesis is increasingly recognized as a valid interpretation of American history, and the pioneering experience as one of the casual forces responsible for the distinctiveness of the nation’s social order.”<sup>210</sup>

Interpretation of interpretation will continue for a long time. Historian George Taylor wrote in 1972, “It seems unlikely that the last word has been spoken or that the Turner thesis has been generally accepted at last. The debate will continue if for no other reason than that it revolves around values central to the American character and basic to America’s image of itself. Moreover, as current problems press in upon us, our view of the past will inevitably reflect our concern with the ever-changing present.”<sup>211</sup> In fact, the story does not end here.

Just as many historians agreed with or disagreed with Turner, so to historians critiqued and criticized Limerick. In 1994 Stephen Aron, a professor of history from Princeton University, suggested that the idea of the West as defined as being across the Mississippi does not tell the full story. Without the middle ground of the movement of the frontier from east through the middle states, and then into the West, is to miss much of the history of America. Aron gave some praise to Richard White for his environmentally based summary of Western History in the 1991 text *It's Your Misfortune, and None of My Own*, and liked that White was able to do this without invoking the frontier. However, he found much to reject in Limerick’s works. While looking over the Appalachians, Aron

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<sup>210</sup> Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, xviii.

<sup>211</sup> George Rogers Taylor, ed., *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), x.

was not looking very far. He called for the term “A Greater Western History” to represent all that could be written about American history.<sup>212</sup>

### The Next Western History

Ten years later others looked back on the historiography of the West and found that the context of the scholars was important to the history they present. Historian Joseph Taylor found that “A review of Library of Congress titles that use the phrase ‘New West’ reveals at least four distinct epochs in the last 135 years: the first was a transcontinental revision of western possibilities, the second a nostalgic longing for the frontier period, the third ambivalent assessment of mid-twentieth-century modernity, and the latest a fest of social and ecological diversity.”<sup>213</sup> However, the distinct epochs keep coming. In 2011 one scholar placed the New Western History at the mid-point of its generational assessment, suggesting that yet another change in society’s concerns is right around the corner.<sup>214</sup> Others would say the change is already taking place.

In 2002, historian Stephen Aron reviewed the recent prize-winning scholarly works in Western History. At this time, he referred to the subtle changes that are already appearing in the new historiography as “The Next Western History.” He detected that historians put aside the stale debates of the frontier versus a region, westward expansion

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<sup>212</sup> Stephen Aron, “Lessons in Conquest: Toward a Greater Western History,” *The Pacific Historical Review* 63, no. 2 (May 1994): 16-127 and 147. See White, ‘*Its Your Misfortune and None of My Own*’.

<sup>213</sup> Joseph E. Taylor III, “The Many Lives of the New West,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 145.

<sup>214</sup> William Deverell, “Western Vistas: Historiography, 1971 to Today,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 358.

versus environmental and human casualties. The latest works, “rather than rehashing questions about place versus process,” recognize “that no single spatial scale or interpretative framework can capture the complex history of the American West.” The new historiographies “grapple with the entwined *intercultural* legacies of conquest and cohabitation.” Best of all, in his opinion, the Next Western Histories “offer up paradoxes and possibilities”<sup>215</sup> However, Aron is quickly criticized for his pronouncements. Ty Cashion, in his online class notes from Sam Houston State University in Texas, disagreed, and stated that the New Western History never achieved a consensus; rather the New Western Historians never clearly defined their West. Also, the New Western History was “simply B-O-R-I-N-G” because it does not tell a good story. He instead told his students to appreciate the work of historians Cronon, Miles, and Gitlin who recognized both place and process and called that relationship a movement from flux to fixity. “That is, they see the West as a definite place (fixity), but one that became a region only after a succession of migrating frontiers ran their course (flux.)”<sup>216</sup>

Cronon, Miles, and Gitlin, in *Under an Open Sky*, said that rather than stressing the isolation of the frontier like Turner did, they saw the new approaches to Western history as “likely to stress the *connectedness* of frontier areas.” They also often stated that while historians may have lost interest in the West, ordinary Americans liked it because it has not changed much, at least in their imagination. Nor do they want it to change. The

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<sup>215</sup> Stephen Aron, “Prize Reflections 2001 Western History Association Published Prizewinners: The Next Western History,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 337-338.

<sup>216</sup> Ty Cashion, “Place, Process, and the New, the Old, and the Next of Western History, A Primer,” from a lecture titled “Reconciling Frontier History with the New Western History,” date uncertain, but after Autumn 2002. [shsu.edu/~his RTC/New%20Western%20History.htm](http://shsu.edu/~his RTC/New%20Western%20History.htm) (accessed February 16, 2014).

authors saw six steps in moving from a frontier to a region, and anticipated that as historians analyze each, they will be creating the Next Western History. The steps are “species shifting, market making, land taking, boundary setting, state forming, and self-shaping.”<sup>217</sup> The essays in *Under an Open Sky* reflected the changes recognized as important from the 1960s, but they start to refine what Limerick posited as the New Western History.

It did not take long for others to add to the Next Western History. In 1994 editor Gene Gressley found the New Western History to have such a focus on the present that the scholars conducted only superficial research, mostly because there was little of the present time available in archives. He found Limerick fascinated by the lack of quality in academic prose and once again, in her essay “The Privileges and Perils of the Western Public Intellectual,” she touted that there was no audience for academic work. Professor Limerick was certainly consistent and prolific with her message.<sup>218</sup> After many years of preaching her ideas of a multicultural West the tenets of New Western History finally reached textbooks. White’s “*It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own*” was an early summary of West, and other text-books followed. While there are only a few texts about the West, textbooks of American history have generally accepted the New Western History concepts. *The American West: A New Interpretive History* by historians Hine and Faragher was published in 2000. Their condensed version, *Frontiers: A Short History of the American West*, more useful for classroom work, was published in 2007. Right from

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<sup>217</sup> Cronon, *Under an Open Sky*, 8 and 22.

<sup>218</sup> Gressley, ed., *Old West/New West*, 13 and 20-21.

the third sentence of the Preface the authors detailed their reflections on the New Western History. They stated, “Following the abundance of recent provocative work on the American West, we have highlighted the Native American side of the frontier, the significance of ethnicity in settlement, and the participation of women in the making of Western history. There are many voices that speak directly from experience.”<sup>219</sup> Yet, they called their text “Frontiers” in homage to the popular and traditional view of the West.

Overcoming the traditional resistance may never be completely possible. The Autumn 2011 edition of the *Western Historical Quarterly* was dedicated to “The WHA at Fifty: Essays on the State of Western History Scholarship, A Commemoration.” The articles examined the state of historiography. The challenges of writing history, and specifically for the West, have not changed since the reawakening of historians to the West as a region worthy of historical study in the 1960s. A contributor stated, “Western history, as a field of study, is in the midst of a generational and intellectual transformation. Twenty-five years have passed since the energetic new western historians uprooted the Turnerian tree that had defined historical inquiry for decades. Some historians mourn the passing of that dynamic moment and complain that the field has since splintered into subspecialties.”<sup>220</sup> Indeed, the academy changed with the times, but

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<sup>219</sup> Richard White, ‘*It’s Your Misfortune.*’ Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *Frontiers: A Short History of the American West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), vii. For an example of an American History textbook using New Western History concepts see Jacqueline Jones et al., *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States* (New York: Pearson Education, Inc. 2006), 516. In this discussion of “Federal Military Campaigns Against Western Indians” the following phrases are used: “aggressive effort to subdue native populations,” and “Custer’s men murdered women and children.”

<sup>220</sup> Colleen O’Neil, “Commentaries on the Past and Future of Western History: Multiple Strands of Inquiry in a (Still) Contested Region,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 287.

still remained but one avenue for learning about the West. Historian Douglas Dodd wrote, “Increasingly, western public historians received training in the New Western History, and have been influenced more by Limerick and White than by Turner and Webb. Yet they often work in environments and institutions—and with public audiences—that might be slow to embrace, if not outright hostile to, the new interpretations.”<sup>221</sup>

This public learns early in life about the excitement and heroic spirit of the pioneer through popular media. When they get to colleges and universities they may—or may not—find professors teaching the New or Next Western History concepts. The volume of literature concerning the West is now considerable and there are many bibliographies and works exploring the research opportunities from the last few epochs about the changing ideas of what history could be.<sup>222</sup> There is more than enough information for museum curators to review and draw upon should they wish to get a sense of current historiography for an exhibition. This should not be interpreted to mean that the historiography of any period was consistent in message or interpretation.

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<sup>221</sup> Douglas W. Dodd, “Legacy of Conquest and Trails Twenty Years Later: Public Historians and the New Western History. Introduction,” *The Public Historian* 31, no. 4 (November 2009): 70. See also Gerry Kearns, “The Virtuous Circle of Facts and Values in the New Western History,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 88, no. 3 (September 1998): 378.

<sup>222</sup> Bibliographies include Etulain, with Devejian, Hunner, and Partch, *The American West in the Twentieth Century*; Oscar Osburn Winthur, *A Classified Bibliography of the Periodical Literature of the Trans-Mississippi West (1811-1957)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961); and Oscar Osburn Winthur and Richard A. Van Orman, *A Classified Bibliography of the Periodical Literature of the Trans-Mississippi West: A Supplement (1957- 1967)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970). For ideas about research topics see Gerald D. Nash and Richard W. Etulain, eds., *Researching Western History: Topics in the Twentieth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), and Appendix A for several essays in collected works that cover the research topic.

Hofstadter acknowledged the longevity of Turner, writing, “Among all the historians of the United States it was Turner alone of whom we can now say with certainty that he opened a controversy that was large enough to command the attention of his peers for four generations.”<sup>223</sup> So who are the museum curators to believe? Which work is the right story, or the most accurate story? Curators are challenged with presenting an interpretation that is based in fact, has a broad perspective, and is current with both academic and public opinion at the time of an exhibit’s creation.

Historian Allan Bogue recognized this issue, writing, “The changing human condition dictates that new generations will ask different questions. That does not mean that their predecessors did not ask important questions, nor that all of their answers were wrong, then or later. But not all of those questions, nor the answers, may be very useful to a succeeding generation.”<sup>224</sup> Western history museums face their own challenges in exhibition making, only one of which is presenting a historical interpretation to the many generations that make up their visitor base, each with its own imbued ideas and myths about the American West.

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<sup>223</sup> Hofstadter, *Progressive Historians*, 164.

<sup>224</sup> Allan G. Bogue, “The Significance of the History of the American West: Postscripts and Prospects,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (February 1993): 68.

## CHAPTER 3

### HISTORY AND THE PUBLIC:

#### THE BACKSTORY OF MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO NEW WESTERN HISTORY

*“Who controls the past, controls the future; who controls the present, controls the past.”*<sup>225</sup>

--George Orwell, 1950

#### The Relevance of Museums

The Party’s slogan in Orwell’s dystopian classic *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, “Who controls the past, controls the future; who controls the present controls the past,” was an insightful comment about how those in power have always influenced historical perspective. This is instructive when it comes to understanding museums. In the late nineteenth century those in power created museums to show “others” what a proper culture looks like. In order to achieve this goal, museums offered visual artifacts of the past—objects, pictures, and documents—all ethnographic evidence showing both superior and inferior cultures. The elites presumed that the exhibitions would be of interest to the many visitors and influence that public to accept its role in society. However, historians, museum exhibitions, documentaries, and other forms of history have an obligation to present their topic in an unbiased manner. Unfortunately, the very act of retelling the past is fraught with potential issues; given interests and experience, a bias exists on the part of the author of a historical creation just by the selection of the

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<sup>225</sup> George Orwell, *1984* (New York: Signet Classics, 1950 and 1977), 34. The actual quote is “Who controls the past, ran the party slogan, controls the future; who controls the present, controls the past.”

topic, what research is conducted and omitted, and the form of the presentation. People look to the professional historical community to tell them if there are other sides to the story, and to keep the control of history spread across a broad spectrum of society.

History, then, is the interpretation of artifacts, be they documents or objects, and how this interpretation changes over time. As time advances so too does historical interpretation, each new layer building on prior ones. What is important to society also changes over time, so historians look for answers to new questions, or new answers to old questions, that reflect the needs of their contemporaries. Different generations therefore may learn different interpretations of the same historical event, person, or place. Since the typical scholarly historical work has a narrow audience, current interpretations may never reach older generations, unless historians can promote these ideas to a broader, multi-generational audience. Museums can be part of that disbursement of historical knowledge, and they often welcome family units to their exhibitions. People of all ages visit museums. Curators hope each visitor will learn their intended message, or ideally, make a personal meaning from the exhibition, and tell others about the relevance of the exhibition when asked, “What did you do today?”

This dissertation examines Southwestern history museum’s interpretation of their missions to determine if the New Western History is included in their public displays. This chapter discusses why museums are important in the dissemination of history and how the changes to museum practice can aid or hinder the presentation of New Western History. Just as some historians promoted the New Western History in the latter decades of the twentieth century, so too the academy developed a New Museology, how to address the research and creation of an exhibition. Likewise, as the cultural changes

starting in the 1960s brought about the possibility of the New Western History ideals, these changes also created the opportunity for change in the museum world. Peter Vergo was a museum scholar who addressed the changing nature of the museums. He wrote,

At the simplest level, I would define it [New Museology] as a state of widespread dissatisfaction with the “old” museology, both within and outside the museum profession; and although the reader may object that such a definition is not merely negative, but circular, I would retort that what is wrong with the “old” museology is that it is too much about museum *methods*, and too little about the purposes of museums; that museology has in the past only infrequently been seen, if it has been at all, as a theoretical or humanistic discipline, and that the kinds of questions raised above have been all too rarely articulated, let alone discussed.<sup>226</sup>

Vergo, and others, attempted to transform the thinking of museum professionals so that the subjects they explored were more inclusive of multiple viewpoints and more accepting of the general public. The elite class and “leading figures” view of history should no longer be the only view of history. What museums exhibit and how they interpret the topics continue to change. The speed at which they change their topics or the interpretation of them is perhaps not as fast as that of the academy. However, given the nature of display or the method of presentation, some issues museum professionals face will not change.

The questions that a museum’s presentation address may be several years old by the time the visitor sees the display. The historiography of the subject matter may change many times over the life of an exhibition. The challenges of constructing an exhibition typically mean the topics covered are broader in scope and are not presented in the detail discussed in monograph form. Still, many more interested parties may see the history

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<sup>226</sup> Vergo, ed. *The New Museology*, 3 (emphasis in the original).

museum exhibition than will have read the collection of articles and monographs written about the subject. George Brown Goode, director of the Smithsonian Institution in the late nineteenth century, advocated the value of museums, comparing them to libraries, writing, “The library is most useful to the educated; the museum to the educated and uneducated alike, to the masses as well as the few, and is a powerful stimulant to the intellectual activity in either class.”<sup>227</sup> Since many people go to history museums, a review of how museums create their exhibitions is in order.

### Museum Defined

What is the definition of “museum”? No standard, one- or two-sentence definition of museum was found among the many works consulted. Just as historiography changes with time, so too does the meaning of the word museum. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Professor of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, said of museums, “There is no essential museum. The museum is not a pre-constituted entity that is produced in the same way at all times. No direct-ancestors can be identified. Identities, targets, functions, and subject positions are variable and discontinuous. Not only is there no essential identity for museums . . . but such identities as are constituted are subject to constant change as the play of dominations shifts and new relations of advantage and disadvantage emerge.”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> George Brown Goode, “Museum-History and the Museum of History,” in *The Origins of Natural Science in America: The Essays of George Brown Goode*, Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, ed. (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 310.

<sup>228</sup> Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 191.

In 1942, at the beginning of World War II and a time for patriotism to be displayed, Theodore Low, a museum educator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, writing on behalf of the American Association of Museums, said there were so many different connotations to the word that it could not be defined. However, he cited Paul Rea who believed museums have three purposes: “the acquisition and preservation of objects, the advancement of knowledge by the study of objects, and the diffusion of knowledge for the enrichment of the life of the people.”<sup>229</sup> Low then wrote, “There can be little quarrel with the analysis in simply defining the functions. The trouble is that on paper such a statement makes it appear that the three functions are equal and receive an equal emphasis. Nothing could be farther from the truth.”<sup>230</sup> The rest of Low’s essay discussed the need for a stronger voice on the part of the new education departments that were being formed in museums. He also demonstrated his patriotic spirit, placing great responsibility and trust in museums, and wrote for his time just as historians are wont to do, when he said: museums “have the power to make people see the truth, the power to make people recognize the importance of the individual as a member of society, and, of equal importance in combating subversive inroads, the power to keep minds happy and healthy.”<sup>231</sup> Low believed museums had the potential to reach a very large audience and should act on that responsibility. Perhaps George Orwell saw this work and envisioned a

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<sup>229</sup> Paul M. Rae, “What are Museums For?” *Journal of Adult Education*, II (June 1930): 265–271.

<sup>230</sup> Theodore Low, “What is a Museum?” in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, Gail Anderson, ed. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2004), 31–32.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

future dominated by a select, powerful few who would promote their own self-interests in falsehoods and half-truths.

Sixty-five years later, in 1995, using the same category technique of definition as Rea, Stephen Weil, a deputy director of the Hirshhorn Museum of the Smithsonian Institution and author of several books on museums, used several pages to describe the qualities that make up a typical museum, but did not offer a definition of his own. The qualities Weil discussed include: museums are subject to the authority of their ruling bodies and can change with those ruling bodies; museums are active agents, presumably of the subject matter under display, but perhaps also of the society it is depicting; the museum, like the act of teaching, can be a “neutral medium that can be used by anybody for anything”; given their reliance on objects, museums are not effective mediums for some cerebral subjects, such as philosophy [although there are exceptions to this example]<sup>232</sup>; museums have the ability to point out issues effecting a community, both good and bad, but rarely have the ability to make a change to these issues without the assistance of other institutions; collections, especially in art and science museums, are static and often mismatched to the community they are designed to serve, and the diversity of the community is changing, but the diversity of the museum collection—or its staff—is not.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>232</sup> For example, see “A Question of Truth” exhibition at the Nature Museum in Chicago. Nancy Maes, Stephanie Price and Diana Strazalka, “Nature Museum Looks at ‘Truth.’” *Chicago Tribune*, February 4, 2000 [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2000-02-04/entertainment/0002040065\\_1\\_yo-crocodile-bernard-waber](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2000-02-04/entertainment/0002040065_1_yo-crocodile-bernard-waber) (accessed October 13, 2014).

<sup>233</sup> Stephen E. Weil, *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Inquiries into Museums and Their Prospects* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), xiii–xvi.

In the recently revised version of *The Museum Experience*, John Falk and Lynn Dierking, like George Orwell, look to the future and see changes to society and technology that make defining a museum a challenge. In 2013 they wrote, “As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, the very definition of what constitutes a museum is not only changing, but is being challenged by the creation of a range of new institutions calling themselves museums. Some of these institutions do not have any of the traditional characteristics of museums, such as collections or exhibitions.”<sup>234</sup>

Boldly committing to a working definition, Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig provided the following in an edited work on history museums: “For the purposes of this book, we define history museums as institutions that display historical artifacts, or even reproductions or representations of artifacts, in the formal effort to teach about the past.”<sup>235</sup> It is the middle phrase, “or even reproductions or representations of artifacts,” that makes it broader than most others. Additionally, it speaks to the purpose of history and other museums, “in the formal effort to teach.” That point may be contested in some circles, but while many museum-related organizations and authors speak to the standards and reasons for museums to exist, few define what a museum is, perhaps because there are no essential characteristic that they all have in common.<sup>236</sup> As Eilean Hooper-Greenhill observed, they are constantly changing.

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<sup>234</sup> Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*), 25.

<sup>235</sup> Leon and Rosenzweig, eds., *History Museums in the United States*, xiv.

<sup>236</sup> A search of the two most related organizations’ websites, the American Alliance of Museums at [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org), and the American Association for State and Local History, [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org), did not produce a definition of museum.

Sense of place is also important to this study, as several of the participating museums are located on the sites where people settled and built structures to meet their needs. Visitors now view these structures, surrounded by a similar geography and landscape of the time of settlement, and are able to immerse themselves in the place and in the lives of the people who occupied it. Not all museums have the opportunity to depict a particular small location as they focus on larger topics, such as a whole town or state. Others bring new ideas—and challenges—to the future of museums.

A few museums no longer collect artifacts, rather they borrow objects for a period of time for display purposes only. This may limit a museum's use as a center for the long-term study of a topic. One museum scholar, Elaine Heumann Gurian, thinks the artifact may not be the medium for museums of the future. She wrote, "The foundational definition of museums will, in the long run, I believe, arise not from objects, but from 'place' and 'storytelling in tangible sensory form,' where citizenry can congregate in a spirit of cross-generational inclusivity and inquiry into the memory of our past, a forum for our present, and aspirations for our future."<sup>237</sup> In support of this idea, and probably for economic reasons, certain museums in Arizona are moving away from the traditional model toward a national trend called "Communities for All Ages." It is a plan to provide multiple uses for several non-profit, community-based organizations within the museum space.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Elaine Heumann Gurian, *Civilizing the Museum: The Collected Writings of Elaine Heumann Gurian* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 181.

<sup>238</sup> Srinathi Perera, "Gilbert Museum Embraces Intergenerational Model to Survive," *The Republic/AZCentral.com*, May 2, 2014, [model-survive/8629985/](http://model-survive/8629985/) (accessed, June 30, 2014).

The Internet has changed the way visitors and potential visitors access museums. Many museums have an Internet site, and several have electronic versions of their mission. Some museums are Internet-based. People of all ages use the Internet, especially those who live in rural areas or whose families include a disabled member, and many use electronic access to these cultural institutions.<sup>239</sup> Some museums receive many more visitors to their Internet sites than they do to their physical location. As early as 2006 three times as many visitors were visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art's web site than were able to enter its doors. That number represents millions of visitors for this very popular institution.<sup>240</sup> Whether the museum is visited online or on site, the manner in which the museum displays and interprets its objects is equally important. When looking at the museums of the Southwest and their interpretation of western history, a review of the manner in which the presentations are made will be conducted in this study. The more opportunities a visitor has to learn about a topic the more opportunities there are for New Western History methods to be conveyed.

### Museology: The Science and Art of Museum Exhibitions

The artifacts in a museum's collection often determine the subject of an exhibition. The mission of the institution and the vision of the board may change with each year, but collections are difficult to obtain, thus limiting the opportunities for

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<sup>239</sup> Herminia Din and William B. Crow, "Museums Unfixed in Place and Time," *Museum* 88, no. 4 (July–August, 2009): 47.

<sup>240</sup> Carol Vogel, "3 Out of 4 Visitors to the Met Never Make It to the Front Door," *The New York Times* March 29, 2006, [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/29/arts/artsspecial/29web.html?\\_r=1&sp=3](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/29/arts/artsspecial/29web.html?_r=1&sp=3) (accessed March 26, 2008).

diverse subject matters. Sponsors may demand a certain slant to a topic, as may the curators with their emphases or ambitions. Of course, available funding will determine the quality of the visual display, whether through electronic media or a physical presentation, and the public may enjoy or contest an interpretation. Creating an exhibition often takes many years and much effort. According to exhibition experts, collaboration is essential to create a quality exhibition in the twenty-first century. It is “the intersection of thoughts and idea from varying points of view” that will create the diverse narratives an audience desires. The experts say “the planning, development, and designing of an exhibition are complex. As the museum profession has become more established, more collaborative, and more complicated, the stakes have become higher, creating the need for a shared and effective process.”<sup>241</sup>

Just as historiographical focus changes slowly over time, allowing many perspectives to exist at the same time, so to do broad theoretical ideas inform the practice of applying techniques in museums, although museum professionals contest many of the theories espoused or may reshape those adopted in execution. This means several museological theories may be simultaneously extant, causing a transformation of practice over time rather than a revolution of changing theoretical ideas.

Creation of an exhibition is coordinated among several functions within the museum. In some cases, this involves a team of people, perhaps from within and outside the museum staff; in others one person assumes all the roles. This is relevant to consider

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<sup>241</sup> Polly McKenna-Cress and Janet Kamien, *Creating Exhibitions: Collaboration in the Planning, Development, and Design of Innovative Experiences* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), <http://www.myilibrary.com?ID=514359, 2, 263> (accessed October 13, 2014).

because it is the curator of the exhibition who places his or her theoretical stamp upon the show. The curator must be aware of the audience and anticipate the audience's reaction to and engagement with the show. Although history-related museums are the focus of this study, each museum is in a different geographic location and physical setting. Some are urban, some rural, for example. The exhibition's setting and context are important to the visitor who may read the same exhibit label in different places and take from each one a different meaning. How and when an exhibition was created are important to the depiction of New Western History in the subject museums. Some of the exhibitions are only a few years old and should, therefore, benefit from current museological thinking. Others are decades old and may or may not be inclusive in their presentation, as is criticized by the New Western Historians. The history of the changes in museum practice and how people learn in museums are integral to the shaping of museums and the methods of display used today.

### The History of Museums in America

Just as the historiography of the New Western History has a history, so too does museological display. The changes in display methods and learning theories changed over time as society evolved. What was happening in the daily lives of individuals was reflected in the way museums created exhibitions. Museum theorist Tony Bennett looked at the changes caused by new thoughts on evolution to the field of museums. He saw there were two aspects involved with this change; the first being that natural history and other museums became "laboratories" for the academic disciplines exploring these changing ideas, and second how changing exhibit practices helped translate these ideas

into significant components of the public culture.<sup>242</sup> That changing history is important to this study if the exhibitions considered here reveal various older methods of display techniques still being used, counter to contemporary practices. Several of the museums in the study do not have dedicated exhibition staff members, and some do not have historians on site. Therefore, new displays can be created that demonstrate not only whether the curators are current in their subject matter, but also current in display technique theory. The application of these theories, as with the acceptance of new ideas of historiography, vary over time and by institution. This study compares changes in museum remodeling, from the late nineteenth century to those of our current time, specifically from the 1960s to the present when the new social histories led to the New Western History paradigm.

Modern museums in the United States use models created in Europe, especially from international fairs and amusement sites. Bennett wrote, “The founding collections of many of today’s major metropolitan museums were bequeathed by international exhibitions; techniques of crowd control developed in exhibitions influenced by design and layout of amusement parks; and nineteenth-century natural history museums throughout Europe and North America owed many of their specimens to the network of animal collecting agencies through which P. T. Barnum provided live species for his various circuses, menageries and dime museums.”<sup>243</sup> American society changed rapidly after the American Revolution. It experienced an industrial revolution as technology

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<sup>242</sup> Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 5.

changed methods of communication and transportation. It also saw a population expansion to the west of the Alleghany Mountains, creating opportunity for a new group, the middle-class. Museum exhibitions offered the classical European ordering of artifacts and their scientific labeling, the first institution to use this type of display in America being the Charleston Museum, founded in 1773.<sup>244</sup> Another example of a museum using this type of ordering of artifacts is the Philadelphia Museum operated by Charles Willson Peale, effectively depicted by his 1822 self-portrait *The Artist in His Museum*.<sup>245</sup> An innovator for his time, Peale displayed his birds in front of a painted background, giving them some context, rather than the common practice of using a white background so as to not detract from the object itself.<sup>246</sup> This changed the nature of how artifacts were displayed and interpreted.



#2 Charles Willson Peale

<sup>244</sup> Edward P. Alexander and Mary Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Function of Museums*, second edition (New York: AltaMira Press, 2008), 6.

<sup>245</sup> Portrait courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, gift of Mrs. Sarah Harrison (The Joseph Harrison, Jr. Collection), <http://www.pafa.org/museum/The-Collection-Greenfield-American-Art-Resource/Tour-the-Collection/Category/Collection-Detail/985/coltype--Painting/mkey--1600/pageindex--31/sort57--r-39/> (accessed September 9, 2014).

<sup>246</sup> Gary Kulik, "Designing the Past: History-Museum Exhibitions from Peale to the Present," in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, eds. (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1989), 2–5.

Historically, objects, the artifacts in museum collections, were viewed as individual entities, with a separate focus on each object. Peale and others rearranged exhibits so that visitors saw how one object was related to another, and perhaps had been connected over time. Curators filled gaps in time and place as best as they could. Museums played a key role in the operations through which the historical sciences measured and partitioned time, and distributed human and non-human actors across it.<sup>247</sup> Historical interpretation, and its widespread use for educational purposes, thus has its beginning in these arrangements of objects from various places and times as the objects become part of the story of humanity. Bennett explained, “Assembling together hitherto dispersed objects in ordered relationships of contiguity and difference, museums make new realities perceptible within the field of knowledge. The relationships that were developed between museums and popular schooling in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries placed the museum at the centre of a set of distributive networks through which the new forms of knowledge that had been made possible through its operations as a centre of accumulation could be brought to bear on the governmental task of shaping future citizens.”<sup>248</sup> It was a time of progress in politics and technology. Feeling further removed from the heroes of the Revolution and a democratic movement during the Jackson presidency, museums promoted the growth of knowledge from the primitive to the civilized through the example of its leaders. Display techniques in

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<sup>247</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 64.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 123.

museums moved to the temple lauding the rich and famous of America, the heroes and well known, as examples for the ordinary person.<sup>249</sup>

The transmission model of communication explains how museum curators educated the general public during this time period. There was no audience research and the curator acted as the scholar and educator of values that could help shape visitors into ideal citizens.<sup>250</sup> Three important and large museums that followed this display format were founded in America in the 1870s—the American Museum of Natural History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston—enabling America to compete on a cultural level with Europe. Around this same time historical societies on the east coast created museums dedicated to the display of history collections.<sup>251</sup>

Late in the nineteenth century several American universities opened and began awarding advanced degrees in history and other fields. These specialists professionalized knowledge and enhanced the reputation and the level of quality of exhibitions.<sup>252</sup> As the graduates moved into curatorial positions they collected things and displayed them in a manner that was meaningful only to those with an education and to the middle- to upper-middleclass elite. They used museums to enshrine “those things held to be significant and

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<sup>249</sup> Kulik, “Designing the Past,” 8–9.

<sup>250</sup> Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, “Changing Values in the Art Museum: Rethinking Communication and Learning,” in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, Bettina Messias Carbonell, ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 556–575, and Jem Fraser, “Museums—Drama, Ritual and Power,” in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 291–302.

<sup>251</sup> Alexander and Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 7, 118.

<sup>252</sup> Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life*, 17.

valuable. The public generally accepted the idea that if it was in the museum, it was not only real but represented a standard of excellence.”<sup>253</sup> The ordinary person came to museums to learn what society expected of a model citizen, not to see him- or herself represented in the exhibition. This attitude was also the norm in Europe and prevalent in art museums. All clean and orderly visitors were eventually welcome into museums, which were wrestling with how they could “shape the public in keeping with perceived political and social needs.”<sup>254</sup> Another approach was utilized by entrepreneur collectors and showmen who offered admittance open to all in the dime museum.

Started by Phineas Taylor Barnum years before he began his circus business, the dime museum provided live shows and strange objects for viewing by men, women, and children in a safe place from early morning into late in the night, all for a single price.<sup>255</sup> The relatively inexpensive fee was the same for all guests and made admission attractive for all classes without distinction.<sup>256</sup> Situated primarily in the major city centers of the east coast and Midwest in America, the dime museum flourished in the latter half of the nineteenth century. According to Dennett, they “emerged as a novel form of recreation that could divert a heterogeneous audience while supporting the new industrial morality

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<sup>253</sup> Duncan F. Cameron, “The Museum, a Temple or the Forum,” in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, Gail Anderson, ed. (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004), 66.

<sup>254</sup> Andrew McClellan, “A Brief History of the Art Museum Public,” in *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium*, Andrew McClellan, ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Company, 2003), 7.

<sup>255</sup> Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful*, xi.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 145.

of hard work, temperance, and perseverance.”<sup>257</sup> These museums could be entertaining, even bizarre, in order to attract visitors and their admission fees. However, they also wanted to present an appearance of respectability so they promoted the shows as having morally and socially educational value. Dennett explains these marketing efforts by claiming, “For those citizens who yearned for middle-class status, rational amusements were a symbol of respectability.”<sup>258</sup> The dime museum’s popularity declined rapidly at the beginning of the twentieth century. There was new competition with the specific amusement venues the dime museum had previously assembled into one space; including the circus, the movie theatre, vaudeville, and amusement parks.<sup>259</sup> At no time did the dime museum compete with the museums of “high culture,” such as the American Museum of Natural History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.<sup>260</sup>

At the same time as the dime museum was drawing large crowds of people, the museums of high culture were trying new methods of attracting visitors, such as the Period Room. During the American Civil War, collectors gathered family items and displayed them in real and imagined rooms, which brought nostalgic feelings for what some people believed were the simpler times of yesteryear. Artists and curators placed artifacts in a larger context, albeit not always the historically accurate one. The Period Room also elevated ordinary objects to the status of art. Many of the displays contained

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<sup>257</sup> Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful*, 5.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 65.

well-lit glass cases that drew the visitor's eye to what the curator considered special. These objects, presented as art, influenced the collection habits of history museums, forcing history curators to replicate the work of their art curator contemporaries in order to provide a similar message to the commoners visiting.<sup>261</sup> Patriotism, and the long-established American elites' desire to offset the supposedly radical ideas of the growing numbers of immigrants, was the intended theme of the Period Room. This was not always evident, but the display of wealth and civilized order in the rooms paralleled the restrictive immigration laws enacted during the same period. At the same time art museums offered "docent" or interpreter services to help expand educational opportunities, particularly among the young. These instructive helpers did not prevent verbal disputes that arose among civic minded thinkers about whether art museums were useful in transporting the views depicted in the art into the quotidian cares of commoner's lives or were simply a way for the rich patrons to further distance themselves from the working class.<sup>262</sup> This Period Room movement also legitimatized the opening of historic homes as museums, usually showing the artifacts of notable people, providing the notions of aesthetic taste and the idea that the culture of the Anglo elites was worth capturing.<sup>263</sup> This idea would change a little in the next decade.

Prosperity through war and improved technology brought changes to everyday activities in the 1920s. Electric appliances, the car, and the radio allowed people to learn

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<sup>261</sup> Kulik, "Designing the Past," 15.

<sup>262</sup> McClellan, "A Brief History of the Art Museum Public," 19-20.

<sup>263</sup> Kulik, "Designing the Past," 12-16.

more about the world around them. While it was the time of flappers, speakeasies, and jazz, it was also a time of fundamentalism and an emphasis on moral right. Prohibition was enacted, lawmakers sought to ban the teaching of evolution, and immigration from southern and eastern Europe was restricted. The increased use of the automobile in the 1930s created a tourist industry. Once remote sites developed historical connections in the lives of travelling visitors. The activities of ordinary people now played a greater role in the collection policies of house museums and other historic sites that were unrelated to the elites' lives or that found highly-valued artifacts unaffordable to collect. Depression and the development of various workers' groups formed in the New Deal brought further focus onto the lives of the working class. Responding to this, in 1945 the Farmers' Museum in upstate New York changed the way history museums would develop exhibitions. Instead of using famous people's tools, it exhibited everyday equipment from local farmers. It displayed its collection of agricultural items as ordinary tools used by ordinary people, but showed the relevance of these people and their work to the larger American economy and way of life. However, the exhibition still followed past methods of putting all examples of similar items together in one row so a visitor could quickly see the taxonomy, or similar organization and structure of the items.<sup>264</sup>

A few years later, in 1958, the same museum changed its methodology by following the example of art museums and displayed a thematic approach to farming topics, such as seasonal activities and tools needed for a particular chore, rather than all the varieties of one tool in a row. This show was also one of the first to use interpretation

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<sup>264</sup> Kulik, "Designing the Past," 17–21.

in an exhibition. By showing the ordinary in a thematic fashion in open exhibitions, the curators of the Farmers' Museum made a break from the past methods of idolizing the elite in a taxonomic exhibition in a well-lighted Period Room with artifacts in vitrines. Labels became descriptive of the common occurrences among the random artifacts, rather than describing the nature of the artifacts on display.<sup>265</sup> This reflected what was happening in society. Many soldiers developed a broader taste of the world as they travelled because of the world war. Returning home, they now sought ways to see patterns in their lives. The 1950s were a period of introspection for Americans. Anglos experienced increased prosperity after World War II, but were frustrated by Cold War activities and the rise of Communism. Although increasingly acting on the global stage Americans sought the better life at home by embracing conservative attitudes over liberal ideas. Minorities were not given the same opportunities they had during the war effort and found themselves once again facing segregation, which contributed to the rise of civil rights movements.

Museums also experienced competition from outside the traditional museum field. Walt Disney opened Disneyland in California in 1955, and Disney World in Florida in 1971. Although modeled on the nineteenth century international exposition, their depictions of some historical themes continued to popularize some of the myths rampant in mass media.<sup>266</sup> By the 1960s, the National Endowment for the Humanities, a major funder of museum projects, demanded applicants "use the best and most recent

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<sup>265</sup> Kulik, "Designing the Past," 23–24.

<sup>266</sup> Alexander and Alexander, *Museums in Motion*, 129.

humanities scholarship.” Civil rights initiatives that brought attention to women and minorities’ voices allowed scholars to increasingly emphasize the importance of interpretation in exhibition. Over the next twenty years the old guard of museum curators who were trained to honor the elite and display artifacts in a rigid prescribed fashion were mostly gone and the interpretive exhibition was the norm in history museums.<sup>267</sup> Individuals were making a difference in society. Activism encouraged women and all classes of American society to make their voices heard and seek equality. Art museums strove to be “relevant” and include the local communities and all classes of people in exhibitions. The collection, although still a critical piece for creating an exhibition, was no longer considered the main measure of value; instead the effectiveness of the museum’s service to its community became the primary method of evaluation.<sup>268</sup> However, adding designers and educators to exhibition teams and taking a team approach to exhibition creation had confused the development of a distinct theory of exhibition design. Museums still blend traditional with new techniques. Curators, especially in art museums, and exhibition planners in science centers, periodically test new theories, and one of these may eventually become a new standard for history and other types of museums.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Kulik, “Designing the Past: History,” 27–28. The Institute of Museum and Library Services, now the major government sponsored funder of museums, was not formed until 1996. A legislative act in that year combined the Library Programs Office, a part of the Department of Education since 1956, and the Institute of Museum Services, originally formed in 1976. See [http://www.imls.gov/about/imls\\_legislative\\_timeline.aspx](http://www.imls.gov/about/imls_legislative_timeline.aspx) (accessed June 29, 2014).

<sup>268</sup> McClellan, “A Brief History of the Art Museum Public,” 30, and Gail Anderson, ed., *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 4.

<sup>269</sup> Kulik, “Designing the Past,” 28–31, and McClellan, “A Brief History of the Art Museum Public,” 34.

## Learning in Museums: Modern Models and Looking Toward the Future

In the 1990s museum professionals developed a new understanding of visitors, that the visitor had a role in their learning process, and museums began to move from being subject-centered to being visitor-centered.<sup>270</sup> Interest also shifted “from instilling a sense of morality and good behaviour to fostering an acceptance of cultural diversity.”<sup>271</sup> From a visitor’s perspective “recreational and social considerations consistently rank high among the reasons for visiting museums,” but education is another important aspect of a museum visit.<sup>272</sup> In this “museum experience,” learning, education, and entertainment are linked.<sup>273</sup> Combining these considerations gave rise to “edutainment,” a term meaning “not merely as providing amusement, but as generating absorbing interest, it is perfectly consonant with what history museums have been doing—developing exhibitions that evoke experience as well as offering explanation.”<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, “Changing Values in the Art Museum,” 562. Tony Bennett comments on the need to account for the “subjectivities and capacities” of visitors in any study that tries to relate museums and their visitors (*Pasts Beyond Memory*, footnote 4, page 190).

<sup>271</sup> Fiona Cameron, “Moral Lessons and Reforming Agendas: History Museums, Science Museums, Contentious Topics and Contemporary Societies,” in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 337.

<sup>272</sup> John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience* (Washington, D.C.: Whales-Back Books, 1992), 14–15.

<sup>273</sup> Lyndia Kelly, “Visitors and Learning: Adult Museum Visitors’ Learning Identities,” in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 283, and Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, “Education, Postmodernity and the Museum,” in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 372.

<sup>274</sup> Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1996), 169–170.

Several theories of learning exist. Museum curators create exhibitions in the hope it will be interesting and educational to a majority of visitors. The constructivist theory of education indicates that learners/visitors are critical to the learning moment rather than the explanations provided by the curators. The visitor brings his or her own lifestyle, experience, and level of desire to learn to the exhibition. The museum's role is to acknowledge this method of learning and to provide the means for this learning to occur, but not by dictating it to the visitor. Learning can, therefore, take place at various levels by different age groups and those with differing degrees of education. Unlike earlier theories of presentation, the constructivist museum would offer objects for consideration in no specific sequence and would engage the visitor in comparing what they know with what is unfamiliar and new.<sup>275</sup> Since this learning experience will change as the visitor's life experience changes the artifacts in the exhibition may take on different meanings over time. Therefore, the constructivist museum may be suited for a more permanent exhibition. Although by its nature the constructivist exhibition label may be more attuned to an art museum than an historical interpretation, curators may use constructivist exhibition labels to open avenues of familiarity and education with a historical emphasis. Along with this constructivist concept, the exhibition curator might consider the "post-museum," defined in 2006 by art historian Chris Bruce as "a service economy ideal of putting the audience member at the center of the institution's mission; architectural environment, content, and presentation are inherently at the service of the visitor's

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<sup>275</sup> Hein, *Learning in the Museum*, 156, and Hooper-Greenhill, "Education, Postmodernity and the Museum," 372–373.

pleasure.”<sup>276</sup> The focus will be on partnerships and diversity. The development of this post-museum concept may take place outside of the major European centers that created the traditional Western mode of museum exhibition expanding the worldview of current museum theory and development.<sup>277</sup>

Griselda Pollock, a scholar of the visual arts, called the postmodern museum “an opened public space that can become their [the visitor’s] stage, where they are investigated and performed.” She also said “there is nowhere else to go.”<sup>278</sup> Bruce added that the museum of the twenty-first century must compete with other recreational venues and provide celebration rather than opportunities for contemplation.<sup>279</sup> Beth Lord, professor of philosophy, went even further by positing that future museums need to move beyond the Platonic-hermeneutic models of memory and rely instead on letting the visitors think for themselves. She would have us return almost to a *cabinet of curiosities* where “objects will be understood as particulars, as fundamentally puzzling things to be opened, developed and connected with other things into series.”<sup>280</sup> Many theories abound about how museums of the future *should* engage the public, but museum staffs may also

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<sup>276</sup> Chris Bruce, “Spectacle and Democracy: Experience Music Project as a Post-Museum,” in *New Museum Theory and Practice: An Introduction*, Janet Marstine, ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 131.

<sup>277</sup> Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 153.

<sup>278</sup> Griselda Pollock, “Un-Framing the Modern: Critical Space/Public Possibility,” in *Museums After Modernism: Strategies of Engagement*, Griselda Pollock and Joyce Zemans, eds. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Company, 2007), 34.

<sup>279</sup> Bruce, “Spectacle and Democracy,” 130.

<sup>280</sup> Beth Lord, “From the Document to the Monument: Museums and the Philosophy of History,” in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 359, 363.

be constrained by outdated mission statements and funders' concerns as the staff looks to provide relevance within a severely limited budgets. Thus many museums look for a working model that fits with their resources today while keeping an eye on future developments.

One practical model based on primary research is that offered by John Falk and Lynn Dierking. They espouse the Contextual Model of Learning. This approach describes why people go to museums, what they do when they get there, and what they take away from the experience (how they make meaning of it). The three contexts of the model are: The Personal Context, the Sociocultural Context, and the Physical Context. "Time," how much of it the potential visitor has to view an exhibition, is also a crucial element to be explored.<sup>281</sup> These practical applications, derived from visitor observations and surveys, posed the question: What experience do people hope to get from their museum visit? If those expectations are met, the visitor will reflect upon their visit, relate it to their experiences, and over time tell others about the museum, thereby expanding the social understanding of the benefit of this and other museums.<sup>282</sup> Museum professionals acknowledge the power of museum free-choice learning when done in a place that excites and entertains the visitor. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, professor of museum studies at the University of Leicester, explained, "Learning in museums is performative, based on experience, tacit, not always fully articulated. It is powerful, culturing identities. In museums, bodies and senses as well as the mind are used to engage with and explore new

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<sup>281</sup> Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 26–29.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 32–47.

things; to deepen or challenge what is already known; and to lay down tacit knowledge that can be called upon in the future.”<sup>283</sup>

Perhaps, then, the museum is neither the temple where truth is assumed to occur, nor the forum where open debate is expected, but it is rather the educational amusement center, the place imagination can take the visitor. These imaginative visitors today are members of the creative class, an economically potent generation of people whose jobs require creative ideas.<sup>284</sup> This group will demand more of museums tomorrow. The museum of the future “will in essence be one of a range of organizations—*instruments*, really—available to the supporting community to be used in pursuit of its communal goals. As an intricate and potentially powerful instrument of communication, it will make available to the community, and for the community’s purposes, its profound expertise at telling stories, eliciting emotion, triggering memories, stirring imagination, and prompting discovery—its expertise in stimulating all those object-based responses.”<sup>285</sup> This may only happen if curators help visitors understand the purpose museums serve, and develop critical museum visitors of all ages and ethnicities, for locals and visitors from afar. All the museums in this study exhibited a desire to educate their visitors about the museums’ specific topics. Some recognized the diverse nature of their visitors and attempted to provide multiple learning opportunities. There are various levels of success at these attempts.

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<sup>283</sup> Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, “The Power of Museum Pedagogy,” in *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century*, Hugh H. Genoways, ed. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006), 242.

<sup>284</sup> For a discussion of the “creative class” see Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

<sup>285</sup> Weil, *Making Museums Matter*, 200.

## The Bennett Model: A Theoretical Basis for Change in Museums

This study follows the model presented in Tony Bennett's *Pasts Beyond Memory*, published in 2004. In this work, Bennett examined the changes that took place in museums in the late nineteenth century with the public's general acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution. It caused a major shift in how objects were presented, why certain objects were being presented, and the target audience of these presentations. Bennett wrote, "The part played by exhibition practices of those museums [new museums of natural history, ethnology, and geology] in translating these pasts into a significant component of late-nineteenth-century public culture, enlisting them in service of new strategies of cultural governance."<sup>286</sup> Bennett's case studies explored how museums became producers of memory, the involvement of governments and social agencies in promoting their ideals, and how these groups began to include indigenous populations in colonial settings. Similar issues arise in the promotion of the New Western History. Are museums keeping up with the changing attitudes of a society more agreeable to including the stories of a broad spectrum of all classes of society? How did influential groups alter, and in some cases stop, exhibitions that challenged the traditional teachings of American history, and were the museums displaying the history of people long-neglected in the Anglo-centric public consciousness?

Bennett's study takes its theoretical framework from Michel Foucault's views of governmentality. As Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller stated, Foucault's theory, espoused most notably in 1978 and 1979, asserted, "A whole aspect of modern

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<sup>286</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 2.

societies, Foucault was suggesting here, could be understood only by reconstructing certain ‘techniques of power’, or of ‘power/knowledge’, designed to observe, monitor, shape and control the behaviour of individuals situated within a range of social and economic institutions such as the school, the factory and the prison.”<sup>287</sup> Government, in Foucault’s definition, is not just the political organizations elected or otherwise appointed to power (a telling phase, commonly used, but whose implication is perhaps rarely considered), but all those groups who assert a “conduct of conduct”; that is, not only influence from the top down, but also to a large extent “through the manner in which governed individuals are willing to exist as subjects.”<sup>288</sup> It is this assumed influence upon the lower classes of society, and particularly immigrants who have not been “assimilated” into the Anglo-conceived notion of proper society, which will cause individuals to compare themselves to others who are rewarded for acting “correctly.” Bennett explains that museums “provided a context in which the working- and middle-class publics could be brought together and the former—having been tutored into forms of behaviour to suit them for the occasion—could be exposed to the improving influence of the latter.” This concept that the governed must provide assent to that government required the bourgeois democratic body politic to enlist the working-class and recent immigrants in these objectives and values being espoused.<sup>289</sup> The goal then, as Foucault states it, is “When a state is well run, the head of the family will know how to look after his family, his goods

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<sup>287</sup> Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, With Two Lectures and an Interview With Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 3–4.

<sup>288</sup> Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect*, 48.

<sup>289</sup> Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 86, 99.

and his patrimony, which means that individuals will, in turn, behave as they should.”<sup>290</sup> Museums, according to Bennett’s interpretation, when viewed through the perspective of ideology play a significant, albeit not primary, part in this organizational structure; “The role of museums, of that of other cultural institutions, is then viewed as secondary—as a role of relay and reinforcement—in relation to these relations of power.” However, “governmentality was not to be confused with, or limited to, the actions of the state or even publically funded organizations, but rather concerns a much broader orientation to the regulation of conduct that spans public-private relations of ownership and state/civil society distinctions”<sup>291</sup>

It is important to note that Bennett and Hooper-Greenhill applied Foucault’s ideas on the role of the visitor in these power relationships to museum studies. Children may be forced to attend a field trip to a museum, but the adults’ attendance is a matter of free choice, and they must agree to view their role in the exhibition as some aspect of society, and accept or reject it. Philosopher Hilde Hein stated that by their attendance, visitors allow museums to continue their role as places of learning. She wrote, “Museums own their existence to, as well as being a source and instrument of, open-ended seeking. They do not address a defined audience, as schools do, but issue an invitation to a broad public to come and enjoy.”<sup>292</sup> This broad public is best served when it includes both the elites and the “others.”

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<sup>290</sup> Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect*, 92.

<sup>291</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 5, 8.

<sup>292</sup> Hilde Hein, “Assuming Responsibility: Lessons from Aesthetics,” in *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century*, Hugh H. Genoways, ed. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006), 8.

Bennett uses his case studies to show how the priorities of the post-Darwinian liberal governments utilized museums, adult educational techniques, and the new mass-schooling concept, to see how individuals were influenced to accept the attitudes of the current mode of society. He explored how writers at the close of the nineteenth century felt about immigrants and other marginalized people and how these lower classes could best contribute to society. Walter Bagehot, a British journalist and one source Bennett cited, believed habits, and the transmission of family traits that pass from one generation to the next, such as food preferences, religious traditions, and work ethics, were things to be abolished so that new and better values could be attained.<sup>293</sup> Government must help the lower classes, as these people had not reached this point of discussion on their own and did not see what moral qualities would form civic virtue. This Anglo-male idea of improvement did not extend to most indigenous cultures—or women of any ethnicity.

Nineteenth-century thought assumed leadership could only be exercised by those given the ability to apply disinterested reason to problems. The curator of evolutionary nineteenth-century museums assumed their work would be viewed by white, western males. Bennet wrote, “The place assigned the primitive within these [museum displays] was designed exclusively for western eyes, for telling a story to and about a metropolitan ‘we’ by means of the representational roles assigned to ‘them.’ This exclusionary logic was most acutely evident in colonial contexts where the address of museums assumed, just as surely as their metropolitan counterparts, that ‘the primitive’ would only appear in

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<sup>293</sup> Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics: Or Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of 'Natural Selection' and 'Inheritance' to Political Society* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), 42.

the museum as an object of display and research, and never as a visitor.”<sup>294</sup> Similarly, because the standards of proper society in the nineteenth century believed women should contribute to the general welfare by not holding back men and by raising their children correctly, exhibitions did not provide a key role for women. Rather, the place of the woman had been fixed in the language of the age, which was that women could contribute little to actively developing a better society.<sup>295</sup> Yet, the philosophy of the time, as proposed by men, suggests that women should teach their children. Teachers have great influence over what the children will think, so these self-aggrandized men could have been letting the fox into the hen house, and by the early years of the twentieth century women did gain a fair amount of liberty.

Education was of vital importance to the concept of self-governance and self-development. Bennett stated, “Museums were placed on the front line in the educational agendas of the period. This was evident in the increasingly close connections between museums and the development of compulsory public schooling, and in the stress that was placed on the value of museums as instruments of adult education.”<sup>296</sup> Some thought museums could be active participants in the educational process. An 1869 *New York Times* editorial, discussing a speech by the governor of Massachusetts, and noting the paucity of skilled young men in the various fields of mechanical arts, urged the building of a science museum to train young men for these new professions and to provide for “the

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<sup>294</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 110.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 112–113.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 31.

culture and good habits of the masses.” In this way democracy could equal aristocracy in the cultivation of the masses.<sup>297</sup> Museums became important institutions.

A major increase in the number of museums, mostly natural history, occurred between 1888 and 1914. These museums sought to reform the working class by providing access to a common culture. Much of this new concept acquired currency in the new liberalism of society at the time.<sup>298</sup> Many museums also received sponsorships from wealthy individuals or groups who saw the value of a quality civic education. Curators sought to expand the programming to embrace as many of the working class people as possible. Bennett considered that “there were few museums that had not, by the 1880s and 1890s, developed extensive programmes of public lectures through which the object lessons of things were to be relayed far beyond the museum’s walls through the connections that such programmes established with university extension classes and ‘outreach’ activities more generally.”<sup>299</sup>

These wealthy private investors took an active part in the funding and governance of some notable museums. Voluntary organizations sometimes took the place of government in the promotion of civic ideals. Bennett explained that these organization placed stress “on the need for private philanthropy to resource the development of a public cultural sector—museums, libraries, art galleries—that would nurture the values that would provide an antidote to the brutalising effects of the struggle for existence.”<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Editorial, “The New Professions—Need of Museums of Science,” *New York Times*, Feb 7, 1869.

<sup>298</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 33–35.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 120.

Bennett used the example of the American Museum of Natural History, opened in 1877, as a privately owned but public-minded organization. Rosenzweig and Blackmar wrote, “In effect, the museum was organized as a hybrid institution, and it would be a model for many future cultural establishments in the city, under private control but public in their relative openness, nonprofit motives, and use of city and state resources.”<sup>301</sup> However, not all these elite philanthropic individuals worked for the betterment of all humankind. Some had to be pressured by popular sentiments to consider the greater good. In the 1870s and 1880s the elites who wanted a zoo and museums in Central Park, New York City, worried that public access “might undermine the cultural authority to their own institutions. Museum trustees accepted the need to deal with politicians to secure public funds, but they resisted opening their institutions to the same inclusively defined public that now infused the park. Their resistance was only partly successful. Dependence on public money ultimately forced the museum trustees to yield to demands of working-class New Yorkers for greater access, particularly on Sundays.”<sup>302</sup> In fact, the use of museums as an agent to influence the masses was a two-way street. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explained; “In the homelands exhibitions and festivals organized in the first half of this century, ‘cooperation’ between Americanization agencies and immigrant groups, however well-intentioned, also involved co-option. Homeland exhibitions were designed to gain the trust of immigrants, who it is hoped, would allow themselves to be helped by Americanization organizations. These events were not simply displays of immigrant

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<sup>301</sup> Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 354.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 341.

gifts—crafts, music, dance, and wholesome values. Equally important—and the organizers were explicit on this point—they were good public relations for the Americanization workers and social reformers, who were themselves on display.”<sup>303</sup>

However, these cultural institutions designed to promote an agreeable society modeled on the culture of the elites would have to be visited by the working class or they would have no effect. When Central Park first opened, “not only did immigrant and working-class New Yorkers live far away from Central Park, but in their limited leisure time they preferred commercial (and less regulated) pleasure gardens that more readily accommodated their familiar habits of public socializing.”<sup>304</sup> Additionally, the American Museum of Natural History was far from public transportation and did not display popular topics that would appeal to the working-class person. The labels were in Latin. So the day after the grand opening the exhibition halls were all but deserted. Shortly afterwards, Albert Bickmore, the director, “aggressively linked the museum to the public school system, developing teachers and school-children as an important constituency.”<sup>305</sup> The efforts to educate the populous began to take many forms, mostly all encouraged by local authorities who used almost any event to promote their ideas.

When ordinary people celebrated their pioneer ancestors and the local veteran’s groups, local officials coopted the events to constrain the vernacular meanings in favor of authoritative expressions of power they desired to imbue into the populace. Historian

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<sup>303</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 78.

<sup>304</sup> Rosenzweig and Blackmar. *The Park and the People*, 8.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 357.

John Bodnar explained, “Regardless of the number of forums that exist or the complexity of communication over the past, the commemorative activities examined here—anniversaries, monument dedications, landmark designations, reunions, and centennials—almost always stress the desirability of maintaining the social order and existing institutions, the need to avoid disorder or dramatic changes, and the dominance of citizen’s duties over citizen’s rights.”<sup>306</sup> Museum displays were part of that constraint on the collective memory of the community.

Just as there had been an increase in the number of museums around the turn of the twentieth century, a proliferation of new history and other museums occurred in the 1970s, due in large part to the bicentennial of the American Revolution. Patriotism was on display, but with a new attitude. By this time society began to accept the principles of the civil rights movement and other changes to societal thinking, such as freedom of expression and inclusion of minority groups in discussions across a broad range of topics. National officials began to recognize the growing power of the people, so by 1976, “these planners appeared more accepting of popular choices for commemorating the past in the context of local or ethnic memories.”<sup>307</sup> Change for some did not mean change for all. Conservative attitudes regarding traditional history still existed, but were not as prominent as in the past. In a separate work, written two years after *Past Beyond Memory*, and directed, perhaps, toward a more modern readership undergoing dramatic demographic changes, Bennett stated that for change to occur in any segment of society,

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<sup>306</sup> John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 19.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 243.

the leaders of that proposed change must train by example and provide those examples often. These changing civic attitudes allowed for a voice from the “others” of the past, many of whom were demanding representation in the public sphere. Still, not all those in the Anglo majority were willing to give up their hold on power. This places museums in a challenging position. Bennett wrote, “If they are to provide such exercise in a new civics, museums need to take account of the different ways in which they can intelligibly relate to sharply diverging constituencies and public in the context of complex intersections of class and racialized social divisions.”<sup>308</sup> Museums still need to get the visitor to see the exhibitions, at the least electronically but preferably on site, and then to discuss the subjects presented, for these changes to civic attitudes to be effective.

However, it is questionable if the immigrant or lower-class person who is the object of the lessons found in these societal-norm exhibitions visit museums. Falk and Dierking found that education and income are keys to determining the nature of the typical visitor. They wrote, “Opportunity also factors into museum attendance. Wealth provides the obvious advantage of increased access to all consumer opportunities, including cultural experiences and other kinds of socially-valued resources that may not even have a price-tag. Money buys more than material goods: it confers social position, status, and power in the world. But why higher education continues to be so strongly correlated with museum attendance is less clear—if only because there are so many intervening forces at work between the formal process of getting an education and the leisure choice of attending a museum.” Falk and Dierking discovered that immigrants

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<sup>308</sup> Tony Bennett, “Exhibition, Difference, and the Logic of Culture,” in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformation*, Ivan Karp, et al., eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 67.

coming from less developed countries where museums may not exist, and who had no tradition of visiting cultural sites, to more developed countries with museums, would still not visit these sites as it was outside their normal experience.<sup>309</sup>

Museums can be institutions that meet the needs of their communities; they preserve what society has accomplished, and they can interpret events in ways that build relationships among various cultures and time and place. Still, museums typically show the works of the dominant culture. To change this attitude requires the right mix of board members, staff, and sources of funding. The intent of the New Western History to include people formally excluded from the story of the dominant Anglo culture requires asking those in power to share it, an often daunting task. This potential change in attitude in museum professionals also hopes that the “others” who may receive a place at the table of history will come to see their story in the exhibition, even when told by the still-dominate culture, the Anglo curator.

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<sup>309</sup> Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 54–55. The work of Pierre Bourdieu looks at the relationship of social origin, education level, and environment to determine why some are more comfortable in art museums than others. Those who acquire a high level of “cultural capital” from upbringing, education, and experience develop a “habitus” which allows them to value the museum experience more than those with low levels of cultural capital. “Habitus” is considered norms or tendencies developed over time, and that “owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the levels of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will.” Change in “habitus” can occur over an individual’s lifetime, especially through education, but it is more often seen over generations; as the competences of one ancestor are inculcated through lineage. “Scientific observation shows that cultural needs are the product of upbringing and education: surveys establish that all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going, reading etc.), and preferences in literature, painting, music, are closely linked to educational level (measured by qualifications or length of schooling) and secondarily to social origin” (Pierre Bourdieu, *A Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* [London: Routledge, 1984], 466, 123, 1).

## The Battle for Power over Museums

Museums are not immune to criticism, especially when their exhibitions occur on a national stage. Professionals who curate these exhibitions believe the shows may have influence, in the extremes they can cause either civil unrest or change the way the public views an event. George Orwell's party slogan has practical examples in recent memory. "The West as America," an art show held in 1991 at the National Museum of American Art, caused a reaction from the press, not because of the art itself, but of the new interpretations given to the images. Rather than describe the vast beauty of the landscape in the traditional method, the labels "examined how painters of iconic frontier scenes wittingly or unwittingly contributed to the process of appropriation."<sup>310</sup> As Patricia Limerick said, the West was conquered, not just settled.

The former "others" also found a voice in once forbidden territory. In the 1970s and 1980s slavery and prejudice became topics openly discussed in the South. Colonial Williamsburg hired blacks as interpreters; Ku Klux Klan material went on display in Jackson, Mississippi; and museums in Virginia produced shows on African Americans' lives before and after the Civil War. Japanese American internment stories were told in museums in Chicago and Phoenix. The Holocaust Memorial Museum, memorializing the horrible struggle of Jews during World War II, opened in Washington, DC. Issues of class, gender, and ecology are also exhibited around the country. Native Americans successfully brought their voices and perspectives to museums' Anglo-centric worldview. Custer Battlefield was renamed Little Bighorn National Monument. Museums recalled

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<sup>310</sup> Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 117.

Indians forced marches to lands foreign to them, and the National Museums of American History created an exhibition showing the conflict and interaction between Native American, African, Asian, and European peoples.<sup>311</sup> In 1989 Congress passed legislation enabling the National Museum of the American Indian, which now operates at three sites on the east coast.<sup>312</sup>

A once-great national symbol, Christopher Columbus, also was demythified during the time of events marking the Quincentenary of his so-called discovery of the Americas. Planners of traditional celebrations found themselves “confronting difficult questions about the rise of colonialism, the destruction of native American societies, and the disruption of biological habitats.”<sup>313</sup> Native Americans protested against Columbus Day celebrations and became activists for their perceived rights as both United States citizens and as independent nations. Debates ensued over elite versus popular cultural ideals, diversity, local versus central government, and myth versus history. 1992 was a watershed year where old traditions of “seeing history as the record of human purposes” gave way to a multitude of voices that “presents a much more complex and interesting spectacle.”<sup>314</sup> The Quincentenary was one of the focal points for contention between

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<sup>311</sup> Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 116–119.

<sup>312</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-103/pdf/STATUTE-103-Pg1336.pdf> (Public. Law. 101-185, Sec. 3, Nov. 28, 1989, 103 Stat. 1337.) (accessed October 2, 2014). See also <http://nmai.si.edu/about/> (accessed October 21, 2014) for the history of the National Museum of the American Indian.

<sup>313</sup> Stephen J. Summerhill and John Alexander Williams, *Sinking Columbus: Contested History, Cultural Politics, and Mythmaking during the Quincentenary* (Miami: University Press of Florida, 2000), 5.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

traditional ideas of history and the new social history, the methodology focusing on non-Anglo, non-wealthy, non-male stories.

Notwithstanding the successes of activist groups, historians and museum professionals in the 1990s, liberal attitudes promoting inclusion had been under attack since the ultra-conservative Ronald Reagan presidential years of the late 1980s. In 1993, conservative pundit Rush Limbaugh wrote a popular book titled *See, I Told You So*, attacking all things liberal. Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, continued this criticism of what American had become, especially because of the tenets of the Great Society of the 1960s, which led in his view to unsavory characteristics that suddenly occurred, such as the welfare state and rampant drug use. According to Gingrich, this was the time when all that was degenerate in society began. Then, in 1994, Lynne Cheney, former head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, wrote a criticism of the newly proposed National Standards for United States History. She found that traditional heroes like Ulysses S. Grant were underrepresented and women and minorities, such as Harriet Tubman, mentioned too often. Although there was widespread participation by teachers, administrators, scholars, and business leaders in the creation of the Standards, Cheney and her fellow critics had “command of media megaphones,” which “allowed them to manufacture another uproar.”<sup>315</sup> During this time the Enola Gay controversy made national news.

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<sup>315</sup> Mike Wallace, “Culture War, History Front,” in *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 176–183.

In 1994 The National Air and Space Museum staff proposed an exhibition highlighting the role of the airship *Enola Gay* to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. The curators wanted to show both the positive aspects of dropping an atomic bomb in the stopping of the war, but also the horrors atomic weapons created. Many veterans of World War II were still alive, and with the suffering by United States troops in Vietnam still fresh in many minds, veterans took offense to the presentation. The Air Force Association particularly indicated that the script was biased toward unpatriotic, pro-Japanese views and should not, in any way, downplay the patriotic aspects of Americans during war. Although the proposal was rewritten several times in an attempt to find compromise among the various possible interpretations, Congress finally pressured the museum director to cancel the show as planned. This was a blow to the independence of museum curatorship, but necessary if the Smithsonian was to survive. Richard H. Kohn, former president of the Society for Military History and from 1981 to 1991 chief of history for the United States Air Force stated, “By abandoning the exhibit and agreeing to review some earlier controversial exhibitions and to suspend or delay new ones under way, he [Michael Heyman, the new museum director] chose to surrender the Smithsonian’s independence in order to save it.”<sup>316</sup> Historians were losing influence over the right to interpret the past.

The right to interpret the past took a new, and for many, frightening turn when the Disney Corporation declared their idea to popularize history. In 1993, the company

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<sup>316</sup> Richard H. Kohn, “History at Risk: The Case of the *Enola Gay*,” in *History Wars: the Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 167.

announced plans to open Disney's America on three thousand acres in Virginia. The park would be close to both Civil War battlefields and Washington, D. C. to attract its large population. Disney proposed to give the park a history theme, taking a serious, but fun, approach to both the good and bad in America's rise to becoming a world power. In fact, Disney offered visitors the opportunity to experience what it was like to be a slave attempting an escape from bondage. Historians tried to work with Disney and tried, half-heartedly, to criticize the concept, fearing history would be sentimentalized. Opponents of the park came from both sides of the political spectrum. However, what ultimately caused the defeat of the park was a combination of non-historical events. The local community did not like the idea of masses of people flocking to the planned hotels and strip malls that would accompany the park. Additionally, some of the main Disney executives left the company for various reasons.<sup>317</sup> These factors worked in the historians' favor, but the role of historians confronted with non-historians practicing history for profit, as in the case of popular depictions of the West or the Walt Disney Company theme park, should be to "encourage them as critics, by exploring the tensions between education and entertainment."<sup>318</sup>

Since that time, some museums have embraced the notion that an immersive experience is what visitors crave. "Participation" is now the theme to be exploited. Andrea Jones, writing in *History News* in 2006, used the work of Colin Beard and John Wilson, professors of experiential learning, to define what an experience is, and where

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<sup>317</sup> Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History*, 165–167.

<sup>318</sup> Marcia G. Synott, "Disney's America: Whose Patrimony, Whose Profits, Whose Past?" in *The Public Historian* 17, no 4 (Autumn 1995): 58.

that definition originated. They wrote, “Experience is a meaningful engagement with the environment in which we use our previous knowledge (itself built from experience) to bring new meaning to an interaction.”<sup>319</sup> Taken from the constructivist learning theory, curators hope to not only engage the senses, but to add the ability to manipulate and experiment with the environment. The Connor Prairie museum outside Indianapolis created their *Follow the North Star* program in 1998. The program used the park’s outdoor setting to put visitors in the role of escaped slaves making their way through the Underground Railroad. The program was well received, and appeared to be very much like what Disney’s America program would have been.<sup>320</sup> The reality is that there are potential challenges to any interpretation, and Patricia Limerick’s fight to make New Western History’s views ubiquitous, including throughout museums still continues.

### The Evolution of New Western History in Museums

Patricia Limerick promoted New Western History ideas in her co-curated exhibition *The Frontier in American Culture*. Unfortunately, the show was held at the Newberry Library in Chicago. Although open to the public, this institution is primarily a research facility with a non-circulating collection. It is not the typical setting that would draw the masses. However, the elites and educators who would attend the exhibition constituted a top-down approach to opening the minds of those who potentially influence others to non-Anglo-centric stories. Drawn mainly from two collections of books,

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<sup>319</sup> Colin Beard and John Wilson, *Experiential Learning: A Best Practice Handbook for Educators and Trainers* (Philadelphia: Kogan Page Limited, 2006), 21.

<sup>320</sup> Andrea K. Jones, “All Hands on Deck: Toward the Experience History Museum,” *History News* 69, no. 2 (Spring 2014): 18–19.

manuscripts, and other library materials, this exhibition differed from previous shows in that it compared and contrasted two stories different in genre, tone, and content—the scholarly Frederick Jackson Turner and the consummate showman, William “Buffalo Bill” Cody. The men and their stories were paired in the show, “just as they were paired in Chicago in 1893, because they invariably exist in relation to each other—whether separate or entangled.”<sup>321</sup> The collection reflected trends in scholarship and popular culture, both at the time of the Exposition and today. Museums have to tread the line between providing entertaining educational items that people enjoy and imparting knowledge.

This exhibit was successful, as it compared and contrasted the two entangled contexts. It also demonstrated the limitations of museum exhibitions. Although immersion experiences can provide a quality learning experience with minimal use of artifacts, they rely on educational pieces or props to help create the environment of the time and place being experienced. It is difficult to show what is not contained in a museum’s own collection or that cannot be borrowed from other institutions. The exhibition demonstrated that interpretation is the key to history; whether contained in an academically produced manuscript or a museum exhibition, the history that is told depends on what elements of the story are chosen and the research that is invested. How did such disparate stories play such powerful roles in influencing American thought? First, both used narratives that erased any confusing parts, and only delivered the messages the authors believed was relevant. Turner emphasized humanity’s conquest

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<sup>321</sup> James R. Grossman, ed., *The Frontier in American Culture: An Exhibition at the Newberry Library, August 26, 1994–January 7, 1995* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1.

over nature, but thought the presence of Native Americans secondary to his thesis. Buffalo Bill conversely displayed his theme, the conquest of the savage Indian, while nature had barely any mention at all. “Second, the very ubiquity of frontier icons allowed both Turner and Buffalo Bill to deliver powerful messages with incredible economy and resonance,”<sup>322</sup> wrote historian and librarian James R. Grossman in 1994. People like the idea of the frontier; they look back to what they believe was true of the past, while appreciating the advantages of today, but want to know if they personally could have survived the frontier and been a force in the past. Grossman wrote, “Preserved frontier sites, or, better yet, newly constructed ones, such as Frontierland in Disneyland or the western town in Knott’s Berry Farm, opened opportunities for children, and indeed adults, to reenact western stories.”<sup>323</sup> Unfortunately, reenacting was not necessarily interpreting the truth of what actually happened, and encouraged visitors to create a partially false meaning of events.

Limerick also addressed Disney’s Frontierland, “That cheerful and complete indifference to the work of frontier historians may, in truth, be the secret of the place’s success.”<sup>324</sup> Popular culture does not often express the harsher realities of any time period. The stories visitors already think they know and cherish are harder to change than

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<sup>322</sup> Grossman, ed., *The Frontier in American Culture*, 11.

<sup>323</sup> Richard White, “Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill,” in *The Frontier in American Culture: An Exhibition at the Newberry Library, August 26, 1994–January 7, 1995*, James R. Grossman, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 54.

<sup>324</sup> Patricia Nelson Limerick, “The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century,” in *The Frontier in American Culture: An Exhibition at the Newberry Library, August 26, 1994–January 7, 1995*, James R. Grossman, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 72.

for people to accept new information.<sup>325</sup> There is hope for the changes that Limerick and others believed should and can occur, however. Charles M. Russell, painter and poet of western images wrote:

The west is dead my friend  
But writers hold the seed  
And what they saw  
Will live and grow  
Again to those who read.<sup>326</sup>

Patricia Limerick continued her efforts to encourage academics to read and produce New Western History historiography for many years after this exhibition. She saw the history of the frontier and the west as being very complex, full of cultural encounters, regardless of historians advocated prior to the late twentieth century.<sup>327</sup>

Proponents of the New Western History paradigm would invite a broad ethnicity to attend exhibitions so these new visitors may experience both the stories of the Anglos in power when the more traditional history was written and those whose stories are now being added to the interpretation. Exhibitions can open up new worlds if the visitor is receptive, and if the material is meaningful. Museum Studies professor Helen Coxall wrote, “The key to inclusive practice is relevance. For example, when dealing with ‘other’ people’s objects, curators are dealing with those people’s culture, history, and

<sup>325</sup> Personal observation: when discussing a point of history, such as an invention and who created it, visitors to museum sites with some knowledge, even if incomplete or incorrect, are happy to share that information, but loath to be corrected should there be one or more less than factual statements.

<sup>326</sup> Charles M. Russell, “The West Is Dead My Friend,” in *Regards to the Bunch: Letters, Poems, and Illustrations of C. M. Russell*, Elizabeth A. Dear, ed. (Great Falls, MT: C. M. Russell Museum, 1992), 40. Charlie Russell is still influencing readers. His life as told in pictures is the main story in the October, 2014, *True West: History of the American Frontier* magazine.

<sup>327</sup> Grossman, ed., *The Frontier in American Culture*, 79.

way of life. In this context I am using the term ‘other’ to indicate any culture that is likely to be misrepresented if seen from a purely monocentric perspective.”<sup>328</sup> Patricia Limerick might read “monocentric” as being the Anglo version of history.

Museums may be able to achieve this multi-ethnic perspective with their current tools and methods. What is required is a change of interpretation. Hooper-Greenhill stated, “The polysemic character of artifacts means that museums can use their collections to tell multiple stories; the reinterpretation of objects opens up possibilities for bringing new stories to light, representing the events of the past in new ways. The active interpretive processes used by audiences mean that museum visitors are able to use the objects, events, and visual narratives they find as raw material for constructing their own stories, for their own purposes. And where audiences are used to coauthor museum narratives, new perspectives on old stories may emerge.”<sup>329</sup> David Carr, curator at Colonial Williamsburg, further clarified the role of museums and acknowledges the point Bennett makes of the museum being a place for learning, particularly of a common culture, writing, “The museum illuminates irresistible new thoughts and stimulates revisions of former thoughts. The museum invites us to reconsider how we behave and what we craft in the worlds of lived experience. The gift of a museum for every user is an appreciation of complexity, a welcoming to the open door of the unknown, the possible, the possible-to-know, and the impossible-to-know.”<sup>330</sup> The future for some people is a

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<sup>328</sup> Helen Coxall, “Open Minds: Inclusive Practice,” in *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century*, Hugh H. Genoways, ed. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006), 140.

<sup>329</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, “The Power of Museum Pedagogy,” 238.

<sup>330</sup> David Carr, “Mind as Verb,” in *Museum Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century*, Hugh H. Genoways, ed. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006), 16.

dark place because of its uncertainty, but others see the potential for change and personal growth.

The Center for the Future of Museums, an initiative of the American Alliance of Museums to look at potential visions of the place of museums in the lives of all people, examined demographic changes in the United States and suggested that museums should still consider the acculturation process of immigrants and native-born second generation minority groups since the minority populations will shortly become the new majority. Immigrants account for almost forty percent of population growth in the United States between 2000 and 2008. Additionally, just over twelve and one-half percent of the American population is now born outside of the United States, with the vast majority of these people coming from Latin America and Asia.<sup>331</sup> These minority people's ancestors have a place in the New Western History and could be interested in how their cultures helped shape the present. If museums can get these groups to engage with an exhibition it might provide an historical basis of understanding that appears frequently to be lacking in the discussions on current topics and open more discourse about our shared future.

However, there are challenges to getting these groups to museums and for the museums to create an exhibition that would engage the non-Anglo visitor. How the museum has classified its objects, the way it filters information, and the nature of the language it uses in labels, can be alienating to the visitor educated outside of the United States. The curator plays a major role in deciding what is displayed and how it is interpreted. If the curator is not disposed to be inclusive, the immigrants and working

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<sup>331</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2010) Statistical abstract of the United States. Washington, DC. [www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/10statab/pop.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/10statab/pop.pdf) (accessed September 2, 2014).

class will not come.<sup>332</sup> In addition, if the curator does not present an inclusive exhibition, no visitor's perspective—neither immigrants, working class, minorities, nor Anglos'—will be broadened. The lens of New Western History adds perspective for all readers of history and visitors to museums. The process of exposing new immigrants to the American culture may begin when their children visit a museum as part of a school group, but this will only be effective if the exhibition displays its interpretation in ways the unfamiliar student can understand. These groups may learn more after the visit back in the classroom. William Ray wrote, “The museum of technology or the historical institute impel us to discourse even more forcefully [than art museums]. While the students visiting the historical diorama or natural history display may not articulate their responses in terms of beauty, they *are* expected not just to absorb the examples they have observed, but to *talk* about what they saw, what it meant, where it came from, why it is important, what it made them feel, and so forth.”<sup>333</sup>

While a school group may have a recap of their visit, what about their parents? Will the student be encouraged to discuss what they learned with their family group? Should this happen, and should the family now come to the exhibition, how and when do they recap their communal experience? This is of special concern, if as Falk and Dierking have found, it may be many months before the experience is internally considered and then verbalized. Museums may struggle with aiding this ideal result, but they can at least consider how to create the opportunities for the dialogue to happen. Falk and Dierking

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<sup>332</sup> Ray, *The Logic of Culture*, 123–124.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 125.

wrote, “Participating in museum experience could be an important acculturation tool for immigrant families, one that helps the family navigate their new community. The key is to create a context in which the family feels like they have a reasonable amount of control over their experience, which is not usually the case in other settings they are trying to understand, such as formal education, health services, and the labor market.”<sup>334</sup>

Using museums as a place for discussion is not new, but is receiving more emphasis than it has in the past. Ray stated, “All cultural institutions instigate discourse,” and Bennett agreed, adding that museums, “in discharging their civic mandate, they aim to ensure that the visitor’s visual experience is translated into verbal accounts which can then be exchanged in social discourse outside the museum.”<sup>335</sup> These comments may be the ideal and only pertain to the experience of the literati; perhaps people without years of a shared experience do not have the means to analyze what they saw and experienced.

Change often takes a long time. Museums reflect changes in society, but that change may take even longer to appear in the museums’ exhibitions. Bennett saw museums reflecting the changes that happen and providing places to contemplate and discuss these changes, writing “These are, then, institutions of ‘slow modernity’ in which the time series they organize serve as templates for regulated progress and, as such, are just as much institutions of culture as art museums.”<sup>336</sup> Falk and Dierking saw that there is still much thought needed in exhibition practice, stating, “If museums continue to tout their value as community anchor institutions, they will need to form new authentic,

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<sup>334</sup> Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 89.

<sup>335</sup> Ray, *The Logic of Culture*, 125–126, and Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 170.

<sup>336</sup> Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory*, 187.

ongoing, and adequately resourced coalitions dedicated to collective public good goals. Moreover, these models—and the core definition of a museum—will need to adapt to accommodate the changing behaviors and 24/7 learning demands of our technology-savvy publics and their expectations of co-creating, mixing and mashing, and riffing on our content and collections.<sup>337</sup> This study next turns to various types of museums in the Southwest to see if, and how, they are embracing the presentation of history through the lens of the New Western History.

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<sup>337</sup> Falk and Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 11.

## CHAPTER 4

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SITES

*“The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there.”*<sup>338</sup>  
-- L. P. Hartley, 1954

#### Through the Limerick Lens

We may not always remember our own recent past, at least not accurately. British novelist L. P. Hartley indicates that we may find the past a strange place compared to our own experience. This becomes more prevalent the further away in time or location the past under review is to our own experience. How strange is the story of Native Americans interacting with missionaries, or pioneers and religious settlers moving across the Southwest when viewed from our modern day? This chapter looks at four National Park Service sites in Arizona and New Mexico through the lens provided by Patricia Limerick. It will examine whether any of these sites offer examples of continuity, convergence, conquest, or complexity in their permanent indoor exhibitions. National Park Service sites frequently have an outdoor site, the reason for the park being where it is—a fort, house, mission, or topographical feature relevant to the history of the area, usually with trail signs that explain what is available for viewing. Many also provide a museum or visitor center with an indoor exhibition that further explains the events or significant people that gave the site meaning. The focus here is on these indoor exhibitions, to determine whether the story presented by the National Parks Service interpreters subscribed to New Western History concepts. The outdoor exhibits were viewed to see how they agree with the inside interpretations.

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<sup>338</sup> Leslie P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (New York: Knopf, 1954), 1.

Limerick defined continuity as subjects that are as important today as they were in the 1890s.<sup>339</sup> For purposes of these national park historic sites, those themes included the protection of the local economy, water use, relations with Native Americans and Mexico, and freedom of religious practice. Convergence was defined as the West as meeting place for many groups, not just white men. All of the sites selected had an opportunity to discuss convergence. Limerick used conquest to replace the word “frontier” in historical texts. Taken in a global context, American history can reflect how Europeans appropriated the area’s natural resources, subjugated those living near or at these sites, and changed the patterns of daily existence for these non-Anglo peoples. Finally, to dispel the myth that humankind is all good, or all bad, the complexity of humanity is considered. In this vein, causes for actions that made an event significant might begin in the mundane.

While each of these elements is considered, it is important to note the history and significance of the national parks in relation to state historical societies and local museums that will be considered in the following chapters. All were created and operate under different authorities and have slightly different missions to fulfill. However, it appears they all need at least some level of private funding to execute a new exhibition.

## The National Park Service

The national parks come about through a series of related events over many years. Public concern was raised in the early 1800s when visitors to Niagara Falls could not

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<sup>339</sup> Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 18–21.

avoid hucksters or when the bark of a giant sequoia was stripped from the tree in California and reassembled for the amazement of Eastern and European gawkers, at just a few cents per viewing. To counter some of this entrepreneurial activity and preserve some of the wilderness left in the West, in June of 1864 President Abraham Lincoln transferred the Yosemite Valley and a grove of giant sequoias to the State of California. While transfers of this nature were not uncommon before this time, the language used in the decree was new; it stipulated that the lands “shall be held for public use, resort and recreation.”<sup>340</sup> In 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the act creating Yellowstone National Park, providing two million acres “as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”<sup>341</sup> Thirty-four years later, in 1906, both the passage of the Antiquities Act and the creation of Mesa Verde National Park (it was called a national park before the National Park Service was created) provided protection for historic sites by prohibiting “removing or destroying any historic object or excavating any historic or prehistoric ruin on the public lands.”<sup>342</sup> Ten years later the National Park Service was created as part of the National Parks Act.

Although the Antiquities Act considered the historical aspects of the parks, most of the early sites were created for their natural beauty. History was given more emphasis in 1935 with the enactment of the Historic Sites Act. The act directed the Park Service to

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<sup>340</sup> William C. Everhart, *The National Park Service* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), 5–7.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 11. An Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities, 1906, S. 4698, 59<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., Congressional Record 225, found at <http://www.legisworks.org/congress/59/session-1/publaw-209.pdf> (accessed October 3, 2014).

“establish and maintain museums” and provide educational materials with respect to the history of the sites. In a paper titled “History and Our National Parks” presented in that same year, the Parks Service first chief historian, Verne E. Chatelain, said,

The concept which underlies the whole policy of the National Park Service in connection with [historical and archeological] sites is that of using the uniquely graphic qualities which inhere in any area where stirring and significant events have taken place to drive home to the visitor the meaning of those events showing not only their importance in themselves but their integral relationship to the whole history of American development. In other words, the task is to breathe the breath of life into American history for those to whom it has been a dull recital of meaningless facts—to recreate for the average citizen something of the color, the pageantry, and the dignity of our national past.<sup>343</sup>

Chatelain instructed the reader that the significance of a park’s historical event should be viewed not only in a local context, but also through the lens of all American development. This fits with the direction Limerick asked historians to take, the broad view. However, it is not clear that Chatelain included all ethnicities and classes when he further stated that while the re-creation of history in museums was meant for the average citizen, since that citizen was a white, white-collar person from the middle or upper class. History’s purpose was to depict the “color, the pageantry, and dignity of our national past.” Prior to 1935 most of that national past had been written from an Anglo, male perspective.

Regardless, the national park sites were among the first to value and use interpretation. As we saw in the prior chapter, museum display and what and how artifacts are interpreted undergoes change just as historiography does. Ned Burns, head of the National Park Service Museum Division, described the formal exhibits in the park

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<sup>343</sup> Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 22.

museums in 1941 as “merely explanatory devices to make clear the natural and historical exhibits outside. In a sense the park as a whole may be regarded as an exhibit and the museum as an explanatory label. This concept underlies all park museum work.”<sup>344</sup> Many of the labels were long in narrative and not culturally inclusive, however.

By the 1950s many people owned automobiles and were able to travel to see natural and historic sites around the country. As more people visited the parks, the infrastructure of the parks was strained and in need of additional support. The Park Service started a ten-year development program to improve facilities that would culminate in 1966, the fifty-year anniversary of the National Park Service. This project was called MISSION 66. A focus on parks’ visitor centers was a consequence of this initiative. “These structures were designed to be the focal point for information and interpretation within the parks” and, according to historian William Noll, 458 historic buildings were reconstructed or rehabilitated in the process.<sup>345</sup> This was also a time for living history interpretation in the parks and a movement toward historic preservation. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorized a National Register of Historic Places to be maintained by the National Park Service.<sup>346</sup> In the late 1960s, many parks began to develop historic resource studies. These extensive research studies “provided an

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<sup>344</sup> Ned J. Burns, *Field Manual for Museums* (Washington, D. C.: National Park Service, 1941), 2.

<sup>345</sup> William Nelson Noll, “Mission 66: The National Park Service Program for the Revitalization of America’s National Parks, 1955–1966” (master’s thesis, Kansas State University, 1997), 151, 173–174. This was funded in 1957 as part of the National Park Service annual budget.

<sup>346</sup> *The National Parks: Shaping the System*, produced by Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2005), 65, available at [http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/LPS63815/LPS63815/www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/shaping/part2.pdf](http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/LPS63815/LPS63815/www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/shaping/part2.pdf) (accessed November 28, 2014).

inventory and evaluative review of the cultural resources of an area administrated by the National Park Service.”<sup>347</sup>

In the 1970s, members of Congress were hearing from their constituents that park rangers did not know enough about their sites. As a result Park interpreters became subject specialist and practiced good communication skills.<sup>348</sup> William Everhart, then Chief of Interpretation for the National Park Service also recognized the changes occurring in society and “called for greater sensitivity to cultural diversity in interpretation.” Ten years later he declared that interpretation at the national parks is “designed to popularize knowledge, which is after all what a good museum should try to do.”<sup>349</sup> While the popularization of knowledge is one of the goals of public history, it is important to realize that it must be done with accuracy and be representative of more than just an Anglo view. As the evidence below will show, not all National Park Service sites lend themselves to popular interpretations, regardless of who the main visitor group is. However, the fact that a site has been designated a national park or monument by Congress and is managed at public expense gives it an aura of importance. What is told as the site’s interpretive history is important to its visitors. Barry Mackintosh, a former National Park Service park historian, commented on the challenges of interpreting at some sites and why context is not always considered in the broad scope of site interpretation. He wrote, “Visitors, too, like to hear how important the site is; they do not

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<sup>347</sup> Edwin C. Bearss, “The National Park Service and Its History Program: 1864–1986—An Overview,” *The Public Historian* 9, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 11–12.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>349</sup> Everhart, *The National Park Service*, 52.

want to be told that they have gone out of their way to see something that played a secondary role in this war or that series of events. The very act of telling and retelling the single site's story—in contrast to the classroom teacher surveying the sweep of history—tends to magnify its significance.”<sup>350</sup>

In the 1980s the national parks, like many museums, were suffering from budget cuts and experiencing a lack of emphasis on interpretation by current directors. While still considered important, doing interpretation right could be costly and time intensive.<sup>351</sup> Dwight Pitcaithley, former National Park Service chief historian, indicated that in the 1970s and 1980s most historians in the Park Service did little historic interpretation. He cited meetings designed to formulate a new interpretation of the Statue of Liberty in 1983, and observed that the Park Service interpretive planners and scholars were very far apart in their ideas about how best to create an exhibition. Pitcaithley said, The National Park Service “had over the past fifty years told one-dimensional stories that were solidly anchored in the “consensus” school of historical interpretation. It sought the most middle-of-the road, conservative (not to mention, safe) approach to developing interpretive programs and exhibits and publications that collectively gave no hint of the vibrant conversations historians had within the many fields of historical inquiry, especially that of immigration and ethnic history.”<sup>352</sup> The Park Service was not giving the public the tools to reflect upon the past in relation to the present.

<sup>350</sup> Mackintosh, *Interpretation in the National Park Service*, 36.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 92–102.

<sup>352</sup> Dwight T. Pitcaithley, “Taking the Long Way from Euterpe to Clio,” in *Becoming Historians*, James M. Banner, Jr. and John R. Gillis, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 63.

Pitcaithley indicated that it was not until the late 1990s that the Park Service incorporated the role of women, different races, social classes, and historical perspectives into exhibitions.<sup>353</sup> However, the public still resisted the new interpretations versus their knowledge of the “facts” of history. When explaining changes, Pitcaithley found it best to cite primary sources rather than modern interpretations. Seeing or hearing what the original documents said, as opposed to what the public thought they remembered about an event, reduced resistance to the broader interpretation of these events.<sup>354</sup> This period of change in Park Service interpretation was the environment and timeframe in which most of the sites under review created their exhibitions. One, Fort Union National Monument in New Mexico, is much older than these debates. The others have made recent changes, but the challenges of utilizing current methodology and historiographical research still exist. However, the time period discussed in the exhibitions at each of the sites also offers a chronological depiction of the people and use of land. This exhibition-based chronology creates the order of discussion in this work for the four sites.

### Historiography for Researching the Exhibitions

The museum professionals consulted for this study either did not know what, if any, scholarly works were consulted prior to creating the exhibitions, or could not remember specific references. Various sources were available for review and are mentioned below. They are included here to help determine if scholarly works available

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<sup>353</sup> Pitcaithley, “Taking the Long Way from Euterpe to Clio,” 64.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 73.

at the time of the creation of the exhibitions contained elements of New Western History. Each of the three chapters reviewing the selected sites include applicable historiography. Books and articles relevant to a specific site will be discussed at the beginning of the site review.

Several of the works would be applicable to any of the sites, as they discuss general conditions in the Southwest at the time of Spanish and American incursions into the area. Many more reference works are now available, but these were written after the exhibitions were opened.

Scholarly works discussing general topics include “The Influence of Weapons on New Mexico History” by historian F. S. Curtis, Jr., from 1926. This author discussed the use of weapons from the ancient through the resolution of Indian uprisings in Pecos, the Civil War action, and weapons used at Fort Union.<sup>355</sup> Jos Wasson transcribed the reminiscences of Lieutenant John G. Bourk, Third Calvary, aide de camp to Brigadier General George Crook, about his travels through southern and eastern Arizona and New Mexico in 1880 in “The Southwest in 1880,” published in 1930.<sup>356</sup> Both of these works are traditional in their interpretation.

Historian David Weber contributed several works to the study of the Southwest Borderlands. *New Spain’s Far Northern Frontier* is an edited collection of essays that examined the period of Spanish conquest of northern Mexico from the period of Mexican control of the area through the 1960s American Pepsi Generation’s idea of the history of

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<sup>355</sup> F. S. Curtis, Jr. “The Influence of Weapons on New Mexico History,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 1, no. 3 (July 1926): 324–335.

<sup>356</sup> Jos Wasson, “The Southwest in 1880,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 5, no. 3 (July 1930): 263–287.

the Southwest.<sup>357</sup> Weber declared that as of this publication date (1979) little work of any depth had been done on the social history of New Spain's northern frontier, the role of women, the ecological impact of the arrival of Spanish or Mexicans, or the similarities and differences in the various regions of the Southwest. The essays covered exploration, institutions, society, changes that occurred in the eighteenth century, Indians as actors in the formation of the Borderlands history, and the relevance of continuing the study of the area and its peoples. Published about ten years before Patricia Limerick addressed New Western History topics, Weber saw the need for the same refocusing. Then, in *The Idea of Spanish Borderlands*, Weber examined the historiography of the Borderlands, as first described by Herbert Bolton. This 1991 book was "the history of the writing of the history of the Borderlands."<sup>358</sup> The essays range in date from the 1930s through the late 1980s. While traditional, romantic views were presented, there were also more modern interpretations, including a Chicano perspective. Weber cited other authors, but agreed that the field of study in the late 1980s "has embraced new methodologies and become more open to interdisciplinary approaches." The purpose of the essay selection was to view a broader picture of Borderland society, not just the cruelty of the Spanish, and to integrate it into the general story of American history. His last general work, the 1992 *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, offered "a fresh overview that reflects the concerns of current scholarship as well as the sound conclusions of earlier generations. Simply put, I [Weber] try to explain Spain's impact on the lives, institutions, and

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<sup>357</sup> David J. Weber, ed., *New Spain's Far Northern Frontier: Essays on Spain in the American West, 1540–1841* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979).

<sup>358</sup> David J. Weber, ed., *The Idea of Spanish Borderlands* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), xiv, xxiv.

environments of native peoples of North America, and the impact of North America on the lives and institutions of the Spaniards who explored and settled what has now become the United States.”<sup>359</sup>

Historians Ellwyn R. Stoddard, Richard L. Nostrand, and Jonathan P. West edited the *Borderlands Sourcebook* in 1983. This encyclopedia-like book contained brief articles of various topics, including frontiers, history, the environment, the economy, politics, and culture. The book included a bibliography of all works cited and an index. The essays covered a wide range of New Western History topics and provide discussions of the authors’ ideas of the best literature on their topics available up through the 1970s. Stoddard continued this theme almost twenty years later. Her *U.S.-Mexico Borderland Studies* updated the field of Borderland Studies. Stoddard quickly discussed the last 150 years of research and puts into perspective current (in 2002) needs and challenges, including how the *Al Qaeda* terrorist network affected border security. The work also challenged scholars to participate in multidisciplinary views of the Borderlands regions so as to replace “purely ethnocentric values and interpretations.”<sup>360</sup>

An early discussion of the Spanish in the southwest by historian Earle R. Forrest presented an Anglo bias. In 1929 Forrest wrote, “Contrary to popular belief those old-time Spanish conquistadores were not cruel to the Indians. It is true that the invaders

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<sup>359</sup> David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 8.

<sup>360</sup> Ellwyn R. Stoddard, Richard L. Nostrand, and Jonathan P. West, eds., *Borderlands Sourcebook: A Guide to the Literature on Northern Mexico and the American Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press; Published under the sponsorship of the Association of Borderlands Scholars, 1983) and Ellwyn R. Stoddard, *U.S.-Mexico Borderland Studies: Multidisciplinary Perspective and Concepts* (El Paso, TX: Promontory, 2002), 78a.

fought the aborigines when they were opposed; but so did the English.” This gave the impression that if the English did it, it was an acceptable practice. *Missions and Pueblos of the Old Southwest* is based on first-hand observation and historical manuscripts.

Forrest marveled at how many missions were created in New Mexico and Arizona long before the establishment of missions in California. This work may best be used for its observations of the sites and to determine the location of places that may no longer exist.<sup>361</sup>

The Navajo played a considerable role in the Southwest, especially in the interaction with Anglos at Pipe Spring, Pecos, and Fort Union. *Through White Men’s Eyes: A Contribution to Navajo History* by archaeologist J. Lee Correll, penned in 1979, is a recounting of archival material. However, the author noted the documents are biased, for “These, as the title implies, only contribute to Navajo history, for they present only one side of the situation, and that from the White man’s viewpoint.”<sup>362</sup> Another collection of relevant archival material is *Collection of 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish Documents Relative to the History of New Spain and the Spanish Southwest*. This was a bibliography of the documents produced in 1983 of the microfilm collection of the same title. The book contained atlases, maps, documents, and descriptions of travel by Spaniards in New Spain and Mexico.<sup>363</sup> Another listing of archival material in Arizona, California, New

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<sup>361</sup> Earle R. Forrest, *Missions and Pueblos of the Old Southwest: Their Myths, Legends, Fiestas, and Ceremonies, with Some Accounts of the Indian Tribes and Their Dances; and of the Penitentes* (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1929), 19.

<sup>362</sup> J. Lee Correll, *Through White Men’s Eyes: A Contribution to Navajo History. A Chronological Record of the Navajo People from Earliest Times to the Treaty of June 1, 1868*, 6 volumes (Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Heritage Center, 1979), ii.

<sup>363</sup> *Collection of 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish Document Relative to the History of New Spain and the Spanish Southwest*, Arizona State University, 1983.

Mexico, and Texas was historian Henry Beers's *Spanish and Mexican Records of the American Southwest*.<sup>364</sup> This was published in 1979, just prior to the preceding collection.

John Bannon, historian, also provided books dealing with the Spanish Borderlands. He promoted the work of Herbert Bolton and presented a precursor to Limerick's New Western History model in 1964. *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands* suggested that Bolton "did little more than propose a broader approach to American history, one which was not simply Anglo-oriented or limited to the study of the thirteen colonies to which three dozen and one states were added in time." Bannon also provided an early example of viewing the west from the west, another of Limerick's concerns. First published in 1963, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513–1821* has a forward by Ray Billington that declared that Frederick Jackson Turner, from his perch in Wisconsin, close to the geographic middle of the continent, had a simple, east to west, view of the English expansion across America. Billington suggested Turner neglected to consider the French Canadians moving south, and the Spanish from the Caribbean north and west, and from Mexico north. This work was a synthesis, and an attempt "to recognize that North America had frontiers other than the more familiar ones of Anglo making." The essays in this book examined the collision of frontiers and the fusion of cultures that continues, and made comparisons of Spanish institutions to those of the English. Additionally, occupations of the pioneers were compared, as were their ethnicities.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Henry P. Beers, *Spanish and Mexican Records of the American Southwest: A Bibliographical Guide to Archives and Manuscript Sources* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1979).

<sup>365</sup> John Francis Bannon, ed., *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 3, and John F Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), ix.

Another view of the west from the west included sociologist Frank Blackmar's *Spanish Institutions of the Southwest*. In 1976, Blackmar compared the Teutonic institutions and their importance in the formation of the Atlantic coast colonies to those of the Southwest. This read like a general history, rather than a concentration on institutions as claimed. The story of Coronado's expedition into the plains was basically the same as told by later historians, but the tone was perhaps from an earlier style of writing. Blackmar said, "The repetition of the accounts of these famous cities of the north again inflamed the breasts of the Spanish cavaliers with a desire for conquest."<sup>366</sup>

Bolton's influence could be seen in other historiographical works about the Southwest. Historian Charles W. Haskett claimed that accounts written before his 1911 "The Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico in 1680" examined summaries of original documents in the Spanish and Mexican archives, but he used the transcripts of the originals for his research. Haskett was a student of Bolton.<sup>367</sup> A 2002 book by James Brooks employed an interesting New Western History themed-example of the interrelationships of Native Americans and Euro-Americans brought about by slavery and marriage. The author concentrated on the New Mexico territory.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> Frank W. Blackmar, *Spanish Institutions of the Southwest* (Glorieta, NM: Rio Grande Press, 1976), 218.

<sup>367</sup> Charles Wilson Haskett, "The Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico in 1680," *Southwest Historical Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (October 1911): 93–94.

<sup>368</sup> James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press; published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, 2002).

## Pecos National Historical Park

The Pecos National Historical Park in New Mexico is the most recent of the parks under review to receive a national park designation. It was granted national park status in 1965.<sup>369</sup> The park is twenty-five miles southeast of Santa Fe. It has the remains of an Indian pueblo and claims to show “the cultural exchange and geographic facets central to the rich history of the Pecos Valley.”<sup>370</sup> According to park literature, this large pueblo once held 2,000 inhabitants who acted as intermediaries for the “trade path between the Pueblo farmers of the Rio Grande and the hunting tribes of the buffalo plains.” Coronado led his Spanish troops to the prosperous pueblo region in 1541, but they did not occupy this land until the 1580s when silver was discovered in the area. Franciscan friars were assigned to the area with the idea of both converting and colonizing the natives. They achieved mixed results. A Catholic church was built, but had to compete with the kivas, ceremonial pits that represented the origins of the Puebloan people and their living in pit houses. In 1680 the Indians revolted against what they considered religious oppression. The Spanish left the area for twelve years, at which time they “came back to their lost province” and were welcomed by the Puebloan people. A new, albeit smaller, church was built, “and most Pecos sustained Spanish rule until it ended.” By the 1780s Pecos had diminished in influence and size due to disease, raids by other tribes, migration east, and internal divisions between those favoring the old ways and those loyal to the Church and things Spanish.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> Noll, “Mission 66,” 182.

<sup>370</sup> Pecos National Historical Park, <http://www.nps.gov/peco/index.htm> (accessed September 23, 2013).

<sup>371</sup> *Pecos* (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, 2008), brochure.

The historiography associated with Pecos included historian Adolf Bandolier's "Documentary History of the Rio Grande Pueblos, 1538–1542." This essay, published in 1929, told the story of Coronado's first contact with the Indians at Pecos, or Cicuyé.<sup>372</sup> France Scholes's "Documents for the History of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century," also from 1929, revealed that new documents found in archives in Mexico and Spain showed the condition of the church and population of the Pecos mission in 1664.<sup>373</sup> Much more recent works included that of law professor G. Emlen Hall and historian David J. Weber who in 1974 authored "Mexican Liberals and the Pueblo Indians, 1821–1829." It explained that with the creation of the Republic of Mexico came changes to laws and land rights in the northern states. The area around Pecos was fertile and little used, so it was ripe for take-over by non-Indians.<sup>374</sup> There is a humorous description of a Native American's imitation of a Spanish Catholic bishop's actions at a confirmation ceremony in Oaxah Jones's "Hispanic Traditions and Improvisations on the Frontera Septentrional of New Spain."<sup>375</sup> This essay provided a Native American view of the presence, but not importance, of the new religion.

Cowboy and historian John Terrell, with his *Pueblos, Gods, and Spaniards*, was a 1973 harbinger of New Western History concepts. The author found the religious aspects

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<sup>372</sup> Adolf F. Bandolier, "Documentary History of the Rio Grande Pueblos, 1538–1542," *New Mexico Historical Review* 4, no. 4 (October 1929): 306–307.

<sup>373</sup> France Scholes, "Documents for the History of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century," *New Mexico Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (January 1929): 47–48.

<sup>374</sup> G. Emlen Hall and David J. Weber, "Mexican Liberals and the Pueblo Indians, 1821–1829," *New Mexico Historical Review* 1, no. 5 (January 1974): 12–20.

<sup>375</sup> Oaxah L. Jones, Jr., "Hispanic Traditions and Improvisations on the Frontera Septentrional of New Spain," *New Mexico Historical Review* 56, no. 4 (October 1981): 336–337.

of the exchange between the Spanish and Native Americans to be a critical piece of Native American's history. Terrell used strong language to interpret the interaction of Puebloan and white people:

No Indians in the region of the United States suffered for a longer period from intrusions by white military, civil, and religious forces than the Pueblos. Soldiers slaughtered them, government officials stole their resources and enslaved them. If priests did not attack them with guns, they employed cruel methods, both mental and physical, to break their resistance to Christianity and to obliterate their ancient ritual. Each of these oppressive elements was calamitous to them, but the most irremediable traumata were inflicted by ecclesiastical decrees enacted by three powers—Spanish, Mexican, and American. For considerably more than four centuries, virtually every facet of their personal lives was grievously affected by these onerous policies.<sup>376</sup>

This bold language continued well past the introduction. Terrell explained that the Spanish explorers who first came to the area gave a description of early Pecos. They also described the trade goods brought by the Plains Apache and other Puebloan Indians to the mission. The book contained a listing of Jemez pueblos including and near Pecos. The Jemez were one of the few tribes that were compatible with the Navajo to the west. Park rangers noted the Jemez people as being the primary group of Native Americans with an interest in the Pecos site.<sup>377</sup>

José Rabasa, professor of Latin American literature and culture, reviewed modern interpretations of Spanish rule in *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*. Published in 2000, it revealed the terminology of “peaceful conquest” used in academic circles reflected that colonial law legislated against violence unless such violence was

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<sup>376</sup> John Upton Terrell, *Pueblos, Gods, and Spaniards* (New York: Dial Press, 1973), xii–xiv.

<sup>377</sup> Terrell, *Pueblos, Gods, and Spaniards*, 99, 113. Conversation with a park ranger. Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010.

considered justified. Rabasa considered this concept an oxymoron, but saw it used in modern literature and film. The author considered that what Spain was enacting was already done by other European powers in India, Africa, and the Middle East. He wrote, “In the course of history, the northern frontier emerges as a space populated by a plurality of ethnic groups often in conflict with each other and having different experiences and perspectives on the evolving structures of power through which the colonizers eventually become the colonized, in the transitions from the Spanish empire to the Mexican republic and to the American annexation.”<sup>378</sup> This might indicate that we need to view events in context of the times and place to see how perceptions of Hispanic culture are being shaped today.

Historian John Kessell provided “a firm base for the management and interpretation of Pecos National Monument”<sup>379</sup> in *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540–1840*. The book, authored in 1979, was “a beginning, an historical documentary of the eastern fortress-pueblo from earliest Spanish contact in 1540, to abandonment three hundred years later.”<sup>380</sup> Kessell accessed original documents in Spain and Mexico whenever possible. He was familiar with the Pecos site, thus he was able to correct some earlier translations, such as the claim that a stockade existed when the structure was really just a low mud wall around the settlement. His chapter titles

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<sup>378</sup> José Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 20–21.

<sup>379</sup> John L. Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540–1840* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1979), vi.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid., vi–viii.

revealed his approach: “I. The Invaders, 1540–1542,” and “II. The new Mexico: Preliminaries to Conquest, 1542–1595.” The conquest theme was very evident.

The story of the various tribes in the Pecos area was wide ranging. In *Storms Brewed in Other Men’s Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540–1795*, published in 1975, independent historian Elizabeth John discussed cultural revolutions due to Spanish influence, fierce resistance to change, and the subtle accommodation to imposed Spanish values. The author used factual, gentle language to describe events; the Spanish “has sown hostility and distrust where there had been valuable friendship,” Coronado, in need of supplies for the winter, began “levying food and clothing,” and “Coronado let his soldiers execute that rogue,” the Puebloan guide to the Plains who was probably misinterpreted when discussing cities of gold.<sup>381</sup> Another pro-Spanish approach is that of the Reverend James Burke. His 1973 *This Miserable Kingdom* was a locally produced volume written to correct (in Burke’s view) the identity of the cultural heritage of the people of New Mexico. Burke believed Mexican attitudes discount their Spanish heritage, explaining, “Ever since the first stirrings of the revolution against Spain, however, there has been a very vigorous and impassioned attempt to play down or ignore the Spanish heritage while glorifying Mexico’s Indian past.” He also commented, “There is no good reason why this should be

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<sup>381</sup> Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men’s Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540–1795* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1975), 19–21.

done; the Spanish were not all that bad and the Indians not all that good.”<sup>382</sup> Complexity was evidenced here.

Elizabeth John discussed the source material in her book about confrontation, much of which was from Spanish archives, but also from the work Herbert Eugene Bolton and his followers. She mentioned that the work of Bolton and his students was still not resonating in contemporary scholarship sixty years later. So, John stated that her conclusions may be considered revisionist, but wrote that others such as anthropologist Edward H. Spicer and his *Cycles of Conquest* have provided direction. Limerick’s battle to promote a New Western History over twenty-plus years then seems to have a precedent in these earlier works.

The Pecos National Park encompasses a Civil War battlefield. Many references were available about this battle, but most are written after the Pecos exhibition was opened. A few works were available for the curators to use, however. In “The Battle of Glorieta Pass: Its Importance in the Civil War,” David Westphall, historian, declared in 1969 that if the Confederates had won this battle, not only would New Mexico have been added to the southern states politically, but the whole Southwest could have then been pursued by the South. This would have brought European recognition of the South, opened the gold fields of California to the Confederate states, and allowed for the exportation of cotton once again. These factors would have significantly changed the course of American history.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> James T Burke, ‘*This Miserable Kingdom. . .’*: *The Story of the Spanish Presence in New Mexico and the Southwest from the Beginning Until the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (West Las Vegas, NM: Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 1973), ii.

<sup>383</sup> David Westphall, “The Battle of Glorieta Pass: Its Importance in the Civil War,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 44, no. 2 (April 1969): 137–138.

The Territory of Colorado was organized in 1861, just a few months before the Confederate incursion into the Territory of New Mexico. Historian William Whitford offered an account of the Colorado Volunteers and the defeat of General Sibley at Glorieta Pass, and the termination of Southern political interests during the Civil War in the far Southwest in *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War: The New Mexico Campaign in 1862*. Published in 1906, Whitford also made several references to Fort Union—how the fort was configured and the time the Colorado Volunteers spent there.<sup>384</sup> Because of the invasion of Santa Fe by Confederate soldiers on March 8, 1862, the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* suspended operations until April 26. On that date the newspaper published a detailed summary of the events regarding the Battle of Glorieta, also called Battle of Pigeon's Ranch or Valle's (Valley's) Ranch. Historian Marc Simmons edited *The Battle of Valley's Ranch: First Account of the Gettysburg of the West, 1862* as a 1987 reprint of that newspaper article and “notices, taken from the same April 26 issue of the *Gazette*, that deal with sundry aspects of the Civil War in New Mexico.”<sup>385</sup>

The introduction to the site in the park brochure offers a hint of New Western History, but does not include it directly. The brochure spoke of the unrest among the native peoples to the Spanish intrusion, but also acknowledged that many natives accepted the Catholic Church and its missionaries. The local chamber of commerce brochure, even more traditional in its approach, claimed, “Pecos is a western saga,

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<sup>384</sup> William Clarke Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War: The New Mexico Campaign in 1862* (Denver, CO: The State Historical and Natural History Society, 1906).

<sup>385</sup> Marc Simmons, ed., *The Battle of Valley's Ranch: First Account of the Gettysburg of the West, 1862*, first ed. (Sandia Park, NM: San Pedro Press, 1987), 13, 17.

situated near an all-weather pass where the west was lost and won time and time again. First came Pueblo and Plains Indians, then Spanish settlers, then traders on the Santa Fe Trail and then Confederate and Union soldiers.”<sup>386</sup> In this area booster piece, the Spanish were settlers, not conquerors, and their coming to the area appeared to be just one in a series of romantic happenings on the timeline of the region. New Western History had not influenced the town leaders—yet.

The main section of the current indoor exhibition at the park was first opened in 1984. An addition was constructed in 1990. Park rangers would like exhibitions to stay intact for fifteen to twenty years, but experience has shown that they stay up—unchanged—longer than that.<sup>387</sup> Part of the exhibition focused on the contribution of Alfred Vincent Kidder, considered the founder of Southwest archaeology because of his scientific exploration of the Pecos site.<sup>388</sup> The exhibit also presented a history of the pueblo that includes the period of Spanish occupation.

Outside, a trail led to the location of the Spanish mission. This is relevant to the discussion as a few of the trail labels spoke to the interaction between the Native Americans and the Spanish—and related to some of the New Western History concepts. One label discussed trade: “In addition to raising turkeys, the mission also supported itself through raising livestock and trade. The Spanish exchanged metal tools and livestock for piñon nuts, hides, and cotton blankets (mantas) woven by the pueblos

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<sup>386</sup> *Pecos: Historic, scenic, peaceful. Just six miles off the beaten path* (Las Vegas, NM: Pecos Business Association and Las Vegas/San Miguel Chamber of Commerce, Summer 2008), brochure.

<sup>387</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010.

<sup>388</sup> *Pecos* (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, 2008), brochure.

(sic).<sup>389</sup> Some of the indoor exhibition labels also spoke to the Spanish influence, but not as one of conquest. The first label referring to the Spanish in the area was titled “Spanish Contact.” It discussed Coronado and how he “advanced the Spanish frontier.” While looking for riches on behalf of the king of Spain, “Coronado and his army camped at Pecos.” Having been told there was gold further north, Coronado took a guide to lead him to what today is Kansas. He discovered he has been “led astray” as “the Pecos had intended the Spaniards die on the plains or be so weakened that they could easily be killed on their return to the pueblo.”<sup>390</sup> The label could be interpreted that the natives were people without honor and had devious motives. What the highly visible and probably often-read label does not say, that the brochure did, is that Coronado had the Indian guide strangled. Here we saw a mixed message, with the emphasis being on the more traditional, Anglo-centric view of history. A following label used stronger language, but did not include the full context. It stated that later in time the Spanish continued to explore the area and eventually stayed: “The period of conquest had ended, and a long period of pacification and settlement had begun.”<sup>391</sup> Again, it is difficult to point to an emphasis that leads the visitor to think in terms of New Western History. While the words “conquest” and “pacification” were used, there was a tone that good works through settlement are about to begin.

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<sup>389</sup> “Turkey Coop, #15” (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>390</sup> “Spanish Contact” (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010), museum exhibit label, and *Pecos* (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, 2008), brochure.

<sup>391</sup> “The Spanish Frontier” (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

The label following the one above explained the failure of the missionaries to completely convert the Native Americans to the Catholic faith. It stated, “Catholic symbols were combined with traditional native symbols but did not replace them.” Next to that, on the same placard, was a less than complimentary statement about the blending of cultures: “The mission was a program that emphasized conversion to Roman Catholicism. The natives also learned new techniques in masonry, husbandry, carpentry, and farming so they could become tax-paying subjects to the crown.”<sup>392</sup> The message was subtle here. While learning European technologies produced more efficient labor, the native culture was transformed for the economic benefit of the Spanish, not the Indians.

The next label finally entered into the spirit of New Western History, but had its limitations. It discussed the revolt by the Puebloan people, and as many museum labels do, delivered the concept of the title in large type. This label stated, “On August 10, 1680, in one well-planned move, the pueblos rose in revolt.” Then, in much smaller type that is not read as often as the larger type, the story continued with a definite New Western History slant. It read,

During the years before the revolt, church-state conflicts damaged Indian relations in New Mexico. Long standing grievances against Spanish rule caused by the encomienda, repartimiento, and the mission program increased resentment throughout the pueblo world. Droughts, famine, epidemics, and raids from Plains Indians deepened disharmony.

As the harmonious world of the pueblos crumbled, Pueblo leaders began a resurgence of their traditional religious practices. Spanish suppression followed and some Indian leaders were imprisoned or hanged.<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> “Symbols of a New Faith” and “The Mission Program” (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010), museum exhibit labels.

<sup>393</sup> “The Pueblo Revolt” (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

In this label, so far, the language displayed a more inclusive attitude. It spoke to both the Native American action against oppression, and the Spanish reaction to discord that disturbed their economic goals. However, the text equivocates when, following a Spanish translation of the words above, it offered a quote from a Spanish document that again portrayed the Indian in completely negative light. The label continued, “the rebellious Indians, by prearranged conspiracy, fell upon all the pueblos and farms with such vigor and cruelty that they killed nineteen priests. . . . And more than three hundred eighty Spaniards . . . They set fire to the temples, seizing the images of the saints and profaning the holy vessels.’ Marquis of La Laguna, Viceroy of New Spain, report to the King, February 28, 1681.”<sup>394</sup> While this was descriptive of the events, it only offered one side of the story. The voice of the Native Americans was not presented as a counterpoint to the Anglo-centric view.

The next section of the exhibition reflected the movement of military operations in the area during the Civil War. Santa Fe, not far from Pecos, was occupied by Confederate troops in 1862. Union troops from Fort Union, another site researched for this analysis, camped near Pecos and engaged the Confederate troops at Glorieta Pass. Two labels discussed this encounter.<sup>395</sup> The label language was descriptive and factual without taking sides. Today, this battleground site is included in the Pecos National Historical Park grounds, but is not open to the public. This brief display did communicate the ongoing history of the location and added another layer to the reason the park is of

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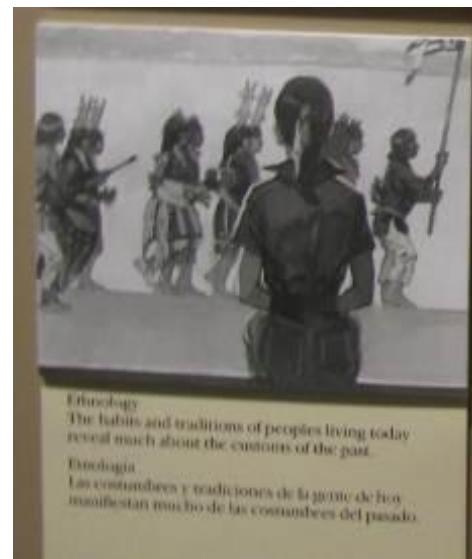
<sup>394</sup> “The Pueblo Revolt” (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>395</sup> “Troops in New Mexico” and “The Battles” (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010), museum exhibit labels.

national historical significance. However, while there was an opportunity to add the New Western History components of convergence and complexity, and perhaps continuity, the limited space did not expand the experience beyond the facts.

The remainder of the exhibition space was dedicated to the work of A. V. Kidder. One label acknowledged that the interpretation of events should be found in more than one source. Kidder credited the fields of history, biology, geology, linguistics, ethnology, archaeology, and human anatomy for telling the story of the Puebloan people. Descriptions referred to the studying of current societies that reflect how they existed in the past. The history label explained, “the written work—records, journals, maps—helps us in locating and describing peoples at the time of European contact.” It would have been nice by today’s standards of interpretation if Kidder had included oral histories of the native peoples as well. The use of ethnography told how “the habits and traditions of peoples living today reveal much about the customs of the past.”<sup>396</sup> The image accompanying this description is of a modern person looking at native peoples in traditional costume parading past.

Many works could be included in the historiography of consulted sources in the research and development of this exhibition. Unfortunately, none of the park rangers who created the exhibition were still at the park and there did not appear to be any record of



#3 Ethnology

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<sup>396</sup> “Knowledge from Many Sources” (Pecos, NM: Pecos National Historical Park, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

what sources were used. Usually, books for sale in the gift store reflect the park's themes and may have been consulted when researching the exhibition labels and artifact displays. The one scholarly history work in the Pecos gift shop was *What Caused the Pueblo Revolt of 1680?* by David Weber, and published in 1999.<sup>397</sup> However, this study was published fifteen years after the exhibition was constructed.

### Tumacácori National Historical Park

The Tumacácori National Historical Park in Arizona delivered a similar message of Spanish intrusion into Native American environs as that of Pecos. Located forty-five miles south of present-day Tucson and nineteen miles north of the current Mexican border, Tumacácori was one of a series of missions established by the Jesuits and later maintained by Franciscans friars. Jesuit missionary Father Eusebio Francisco Kino came to an O'odham Native American village called Tumacácori in 1691. The first church structure on the site was completed in 1756. That building was not well constructed, and a new one replaced it in 1800. The present church was finished in 1822, although it is not as large as originally conceived.<sup>398</sup> The site was designated a national park in 1908, and the Park Service built walls around the grounds and established a visitor center in 1937.<sup>399</sup> This makes the visitor center and four wax dioramas built into its interior walls more than fifty years old and considered artifacts by the Arizona State Historic

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<sup>397</sup> David Weber, *What Caused the Pueblo Revolt of 1680?* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999).

<sup>398</sup> "San José de Tumacácori" (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April, 2009), museum exhibit label.

<sup>399</sup> Noll, "Mission 66," 182, and *In the Footprints of the Past* brochure, (Tucson, AZ: Western National Parks Association, 1998), 39.

Preservation Office. While this appears as an honor, according to a park ranger, it also meant that the new exhibition had to be rearranged from its original plan to accommodate the information flow around the dioramas. Museums work constantly presents challenges. Now the curators had to consider a modern interpretation of a fifty-year old interpretation. This presented an opportunity for mixed messages and potential confusion to the museum visitor. As discussed later, the curators created labels that were not strong in New Western History language, but provided traditional to neutral language when discussing the content of the dioramas.

Essays useful to New Western Historians, if not actually using those themes, were available to the curators at Tumacácori. They included an article by anthropologists Alfred F. Whiting and A. W. Bork penned in 1953 called “The Tumacácori Census of 1796,” with information about the demographics of the population of that place.<sup>400</sup> In 1965 John Kessell told of the last Franciscan missionary at Tumacácori, Father Ramón Liberós, in “Documents of Arizona History: A Personal Note From Tumacácori, 1825.”<sup>401</sup> A discussion explaining that only a small percentage of the population died at Tumacácori due to Apache raiders can be found in Robert Jackson’s 1983 “Causes of Indian Population Decline in the Pimería Alta Mission of Northern Sonora.”<sup>402</sup> Then, a 1993 article by historian James Officer entitled “Kino and Agriculture in the Pimería Alt”

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<sup>400</sup> Alfred F. Whiting and A. W. Bork, “The Tumacácori Census of 1796,” *Kiva* 19, no. 1 (Fall 1953): 1–12.

<sup>401</sup> John L. Kessell, “Documents of Arizona History: A Personal Note From Tumacácori, 1825,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 6, no. 3 (Autumn 1965): 147–151.

<sup>402</sup> Robert H. Jackson, “Causes of Indian Population Decline in the Pimería Alta Mission of Northern Sonora,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 24, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 407.

revealed how missionaries to Tumacácori taught the Indians to grow new crops, better utilize water supplies, and raise livestock.<sup>403</sup>

Several works reviewed the relationship of the missionaries to the Native Americans. Historian Kieran McCarty acknowledged John Kessell as a companion scholar in 1981, and saw his own work, *A Spanish Frontier in an Enlightened Age*, as a complement to Kessell's *Friars, Soldiers, and Reformers*. Kessell examined the seventy-five years of Franciscan presence in Pimería Alta. McCarty's work "concentrates on an in-depth analysis of the eventful three and half years following Jesuit expulsion." The author related the difficulties the Franciscans had when, with only limited resources, they took over established missions in a vast territory having two distinct languages. They were also facing the aftermath of the recent uprisings against the Jesuit missions.<sup>404</sup> Father Francis J. Weber, in 1968 edited "Arizona Catholicism in 1878: A Report by John Baptiste Salpointe," which addressed Indian revolts and Jesuits at Tumacácori.<sup>405</sup> The Franciscan missions and settlers were an integral part of the Spanish occupation of New Spain's "Old Northwest" in anthropologist Henry Dobyns's "Some Spanish Pioneers in Upper Pimeria," published in 1959.<sup>406</sup> Charles Polzer, a fellow Jesuit, traced the life of

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<sup>403</sup> James E. Officer, "Kino and Agriculture in the Pimería Alta," *The Journal of Arizona History* 34, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 287.

<sup>404</sup> Kieran McCarty, O.F.M., *A Spanish Frontier in an Enlightened Age: Franciscan Beginnings in Sonora and Arizona, 1767–1777* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1981), foreword, 2–3.

<sup>405</sup> Francis J. Weber, ed., "Arizona Catholicism in 1878: A Report by John Baptiste Salpointe," *The Journal of Arizona History* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1968): 130–134.

<sup>406</sup> Henry F. Dobyns, "Some Spanish Pioneers in Upper Pimeria," *Kiva* 25, no. 1 (October 1959): 18–21.

Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, S. J., and his missionary work in northern Mexico, in his 1998 *Kino, A Legacy*. Tumacácori is one of the many missions founded by Kino.<sup>407</sup>

Perhaps the basis for the exhibition at Tumacácori is Nicholas Bleser's *Tumacácori: From Ranchería to National Monument*. This appeared to be a workbook for docents at Tumacácori, or a quick reference work with pictures for guests who want a slightly more in-depth understanding of the history of the site.<sup>408</sup> In 1988, Bleser provides a reading list, which includes John Kessell's *Friars, Soldiers and Reformers* and *Mission of Sorrows*, James Officer's *Hispanic Arizona*, Polzer's book on Kino, and Spicer's *Cycles of Conquest*.<sup>409</sup>

According to the exhibition, Father Kino was credited with introducing wheat, livestock, and fruit trees to the O'odham people.<sup>410</sup> These items forever changed their way of life.<sup>411</sup> While the Spanish did exercise a conquering attitude toward the indigenous people, these new foods also spoke to Limerick's themes of continuity and convergence. The environment for the Native Americans was altered. A page on the Tumacácori Park Service web page spoke to this. It said "Always Changing—Forever the

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<sup>407</sup> Charles W. Polzer, S. J., *Kino, A Legacy: His Life, His Works, His Mission, His Monuments* (Tucson: Jesuit Fathers of Southern Arizona, 1998).

<sup>408</sup> Nicholas Bleser, *Tumacácori: From Ranchería to National Monument* (Tucson: Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1988).

<sup>409</sup> See John L. Kessell, *Mission of Sorrows: Jesuit Guevavi and the Pimas, 1691–1767* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970), and James E. Officer, *Hispanic Arizona, 1536–1856* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987).

<sup>410</sup> Several of the museum labels use the term "Pima" to describe the tribes around Tumacácori. The word "Pima" is an Anglo word for the Akimel O'odham.

<sup>411</sup> The labels imply that the changes were positive. However, modern health studies indicate that the adoption of Western lifestyles has disturbed O'odham genes and accounts for high incidences of diabetes and obesity. See the Pima Indians, Obesity and Diabetes, <http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/DM/pubs/pima/obesity/obesity.htm> (accessed March 24, 2014).

Same. More than just adobe, plaster, and wood, these ruins evoke tales of life and land transformed by cultures meeting and mixing. Father Kino's 1691 landmark visit to an O'odham village when he established Mission Tumacácori was just one event among many. Wave after wave of change has swept or crept across this realm—this land and its people are not static.”<sup>412</sup>

The current exhibition opened in its present form in April 2009. The prior exhibition was in place for approximately forty years, dating from the early 1970s. This new exhibition, according to a conversation with park rangers, will probably be up unchanged for forty to fifty years. The current National Park Service average time for exhibitions to exist unchanged is twenty years.<sup>413</sup>

A fourteen-minute video outside the indoor museum entrance introduced the full site. It is rife with conflicting messages when viewed through a New Western History lens. The video began with a Native American family speaking their native Akimel O'odham language. This was a positive presentation as it demonstrated that these Indians are still extant, still speaking their language, and have not disappeared or been fully assimilated into American society. The ideas of continuity and convergence were present. The senior male member of the family told the story of how his ancestors went to the Black Robes, the Jesuit priests, to ask about the food they grew in the south because those people always appeared to have food available. The video progressed in time to depict a Franciscan friar speaking in both O'odham and Spanish. He discussed the labors he

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<sup>412</sup> “Always Changing – Forever The Same,” <http://www.nps.gov/tuma/index.htm> (accessed September 23, 2013).

<sup>413</sup> Conversations with a park ranger, April 2010, and park historian, September 2010.

endured as his flock never dresses like decent people and lives in poverty regardless of the efforts of the Spanish. The friars hand out corn to O'odham women, showing the church's governance over and generosity toward the natives. The end of the video described the Apache Indian attacks upon the Akimel O'odham people and the missions in the area. These attacks would eventually cause these northern missions to be closed, even after Presidios were established to house soldiers in the area. For all its good intentions and attempts at inclusivity up to the end, the very last statement of the video backslides on a New Western History approach when it stated that the missions brought European civilization, Christianity, and positive change to the people and land of the area. It was not expressing this sentiment from a Native American point of view, but rather presented an Anglo-centric one.<sup>414</sup>

The language used in the exhibition was passive when reflecting the arrival of Europeans and the changes to the local existing cultures. There was no emphasis on conquest as a theme; the visitor had to consciously seek the topic. For instance, at the entrance to the exhibition a label stated, "The arrival of the Spanish brought Catalán, Basque, Gallego, German, Italian, Bohemian, Swiss and other cultures to Tumacácori. Here, in addition to the O'odham, they met Seri, Opata, Maricopa, Yuma, Yaqui, and Apache."<sup>415</sup> Another label indicated, "Cortez marched on Mexico City. The advance northward to present-day Arizona took another two hundred years, bringing profound

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<sup>414</sup> "Tumacácori" (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit video. According to a park ranger in March, 2014, the video was created in 1979, and is scheduled to be replaced in 2013.

<sup>415</sup> "Always Changing – Forever The Same," (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

change to both colonist and native inhabitant.”<sup>416</sup> Other labels discussed European-borne diseases as being destructive to the indigenous population. One described the local effects, stating, “More people died of smallpox in the summer of 1751 than died in the Pima uprising that fall.” Twenty-six deaths by smallpox were recorded.<sup>417</sup> Another section of the label stated, “European diseases, new to America, decimated the indigenous populations. The two main killers in the Pimeria Alta were smallpox and measles.”<sup>418</sup> Still, even presenting this conversation was probably a step forward from earlier exhibitions.

The environment had a key role as the introduction to the exhibition, so the topic could be considered part of the continuity theme as proposed by Limerick. However, the exhibit’s description of the environment’s role does not center on the effect of any changes as much as it described the land and weather in which the Spanish found themselves. Proximity to water and the seasons of the year were described in relation to where human habitation could exist.<sup>419</sup> The Akimel O’odham were an agricultural-based society when the Spanish arrived with their new crops and farming methods so the Indians had an interest in these new food sources. A label indicated that the O’odham “often welcomes new ideas and methods brought by the Spanish and other newcomers.

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<sup>416</sup> “The Encounter” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

<sup>417</sup> “Deadly Epidemics” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid.

<sup>419</sup> “O’odham \* O’otam” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

However, the sometimes extreme differences between the cultures cause intense stresses on the traditional way of life.”<sup>420</sup> What these stresses were, the labels do not communicate at this point.

Three audio buttons allowed the visitor to select Native Americans speaking in their native tongue, English, and Spanish. One was the voice of a woman. Another presented the speaker singing his tale. This presentation represented an inclusion of the indigenous people into the exhibition, which was in line with New Western History thinking.

A following label discussed a select group of Native Americans taking advantage of new opportunities to expand their occupations: “With the arrival of the Spanish, the Yaqui recognized opportunities to work as freighters, cowboys, and miners, and came to this area in large numbers.”<sup>421</sup> While it did not discuss the conditions under which this work was performed, it did give the visitor an idea of the themes of convergence of these various ethnic groups, and touched that of complexity, or how life for those who accepted these career choices was different. The label did not dispel the myth that the life of the cowboy was glamorous, but placed the Indian into that role. An additional label showed a pleasant setting by the church walls with Indians working under the direction of a Spanish friar. The label said workers “plied their trades. In addition to cooks and tortilla makers in the kitchen, there were blacksmiths, leather workers, cloth and basket weavers,

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<sup>420</sup> “O’odahm (Pima) O’otam (Pima)” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

<sup>421</sup> “Yoeme (Yaqui) Yoeme (Yaqui)” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

and carpenters.”<sup>422</sup> Who did these and other trades listed or how the Native Americans learned some of these trades was not clear. However, there was a sense from these scenes, and those shown in the video, that the Spanish were the teachers and management, and the Indians were the labor.

As this site was a Christian mission, religion was an important aspect of this exhibition. Two of the religious scenes. The accompanying diorama strongly worded the concept of softer tack. It read,



*#4 Conversion to Christianity*

Christianity was the

dioramas were label for this could have used language concerning conquest, but took a “Conversion to first step in the

attempt to assimilate native populations into Spanish society.”<sup>423</sup> It did not indicate that conquest was necessary before assimilation could be attempted.

Not all attempts by the Christian missionaries were successful. There was also interaction with the tribes on the part of the Spanish civilian government, not all of which were successful from anyone’s standpoint. A diorama and accompanying labels spoke to this unrest, but left the museum visitor with many questions about this new information. One label was entitled “A New Enemy” and stated, “Over time some members of every tribe became disgruntled with the Spanish and sometimes joined with their former

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<sup>422</sup> “Secular Life” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

<sup>423</sup> “Conversion to Christianity” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

enemies to make war. At these times, native peoples still friendly with the Spanish took much of the brunt of their former allies' anger. Fully one quarter of those killed in the Pima Revolt of 1751 were Yaqui Indians.<sup>424</sup> All four of Limerick's themes could be extracted from this label; ongoing disputes over land and water rights could be described as continuity; convergence was explained in that not only were there various European groups, there are still many Native American groups and they should not always be lumped into one point of view; conquest and the resistance to it through this uprising was well evident; and the idea of complexity could be considered as we realize that not all people within any one group all think and act the same.

As the exhibition continued convergence becomes the prominent theme. Labels discussed the blending of European and Indian music, and images of celebrations with dancing were shown. Religious ideas and icons also converged. Foodstuffs and their names were added to the lexicon of the local people as new crops were introduced. One example was the *tortilla*, which the Spanish named the Indians' flatbread because it looked like their round, flat, yellow omelet. One additional section of the label summarized this meeting of the various cultures as a positive thing, stating, "Much good came from the meeting and mixing of distinct civilizations. Foods, art forms, building techniques, farming methods, and much more were exchanged, incorporated, and improved upon. The dynamic change was the creation of a new 'Mexican' race and culture through the intermarriage of Spanish and indigenous peoples."<sup>425</sup> The evolution

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<sup>424</sup> "A New Enemy" (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

<sup>425</sup> "Exchange and Intermarriage" (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

of the cowboy and his gear, developed by the people in Northern Mexico, handed traditions on to the American cowboy. This evolution has been left out of many of the western movies, helping perpetuate the American cowboy myth.

The exhibition ended on a global note. “World politics played a major role in the eventual departure from Tumacácori,” stated a label. It explained that, among other things, the U.S.-Mexican war contributed to hardships on the “frontier.”<sup>426</sup> New Western Historians have both reason to cheer and bemoan labels like this; they start on a promising note yet use words or ideas that revert to the frontier/traditional style of history.

If a visitor to the Tumacácori exhibition spends time reading the text and comes to the site with some knowledge of New Western History they will find examples of the four themes. However, if, like many of the visitors observed during the research tour, they pass through looking at the pictures and the few artifacts, they may only experience a sense that the Spanish came to convert the Native Americans to both Christianity and a Eurocentric civilization. This visitor will feel that European religious and political life was in conflict, that the Apache were at war with everyone, but that it was overall a positive thing for the native peoples that the Spanish came to the Americas.

This exhibition was in development for approximately ten years, starting approximately in 2000. One ranger indicated that if the park had been able to consult with the National Park Service Harpers Ferry exhibition group sooner the planning time would have been shortened by several years. The lack of necessary funds prohibited some of

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<sup>426</sup> “The Last Departure” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit label.

what they wanted to do, however. The exhibition team consisted of the park interpretive staff, the superintendents, and a resource manager who joined the group toward the end of the development stage. Consultations with the state historic preservation officer toward the end of the development stage brought untimely structural changes to the presentation. Conversations with local tribes also caused some artifacts to be removed or rearranged in the manner of their display. The staff historian had consulted some original Spanish documents, which would have been done well after New Western History themes were publicized. However, the historical interpretation was from a Spanish colonial point of view, according to at least one park ranger. The tribal consultants indicated that not all Native Americans were willing participants in the mission system and saw some of the text as perpetuating this myth. The team planned for a guidebook to expand upon the exhibition, but as of November 2014 the staff had not yet produced it.

One scholarly work referred specifically to Tumacácori. Thomas Sheridan, professor of anthropology at the Southwest Center and University of Arizona, published *Landscapes of Fraud* in 2006. Sheridan thanked the staff of Tumacácori National Park, including historian Dan Garate, who provided access to documents, photos, and their personal knowledge of the site.<sup>427</sup> Sheridan examined the changes in the Upper Santa Cruz River Valley of southern Arizona from ancient times up to early 2005. He told the story of creation from the Akimel O'odham point of view, and depicts how the local

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<sup>427</sup> Thomas E. Sheridan, *Landscapes of Fraud: Mission Tumacácori, the Baca Float, and the Betrayal of the O'odham* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), acknowledgements page.

O'odham people were displaced from their ancestral homelands, sometimes by physical conquest, sometimes by legal action.<sup>428</sup>

Sheridan was much harsher in his language of the Spanish treatment of the Indians than the labels in the exhibition at the site. He related the story of “a theocratic vision of communal order imposed upon the O’odham Indians,” and explained how the Spanish frontier in the valley was confronted by the Apaches, “making the colonial enterprise a tenuous affair, and series of advances and retreats, expansions and contractions.”<sup>429</sup> He discussed how “the O’odham world of autonomous communities moving across the landscape in seasonal rounds was reduced to a mission world of subordination and circumscription. O’odham hunting and gathering were discouraged. O’odham ritual space was suppressed.”<sup>430</sup> Sheridan continued his criticisms of non-Indian control of the territory, writing, “As this book makes clear, the social space was stolen from the O’odham by a Mexican *caudillo* (military strongman) in 1844. Then it was sold to an Anglo speculator, negated by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1898, and swallowed up by a fraudulent land grant known as Baca Float No. 3, which the Supreme Court confirmed, despite opposition from the Department of the Interior, in 1914.”<sup>431</sup> Terms such as “subordination and circumscription,” “stolen,” and “swallowed up” were not found among the more placid label language of the National Park Service exhibition.

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<sup>428</sup> Sheridan, *Landscapes*, 6.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 10.

Sheridan mirrored some of the concepts in a few of the exhibits. He wrote of the influence of new European crops and livestock that changed the Native American way of life. He said, “Old World crops and livestock loosened those limits [imposed by the seasonality of desert rains and the plants and animals that depended on them], enabling the O’odham to farm more intensively and to turn more wild plants into food and fiber. The introduction of Old World livestock was the most dramatic transformation of the landscape.”<sup>432</sup> Animals brought to America for consumption also provided for better health and a longer life. Sheridan stated, “For people whose animal protein came from rabbits, rodents, and an occasional deer or bighorn sheep, cattle, goats, and sheep must have offered an incredible bounty.” Additionally, “Another ecological revolution had just been launched. Because it tolerated frosts, wheat, *pilkañ* in O’odham, filled a largely empty niche in the agricultural cycle, growing during the winter months when corn, beans, and squash would have withered.”<sup>433</sup> However, “Old World foods did not obliterate New World fare.”<sup>434</sup> Many traditions continued in the Indian lives, especially when Old World ways did not work in the New World desert. Still, the new food items played a major role in changing the lives of Native American, just not in the way the Spanish priests wanted. Sheridan commented, “Like Old World livestock, wheat affected many O’odham more profoundly than Catholic rituals and beliefs.”<sup>435</sup> Adequate food was more essential than changing religion.

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<sup>432</sup> Sheridan, *Landscapes*, 38.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 40.

Sheridan discussed in detail that the Spanish rule in the area was at first guided more by religious groups than civilian or military authority. He wrote, “The O’odham of the Upper Santa Cruz would not be free of at least one resident missionary for the next century,” from 1732 to 1832.<sup>436</sup> Note the language Sheridan used versus the Euro-centric approach of the exhibition labels. There appeared to be some disdain for the European religious groups at Tumacácori on Sheridan’s part if he described their time among the O’odham as one of captivity. Although more temperate in tone, exhibit labels did discuss the less pleasant aspects of religious presence at the mission. One label discussed how the Franciscans replaced the prior Jesuit churches. Finding them small, poorly built structures, the newly installed Catholic leaders had grand plans. The label stated, “At Tumacácori, between twenty and forty families struggled in the severe desert climate to build a new church under labor, material, and money shortages, and Apache attacks.”<sup>437</sup> An additional label addresses problems of a different nature. It stated, “Father Estelric was transferred from Tumacácori due to a liaison with a mission Indian woman.”<sup>438</sup> The labels in this exhibition did present a New Western History approach of telling various parts of the story of the O’odham and European interaction. However, they did not do it in as strong a manner as the scholarly work that covers much of the same material.

As another example, Sheridan provided much greater detail on and the meaning of the 1751 uprising than the labels discussed above. Sheridan posited that the Akimel

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<sup>436</sup> Sheridan, *Landscapes*, 43.

<sup>437</sup> “Building a New Church” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit labels.

<sup>438</sup> “Funding” (Tumacácori, AZ: Tumacácori National Historical Park, April 2009), museum exhibit labels.

O'odham people were always trying to maintain their place as free and independent. Sheridan stated that there were several rebellions, but “These initial actions appeared to be more a spasm of resistance than coordinated rebellion.”<sup>439</sup> However, in 1750, an O'odham war leader, Luis Oacpicagigua of Sáric, was asked by the territorial governor to help conquer a rival tribe that would not abide by Spanish ways. Oacpicagigua did not think the Spanish military strong or well disciplined. Then, in early 1751, an “irascible and alcoholic Ignaz Keller publically humiliated the O'odham leader.” Keller was a Jesuit priest assigned to the area. This action started Oacpicagigua thinking that he should betray the Spanish and perhaps force them from the O'odham lands.<sup>440</sup> In November 1751, Oacpicagigua, using the pretext of an Apache attack, panicked the local Spanish and their servants into taking refuge in his house. He and his men then set fire to it and clubbed anyone trying to escape. Other communities experienced similar assaults the next day. Spanish families and those O'odham who did not join the rebellion sought protection in local presidios and in the mountains.<sup>441</sup> The exhibition text explained none of these reasons for the revolt of 1751.

Sheridan concluded the section of his book concerning the time period depicted in the national park exhibition on a defiant note on the part of the O'odham people, while acknowledging the significance of European intervention. He proposed, “their [the O'odham] philosophical principles and religious beliefs remained largely O'odham, not Roman Catholic. The missionaries won their bellies but not their souls.” Additionally,

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<sup>439</sup> Sheridan, *Landscapes*, 30.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid., 46–47.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., 49.

Sheridan concluded, “In all probability, then, the O’odham took what they wanted from their new church just as they did from the missionaries themselves.”<sup>442</sup> Combining the scholarly work with the visual presentation of the Tumacácori exhibition provided a broader interpretation of the time and place of the coming of the Spanish and founding of the mission. Museum labels and scholarly texts enhanced each other, expanding some parts and providing aspects that the other ignored. However, more people probably visit the exhibition than read the scholarly work.

#### Fort Union National Monument

Fort Union is located ninety-four miles north of Santa Fe, near Watrous, New Mexico. The site was made a national monument in 1956.<sup>443</sup> The permanent exhibit in the visitor center opened in 1959.<sup>444</sup> It remained unchanged in both content and style for the fifty-year period between its creation and the visit to the site for this review. One park historian indicated that when the exhibition was created, “because of the worldview about military history, we would not take on the controversial issues. So Fort Union in that period where we are doing all the Civil War exhibits where you did not talk about slavery or the big issues. We just talked about the battles, and the little things about your fort. You did not talk about the Indian wars. You did not talk about the Navajo long walk.”<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Sheridan, *Landscapes*, 73, 80.

<sup>443</sup> Noll, “Mission 66,” 180.

<sup>444</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, Fort Union National Monument, September 2010.

<sup>445</sup> Conversation with a Park Service historian, September 2010.

Therefore, the visitor might not anticipate seeing any New Western History themes displayed in this exhibition.

In the 1950s, discussion of New Western History concepts were still many years off, so the historiographical works available would not have spoken to these themes. The resources available and accessible at the time included the Fort Union collection in the Special Collections at the (Las Vegas) New Mexico Highlands University Library Archives. This collection, compiled by James W. Arrott, consists of “correspondence to and from the commanding officers of the fort, reports, and medical and military documents.” This collection is the main source of information concerning the years the fort was occupied, 1851–1890. The collection also includes a few articles and newspaper stories collected up through 1961.<sup>446</sup>

In 1934, A. B. Bender contributed two articles about the defensive infrastructure created in New Mexico from 1846 through 1861. He explained that Fort Union was established to protect the American frontier and Santa Fe Trail from Apache and Utah Indian attacks, although Fort Union apparently was not a site of much military activity during this period.<sup>447</sup> Genevieve La Tourrette and Elma Spencer each wrote stories of their personal and family histories concerning Fort Union. La Tourrette, the daughter of the chaplain stationed at the fort, recounted the social life of the post from 1877 through

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<sup>446</sup> See <http://www.nmhu.edu/library-and-venues/highlands-university-libraries/reference-information-services/special-collections-university-archives/> (accessed February 1, 2014).

<sup>447</sup> A. B. Bender, “Frontier Defense in the Territory of New Mexico, 1846–1853,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 9, no. 3 (July 1934): 265, and continued in A. B. Bender, “Frontier Defense in the Territory of New Mexico, 1853–1861,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 9, no. 4 (October 1934): 345–373.

1890 in “Fort Union Memories,” published in 1951.<sup>448</sup> Spencer offered “Famous Fugitives of Fort Union,” an article written in 1957, discussing the fate of three Southerners taken prisoner and held at Fort Union during the Civil War. The author was a relative of one of these prisoners and speculated on the degree of celebrity of the prisoners and the events leading up to their release, but she does address attitudes of civilian safety during wartime.<sup>449</sup>

Many articles that discussed the history of forts in New Mexico only give Fort Union a passing reference. Not so *Fort Union (New Mexico)* and *Apache Prisoners*. Taken in part from original sources such as diaries, newspapers, and Army records, *Fort Union (New Mexico)* was not footnoted and was written in 1953 with a general public in mind. F. Stanley writes of the fort, “It was so well garrisoned that Comanches, Utes and Jicarillas feared to attack it. Here was the supply depot that fed all the forts of New Mexico and Southern Colorado. Confederates depended on Fort Union for the life line of the Confederacy in the Southwest—if they could capture it. Trader and traveler looked to the fort for protection as they crossed the plains and the history of the number of roads the soldiers built in order to make travel more pleasant in those frontier days has never been written.”<sup>450</sup> The author wrote in an Anglo-centric and romantic style:

Fort Union. The life line of all the other forts strung throughout the length and breadth of Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona; the goal of every caravan going westwards across the plains; the fear of the Utes and Apaches. Fort Union, like the night, was possessed of a thousand eyes.

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<sup>448</sup> Genevieve La Tourrette, “Fort Union Memories,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 26, no. 4 (October 1951): 277–287.

<sup>449</sup> Elma Dill Russell Spencer, “Famous Fugitives of Fort Union,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 32, no. 1 (January 1957): 1–9.

<sup>450</sup> F. Stanley, *Fort Union (New Mexico)* (Privately printed, 1953), vii.

And it was a listening post. The sound of every depredation committed by Indians within hundreds of miles of the fort was heard by the ever alert soldiers. It was the cedar of Lebanon standing out against the fury of the elements, the bows and arrows, iron and lead of enemies, the sweeping wind of sedition.<sup>451</sup>

*Apache Prisoners*, from an earlier period and by an author who experienced interaction with Native Americans rather than romanticizing about them, is a transcription of “Observations on Apache Indians from the San Carlos Indian Reservation in Arizona held at Fort Union, New Mexico, in 1890. The Apache had been transferred to Fort Union to prevent their giving aid to a band of renegade Apache led by the Apache Kid.”<sup>452</sup> In 1890, Lt. John Glass described the Apaches, both men and women, in some detail. He appeared to care about the people in his custody, but he called them “savages,” and paternalistically stated, “When one of them wishes to be grave and wishes to have a pow-wow with a ‘big chief’ he can be as dignified as a chief justice and can talk with much real eloquence. Even the women can do this.”<sup>453</sup> Glass discussed how the women were treated and what their roles were, noting that some of the women were rulers of large groups. Glass further elaborated on the predominate Anglo view at the time—the two-sided nature of Indians—stating, “A casual observer, seeing these Indians living quietly and happily and seeing the best side of their character would very likely imagine it would be an easy task to civilize the Apaches. A more intimate acquaintance with them would show him that they are untamable savages who have a supreme contempt for the

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<sup>451</sup> Stanley, *Fort Union*, xi–xii.

<sup>452</sup> *Apache Prisoners*, manuscript attributed to Lt. John N. Glass, G Troop, 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (August 1890), 1.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

white man and his ways.”<sup>454</sup> Glass appears to be a careful observer, and one wonders how he would have described his own troop.

The first fort on the site was erected in 1851, and by the 1860s was the largest U.S. military base in the Southwest. Over time, as one base was considered inadequate to the weather or needs of the soldiers, three forts were built in the immediate area, the last of which was occupied until 1891. The forts were established to protect travelers on the Santa Fe Trail and the local white inhabitants from Indian attacks. With the coming of the Civil War, the fort served as the headquarters of the Ninth Military Department. Its troops, along with volunteers from Colorado and New Mexico, thwarted a Confederate invasion at Glorieta Pass (today part of the Pecos National Historical Park). Throughout the fort’s history soldiers conducted many campaigns designed to pacify Native American tribes. Operations were conducted against Apaches, Utes, Kiowas, Comanches, Navajos, Cheyennes, and Arapahos. The park brochure stated the actions “finally brought peace to the southern Plains in the spring of 1875, albeit on the white man’s terms.”<sup>455</sup> This last phrase indicated a sensitivity to the stories the Native American tribes might tell that could be vastly different from those of the Anglos. It hinted at a New Western History interpretation. The brochure was much more modern than the exhibition and provided an opportunity to express more current thinking than what may be found on the labels.

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<sup>454</sup> *Apache Prisoners*, 5–8.

<sup>455</sup> *Fort Union* (Fort Union, NM: Fort Union National Monument 2009), brochure.

A kiosk outside the front door to the visitor center noted the legendary people of Fort Union. It included brief biographies of three Anglo men and one Anglo woman. Given primary place was the notable name of Christopher “Kit” Carson. This played to traditional historic sentiments. The display also showed Henry Hopkins Sibley, a Union soldier who became a Confederate general, allowing visitors from southern states to feel a potential connection to this obviously northern fort. While no other ethnic groups were represented, the presentation of a woman who lived at the fort and traveled the Santa Fe Trail, Marian Sloan Russell, was an expansion beyond the more traditional all white-male exhibits.<sup>456</sup>

Inside the visitor center, the exhibition occupied a small space and displayed artifacts of military gear. The labels described some of the battles in which the troops saw action. In a display of canon, one label told of an engagement between Colonel Carson and Native Americans: “Two howitzers held off swarms of Comanche, Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache at the battle of First Adobe Walls, November 1864, enabling Colonel Kit Carson’s First New Mexico Volunteers to retreat with light losses.”<sup>457</sup> The expression “swarms” of Indians connoted a sense of overwhelming danger and unpleasant activity. There was no further explanation about the encounter, which might lead the visitor to think the Native Americans could have operated in a coordinated attack, just like the Anglo soldiers would have done. Sometimes one word is all it takes to create an image, either pro or con, of New Western History themes.

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<sup>456</sup> “Legends of Fort Union” (Fort Union, NM: Fort Union National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>457</sup> Untitled (Fort Union, NM: Fort Union National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

One display case was titled “The Indian Wars” in very large letters. This explained the Anglo perspective only, so the idea of conquest was evident, but convergence was lacking in this exhibit. However, in a separate area where arrows were displayed, a label reported, “For a quarter of a century, Fort Union soldiers took part in the Indian Wars against Ute, Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche, and Jicarilla Apache, who fought desperately to maintain their way of life. With minimum equipment the Indian secured maximum effectiveness in battle. Bow and arrow, lance and shield, and, after the arrival of white men, firearms made up his equipment.”<sup>458</sup> This label, then, presented a subtle message of convergence and conquest—from the Native American point of view. This label was not given the prominence of the “Indian Wars” display, however. Accompanying this exhibit was another mixed message label. It read, “In 1863–1864, troops from Fort Union took part in subduing and resettling the Navajos. More than 7,000 were removed from their homeland and marched across New Mexico.”<sup>459</sup> To be “subdued” implies wrong-doing, but the next sentence allowed that the first settlers, the native peoples, were “removed from their homeland.” It is difficult to see a bold attempt to be inclusive of the stories of both Anglo and native groups, but the 1950s curators were not completely one-sided in their interpretation.

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<sup>458</sup> Untitled (Fort Union, NM: Fort Union National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>459</sup> Untitled (Fort Union, NM: Fort Union National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

Also included were small exhibits about the Civil War and the Santa Fe Trail. The Civil War labels discussed the action at Glorieta Pass and the officers associated with the fort who served for both the Confederate and Union sides. The Santa Fe Trail exhibit provided information about the caravans of freight wagons and the time it took to traverse the harsh landscape. One sign outside on the trail depicted enlisted men's families. It explained that while rank was important, the dangers of frontier life brought all groups together. It depicted Anglo women, and an Anglo woman in well-to-do attire on horseback conversing with, and perhaps providing a small box of goods to, a Mexican woman and child. There appeared to be superior



relationship of the Anglo to the non-Anglo people.<sup>460</sup> #5 *Married Enlisted Men's Quarters*

Considering this exhibit was installed in 1959, it demonstrated an understanding that there were various interpretations available to the history of this site. It spoke of complexity, one of the New Western History themes in that it showed, although in a restrained manner, that the Indians who encountered the white men had their own agenda, often just to maintain their ways of life. However, the exhibition fell short of being truly inclusive or of discussing multiple themes of the New Western History. A park ranger explained that "the exhibits that we have here were state of the art of their time and they are actually quite good exhibits, but they are not telling all of the stories that are available

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<sup>460</sup> "Married Enlisted Men's Quarters" (Fort Union, NM: Fort Union National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

that we can collect now, and that the public might be interested in hearing.”<sup>461</sup> This statement was an indication that a new exhibition was being planned, and might contain New Western History themes.

However, as of 2014, that new exhibit has yet to be installed. Public History professionals and students were engaged to create the text for the new exhibition prior to 2013. Unfortunately, the Park Service has yet to change the exhibits and may not do so until 2013 or 2018, citing budgetary concerns.<sup>462</sup> There was some concern on the part of the exhibit designers that the text created was not acceptable to the Park Service as it was too multi-cultural in its interpretation and would not be pleasing to its mostly Euro-centric visitor base.<sup>463</sup> The park managers at Fort Union may be following the example of those at Tumacácori who created a mostly traditional view of events relevant to their sites. Built to protect Anglos on the Santa Fe Trail, Fort Union has a more European-based story to tell than Tumacácori or Pecos. However, there were other actors in the events that transpired in the Fort Union area and displaying a multi-cultural interpretation of these occurrences would provide visitors with less of a movie-legend presentation and a broader, more current historiographical current orientation.

Interestingly, there were many scholarly works offered in the museum store that were recent publications. While they would not have been available as research opportunities when the exhibition was first created they should be consulted by the current staff for ideas about relevant, and New Western History related, topics to use in a

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<sup>461</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, Fort Union, New Mexico, February 2011.

<sup>462</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, Fort Union, New Mexico, May 2014.

<sup>463</sup> Conversation with exhibition designer, January 2014, and a museum professional, June 2014.

new exhibition. Several of the works could be found at both the Tumacácori and Pecos parks. Others addressed the Civil War, Native American tribes of the Southwest, and Spanish influence in the Southwest.

### Pipe Spring National Monument

Pipe Spring was a source of water in the northern Arizona prairie, called the Arizona Strip. It is located fourteen miles southwest of Fredonia, Arizona, closer to the Utah border than to the north rim of the Grand Canyon. Pipe Spring is similar to Fort Union in that it was a stronghold and sanctuary. The buildings there today were built so members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, could raise cattle for the temple construction workers in Utah. A strong outpost was needed to protect the settlers from Paiute and Navajo raids. It was also a hiding place for church members who practiced polygamy.<sup>464</sup>

In *Mormon Settlement in Arizona* James McClintock in 1921 told how Ammon M. Tenney named Pipe Springs when William Hamblin “shot the bowl out of the bottom of a tobacco pipe.”<sup>465</sup> An expanded story of Tenney and his time among the Indians of the Arizona Strip was presented by library assistant Winn Smiley in the 1972 article “Ammon M. Tenney: Mormon Missionary to the Indians.”<sup>466</sup> In “Pipe Springs, Arizona and Thereabouts,” historian Robert Olson, Jr. hoped his 1965 “brief sketch and the

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<sup>464</sup> *Pipe Spring* (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, 2008), brochure.

<sup>465</sup> James W. McClintock, *Mormon Settlement in Arizona* (Phoenix, AZ: Manufacturing Engravers, Inc. 1921), 98.

<sup>466</sup> Winn Whiting Smiley, “Ammon M. Tenney: Mormon Missionary to the Indians,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1972), 82–108.

accompanying illustrations will illuminate some of the outstanding events which contributed to the white conquest of the Utah-Arizona borderlands.”<sup>467</sup> This article reflected much of the information that can be found today in the National Park Service brochure. Two authors discussed the necessity of Pipe Springs fort: Robert Olsen, Jr. wrote “Winsor Castle: Mormon Fort at Pipe Springs” in 1966, Michael Belshaw provided “High, Dry and Lonesome: The Arizona Strip and Its People” in 1978.<sup>468</sup> All of these works contribute a traditional interpretation to the events surrounding Pipe Spring.

Gregory Crampton of the University of Utah produced a book on the Mormon settlement in the Arizona Strip area. The National Park Service contracted this work to “show that settlement in this one area was a part of the large story of Mormon expansion in the West.” In this scholarly work published in 1965 Crampton discussed the first use of the term “Pipe Spring,” explorations in the area, and referred to the site twelve more times. Crampton related the history of the area from the perspective of the Mormon settlers, and while he discussed many Mormon interactions with Native Americans, he expressed little of the Indian point of view.<sup>469</sup>

*The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-Day Saints* was written by the Church Historian of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Leonard Arrington, with Davis Bitton, who used the Latter-day Saints archives to provide this one-volume

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<sup>467</sup> Robert W. Olson, Jr., “Pipe Springs, Arizona and Thereabouts,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1965): 11.

<sup>468</sup> Robert W. Olsen, Jr., “Winsor Castle: Mormon Fort at Pipe Springs,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (June 1966): 218–226, and Michael Belshaw, “High, Dry and Lonesome: The Arizona Strip and Its People,” *The Journal of Arizona History* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1978): 359–378.

<sup>469</sup> C. Gregory Crampton, *Mormon Colonization in Southern Utah and in Adjacent Parts of Arizona and Nevada, 1851–1900*, (Privately printed, 1965), iii, 94–96.

history in 1979. Mormons considered Indians to be one of the three chosen people of God, but who had lost their way in the wild lands of the Americas. They were therefore brothers who, with the right education and cultural training, could be brought back into the fold. According to Arrington and Bitton, the Mormons followed four practices toward the Native Americans: settle in a fort-like structure to help Indians resist the temptation of taking goods that did not belong to them; learn the language of the Native Americans and designate people to deal with the local tribes; contribute to a community storehouse, or tithing station, from which goods could be distributed to the Indians and others in need; and the Mormon women made clothing and bedding for the Native American women and children.<sup>470</sup> These practices were described in the Pipe Spring exhibition.

Several other works did not mention Pipe Spring directly, but deal with the area, the inhabitants, attitudes, and the use of local resources. These books addressed New Western History themes, especially continuity, convergence, and complexity. In 1985, Leonard Arrington produced a life of Brigham Young, who directed that Pipe Spring be erected as a fortified settlement for Mormon use. Arrington provided a comprehensive background into the workings of the Church and the attitudes of its early leaders.<sup>471</sup> Anthropologists Pamela Ann Bunte and Robert J. Franklin discussed the “continuities in cultural tradition and social and political process” among the San Juan Paiutes in northern Arizona, east of Pipe Spring. Their 1987 book provided researchers with a background of the local community during the period of interaction between the Kaibab-Paiutes and

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<sup>470</sup> Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-Day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 149.

<sup>471</sup> Leonard Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985).

Mormon settlers at Pipe Spring.<sup>472</sup> While not dealing directly with Pipe Spring, *Sisters in Spirit*, a scholarly work, examined the role of women in Mormon society, beginning when the church was established. The essays in this 1987 book explored such topics as women as the heads of the households when the men were away, how Mormon women defied “the conventions of Victorian America by marrying into ‘plurality,’ and the struggle for independence and suffrage.”<sup>473</sup> This work provided a background for the lifestyles experienced by the women in Pipe Spring, who were there because of the anti-polygamy movement in Utah.

Finally, in his 1992 work, anthropologist Ronald Holt discussed the use of water and horticulture among the Utah Paiute Indians. The author did not view the Mormon Church favorably, citing many examples of paternalism toward the Paiutes, writing, “After the Anglo-Mormon occupation of their country, the Paiutes were isolated in small, ‘shantytown’ enclaves adjacent to the Anglo settlements and were forced to define themselves through their dependent relationship to the Mormon Church. By means of military superiority, the Mormons controlled the Paiutes by controlling access to their traditional means of production: food resources and water for irrigation.”<sup>474</sup> The Pipe Spring exhibition is constructed in this same fashion.

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<sup>472</sup> Pamela Ann Bunte, and Robert J. Franklin, *From the Sands to the Mountain: Change and Persistence in a Southern Paiute Community* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987).

<sup>473</sup> Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds., *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), viii.

<sup>474</sup> Ronald L. Holt, *Beneath These Red Cliffs: An Ethnohistory of the Utah Paiutes* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), xv.

As a source of water, the area around Pipe Spring was peopled from ancient times up to 1923 when the private ranch, surrounded by the Kaibab-Paiute Reservation, became a national monument. The monument brochure addressed the New Western History theme of continuity in the form of water rights. It mentioned that for 12,000 years the spring sustained people moving through the area. Members of the Southern Paiute tribe still live in the area, and they interacted with both missionaries in the 1700s and the Mormons in the 1800s. The brochure stated, “Each of these cultures affected how the others adapted to this hard and demanding place in the high desert.” The brochure also declared that the local tribes were well adapted to the environment until “the arrival of Europeans in the late 1700s, after which introduced diseases and Navajo and Ute slaving raids reduced their numbers.” These statements spoke to both convergence and the complexity of humanity, showing that although unfamiliar European diseases killed many of the natives, there was also conflict among the tribes, as there had been historically.<sup>475</sup>

The Mormons arrived in the area in the 1850s. They were looking for land on which to raise cattle, sheep, and crops to feed the congregations in Utah. The monument brochure continued in its theme of including multiple interpretations, stating, “Mormons soon controlled most of the area’s water, further stressing Paiute tribes.” It claimed that Mormon militiamen built a stone cabin in 1868 to help stop Navajo raiding parties after “several revenge killings between Mormons and Indians.”<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>475</sup> *Pipe Spring* (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, 2008), brochure.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

The buildings that stand today, and cover the source of the spring, were constructed in 1870 under the direction of Brigham Young as part of a tithing ranch, where ten percent of the output would go to the workers constructing religious and civic buildings in Saint George, Utah. Although successful for a time, drought and overgrazing damaged the range. The continuity New Western History theme would consider the lack of water in the area a contributing factor to the use of the land today. The brochure also recounted how in “the 1880s and 1890s the remote fort at Pipe Spring became a refuge for wives hiding from federal marshals enforcing anti-polygamy laws.” Facing declining grazing and the potential confiscation of church property by United States officials in reaction to their religious beliefs, the Mormon Church sold Pipe Spring in 1895. The ranch continued to run cattle and served as a traveler’s way-station under private ownership. The brochure continued in a New Western History manner of disclosure, stating, “During this period the Kaibab band of Paiutes struggled to survive as Mormon settlements displaced them from their traditional hunting, farming, and gathering lands,” and “Conflicts over water rights and land use issues developed during this period and persisted for many years.”<sup>477</sup> The brochure was a refreshing read of modern historiography.

The visitor center sign at the site also said “museum.” It was the only park visited to use this term. According to a park ranger, the current exhibition in the visitor center was opened in 2003. The visitor center was built with funds from the Kaibab tribe around 1999. This new building created a larger space for a museum than existed previously. The

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<sup>477</sup> *Pipe Spring* (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, 2008), brochure.

Park Service and tribal representatives were able to develop an exhibition that was more than an introduction to the site. It was planned to tell the Kaibab people's story and introduce the pioneers to visitors. The inside, long-term exhibition had a greater emphasis on the Native American history than outside exhibits—the buildings built by Mormons, with guides who tell that aspect of the site's history.<sup>478</sup> The visitor center is located on tribal land, the reservation, so it is not in the national monument boundaries. This allows for a joint operation between the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians and the National Park Service, along with the creative purchasing of unusual tribal items for sale by the cooperating Zion National History Association.<sup>479</sup>

The introductory video was installed in 2010. It replaced a short introduction “and that the mention of the Indians was they were here and then they vanished kind of.”<sup>480</sup> The original video was a brief Anglo pioneer-centered orientation. The new video, approximately twenty-five minutes long, “is much more delving into why this place is important to different people, and not so much what you can see and do while you are here.”<sup>481</sup> A Mormon Church historian named John Peterson was instrumental in developing the new film. He was one of the speakers on the film and was given credit for his work. (Peterson wrote a history of Utah’s Black Hawk War, a several-year conflict between Mormons and Native Americans in the late 1860s.<sup>482</sup>) Tribal members also

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<sup>478</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, Pipe Spring, Arizona, September 2010.

<sup>479</sup> “Welcome” (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, 2008), Visitor Center sign.

<sup>480</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, Pipe Spring, Arizona, September 2010.

<sup>481</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, Pipe Spring, Arizona, September 2010.

<sup>482</sup> John Peterson is also writing the administrative history of the site, so his available research material for Pipe Springs is extensive.

contributed to the development of the film and the exhibition. It is anticipated here, just as in the other national parks, that the new exhibitions will be up for several decades. In this case, since there was direct tribal involvement, the exhibits concerning the Paiutes will be reviewed approximately every ten years to reflect current thinking among the tribal members.<sup>483</sup>

Unlike usual museum practice, the film was not the first thing available for viewing. The layout of the building put the video toward the back of the exhibition. Before getting to the film, visitors saw the display. First they encountered an etched piece of glass with a tribal member's quote positioned above that of a quote from Brigham Young. Indians and Mormons varied in their interpretation of the use of the land. The Kaibab viewed the land as a place for all things, humans, plants, animals, and rocks to share, each with its own purpose. Brigham Young espoused the use of the land to further the growth of the children, and the vast wasted land must be used to increase the multitudes.<sup>484</sup> This label opened the access to the museum through an area dedicated to the Kaibab Paiute.

The New Western History themes took on a not often seen aspect in this exhibition. While the concept of convergence was used in this Native American section, it was presented as the story of the tribe interacting with other tribes as much as with Europeans. One label read in part, "Contact with the Navajo and Ute, however, was stressful. These larger tribes acquired horses and modern weapons (swords and guns)

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<sup>483</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, Pipe Spring, Arizona, September 2010.

<sup>484</sup> Untitled introduction (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

early, and aggressively expanded their ranges. The Navajo and Ute tribes also participated in the Spanish slave trade, often acting as ‘middle men,’ stealing or trading with the Paiutes for their children. These children were then traded or sold to the Spanish in New Mexico and California, where they were used as slave labor for mining or domestic work.”<sup>485</sup> Not all history was the story of European interaction, although the Spanish in this case are the ultimate slavers.

A large label discussed tribal contacts with other groups. It identified three areas of interest: Spanish, Mormons, and indentured servitude. In the Spanish contact section, first the label explained indirect contact through trade, which was positive. The negative contact was that of disease, which reduced native populations by eighty percent. This was followed by the slave trade, which brought the Paiutes far from their beloved homes. The Mormon section told of a different approach to the Native Americans. The label stated that there was often conflict, “But because of their religion, Mormons generally opposed the customary frontier theory that ‘the only good Indian is a dead Indian.’” However, the goal was to transform the “loathsome people” to the knowledge of Jesus Christ so ‘many generations shall not pass . . . save they shall be a white and a delightful people.’” The indentured servitude section expanded on the conundrum in which the Mormons found themselves. Although they did not condone the slave trade, they found the only way to stop it was to buy the Indian children from their captors. They did not set these children free, however. They justified this practice as indentured servitude and set about to

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<sup>485</sup> “Tribal Interaction” (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

educate and assimilate the tribal members.<sup>486</sup> The visitor could see the strong Kaibab influence in these labels.

A label in the exhibition section concerning the Mormon occupation of the site included a discussion about the role of women. The label explained that their day was one of constant and hard work. Women did the laundry, cooked, and cleaned not only for their family but for the ranch hands as well. The women made large quantities of butter and cheese every day, and they ran the telegraph. Also, the women were expected to drop everything and see to the needs of unexpected travelers.<sup>487</sup> This label was indicative of the inclusive, convergent aspect of the New Western History. However, an associated label that discussed the family and each member's role within it said "A large part of the Mormon's mother's role was childbearing and child rearing."<sup>488</sup> While this was undoubtedly true, it reflected the more traditional role of women in society.

One label addressed the differences between the Paiutes and Mormons. It stated, "But the cultural gap between Mormon and Indian was huge. Values, concepts of land use and ownership, and religion, were drastically different. Indians didn't understand why Mormons could hunt deer, but Indians couldn't hunt cattle. Mormons didn't understand how their permanent settlements, using the best water and land, were changing Indian life ways." This was a label showing the concept of convergence, the meeting of various

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<sup>486</sup> "Outside Contact" (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>487</sup> "... But Women's Work Was Never Done," (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>488</sup> "Families Are Forever" (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

groups in the West. The idea of conquest by Anglos over Native Americans was continued. It discussed the Mormon militia's retaliation for raids on the settlement. It described a senseless killing and the reaction to it by another Mormon. It read, "The next day another old Kaibab man was killed. One militia member volunteered to do the deed—'*Damned if I wouldn't like to kill an Indian before I go*' and made haste to '*blow his brains out*.' Others unsuccessfully protested the killings—'*I was never so ashamed of anything in my life—the whole thing was so unnecessary*,' stated Edwin D. Wooley, Jr."<sup>489</sup> Wooley was the ranch manager in the middle to late 1880s. In this account we saw the theme of complexity. The Mormon settlers professed a belief that the Indians could be equals if given the same education and life experience the Mormons had, but took umbrage when cattle were stolen and lives disrupted. Therefore, force was exercised, but murder of Indians was going too far for some.

An outdoor label overlooking the prairie around the settlement contributed to the theme of continuity. The label explained that when the weather changed and new animals were introduced to the area to graze the lush land, whole ecosystems were altered. The sign read,

High-desert grasses once covered the range before you, as far as the eye could see. For centuries Paiute people made the tiny seeds of those native grasses a staple of their diet. Even the animals hunted by the Kaibab Paiute, like grouse, rabbits, or antelope, lived on the nutrient-rich grass.

Then in the 1860s thousands of sheep and cattle were put on the range to take advantage of this sea of grass. Without warning, a 10-year period of cooler moist weather ended. Scarce rain and snow, combined with

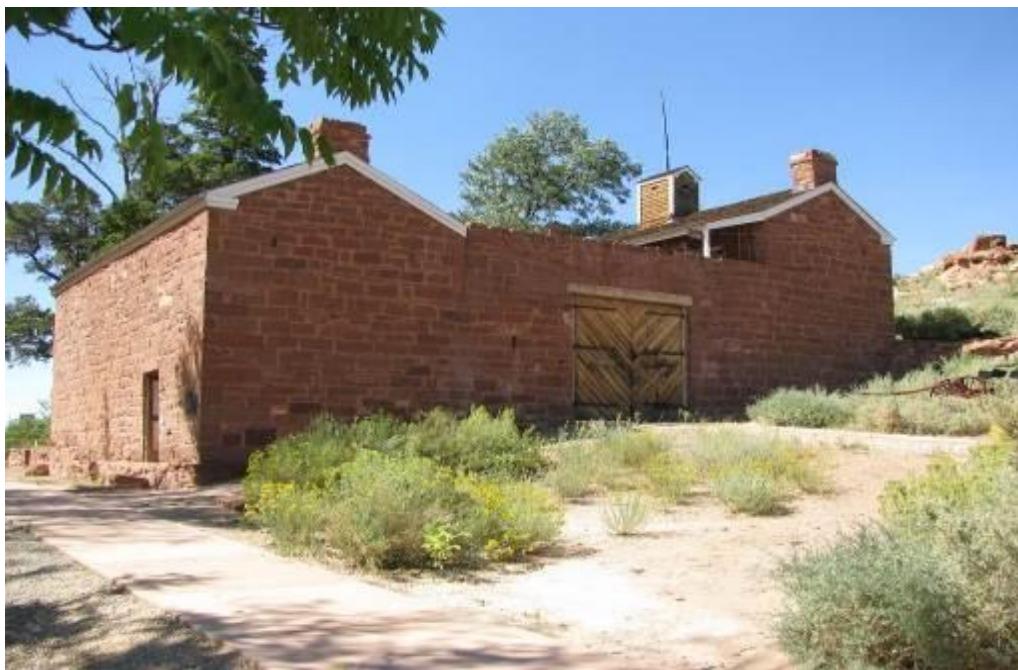
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<sup>489</sup> "Paiutes and Mormons" (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

overgrazing, changed all the lives that had depended on the good grass—for the worse.<sup>490</sup>

The use of the land, how much water is available, and who has rights to these resources, continue to be issues relevant to life in the West today.

Some of the tribal members served as interpreters for the tours. One recalled how in the 1990s the tribe had several heated conversations with the monument superintendents about making the museum and tours more accurate. This guide pointed out that while the Mormons built the fort or enclosed housing area to defend themselves from the Indians, the Paiute call the site “The Killing Place.” The idea of inclusivity has apparently been accepted by the current monument staff as this docent felt free to relate many views of the history of the site, although there was still room for improvement.<sup>491</sup>



#6 Pipe Spring Fort

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<sup>490</sup> “When the Good Grass Goes” (Pipe Spring, AZ: Pipe Spring National Monument, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>491</sup> Conversation with a park docent, Pipe Spring, Arizona, September 2010.

It was pleasing to see that the film, the exhibition, and the guided tour were similar in message and even tone. It would appear that this monument, more so than the other National Park Service sites, had embraced New Western History themes. As at the other sites, the message was not explicit, but at least here various topics within the themes were prominent in the message delivered. This may be in large part due to the regular and significant involvement of the local Native American Indian Kaibab tribe, and changes within the Church of Latter Day Saints to be more open to various interpretation about their history.

Each of the sites visited expressed some New Western History themes. The label texts at each museum covered one or more of the themes, even if the visitor had to search for the appropriate interpretive text. The exhibitions ranged in time of existence from fifty to one year, but both the oldest and the newest were the most subtle in their presentation of inclusive topics, or modern historiography themes. It appears that the attitude of the curators and the involvement of the local communities are the significant factors in presenting New Western History themes.

Former Tumacácori National Historical Park historian Donald Garate wrote a book about the Anza Trail after attending a conference on Anza; he was concerned that he had no information about this explorer who was so important to the Southwest.<sup>492</sup> Garate also contributed greatly to the creation of the exhibition at Tumacácori, but the exhibition contains no description of other Park Service or local history sites that might relate to the missions or the Anza Trail. As the first park historian, Verne E. Chatelain,

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<sup>492</sup> Donald T. Garate, *Juan Bautista de Anza: Basque Explorer in the New World* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003), xvii.

stated, the parks and their history should be viewed in the context of the development of America. I agree that it is important to link the national parks together. How does the story of one park relate in context to the parks around it? I would add that not only the national parks, but also all the regional and local museums should be placed in context with other sites around them. This would give the visitor the opportunity to frequent these other locations and develop a more informed experience for the history of that area. This could be accomplished through a simple label or brochure, but, in my experience, is rarely done. It was not evident at these selected National Park Service sites.

The following table reflects the degree to which New Western History themes were found in the local museums surveyed. I approached the exhibitions as a visitor would, looking for both artifacts, images, and text that made me reflect on the four “Cs” of New Western History. I also regarded the size of the exhibition space in considering my evaluation, those with more space had a greater opportunity to display more interpretations of the same subject. Additionally, I looked for how prominent New Western History language was on the text panels, whether it was obvious or whether the reader had to surmise that the curator was delivering a New Western History message. This analysis includes conversations with museum staff. As discussed in Chapter One, the four “Cs” were defined by Patricia Limerick as:

Continuity: Topics from the 1890s through the present for research consideration by New Western Historians, including:

*homesteading	*local versus federal authority
*water use	*relations with Mexico
*public lands	*Indian land and water claims
*boom/bust economies	*freedom of religious practice
*extractive industries—timber, oil, coal, and uranium	

Convergence: Described as the West as meeting place for many groups, including, but not exclusively

\*white men  
\*Native Americans  
\*African Americans

\*Hispanics  
\*Asians  
\*women in all of these groups

Conquest: Repositioned American history into a global context. It meant that Europeans seized nature's bounty, dominated the daily lives of others living in the occupied territories of America, and refashioned the culture of indigenous peoples.

Complexity: Many myths of the West avoid complexity by making people either good guys or bad with nobody in between. That is not reality. Humans tend to both love and hate, they can fight and be compassionate, they can be petty and display grace and dignity.<sup>493</sup> Complexity is shown when complicated, often contradictory aspects of daily life are included in the display.

Table 1

The Low, Medium, and High ranking is based on the author's judgment of New Western History themes displayed throughout the exhibitions. The relative size of the exhibition was considered, as was the relative ease of finding the four themes in the display.

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<sup>493</sup> Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 18–21.

Museum	Exhibit Date	Continuity	Converge	Conquest	Complexity	Ranking
Pipe Spring	2003	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High
Tumacácori	2009	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
Ft Union	1959	Absent	Low	Low	Absent	Low
Pecos	1984–1990	Absent	Low	Absent	Absent	Low

These exhibits span a fifty–year time frame. Convergence was the most often observed theme presented, while only half of the sites offered interpretation of continuity and the complexity of events. There was a wide range of observed incidents between Pecos and Pipe Spring. The rankings of the four “Cs” alone, do not tell a complete story, however.

Although Tumacácori showed at least one example of each of the four “Cs”, the references to New Western History themes were not explicit. That is, the modern historiographical message was couched in such a way as to not offend any related party. At least that was the reason claimed by informants. Various cultures met, and events took place, but it was difficult to clearly identify who the agents of the actions were, what the reasons for the events were, and whether there were any long-term effects from these actions. Because I viewed the labels with the intention of finding New Western History themes, I was able to discern incidents of the four “Cs,” but I would not say a multi-cultural message was offered clearly. The same could be said of Fort Union. Both sides of the European-Indian conflicts were presented, but not in a single label. The story had to be constructed by the visitor who happened to read all of the labels, some of which were in different exhibit cases. Pipe Spring, on the other hand, presented a clear message

and offered multiple opportunities, in each of the themes, to see the use of New Western History historiography.

Of all the types of museums visited, this group also had the widest spread from oldest to newly created, over a fifty-year period. While Pipe Spring was not the newest of the exhibitions created in this group, it was directly influenced by its local community of Native Americans and Mormons. This may account for the instance of convergence as a theme. The two most recent exhibitions, Tumacácori and Pipe Spring, were the two that display some aspect of all four New Western History themes, but Pipe Spring got a higher ranking because its use of the themes was explicit.

New Western History themes are present at each of the parks to some degree. The brochures from all the parks are the most current in reflecting the changing attitudes of society. It is curious that museum professionals apparently do not often think to update their exhibition labels in the same manner. This can be done without redoing the artifacts within an exhibit, but the labels do not get the attention that other printed items may receive. However, museum curators appear to be concerned about following scholarly works too closely if those works present what may be seen by the visiting public as a radical view, or at least what the curators perceive the visiting public's viewpoint to be. Thomas Sheridan countered that, at least in the interpretation of the mission sites, exhibits need to be revised from early historiography. He claimed, "Jesuit missions were not the self-sufficient, smoothly running theocracies romanticized by Herbert Eugene Bolton and his students."<sup>494</sup> Sheridan rather depicted the complexity of interactions

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<sup>494</sup> Sheridan, *Landscape*, 54.

among all groups of people. The curators and designers of the National Park Service museum exhibitions may or may not agree. Each site controls its own content, and some of the sites hoped to be able to change their exhibitions in the next few years. However, using the Tumacácori exhibition as a recently changed example, while the Native American voice was included, it was not of equal volume with the European view of events. A follow-up study of visitor reactions to various exhibits would be instructive to determine the effect of New Western History themes on museum audiences. The next chapter is a review of the state-sponsored museums visited in the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### STATE SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS

*“Myths can’t be refuted by facts.”<sup>495</sup>*

Mike Wallace, 1996

There are many myths in American history, particularly in the history of the West. This is one of the issues Patricia Limerick argued against. The public display of history in museums sometimes faces an uphill battle against the perceived perception of history. This less factual or one-sided history may be supported by television and movies, popular novels, and some long-standing exhibitions. Mike Wallace declared it is hard to dispute the perceived history with facts. As the saying goes, sometime it is not what you say but how you say it. When trying to change people’s minds it might be better to consider how you want to state the fact, rather than boldly declaring it. This is a conundrum museums face. One museum professional stated,

Museums are struggling in this country, everywhere from the little Podunk museum storefront to the Smithsonian. Everyone is struggling partly because we have not been very good at telling our story, selling our story. And then there is the other side of the coin. If you sell out and become the Disneyland of history are we really serving the public? And I struggle with that here all the time, what is the right path between the academic, really solid, really pedantic history that may be really accurate and super detailed and well researched, versus kind of fudging around the edges little bit and telling a good story. We never fudge the telling of truth, but there are places where you can cut. The more subtle version is not easy to digest so you tell the simpler version.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>495</sup> Mike Wallace, “Culture War, History Front,” in *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 176.

<sup>496</sup> Conversation with a museum professional, September 2010.

Although the version might be simple, museums strive to always tell the truth. That is, the interpretation expressed is one or more versions of events that can be backed up with fact. An exhibition is not as detailed as a monograph may be, but when done well can raise awareness and present the visitor with a meaningful message worthy of reflection. State supported organizations were created to keep, and present, to their residents and visitors the stories of their particular state, and to sort the myth from the facts.

Just as in the preceding chapter, some of the historiography available prior to the time of each site's exhibition opening was reviewed. The curators and staff members consulted for this study did not offer copies of the research consulted. The works included with each site's exhibition review may help determine if New Western History themes were discussed in scholarly works available at the time of the creation of the exhibitions.

### The Arizona Historical Society

The Arizona Historical Society was first created by "colorful, strong-willed men of frontier Arizona in 1884." They "organized a 'Pioneer Association for historical and humanitarian purposes,' known as the Society of Arizona Pioneers." The society was founded by first-generation Arizona pioneers, who feared that with the coming of the railroad four years earlier, their time was ending and the stories of the past would be lost.

The 1880s were still a time of lawlessness and violence, and the citizens wanted to change the image of the Arizona Territory.<sup>497</sup>

Today, it might be presumed by some that pioneers were great leaders who set out to make a better country. There was a perception that European settlers were determined to impose their culture on all others in the land. According to Southwestern historian C. L. Sonnichsen, that is far from the truth. He stated that, “the pioneers deserve to be judged by their own standards and beliefs, not by ours.” He claimed that what the Spanish, Mexicans, and Americans all wanted was precious minerals, free land, and to get rich. There was no presumption in the minds of pioneers to create a great country ruled by whites. They wanted personal wealth and some freedom to live life as they chose.<sup>498</sup> New Western History themes might agree with Sonnichsen’s interpretation so long as all other cultures get historical representation as well. Rather than emphasize a pioneer-frontier myth, various viewpoints are available and a European-centered altruistic approach is only one of them.

At first the only members of the society were male. An attempt was made to create an auxiliary of female pioneers, and women did help out with annual dinners and events. However, not until 1947 were females admitted to the society. Much of the acceptance of women can be attributed to Edith Kitt, who took charge of the Arizona

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<sup>497</sup> Sybil Ellinwood, *The Arizona Historical Society Today* (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1973), 1; and C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pioneer Heritage: The First Century of the Arizona Historical Society* (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1984), 2.

<sup>498</sup> C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pioneer Heritage*, 4.

Pioneer Historical Society in 1925 and held that position until 1947. She continued to work on special projects for the society until 1964.<sup>499</sup>

In 1897 “the Nineteenth Territorial Legislature officially instructed this group to ‘pursue its historical, scientific, literary, and benevolent goals’ as the Arizona Pioneers Historical Society.” Since then, the society has been an official state agency charged with the collection and preservation of Arizona history. The society operated several museum sites and library so as to be repositories for artifactual and documentary records of the past. In 1971, the state legislature changed the name to The Arizona Historical Society, “a title reflecting the increased scope of its programs and services, which are focused on education, preservation, and publication.”<sup>500</sup>

The society became a 501(c)(3) entity in the 1950s. A new building, large enough to house the collection and library, was completed in Tucson in 1955 and then expanded in 1975. The society was reorganized and went statewide in 1980. They supported seven sites in 2010, but like many historical sites, felt the effects of budget restraints. One museum professional explained, “The AHS (Arizona Historical Society) is at forty percent of its strength ten years ago. Overall budget, staff, we are a fraction, and yet we have not reduced programming and we are almost operating at the same level, at about eighty percent of what we used to do, so there is a disconnect there someplace.”<sup>501</sup> As stated above, museums struggle to tell a version of a truthful story, in a limited space, and

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<sup>499</sup> C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pioneer Heritage*, 21, 84–108.

<sup>500</sup> Sybil Ellinwood, *The Arizona Historical Society Today* (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1973), 1.

<sup>501</sup> Conversation with a museum professional, Flagstaff, Arizona, September 2010.

as briefly as possible. There is no reason this cannot include New Western History themes when they are relevant to society's needs today. However, just as people standing on opposite corners report the circumstances of an accident from their own viewpoint, there are multiple versions of each historical event. This expands the "facts" available for interpretation. Together, all these viewpoints make the complete story. The challenge of utilizing New Western History in museums is to present multiple interpretations along with the facts as they are known. Traditional history, the predecessor to New Western History, typically only presented the European, male interpretation of events. New Western History themes demand a broader ethnically and socioeconomic interpretive base for these events, making wider, and more accurate story. Museums can tell just the "facts" — that an event happened on a certain date, in a certain place, and involved specific people of things — and let the visitor create their own interpretation, or they can provide one or more interpretations, perhaps mixing the traditional with New Western History themes. However, storytelling is more captivating than a simple listing of enumerated facts. So, as Mike Wallace pointed out, changing the ideas of an event, which may be based on a mythical movie version, needs more than just the facts. Interpretations should be part of a well told visual and textual museum story.

#### *Pioneer Museum (Flagstaff, Arizona)*

The Arizona Historical Society has several sites, one of which is the Pioneer Museum. The museum is located in what used to be the Coconino County Hospital for the Indigent. The exhibitions presented at this site concentrated on northern Arizona history, the living conditions of the nurses caring for patients, and the ranching, logging,

and transportation industries.<sup>502</sup> In this facility, the museum staff had several rooms in the building to present exhibitions. Many exhibits dated from the 1980s, and some, at least in part, were changed or updated on a regular basis.<sup>503</sup>

Since the exhibits at the Flagstaff site have changed often over the years, defining when a particular exhibit was created to determine if any useful historiography was available is difficult. However, there are some works that spoke to several of the topics shown at the site. The 1976 work, *They Came to the Mountain: The Story of Flagstaff's Beginnings*, was a record of significant events that occurred in Flagstaff from the 1870s to 1891. The author was a journalist who studied all the old newspapers printed at the time of the founding of Flagstaff to gather the stories of the people who occupied this town. The chapters revealed the marketing efforts to influence people to move to the area. The book told of the first settlers and the coming of the railroad. With the railroad came opportunities for lumber and livestock companies to flourish.<sup>504</sup>

An earlier work also considered the history of Flagstaff. A 1952 thesis discussed the early history of the area from approximately 600 A.D., and then covered the time of European settlement up to its publication, 1876 through 1951. The opening sentence of the chapter on the establishment of Flagstaff was telling in how the author considered European industrial accomplishments to be the hallmark of history. He stated, "The northern plateau of Arizona lay dormant for many years, except for wandering sheep

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<sup>502</sup> Pioneer Museum, [www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/museums/flagstaff.asp](http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/museums/flagstaff.asp) (accessed August 26, 2010).

<sup>503</sup> Conversation with a museum professional, Flagstaff, Arizona, September 2010.

<sup>504</sup> Platt Cline, *They Came to the Mountain: The Story of Flagstaff's Beginnings* (Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University with Northland Press, 1976), xi.

herders, cattlemen, trappers and Indians, until the railroad ushered in a new era.” It appeared that all these people were not significant enough to be considered lively residents of the area. The author then looked at civic, social, and economic progress from the late 1800s until 1951. Railroads, water supply, fire management, the lumber industry, electricity, a school system, and one brief paragraph about the town hospital, were covered topics.<sup>505</sup> The founding of Northern Arizona State University and the importance of astronomy to the area, significant events to the town, were not mentioned in this work.

Additionally, a photographic collection of the town and surrounding area from the late 1800s through 1999 was available. In the forward, former Governor of Arizona and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt praised the work and the town’s people, saying “We owe a big debt of gratitude, not only to the original builders, but also to the dedicated preservationists who came along in the nick of time to capture it all. It is an instructive contrast to Phoenix and Tucson, where the past has been largely obliterated by urban renewal and uncontrolled development.” This was a booster piece, but also offered photographs of the past and the many aspects of life that made up the town.<sup>506</sup>

Cowboys and miners were two exhibit topics in Flagstaff and at other sites visited. Several works described cowboys, while miners were mentioned more often in general histories. Author Artie Freeman’s 1959 short work *Pioneers of the Trail* was a collection of the author’s memories from 1879 until the 1940s. He lived in several places in Arizona, working various jobs, and finally raising cattle in the Phoenix area. The

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<sup>505</sup> Donald Paul Shook, “The History of Flagstaff” (master’s thesis. University of Arizona, 1952), 39.

<sup>506</sup> Richard Mangum and Sherry Mangum, *Flagstaff Past and Present* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing, 2003), viii.

writing appeared factual, although sometimes Freeman's memories were of exciting things like train robberies and shootings. He used language typical of the time to describe people, that is, terms not typically found in today's literature.<sup>507</sup>

*California Cowboys* revealed the life of cowboys in California, Arizona, and Old Mexico. First published in 1939, the book included stories of various men and brief incidents in their lives, and provided pictures with each chapter. Dates were not often given although the events appear to be in the early 1900s. The work may be best used to get background information about cowboy life, what they did daily, their concerns and moments of happiness.<sup>508</sup> Another background book could be *Never Walk When You Can Ride*. Published in 1989, these were cowboy stories, not stories about cowboys. Therefore, they may not all be factual. They provided a colorful view of food, horses and other animals, women who worked on the range, encounters with alcohol, and getting acquainted with a new job.<sup>509</sup>

A more recent and relevant work is *Miners and Cowboys*, published in 2004. This book focused on southeastern Arizona; it took a New Western History perspective but also touted the European ancestors of the area's residents today. The authors stated, "The European-Americans who first made their homes in the area did so in defiance of the Native Americans who had thousands of years of prior claim on the land." Miners extracted resources from the ground and ranchers provided supplies to the miners. Both

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<sup>507</sup> Artie Elizabeth Freeman, *Pioneers of the Trail: Reminiscences of the Old West* (New York: Greenwich Book Publishers, 1959).

<sup>508</sup> Dane Coolidge, *California Cowboys* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985).

<sup>509</sup> Mike McFarland, *Never Walk When You Can Ride* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing, 1989), 2.

these groups brought others seeking a faster, less strenuous path to wealth—highwaymen and rustlers. This was a local history and not comprehensive, but engaging and potentially useful to the curator.<sup>510</sup>

The story of the Arizona Rough Riders was also exhibited at the Flagstaff museum. These men were associated with the cowboy theme. Two works lent themselves to the historiography of this topic. One, *Cowboy Cavalry*, was a photographic history printed in 1998 that discussed how prior to the sinking of the *Maine* in February 1898, many American were already preparing for war. The Arizona town of Prescott was the center of one such group. By the time war was declared, over five hundred men were ready to join a newly formed, local regiment. Of those who were chosen only about half saw action in Cuba and then without their horses. Several were injured, but the story of the cowboys-turned-soldiers from out West was shown in the pictures of this book.<sup>511</sup> A seminal work on the subject was Theodore Roosevelt's *The Rough Riders*. Originally published in 1899, Roosevelt told the stories of the men, and did a lot of self-promoting, along with depicting the hardships encountered before and during the troop's brief time in Cuba. The story was expanded to include a national view. Roosevelt claimed his work "is the story of men at war, but it also offered a perspective on a nation coming to grips with the industrial age and the realities of great power responsibilities."<sup>512</sup>

<sup>510</sup> Ted Cogut and Bill Conger, *Miners and Cowboys: Real People of the True Southwest* (Thatcher, AZ: Mining History, 2004), 1.

<sup>511</sup> Charles H. Herner, *Cowboy Cavalry: A Photographic History of the Arizona Rough Riders*, Museum Monograph No. 10 (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1998), 1–6.

<sup>512</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *The Rough Riders* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xiv.

In 2010, upon entering the facility, a large two-story house, the visitor saw a display of excerpts from oral histories taken from contemporary locals who worked outdoors. Intended as an environmental record of changes in the area over recent memory, the display provided an insight into the nature of occupations in the community. It was inclusive of many groups of people and spoke to the contemporary issue of environmental change, demonstrating New Western History themes.

Two signs told the story of how Flagstaff, Arizona got its name.<sup>513</sup> They introduced the Foundations of Flagstaff exhibit, a display case showing pictures and artifacts from the early years of the town. Following this was a reflection of the museum's past as a medical facility. A single framed display of newspaper articles discussed the work done by Dr. Jonas Salk to eradicate polio and of one man's existence in a Drinker Respirator, or Iron Lung, for forty-one years.<sup>514</sup>

The rooms of the building were small, which limited the space needed to explain a topic, but also allowed the curators to change topics from room-to-room. In 2010 the second floor was undergoing renovation, with the anticipated completion being in 2013.<sup>515</sup> However, the curators used a technique many visitors enjoy. The staff left the upstairs open and encouraged guests to view the progress of the changes.

A neutral exhibition from a New Western History standpoint would be that of Uliss "Shorty" King. Labels along a railing delineating the exhibit detailed the life story

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<sup>513</sup> "What's in a Name" (Flagstaff, AZ: Pioneer Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>514</sup> "Untitled exhibit" (Flagstaff, AZ: Pioneer Museum, September 2010).

<sup>515</sup> Pioneer Museum, [www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/museums/welcome-to-pioneer-museum-flagstaff/](http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/museums/welcome-to-pioneer-museum-flagstaff/) (accessed September 2010).

of this cowboy and local Flagstaff resident.<sup>516</sup> Behind the labels were items associated with cowboys—saddles, bridles, horseshoes, and wagon wheels. If a visitor took the time to read far enough into the label, a romantic story could be found of “Shorty” taking his horse to see the Grand Canyon, but otherwise the myth and legends of cowboys were not glorified. An exhibition on the creation of the Rough Riders was linked to cowboys in the “A Regiment of Cowboys” labels. The story explained that many of these cowboys initially thought the Rough Rider term was demeaning to their horsemanship, but soon



came to enjoy the idea of being a rugged group of soldiers.<sup>517</sup>

One glass case displayed a stuffed bear and other pelts along with a rifle and trap. Using local resources for food and clothing helped northern Arizonans survive. Nearby, an incomplete label explained the needs of the local people and the potential detriment to the local environment by over-trapping and hunting of indigenous prey animals. Called “Flagstaff

<sup>516</sup> “Uliss “Shorty” King (1925–2001)” (Flagstaff, AZ: Pioneer Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>517</sup> “A Regiment of Cowboys” (Flagstaff, AZ: Pioneer Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

Issues” the exhibition showed several sides of the environmental and resource issues, topics that fall under the continuity theme of New Western History.<sup>518</sup> The labels discussed how ranchers protected their cattle by killing predators. This in turn led to an explosion in the population of deer, leading to overgrazing of forest and range lands and the destruction of seedling trees by starving animals.

Another exhibition provided an Anglo-centric Turner view of history. Called the “Pioneer Kids Exhibit,” it invited visitors to “imagine yourself as a pioneer.” Perhaps the curators only anticipate Anglos coming to the museum as all the pictures associated with this exhibit appear to be of white children. A broad interpretive New Western History themed view of the pioneer is not presented. Pictures of only white children in period-appropriate clothing graced the opening label.<sup>519</sup> Dolls, toys, games, and curiosities filled the cabinets. Images on a poster showed people in aspects of travel and play, at work and home. Many photos seemed to be from the early nineteen hundreds and show the transition of transportation, from horse-drawn carriages to early airplanes.<sup>520</sup> There was a workbook for adults to help their children understand the pictures and figure out what the people in them were doing. While this exhibition could engage young people to see how history is the change over time, it was not inclusive of other cultures. Both boys and girls were pictured, and if one wanted, controversial issues could be brought into the discussion by asking, “what is good, what is bad” about the events in the photographs. However, when working with children, controversy is probably not often introduced.

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<sup>518</sup> “Flagstaff Issues” (Flagstaff, AZ: Pioneer Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>519</sup> “Welcome to Our New Pioneer Kids Exhibit” (Flagstaff, AZ: Pioneer Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>520</sup> “Pioneer Life” (Flagstaff, AZ: Pioneer Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

Perhaps this same exhibition could be conducted with middle or high school students with different themes associated with the same pictures.

Because this museum's exhibits were in transition, and the curators probably lacked sufficient funding for extensive long-term exhibitions, many of the displays appeared temporary in nature. Pushpins held labels to poster board instead of being permanently mounted. Masking tape could be seen on the label shown above instead of the more preferred two-sided tape or Velcro. Regardless, the changing nature of the displays and the topics presented could reflect more New Western History themes. At this point, only the environmental exhibit reflected text presented in a multi-interpretive way. The bookstore did not present many titles relevant to the topics on display. Keeping a current published inventory, especially of a scholarly nature, is more difficult and expensive when the exhibits change often.

New Western History themes were only evident in the two environmentally related exhibits, and conversations with curators did not indicate that this was a new direction the staff would take in its interpretation. Rather, the opening exhibit was a matter of convenience and the people interviewed just happened to offer various ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

#### *Museum at Papago Park (Tempe, Arizona)*

The Arizona Historical Society's Papago Park site is the state museum that tells the stories of changes in central Arizona, with a concentration in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Exhibitions focused on World War II and its effects on Arizona,

the rise of cities in the desert, and popular culture.<sup>521</sup> Changing exhibitions occupied the first floor, with the longer-term displays upstairs.

Relevant works that apply to these subjects included historian Donald Worster's *Rivers of Empire*. Published in 1985, Worster examined, and debunked, the notion of the West as a place of conquest by Easterners looking for Thoreau's mythic place of freedom, and Turner's idea that strong leaders of industry would be the only ones who could make the semi-arid land productive. Worster claimed that since World War II the West "has become a principal seat of the world-circling American Empire."<sup>522</sup> Another work, Matthew McCoy's 2000 dissertation "Desert Metropolis," looked at the period 1940 through 1965. The author stated this was a period of "striking and radical" change unprecedented in the United States. Involvement in World War II reshaped people's idea of what good living should be, and Phoenix became that vision.<sup>523</sup>

Historian Bradford Luckingham's 1989 history of Phoenix is a general history of the city, and includes a chapter on the boom years of 1941 to 1960. This chapter covers the "economic boom and population explosion" that happened with the coming of World War II.<sup>524</sup> Several pages are dedicated to the proliferation of military based and related companies that caused a considerable expansion of the housing market. Japanese

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<sup>521</sup> Arizona Historical Society Museum at Papago Park, <http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/museums/tempe/> (accessed August 2010).

<sup>522</sup> Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 15.

<sup>523</sup> Matthew Gann McCoy, "Desert Metropolis; Image Building and the Growth of Phoenix, 1940–1965" (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2000), 6.

<sup>524</sup> Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 136.

internment and segregation issues close out the chapter. The civil rights movement is discussed in a later chapter, but focuses more on black and Hispanic issues than Native American advancements in gaining equality.

Moving specifically to the postwar themes, historian Neil Wynn looked at African American involvement in World War II. This 1993 work showed the conditions for black Americans at the time of the war, the impact of the war on employment, how the war disrupted migration, black people in film and literature during the war, and black attitudes and the white response to the war. The author also commented that the second edition, written twenty years after the first, had a different tone to it as historical perception has changed. He declared, “Writing in the 1960s and 1970s, when civil rights action and reform seemed to promise so much, it was easy to see the 1940s as the moment when positive change was set in motion. Now, when views of the sixties are more pessimistic and when the limits of reform are more apparent, it may seem necessary to qualify judgments on the importance of World War II.” He later stated, “Rarely, if ever does war produce change not already begun in some way—the preconditions for change are usually already evident.”<sup>525</sup> The same can be said of the New Western History movement; Limerick gave a name to changes that were slowly taking place in historiography.

Women and their roles in the war were also part of the exhibition at Papago Park. Historian Susan Hartmann addressed this in her 1982 *The Home Front and Beyond*. The author explored women’s experiences across class and racial lines, especially in the

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<sup>525</sup> Neil A. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993), ix, 130.

public sector, as the war created opportunities like never before. One of the chapters specifically dealt with women as “full-fledged members of the military establishment.” Other chapters examined women in the labor force, their opportunities for education, and how women were treated in the legal and governmental systems.<sup>526</sup>

Internment was addressed by two authors with differing viewpoints. In *And Justice for All*, published in 1984, oral histories told how civilians “were forced by armed military guards to abandon their homes and jobs, and denied their constitutional rights, they were herded into detention camps, which had all the trappings of prisons.” The other book, written in 1990 by conservative author Lillian Baker, attempted to sort fact from fiction concerning internment, and the 1988 legislation that provided reparations to persons of Japanese descent who were evacuated, relocated, or interned from 1941 to 1946. This work asserted that it provides documented facts that discredit America-bashing seen in the 1980s. It purported to be an educated and non-emotional view of the reasons for, and actions taken in, a few West Coast states during World War II.<sup>527</sup>

The Arizona Historical Society contracted with the American History Workshop, a museum content firm lead by Dr. Richard Rabinowitz, to generate ideas for the new museum in 1989. This firm presented a “Conceptual Plan” that discussed that a reason a group creates a museum is that it feels a part of its history is going to be lost. This is similar to what the creators of the Arizona Historical Society felt in 1884. The conceptual

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<sup>526</sup> Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), x.

<sup>527</sup> John Tateishi, *And Justice For All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps* (New York: Random House, 1984), vii; Lillian Baker, *American and Japanese Relocation in World War II; Fact, Fiction and Fallacy* (Medford, OR: Webb Research Group, 1990), 13–15.

plan proposed that this museum be “about the future, how it was imagined, shaped, feared and realized by a century and a half of Americans in the Salt River Valley.”<sup>528</sup> The plan offered a view of recent history of the area given then current historiography and the opinions of Arizona Historical Society staff and board members, educators, public officials, historians, museum professionals, and members of the community. It reflected many of the ideals that were to be called New Western History. While the exhibitions reviewed do reflect many of these themes, the presentation by the American History Workshop was only partly used due in part to frequent turnover in the Arizona Historical Society management and staff, causing disruptions in the creative flow of the development process. Interviews with some of these society staff members indicated that there was disagreement over the curation of the exhibits, and the feeling was that exhibit production had stagnated.<sup>529</sup> Development of museum exhibitions is a complex process. As Richard Rabinowitz said in the conceptual plan “most museum visitors would agree that it is the quality of the interpreters — rather than the quality of the collection — that shapes the learning experience and remains as a lasting impression.”<sup>530</sup> The audience sees only the final product and usually is not aware of the issues and time spent creating an exhibition. However, professionals involved often encounter a complex process when developing that interpretation, a story that the curators feel meets the museum’s standards of quality while being appealing and engaging to their visitors.

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<sup>528</sup> American History Workshop, “Conceptual Plan for Arizona Historical Society Museum/ Marley Center” (November 1989), 2–3.

<sup>529</sup> Conversations with museum professionals, September 2010.

<sup>530</sup> “Conceptual Plan for Arizona Historical Society Museum/ Marley Center” (November 1989), 8.

An exhibit that closely mirrored New Western History concepts was the “Natives and Newcomers: Foundations of Central Arizona” display. The suggested beginning of the path through the long-term gallery, it was brief but revealing of a curator steeped in New Western History, and museology current in 1996, the date of this exhibit’s opening. It showed life-sized sculptures of nine various ethnic, class, religious, and gender groups.



#8 *Immigrants to the West*

In an article about the display, the curator wrote, “Although we display each individual as arriving alone, we pose the figures in ways that suggest their future relationship with the environment and each other. Identified by the baggage they pack, and the clothes and accessories they wear, these unrelated people move toward each other over time, engage in conflict and confrontation, victimize and displace each other, and quarrel over environmental issues.” The curator later used more New Western History themes when she explained, “Collectively, these figures represent the continuity of cultures in the desert. They also introduce the museum visitors to the complex forms of cultural

convergence that occurred over the next century.”<sup>531</sup> Native Americans, male and female, Mormon women, and a Chinese worker were among the usual Anglo immigrants to the area.

“Views from the Home Front” was a large exhibition about the impact of war on the Phoenix, Arizona, area. Labels spoke to the internment of Japanese, and the role of blacks in World War II.<sup>532</sup> Exhibits showed the inconsistency in the selection of which people were forced into internment camps, black people dancing, and how Lew Davis produced posters depicting blacks serving in the Army. Close by were a series of labels that raised controversial topics for consideration. The Arizona Enduring Communities Lesson Summary asked pertinent questions about the exhibition. One series included a discussion of tolerance during times of war. It presented both Native American and Japanese American views of segregation during the war and hoped to educate high school students about the effects of racism.<sup>533</sup> There was a label dedicated to the service of women pilots in World War II. It described the duties, successes, trials, and lack of benefits for Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs) and included details of the contribution of two female pilots.<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> Nancy L. Dallett, “Using the Past to Shape the Future,” *History News* 51, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 14, 15.

<sup>532</sup> Posters and labels include “Wartime Exile,” “USO for Black Soldiers,” and “Lew Davis’ World War II” Posters (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit labels.

<sup>533</sup> “Do the Rights of the Individual Remain Constant in Times of Peace and War” (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>534</sup> “Women in Aviation” (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

This exhibition, created around 1990, was a good example of the inclusive and complex nature of New Western History. It showed disparate groups of people, all converging in a time and place of conflict, and asked the visitors to consider how they will respond to similar situations. The circumstances of war and prejudice that existed in the 1940s are almost being rehashed today with the threat of terrorism causing fear for physical safety and reenacting the perceived need for ethnic and religious segregation among some people.

The next long-term exhibition was “Desert Cities.” It reflected the growth in the Phoenix-area valley since World War II and reviewed social movements that changed people’s lives and continue to be topics in the continuity theme of New Western History. In this exhibition, just as in the last, controversial topics received a prominent place. A series of labels discussed the living conditions of the poor, segregation, the “place” for women, and the desire for equality by Native Americans.

A series of photographs showed how public housing improved the life of poor people who could not keep up with the booming population growth in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>535</sup> Building a Better Society provided examples of how the civil rights movement challenged conventional conservative views.<sup>536</sup> Another label revealed how women began to challenge their “traditional” role of homemaker in the 1970s, and the advancements made in the fight over the Equal Rights Amendment.<sup>537</sup> Next to this, a

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<sup>535</sup> “Photographing Life “South of the Tracks”” (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>536</sup> “Building a Better Society” (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>537</sup> “Just What Is a Women’s Place” (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

label talked about how Native Americans fought for the vote after World War II and the role of the American Indian Movement in fighting discrimination, poverty, quality education, and land use.<sup>538</sup> Hispanics were also acknowledged as being an integral part of the central Arizona cultural scene. The Chicano movement label explained how many Hispanics sought equality with Anglos by arguing for better educational opportunities and fought for farm worker causes.<sup>539</sup> The whole idea of segregation and discrimination was boldly discussed as a movement for change starting in the 1950s and continuing through the 1970s.<sup>540</sup>

This museum provided a viewpoint of the modern West that coincided with Patricia Limerick's New Western History themes. Unfortunately, in 2010, certain exhibits were in need of repair or modernization in order to make them more appealing. If the visitor does not find the display attractive the subject matter will not be viewed, so a potentially engaging, modern, complex, and thoughtful exhibition could be discarded before it has a chance to interact with a guest. One museum professional explained that these exhibitions would be up as long as the subjects remain relevant and "useful to the Arizona resident, school kids, and the appropriate populations." The same person also declared, "Design certainly has an impact on the impression the visitor has as to whether or not what they are seeing is current. Whether it is relevant to their concerns. You can do cosmetic changes; you can change a paint color. You can redo the graphics, you can redo

<sup>538</sup> "American Indians Push for Change" (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>539</sup> "The Chicano Movement in Arizona" (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>540</sup> "Segregation Breaks Down" (Tempe, AZ: Papago Park, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

some things that give the visual cues to make a person know that you have not forgotten this exhibit and you are still thinking about it.”<sup>541</sup> Since the curators went through the effort to present several exhibits relevant to the visiting community grounded in New Western History themes, it would be appropriate to also give the impression that what the visitors are seeing is current historiography and museology.

#### *Arizona History Museum (Tucson, Arizona)*

The headquarters of the Arizona Historical Society is in Tucson. Here the Arizona History Museum is a large, modern facility with multiple rooms for various exhibitions. The focus was on life in southern Arizona from Spanish colonial through territorial eras.<sup>542</sup> There were four large long-term galleries and several smaller galleries with special-topic displays available for viewing for briefer periods. Exhibitions spanned from 1978 to 2006.

There were two works available to consult about the history of Tucson. John Kessell looked at the period from the expulsion of the Jesuits to the coming of the United States Army in 1856. This 1976 book was a thorough examination of the Sonoran area at the time of Spanish occupation.<sup>543</sup> The other work covered a similar period, but “examines the dynamics of ethnic diversity with the city of Tucson” during the colonial occupation. Henry Dobyns’s 1976 work, *Spanish Colonial Tucson*, described how

<sup>541</sup> Conversation with an Arizona Historical Society museum professional, August 2010.

<sup>542</sup> The Arizona History Museum, [www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/welcome-to-the-arizona-history-museum-tucson/](http://www.arizonahistoricalsociety.org/welcome-to-the-arizona-history-museum-tucson/) (accessed September 2013).

<sup>543</sup> John L. Kessell, *Friars, Soldiers, and Reformers: Hispanic Arizona and the Sonora Mission Frontier, 1767–1856* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976), xiii.

“Spaniards, Mestizos from New Spain, and Native Americans of various tribal antecedents laid the ethnic foundations of one modern city in the United States.”<sup>544</sup>

The Gallery Guide immediately showed both a traditional approach and a turn toward New Western History in the exhibitions. One long-term exhibit was described as “Old West firearms associated with famous people,” the famous people being Anglos, although it included a temporary exhibit on Geronimo and his rifle. However, another long-term exhibition invited the guest to “Visit the rich multi-cultural heritage of 1870’s Tucson through the daily lives of three fictional families: Tohono O’odham, Mexican-American and Anglo. The hands-on exhibit featured replicas of typical homes of the era and has activities for children.”<sup>545</sup>

One exhibit showed the first census recorded of the Tucson area. It came from 1797, “at a time when our area was under Spanish rule” and conceded that “The census includes the residents of Tucson’s presidio, whom he [Fray Pedro de Arriquibar] regarded as parishioners, but does not include the Native American population settled outside the presidio walls.”<sup>546</sup> This was an acknowledgment of the Spanish conquest of the area and that Native Americans were not considered equal to the European settlers, but not in strong, direct language.

A timeline of settlement in the area was the next colorful display. It showed four distinct periods of settlement: American Indian, Spanish, Mexican Era, and the arrival of

<sup>544</sup> Henry F. Dobyns, *Spanish Colonial Tucson: A Demographic History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976), ix.

<sup>545</sup> *Gallery Guide* (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, obtained August 11, 2010) museum brochure.

<sup>546</sup> “First Census” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

U.S. Citizens. Unfortunately, in the Spanish Settlement section, two references were made to Indian attacks on, and killing of, Europeans. This section mentioned the “1540 Coronado expedition to Southwest.” Later, it stated “1751 Pimas rebel against Spanish, killing settlers,” and “1781 Querchans attack Spanish, killing Father Garces.”<sup>547</sup> However, no mention was made of the conquest and devastation of Native American populations in the area.

A label titled “New Landowners” was three paragraphs long, more than most museum visitors will read completely. It discussed in thorough detail how three Anglo farmers were able to control access to the Santa Cruz River in the 1880s. At the very end of the last paragraph was a reference to Chinese farmers. It stated, “Many of the new owners continued to lease land to the Chinese vegetable farmers. Chinese farmers produced fresh fruits and vegetables along the Santa Cruz into the 1920s.”<sup>548</sup> An accompanying label depicted in some detail the plight of the Chinese in Arizona that occurred over time. It discussed why these immigrants left China, how they faced discrimination in California and as a result came to Arizona and found plentiful opportunities for work, as long as their numbers were low in comparison to Anglo and Mexican workers. As more Chinese arrived and threatened Anglo economic strength, legislation was passed in 1878, barring them from working in the mining industry. Therefore, the Chinese went into the grocery, restaurant, and farming businesses.<sup>549</sup>

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<sup>547</sup> “American Indian Settlements, 200 A.D.–A. D. 1539” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>548</sup> “New Landowners” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>549</sup> “Journey of the Dragon: Chinese Settlement in Territorial Tucson” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

This was a good example of New Western History inclusivity. It described how a minority group came to converge with both Anglos and Mexicans and the complexities of their existence since they did not have political power. Unfortunately, this and the prior label were so long, it would take considerable interest on the part of a competent museum visitor to learn this valuable lesson.

In the same section was a further acknowledgment of the problems the Chinese faced in Arizona. This exhibition was more valuable, as the top of the three labels was titled “Discrimination.” It was a briefer, yet more revealing, description of how Chinese men were limited in economic and social opportunities in America. Since it was difficult for Chinese women to gain access to the United States, many Chinese men, unable to marry Anglo women by law “married Hispanic or Indian women.”<sup>550</sup> The exhibition did not tell of any further discrimination heaped upon these mixed marriages, but it did set the stage for a discussion of multi-racial and multi-ethnic couples that enjoy full privileges as citizens today.

Further into the exhibitions additional subtle signs of New Western History were evident. Again, the curators were not making bold statements about European conquest of the area, but rather implying that the local Native American population was put under the control of whites. A label proclaimed, “In the early 1770s, the Spanish royal government realigned the chain of presidios, or walled forts, to better protect the expanding frontier against hostile Indian groups.” The same label then explained, “It may be hard to imagine

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<sup>550</sup> “Discrimination Tucson” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

today, but the Tucson location was chosen because of its plentiful water supply, irrigated fields, abundant trees that could be used for building, and a full view of the valley for defense. It was also close to the O'odham labor force at the San Agustín mission on the opposite side of the river.<sup>551</sup> In this label it may be surmised that the themes of continuity as well as conquest can be explored since there is little water in the river today and few abundant trees. When discussing the O'odham labor force, it does not mean a paid staff with rights and benefits, but rather a conquered people who were trading newly acquired skills such as blacksmithing and brick making for occasional protection against other bands of Indians.

The next label was more explicit, providing a description of conquest and convergence. It used the phrase “the Spaniards claimed the land” and described how some O'odham welcomed the Spanish as assistance in overcoming Apache raids while others “viewed the arrival of the Spaniards as an invasion.” Regardless, “Missionaries, soldiers, and native peoples created interdependent communities on the northern frontier of New Spain.”<sup>552</sup> This was another example of how curators understand current historiography and attempt to incorporate it into their exhibitions, while at the same time trying to also present the traditional Anglo-centric point of view.

An archaeological exhibition near the timeline section mentioned above continued the New Western History themes. A timeline covering 12,000 years with brief bullets of information about key periods of an excavation site explained, “There are many ways of

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<sup>551</sup> “The River and the Spaniards” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>552</sup> “The Old Pueblo: Tucson’s Presidio Heritage” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

looking at the past, and views of the past may differ from culture to culture. Hopefully the past we choose to celebrate in the Rio Nuevo District will honor this diversity of views.”<sup>553</sup> This exhibition was approximately four years old in 2010 so its designers had an opportunity to embrace New Western History concepts that had been extant for the prior twenty or more years.

Resources were taken from the area as soon as the Spanish arrived in the Americas. The New Western History theme of continuity was considered in a large exhibition called “The Spaniards: Arizona’s First Miners.” Created in 1978, it showed that “Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, minerals have been a major factor in Arizona’s growth and development.”<sup>554</sup> The exhibit listed dollar values and the various ores extracted from the Arizona mines. This was part of a large indoor exhibition of an underground mine complete with a stamp mill that would have needed access to very large quantities of running water.<sup>555</sup> A small, but easily readable label explained that family men were preferred as miners as they provided stability. It also stated, “While families of all ethnic groups shared many goals and values, the middle-class, Anglo-American minority controlled most of the political and cultural affairs of the town. The practices and policies of the mining companies reinforced the Anglo’s position of dominance over the non-

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<sup>553</sup> “Tucson’s Timeline: 12000 years along the Santa Cruz” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>554</sup> “The Spaniards: Arizona’s First Miners” and “Minerals of Arizona” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>555</sup> “Milling the Ore” (Tucson, AZ: Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

white, non-English-speaking ethnic groups.”<sup>556</sup> This was a revealing statement of fact that did not take sides, and so may not, as Mike Wallace explained, be refuting any myths or beliefs about the quality of life for the non-middle-class, Anglo-Americans who also had a story to tell. It did provide a channel for discussion about the complexity of authority, and the convergence of groups sharing space and time. A nearby label appeared to be more temporary, but spoke to the same topic with an added boldness. It declared that many ethnic groups participated in the mining business and co-existed although in their own neighborhoods. Those that did not speak English soon found themselves the subject of prejudice. However, community-wide celebrations may have allowed these cultures to mix and combine traditions.<sup>557</sup> The accompanying picture was one of the few that shows non-European groups.



#9 *Ethnics*

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<sup>556</sup> “Life in a Mining Town” (Tucson, AZ) Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>557</sup> “Ethnics” (Tucson, AZ) Arizona History Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

There was a connection in this museum's exhibitions concerning Native American and Spanish interaction to that of nearby Tumacácori National Park, although that site was never mentioned.<sup>558</sup> In the mining exhibition described above, there was a label that recognized the nearby town of Bisbee as a center for mining and how 2,500 strikers from that town were shipped to New Mexico in 1917. The same photograph was used in both museum exhibits. However, this exhibition did not mention the possibility of finding out more about this incident and learning more about mining at the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum. It is unfortunate that more referrals to local and regional museums were not given, especially by a state historical society. This history museum in Tucson offered many examples of New Western History themes. By connecting to other sites offering similar New Western History interpretations of related topics, visitors could learn more of the broader story of the region and the issues relevant to that local community. The greater depth of current historiography may be revealed through multiple sites presenting various interpretations of the same events.

From the Historical Society of New Mexico to the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

The oldest historical society west of the Mississippi River, the Historical Society of New Mexico was founded on December 26, 1859. During the period 1851 to 1912, the time after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo up to statehood, many of its members

<sup>558</sup> In the temporary traveling exhibition "The Civilian Conservation Corps at the Grand Canyon and in Southern Arizona, 1933–1942," there is a reference to the building of the visitor center at Tumacácori, but it focuses on what was built and by whom, not on the relationship of the mission at Tumacácori to the presidio at Tucson.

published historical accounts of the Spanish, Mexican, and American periods of the territory. The society began to collect historic artifacts and papers of various periods and ethnic groups from its earliest days. This led to the founding of the society's museum in rooms in the Palace of Governors in 1885.<sup>559</sup>

Twenty-four years later, the New Mexico territorial legislature gave the School of American Archaeology in Santa Fe the Palace of the Governors "as a permanent headquarters in exchange for restoring the building. At the same time, the legislature created the Museum of New Mexico to be housed in the Palace and managed by the School with state funding."<sup>560</sup> Eventually, as the Historical Society became less prominent, the museum collections were given to the State of New Mexico. By 1977, the state was consolidating departments, and in 1978 the state legislature created the Office of Cultural Affairs, the predecessor of the Department of Cultural Affairs. The official web site stated the "Department of Cultural Affairs represents New Mexico's dedication to preserving and celebrating the cultural integrity and diversity of our state." The department did this by managing ten museums and multiple cultural sites and programs. In 1980 more state departments were consolidated, divided, and created. This separated the department from those with an educational direction, giving cultural activities more independence. Then, in 2004 the governor signed legislation elevating the Office of

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<sup>559</sup> Historical Society of New Mexico, <http://www.hsnm.org/about/> (accessed April 21, 2014).

<sup>560</sup> William James Burns, "Gateway to the Colorado Plateau: A Portrait of the Museum of Northern Arizona," (master's thesis, Arizona State University, 1994), 5–6; and Michael Stevenson, "Governor Prince, Dr. Hewett, and Their Battle for the Old Palace," *La Cronica de Nuevo Mexico* 77 (November 2008): 8.

Cultural Affairs to cabinet-level status and gave it its current name, the Department of Cultural Affairs.<sup>561</sup>

*The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum (Las Cruces, New Mexico)*

This museum is part of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. Dedicated to preserving the agricultural history of the state, management considered its audience “anyone who eats or wears clothes.”<sup>562</sup> It was the only museum visited in this study that had live animals as part of a long-term exhibit. The museum inhabited forty-six acres on the eastern side of Las Cruces. The site also had a 24,000 square foot indoor exhibit hall that interpreted the 3,000-year history of farming and ranching in what is today New Mexico. The curators emphasized that there were many hands-on activities and demonstrations throughout the exhibitions. Although the ability to touch items in the exhibits is a recent addition to museological practice, this museum still acknowledged its founders by combining the new with the old. Three exhibition spaces were named “Heritage,” “Legacy,” and “Traditions.”<sup>563</sup> The hallways were wide enough to also include exhibit space.

The New Mexico Farm and Ranch site discussed agricultural techniques and the lives of the individuals who practiced that industry. Cultural anthropologist Evon Vogt produced a work in 1955 about homesteaders in a remote area of western New Mexico.

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<sup>561</sup> New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs <http://www.newmexicoculture.org/about> (accessed April 21, 2014).

<sup>562</sup> Discussion with museum personnel, Las Cruces, New Mexico, September 2010.

<sup>563</sup> *Experience Tradition* (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, n.d.), museum brochure, and [www.nmfarmandranchmuseum.org](http://www.nmfarmandranchmuseum.org) (accessed September 23, 2013).

This book was the result of a study examining “the value systems of five distinct cultural groups in western New Mexico: Navaho [sic], Pueblo, Spanish-American, Mormon, and Texan homesteader.” Vogt wrote, “The basic design of the project was based upon the fact that the five distinct cultural groups coexist in the same relatively small ecological area in New Mexico, yet have developed over time and continue to maintain distinct value systems.” The author found “evidence has been presented for the view that the homesteaders were a group of people in whom the values of the American frontier settlers were especially strong and that they formed a genuine twentieth-century pioneer movement.”<sup>564</sup> The idea of the rugged West and the hard life of a pioneer was evident in this mid-century work.

Two other works were relevant to the exhibits at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, *Heartland New Mexico* and *Gendered Fields* published in 1989 and 1996. There were more than five thousand New Mexico images in the Farm Security Administration file at the Library of Congress. *Heartland New Mexico* presented a book of photographs, which depicted Hispanic culture and Anglo ranch families, and which could have inspired the exhibits at the museum.<sup>565</sup> Likewise significant, *Gendered Fields* viewed the role of women in feminist theory and their connection with the land, plants, animals, and as members of family farms. This book provided “angles of vision

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<sup>564</sup> Evon Z. Vogt, *Modern Homesteaders: The Life of a Twentieth-Century Frontier Community* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955), vii and 173.

<sup>565</sup> Nancy Wood, *Heartland New Mexico: Photographs from the Farm Security Administration, 1935–1943* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

concerning the natural world that clearly differ from urban women's or men's perspectives.”<sup>566</sup>

A 1995 work by geographers Robin Butlin and Neil Roberts explored environmental issues. The book explained the relationship between humanity and the environment as agricultural techniques changed and improved over time to feed a greater population. Not specific to the Southwest, it nevertheless created a framework for looking at the integration of European agriculture into local conditions and the changes caused. The authors professed a version of the conquest theme with an agricultural twist. They claimed, “Both in Europe and beyond it, post-medieval expansionary processes led to culture contact between societies with indigenous cultural ecologies, and populations from the heartlands of Europe who were economically and technically more powerful. This process was almost always to the detriment of the former and typically led to a breakdown in traditional relations between cultural groups and their natural environments.”<sup>567</sup> Several references at many of the museum sites visited discussed the co-mingling of old and new world biota, some of the intermingling intentional, some not. The changes brought about are still contributing to the New Western History themes of continuity, conquest, and complexity.

The introductory exhibition label invited the visitor to experience a romantic country and waxed poetic as it described the land, but it also used the phrase “precious water” to classify this as a potentially environmentally-sound exhibition. The label stated,

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<sup>566</sup> Carolyn E. Sachs, *Gendered Fields: Rural Women, Agriculture, and Environment* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 179.

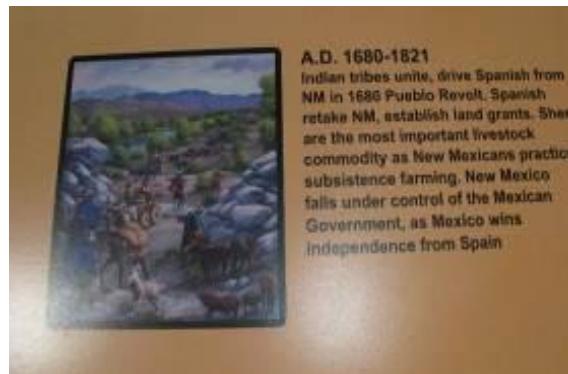
<sup>567</sup> Robin A. Butlin and Neil Roberts, eds., *Ecological Relations in Historical Times: Human Impact and Adaptation* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1995), 7–8.

“Turquoise skies reign over New Mexico’s unique landscape as sunlight penetrates mountains, valleys, and deserts. Animals graze unattended on vast open space and native grasses make gentle music as they wave in the breeze. Precious water meanders through river valleys and finds its way into a myriad of acequias watering thirsty fields.”<sup>568</sup> The New Western History concept of continuity may be gleaned from the first label.

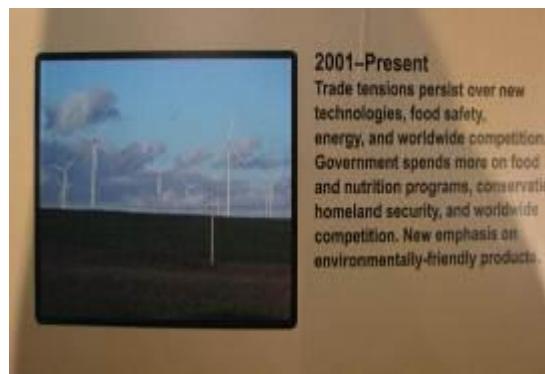
A nearby timeline likewise presented, with great clarity, New Western History themes. Both conquest and continuity were evident in at least three of the images. The



#10 A.D. 1500–1650



2#11 A.D. 1680–1821



I#12 2001–Present

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<sup>568</sup> “Enchanted New Mexico” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

earliest spoke of invasion, the second, resistance, and the most recent in the chronology addressed modern issues of food production.<sup>569</sup>

This timeline was installed around 2008, so it had the advantage of recent historiography to use as example. Some of the themes found in the National Park Service sites were retold here, but from a more focused agricultural approach. The idea of convergence of groups was discussed in a label that revealed the crops grown by both Native Americans and the Spanish and how the produce benefited both groups. The label declared, “Once established, the Spanish colonists introduced a great variety of foods that enhanced their diet, and also that of the native people.”<sup>570</sup>

There were two main long-term exhibitions available. The first discussed 3,000 years of agriculture through the lens of 150 generations as revealed in the biographies of thirty-three people. The Generations exhibition was first opened in 1996. It provided a look at the themes of convergence and complexity. The first paragraph of the opening label explained, “Rural New Mexicans, past and present, are a diverse group of people linked by common roles and shared experiences. As such, these people are the foundation for New Mexico’s agricultural story. These people, of different ethnic and cultural groups, have become the source of New Mexico’s rural and agricultural heritage.”<sup>571</sup> The

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<sup>569</sup> “A.D. 1500–1650” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label; “A.D. 1680–1821” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label; and “2001–Present” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>570</sup> “La Entrada: The Spanish Colonial Period” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>571</sup> “Generations” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

label explained that while some of the biographies were of famous people, most biographies were unknown to the general public, and some were composites created from prehistoric archaeological data.

Women had a significant position in this exhibition. They were lauded as being the first farmers who, with their children, tended the fields while men hunted.<sup>572</sup> A Native American woman was shown grinding corn in a metate.<sup>573</sup> Women were also prominent in a collage of photographs of people and families from various decades.<sup>574</sup>



#13 *Untitled*

The idea that new crops introduced by the Spanish were significant to the future diets of Native Americans was replayed in this Generations exhibition. A label told how the Spanish influence was felt not only by the Pueblo Indians but the nomadic Navajos

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<sup>572</sup> "The First Farmer: 3,000 Years Ago" (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>573</sup> "Come Grind Corn" (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>574</sup> Untitled (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

and Apache as well. It finished with this paragraph, “Over the course of many generations, the descendants of these settlers and of the regional original American Indian people have adopted many of each other’s customs and agricultural methods. The braiding of Native and European culture and agriculture that began four hundred years ago continues today. It is the foundation of modern New Mexico.”<sup>575</sup> Continuity and convergence certainly were introduced into the interpretation of New Mexican history.<sup>576</sup>

The curators promoted New Western History ideas, but took a subtle approach when discussing the cowboy. A label titled “Cowboys—An American Classic,” told the history of the rancheros, but used some glorifying words while explaining how the work was hard and not always glamorous, for example:

The work of tending cattle was physically demanding and lonesome. The ruggedness of the land, the nature of the work, called for men of fortitude and endurance. The cowboy often spent many hours alone in the saddle, with only his horse for company. The work was hard, often monotonous, and sometimes dangerous. Tending cattle, mending fences, pulling a cow from a mud hole, bailing hay, caring for an orphaned calf, breaking horses, or branding cattle were “typical” tasks that filled the cowboy’s day.

These cowhands were self-reliant and courageous individuals. They spawned the traditions of life on the range known today in the real life and in the myth of the “Wild West.”<sup>577</sup>

The message was that the cowboy life was not one of great excitement, but the visitor would have to read the whole label to register that significance.

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<sup>575</sup> “Native Cultures and Colonists, 1598 to 1821” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>576</sup> For a brief discussion of the modern consequences of the change to the diet of Native Americans see Chapter Four, page 177, footnote 411.

<sup>577</sup> “Cowboys—An American Classic” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

The other main exhibition was in the same room as Generations and encompassed four related agricultural themes. “Moving Around,” “On the Farm,” “Home Sweet Home,” and “Going to Town” provided examples of artifacts used by farmers and ranchers. Much of it was factual, as opposed to interpretive, and offered a sense of how people comported themselves in an earlier age, doing the same things farmers do today, but using different machines. Water again made an appearance, listed as “today’s most challenging environmental issue.”<sup>578</sup>

There was another example of how women are important parts of farm communities. Buttons could be pushed for recordings of farmers and their stories. At least two of these were women’s voices. However, both told stories of how “Dad” ran the farm. It was good that visitors could hear the stories in the voices of the people who experienced the events. It would be equally beneficial if the stories told were more about the roles of these girls or women on the farm and not what the men had to accomplish on a daily basis.

Regardless of the few suggestions for a more vigorous New Western History presentation, this museum obviously used modern concepts of interpretation in their displays. All four themes of continuity, convergence, conquest, and complexity were evident in this large and thoughtful exhibition.

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<sup>578</sup> “River Water” (Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

*New Mexico History Museum and Palace of the Governors (Santa Fe, New Mexico)*

This is the primary site of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. The Palace of the Governors is the oldest government building in the United States, extant for over four hundred years. The recently opened New Mexico History Museum originated as a storage facility for the collections at the Palace, but, as of 2009, is now 96,000 square-feet of exhibit space. The buildings are literally next to each other and in the center of downtown Santa Fe. The Palace has four-foot thick walls, long galleries, and small rooms. It is used for period rooms and exhibitions. It has had many different occupants: “Through Palace doors have passed Spanish soldiers, Pueblo peoples, Mexican governors, U.S. Military personnel, an army of the Confederate States of America, New Mexico territorial governors, and merchants who came by way of the Santa Fe Trail.” The main exhibition in the history museum was “Telling New Mexico: Stories from Then and Now.” It “swept across more than 500 years of stories—from early Native inhabitants to today’s residents—with stories told through artifacts, films, photographs, computer interactives, oral histories and more. Together, they [the museum and the Palace] breathe life into the people who made the American West: Native Americans, Spanish colonists, Mexican traders, Santa Fe riders, fur trappers, outlaws, railroad men, scientists, hippies and artists.”<sup>579</sup> Multiple viewpoints, both ethnically and socioeconomically, were represented in these exhibitions. Unfortunately, at the time of my visit, photography was not allowed. This was one of two institutions visited where that was the case. This policy has since been reversed.

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<sup>579</sup> [www.nmhistorymuseum.org](http://www.nmhistorymuseum.org) (accessed September 16, 2010), and *2009–2010 Museums and Monuments* (Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, 2009), museum brochure.

Insight into the exhibitions created for the new museum site could be found in *Telling New Mexico: A New History*. This work, published in 2009, offered articles organized into sections that correspond to the New Mexico History Museum core exhibitions. The articles were originally printed between 1941 and 2007. This volume, printed by the museum, was a thick description of what was to be the interpretative labels inside the museum. It was a scholarly piece that interested visitors could use to further their knowledge of any of the subjects on display. However, not all the authors will find their interpretive work in the exhibitions. The topics of the articles may be discussed in an exhibit, but the viewpoint of the author may not be included in the label text.<sup>580</sup>

The Palace of the Governors, next to and managed by the history museum staff, has a long history. It was covered in a coffee table-type book printed in 2007 that broke that history into thematic blocks. The first chapter addressed Spanish “exploration” of the area. There was no discussion of New Western History terms, such as invasion or conquest. However, the second chapter, that of “1609–1709: A Century of Exploitation” offered a more balanced approach. It started with the building of the Palace by Spanish governor Pedro de Peralta. The chapter explained, “Peralta designed the Palace to exhibit his power and cultural superiority to both settlers and Natives.” Fortunately, the Native American point of view was also explored. The author stated, “What local Indians may have thought of the Palace at first is unknown. Some came there to trade or receive supplies. Others came for paid work, to report problems, or to serve a Palace jail sentence or forced labor. Still others watched from afar for raiding opportunities. For many, the

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<sup>580</sup> Marta Weigle, ed., *Telling New Mexico: A New History* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, n.d. [2009]).

Palace certainly represented lack of freedom, if not suffering and abuse.”<sup>581</sup> Although subtle in its approach, the book did present an even hand in discussing European and native relations.

*The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* attempted to show the relevance of the treaty to contemporary issues by looking at it from both the United States and Mexico’s points of view. The effects of the treaty were controversial and have led to unforeseen consequences between the two countries. The author, writing in 1990, clearly expressed his viewpoint, taking a Mexican-centered view, perhaps something to be applauded by New Western Historians, stating, “With an arrogance born of superior military, economic and industrial power, the United States virtually dictated the terms of settlement. The treaty established a pattern of inequality between the two countries, and this lopsided relationship has influenced Mexican-American relations ever since.”<sup>582</sup>

Mountain men also presented a topic for an exhibit at the museum. Southwestern author Carolyn Davis wrote of one such man in 2003. The southwest quarter of New Mexico in the late nineteenth century “was a land that attracted the last wave of old-style risk takers, shaped in the pioneer mold. In truth, they had few places left to go, since everywhere else the last remnants of the frontier were fast disappearing.” This work was a biography of bear hunter Nat Straw and “traditional ranching folk.”<sup>583</sup> The language of

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<sup>581</sup> Emily Abbink, *New Mexico’s Palace of the Governors: History of an American Treasure* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2007), 27, 31.

<sup>582</sup> Richard Griswold Del Castillo, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), xii–xiii.

<sup>583</sup> Carolyn O’Bagy Davis. *Mogollon Mountain Man: Nat Straw, Grizzly Hunter and Trapper* (Tucson, AZ: Sanpete Publications, 2003), 7–8.

writers of the West often included words like "pioneer" and "frontier," although these words can now be more clearly defined and carry less of a mythical connotation. The author's use of "risk-takers" was a good description of those "pioneer" people, regardless of ethnicity, who settled in the arid Southwest and tried to share the land and its resources. The environment was hostile to all, and frequently the people were hostile toward each other.

Concerning the Civil War in New Mexico, author Jerry Thompson used information printed in the period 1887 to 1888 that had been undiscovered until the 1990s. Thompson's 2001 book particularly provided a Confederate recollection of events of the campaign to conquer the Southwest by the Sibley Brigade. This work expanded on and differed from other stories of General Sibley. Thompson explained that Sibley was drunk most of the time, and the Union forces greatly determined and well led. The book used Limerick's point of telling the story of the West from the perspective of the West. The author explained his research, stating, "*Civil War in the Southwest* is a living memoir of a courageous band of young and ambitious Texans who marched west to seek glory and renown but found only death and destruction in a barren, hostile, and foreboding land far from the home fires of the Lone Star State."<sup>584</sup> Being a pioneer was hard work and rarely glorious.

The life of Billy the Kid was a popular topic with the visiting public and had a place in the history of New Mexico. Originally written in 1882, *The Authentic Life of Billy, the Kid* was part truth, part fiction. Many subsequent works used Pat Garrett's

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<sup>584</sup> Jerry Thompson, ed., *Civil War in the Southwest: Recollections of the Sibley Brigade* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), x–xi, xxv.

account to further the legend. English author Frederick Nolan provided notes and commentary for this work in 2000, and provided his own documentary history of the Lincoln County War in 1992. This description was more detailed than that found in the exhibit. Nolan explained that war came about in part because the people living there had survived harsh conditions without the support of modern society for decades. They were abused by people with wealth, even as the residents sought to be like those wealthy suppressers of the lower economic classes. Nolan posed these questions, “How did they do it? Why, in the face of such unremitting discouragement, did they go on believing it was worth persisting? What would America be today if they had not?” These questions and the research provided offered insights along New Western History themes, especially conquest and complexity. His assumption that America was built on the backs of these rugged individuals alone was perhaps more part of the myth than reality. Still, Nolan was promoting the actions of the ordinary people who overcame the rule by might and who used democracy and law to survive.<sup>585</sup>

Also available was a study by author John Tuska, published in 1994. This was a well-researched book that covered the life of Billy the Kid, as well as how he was portrayed by historians, in fiction and in film. The author cited Frederick Nolan’s *The Lincoln County War*, and considered it one of the best histories, although not perfect, since the author was forced by his publisher to use the generic racist term “Hispanic” rather than native New Mexican, as an example of the “imposition at the time of Anglo-

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<sup>585</sup> Frederick Nolan, “Notes and Commentary” in *The Authentic Life of Billy, the Kid*, Pat F. Garrett (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), and Frederick Nolan, *The Lincoln County War: A Documentary History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), xii–xiii.

American mores.” Tuska used Nolan’s work and other sources to analyze and clarify points made by historians and authors on the subject. Tuska suggested an order to reading works on the events around the Lincoln County War as some “have prompted innumerable errors by other writers over the years and [Robert] Utley’s books have no information in them that cannot be found elsewhere with less quixotic and ludicrous interpretations which in his case also involve all too many errors of omission, commission, and distortion of documents.” Utley’s book was published by a university press, but as with all cases of historiography, critical views can be found.<sup>586</sup>

The atomic age was reviewed by historian John Hunner. He wrote of Los Alamos and of J. Robert Oppenheimer. From its start in 1943, the town of Los Alamos was a center of social and cultural issues associated with the atomic age. This 2003 book not only looked at the work done in the laboratories that changed the world, but also at the families and workers outside the laboratories that dealt with the daily existence of that changing world. There was an exchange of culture by the people living in and around Los Alamos, just as there had always been in New Mexico. Hunner explained, “This cultural switching is a time-honored tradition in northern New Mexico. After contact with the Spanish settlers in the sixteenth century, American Indians taught the Europeans how to live in the challenging environment. Upon the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in 1821, Hispanics and American Indians similarly tutored the newly arrived Anglo Americans. And in the 1940s and 1950s, many of these native New Mexicans instructed the residents

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<sup>586</sup> John Tuska, *Billy the Kid: His Life and Legend* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 141–142, 133. Robert Utley, *Billy the Kid: A Short and Violent Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

at Los Alamos in the mysteries and delights of living in northern New Mexico. A borrowing or switching of cultures often occurs on the frontier between societies.” Hunner used some New Western History themes in this work; convergence and continuity. Hunner’s work on Oppenheimer, published in 2009, along with his depiction of Los Alamos, would have helped show the significance of the atomic age and Los Alamos specifically in the New Mexico History Museum exhibit. Instead, visitors encountered a not easily understood exhibition of words on the walls and ceiling along with a few pay phones. The words were statements made by people working at Los Alamos and were shown in an attempt to provide the attitudes of those involved in atomic research. The message did not reach all visitors. And yet, just when it appeared that Hunner’s work was modern in a New Western History mode, Hunner could not resist using language designed to appeal to a more traditional, myth-based view of history. He added, “The atomic bomb burst over the New Mexican desert in 1945, adding a new dimension to the American myth of the Wild West—that of atomic sheriffs riding off into the sunset to save the world for democracy.”<sup>587</sup>

The new museum building was built in large part because the Palace is a historic object itself and should not be changed to meet the needs of a modern audience. The new space was conceived to be “a partner in education, to be a center of community.” Now there are classrooms, an auditorium, climate controlled galleries, and collection storage

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<sup>587</sup> Jon Hunner, *Inventing Los Alamos: The Growth of an Atomic Community* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 3–6. Jon Hunner, *J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Cold War, and the Atomic West* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 8.

facilities. “The Palace never had that, and you cannot do that to the Palace.” The Palace has its own mission, which is not as broad as the history museum.<sup>588</sup>

Since the building is new, so were the exhibitions. This was the first time a statewide history of New Mexico could be told in one place. The planning was extensive and considered modern display techniques. The old exhibitions in the Palace “had a tradition of books on the wall.” The staff took a content team approach in planning the new exhibitions. Thirty town hall meetings were conducted around the state. People were asked what they would like to see in the history museum, what were the important stories in New Mexico history, who were the people involved, and what stories were particular to the various sections of the state? This was a New Western History inclusive approach. That information was then compared to the artifacts available to support those stories. Stories with only text were not usually included, as exhibitions are usually visual or tactile. Decisions were made about how “could we best tell the story through an object, through a graphic, through a photo, through a drawing, through a document, through a map, through a computer interactive, through audio, through film.” The staff developed a matrix for the number of words per label. Main stories got up to eighty-four words. Sub-stories were allotted sixty-two words, and labels reflecting only an illustration received twenty-six to thirty words. The strategic plan was to create an interpretation of the compelling stories of the state’s history.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Conversation with a museum administrator, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 2010.

<sup>589</sup> Conversation with a museum administrator, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 2010.

The individual exhibits in the long-term gallery were designed to change, as borrowed artifacts were only on loan for a one-year period. This allowed for various interpretations, or changing focus, on any one story or idea. The museum staff revealed their intentions when they stated, “We have tried multiple perspectives where we can. Some people really appreciate that, and other people may be a little unhappy because their favorite perspective is not the only one being represented.”<sup>590</sup> This statement by a museum professional was another way of looking at the comment made by Mike Wallace. When people only look at one side of any story, it is easier to create a myth around an event by adding culturally specific aspects that are not factual. Changing interpretations of the same exhibit keeps the exhibition fresh so visitors will want to come back often. Funding, as at all sites, will dictate how often any of the exhibits can change.



#14 *Beyond History's Records*

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<sup>590</sup> Conversation with a museum administrator, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 2010.

Since this was a new, large, and statewide facility, with modern museology concepts established, it was expected that the themes of New Western History would be displayed.

There were six main sections representing the chronological periods over the five hundred years on display. The first section was “Beyond History’s Records.” The curved walls of the entrance were designed to give the appearance of a valley with high cliffs above.<sup>591</sup> I did not grasp this design concept at the time, but focused instead on the walls, which were filled with artifacts and interactive devices that provided oral comments. The oral histories were triggered by pressing metal impressions of Native Americans’ hands. However, this was only explained at the beginning of the exhibit so if that label was missed it was confusing to someone taught to not touch objects in a museum. The story told was that of the longevity of the Indians on the land and how they traded and moved across North and Central America. A good example of New Western History concepts concerning this idea was found on the museum’s website. It said, “The American Southwest remains their (Native peoples) home, never empty nor waiting to be discovered, neither a frontier nor a paradise.”<sup>592</sup>

The arrival of the Spanish was the focus of the next gallery. There was a large cross hanging from the ceiling at the entrance. I was told that it was to be backlit so visitors would have to walk on the shadow of the cross, a harbinger of Spanish Catholicism casting a pall over Native American beliefs. However, light-sensitive books

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<sup>591</sup> Beyond History’s Records, New Mexico History Museum, <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/mediabank.php?mode=events&action=detail&fileID=770&eventID=214&instID=19> (accessed March 5, 2014). The metal handprints that activate audio descriptions of the artifacts or Native people’s view of the land can be seen in this image.

<sup>592</sup> <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/events.php?action=detail&eventID=214> (accessed March 5, 2014).

and a cloth medallion were also hung in this same area so the cross lighting had to be dimmed. The medium was getting in the way of the message. Regardless, the message was that of the New Western History idea of conquest. A panel called Coronado's Conquest explained that Indians could expect violence on return visits.<sup>593</sup> A later panel indicated, "Spanish colonists tried to transplant their civilization to New Mexico. For Pueblo peoples, this meant labor on Spanish haciendas and missions, a command to abandon their beliefs, and worship a new god. Pueblo people rebelled, Spanish settlers retaliated, and ways of life mixed and clashed."<sup>594</sup> Many such panels reflecting the same message can be seen at other sites that discuss the Pueblo Revolt and interaction of native peoples with the Spanish. As in other museums, these various sites were not mentioned. This section did display portraits of some of the Spanish leaders of the period. It was informative to be able to put a face with the names mentioned in the labels.

The next section was titled "Linking Nations." It reflected the change from Spanish to Mexican rule, and then as a United States territory. This section and the following sections, had more on display, as more artifacts and records are available than in the prior sections. This section spoke to the conflicts that came with the new independence, the development of the Santa Fe Trail opening trade to the United States through the east and north, and the kind of people living and working in the new northern territory of Mexico. Fur traders in the mountains, consisting of a mix of Mexican,

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<sup>593</sup> "Coronado's Conquest" (Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico History Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>594</sup> "A New Order for Heaven and Earth" (Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico History Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

American, and French, as well as the farmers, ranchers, miners, and purveyors of goods to these people, were represented.

One story of the Santa Fe Trail told of José Piedad Tafoya. The panel explained the complexity of life, stating, “José Tafoya was a scout, rancher, and Comanchero. He traded with Comanches (Numunu), and then helped the U.S. Calvary track down Comanche bands. On raiding expeditions, he and others took Navajo (Diné) woman and children as slaves. He returned home when he could. Tofoya’s life reflected the demands of survival and the complexity of his times—when employers, trading partners, allies and enemies were sometimes one and the same.”<sup>595</sup>

The Mexican-American War and the Taos Rebellion shortly thereafter were given some space. There was a transitional area depicting the ideal societies imagined by New Mexicans, Native Americans, Hispanics, and the newly arrived Anglo-Americans up to that the time of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which turned the disputed area over to the United States. This area presented a comparison of each society, showing their similarities and differences, and allowing the visitor to see the new Western history theme of complexity. This section bleed into the next.

Section four was called “Becoming the Southwest.” It addressed U.S. Indian policy and the creation of reservations, the “Long Walk” of the Navajo and their imprisonment near what is today Fort Sumner, south and east of Santa Fe. In the same display the topic of the Civil War in New Mexico was played out on a panel that told how 3,500 Texans under General Henry Sibley took Santa Fe, but were later defeated at

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<sup>595</sup> “José Piedad Tafoya” (Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico History Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

Glorieta Pass. Conflicts over land and water rights led to violence, which were depicted in the displays of the Lincoln County War. In this exhibit the legend of Billy the Kid had prominence and the New Western History theme of complexity was evident. The panel described the reason for the dispute. It stated, “In Lincoln County, the U.S. army needed cattle to feed its soldiers and supply Apache (N’de) on their reservations. The cattle needed land and the ranchers needed supplies. In 1878, the struggle for these assets erupted as the Lincoln County War.”<sup>596</sup> Continuity was also revealed in the exhibit on the railroad along with a description of how recourses are extracted and shipped across the state. Lastly, the section discussed how the natural beauty of the state was promoted across America, which increased tourism, which lead to artist colonies and health resorts.

New Mexico as a player in the nation and world was seen in section five, “A New Image for New Mexico.” Statehood, the effects of the Great Depression, and the role of New Mexico in World War II and the use of Los Alamos as a site for the development of atomic weapons consumed much of this area. Documentaries showed the postwar boom period and population growth and its challenges.

The last section was “My New Mexico.” The description for this section was another good example of a New Western History approach. It described this section as “The past lives in the present. Our memories and traditions will become New Mexico’s history. Whether cowboy, miner, immigrant or scientist, whatever your ethnic or religious background, the stories of New Mexicans today reveal unbroken connections to

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<sup>596</sup> “Outlaws and Heroes” (Santa Fe, NM: New Mexico History Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

the past.”<sup>597</sup> Visitors were encouraged to write out and hang on a wall their thoughts about being in New Mexico.

The museum was large and attempted to cover a long period and many topics. Not all reviewers were pleased with the results. Marsha Weisiger, environmental historian, claimed the museum “fails to convey the exciting recent scholarship on the state’s history in its permanent galleries. In part this may be due to its desire to offend no one.”<sup>598</sup> In talking of the history displayed up to 1870, the reviewer stated “The exhibits also make clear that New Mexico has long been a meeting ground for different cultures and that those cultures have clashed, sometime violently. Still, they disclose little of the motivations and passions behind those clashes. They explain what happened without really explaining why.” Additionally, Weisiger concluded “The treatment of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries seems, at best, an afterthought,” and “That the main gallery gave short shrift to modern history is regrettable, not only because some of New Mexico’s most significant contributions to our nation’s history came in the twentieth century, but because the public tends to connect most viscerally to the history of their parent’s and grandparents’ generations.”<sup>599</sup> When Patricia Limerick conceived of New Western History themes, she wanted our current interpretations to reflect the values and needs of today. Interpretations could better reflect the issues people are dealing with today by showing how the issues had their beginnings in the past, particularly those of the

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<sup>597</sup> New Mexico History Museum, <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/events.php?action=detail&eventID=214> (accessed March 5, 2014).

<sup>598</sup> Marsha Weisiger, “No More Heroes: Western History in Public Places,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 292.

<sup>599</sup> Weisiger, “No More Heroes,” 293.

Western past. One definition of continuity is the protection of the local economy, water use, relations with Native Americans and Mexico, and freedom of religious practice.<sup>600</sup> Weisiger's comments indicated that many more of these topics could have been discussed or discussed with more of a current interpretation, better reflecting the needs of visitors who are gaining exposure to New Western History concepts elsewhere.

Other historians thought the concentration of the Santa Fe History Museum was a view of the state from a Santa Fe perspective.<sup>601</sup> They would have preferred a more local approach from the various regions within the state. Interpretation is, of course, a personal thing. This means the perspective of the historians involved with any exhibition colors the language used and emphasis of the message being delivered. While an exhibit can apply New Western History concepts, it still might not clearly reflect current historiography. Just as in the writing of a historical monograph where the author is the last word in the sources used and direction taken, a museum exhibition is the product of the curator, regardless of what subject matter experts they engage or works they read.

The following table reveals the extent to which New Western History themes were found in the state sponsored museums surveyed. Impressions gathered during oral interviews, observing artifacts and images, reading label text, brochures and web sites, form the basis for this analysis. The prominence of the incidence of New Western History themes was also a factor in the ranking process. Patricia Limerick's four "Cs" were used to determine whether a New Western History theme was discussed. As a reminder, these

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<sup>600</sup> Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 18–19.

<sup>601</sup> Conversations with academic-based historians, September 2010, and April 2011.

four “Cs” are: Continuity, relevant topics to the first historians of the Southwest that are still relevant; Convergence, which people met, and the consequence of their interaction; Conquest, how, as part of a global incursion, Europeans seized the land and resources and forever changed the daily existence of the previous inhabitants; and Complexity, the demonstration of varied thoughts and actions of all people and cultures, history cannot be explained in a black or white manner.<sup>602</sup>

Table 2

Low, Medium, and High ranking is based on the author’s judgment of occurrences of New Western History themes displayed throughout the exhibitions. The size of the exhibition was considered, as was the ease of finding the four themes in the display.

Museum	Exhibit Date	Continuity	Convergence	Conquest	Complexity	Total
Tucson	1978–2006	Low	High	Medium	Absent	High
Farm & Ranch	1996–2008	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High
NM History	2009	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High
Papago Park	1996	Low	Medium	Absent	Medium	Medium
Pioneer	1980s	Low	Low	Absent	Absent	Low

This group of museums had the highest instance of showing New Western History themes. Their overall rankings are higher than that of the National Park Service sites.

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<sup>602</sup> Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 18–21.

Two of these museums, the New Mexico state sites, showed all of the four themes in a forthright manner. In the case of the Tucson museum, it demonstrated a high occurrence of the convergence theme in an obvious way, and they included two of the other “Cs” in their text panels. The exhibition opening dates for this group were neither the oldest nor the newest. The span of years between the oldest exhibition opening date and the most recent was thirty-one years. Convergence, the inclusiveness of multiple groups and women and children in label texts, was included at all the site, just as it had been at the National Park Service exhibitions. This state sponsored group also had the highest use of the complexity theme, which was less evident in the National Park and local museum sites.

The curators of the exhibitions presented in these state-sponsored institutions could have reviewed several of the works discussed above that expressed New Western History themes from a historiographical background. The sources that the curators used and how much emphasis they placed on them is unknown. Regardless of the sources used, most of the sites emphasized New Western History themes throughout their exhibitions. Some appear to have used a restrained, European-centric visitor-pleasing emphasis, but even these had elements of New Western History in select exhibits. All provide valuable information, but some texts made the visitor work harder to find the New Western History themes than others. While it is difficult to please everyone, museum professionals are best served if they can consult with content experts and also do a public evaluation before an exhibit opening to determine if the intended message is indeed being communicated.

## CHAPTER 6

### LOCAL MUSEUM SITES

*“One man’s life is another man’s spectacle.”*<sup>603</sup>

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998

We have an interest in the lives of other people. Discovering what they did, and more interesting, why they did something, is the stuff of historians. Change over time is History, change in the course of other people’s lives can be the spectacle that attracts us to a study of history. Looking at nationally and internationally famous people, the larger-than-life heroes and villains, was the approach most historians took at the turn of the twentieth century. Today, the lens is focused more on the common person, the local, the neighbor next door, the New Western History in an intimate and familiar setting. As one academic historian put it, “It is great to have history exhibits that take a long view and that go from coast to shining coast, but I think that first connection should lock up the local and nearby history. Once you hook the public with their own history, or the history of their local community, then you can broaden out the context and include bigger themes and wider geographical area.”<sup>604</sup>

Local museums offer the opportunity for us to reflect on the events that occurred in our immediate area. They provide the story of town founders, of families and friends, trace the change to our towns and cities from creation to yesterday, and present a glimpse

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<sup>603</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 47.

<sup>604</sup> Conversation with a historian of the Southwest in the Southwest, April 2011.

into the future. Some present thoughtful interpretations, others display the artifacts of residents in a hodge-podge, presenting curious items without describing their relevance.

The historian cited above was, in part, quoting historian Joseph Amato. In his 2002 *Rethinking Home*, Amato said, “All history is local. Every place is a universe unto itself. Yet home remains the microcosm in which we learn and know all we will ever learn and know of fellow humans and the world at large.”<sup>605</sup> He also saw an environmental component to local history. He wrote, “Historians must understand how human relations to grasses and animals, lands and waters, machines and markets, agricultural practices and personal desires, shaped and reshaped an environment, a way of life, and a state of mind.”<sup>606</sup> Why people are where they are, especially when they migrate to an area, could be based on national or international events. What they do in and to their immediate vicinity is local history.

Another long-standing proponent of local history, Carol Kammen also believed local history could be used as a catalyst to get people to see how the local fits into the larger context of their region and country. Kammen expanded Amato’s environmental idea. She explained, “local history is, despite its limited geographical focus, a broad field of inquiry: it is the political, social, and economic history of a community and is religious and intellectual history too. It is a place to look for individual reactions to historical events and the arena in which to practice demographic investigation.”<sup>607</sup> Kammen also

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<sup>605</sup> Joseph A. Amato, *Rethinking Home: A Case for Writing Local History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 191.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>607</sup> Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2003), 4.

wrote that local history is the easiest for people to read and the most available, because “local history is, of course, the most accessible of all history, for it is the closest to home.”<sup>608</sup> When researched in depth and presented in a scholarly fashion, local history can be the basis for histories with a broader scope.

Historians David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty praised local history, and put it to good use. They cautioned against the creation of myths, the telling of stories not grounded in historical data, and demonstrated how well researched historical writings can overcome them. They explained, “Too much memory is paralyzing, and so everyone remembers selectively and incompletely. Yet, the more extensive and accurate the memories, the greater the ability to decide whether to follow or depart from past practices.” Distorted memories sometimes become current beliefs and forge myths. Histories, more accurate interpretations of events, can help change that, for “creation myths, national superiority myths, alligators-in-the-city-sewers myths all reflect the lingering hold of a time of limited knowledge on a later age that should be better informed.”<sup>609</sup> Kyvig and Marty explained how local events can have a greater impact than national events on the lives of most people. They stated that all people have a history; “The president will no doubt have wider-ranging influence, but the plumber’s grandchildren, neighbors, and clients may be more directly affected by him than by the president.”<sup>610</sup> Most importantly, local history can bring people to museums to not just

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<sup>608</sup> Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1.

<sup>609</sup> David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: AltaMira Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>610</sup> Kyvig and Marty, 7.

read about, but see the artifacts of their community, and feel their connection to history. The authors proposed, “But beyond the serious importance of examining the past of our immediate world to improve memory; dispel myth; understand the contemporary situation; sharpen social, political, and economic generalizations; or facilitate intelligent policy making, nearby history has a further intangible appeal that may be its most notable quality. The emotional rewards of learning about a past that has plainly and directly affected one’s own life cannot be duplicated by any other type of historical inquiry.”<sup>611</sup> Kyvig and Marty brought not just the mind to history, but the heart as well. City and private institutions offer local insight into the community, often displaying the same issues that impacted the rest of the nation. However, they also can single out local people and tell their stories in an intimate way.

As at the other sites discussed in prior chapters, the local museum staffs were unable to produce exact references to works or consultants cited in the creation of their exhibitions. Most of the city museums have their own collection of oral histories and diaries of local residents. They relied on these and town records for information to curate exhibitions. However, scholarly works were available that could have been consulted in the creation of the displays. Several are reviewed below. One curator informed me that the museum staff also went directly to subject experts at the local college or university to have labels reviewed. This was usually done after the label was drafted, rather than asking for text creation help, since the museum professionals found it easier to synthesize the volume of material to a handful of words. They would then ask academics what

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<sup>611</sup> Kyvig and Marty, 12–13.

concept was perhaps missing rather than debate how to include an entire published article or book on a brief label.<sup>612</sup>

### Tempe History Museum, (Tempe, Arizona)

Tempe is a suburb of Phoenix and home of Arizona State University. The Tempe



#15 Old design, circa 2007

public space, adding a community room and an open area exhibition hall. The prior exhibition was constructed in 1998. The focus at that time was to protect artifacts from ultraviolet light. The space

History Museum<sup>613</sup> is a city-operated institution and was granted a \$4.1 million dollar bond issue to upgrade their facility and open a newly designed exhibition in 2010. Most of the funds were used in the



#16 New design, circa 2010

was dark and physically inflexible. The new exhibit hall is an open design and bright. It was designed by a firm that typically worked in children's museums and science

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<sup>612</sup> Conversation with a museum professionals, Tempe, Arizona, October 2010 and April 2011.

<sup>613</sup> The name of the museum changed from the "Tempe Historical Museum" to the "Tempe History Museum" when the renovations to the building were completed in 2010.

centers.<sup>614</sup> The two pictures show the old design and feel on the left, the new style below.

Tempe History is the only example of a museum seen in this study that used both New Western History and modern museology presentation concepts.

For Tempe, several locally published works were available for research purposes. In 1996 artist Richard Nearing published drawings of houses and provided brief biographies of their histories. *Oasis in the Valley*, a short book published in 2007 by author Mark Pry, described the importance of obtaining water for the growth of the city. It was published by the museum. There is also an undated history of early Tempe. Authors Dorothy F. Robinson and Lola Brough Bonham began with the life of Charles Trumbell Hayden and added the stories of other early settlers. Transportation, schools, the newspaper, electricity, and other utilities and businesses were briefly described to reveal how the infrastructure of the town was formed.<sup>615</sup>

A work on the environmental history of Phoenix might have been valuable to review for the “Surviving in the Desert” section of the exhibition. Historian Michael Logan published *Desert Cities* in 2006 as a review of the environmental similarities between Phoenix and Tucson, and how the city leaders determined to use the resources differently. Because Tempe is adjacent to Phoenix, some of the findings would apply there. Logan stated, “Water has always been central to the communities’ history. Simply stated, without the rivers and the riparian ecosystems supported by rivers, no permanent,

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<sup>614</sup> Gyroscope Inc. Oakland, California.

<sup>615</sup> Richard Nearing, *Drawing on History: Tempe’s Heritage through Its Historical Buildings and Homes, 1871–1996* (Tempe, AZ: Gem Publishing, 1996). Mark E. Pry, *Oasis in the Valley: The Story of Water in Tempe* (Tempe, AZ: Tempe History Museum, 2007), and Dorothy F. Robinson and Lola Brough Bonham, *A History of Early Tempe* (privately published, n.d.).

sedentary human society could have developed in the region. Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo cultures have exploited the water supply according to their own concepts of appropriate use. Judgments of ethical propriety toward the natural environment have changed over the centuries, but central to each culture's residence in the valleys have been the politically determined valuation and use of the water resources.”<sup>616</sup> Others have said the same: without water, there is no life in the desert. Logan also posited, “The harsh conditions in the desert require humans to bind together to survive. This applied to the prehistoric Hohokam, and it remains true today. Beyond issues of survival, rising to levels of comfort and prosperity continued and heightened the impetus toward community formulation. Within the discipline of history, this focus on settlement patterns and city building in the west remains more than just vaguely Turnerian.”<sup>617</sup> His nod to the debate between traditional views of Turner and New Western History is notable. Logan then explained that while the urban built environment has grown, most people no longer interact with the real desert. Rather “nature is something they visit but do not live in.”<sup>618</sup> Tempe History considered itself a community history museum. “We worked with Hispanic folks before. We work with local Muslim folks to create an exhibit. We worked with Southeast Asian refugees and created an exhibit here. We are now working with an African-American group.”<sup>619</sup> Not all the conversations with these groups led to exhibits.

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<sup>616</sup> Michael F. Logan, *Desert Cities: The Environmental History of Phoenix and Tucson* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 4.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>619</sup> Conversation with a museum curator, Tempe, Arizona, August 2010.

Some became a program or additional information for an interpretative tour. However, a major presence of the local community was seen in the current long-term exhibition.

There were four thematic areas to the exhibition: College Town, Building Our Community, Living Together, and Surviving in the Desert. There was no set path through the exhibition. The sections were color coded, but visitors were free to move about the space in whichever direction they chose. Each section had its own sitting area with content-related books and a computer terminal with content and oral history presentations available via touch screen selection. The first exhibition encountered was that of Surviving in the Desert. It contained several sections that relate to the New Western History concepts of continuity, convergence, and complexity. The selections were: A Fragile Land, Water Fluctuations, Brown Clouds and Heat Islands, Unintended Consequences, Sonoran Desert Stories, Desert Dweller Biographies, and Sonoran Desert Videos.<sup>620</sup> These titles alone contributed to a view that water is not only necessary to living in the Southwest, but that it shapes the land and people who lived on it. Unfortunately, much of the information contained on the computers was the same as the text on the exhibit labels. The opportunity to delve much deeper into the topic was not utilized, probably due to the cost and time constraints on the museum staff.

The opening banner to this Surviving in the Desert section told much of the story from a New Western History perspective: “Prehistoric and historic settlers in the region adapted to the desert by modifying and transforming the environment to their needs, often resulting in irreversible changes to the fragile landscape.” The banner then discussed how

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<sup>620</sup> “Surviving in the Desert” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit computerized Exploration Station.

the local vegetation and flowing water has changed since the coming of settlers to the area. The label concluded, “Some of these changes have produced unintended consequences, raising questions about the sustainability of desert cities.”<sup>621</sup> However, not all the labels adhere to a strict interpretation of New Western History concepts.

Along one wall was a timeline. Broken into broad time periods, the labels were sometimes traditional in their interpretation of European introduction to the area. One such period was called the Age of Exploration, rather than something like Conquest and War. It talked of Father Kino naming the Salt River, Mexico’s War of Independence, and the acquisition of the Southwest by the United States with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.<sup>622</sup> Few if any comments concerning Native Americans in the area appeared on the timeline. A convergence issue was not addressed until 1925, when the timeline mentioned, “Adolpho Romo brings a suit against the trustees of the Tempe Elementary School District in Maricopa County Superior Court, challenging the district’s segregation of Mexican-American children.”<sup>623</sup> There was no mention as to the outcome of the suit. The next panel on the timeline mentioned that “Emerson Harvey become the first African-American football player at Arizona State Teachers College.”<sup>624</sup> Not all the timeline entries showed a disregard for New Western History interpretation, however. The 1946 label read, “The Tempe Beach Pool segregation policy is ended, due in large

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<sup>621</sup> “Surviving in the Desert” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>622</sup> “Age of Exploration” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>623</sup> “1920s” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>624</sup> “1930s” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

part to the efforts of Hispanic veterans from Tempe.”<sup>625</sup> While this, and a handful of African-American accomplishments were mentioned later, the timeline was not as explicit as the banners and labels in other areas in promoting the concept of convergence and the troubles that went along with it. The timeline did end in the future and expressed a related question. In the 2020s section it asked, “Will diversity help shape Tempe’s sense of place?”<sup>626</sup>

Moving off the timeline were the four exhibit sections. The Living Together section addressed such New Western History topics as diversity and ethnicity. Images showed an ethnically mixed group of women and men. In this section a visitor could find a much more in-depth label about Tempe Beach discrimination that was only briefly mentioned in the timeline. This label explained that the pool was for whites only, and that it took twenty-three years for the majority of Tempe’s population, Hispanics, to gain access to the facility. It also mentioned the historian responsible for the research into this subject.<sup>627</sup> An additional label discussed how segregation in education in 1899 “would cause strained relations well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.”<sup>628</sup> The New Western History theme of continuity, especially as it concerns relations among various ethnic groups, was evident throughout the exhibition.

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<sup>625</sup> “1940s” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>626</sup> “2020s” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>627</sup> “Tempe Beach Discrimination” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label. Christine Marin, the historian responsible for this research, was the Curator/Archivist and Historian of the Chicano Research Collection, Department of Archives and Manuscripts at Arizona State University.

<sup>628</sup> “Tempe & Hispanic Relations—1899” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

The Building Our Community section continued this theme when discussing the settlement of the town's area. Labels noted, "The first settlers to move to the Tempe area were Mexican-American families from southern Arizona and Sonora, Mexico." The labels further explained how these early settlers helped redevelop the prehistoric Hohokam canal system.<sup>629</sup> Although it is somewhat of an anachronism to call this group of settlers "Mexican-Americans," since at that time they were not part of the United States, it did express to visitors not familiar with the region that Anglos were latecomers to the area.

In this same section a label created a tenuous tie to the Arizona Historical Society museum at Papago Park, Tempe, discussed in a prior chapter. The label disclosed the fate of the Japanese families living in the Tempe area during World War II. Those Japanese families living north of the exclusion line were allowed to stay in their homes but their movements were restricted.<sup>630</sup> Again, no mention of the Papago Park site was given as a resource for further learning about this regional issue.

Living Together was the most obvious example of New Western History themes in this exhibition. It focused on the various ethnic groups that over time came to make today's Tempe. One of the first labels viewed in this section explained. "Since the first human occupation in the area, Tempe has been shaped by the efforts and interactions of diverse groups of people." It also said, "Living together has not always been harmonious

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<sup>629</sup> "The Origins of a Desert Town" (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>630</sup> "After Pearl Harbor" (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

and at times injustices have occurred.”<sup>631</sup> A kiosk contained booklets that talk about various Tempe ethnic groups, including Hispanics, Jews, Muslims, Vietnamese, African-Americans, and Danes. Mormons were mentioned in a separate exhibit.<sup>632</sup> Ethnic strife and the complexity of life for many non-Anglo groups were discussed in a large label titled “Communities Apart.”<sup>633</sup> Finally, an exhibit displayed the exclusion of Native Americans from society and the taking of their farming lands by both Anglos and Mexican-Americans.<sup>634</sup>

As mentioned above, this exhibition was a clear example of the New Western History concepts. It did not mention the conquest theme mostly because the Spanish did not come this far north to create settlements. The Spanish influence was present but in a peripheral way. However, the depiction of whites being the dominant class is evident. In the Surviving in the Desert section especially, academics whose works were consulted or opinions sought were listed on the labels. Inclusivity of ethnic groups was very evident. While conflict was not avoided as a topic, it was not emphasized either. The subject matter was generally more limited in time and place than at the National Park and State Historical Society sites, but still presented in a multiple-perspective manner that made it an example of New Western History displays for other sites to consider.

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<sup>631</sup> “I think Tempe has come a long way” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>632</sup> “Settlement by the Butte” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>633</sup> “Communities Apart” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>634</sup> “They Were Here First” (Tempe, AZ: Tempe Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

## Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum (Bisbee, Arizona)

Bisbee is in the hilly region of southeastern Arizona, about one hundred miles from Tucson and close to the U.S.-Mexico border. The museum building is owned by the City of Bisbee, but the museum is operated by a private non-profit corporation. The museum opened in 1971, but according to a museum staff member, around 2000 the staff conducted a survey of the residents and discovered the exhibits were not meeting the needs of the community. The people of Bisbee wanted more than just a history of local people, they wanted to have an exhibition on mining, since the town was founded as a mining community.<sup>635</sup> The curators at the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum obliged. After obtaining many grants, expert museum help from the Smithsonian, and support from locals and subject matter experts, “Digging In,” a history of mining in Bisbee, was opened in 2006. Two years later the slightly smaller story of the general town history, “Bisbee: Urban Outpost on the Frontier,” was opened.

The history of Bisbee can be found in *Bisbee*. This 1992 book was the basis for the exhibition prior to the current one. Some of the exhibition story was similar to the book, especially on the first floor. Bisbee was not just an isolated mining town. “Local development could best be seen as a result of many larger forces interacting on a regional, national, and even international scale.”<sup>636</sup> This was an edited work of articles from a handful of authors with expertise in various subjects, including environmental engineering, mining, mineralogy, and history. The articles included the history of the

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<sup>635</sup> Conversation with a museum professional, Bisbee, Arizona, August 2010.

<sup>636</sup> Carlos A. Schwantes, *Bisbee: urban Outpost on the Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), xv.

importance of copper to the area, the urbanization of the town, an industrial history, how daily life was conducted in the mining camps, the importance of the railroads, and the relations between management and unions.

Two works describe the deportation of miners from the area during the unrest of World War I. Researchers Hazel Gibson and Sue Smith compiled a listing of newspaper articles concerning the topic in 1990.<sup>637</sup> *Forging the Copper Collar* provided an analysis of the event and the larger picture of labor versus management that arose in the mining industry. Southwest historian James Byrik, in his 1982 work, stated, “This book is about power: about Eastern power sponsoring and manipulating economic, political, social and cultural life in the American West; about corporate interests in Arizona gaining power, using it, abusing it, losing it—and regaining it.”<sup>638</sup> This was a story of the Progressive Movement specific to Arizona. Looking to broaden earlier interpretations of the Bisbee Deportation and nicely stating how history changes over time, the author considered, “Each of the earlier interpretations of the Bisbee Deportation—pragmatic, ideological, or behavioral—gave a singular explanation to the event. But, as in other historical developments, there are multiple branches in the Bisbee Deportation’s casual tree.” New Western History themes complement this several-points-of-view approach.<sup>639</sup>

For the history of mining in the Bisbee area, a concise work was available. *The Story of Mining in Bisbee*, published in 1998, discussed the geography and geology of the

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<sup>637</sup> Hazel Gibson and Sue Smith, comps, *Bisbee Deportation and the People Involved—1917* (Tucson: Arizona State Genealogical Society, 1990).

<sup>638</sup> James W. Byrik, *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona’s Labor-Management War of 1901–1921* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982), xiv.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid., 325.

land, how mines are constructed, and the history of the copper mines that made the town possible. Arizona author George F. Leaming mentioned how the Spanish were looking for gold, but finding none in this area, left this land in the hands of the Apache. He then traced the history of mining in the area from the 1880s until its decline in the 1990s. A timeline depicted not only the copper industry events, but also those of Arizona and other external happenings that may have affected the demand for copper. This is not a scholarly footnoted work. It provided little interpretation or analysis, but did describe events and processes, both the positive aspects of the uses of copper and the environmental and labor issues that came about because of these processes. Still, it provided a generous resource for the museum curator to consider when determining what material to present to a visiting audience. It also told the story using pictures and graphs in a concise manner, another lesson for exhibition creators.<sup>640</sup>

The general history exhibition on the first floor opened with a New Western History-based orientation. A label called “Growing Up in Bisbee” started with the phrase, “Women and children” and reveals that they worked in any and all areas outside the mines. The label also promoted the role of women when it stated the first high school graduation class consisted of four girls.<sup>641</sup> Pictures of girls and women, and dolls and toys that girls would have played with, were prominent in this display.

Since mining was the cause of the town’s existence, mining was discussed in the town history exhibition, and then more specifically in the larger “Digging In” exhibition.

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<sup>640</sup> George F. Leaming, *The Story of Mining in Bisbee* (Marana, AZ: Arizona Lithographers, Inc., 1998).

<sup>641</sup> “Growing Up In Bisbee” (Bisbee, AZ: Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

The discussion of mining in the Bisbee presentation employed New Western History themes. A label immediately set the tone by stating that the mining industry was ruled by Anglos. A section titled “A White Man’s Camp” stated,

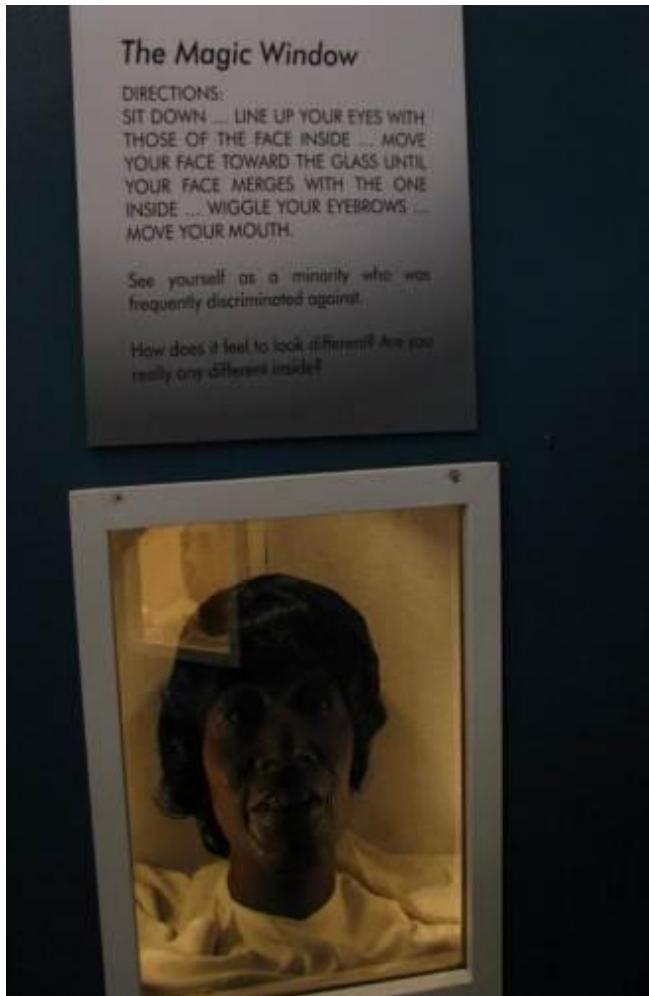
Although there were a variety of ethnic types here, it was the Northern Europeans who dominated this town politically, socially and economically. Northern Europeans got the high-paying jobs, such as foremen, engineers and mechanics. Mexican immigrants and American citizens of Mexican descent were not allowed to work underground, where the best wages were paid. They were allowed to work only as surface laborers or in the smelter. Although Southern European immigrants worked underground, they were given the lower-paying jobs such as mucking and tramping. Blacks were not employed in the mines and could only obtain jobs as musicians, porters and shoeshine boys. Chinese were not even allowed to stay overnight in Bisbee.<sup>642</sup>

The label clearly pointed out the convergence of various ethnic groups in the West by listing several of them. It also referred to the New Western History themes of complexity and conquest, albeit the conquest is not of a Spanish invasion, but an Anglo control of the political, social, and economic life of the mining community.

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<sup>642</sup> “Do Differences Matter?” (Bisbee, AZ: Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

The next label was “The Magic Window.” It assumes that the visitor is white and



#17 *The Magic Window*

view themselves as different from minority groups. Here, the visitor’s reflection was overlaid that of a dark-skinned mannequin head. The question was asked how the visitor felt about looking different and if they are really any different inside.<sup>643</sup> This was a powerful message to Anglo visitors, asking them to be introspective and subconsciously consider the four “Cs” of New Western History.

In contrast to what was seen at the National Park exhibitions where Spanish, Mexican, and Native

American cultures and foods were combined, labels in the Bisbee exhibit asked if America is a “Melting Pot” or “Ethnic Stew.” The exhibit claimed that while at the turn of the twentieth century diverse cultures were blended together to a Melting Pot of American culture, in more recent times “various ethnic groups are seen as keeping their

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<sup>643</sup> “The Magic Window” (Bisbee, AZ: Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

individual cultures.”<sup>644</sup> Distinct foods were listed and cookware shown that retained their own country’s origin in today’s America.

The continuity theme was continued in a label that described how cities were unprepared for the vast and quick influx of people. Between 1860 and 1920 the urban population rose from twenty percent of the total population of the United States to fifty percent. The label stated, “The unplanned growth of cities brought about many acute problems—overcrowding, epidemics, fire, crime, and lawlessness.”<sup>645</sup> These issues continue today. The curators could have included sanitation, water, power, and general environmental concerns as well.

The “Digging In” exhibition upstairs in the museum had a powerful demonstration of decision making in modern life. After showing historic versus modern mining equipment and methods, a display of modern appliances and electronic devices was shown. The associated label revealed that all these items have some form of copper component. Visitor were asked to think about what life would be like without copper, and to “think about the last time your power went out.”<sup>646</sup> The curators then asked three very disturbing questions that can shape visitors’ perspective about their own comfort versus

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<sup>644</sup> “Melting Pot or Ethnic Stew?” (Bisbee, AZ: Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>645</sup> “Urban Growth Brings Problems” (Bisbee, AZ: Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>646</sup> “Copper Seen and Unseen” (Bisbee, AZ: Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

the long-term effects of mining to the environment. Visitors were asked to put their reflections on a white board. The questions were: “What benefits do you receive from copper? What benefits would you be willing to give up?” and “Are the benefits of copper worth the effort of mining it?”<sup>647</sup> This exhibition was obviously pro-mining. It did not dwell on the hardship of the early miners of the labor troubles that occurred in the town’s history. However, the town’s history exhibition on the first floor did recount the deportation issues and talked



#18 *Copper Seen and Unseen*

of life in the mining camps. Taken together, these two exhibitions reveal multiple sides and a multi-cultural view of the mining story.

If history is concerned with interpreting change over time, and museums are designed to both help reveal this interpretation and engage the visitor to experience that change in values, this site has succeeded.

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<sup>647</sup> “What do you think?” (Bisbee, AZ: Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, August 2010), museum exhibit label.

## Peoria Arizona Historical Society Museums (Peoria, Arizona)

The city of Peoria is approximately ten miles west of Phoenix, Arizona. The Peoria Arizona Historical Society is a private non-profit corporation operating in city owned buildings. In 2010 the museum was contained in several old school buildings. Each building had its own theme, for example one for pioneers, another for agriculture. The society hoped to open a third building and display items of business and government. The main building contained the story of the town's beginnings. When a docent was available, tours were led through the site. Otherwise, visitors were able to self-guide and read the labels near the multitude of artifacts. The labels were factual and informative, but rarely interpretive. The exhibits were installed in 1998 and artifacts or sections of each building were changed or updated periodically, usually annually. The society relied on the Internet or reference works about antiques for research on the objects. They did not use consultants or content experts.

The pictures and labels frequently represented the life of women. The labels mentioned Hispanic families as often as Anglo families. Water, a topic associated with the New Western History theme of continuity, was discussed in the labels about the founding families. It stated that the Straw family, the first to lay claim to property that became the town, had to travel eight miles every other day to gather pails of water for the entire community. Three years later, a farm manager imported from Kansas named Hiram Chester Mann dug a well. It became the closest source of water for many in the area. The label records that "farmers and ranchers from miles away came to fill their barrels with



*#19 Fox Fiber and Bounty from a Bale of Cotton*

water.”<sup>648</sup> One text discussed segregation, but the voice of the exhibition was generally from an Anglo perspective and certainly that of the farming community. The picture to the left shows the display of cotton production, one of the major sources of revenue for the town. The labels give facts about cotton production and processing.<sup>649</sup> The labels do not mention the current occupations of the town’s residents or the status of cotton growing in the region today. The New Western History concepts of continuity and

convergence are included, but not from a review of current historiography. Rather, they were a bi-product of the town’s early makeup and reflected the longevity of the founding families that still inhabit the area. Generally, this exhibition had yet to reach a professional level and remained a booster for the town and its pioneer families.

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<sup>648</sup> “Peoria’s Beginnings” (Peoria, AZ: Peoria Arizona Historical Society Museum, August, 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>649</sup> “Fox Fiber” and “Bounty from a Bale of Cotton” (Peoria, AZ: Peoria Arizona Historical Society Museum, August, 2010), museum exhibit label.

## The Albuquerque Museum of Art and History (Albuquerque, New Mexico)

The Albuquerque Museum is a city operated site located in the heart of the city. The history division researched, collected, preserved, and exhibited the history of Albuquerque and the Middle Rio Grande Valley from the early Spanish settlements prior to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, through the establishment of Albuquerque in 1706 and to the present. The main history exhibition was “Four Centuries: The History of Albuquerque.” It opened in 1983, prior to Patricia Limerick’s proposition to consider New Western History. This was a permanent history exhibition with a focus on historical maps of the Southwest, the story of the Spanish occupation of the area, Hispanic life, the Civil War in New Mexico, and statehood in 1912.<sup>650</sup>

One work about New Mexico was noteworthy when considering the historiography of the area. The 1976 book, *Civilization and Culture of the Southwest*, was written by a person of Mexican descent to “remind the New Mexicans of the glorious pursuits and hardships suffered by their heroic ancestors; to nourish their hearts with proud sentiment which noble sons should always have of noble fathers; to bring out the forgotten which unjustly exists in regard to the benefits given to the Holy Barons in this land, the first missionaries; and to enliven in their souls the just pride of being part of one of the most noble, generous, and brave people of the universe, the Spanish and Mexican people.”<sup>651</sup> This author was telling a local version of history that is non-Anglo ethnically-specific.

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<sup>650</sup> “Four Centuries: The History of Albuquerque,” [www.cabq.gov/museum/history](http://www.cabq.gov/museum/history) (accessed September 15, 2010).

<sup>651</sup> Nash Jaramillo, *Civilization and Culture of the Southwest* (Santa Fe: La Villa Real Southwest Book Materials, 1976), iii.

Two-thirds of the book discussed the Spanish conquerors, covering the period 1534 through 1700. The last section of the book covered the time of transition from Spanish control to that of the Mexican people and into acquisition by the United States. The discourse ended with 1895, New Mexico not yet a state. The author, Nash Jaramillo, used words like “conquest” and “abuse.” However, the author certainly took the side of the Spanish when discussing Native Americans. He stated, “In place of exterminating or imprisoning the native of the country, he was protected with a firm hand and kindness, and educated with affection. If there were any exceptions, they were rare and meant nothing.”<sup>652</sup> Native Americans may think the incidents neither kind nor affectionate. In this work we see the New Western History theme of convergence, not from the typical Euro-centric view, but from that of a Mexican-American who shared with many whites a disparaging opinion of Native Americans.

Unfortunately, photography was not allowed in this gallery. The text on the signage for the exhibition was longer than that found at other museums. Labels contained large-font primary captions, and then two to three times as many paragraphs found in the other museums visited for this study. A few statements found on the labels showed a slight hint of New Western History concepts. One related, “After the conquest of Mexico Spanish miners and colonists began pushing north to found mining camps and settlements.”<sup>653</sup> There were many maps of the area and the paths taken by explorers. The words “massacre” and “revolt” were used to describe the Native American uprisings and

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<sup>652</sup> Jaramillo, *Civilization and Culture of the Southwest*, 57.

<sup>653</sup> Unknown title (Albuquerque, NM: Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

Pueblo Revolt, but these words are from the Spanish or European point of view. One notable panel presented the Indian viewpoint. It said in part, “Apache raids and Comanche attacks against the pueblos and Spanish settlements of colonial New Mexico were not mindless violence and theft, but these were the means of survival for normal people living in the uncertain environment of the plains.”<sup>654</sup>

One panel did discuss the Los Indios Indians, and then, unlike most other museums visited, indicated that while this museum did not specialize in Native American cultures other area museums did and then listed them.<sup>655</sup>

Many artifacts were used as part of this exhibition, each artifact with an accompanying label describing the item and its use. There was a section on the United States Army in Albuquerque from 1846 to 1867, and one on the New Town. This latter section discussed the importance of the railroad to the development of Albuquerque and contained a few articles of clothing. There did not appear to be a particular voice for the exhibition. It was mostly neutral in presentation and did not emphasize any one gender, age of individuals, or ethnic group, although the Spanish conquest of the region occupied much of the display space.

This exhibition was to be dismantled shortly after my visit in 2010. New construction would substantially reconfigure the space. The staff planned a new exhibition with a greater emphasis on the history of Albuquerque, rather than that of the New Mexico region, that would bring the displays more into the current time period.

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<sup>654</sup> “Soldiers, Militia, and Indians” (Albuquerque, NM: Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>655</sup> “Los Indios Indians” (Albuquerque, NM: Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

Since the staff used academics and other content experts for temporary exhibits it is anticipated that the new long-term exhibition will reflect more of the New Western History.

The new gallery opened in March, 2014. As planned, the new exhibition, *Only in Albuquerque*, “reinforces the central theme: different cultures, interacting with each other in a unique geographic setting, have developed shared characteristics found only in Albuquerque and the middle Río Grande Valley.”<sup>656</sup> The New Western History theme of convergence should be discovered given this depiction of their exhibition.

The Hubbard Museum of the American West (Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico)

Ruidoso Downs is west of Roswell, between Albuquerque, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas. The museum purported to provide an experience of three cultures—Native American, Hispanic, and “Pioneer.”<sup>657</sup> The pioneer culture was assumed to mean Anglo. The museum opened in 1993, but many of the exhibits changed at least every year. At the time of the visit to this site, the institution had recently made a switch from private to city ownership. The staff remained materially the same, but was now being paid by the city.

Some of the scholarly works addressing the role of cowboys presented in the prior chapter about the Pioneer Museum of the Arizona Historical Society would apply to the Hubbard Museum as well. An additional title, applicable to both Hubbard and Bisbee, was *Miners and Cowboys: Real People of the True Southwest*. The 2004 work focused on

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<sup>656</sup> Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, <http://albuquerquehistory.org/art-history/upcoming-exhibitions/?exhibition/55> (accessed July 8, 2014).

<sup>657</sup> Hubbard Museum of the American West, [www.hubbardmuseum.org](http://www.hubbardmuseum.org) (accessed September 23, 2013).

southeastern Arizona and promoted the European ancestors of today's area residents. It took a New Western History perspective. The authors stated, "The European-Americans who first made their homes in the area did so in defiance of the Native Americans who had thousands of years of prior claim on the land."<sup>658</sup> Miners extracted resources from the ground and ranchers provided supplies to the miners. Both these groups brought others seeking a faster, less strenuous path to wealth—highwaymen and rustlers. This is a local history, not comprehensive, but using the techniques espoused by Amato, Kammen, and Kyvig and Marty. It was useful to the stories of Bisbee as well as Hubbard.

The museum had exhibitions on two floors. Upstairs was an anthropological and archaeological presentation of the Native American people who inhabited the New Mexico region. The exhibition displayed archaeological artifacts of the "Clovis" and "Folsom" people which were discovered in the region. It offered information from scholars and provided long and detailed explanations on text panels. One panel talked of the European exploration of the Americas. The panel was six paragraphs long, a lot of text for the typical museum label. The only aspect of a New Western History theme can be found in the last paragraph:

When Columbus made his epic journey in 1492, he was seeking a new way to India to open up cheaper, faster, and more lucrative trade routes for spices. While other explorers doubted that Columbus had found the route to India, there was no doubt he had found something valuable. The race to explore the "New World" was on, as was the quest for gold, glory, and gospel: Gold for the national treasury, glory for the explorer, and gospel to create new converts to Christianity. Although failing in his primary objective, Columbus helped set in motion a series of future events and

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<sup>658</sup> Ted Cogut and Bill Conger, *Miners and Cowboys: Real People of the True Southwest* (Thatcher, AZ: Mining History, 2004), 1.

actions that would ultimately have a dramatic impact on the lives of people in the American Southwest.<sup>659</sup>

This is not a blatant example of the New Western History theme of conquest, since it hardly revealed that most of the Native American population was devastated by European disease, let alone war and subjugation of their culture. However, it did acknowledge that there was a “dramatic impact” on the inhabitants of the Southwest, although it leaves it to the visitor to determine if that impact was positive or negative.

Downstairs in the museum more exhibitions related to a mixing of cultures. The website indicated that a visitor would see “Western and Cowboy Artifacts, Native American Artifacts, Saddles of All Sizes and Kinds, Wagons and Transportation Vehicles, and the Friends, Amigos and Chuúne Interactive Area.”<sup>660</sup> The latter provided a passing reference to convergence, as the word for friend is expressed in the three main cultures from the area. The other exhibits mentioned were stand-alone and did not typically show an interrelationship of social groups.

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<sup>659</sup> “The Age of European Exploration” (Ruidoso Downs, NM: Hubbard Museum of the American West, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

<sup>660</sup> Hubbard Museum of the American West, [www.hubbardmuseum.org](http://www.hubbardmuseum.org) (accessed September 23, 2013).

A large number of wagons were on display. A curator explained that it was not really an exhibit, rather that of open-storage.



#20 Wagons in open-storage

One section discussed the effects of an opera house on the area, including a few pieces of burnt cork, which actors used to blacken their faces when representing black people. The descriptions made no allusion to this as a form of segregation or discrimination. One label stated that in the 1920s the “Jack Weber Burnt Cork Makeup came in paper containers with a powder puff for each case. Before manufactured burnt cork was available, actors themselves would burn a portion of cork and apply the ash

directly to their faces.”<sup>661</sup> Once again, the visitor was left to understand from their own experience the significance of the use of black face makeup.

A label in the mining section did clarify the occupation of New Mexico by the Spanish. The main label in the grouping was titled “Conquest and Colonization of Nuevo Mexico.” However, no further explanation of the meaning of this title was provided. The large label in the bottom left of the image below talked of Native American mining efforts. It discussed the discovery and use of turquoise in Chaco Canyon and how



#21 Conquest and Colonization in Nuevo Mexico

turquoise remained a trade item even after the canyon pueblos were deserted. Conflict, conquest, complexity, and convergence were not themes found in any interpretation in this institution.

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<sup>661</sup> “Jack Weber Burnt Cork Makeup with Powder Puff” (Ruidoso Downs, NM: Hubbard Museum of the American West, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

A final exhibit discussed the effect of firearms on the West. It tended toward promoting the glorification of pioneers crossing a “frontier” and the West rather than providing a New Western History version, stating, “From the blunderbusses carried by Pilgrims to the Colt revolvers used cowboys [sic] in the ‘Wild West,’ the gun has become an iconic figure in American culture. Europeans brought their firearms to the New World for protection, for hunting game, and for conquest. Soon, many realized that the American ‘wilderness’ demanded a different sort of gun. American firearms evolved to fit many needs: frontiersmen hunting large game, military men fighting wars for independence and between Northern and Southern states, as well as settlers living in isolated parts of the immense West.”<sup>662</sup> The picture on the label was that of families in buckskins and homespun cloth walking and riding horses with rifles over the shoulders of the men.

This museum promoted artifacts found in the West dating from the time of Anglo entry to the area. The labels used were not specifically Anglo-centric, but neither did they discuss the four “Cs” of New Western History. It is a neutral exhibition that did not tell various sides of any one story.

#### Raton Museum (Raton, New Mexico)

Raton is almost on the Colorado-New Mexico border. It is 175 driving miles north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. It was on the Santa Fe Trail. The museum was created by the Raton Historical Society in 1939 and featured regional artifacts and works by New

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<sup>662</sup> “Firearms of the American West” (Ruidoso Downs, NM: Hubbard Museum of the American West, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

Mexico artists. The museum provided a walking tour brochure of the historic downtown district that offered a brief and picturesque history of the town.<sup>663</sup>

A year and a half before this site visit, the museum had moved to a new location because the city would not fix the building that the historical society had occupied for the previous fifty years. This was an opportunity for the society to explore new delivery and interpretation methods. However, the same approach was used as in the past. The society found that the new space provided more display room than previously, so instead of thirty percent of their artifacts being on display, seventy percent could be shown. The artifacts were a reflection of the town and county from 1880 to the present. There were item identification labels, but practically no interpretation. If a tour guide was available, an explanation of the artifacts would be given. The guides “go from item to item to item.”<sup>664</sup>

There was one notable label. It was next to a diorama of the Clifton House and used many words to describe the display. The label used a lens more in keeping with Turner’s view of history than that of Patricia Limerick. The label read in part, “The Clifton House, portrayed



#22 The Clifton House

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<sup>663</sup> [www.ratonnm.gov/arts/the-raton-museum](http://www.ratonnm.gov/arts/the-raton-museum) (accessed September 23, 2013). *Raton, New Mexico: Walking Tour of the Downtown Historic District* (Raton, NM: The Raton Museum, 2009), museum brochure.

<sup>664</sup> Conversation with a museum employee, Raton, New Mexico, September 2010.

here, is a grim reminder of the rough, tough, frontier life in the southwest in the closing decades of the last century.” Further down, it also stated, “The story of the Clifton House in the days that followed [the house’s opening as a hotel on the Santa Fe Trail] reads like a panorama of frontier history. Mule teams and fast coaches continued to bring more and more men and women to the romantic southwest, and soon legends began to center about this old state depot.”<sup>665</sup> The romantic view of the West was used to tell stories of the

supposed happenings in the house and gave visitors the impression that the West, and a pioneer way of life, was full of excitement and danger. It is Anglo-centric and not consistent with more recent historiography.

Since there is little written interpretation, and the staff and volunteers did not do research beyond the stories presented by donors, no New



#23 Family Chair

Western History interpretation

was available in this facility. The picture above showed a typical exhibit: a chair, which

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<sup>665</sup> “The Clifton House” (Raton, NM: The Raton Museum, September 2010), museum exhibit label.

appears in each of the three pictures on the label placed on the seat of the chair. The story is about a family that lived in Raton and the chair that they owned. This museum was a local history, boosterism-oriented site, a closet of curiosities.

The local museums in larger cities with professional staffs appeared to be in tune with current museology and New Western History concepts. Smaller sites with consistent family ties over generations seem to have taken less of an opportunity to study new methods of delivery of the stories relevant to today's visitor. What is missing in the smaller museums is a fuller picture of the larger community. Instead, the museum is perpetuating one group's origin and identity, stories based on memory and not supported by research, at the expense of other and newer groups in the community. The newer groups are excluded from the "official" history and stories of the place. Perhaps today's visitor in these smaller locations are primarily the descendants of the pioneers and their needs are being met.

As in prior chapters, the following table reflects the degree to which New Western History themes were found in the local museums surveyed. The analysis is based on information obtained from museum staff during interviews and public displays, both on site and electronic. It explores the occurrences of the four "Cs": Continuity, topics that were as important in the 1890s as they are today; Convergence, the meeting of many groups and the influence they had on each other and their local environment; Conquest, the European global seizure of land and resources and the reshaping of local ways of life and economies because of it; and Complexity, exploring the gray area between a person or culture being all good or all bad.<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 18–21.

Table 3

The Low, Medium, and High ranking is based on the discernable occurrences of New Western History themes displayed throughout the exhibitions. The size of the exhibition was considered, as was the ease of finding the four themes in the display.

Museum	Exhibit Date	Continuity	Converg	Conquest	Complex	Total
Tempe	2010	Medium	High	Low	Low	High
Bisbee	2006–2008	Medium	High	Low	Low	High
Peoria	1998	Low	Low	Absent	Absent	Low
Albuquerque	1983	Low	Low	Low	Absent	Low
Hubbard	1993+	Absent	Absent	Low	Absent	Low
Raton	2008	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Low

Locally controlled museums had the lowest instance of showing New Western History themes. Two show all four themes, but three sites show only two or less themes. The highly ranked sites are Tempe and Bisbee, which not only showed all four themes, but also had a high number of observed uses of the convergence theme. As at the other sites, convergence, the inclusiveness of multiple groups and women and children in label texts, is the topic most often included. This group had the lowest use of both the conquest and complexity themes. The exhibition opening dates are the shortest span of years at twenty-seven years apart.

Again, the rankings do not tell the whole story. Besides the frequent use of the convergence theme, Tempe and Bisbee also frequently presented the continuity issues in their displays compared to most other sites. They also frequently presented the story of many cultures and offered various viewpoints based on those stories. Peoria's displays did include women and Mexicans along with the histories of white men who settled the area, but it was not evident that this was done from a New Western History perspective, rather it was a consequence of the mixed demographics of the town's early settlers. Albuquerque's exhibition was created shortly before the New Western History themes were promoted. Hubbard did not contribute much to the New Western History presentation style, but it did not espouse the more traditional, mythic interpretation either. Rather, the exhibition presented an impersonal narrative. Raton did not offer anything in the way of New Western History themes or a professional presentation. Its displays were simply a recounting of the town's residents and their belongings.

The local history museums had a greater opportunity to utilize local memory and more recent topics than their state or nationally sponsored counterparts. The subject matter covered is narrower in geographical scope and in the case of Tempe and Bisbee, contemporary topics were as prevalent as nineteenth-century events. The museum in Albuquerque was closing its exhibition to make changes that would follow this trend found in its sister cities. Hubbard, at the time of the visit, was struggling for identity and funding. Raton and Peoria had yet to become professionalized and would rely of their own method of displaying curious objects from yesteryear offered by local families. The topics any of the institutions appear to have researched were locally oriented and the material probably found in their own archives rather than in scholarly monographs from

the academy. Fortunately, those that chose to follow modern concepts of museology also presented New Western History themes and appear to provide a relevant historical interpretation of local events.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

*“History, which seldom has endings to record because of the cycles which bring life again and again to issues which have seemed dead and done with, is full of robust and stimulating stories of the beginnings of things.”<sup>667</sup>*

Thomas Costain, 1962

This study looked at changing historiography, from the traditional Euro-centric focus of Frederick Jackson Turner to the more inclusive ideas of Patricia Nelson Limerick, to determine whether it could be found in history museums in the Southwest. New Western History themes offer the opportunity to tell robust and stimulating stories, which are also, arguably more accurate, from multiple perspectives, and full of the complex issues that speak to the past as well as the present. Old issues can have new beginnings in the retelling of the stories from different viewpoints. These histories can be representative of all ethnicities, ages, genders, and socio-economic groups. Then, as new generations explore issues relevant to their times, new stories can be told, or retold in different ways as the Next Western History themes supplant those of today.

The use of the four “Cs” in the material presented by the selected history museums in the Southwest provided the focus of this analysis. As presented in Chapter One the four New Western History themes are:

Continuity: The reflection of topics as relevant in 1890 as they are today. These include the use of physical resources, relations with Mexico, and local versus federal authority, among others.

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<sup>667</sup> Thomas B. Costain, *A History of the Plantagenets: The Last Plantagenets* (Garden City, NY: International Collections Library, 1962), 360.

Convergence: The meeting of multiple ethnicities, genders, and religious practices and the consequences of these meetings. White men alone did not live in or define the Southwest. All the stories should be told in concert.

Conquest: This theme put the history of the United States into a global context. Europeans colonized other regions and similarly took resources, dominated native cultures, and reshaped the local future by comingling their ways into the physical and cultural environment.

Complexity: People are complicated, often not performing what is expected of them. Rarely is a person all good or bad. This theme allowed for the story that showed the many sides of the individuals involved in any event just as convergence showed that there are usually more than one person involved in the outcome of any one event.

The preceding chapters examined the selected museums according to organizational structure: federally controlled through the National Park Service, state funded, and those city or local historical society operated institutions. A table at the end of each chapter ranked the observed instances of New Western History themes in their permanent exhibit areas. An overall summary of the three tables' observations of the four "Cs" is in table 4.

Table 4

Continuity	Convergence	Conquest	Complexity
Medium	High	Low	Low

Convergence was the New Western History theme observed most often. The inclusion of multi-cultural groups has become more evident, especially with the more

prominent place Hispanics and Native Americans have in the Southwest today.

Continuity appears frequently, typically presented as the environmental issues of extraction of resources and the need for water in the desert. Most of the topics proposed by Patricia Limerick under this theme were not covered by the exhibits in the study.

Some, like Native American water rights and local versus federal authority, may not be part of the primary mission statements of the museums visited. It could also be that these topics were or will be covered in other exhibitions at these same museums. The conquest and complexity themes are not seen as often. The theme of conquest was evident in a majority of the museums visited, and can be found in all three types of sites. However, the word “conquest” itself was only used occasionally. The theme of complexity was observed least often. Information about specific individuals usually centers on their actions at a certain event, and those actions may not tell the whole story of that person. Unlike monographs, the small space available on museum labels does not often allow for explanations of the intricacies and layers of a story.

The table below combines the three tables from each chapter and provides a summary for further analysis of the sites and their display of New Western History themes.

Table 5

Table 5 is listed according to those museums having the highest ranking of New Western History themes, the four “Cs” displayed, to the lowest. Within each ranking the sites are then shown in the order they appear in the prior chapters; National Park Service first, state sponsored sites next, and the local museums last. Terms used in each column are explained below.

Museum	Type	Exhibit Open Date	Four “Cs” Rank	Number of Staff/Exhibit	Staff Pro. Devel.	Content Experts / Tribes/ Locals	Intended Audience
Pipe Spring	NPS	2003	High	3	Interp	Tribe Locals	Locals Students
Tucson	State	1978–2006	High	4	Confer Web	Content	AZ
Farm & Ranch	State	1996–2008	High	5	Tech	Content	NM
Santa Fe	State	2009	High	6	Mus O	Locals	NM/Tour
Tempe	Local	2010	High	4	Tech	Content Locals	Locals Students
Bisbee	Local	2006–2008	High	2	Tech/ Confer	Content	Locals Students
Tumacácori	NPS	2009	Medium	5	None	Tribe	Locals
Papago Park	State	1996	Medium	6	Mus O	Content	Locals
Pecos	NPS	1984–1990	Low	3	Interp	Tribe	Tourists Students
Ft Union	NPS	1959	Low	2	N/A	Tribe	Inter/Tour
Pioneer	State	1980s	Low	3	Interp	Content	Tourists
Peoria	Local	1998	Low	.5	None	Locals	Locals
Albuquerque	Local	1983	Low	11	Mus O	Content	Local/ Students
Hubbard	Local	1993 +	Low	3	Mus O	Content	Tourists
Raton	Society	2008	Low	1	None	Locals	Locals

Key to the columns in Table 5:

Type:

NPS — National Park Service  
 State — State sponsored  
 Local — City funded  
 Society — Historical Society

Exhibit Open Date:

The date the main exhibition initially opened to the public

Four “Cs” Rank:

The cumulative ranking for instances a New Western History theme

Number of Staff/Exhibit:

Represents the number of paid staff typically assigned to exhibit work. Volunteers and consultants may periodically inflate this number.

Staff Pro. Devel:

The primary form of professional development used by the person(s) interviewed.

Interp — classes, usually online, discussing methods of interpretation.

Tech — technical issues associated with installing an exhibit, such as how to best develop the text for a label or lighting techniques.

Confer — attending professional organization conferences

Web — webinars, an inexpensive method of online learning that can be viewed by one or more staff members.

Mus O — represents professional museum organizations. Professional development through this method usually consists of reading the organizations publications and blogs, and learning about technical issues through online classes.

Content Experts/Tribes/Locals:

The primary group(s) used by the museum staff to help craft an exhibit.

Content experts — any person or group who has knowledge of a topic in either great depth or breadth. The topic may be broad or narrow. For most of the exhibitions visited, the staff did their own historical research. Historians as experts were not consulted often, but their written work may have been.

Tribes — indicates the local Native American tribes associated with the site.

Locals — usually represents oral histories or memoirs gathered about the site.

Intended Audience:

The usual audience the staff believes visits their site. Most museums did not track the actual attendance by zip code, gender, or age. However, when developing an exhibition, the staff expressed the indicated group as the audience they expected would visit.

Locals — those people in the near-by vicinity

Students — almost always elementary school students, usually in the fourth or fifth grade engaged in state history.

AZ and NM — indicate the state residents.

Reg — regional, an area larger than the nearest town but not as big as the state.

Inter — indicates international, people visiting from outside the United States, usually, but not exclusively, from Europe.

Tourists or “Tour” — people from out of state or the same state but far removed from the site.

Six museums received a “high” ranking, one National Park Service organization, three from the state sponsored group, and two local sites. Pipe Spring is unique among

the National Park Service sites in that the visitor center was built on Native American land and with the tribe's financial support. Their influence and the Mormon Church relaxing some of its provisions for historical review allowed this site to be the most inclusive of groups and issues relevant to New Western History. The Arizona History Museum in Tucson updated its exhibitions periodically, allowing for current historiography to be reviewed. This museum presented a breadth of topics, but is the only high ranked site not to use all four of the New Western History themes. Complexity of life was not clearly evident. This southern region of Arizona was conquered by the Spanish, so there was a reference to the incursion of whites into Native American communities. It also was an area subject to mining, the continuity theme, and the convergence of multi-cultural mining communities. Both New Mexico state sites received a high ranking. Both showed examples of all four "Cs." Both also used language conducive to the themes clearly and prominently in their text panels. They also included the local community in their research on what exhibit topics to display, and then did so using current historiography.

The Tempe History Museum display was created in part by museum professionals who had recently graduated from the Arizona State University public history program, students who had been taught using current historiography. Also, the museum's proximity to the university made for easy access to content experts from various disciplines. Again, all four themes were evident, and continuity and convergence had their own designated sections within the exhibition. This site very clearly displayed New Western History themes. The Bisbee, Arizona museum also used all four themes, and like Tempe, more frequently used continuity and convergence to explain their exhibit's

message. Both local sites delivered their message in a smaller space than available at the state sponsored sites.

The two sites ranked as medium in their use of New Western History represent a National Park and a state sponsored museum. Tumacácori National Park used all four themes but the language used almost appears as an apology, rather than as an affirmation of a more inclusive view of history. As shown in Chapter 3, events such as the conversion of Native Americans to the Catholic faith were depicted, but without accompanying language describing the conquest theme that also occurred. The Arizona Historical Society site at Papago Park did not display the theme of conquest. However, there was not a major Spanish presence in the Phoenix valley, and its exhibits were of more recent topics. When there was an intersecting of cultures, the topic was explored by showing the individual groups that were in the Southwest, but not the consequences of that convergence.

These high and medium ranked museums are markedly different from the low ranked sites. All three organizational structures are represented in the seven low ranked sites, so that is not a distinguishing factor. Of this lower group only Albuquerque displayed three of the four “Cs,” but, since it was opened before New Western History themes were really promoted, it only had a low occurrence of each theme in its display. The other sites in this low group only showed one or two themes, with Raton not showing any interest in current historiography.

A major factor relevant to this high versus low distinction is that of the exhibit opening date. Those sites ranked high and medium have an average exhibition opening date of 2001. The seven low ranked sites have an average opening date of 1986. That date

could be modified to 1977 if Raton is counted in its founding year of 1939. This can be reasoned because when the museum moved its location it did not materially change its exhibits. Even taking the conservative later number for the low ranked group, the fifteen-year average difference was enough time for newer historiography to have an impact on museum exhibitions. Patricia Limerick had just written *Something in the Soil* in 2000, and kept writing about the need for a New Western History through 2009.

The number of staff engaged in creating exhibitions does not indicate a significant factor when observing New Western History themes. The average number of paid staff involved in this process, when taking out the eleven at Albuquerque and the half-time person (the only paid staff member at Peoria at the time), is almost four people. That number is close to the mean. Again, the numbers do not tell the whole story. The Arizona State Historical Society has a dedicated exhibition development staff available to provide services at all their sites. This does not limit the regional museums from creating and maintaining their own exhibits. The New Mexico state sites are independent of each other when it comes to staff available to produce exhibits. The National Park Service and local museum staff members appear to fill multiple roles. The creation and maintenance of exhibits are just two of many tasks they perform. There may be other people in the organization they can use as time and need permits, but the state organizations appear to be more specialized in their staffing requirements. Only three of the sites, one from each of the various organizational structures, had a historian on staff. Several of the interviewees indicated that in opening discussions about a new exhibition it would be ideal to involve the following functions: the director, the historian/librarian, an exhibits manager, graphic design, collections, and fabrication. The education, marketing, and

development or funding, departments were not mentioned as often. Many of these functions are performed by the same person.

One area of future research could be an in-depth look at the curatorial staff. When they received their training for developing exhibits and the nature and timing of a college degree might point toward a familiarity with New Western History themes. The National Park Service employees interviewed usually had a degree in science. This helped them with the environmental aspects of their positions but not historical interpretation. Others had training in history or social sciences and worked in museums for a long time. This lead to a question of how the staff in general was keeping current with topics relevant to their site.

The idea of staff professional development as a factor was included to see if staff who were long in their positions were keeping up with current historiography or museology. Each staff member interviewed was asked what they did for their own professional development. Unfortunately, staff members interviewed were usually not the people responsible for the creation of the exhibitions. Those involved with exhibit creation used content and technical experts. The professional development results reflect the most immediate needs of the interviewee or what is most readily available to the staff. For instance, most National Park Service sites offer online courses on a plethora of topics, but because most of the rangers do interpretation, it was the most frequent response. One National Park Service staff member indicated that interpretation is what the rangers “do,” as opposed to there being a need for a class. Rather than give names and dates to visitors they attempt to explain the “so what” of the importance of the site. Assuming then, that the rangers already know how to effectively deliver the proscribed

interpretation, the rangers would do other forms of professional development to enhance their knowledge of their sites.<sup>668</sup> Others indicated that they need help with engaging audiences so they take classes in how best to deliver the interpretation that has been developed for the site. Many of the respondents from all groups availed themselves of multiple types of opportunities. There is no requirement for professional development at any of the sites visited.

The use of content experts, tribes, and locals in the gathering of exhibit content is a reflection of the nature of the museum's mission. This has some significance for using the New Western History themes. For instance, three of the National Park Service sites, Pecos, Tumacácori, and Pipe Spring, are significant to both Native Americans and non-natives because of the interaction between these groups. The story of this interaction is as much of a religious nature as military conquest, so along with the mission churches or attempts at conversion at Pipe Spring there is the story of physical conflict between these groups displayed at all the sites. Fort Union, as displayed, is less significant for the local Native American tribes. The inclusion of tribes of locals in the development of the exhibits should logically lead to a multi-cultural view. However, what seems logical does not always happen. The staff at Tumacácori did not consult with their local tribes until the exhibition was already fabricated. This caused the staff to make changes to the displays.

When the exhibition's time period permitted, the state and local organizations frequently used oral histories both to gather information and to use as audio recordings in their exhibitions. These oral histories were frequently the stories of Native Americans

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<sup>668</sup> Conversation with a park ranger, July 2014.

and women of various ethnicities and social classes. This created a New Western History lens through which to view a subject. Others used content experts when the subject matter demanded it. The two sites that stand out as exceptional in the use of the multi-cultural material are Pipe Spring and Tempe, two sites ranked high for using New Western History themes. These museums are imbedded in multi-cultural communities. They also received their funding from those communities, in the case of Pipe Spring from the Kaibab tribe for the building of the visitor's center, and in Tempe from the local citizens approving a bond issue to rebuild the building and exhibitions.

The intended audience factor could be significant and is one of the major "next steps" to develop from this study. More information about the intended versus the attending audience and their expectations of and reaction to an exhibition could be material. If the main audience attending the museum is fourth graders, then the number of controversial topics may be less frequent. However, a multi-cultural view can be used with almost any topic, regardless of the visitor age group. If, as in Peoria and Raton, the majority of the visitors, and museum funders, are locals from the town who come to see the history of their ancestors, the interpretation will probably be more traditional since few people will continue to fund a place that points out the faults in their family history.<sup>669</sup> In the case of the New Mexico History Museum, it should include as many of the groups in the state as possible, especially since they held regional public meetings to

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<sup>669</sup> For example, consider the 2014 case of actor Ben Affleck influencing the television show "Finding Your Roots" to not disclose that he had an ancestor that kept slaves. It caused the Public Broadcasting Service to halt production of the show while it made major management changes. *Business Insider*, <http://www.businessinsider.com/pbs-internal-review-finds-ben-affleck-had-improper-influence-2014-6>.

ask the residents what they wanted to see in their state museum.<sup>670</sup> One of the prominent factors in creating exhibitions, mentioned in three of the interviews, was the age of the visitors. Curators felt they had to make displays that would appeal to either the seniors or the students, or they had to create special programming that would satisfy these groups.

It is now over twenty-five years since Patricia Limerick began promoting New Western History themes. The majority of the museums surveyed for this study reflected this change in historiography. The more recent the exhibition opening, combined with a professional staff at the museum, the more acceptance there is of a view of the West from the West, a view no longer that of just Euro-centric men.

A larger percentage of the state sponsored sites offered a significant number of New Western History themes than the National Park Service or local organizations. This may be a reflection of the breadth of subject matter they have to cover, although every event has multiple participants or backstories to contribute, just as every participant is complex and could provide multiple views of any one event.

The Introduction listed two opportunities this study may provide: first, for academically-based historians to reflect on the delivery method of their texts to include a non-academically based audience, and second, for museums to reconsider the value of a “permanent” exhibition in an age where ideas are discussed among a wider population and with greater speed than in the past. Tracking the history of New Western History historiography and looking for its ongoing public dissemination in museums suggests that both opportunities should be considered by professional historians. Scholarly studies of

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<sup>670</sup> Conversation with museum staff, September 2010.

great depth on a narrow topic expand the universe of available knowledge on a subject.

They are a benefit to the history-loving world. However, historical works need to reach more of that historically curious group.

Perhaps one way to do this is for academics to hold talks at near-by, topically-relevant history museums, or to donate a copy of their monograph or article to these same institutions. Reaching out to these venues at least makes the published work available for use with a wider audience. Museums can help disseminate the messages of this literature. Museums reach more of that community than the typical monograph. Museum professionals can incorporate this new information into existing exhibits, distribute the work to docents who can use it as a talking point with visitors, and reach out to the historian for lectures with members and interested parties. In this way, both the academic and museum historian potentially gains a wider audience.

Unfortunately, if current exhibitions remain in place for more than the academic life of a generation they may not be reflective of current scholarly thinking on the subject. Museum professionals serve the public best when they make time for their own professional development and read current historiography. This may make it easier to see the need for changes to a museum's long-term exhibitions. As Patricia Limerick explained, "The degree to which the American public embraces or resists this change [to New Western History] could be determined less by an unyielding devotion to simple images of the heroic Old West and more by the persuasiveness of the voice and tone with which historians carry their message."<sup>671</sup>

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<sup>671</sup> Patty Limerick, "Examining 'The Heart of the West'" *The Public Historian* 31 no. 4 (November 2009): 90.

The voice and tone of the New Western History message can be presented in museum exhibitions that are not expressing it now. Even when artifacts remain in place for decades in a long-term exhibition, the accompanying labels can be changed to reflect new information and interpretations relevant to the subject. One example of this would be for Fort Union to leave the fifty-year-old artifacts in its display cases intact, but to change the language of the associated labels to reflect a New Western History interpretation. Additionally, while it is time consuming and expensive to change an entire exhibition, it is easier to change the artifacts and labels in one exhibit case among the many on display. That may update the interpretation of the entire exhibition. This technique can provide fresh intellectual matter for returning visitors, offer new interpretations, and add topical information in the limited museum space.

Also, museums can show there is more to the story than their sites were able to reveal. Most send visitors to the museum store where they can find related books. Perhaps visitors can also be encouraged to visit other sites, read both monographs and the museum's Internet site for additional topical information, and become leaders in the dissemination of local history.

The New Western History themes are, in part, the outcome of the civil rights, women's rights, environmental awareness, and other social changes that occurred over the last half of the twentieth century. Just as the themes took many years to be recognized as the norm in historiography today, they are seen in a majority, but not all, of the museums visited for this study. Traditional values, the heroic West, does still hold a place in both popular and scholarly works. The change is happening, however. Patricia Limerick saw the change in 2009. She said, "... it is striking to see how the change in the

interpretation of western American history was matched by a parallel change in the writing of western American novels, short stories, poems, and memoirs.”<sup>672</sup> Popular works are helping to make this change today.

Just recently, in June 2014, *Bill O'Reilly's Legends and Lies: The Real West*, was the Publishers Weekly number two best seller for hardcover non-fiction.<sup>673</sup> As the title indicates, the author hoped to correct some of the legends with more factual information and current interpretations. The author wrote:

America has a tendency to glamorize its past, creating myths instead of reporting truth. Let's take the Old West, for example. Our image of that time is John Wayne, Marshal Matt Dillon in *Gunsmoke*, and maybe a squinting, grizzled Clint Eastwood mowing down bad guys in a dusty town. But the truth about the West is far different from *Rio Bravo* or *Stagecoach* or *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. This was a place where brutality ruled, and life expectancy was measured in months. If you lived to be forty, you were way ahead. Some famous western men and women were both heroes and villains, split personalities. The dangers they faced were unrelenting.

Did you know that some Indians were more civilized than the settlers they encountered? But other Native Americans would torture in ways that were nearly inconceivable. Some outlaws, such as Butch Cassidy and Black Bart, were almost noble in their outlook. Some lawmen, such as Pat Garrett, were not.<sup>674</sup>

This language contains New Western History themes. Unfortunately, this work written by a journalist and promoted by a talk show host, Bill O'Reilly, does not quite get a high ranking for promoting New Western History. Instead of being truly inclusive, this work looks at the lives of thirteen individuals, twelve white men and one white woman,

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<sup>672</sup> Limerick, “Examining,” 91.

<sup>673</sup> Arts and Entertainment, *The Arizona Republic*, June 28, 2014, David Fisher, *Bill O'Reilly's legends and Lies: The Real West*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2014).

<sup>674</sup> Fisher, 2.

most of them recognizable names from the late 1700s in Daniel Boone to through 1908 with Butch Cassidy. Native Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and more women from every group could have been included.

History, as Thomas Costain said, is “full of robust and stimulating stories of the beginnings of things.”<sup>675</sup> A multi-cultural, complex view of history is now readily accepted as the norm. Museums in the Southwest are one venue for the dissemination of that history. Although seen more frequently, New Western History is not ubiquitous, however. The majority of the sites in this study are displaying some aspect of New Western History, but, like current historiography, it is not uniform. Many of the sites could offer more prominent interpretations of these themes. Museums are often thought of as being authoritative and objective, but they are the expression of the exhibit staff’s interpretation. Adequate funding for exhibits, well trained and interested staff members, and historiography written to “capitalize on the compatibility between accuracy and entertainment”<sup>676</sup> will help foster the continual change. History is for us now. It is the story of changes from the past to the present so that we may explore how we got to this present and perhaps glimpse one possible future. The more complex and multifaceted it is, the more relevant it will be to us today.

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<sup>675</sup> Costain, *Plantagenets*, 360.

<sup>676</sup> Limerick, “Examining,” 90.

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APPENDIX A  
TOPICS IN AMERICAN WEST HISTORIOGRAPHY 1961–2009

The following table is a comparison of essay topics in the historiography of the American West from 1961 through 2009. One hundred and thirteen essays are represented in this select collection. An inventory of the collected works, including the essays and authors, is provided after the table.

The works of K. Ross Toole and Robert G. Ferris represent essays read at the Santa Fe conferences, which led to the creation of the Western Historical Association. The effort by Michael P. Malone was, in his words, “the first such historiographical volume to attempt an appraisal of the entire West as a region.”<sup>677</sup> He did not explain how the work of Toole and Ferris fit into his review. Roger L. Nichols followed with a collection that offers a wide selection of New Western History topics. *Trails*, published in 1991 and edited by Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner, II, and Charles E. Rankin, is also a set of essays that originated with a conference in Santa Fe.

The next year William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin presented a response to the criticism of the New Western History, and attempted to move beyond the arguments and into the Next Western History views of the subject matter that an essay should contain. Gene M. Gressley’s short work was another attempt to explain what the New Western History is and how it differs from older models of historiography. The last selection is a work published in Scotland by Karen R. Jones and John Wills. It was designed for students and illustrates the popular and the scholarly ideas of how the West is depicted.

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<sup>677</sup> Michael P. Malone, ed. *Historians and the American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 10-11.

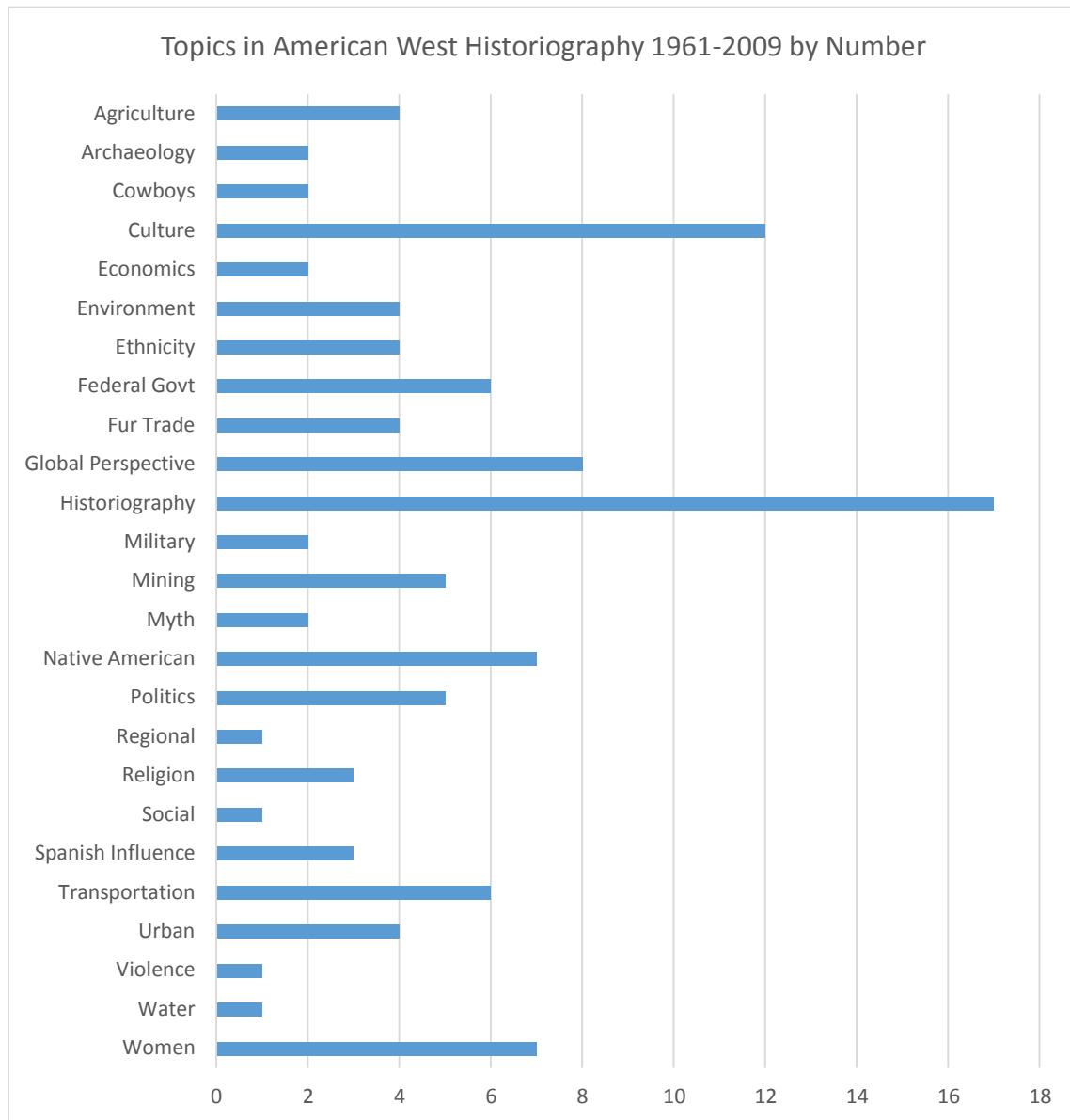
The tables below reveal both what the authors find important and what is missing from the perspective of New Western History over time. Water has only one entry while the global perspective of the West shows eight essays. There are some entries for a Spanish view, but nothing specific about Asians or African Americans. It is also noteworthy that male scholars far outnumber female scholars, especially in the early works. Unfortunately, the argument over the old and the New Western History still animates discussions of Western historiography.

The table is presented two ways, first in Table 6 by the manuscript so a date and editor may be viewed, and then as a bar chart in Table 7 for an easier perspective of the type of topic the authors found relevant overall.

Table 6

Topics in American West Historiography 1961-2009											
Manuscript & Date of Publication	Agriculture	Archaeology	Cowboys	Culture	Economics	Environment	Ethnicity	Federal Government	Fur Trade	Global Perspective	
Toole - 1962	1			3				1	1	2	
Ferris - 1962		2	2		1			2	2		
Malone - 1983	1			1		1	1	1	1		
Nichols -1986	1				1	1	1	1		1	
Limerick <i>et al</i> - 1991	1									3	
Conon <i>et al</i> - 1992				3		1	2			1	
Gressley - 1994						1				1	
Jones & Wills - 2009				5					1		
Total	4	2	2	12	2	4	4	6	4	8	
Manuscript & Date of Publication	Historiography	Military	Mining	Myth	Native Americans	Politics	Regional	Religion	Social	Spanish Influence	
Toole - 1962	2	1	2		2	1					
Ferris - 1962	1		1	2		1		1		2	
Malone - 1983			1		2	2		1		1	
Nichols -1986		1	1		1				1		
Limerick <i>et al</i> - 1991	7										
Conon <i>et al</i> - 1992	3				1		1	1			
Gressley - 1994	3										
Jones & Wills - 2009	1				1	1					
Total	17	2	5	2	7	5	1	3	1	3	
Manuscript & Date of Publication	Transportation	Urban	Violence	Water	Women						
Toole - 1962	1	1			1						
Ferris - 1962	3										
Malone - 1983	1	1	1		1						
Nichols -1986	1	1			1						
Limerick <i>et al</i> - 1991					1						
Conon <i>et al</i> - 1992						1					
Gressley - 1994		1									
Jones & Wills - 2009					1	2					
Total	6	4	1	1	7						

Table 7



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Barlett, Richard A. "John Wesley Powell and the Great Surveys" A problem in Historiography," 48-57.

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Scarnehorn, Lee. "The Development of Air Transportation in the West," 70-80.

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