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Book Reviews

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Chasing Dichos through Chimayó. By Don J. Usner. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014. vii + 232 pp. 37 halftones. $39.95 cloth, ISBN 978-0-8263-5523-2.)

For many New Mexicans, *dichos* (Spanish proverbs or sayings) were a part of our youth. The phrases passed wisdom across generations and throughout communities for centuries. Dichos were exchanged like a linguistic folk currency by *vecinos* (neighbors) and *ancianos* (elders), and they express wisdom in a common tongue. Occasionally they flatter, but more often berate, and they always prove the wit of those employing the dicho. Originating in medieval Spain, dichos spread through colonial Latin America and north into New Mexico. Often metaphorical, sometimes literal, these proverbs offered a descriptive device for people who had little formal education. In this way, dichos expanded the limited linguistic repertoire of New Mexicans. Don Usner's *Chasing Dichos through Chimayó* examines this fading cultural practice and weaves dichos into his personal story of Chimayó.

Usner's journey began when he took up his mother's lifelong affinity of collecting and comparing dichos. His book is a collection of vignettes that describe visits with distant cousins, old neighbors, and friends of the family, and reconnect his deep roots to the place he called home. Readers bear witness to Usner restoring familial ties through conversation, and may be surprised by the depth and breadth of family history carried in his mind and in those of his counterparts. The book is an authentic portrayal of typical conversations in northern New Mexico. The knowledge of familial and communal ties are expressed

almost as a sacred arithmetic. Conversations with the vecinos of Chimayó recount family genealogy and countless ties that bind communities together.

Usner has walked the line between insider and outsider for decades. His keen talents for observation and storytelling make this book satisfying for northern New Mexicans and for the general reader. His talent for curating dichos is outshone only by his love and respect for Chimayó and its people. Usner does not shy away from Chimayó's complicated reputation as a place of deep faith and profound struggle. Rituals are woven into his conversations with *chimayosos*. Both the dancing of the *matachines* at the Plaza del Cerro and a *penitente morada* are on the verge of closure for lack of members due to drug addiction, and have separated younger generations from the traditions of their elders.

Usner reminds us that stories define place. His book includes stunning photographs and stories behind the images. *Chasing Dichos through Chimayó* preserves stories of the Plaza del Cerro for outsiders and Chimayó's insiders to enjoy for centuries to come. Through it all, Chimayó emerges as a place of survival where dichos and the people whose lives they illustrate continue to thrive.

Jacobo D. Baca
New Mexico Humanities Council

Harvey Houses of New Mexico: Historic Hospitality from Raton to Deming. By Rosa Walston Latimer. (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2015. 144 pp. 79 halftones, map, bibliography, index. $21.99 paper, ISBN 978-1-62619-859-3.)

This charming publication by bookseller, journalist, and Harvey Girl descendant Rosa Walston Latimer is inspired in part by the author's grandmother, Gertrude McCormick Balmanno. Latimer presents the memoirs of Fred Harvey employees (mostly Harvey Girls) and others from across New Mexico. The book builds on the work of Lesley Poling-Kempes and other historians who have published oral histories of New Mexico Harvey Girls.

Maurine McMillan provides the foreword. As the director emeritus of the Belen Harvey House Museum, McMillan leads efforts to promote New Mexico's remaining Harvey Houses and to document Belen Harvey House history. McMillan rightly emphasizes the importance of listening to and documenting the treasured memories of Fred Harvey employees. She notes that oral histories bring Harvey Houses to life and help their visitors and staff understand and better interpret the history of these venerable historic properties.

Latimer's brief introduction sketches the Fred Harvey system's history. She then groups the Harvey Houses in chapters organized by building function

rather than by construction history or geographical location. As a result, the longest chapter is "Destination Hotels," such as the Alvarado, the Castañeda, and El Navajo. "Destination Hotels" refers to La Posada, owner Allan Affeldt's recent purchase of the Castañeda. The stories connected to this historic hotel will be of particular interest to the Fred Harvey enthusiast. Chapters detailing trackside hotels, Harvey House restaurants, and newsstands follow.

As would be expected, the sections on the Alvarado, La Fonda, and Belen Harvey House are fairly comprehensive. Other Harvey Houses with more spare oral histories will hopefully be added over time. Accordingly, the chapter on early Harvey Houses is brief.

In the chapter "Good Eats" we learn about Latimer's grandmother, Gertrude McCormick, who was employed in the Rincon Harvey House. She initially worked there only to fulfill her dream of going to Alaska, but typical of the story of many Harvey Girls, McCormick was diverted from her plans, in her case, when railroad man William Balmanno swept her off her feet—McCormick canceled her trip to the Great White North in favor of a lifetime in the Land of Enchantment. Latimer also relates an interesting story from the Rincon Harvey House's manager, Claud Sheats: "I remember how the burros would come to the Harvey House to eat when the dinner gong would ring" (p. 116). Pavlovian burros notwithstanding, an additional perk for the readers is that the book closes with a sample of mouth-watering recipes from the Alvarado Hotel, Belen Harvey House, and La Fonda.

This book presents many new memoirs from New Mexico Harvey Girls and other employees. Any future printing should include a notes section at the end of each chapter detailing the sources, dates, and locations of Latimer's interviews. Excerpted letters, archival documents, and other citations and information not present in the bibliography would be valuable additions. Overall, *Harvey Houses of New Mexico* is a fun, interesting, and easy read.

Deborah C. Slaney
Albuquerque Museum

The Women's National Indian Association: A History. Edited by Valerie Sherer Mathes. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015. x + 340 pp. 18 halftones, chart, appendix, bibliography, contributors, index. $45.00 cloth, ISBN 978-0-8263-5563-8.)

The women's mission movement had more participants than any other female reform cause of the late nineteenth century. The Women's National Indian Association (WNIA) was established by Mary Lucinda Bonney and Amelia Stone

Quinton in Philadelphia in 1879 and increased the number of women who contributed to missionary work. The WNIA operated for sixty-three years and influenced two significant reform efforts: federal Indian policy and women's voluntary associations.

Volume editor Valerie Sherer Mathes and her fellow essayists trace the WNIA's development and growth. The book is divided into four parts that cover the creation and national spread of the WNIA; explore a maternalist agenda through the promotion of Indian women's domesticity; describes the geographic variations of local branches; and contextualizes the organization within the field of women's history. The unifying argument that although the WNIA's aims included missionary work among Indian women, the group was political from its inception. As Larry E. Burgess states in the introduction, "WNIA members represented the power of women in influencing national policy" (p. 19).

Contributors use three key examples to demonstrate the group's political presence. First, the WNIA circulated petitions to Congress requesting federal protection of Indian rights by preventing the encroachment of whites in Indian Territory. Through their petitioning, the founders garnered the attention of Congress as evidenced by a debate recorded in the Congressional Record, which directly addressed the association's message. Second, in 1887 the WNIA worked to awaken public opinion by introducing its periodical, *The Indian's Friend*. The journal reported monthly on Indian policies in an effort to improve protocols by influencing public sentiment. Additionally, the periodical included information about educational and missionary fieldwork as well as communication from the group's growing number of auxiliaries. Third, to help foster the women's political skills, the WNIA members participated at the Mohonk Conference, an annual forum held for non-Natives to discuss the implications of colonialism. These examples and others in the collection successfully show the WNIA women contested male political authority.

The WNIA advanced the political voice of white middle-class women often at the expense of Indian women. Contributors could have critiqued the way WNIA members embraced the ethnocentric ideology of their era and thus refused to recognize the consequences of assimilation. Additionally, WNIA's vision of civil and political rights for American Indians included upholding heteronormativity. Their intervention in federal Indian polices encouraged the construction and reproduction of nuclear-family structures. Only a few authors briefly touch on the heteronormalization of Indian cultures. A deeper analysis of sexuality throughout the narrative would have strengthened the collection. Nonetheless, for historians of the U.S. West, Native, and women's history, this

book is a valuable addition to the scholarship on maternalist and assimilationist politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Jordan Biro Walters
College of Wooster

Regional Cultures and Mortality in America. By Stephen J. Kunitz. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xv + 279 pp. Map, 14 charts, 56 tables, graphs, appendixes, index. $99.00 cloth, ISBN 978-1-107-07963-2.)

Stephen J. Kunitz adds the effect of historical context on health outcomes to the discipline of epidemiology. An essential focus of public health is to examine differences in health outcomes between specific populations in a society, understand the relationship between how populations experience their social and physical environment, and how their environment impacts health—all fundamental to addressing the social determinants of health. Kunitz takes social determinants of health to a deeper level. He uses measurable comparisons to examine historically-based differences in the development of regional and state cultures and institutions and their relationship to state-level mortality.

Kunitz assembles a significant body of historical evidence to suggest that regional differences in mortality may be explained by the characteristics settlers brought with them from their countries of origin, self-selection of those immigrants who follow, the history of the settlement, and the economic development of each region. Further, he argues that these factors are just as important as income (individual and aggregate) in impacting mortality. Kunitz develops an "Index of Institutionalism" from five tested measures. The Index is an explanatory variable that indicates state-level community connectedness and positive community dynamics. The Index "reflects the propensity of populations in each of the contiguous forty-eight states to use both private and public organizations and institutions to advance what they perceive to be common good" (p. 19). The findings reveal that across the forty-eight states, where the Index is high, overall mortality is low. The Index also performs better than each of its components, underscoring its ability to capture several dimensions of state culture and civic dynamics. Not only is the overall mortality rate lower in states where the Index is high, preventable hospitalizations and mortality due to conditions amenable to preventive health are also lower in states where the Index is higher.

Across the forty-eight states, an inverse correlation (high Index/low mortality) finding is observed for non-Hispanic whites and African American populations. However, this pattern, which affects the majority, does not hold true

for Native Americans and Hispanics. The Index is not associated with mortality for American Indians or Hispanics. Kunitz dedicates an entire chapter to the examination of regional differences in American Indian mortality and another chapter on Hispanic mortality in New Mexico. Outlining the unique histories and political struggles of these two groups, he demonstrates how neither group has been fully incorporated into the state socio-political culture and economy in which they reside.

Kunitz sets forth a strong argument that regional cultures, values, and institutions are determinants of health and have real effects on health outcomes. *Regional Cultures and Mortality in America* presents a novel approach that may challenge the traditional way policymakers, public health practitioners, and many other disciplines develop one-size-fits-all programs designed to change risk behavior at the individual level. Kunitz makes a thorough and compelling argument that we must take a broader look at a state's culture, policies and institutions, while mindful of differences in mortality among subpopulations.

Jillian Jacobellis
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Juan Bautista de Anza: The King's Governor in New Mexico. By Carlos R. Herrera. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. xii + 308 pp. Maps, 10 halftones, notes, bibliography, index. $29.95 cloth, ISBN 978-0-8061-4644-7.)

In this authoritative biography, Carlos R. Herrera argues that previous historians have neglected Juan Bautista de Anza and his contributions to New Spain as governor of New Mexico. Approaching Anza's life through what he calls the "lens" of the Bourbon Reforms, a program of administrative modernization that swept across the Spanish empire in the 1770s and 1780s, during the reign of Carlos III, Herrera offers not only a well-written account of Anza's life but also a political history of Spanish colonial administration in northern New Spain.

Herrera relies on a wide array of archival sources from Spain and Mexico to reconstruct Anza's childhood and early military career in Sonora. The son of a Spanish captain of a northern presidio, Anza was born into a Basque familial network that facilitated his rise through military circles. Herrera posits that the death of Anza's father in an Apache attack shaped Anza's campaigns against local Indians, including Apaches and Seris. These campaigns, along with his expeditions to Alta California, helped launch his career as governor of New Mexico, where he successfully applied his experiences on the Sonoran frontier. Herrera concludes that Anza's "full maturation . . . as a frontier soldier and diplomat" arrived during the campaign against the Comanche leader Cuerno Verde

in 1779, when Anza set the stage for a long-lasting Comanche peace agreement a few years later (p. 105). Anza reached similar, if shorter-lived, accommodations with Hopis and Navajos to the west.

After recounting his early career, Herrera focuses on Anza the governor in a series of thematic chapters that evaluate his administrative, judicial, and religious reforms between 1778 and 1787. Departing from earlier studies of Bourbon "modernization" and "advancement," scholars have recently argued that the Bourbon Reforms were not necessarily as new or transformative as their proponents claimed them to be. Some programs dated back to the Hapsburg Empire, and local customary practices persisted on the ground in Oaxaca and Quito. Herrera's own work falls between the older administrative histories of New Spain and newer social histories. By consolidating military forces and improving communication between New Mexico and Sonora, Anza helped protect New Mexico from neighboring Native groups and also expanded his "control" of the state and its people. In judicial affairs, however, Anza followed the precedents of *derecho vulgar* (local justice). Anza's relationship with nuevomexicanos emerges perhaps most clearly in the chapter on judicial practice, where Herrera turns effectively to court records.

A few different themes emerge in Herrera's account of Anza. One is that the remoteness of New Mexico granted autonomy to its governor. Another is that local environmental conditions, particularly drought, produced conflict with neighboring Native groups—a recurring explanation that may seem facile to some readers. Overall, however, Herrera provides a well-researched biography of Anza that will serve as a helpful resource for scholars interested in colonial and Native American history.

Christopher Steinke
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Sounds of the New Deal: The Federal Music Project in the West. By Peter Gough. Foreword by Peggy Seeger. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015. xvi + 259 pp. 29 halftones, notes, bibliography, index. $50.00 cloth, ISBN 987-0-252-03904-1.)

The Federal Music Project (FMP) was established in 1935 as an arm of Federal Project One, the arts initiative of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Over four years, the FMP existed as one of the most successful programs of the New Deal, providing work for thousands of musicians and musical entertainment and education for millions of Americans. In 1939 the FMP dissolved and was replaced by the WPA Music Program, which continued to provide support for

musicians into the war years. Despite its historical importance and its centrality to American musical culture of the 1930s, the FMP remains largely unknown today. The few scholars who have written about the program typically have critiqued it, emphasizing the conservative agenda of its director, Nikolai Sokoloff, who devoted most of his energies to promoting classical music and only grudgingly supported the performance of folk and regional music. In *Sounds of the New Deal*, historian Peter Gough shifts the focus from Sokoloff and persuasively argues against characterizations of the FMP as unsuccessful and elitist. Gough's fascinating and important book demonstrates the extent to which the FMP promoted local and regional musical practices and traditions, paving the way for a broad embrace of multiculturalism later in the century.

Rather than providing an overview of the FMP as it was implemented across the country, Gough focuses on the overwhelmingly positive impact of the FMP in a range of local communities in the American West, the region farthest from FMP headquarters in Washington, D.C. Numerous painstakingly detailed case studies reveal the substantial breadth and depth of Gough's archival research and illustrate the wide variety of FMP-sponsored programs and projects in Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, California, Colorado, Utah, Oregon, and Washington. While not shying away from discussion of FMP controversies and failures, Gough convincingly argues that musicians and audiences in the West—as well as regional FMP administrators and funding organizations—not only tolerated but actively embraced and promoted the performance of music produced by members of marginalized ethnic, racial, and political communities.

With *Sounds of the New Deal*, Gough makes an important contribution to scholarship on American music, the New Deal, and the cultural history of the West. His revisionist take on the FMP is persuasively argued in chapters that overflow with colorful anecdotes and details gleaned from primary sources. Somewhat puzzling is the detailed account of Charles Seeger's career, hardly an unknown figure in the history of American music, and the inclusion of a photograph of the Seeger family taken in 1921 on the back flap of the dust jacket. Pete Seeger and Peggy Seeger contributed the book's foreword, which may account for the emphasis on their father. Charles Seeger strongly advocated folk-song collecting in the New Deal era, but his association with the FMP was limited to the year he unhappily served as deputy director in 1938. Of perhaps more value to scholars already familiar with the period is Gough's attention to individuals who are largely unknown today, including a number of women in prominent leadership roles, such as Helen Chandler Ryan, director of the New Mexico Music Project. Ryan's strong advocacy for musicians and the musical traditions of her home state boosted employment and morale during the difficult years of

the Depression. As Gough depicts her, Ryan epitomizes the positive impact of the FMP on the people and culture of the West.

Erica Scheinberg
Lawrence University

Mesa of Sorrows: A History of the Awat'ovi Massacre. By James F. Brooks. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015. xiii + 259 pp. 19 halftones, 6 maps, notes, bibliography, credits, index. $26.95 cloth, ISBN 978-0-393-06125-3.)

Mesa of Sorrows reviews five centuries of Hopi tribal history in an attempt to explain the destruction of the Pueblo of Awat'ovi by fellow Hopis in AD 1700. Brooks's main theme is that Awat'ovi's destruction was one instance of a repeated phenomenon in which violence was used to purge Hopi communities of witches and *koyaanisqatsi* (social chaos). His conclusion falls within mainstream archaeological and Hopi thought, but troubling issues with tone and data analysis weaken the book's explanatory power.

The book's prose is lurid. The attack on Awat'ovi is imagined in graphic detail, opening with the line, "I had thought about the bodies, but not about the bones" (p. 1). Although the author interviewed at least two knowledgeable Hopis and draws heavily on Hopi oral tradition, the book was not reviewed by the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, and it is difficult to imagine their approval of its tenor.

The author is at his strongest when dealing with historical documents, as in the fascinating letters he uncovered among papers of the Peabody archaeological expedition to Awat'ovi conducted in the 1930s. However, the incorporation of oral tradition, ethnography, and archaeology is less successful. Gleaning historical information from oral traditions is a very tricky operation that requires consideration of the perspective of the narrator and the social, political, and religious contexts of the years separating the account from the narrated events. None of this difficult but important contextual work appears in *Mesa of Sorrows*. The possibility that the cultural meme of koyaanisqatsi has been used to gloss a complicated and fraught historical event is not considered.

Archaeological stumbles range from mis-plotted sites to misdated ceramics. Yet, the most problematic is a cherry-picking of supporting evidence at the expense of a more messy empirical reality. For example, archaeological evidence corroborating the attack on Awat'ovi is actually relatively thin given the amount of excavation; although burning is present, no groups of unburied bodies were found in kivas or anywhere on the site—a central detail in the oral traditions. There is no archaeological evidence that Awat'ovi was more "foreign" than other

Hopi villages, and it cannot be confidently asserted that Awat'ovi residents adopted Christianity to a greater extent than their contemporaries on First, Second, or Third Mesas owing to a lack of comparable excavation data. Both theories are proposed as triggers for the town's destruction.

Hopi scholars like Peter Whiteley have shown village conflicts, like the split of the Hopi village of Oraibi in 1906, can be astoundingly complex events full of contingent decisions that resist simple historical or structural explanations. Brooks's enthusiasm for explaining large chunks of Hopi social history with the theme of koyaanisqatsi leads him to overreach in drawing connections across time, ultimately undermining his arguments about the particular case of Awat'ovi.

Wesley Bernardini
University of Redlands

Wilderburbs: Communities on Nature's Edge. By Lincoln Bramwell. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014. xxiv + 309 pp. 40 halftones, maps, notes, bibliography, index. $34.95 cloth, ISBN 978-0-295-99412-3.)

The rural West proliferates with wilderburbs: subdivisions set in forested terrain, their mazelike roads curling up to houses hidden in the timber, often perched on impossibly steep slopes. Lincoln Bramwell first encountered these communities as a firefighter trying to save them from incineration. Now he revisits them as a historian trying to comprehend their origins and environmental consequences.

"Wilderburbs," Bramwell's term for these subdivisions, encapsulates the tension his book explores. Wilderburb developers tried, with mixed success, to transplant suburban amenities into wildland settings. Frequently, residents' suburban ideals were frustrated by natural forces beyond human control. Looking back, Bramwell notes how the Term Permit Act of 1915 set the stage for private residences to interlace with the West's public lands. By midcentury changes in the regional economy induced ranch families to sell their land, while new tax laws in the 1980s prompted timber companies to do the same. Developers converted land into recreation-oriented subdivisions. The earliest developments, built in the 1950s, were just crude roads and scattered cabins. By the 1980s, developers were building wilderburbs for wealthier homeowners, filling them with amenities like golf courses, community centers, and "developer-packaged aesthetics" (p. 13). Bramwell illustrates this history by telling the stories of case-study wilderburbs in Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico. Of special interest to readers of the *New Mexico Historical Review*, he details the design and

development of Paa-Ko Communities near Albuquerque, which typified the amenity-rich wilderburbs of the 1980s and 1990s.

Bramwell excels at explaining how "environmental reality" bedeviled efforts to make wilderburbs into safe, convenient communities (p. xvii). One vexing problem was a shortage of surface water. Wilderburbs had to pipe in water from elsewhere (Paa-Ko's controversial solution) or pump the unreliable, legally murky groundwater. Some developers built water systems on the cheap, with disastrous results. Wildlife posed problems too. Residents adored the idea of wild animals in their backyards, until they realized that deer devour gardens, moose utterly lack fear of people, and bears habituate to humans—making for harrowing encounters, sometimes in people's bedrooms! The most primal challenge to suburban idealism came in the form of fire. Although fire is integral to western forest and chaparral ecosystems, public pressures following disasters like the Malibu fire in 1956 pushed the Forest Service to double down on aggressive suppression policies. These measures, however, endanger firefighters and make catastrophic infernos even likelier, Bramwell writes. The policies also raise issues of inequity (affluent wilderburbs receive protection poor rural communities do not) and blind wilderburb residents to the ways in which their actions heighten the fire risk.

The book is weaker on wilderburbs' cultural underpinnings. Suburban yearnings are assumed more than they are actually explained or documented, and developers' and promoters' roles in stoking consumer demand for wilderburbs go mostly unexplored. An occasional weakness is that Bramwell falls back on "human nature" to explain people's behavior. Overall, however, *Wilderburbs* is an outstanding ecological history of mountain residential development. Anyone living in wilderburbs, developing sites, or struggling to govern them should read and ponder this book.

William Philpott
University of Denver

Life in a Corner: Cultural Episodes in Southeastern Utah, 1880–1950. By Robert S. McPherson. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. x + 293 pp. 41 halftones, map, abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index. $24.95 paper, ISBN 978-0-8061-4691-1.)

Robert S. McPherson provides "snapshots of a bygone era" in his latest book, *Life in a Corner* (p. 7). The titular "cultural episodes" advance no unifying thesis except to assume the value of seeing the past on its own terms. McPherson waxes nostalgic over an era before technological innovations like air conditioning

and drone strikes. He allows readers to experience lives increasingly removed from a world that is harsher than we often acknowledge. To that end, the book attempts to recover a view of the not-too-distant past in which activities such as feeding and clothing oneself—mundane in today's world of global supply chains—required a closer, more-precarious relationship to the land and to neighbors at the local level.

One might dismiss this book as a bit old-fashioned, but that notion would miss its most important innovation. McPherson has written an ethnohistory of Anglo Americans. The book is the closing episode of his trilogy, the two previous installments focusing on cultural change among indigenous peoples. The frontier plays prominently, but there is no attempt to impose the old frontier process of Fredrick Jackson Turner. He asks basic questions about daily life in rural southeast Utah. How did practices meant to make a harsh physical environment livable work in fact? How did the local environment and its particularities inspire innovation in imported practices? Also, how did external forces—like World War I or Prohibition—reshape the lifeways of the Anglo Americans in the region from afar? Relying on rich first-hand accounts, McPherson reconstructs a vivid portrait of the social, cultural, and environmental peculiarities that either threatened or underpinned life in this particular corner of the world.

Perhaps alongside McPherson's previous monographs, *Navajo Land, Navajo Culture* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2001) and *As If the Land Owned Us* (University of Utah Press, 2011), this book might begin to satisfy the kind of diversity in characters and experiences that students of the Borderlands have come to expect. On its own, the book's best work is close up. McPherson attempts to understand the society and culture of white settlers, a group that proves more internally diverse than it might initially appear. Part of the episodic nature of the book likely derives from its confusing authorship, which might be called innovative if western historians had not spent a century attempting to discover the collaborative authorship of the *Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*. As if intent on teaching the dangers of skipping past the acknowledgments, McPherson mentions there—and only there—that certain chapters originated as research papers written by his students and other collaborators before he published them, usually in the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. McPherson and his editors might have learned from Bancroft and flagged the collaboration more clearly, at least pointing to the citation for the original article in the appropriate chapter notes.

Travis E. Ross
University of Utah

Immigrants in the Far West: Historical Identities and Experiences. Edited by Jessie L. Embry and Brian Q. Cannon (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2015. ix + 485 pp. 32 halftones, maps, charts, selected bibliography, index. $29.00 paper, ISBN 978-1-60781-380-4.)

This compilation of fourteen chapters on immigrant identities adds something novel to historical understanding of race and ethnicity in what the volume editors call the American Far West. Each chapter works to underscore in one way or another an observation made by historian Patricia Limerick about the character of the American West: "as a depository of enormous hope for progress, [it] may well be the best place in which to observe the complex and contradictory outcome of that fruit" (p. 11). For Jessie L. Embry, Brian Q. Cannon, and their contributors, progress was mostly measured by degrees of American cultural homogeneity even as interethnic relations, border crossings, and associational bonds worked against assimilation forces. To further this approach, Embry and Cannon compiled chapters on topics that are either original or understudied. Scholarship on Mormon railroad workers, Jewish associational members in Los Angeles, Japanese women, Irish miners, and Boer colonizers on the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands appear alongside chapters on Mexican California and Revolutionary-era Mexico. All stories told in this anthology are intrinsically fascinating as they illuminate the ways individuals have negotiated their social positions in a translocal, transnational far West.

The far West was a place of deep racial and religious diversity. Embry and Cannon argue that immigrant identities were remade within this distinctive milieu. Case studies by Ryan Dearinger, Katherine Benton-Cohen, Karen S. Wilson, and Mark Choate are emblematic of the types of social adjustments that created such fluid arrangements in the far West. For example, Dearinger argues that in the years before the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, Mormon railroad workers constructed an American identity from notions of manhood and holy community. In reaching toward heaven, they positioned themselves as purveyors of hard work and peace, while casting Irish and Chinese workers as transient, undisciplined, and wont for violence. If Mormon manliness was constructed against entrenched anti-Chinese and Irish racism, Benton-Cohen's chapter on the Dillingham Commission points out that Japanese immigrants in California were no less immune to reflexive nativism, despite moderating voices emanating from the federal and international levels. Accommodation, however, was also burnished at the local level. Using graph-visualization software, Wilson's chapter on nineteenth-century Jewish immigrants in Los Angeles maps strikingly consistent and deep associational networks among Jews and with other immigrant groups. The data show

that relationships mattered. The local ties that bonded Jewish immigrants to Los Angeles were as strong as those between Italian immigrants and the Italian state, as Choate's chapter deftly shows. The Italian diaspora in California reminds historians of the sway homeland governments enjoyed in the lives of their diffused subjects.

Immigrants in the Far West is the most recent contribution to a robust historiography on immigrant life in the American West. Embry's and Cannon's solid compilation of chapters by both established and new scholars of immigration works to destabilize old assimilationist narratives of immigrant settlement. Yet what falls a bit short is the introductory chapter in this anthology. To underscore the complex and contradictory landscape that immigrants encountered and remade, a clearer and more in-depth critique of assimilationist perspectives and immigration history was in order as was a rationale for overlooking content on indigenous peoples or indigeneity. Relatedly, Mormon settlers were treated uncritically as immigrants, not as settler colonialists. These are serious omissions that compromise an otherwise solid compilation of chapters on immigrant life in the American Far West and the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands.

Grace Peña Delgado
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Taken from the Paradise Isle: The Hoshida Family Story. Edited by Heidi Kim. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015. xxxv + 288 pp. 36 halftones, maps, appendixes, bibliography, index. $29.95 cloth, ISBN 978-1-60732-339-6.)

During World War II, the U.S. government required all Japanese Americans living in California and parts of Washington, Oregon, and Arizona to leave their homes and enter camps run by the newly created War Relocation Authority. This incarceration of more than 112,000 people was deemed "a grave injustice" by Congress when it passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which offered an apology and $20,000 to each person still living. Yet this part of U.S. history still garners barely a paragraph in most textbooks.

Over the past few decades historians, attorneys, journalists, and civil rights activists have written a growing body of literature about the wholesale roundup and incarceration of West Coast Japanese Americans. However, the experiences of Japanese Hawaiians, which differed greatly from the mainlanders, have not been well studied. In Hawaii there was no wholesale roundup; rather, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested more than two thousand people, shipping most to mainland internment camps run by the Department of Justice.

Taken from the Paradise Isle is a solid addition to the scholarship. The book is a poignant family history based on primary documents created during the war. George Yoshio Hoshida, born in Japan but a resident of Hawaii since age four, was one of those arrested after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. He spent most of the war interned behind barbed wire in Santa Fe and Lordsburg, New Mexico. His wife Tamae, pregnant when George was arrested, struggled to care for their young daughters. When the new baby was two months old, Tamae and the girls were sent to an incarceration camp run by the War Relocation Authority in Jerome, Arkansas. During the Yoshidas' forced separation and incarceration, George and Tamae corresponded frequently in letters. George kept a journal and illustrated his daily life in sketches and watercolors. After the war, he pulled them together into a memoir with additional narrative that included more of Tamae's point of view. However, his work was not commercially published.

The editor, Heidi Kim, researched his papers and memoir, as well as other primary documents from the era. She does a fine job of keeping her voice out of the narrative and bringing out the strength of George's and Tamae's writing. The Hoshidas come across as people who were deeply in love, a couple who struggled to keep their spirits up in the midst of huge life events beyond their control. The book's structure, going back and forth between George's and Tamae's experiences, sometimes requires the reader to stop and think about the timeline, a small hitch in Kim's well-woven history.

Patricia Biggs
Manzanar National Historic Site