

7-1-1969

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Harry N. Scheiber

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### Recommended Citation

Scheiber, Harry N.. "Turner's Legacy and the Search for a Reorientation of Western History: A Review Essay." *New Mexico Historical Review* 44, 3 (). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol44/iss3/5>

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TURNER'S LEGACY AND THE SEARCH FOR  
A REORIENTATION OF WESTERN HISTORY

A REVIEW ESSAY\*

HARRY N. SCHEIBER

THE HISTORY OF THE WEST is clearly in trouble today, so far as its future as a distinct and unified field of research and teaching in American history is concerned. It is an open secret in the profession that many of the scholars responsible for training students in this field question how long it can survive without a fundamental reorientation of its subject matter and its relevance to basic social research. Moreover, in a recent survey of college and university history departments, it was found that many institutions are discontinuing History of the West and "frontier movement" courses; others reported student and faculty interest in the field to be declining; and many respondents declared that "the West can now be adequately covered by the survey and period courses."<sup>1</sup>

The plight of western history, I think, lies principally in the continuing failure of scholars to produce an acceptable unifying framework—some principle of selection, some lodestone, that admits certain types of data as relevant and rules out others. Lacking such an accepted framework, western history has become an obliging receptacle for trivia and a convenient label for studies whose significance might otherwise be readily challenged. Of course, the founder of academic studies in western history, Frederick Jack-

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\* This review essay considers in a broad context the following recent study: Gene M. Gressley, ed., *The American West: A Reorientation* (University of Wyoming Publications, XXXII, 1966).

son Turner, did attempt to provide a unifying framework—both in his polemical essays, which are widely read, and in his monographic studies, which are not. Put simply, he insisted that American society was unique, and that what differentiated American institutions, ideals, and national character from the received European tradition was the long process of contact with the American frontier environment. Turner declared flatly that “the problem of the West is nothing less than the problem of American development.”<sup>2</sup> But by claiming everything, he risked admitting *anything* to the province of American history that he sought to define; and thereby he imperiled its integrity.

From an examination of numerous textbooks on the frontier, the westward movement, and “History of the West,” it is evident that historians still adhere closely to Turner’s all-embracing view of the significance of western studies. The content of diplomatic correspondence and detailed data on fur traders’ treatment of squaws, the dietary habits of overland migrants, the early explorations, and bureaucratic infighting among the government agencies responsible for western development, all find a place in syntheses of “western history.” Ironically, this situation prevails even though three decades of “Turner criticism” have demolished most of the basic assumptions and hypotheses that underlie the Turner Thesis on the influence of the frontier in American development.<sup>3</sup> For still, no alternative integrating scheme for analysis of western history has emerged, and the History of the West as a distinct subfield of American history has lost much of its vitality.

In the last fifteen years or so, several leading historians of the West—most notably Earl Pomeroy and Ray Allen Billington—have attempted to suggest integrating themes that can restore the integrity of the field.<sup>4</sup> Later on in this essay, their efforts will be reviewed; and consideration will also be given to a new group of studies, edited by Gene Gressley, which represents one of the first fruits of the new, self-conscious effort at reorientation of western history. But to place these recent studies in context, it is important first to consider at some length the basic logic of the Turner Frontier Thesis—and what went wrong.

Without doing violence to its complexity or obscuring internal contradictions and gaps, the Turner Thesis may, I think, be stated in terms of two assumptions and five hypotheses:<sup>5</sup>

*Assumption No. 1:* Turner assumed that a frontier environment can induce a basic transformation (a "forest change") in the institutions, the ideas, and the psychology of men who found new communities in that environment—and also in the larger (metropolitan) nation that plants such communities on the hither edge of settlement.

*Assumption No. 2:* Turner assumed further that human societies evolve by stages, and that frontier communities offer the scholar a "social laboratory" in which one may observe the more universal process of social development. This development runs from a primitive order, based on hunting and then pastoral agriculture, through arable farming and then industrialization. Moreover, in the early frontier period (the first stage, as it were, of universal social evolution) one may observe distinct sub-stages; hence Turner's famous admonition that we "stand at Cumberland Gap and watch the procession of civilization, marching single file—the buffalo following the trail to the salt springs, the Indian, the fur-trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the pioneer farmer—and the frontier has passed by. Stand at South Pass in the Rockies a century later and see the same procession with wider intervals between."<sup>6</sup>

*Hypothesis No. 1:* In the United States, "free land" was so abundant that the frontiers progressively settled had the transforming influence (deemed possible, in Assumption No. 1) over a long period of time, in different places. (Turner variously defined "free land" as land available almost for the taking; as a spectacularly rich resource-base; and, simply, as "opportunity.")

*Hypothesis No. 2:* Turner asserted that there was a distinctive "American character"—an American ideal type distinguishable from European (and other) national types with respect to (a) psychological traits, (b) political ideology, and (c) the social order (in this case a social order marked by mobility and egalitarian features).

*Hypothesis No. 3:* The distinguishing features of the American national character were the same as the traits, ideals, and social order that the American frontier environment produced in successive American frontiers and "called forth" in older-settled regions.

*Hypothesis No. 4:* That frontier traits and American national traits were identical, as stated in No. 3, was not the result of accident. Rather, it was directly attributable to a process by which the frontier experience was transmitted to the society as a whole, over space and over time. (Turner was not very explicit concerning the nature of the process. In his 1893 essay he wrote: "As successive terminal moraines result from successive glaciations, so each frontier leaves its traces behind it." Elsewhere he wrote that each community in the frontier region "reacted on the East" by reminding the older-settled regions of their "morning wishes"—that is, of the ideals that had been evoked by environment in their own frontier period. By offering a haven for the oppressed and the restless, he wrote, frontier regions kept the nation as a whole "in touch with primitive conditions" and prevented hardening of class lines. The frontier community lent credibility, by its example, to egalitarian ideals, including ideals developed in Europe; and it generated political movements which forced democratizing change on older-settled areas.)<sup>7</sup>

*Hypothesis No. 5:* The process of social change on each frontier, Turner asserted, was essentially the same as on all the rest. Local variations were outweighed by the basic similarities of the social process which worked itself out on one American frontier after another, from colonial times until the 1890's.

In sum, Turner treated the history of the United States as an evolutionary "history of the origin of new political species"—"a history of the evolution and adaptation of organs in response to changed environment."<sup>8</sup> American society was differentiated from Europe's because successive generations of men had undergone "forest change" in regions of new white occupation. In every frontier community, the environment produced a social order

which Turner termed—in shorthand expression—“the western democracy,” which was marked by relatively equal distribution of property and whose people were idealistic, materialistic, innovative, energetic, optimistic, restless, and nationalistic. Men of the western democracy displayed such traits as “coarseness and strength,” for they lived in a resource-rich environment that “demanded manly exertion, and . . . gave in return the chance for indefinite ascent [*sic*] in the scale of social advance.”<sup>9</sup>

In retrospect it is clear that the Turner Thesis failed to survive its critics' assaults because Hypothesis No. 5 did not hold up. For if empirical investigation reveals that the results of successive interactions between environment and culture, and between East and West, were *different* in successive cases (ranging in time from the 17th century to the 1890's), then Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 cannot be sustained. Only if each frontier episode produced the *same type of impact* on settlers and the metropolitan regions can one argue that each frontier reinforced the same American traits, gave new strength to the same social institutions, and revitalized the same ideological tradition.

His critics have made it commonplace to observe that Turner was trying to break free of the “germ theory” of American democratic origins—that he attempted to substitute a dynamic theory of development that emphasized what was indigenously American. But this feature of his work should not obscure Turner's deep concern to “follow the thread back and back, uncovering antecedent after antecedent.” He found “at the Atlantic frontier . . . *the germs of processes* repeated at each successive frontier.”<sup>10</sup> When Turner declared that the Massachusetts Bay frontier was a “prototype” of later frontier communities, he was engaged in building a model of the process of environmental impact on men and institutions. On each frontier, settlers faced the same set of challenges: the problem of the Indian, the question of land disposal, the need to provide improved communications with older areas, the need to erect a new political organization, the requirement that “religious and educational activity” be organized. More

important, Turner insisted the responses were basically the same in each case. Superficially he recognized that there were "essential [*sic*] differences, due to the place element and the time element;" and he urged historians to "mark these various frontiers and in detail compare one with another."<sup>11</sup> But he himself, as an historian, consistently emphasized only similarities.

In attributing causal influences, Turner sometimes glossed interpretive issues, as when he wrote, for example, that John Winthrop's refusal to approve liberal land grants which would encourage migration to the frontier "underlay much of the later opposition of New England as a manufacturing section to the free homestead;" never indicating how—in causal terms—one "underlay" the other.<sup>12</sup> In arguing that the frontier always produced comparable social types, Turner created "ideal-type" categories so wide as to be of little analytic value: thus, William Penn and Brigham Young—though obviously dedicated to very different social goals—were both placed in the category of "social reformers anxious to put into practice their ideals, in vacant lands."<sup>13</sup> And though Turner acknowledged that the Old Northwest built a social order fundamentally different from that of the Southwest, still he argued that the latter had "a characteristic western flavor" because of its "rude strength, a certain coarseness of life, and aggressiveness."<sup>14</sup> (Apparently Turner never accepted the notion that a squalid immigrant mill town in New England, or a tenement block on New York's East Side in 1900, might share this "characteristic western flavor.") Similarly, though postulating that the Kentucky-Tennessee frontier produced a "militant" type of political leader, typified by Andrew Jackson, whereas the Old Northwest produced an "industrial type," such as Lincoln, Turner treated both regions as examples of the "western democracy."<sup>15</sup> Indeed, so flexible and open-ended were Turner's ideas of "western democracy" that even the New South's post-1890 industrialization movement denoted, for him, the surrender of "the old tidewater aristocracy . . . to the up-country democrats."<sup>16</sup> That even John D. Rockefeller, Claus Spreckles, and Andrew Carnegie could so easily be portrayed, in Turner's analysis, as products of the west-

ern democracy should have warned scholars from the start that his categories and stereotypes were too vague and fluid to be applied meaningfully in historical analysis.<sup>17</sup>

THE ATTACK on the Turner thesis first took the form of textual criticism. Close reading of Turner's writings—mainly the essays—revealed that many of the characteristics he ascribed to western society were in contradiction to one another, some mutually exclusive. The various meanings that Turner gave to "the frontier"—as a place, as a process, and as a regional society—were revealed as another weak point in the hypotheses. The First Hypothesis, concerning "free land," became the focus of telling criticism from David Potter and others, who argued that the prevailing level of technology conditioned the level of opportunity which Turner associated with the mere presence of natural resources. The Second and Third Hypotheses were assaulted from another angle: critics contended that frontier environments may merely have dramatized or exaggerated traits that were common in the older-settled areas, so that causal lines ran in an opposite direction from what Turner had postulated.<sup>18</sup> In any case, most historians have found no single pattern of "western society," let alone a uniquely "democratic" social order: the complexities and conflicts in the West were of no less wide a range than those prevailing in the East.

What we have termed the Fourth Hypothesis—that the effects of frontier experiences were transmitted over space and time, shaping all of American society—was difficult to prove in any case, but Turner himself offered little in the way of systematic explanation. What he did elaborate in his writings, on the processes of transmission, came under devastating attack—most tellingly in the case of his "safety-valve" thesis, that the West offered an outlet for tensions in the East and kept alive opportunities which softened conflicts born of class consciousness.<sup>19</sup> More important was the collapse of the Fifth Hypothesis. For the interaction of environment with received institutions and ideals was, it seemed,



not the same on every American frontier. The degree and duration of regional isolation itself were a function of communications technology and interregional capital flows: thus, the 17th-century Massachusetts frontier towns were fundamentally different, in respect to their physical isolation, from late-19th-century western settlements.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the implicit and articulated goals of the community might vary greatly from place to place; e.g., compare the Mormons' drive for communitarian life in isolation from the metropolis with the quest of High Plains pioneer farmers for immediate integration with the national economy. Moreover, the alleged radicalism and individualism and nationalism of the West appeared on closer study to be a caricature view of only one side of political behavior and political institutions. In some frontier regions, as in the Southwestern states before 1860, an essentially conservative style of political behavior, commonly termed "deference politics," emerged as the dynamic force that worked within essentially hierarchical institutions. In other Wests, politics was highly participatory and conformed much more closely to Turner's portrayal—but also conformed to the contemporary political order in the Eastern states!<sup>21</sup>

From the empirical studies of specific western regions, it is impossible, I think, to identify any single pattern of development common to all frontiers from 1607 to the late 1890's. At its core, the Turner Thesis was correct in arguing that all frontier settlements had one attribute in common—they were ventures in community building, and as new communities they shared a range of problems usually identified with colonial settlements in their relationship with the metropolitan country. But probably few historians of the West would today accept the notion that the *outcomes* of successive experiences in environmental-institutional interaction, and of successive East-West processes of interaction, were in every case the same.<sup>22</sup>

Ray Allen Billington stands perhaps closest to Turner among practicing western historians today. In his recent reevaluation of the Turner Thesis in light of contemporary social science, Billington-

ton defines the frontier process as "the process through which the socioeconomic-political experiences and standards of individuals were altered by an environment where a low man-land ratio and the presence of untapped natural resources provided an unusual opportunity for individual self-advancement."<sup>23</sup> This definition is loaded with normative implications: it takes for granted that in every frontier area "opportunity" was necessarily greater than in contemporary longer-settled areas. That opportunity existed at all may in fact be attributable to factors that were not unique to the frontier setting itself: for instance, the structure of opportunity in California during the 1850's was a function of resources, but also of the national policy of free immigration, the free international transit of technology, availability of capital and lack of obstacles to its transfer westward, and the stimulative impact of mining law.<sup>24</sup> On other frontiers, at other times, opportunity may have been *unusually limited* as, for example, in areas of poor soil or arid climate where arable farming was attempted. Certainly systematic comparison with contemporary opportunity structure in other regions is required, and cannot be assumed by definition.

Professor Billington's view of the reunification of frontier history rests, I think, upon reaffirmation of Turner's Fifth Hypothesis. Thus, in explaining "the persistence of frontier traits," he stresses "the greater degree of opportunity for self-improvement" in each successive western area—just as Turner celebrated the possibilities of "indefinite ascent." Billington has refined the Turner conception by dealing explicitly with westerners' *perceptions* of political democracy, of social mobility, and of egalitarianism, in trying to reconstruct the mechanisms by which frontier traits came to dominate the American character. But still, like Turner, he insists that these traits were "frontier-bred characteristics," not primarily an expression of pre-existing tendencies.<sup>25</sup> Professor Billington proposes the application of modern social science's tools and findings in fresh ways to old frontier problems—in formulation of new hypotheses, but essentially within the Turnerian framework, respecting phenomena not given much attention in

traditional studies; and in reassessments of long-standing interpretations, but again primarily within the Turnerian scheme of logic and organization.<sup>26</sup>

A very different approach is evident in the methodological studies of Earl Pomeroy. In a much-noted essay of 1955, "Toward a Reorientation of Western History: Continuity and Environment," Pomeroy deplored the tendency of frontier historians to concentrate upon those aspects of western regional history which illustrate most sharply the impact of environmental and radical innovation, especially in the pioneer period; he asserted that other themes, which inevitably require more emphasis upon basic continuities and upon regional variants of national or eastern phenomena, have been unduly subordinated. "Conservatism, inheritance, and continuity bulked at least as large in the history of the West," he stated, "as radicalism and environment."<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Professor Pomeroy underlined the importance of diversity within specified frontier regions, and among different frontiers. "Social change, however visible, was relative and irregular; different Wests often lived side by side, on the same street." The lines of cultural influence characteristically ran two ways, between East and West; and "the problem of the West" can be understood best by historians who "disregard arbitrary boundaries in time and space, among other boundaries." Pomeroy's was an appeal not for a "new conservative bias but more freedom from an old radical-environmental bias."<sup>28</sup> Like Billington, Pomeroy has expressed enthusiasm for the application of modern social science to traditional frontier problems. But more persuaded than Billington of the need for new unifying and organizing themes, Pomeroy has suggested treating the American frontier experiences in the framework of comparative social and political development, and he has called for analysis of western environmental-cultural interplay in order to probe the "universality of experience, of behavior, of feeling" at the level of individual psychology.<sup>29</sup>

The six historical essays in *The American West: A Reorientation* are introduced by editor Gene M. Gressley as exemplary of western history written in the framework advocated by Professor Pome-

roy. Gressley, who himself is author of a highly original study of East-West interplay in the trans-Mississippi cattle industry,<sup>30</sup> organized this volume with a view toward eschewing "stubborn provincialism" and breaking with the excessive emphasis on the orthodox "Turnerian" approach that still dominates so heavily in western historiography. Among the large themes treated in *The American West*, as the editor sets them forth, are "speculation, colonialism, political-economic protest, capital infusion, institutional development, East-West interchange, private enterprise and public subsidy." In addition, the essays are meant to indicate the possibilities of quantitative technique and of investigation into modern, "post-frontier" western subjects.<sup>31</sup>

In an article on Benjamin Silliman, Jr., and the California oil boom of the 1860's, the prominent business historian Gerald T. White considers the interrelated roles of scientists and entrepreneurs in the speculative frenzy that marked southern California's abortive oil enterprises of that era. Professor White depicts the conflicts among nationally prominent scientists of diverse opinion concerning the presence of petroleum deposits; and he treats the consequences of their activities for the California boom and also the impact of the boom on the state legislature's broad attitude toward expertise. White indicates only implicitly how the California story was essentially an extension of eastern petroleum discoveries and development. One finds in this case study no special "western flavor," no exceptional opportunity which is unique to the region as frontier, nothing in the drama of promoters, scientists, and gullible investors that is fundamentally distinguishable from similar episodes in Pennsylvania or elsewhere.

Similarly, in their essay on the Horn Silver Bonanza, Leonard J. Arrington and Wayne K. Hinton portray a western episode in mineral discovery and exploitation. The interplay of the Horn enterprise with international market conditions and investment capital tied to eastern interests provides the underlying theme. Though the authors carry the story down to nearly the present, thereby fulfilling Pomeroy's prescription that the modern West

be given its due, the significance of the essay for western historiography is only implicit. How the corporate history of this venture in Beaver County, Utah, speaks to the utility of Pomeroy's themes of continuity, conservatism, and cultural-environmental interplay is left to the reader to ponder for himself.

Methodological issues and large themes are far more explicitly treated by William Lilley III and Lewis L. Gould in their important contribution on "The Western Irrigation Movement: A Reappraisal." More than White or Arrington-Hinton, these co-authors transcend the concrete episode to etch the large theme of western "colonialism" and the response to regional problems represented by the movement for irrigation development. The main focus is the Nevada politician Francis G. Newlands and his translation of a broad faith in "rational planning, orderly economic development, and stronger political institutions" into a program for water-resource use.<sup>32</sup> By probing the political controversies surrounding the irrigation question in Nevada (and subsequently Congressional) politics, the authors make abundantly clear that traditionalism, drift, and lack of inventiveness marked the West's own response to the water problem. It was only when inaction and imitation gave way to fresh initiatives by such men as Newlands and Theodore Roosevelt, who in formulating the 1902 Federal law "scorned regional policies and traditions," that instruments were forged sufficient to the solution of a long-standing barrier to regional development.<sup>33</sup> Lilley and Gould here provide a political case study that is not only craftsmanlike but also exciting for its large implications: they delineate the tensions that marked relations between a frontier region and the metropolitan center, using the politics of water policy as a lens through which patterns of perceived colonialism and regional selfconsciousness may be viewed in rich detail.

Similarly, the essay by Gerald Nash on "Government Enterprise in the West: the San Francisco Harbor, 1863-1963," conforms well to Pomeroy's prescription that historians interlock their local western studies with analysis of larger national problems. The focus here is the development of governmental institutions

within the federal system. Nash portrays the overlapping roles of the municipal, state, and federal governments in the development of San Francisco Harbor. The move toward state management in the 1860's is depicted as an example of public enterprise by active state government; and so many of the classic problems of federalism—intergovernmental relations, multiple routes of access to decision-making afforded interest groups by the federal structure, the congruity of policy-problem with jurisdiction and administrative capacity of level-of-government—are brought vividly to life. My only criticism is that while Professor Nash calls for application of quantitative techniques to the study of institutional developments, this is apparently the only place that “quantification”—underlined as one of the book's contributions—actually appears in the essays, except for some standard profit-and-loss computations.

Wallace Farnham's essay, “Railroads in Western History: The View from the Union Pacific,” is an evocative and sensitively written piece, designed more to illustrate possibilities for future study than to provide an empirical case analysis. Farnham uses the Union Pacific Railroad to illuminate the multifaceted role of the railway in western development. He suggests important causal lines between railroad-as-proprietor and land use; between railroad-as-transporter and metropolitan hierarchies; and between railroad-as-institution and developments in law and public policy. At each point of intersection, Farnham gives due weight to the particulars of time and place. But he also illuminates the much larger question: how did the railroad affect the East-West relationship? On a large canvas, he draws a model of the railroad as, first, a force for colonizing and community-building; later, as an integrator of the older settled area with western regional economies (and civilizations); and finally, as a force for the development of a more autonomous and mature West, distinctive from other regions. Withal, this brilliant study must now be required reading—together with Robert Russel's similar essay, published forty years ago—for any student of the West who seeks fruitful lines of historical inquiry on how transport shaped a western region in its distinctive aspects.<sup>34</sup>

The final essay in this volume, Richard Ruetten's "Senator Burton K. Wheeler and Insurgency in the 1920's," is addressed, in a sense, to one of Turner's old concerns: whether western Progressivism reawakened America's "morning wishes" and "revitalized democracy." Ruetten also re-evaluates Turner's view of the allegedly indigenous western origins of post-1920 Progressivism through an historical line of continuity, running back through the Populists to the western Jacksonians and ultimately to the pioneers of the Massachusetts Bay frontier. In sharp contrast with Turner's position, however, Ruetten finds that the connection between post-1920 Progressives and even the prewar western reformers was "tenuous at best."<sup>35</sup> The "sons of the wild jackasses" of the twenties tended to glorify agrarian ideals and also expressed the same kind of anticolonial sentiments that bespoke the regional self-consciousness of earlier western movements. But the new progressives were also pro-labor; they were organized on new lines, as the old Progressive coalition had deteriorated; and their grievances sprang from conditions that were proximate to time and place in their own day. Read together with the Lilley-Gould study of the irrigation movement, Ruetten provides a solid conceptual basis for re-evaluation of westerners' changing self-perception of their dependent, colonial situation; and also a firm basis for considering how new national institutions and policies, which were the legacy of pre-war progressivism (especially the regulatory commissions and "moral diplomacy" requiring foreign intervention), provoked new responses from the West in the twenties.

Taken as a whole, the essays in *The American West* all reject, either implicitly or directly, the Turner legacy. They are concerned only marginally with his major hypotheses, and they give not even a nod of recognition to his two basic assumptions concerning the impact of environment on culture. But do they exemplify the full possibilities of what Pomeroy has suggested will reorient (and revitalize) the History of the West as a subfield of American history?

Two of the studies in *The American West*—White on the California oil boom and Arrington-Hinton on the Horn Silver

Bonanza—have great merit as monographs in business history, but do not appear to me explicitly relevant to the problem of western history and its conceptual framework. The other four studies, especially Farnham's, do go well beyond implicit rejection of the Turnerian legacy and grapple with major themes, historical or methodological, that reflect faithfully the approach that Pomeroy suggested in his 1955 essay. Fully emancipated from the Turnerian "radical-environmental" bias, these authors seek to distill what, among many causal factors in given historical situations, was distinctively "western" and what forces were representative of larger phenomena. They are also much concerned with the interplay of East and West, as a problem of reciprocal interrelationships and not merely a problem of "frontier-environment" impact. They deal explicitly, as well, with the differences among frontier or western communities, separated by time and space.

The book as a whole does not, however, provide a fully developed alternative to Turner's unifying framework. (Editor Gressley recognizes this, as he explains that the subtitle, *A Reorientation*, is only "indicative of the desire to emphasize a sharp break with much of the previous historiography of the West.")<sup>36</sup> If such a full-blown conceptual alternative should now become a goal of the western historian, it is because the founding and development of new communities in frontier areas were an important segment of the American experience. To understand the dynamics and national impact of community-building ventures, systematic comparative studies must be undertaken by scholars who share a commitment to fundamental reorientation of the field. Whether or not this suggested focus on community-building (with its attendant problems of "colonial" relationships, and its larger significance for the study of environmental-cultural interplay as determinants of personality) proves useful for the reorientation of western history, the question of the field's proper unifying framework deserves continuing analysis. Until such basic conceptual issues are settled, I think, the failure of the Turner legacy leaves History of the West a subject in quest of a purpose.



## NOTES

1. W. N. Davis, Jr. "Will the West Survive as a Field in American History? A Survey Report," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 50 (1964), pp. 672ff.

2. F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (1920), ed. Ray Allen Billington (New York, 1962), p. 205. (Hereafter cited as FAH.)

3. See Gene M. Gressley, "The Turner Thesis—A Problem in Historiography," *Agricultural History*, vol. 32 (1958), pp. 227-49, for a review of the thesis, its defenders, and its critics.

4. The reintegration of History of the West as a desideratum, measured against studies to the late 1950's is considered in Earl Pomeroy, "The Changing West," *The Reconstruction of History*, ed. John Higham (New York, 1962), pp. 64-81. The fullest restatement of the Turner thesis, in light of current scholarship, is Ray A. Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage* (New York, 1966). For other important scholarly restatements of integrating themes, see n. 29, *infra*.

5. Compare the close analysis of Turner's hypotheses in Lee Benson, *Turner and Beard; American Historical Writing Reconsidered* (Glencoe, Ill., 1960), pp. 33-34 *et passim*; also, the careful discussion of Turner's concept of "free land," in Benson's essay on Turner, to appear in a forthcoming *festschrift* for Paul W. Gates, edited by David M. Ellis (Cornell University Press, 1969).

6. FAH, p. 12. In William Coleman, "Science and Symbol in the Turner Frontier Hypothesis," *American Historical Review*, vol. 72 (1966), pp. 22-49, Turner's environmentalism and determinism are subjected to searching criticism.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 264ff., 205ff., 301. See also Turner, *The United States, 1830-1850* (New York, 1965), pp. 74, 126.

8. FAH, p. 206.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 263-64.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 9. Italics added.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 10; also pp. 12, 35, 43-44, 54ff., 65.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 262-63. See the penetrating study of communitarian experiments and the West, with incisive analysis of Turner's theme, in Arthur J. Bestor, Jr., "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society," *American Historical Review*, vol. 58 (1953), pp. 505-26.

14. FAH, p. 75; Turner, *Rise of the New West* (New York, 1906), pp. 78-80.

15. FAH, pp. 256-57. See also *Rise of the New West*, p. 88.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 295.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 264ff.

18. A devastating critique of Turner's various uses of "frontier" and "West," and problems of logic into which they led him, is in three articles by George W. Pierson, "American Democracy and the Frontier," *Yale Review*, vol. 20 (1930), pp. 349-65; "The Frontier and Frontiersmen of Turner's Essays," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 44 (1940), pp. 449-78; and "The Frontier and American Institutions," *New England Quarterly*, vol. 15 (1942), pp. 224-55. Potter's critique is basic to his *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago, 1954), ch. vii. Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage*, chs. x-xi, treats the impact of the frontier on already-present characteristics. Cyril Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization* (New York, 1966), pp. 113-14 suggests that frontiers may prove, on further study, "to encourage in more extreme form the characteristics of the metropolitan areas."

19. See Norman J. Simler, "The Safety-Valve Doctrine Re-Evaluated," *Agricultural History*, vol. 32 (1958), pp. 250-57; and Ellen von Nardoff, "The American Frontier as Safety Valve—The Life, Death, Reincarnation, and Justification of a Theory," *ibid.*, vol. 36 (1962), pp. 123-42, for recapitulations of the controversy and fresh, constructive viewpoints.

20. See, for example, the excellent discussion of colonial Sudbury, in Sumner Chilton Powell, *Puritan Village* (Middletown, Conn., 1963).

21. This is the burden of Stanley Elkins' and Eric McKittrick's elaborate argument in "A Meaning for Turner's Frontier," Part I, *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 69 (1954), pp. 321ff., Part II, *ibid.*, pp. 565ff.

22. I have argued this thesis at length in my prefatory essay in *The Old Northwest*, ed. Harry N. Scheiber (Lincoln, Neb., 1969).

23. Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage*, p. 25.

24. See Rodman Paul's provocative study, *California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West* (Lincoln, Neb., c. 1947). The paradoxes of collectivism vs. individualism, of varieties of frontier communities, of large-scale capitalism vs. petty capitalism, of the impact of "imported" technology, of the formative influences of received law, and even (if one wishes) of the Chinese as a "frontier type," are abundantly clear in this classic account of development in one frontier region.

25. Professor Billington relies heavily upon an ideal-type construct of "the American character" which is drawn from travelers' accounts. See his discussion of his methodology, in *America's Frontier Heritage*, pp. vi-vii; compare Earl Pomeroy's strictures on taking travelers' views literally, in "Toward a Reorientation of Western History," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 41 (1955), p. 594.

26. See Professor Billington's introduction to the symposium, *Probing the American West* (Santa Fe, 1962), pp. 15-16.
27. Pomeroy's essay is cited in n. 25, *supra*.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 599-600.
29. Pomeroy, "The West and New Nations in Other Continents," John Alexander Carroll, ed., *Reflections of Western Historians* (Tucson, 1969), pp. 256-58; "Comments on 'Space, Time, Culture, and the New Frontier,'" *Agricultural History*, vol. 38 (1964), pp. 31-33. Other important reformulations of the problem of the West include: Allan G. Bogue, "Social Theory and the Pioneer," *ibid.*, vol. 34 (1960), pp. 21-34, in which Professor Bogue applies the findings of modern community studies in social science to the environmental-personality interaction in the frontier experience; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., "Space, Time, Culture, and the New Frontier," *ibid.*, vol. 38 (1964), arguing that the uniqueness of the frontier as place (the geographical environment) "operated as a limiting factor rather than as a determinant" in the community-building process; and Merle Curti *et al.*, *The Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County* (Stanford, 1959), a combined statistical-qualitative study of Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, in the formative period, and an explicit effort to test the Turner Thesis. Elkins and McKittrick, "A Meaning for Turner's Frontier," cited n. 21, *supra*, address their reformulation of the Turner Thesis specifically to the problem of how the frontier conditioned American democracy; their hypothesis is subject to searching criticism by Robert Dykstra in *The Cattle Towns* (New York, 1968), pp. 371-78.
30. Gressley, *Bankers and Cattlemen* (New York, 1966).
31. *The American West*, p. xiv.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 59. Gressley himself opened up on new lines the important theme of western dependency and self-assertiveness, combining defensive and constructive responses, in "Colonialism, A Western Complaint," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (Jan. 1963).
33. *The American West*, pp. 73-74.
34. See Robert R. Russel, "A Revaluation of the Period before the Civil War: Railroads," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 15 (1928), pp. 341-54.
35. *The American West*, p. 113.
36. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.