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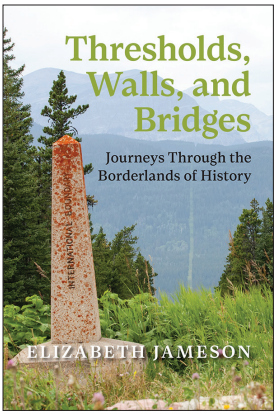

THRESHOLDS, WALLS, AND BRIDGES: JOURNEYS THROUGH THE BORDERLANDS OF HISTORY

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Halfway Across That Line: Gender at the Threshold of History in the North American Wests

February 9, 2016

There is a scene in my favorite movie, *Lone Star*, which compresses the social and spatial boundary lines of western history. *Lone Star,* according to writer/director John Sayles, is "a story about borders." "In a metaphorical sense," Sayles elaborated, a border "can be any of the symbols that we erect between one another—sex, class, race, age."[1] Eagle Pass, Texas, where *Lone Star* was filmed, becomes the fictional town of Frontera—"frontier," in the sense of border. The Anglo minority there has long dominated the ethnic Mexican majority and the smaller African American community. Borders there both exclude and protect—the international border, the racial neighborhoods and cafes, the intimate boundaries of sex, the narrative lines of contested histories, of personal lives and public stories.

At one point in the film, Sheriff Sam Deeds drives across the bridge to Mexico to speak to Chucho Montoya, "El Rey de las Llantas" (The King of the Tires), who, he has heard, witnessed a long-buried murder. As they chat at one of "El Rey's" tire lots, Deeds broaches the murder. Montoya responds: "You the sheriff of Rio County, right? Un jefe muy respetado." He bends down and draws a line on the ground with a Coke bottle, mimicking the line in the sand that William Travis reportedly drew at the Alamo. "Step over this line," he says. Sam obliges. "Ay, que milagro!" Montoya exclaims. "You're not the Sheriff of nothing anymore—just some Tejano with a lot of questions I don't have to answer. Bird flying south—you think he sees that line? Rattlesnake, javelina—whatever you got—halfway across that line they don't start thinking different. So why should a man?"

Sam responds, "Your government's always been pretty happy to have that line. The question's just been where to draw it."

"My government can go fuck itself," retorts Chucho. "And so can yours. I'm talking about people here—men. Mi amigo Eladio Cruz is giving some friends of his a lift in his camion one day. . . ."

And the scene fades to a day some decades past, as young Chucho Montoya crouched beside a bridge and watched then-sheriff Charlie Wade shoot Eladio Cruz, who was changing a tire in the middle of the bridge while smuggling friends across the border.[2] The bridge that might have been the threshold to another country became a wall for his friends, and a dead end for Eladio Cruz.

Halfway across that bridge, did Chucho Montoya start thinking differently? Perhaps he glimpsed the value of a tire.

"The symbols that we erect between one another"

The visual metaphors in *Lone Star* mirror the structural metaphors of this book and of the 2015 Western History Association conference theme, "Thresholds, Walls, and Bridges." The bridge evokes for me Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa's pathbreaking anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back*, about the exclusionary terrains of race and gender, and the personal costs of bridging them.[3] Sayles, Anzaldúa, and feminist literary scholar Carolyn Heilbrun led me to the metaphor of the threshold. Anzaldúa suggested in *This Bridge We Call Home* that bridging led to an uncertain threshold. "To step across the threshold," she wrote, "is to be stripped of the illusion of safety because it moves us into unfamiliar territory and does not grant us safe passage. To bridge is to attempt community, and for that we must risk. . . ."[4] Heilbrun insisted in *Writing a Woman's Life* that narrative in any story is more important than actors, and that narrative conventions constrained how women could tell their lives.[5] A decade later, she wrote in *Women's Lives* that the feminist movement had taken women's narratives to a liminal threshold, "poised upon uncertain ground" akin to "leaving one country or condition or self and entering upon another."[6]

"Leaving one country" does not lead directly to a new self, or a new history. As Chucho Montoya insisted, patterns of thought don't change as people cross borders. It is harder to bridge nations' histories than their borders, and harder still to connect the histories of nations or regions with

the stories of people. Even after new actors cross into histories, it takes a while to change the story.

This is a reflection about adding women to history and changing the story—about what has changed and what hasn't since women began crossing the lines of western history, and about what might come next.

"I'm talking about people here—men."

When Chucho Montoya said, "I'm talking about people here—men," he could have been talking about the history books of my Texas childhood. I got a pretty good education in the Galveston public schools in the 1950s and 1960s, but my required Texas history classes sat far removed from where I lived. I learned linear tales of battles, dates, and politics, with a limited cast of generals and governors. In grade seven we memorized the governors' names, so I met Miriam "Ma" Ferguson, then the only woman who had served as governor, who famously promised that if elected she would take the advice of her recently impeached husband, thus giving Texans "two governors for the price of one."[7] Ma Ferguson knew her place.

The Galveston of my childhood believed in a place for everyone—African Americans in the back of the bus and in separate schools named Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver; Mexican Americans in informally semi-segregated classrooms in schools named for battles and heroes in the Texas War for Independence from Mexico: Alamo, Travis, San Jacinto, Sam Houston, Bowie, Crockett, and Stephen F. Austin. Men in the history books, women—at least White women—at home.[8] It unsettled folks when people were not where they were supposed to be, doing what they were supposed to do. My mother's career as a doctor unsettled other women, who told me my Mom was "unnatural." Yet the history classes of my childhood seemed natural to me—history was about states, about ancient Rome, the United States, and Texas; it was made by powerful people, mostly White, mostly men.

Except for Mr. Bell in grade eight, all my history teachers were women. I don't know if they wondered why there were no women in our textbooks. I didn't.

Nor did I plan to study women's history. My first year of graduate school I resented being assigned what I called the "women" papers—about Margaret Fuller, brilliant transcendentalist and feminist, and Kate Chopin, whose literature was being rediscovered. Then a weird thing happened—I began to feel connected to my work in some indefinable new

way. One day in the University of Michigan History Department, I told a friend I was really getting into women's history. A senior historian stuck his head out his office door and intoned: "Women's history? That's just the history of dishwashing!"

I had run into the analytic wall separating the private domestic space gendered female, and therefore trivial and ahistorical, from the public arenas of consequential acts gendered male. The histories preserved in female spaces became "individual memory," "family stories," or "lore"; those told in masculine public arenas became "collective memory" or "history." The wall that separated dishwashing from history erected what Sarah Carter has called "categories and terrains of exclusion."[9] Social histories have unsettled the lines between histories of places and histories of people, creating tense connections between histories *of* the West and histories of people and social relationships *in* the West. The challenge remains, from the thresholds between private and public, people and states, to imagine new categories and terrains of inclusion.

Gender has been most successfully incorporated at the centers of western history in studies of the fur trade, but that focus has been harder to maintain once nations claimed the spotlight.[10] Some four decades of scholarship on western women and gender occupies center stage in women's history and gender history classrooms, but rarely in western history.[11]

Still, we've made progress. Lots of women have invaded the androcentric mythic West that my generation inherited. Most western historians acknowledge women in western history; most of us have added some women to our courses and textbooks. We began by adding women to the histories we knew, the Wests of national expansion and frontier opportunity. To Lewis and Clark, we could add Sacagawea; to David Thompson, add Charlotte Small. To frontier opportunity, add the first woman suffrage victories, in Wyoming in 1869, Utah in 1870, and the three Prairie Provinces in 1916. This was the stage in reconceiving history often caricatured as "add a woman and stir."[12] When we stirred, we found that it took decades of women's work to gain the hard-won ballot. Stirring again, we asked if votes alone defined opportunity, and what most women did when they weren't fighting for suffrage. One more stir took us beyond the frontiers of national expansion to the Indigenous people on the other side of frontier lines, presumably enduring what Elliott West called their "long centuries of boredom waiting for invaders from the East to show up."[13] *They* took us to new conceptual frameworks like conquest and settler colonialism, and to Indigenous and settler women's distinct roles bridging cultures or

erecting racial differences.[14] Yet, as Heilbrun cautioned, adding actors did not automatically change the story.

Several years ago, I did some crude measures of women's representation in six textbooks: two Western history texts, two U.S. surveys, and two Canadian.[15] Senior feminist scholars co-authored three of them. All six texts had added women, but they remained vastly outnumbered, especially in the western histories, where the populations resembled the skewed sex ratios of cattle drives or gold camps: only 7–9 percent of the people in the indexes were women. Adding the pages that clearly contained content in gender or women's history, women's representation ranged from a low of 6 percent to the high teens.[16] These figures are imprecise; they are skewed by different indexing systems, page duplications, and counting as whole pages any page on which a woman appeared. I am not impugning the authors, who I respect and who worked to include women—in one case with my clearly imperfect advice. But adding women to histories of nations or the West does not in itself change the narratives, and imagining inclusive narratives is much harder than adding women to history. The limits of inclusion highlight the categories and frameworks that privilege specific arenas, actors, and acts.

"Step over this line."

I've been wrestling with these challenges for some time, in a project that follows an unruly cast of women through the Dakota-Manitoba borderlands and tries to bring place and gender into common focus. A few stories from one small place and time in the West illustrate the ways that women strain western and national histories and suggest some possible categories of inclusion.

Sometime in the spring of 1884, Mary J. Rushton left her parents' home in Nova Scotia and traveled west to Manitoba. Turning south, she crossed the line into Dakota Territory, and on June 16 declared her intention "to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity" to "The Queen of England" and become a U.S. citizen. In early 1885 she moved onto 160 acres in Bottineau County and filed her Homestead Application, swearing that she was "over the age of 21" and a single woman. She had paid $150 for a frame house and barn, had sunk a well, and had broken approximately ten acres. She valued these improvements at $200.[17]

Mary Rushton became a U.S. citizen on August 9, 1889. Exactly one year later she filed her final proof statement to gain title to her land. She

had, by then, claimed a second quarter section under the Timber Culture Act, which required her to plant ten acres in trees.[18] She had, she said, lived continuously in her two-room frame house, had raised wheat and oats for four years, cultivated a garden, and dug a second well. She owned a horse, bed, bedding, table, chairs, stove, and cooking utensils. She had not been regularly employed, she wrote, but "would help a neighbor occasionally" who lived three-fourths of a mile away. Exercising her new citizenship, she had voted in the "last school election." Such are the bare facts of six years of her life that Mary Rushton recorded in her homestead claim file.[19]

Rushton was one of 773 women who filed final proofs for their North Dakota homesteads within two decades after the Devils Lake Land Office opened on August 21, 1883.[20] Devils Lake handled claims for north central North Dakota: for Ramsey Country, where the Land Office was located, and Eddy, Wells, Benson, Pierce, McHenry, Bottineau, Rolette, Towner, and Cavalier counties (see Chapter 9, Figure 9.2, page 233). Land opened for settlement as Indigenous people were pushed onto the Devils Lake (now Spirit Lake) Sioux Reservation, established in 1867, and the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation, established in 1882. More land became available as these reservations were carved into privately owned allotments under the 1887 Dawes Act. Within twenty years, 7,548 people had filed their final proof statements in the Devils Lake Land Office. One in ten (773) were women—almost two-thirds of whom were naturalized citizens.[21] At least 123 (16 percent) were Canadian, 145 (19 percent) were Norwegian, and 273 (35 percent) were native-born Americans.[22]

For many Canadian women, the lure lay in subtle differences between Canadian and U.S. land policies. The 1862 U.S. Homestead Act and the 1872 Canadian Dominion Lands Act were similar in most respects. Both offered homesteaders 160 acres; both charged a small filing fee, required claimants to live on their land part of the year and put it to productive use. Both appeared surprisingly egalitarian. Section Two of the Homestead Act clarified in unusually gender-inclusive language: "That the *person* applying for the benefit of this act shall, upon application to the register of the land office in which *he or she* is about to make such entry, make affidavit before the said register or receiver that *he or she* is the head of a family, or is twenty-one years or more of age," and "that such application is made for *his or her* exclusive use and benefit. . . ." (italics added). Beyond this, women had only to swear that they were unmarried when they filed their claims, or, if married, that they were the sole support of their families, and that they were or had declared their "intention to become" U.S. citizens.

Figure 13.1. "Homestead sod shack of Ambjør Hagen, Grandfield Township, Eddy County, N.D.," [189-?]. S. A. Olsness Photograph Collection, Mss 220.4.7. Photo courtesy of the Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU, Fargo. Ambjør Hagen, a Norwegian immigrant, filed the final proof for her homestead on April 10, 1896 at age 61; she received the title to her land on May 2, 1896. Ambjør Hagen Homestead Claim File, file 1672, box 642, Records of the Devils Lake Land Office (1884–1913), Records of North Dakota Land Offices, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, 1685–1993, Record Group 49, National Archives and Records Administration (Washington, DC).

Canada, too, initially offered homesteads to "any *person* who is the head of a family or has attained the age of twenty-one years who is a subject of Her Majesty by birth or naturalization." But in 1876, the law was changed to restrict homesteads to "[a]ny *person*, male or female, who is the sole head of a family, or any *male* who has attained the age of eighteen years."[23] (italics added). Until 1930, a Canadian woman could homestead independently only if widowed, divorced, deserted, or separated, and then only if she also had a minor child living with her and solely dependent on her for support. From 1876–1930, a gendered border divided unmarried women's access to homesteads in Canada and the United States.[24]

It would be a mistake, though, to overstate the differences between the nations on either side of that border. Both offered homesteads and restricted Indigenous Peoples to reservations and reserves to serve their nation-building aspirations. The Homestead Act, Dominion Lands Act, and Dawes Act all inscribed the values of private property, patriarchy, and monogamous nuclear families.[25] All presumed that the head of a family was male, unless no man were present. Both Canada and the U.S. wanted White women to bring their civilizing influence to their Wests. Both recruited homesteading *families*; they chose different means to attract *unmarried* women. The United States offered homesteads; Canada recruited domestic servants from Britain and Scandinavia.[26] Both hoped that the women who came would marry, bear children, and help build western farms and communities. Three in ten women (225) in the Devils Lake cohort did just that, marrying before gaining title to their land. About as many, 228, remained single; 274 (35 percent) were widows.[27]

Although the 49th Parallel served as the threshold to land for single Canadian women, the border they crossed and the land they claimed meant different things to women who shared Canadian "nationality." British North America became the Dominion of Canada only sixteen years before the Devils Lake Land Office opened. "Canadian" women had diverse identities and reasons to claim U.S. citizenship. Mary Rushton was among the youngest, claiming land just after her twenty-first birthday. The oldest, Margaret Belgarde, had crossed the border four decades before. Born in the Red River settlement in 1794, Marguerite Dufort married Alexis Belgarde in 1814. The Belgardes moved south across an indistinct border to Pembina in 1844, twenty-three years before Confederation and twenty-eight years before the 49th Parallel was surveyed between Manitoba and Dakota Territory.[28]

The North West Company had established a trading post in 1797 at the junction of the Red and Pembina Rivers, and, later, a second post at Pembina that Alexander Henry ran from 1801 to 1805.[29] Métis descendants of British and French fur traders and Indigenous mothers, and their Ojibwe, Cree, and Assiniboine maternal kin staged buffalo hunts from there to provision the fur trade.[30] The Pembina post closed in 1823. Norman Kittson opened a new fur trade post on the site in 1844, perhaps inspiring the Belgardes' move that year.[31]

Six years later the census listed Alexis as a carpenter; he died in 1852. Marguerite lived in Pembina County with her son's family until the early 1880s. Then, in 1884 she filed her intention to become a U.S. citizen and

moved onto her own homestead in Bottineau County. Her final proof papers, filed in August 1889, listed her age as 106, but she was likely only 95, living in a log house on her homestead with her daughter. She died four years later.[32]

Colonial settler societies were mapped in gendered and racialized spaces. Marguerite Belgarde did not support dependent minor children; she could not claim land in Canada. Her homestead reflected gendered access to land, and the contested categories of race and citizenship in the U.S.-Canada borderlands. Over half the Canadian women located their homesteads in two counties just south of the 49th Parallel: in Rolette County, site of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation, or in Bottineau County.[33] Most appear to have been Anglo Canadians, but a combination of factors drew Belgarde and other Métis, as the buffalo trade collapsed, and the failed armed resistance of 1885 cemented Anglo Canadian authority north of the border. I cannot determine how many of the 773 women were Métis, but Marguerite Belgarde was not alone. Many Métis moved to the Turtle Mountain area in Rolette County in 1883, when the Land Office opened, the year after the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation was established. By 1884, over 1,200 Métis lived around Turtle Mountain.[34]

More Rolette County homesteads became available after the U.S. government cut the Turtle Mountain Reservation from twenty-two townships to two while limiting access to Chippewa "full bloods."[35] Barred in Canada from receiving Métis scrip because they were "U.S. Indians" and hindered from settling on the Turtle Mountain Reservation because they were not "full-blood Chippewas," some Métis adapted to the new racial and national boundaries by claiming homesteads in an area where they had long hunted, trapped, and traded, and where they could live among Métis and Indigenous kin.[36]

The citizenship requirement that Canadian women satisfied to claim their land skirted the complex racial ethnic categories of two nations and more subtle identities that linked and separated the incoming settlers, Indigenous people already there, like the Pembina Chippewas, whose ancestors had migrated to the area in the 1400s, and newcomers like the Dakotas, pushed west by European Americans.[37] The U.S. was challenged to fit Métis into binary racial categories. In 1870 the Secretary of the Interior appointed C. W. McIntyre to "investigate allegations of the fraudulent issue of scrip under the 1863 treaty" with the Pembina Band of Chippewa. Only "mixed bloods residing with the Red Lake and Pembina Indians at the date of the treaty who were connected with them

by blood" were supposed to receive scrip; "all such as were foreign born" were to be "excluded."[38] Though she was "foreign born," Marguerite (Dufort) Belgarde "was on the 1868 annuity list" for the Pembina band. Four of her children and her son-in-law also claimed annuities and were deemed Pembina Chippewa. But three Belgarde sons, Joseph, Theodore, and Augustin were denied scrip as "Assiniboine/Sioux living in the Turtle Mountains." So was one son-in-law, whom McIntyre found to be "Sioux ½ breed—not good," although his mother was Pembina Métis.[39] Such slippery racial categories skirted longstanding ties among Métis and their mothers' Indigenous kin.

The international boundary and U.S. law allowed unmarried Métis women to claim homesteads. For the women themselves, Métis identity was likely more important than national citizenship. Months before the Devils Lake Land Office opened, on April 15, 1883, a sixty-year-old "American born" widow, Marguerite Azure, moved onto a homestead claim in Rolette County. A brief comment on her homestead application linked the modest plot to rapidly constricting Indigenous space. Azure swore on May 22, 1890, that the land she claimed was "not improved, occupied or claimed by Native born Indian or half Breeds of the United States," [*sic*]—an ironic claim, since Azure was Pembina Métis.[40] Her homestead claim, like Belgarde's, evaded preoccupations with blood quantum, birthplace, citizenship, and national residence that determined what the Canadian and U.S. governments considered they owed Indigenous peoples or "half breeds."[41]

As they crossed the property lines of their homesteads, Azure, Belgarde, and other Métis homesteaders claimed more than private property: they gained proximity to kin and to a Métis community that had spanned the northern Plains long before the 49th Parallel bisected it. They used U.S. law to claim homesteads, but I doubt that their chief goals were new national identities. Marguerite Azure spoke for many homesteading women. "I make this entry," she said simply, "for my own benefit & children."[42]

Many Rolette County children knew another woman who further complicates what private property meant for homesteaders and their Indigenous neighbors. On June 25, 1888, Rose M. Sheridan claimed a quarter section in Rolette County; she filed her final proof statement on November 23, 1893. Born in Ireland, Sheridan immigrated to the United States with her family at age two. Her homestead prospered: she farmed 120 acres and valued her land, log house, and stable at $660. Perhaps land

drew Rose Sheridan to Rolette County; perhaps she came for the job that helped support her claim. She lived on her homestead, she wrote, except "when my duties called me away as Superintendent and teacher at the mission school of the Turtle Mountain reservation. . . ."[43]

Whichever came first—Sheridan's job or her homestead—their combined significance mattered enormously. The national policies that supported family farms and nuclear families generated different options for women who homesteaded independently or as wives; for Norwegian or Anglo Canadian settlers; for Métis, for whom "settling" meant making the best of constricting options; and for their Indigenous neighbors, whose allotments tied them to vastly shrinking territories. Government employees and missionaries worked to reverse Indigenous divisions of labor by giving Indigenous men agricultural equipment, stock, seeds, and legal title to family farms. Sheridan's job at the Turtle Mountain mission school likely included teaching her pupils the values of private property, Christianity, monogamy, and patriarchal nuclear families. She would seek to change Indigenous concepts of kinship, marriage, and divorce, to eliminate concepts of third genders, to inculcate binary heterosexual roles and sexualities. The girls would learn "proper" housework, the boys, farming—though Rose Sheridan was single and managed her own farm, and though many Indigenous women farmed.[44]

One of the best-known accounts of Indigenous women's agriculture came from a Hidatsa woman named Mahidiweash (or Maxidiwiac), known in English as Buffalo Bird Woman, who traced Hidatsa origins to Miniwakan, or Spirit Lake, next to the Devils Lake Land Office.[45] Born in 1839 or 1840 at the mouth of the Knife River "three years after the smallpox winter" killed over half the Hidatsa and perhaps seven-eighths of the Mandan, her people moved with the surviving Mandans to a new village at Like-a-fishhook bend. They lived there until 1885, "when," she said, "the government began to place families on allotments" at the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation.[46] Presbyterian minister and anthropologist Gilbert L. Wilson recorded her history at Fort Berthold from 1906–1918 and published it in two volumes, *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden* and *Waheenee: An Indian Girl's Story*.[47]

For Wilson, Mahidiweash represented the "old ways" being replaced by Christianity and "civilized" gender roles. Her assessment was more nuanced. As Hidatsa men learned to farm, Mahidiweash told Wilson that "White men knew nothing about our gardens. We knew all this I tell you, since the world began." Whites, she said, brought new seeds for oats,

wheat, watermelons, and onions, but also weeds, like thistle and mustard, and vegetables she considered inferior, like turnips and big squashes.[48] Wilson's field notes recorded her views of the changes brought by missionaries, government personnel, and traders:

> In old times, and even when I was young, it was hard for us to get tools; and house-building of any kind was hard work. Now we can build a house of any shape we wish, and tools are easy to get. In this respect our new way of living is better than the old.
>
> On the otherhand [*sic*], we had plenty to eat and wear then, abundance of meat and fur robes and tanned skins. We did not have to buy food with money, and the new food that white men have brought us, and their diseases, cause our people to die. In olden days we did not thus die.
>
> Neither do I like white men's laws. I do not understand them nor know how to make them rule my life.
>
> I think also that it is a very hard thing for us to have to let our children be taken from us and sent away to school where we cannot see them.[49]

This complex judgment appeared in neither of Wilson's published volumes. It did not support the path to assimilation that Wilson assumed and for which Rose Sheridan labored.

Mary Rushton, Margaret Belgarde, Marguerite Azure, Rose Sheridan, and Mahidiweash—five women in one place and time in the North American West, separated by distinct gender systems, nationalities, racial ethnic cultures, classes, spiritual practices, ages, and much more. That they lived in proximity was, for some, the consequence of birth; for some, the intimate legacy of the fur trade; for some, the limits of their options elsewhere coupled with the policies of settler colonialism and national expansion. The fact that they were unmarried women shaped their options, inscribed in national land policies, borders, and survey lines. We can fit them into the history of westward expansion, but that narrative can't hold their diversity. They challenge us to imagine narratives that respect and link their diverse stories—to add women to western history and then go further, to explore the distinct ways they experienced history and made it.

Guns to Butter

Most women have not made it into history, even interesting women like Rushton, Belgarde, Azure, and Sheridan on the standard homesteading frontier. They owe their absences, in part, to gendered assumptions about where history was made, whose acts were important, whose stories worth saving, and to gendered historical categories.

In 1986 William Cronon, Howard Lamar, Katherine Morrissey, and Jay Gitlin identified frameworks and categories of western history that excluded women. Chief among these was the frontier, defined by masculine economies: the fur trade, mining, ranching, and farming.[50] There was no gardeners' frontier, no hide tanners' frontier, no missionaries' frontier, no butter, or poultry frontier.

Women made a mess of masculine resource frontiers. We found them gardening in mining towns, raising poultry on ranches, making butter for the fur trade in the Fort Vancouver dairy.[51] Ojibwe and Hidatsa women farmed; Pueblo women raised turkeys; ranch women used the money from their chickens, eggs, and butter to buy livestock, windmills, flour, and gasoline.[52] Around Devils Lake, women farmed, raised poultry, manufactured butter and pemmican, processed hides, gardened, canned, and supported their homesteads washing dishes in hotels, or, like Mary Rushton, when she "would help a neighbor occasionally."

Women's paid and unpaid labor was similar in each resource economy—they cooked, cleaned, raised and processed fruits and vegetables, made clothing, kept poultry, made butter, hauled fuel and water, engaged in sex, did laundry, and washed dishes. As they gathered, raised, preserved, and prepared food, women created the human energy that enabled hunters, trappers, miners, lumberjacks, ranch hands, and threshing crews to harvest western resources. When the state provided resources, like land for homesteads and railroad construction, those contributions were called infrastructure. Women's labor produced the social and economic infrastructure of western mines, farms, ranches, fur trades, lumber mills, and communities.

Women on the egg and butter frontiers of settler colonialism organized through the Grange and Farmers' Alliance in the U.S. and the Women Grain Growers and United Farm Women of Alberta (UFWA) in Canada to protect their cash-producing butter. Women helped win the Federal Oleomargarine Act of 1886 that decreased the manufacture of U.S. oleomargarine for almost a decade, and the more successful 1886

Act of Parliament that outlawed margarine until 1917, and again from 1924–1948.[53] The Women Grain Growers and the UFWA campaigned for woman suffrage, farm women's property rights, reproductive rights, rural childcare, affordable medical care, and more. Despite their activism, histories chronicle the wheat pools that the male Grain Growers and United Farmers of Alberta established, but histories seldom mention that the UFWA created the first Egg and Poultry Pool in Canada.[54] Their activism fell at one end of a spectrum that ranged from individual resistance, like refusing to wash the dishes or asking a man to change a diaper, to organized collective action.

Dishwashing, in other words, was neither ahistorical nor separate from the public arenas of men's labor or of state and community formation. It got erased through social convention and public policies that privileged male sources that recorded women's homestead claims only because they were unmarried, or that prevented married women from incorporating the schools, libraries, hospitals, and churches they organized, so that their husbands' names appeared on the legal documents historians consulted to identify community leaders.

Class and race erased other women's activism. Maternal concerns inspired May McConaghy Wing (1890-1980), who lived most of her nine decades in hardrock mining towns. She started the hot school lunch program in Victor, Colorado, run by women volunteers who, she said, "washed dishes and they helped make sandwiches and they helped cook."[55] The building that hosted high school basketball games had no bathrooms, so that the boys relieved themselves outside in a cold alley and her son, James, "every year, had one cold right after the other." So, May Wing organized a mothers' "executive meeting" that "brought it to the PTA," which got the school system to install indoor plumbing and provide an apartment for a custodian to keep the pipes from freezing.[56]

Half a century later, Latina environmental justice activists organized the Mothers of East Los Angeles, using skills *they* learned in church work and the PTA to keep a prison, a hazardous waste incinerator, a waste treatment plant, and an above-ground oil pipeline out of their neighborhood. Then they distributed free low-flush toilets, fought against classroom overcrowding, opened a non-profit meat market to fund scholarships, and more.[57] Such social activism made a critical difference in under-served working-class and racial ethnic communities. The women who organized egg and poultry pools, cooked hot school lunches, and learned their organizing skills at the PTA were not mere "social dishwashers." They were

activists: community organizers, civic leaders, and institution builders. Rethinking the labels and categories of women's community and domestic labor opens categories of inclusion in histories of western economic development and community formation.

As we hear women's stories on their own terms, the arenas and subjects of history expand. I went to Cripple Creek long ago to learn about unions and strikes and found women whose lives centered on family, who led me to private arenas of reproduction, sexuality, and abuse even more hidden from history than women's work and activism. Though much current U.S. political discourse concerns the public regulation of marriage, sexuality, and reproduction, those topics remain largely disconnected from U.S. history and western history.

In 1979, I sat with 85-year-old Beulah Pryor in her Colorado Springs living room, as she taught me to make rag rugs, fed me homemade ginger cookies and lemonade, and remembered running for help the night her stepfather threatened to shoot her mother. Neighboring miners called the police and persuaded Beulah Pryor's mother to leave her abusive husband by promising to board with her so she could feed her children.[58] That personal local approach to domestic violence is not yet connected to the more recent history of battered women's shelters, nor is domestic violence linked to the violence of vigilantes, gunslingers, and wars. Although Canadian historians have contrasted the Canadian West of "peace, order, and good government" to a violent U.S. West, that debatable distinction excludes domestic violence and the abuse Indigenous children suffered in the residential schools that so pained Buffalo Bird Woman.[59]

"Winners Get the Bragging Rights. . ."

Historical silences and erasures matter. Almost every woman I've interviewed began by saying "Why do you want to talk to me? I didn't do anything." They couldn't locate themselves in the histories they knew. And yet, like May Wing, they knew what they had done—they just didn't think a historian would care. Three years after we met, May Wing voiced the challenge that still animates my work. "I lived the history that I can tell," she said. "And of course, the history today, in books that's written a lot, is not really the true thing, as it was lived."[60]

Histories "in books" stopped short of the domestic threshold. In the formative narrative of the American West, Frederick Jackson Turner wrote that "Complex society" was "precipitated by the wilderness into a

kind of primitive organization based on the family." History progressed as "primitive peoples" became "new nations" and moved from "families into states."[61] Among the constraints on women's narratives that Carolyn Heilbrun identified were the "limited plots and conventions of romance," like the Cinderella narrative in which a long foreground waiting for Prince Charming led quickly to "and they lived happily ever after."[62] In Cinderella's plot, women disappeared when Prince Charming arrived. In Turner's, they disappeared with complex society, with the state. These narrative conventions help explain why it has been easier to focus on women and families before the nation states of North American solidified their borders and authority.

A number of assumptions wall women, and most men, out of history: that the subject of history is the nation state; that kinship and family are more primitive social forms than governments; that private life is less important, historically, than battles and elections. These assumptions are reinforced by the teleologies of progress, demanding that "civilization" overtake "savagery," and that homesteaders spend the rest of their lives happily farming their hard-won acres.

Those assumptions and conventions pushed Buffalo Bird Woman to the margins of history, because Gilbert Wilson either couldn't hear the stories she told, or could not fit them into the stories he knew or wanted to tell. Wilson also interviewed her brother, Henry Wolf Chief, and her son, Edward Goodbird. Mahidiweash spoke Hidatsa; Goodbird and Wolf Chief learned English. Goodbird became a minister, Wolf Chief a storekeeper. Wilson published *Goodbird: The Indian* and *Waheenee* to introduce Christian children to Indigenous people.[63] Differences of gender and generation separated Goodbird and his mother on the historical trajectory that Wilson assumed was civilizing and progressive.

The narrative Wilson wrote did not fit Mahidiweash's experience, her concept of history, or her interpretations of progress. It corseted her life into a combined Turnerian and Cinderella narrative—a long tale of girlhood that ended with her first marriage to Magpie, his death, and her second marriage to Son-of-a-Star, followed by a hunting trip and Goodbird's birth, and then a fast flyover to the voice of a dying tradition. That narrative implicitly supported a Turnerian trajectory from "a primitive social organization based on the family" to assimilation, to the nation.

In the process it deleted much rich detail in Wilson's field notes. In the story of Buffalo Bird Woman's first marriage, he accurately reported that her younger sister Cold Medicine accompanied her in the ritual of

taking gifts to Magpie's family, but he never explained that they were both marrying Magpie, as was the custom.[64] Mahidiweash told Wilson:

> . . . I lived with my husband, for two years, when my father gave my sister also to my husband. . . .
>
> Tho my sister and I had both gone to call Magpie to his lodge, yet he did not take my younger sister until my father said, "Take this one also as your wife."
>
> My sister however had been given to him only about a month, when she ran away with a man named Bush. They did not try to escape to another village, just went to another lodge in our village. My younger sister just left us one night, that was all.[65]

"In old times," she said, "we thought that a wife had a right to divorce herself from her husband just as the husband had the right to separate from her if he chose."[66]

Wilson's story most differed from Buffalo Bird Woman's regarding the trajectories of change. Mahidiweash did not think education and Christianity brought unqualified progress. She told Wilson, "In old days, mothers watched their daughters very carefully, and girls did not give birth to babies before marriage. But after schools were started on this reservation, then our daughters began to have babies before marriage, for they now learned English ways."[67]

Wilson concluded Buffalo Bird Woman's story with words that I have not found in his field notes:

> I am an old woman now. The buffaloes and black-tail deer are gone, and our Indian ways are almost gone . . .
>
> My little son grew up in the white man's school. He can read books, and he owns cattle and has a farm. He is a leader among our Hidatsa people, helping teach them to follow the white man's road.
>
> . . . Our Indian life, I know, is gone forever.[68]

Through Wilson's filters, Buffalo Bird Woman became the voice of a dying tradition. Goodbird learned English, converted to Christianity, owned cattle and a farm. He could join a mainstream history; his mother was a prelude to national progress. The imperatives of "civilization" moved Mahidiweash from collective gardens and lodges that women owned,

from a matrilineal household to an isolated nuclear family on a farm to which her son held title.

Buffalo Bird Woman was marginalized on the same terms as many immigrant women, who stayed home while their children and husbands learned English in schools, jobs, and marketplaces. Preserving family histories, food, rituals, holidays, languages, and customs, they were denigrated as ignorant and unacculturated. Other women who built schools, churches, and libraries became too civilized, unfit for the rigors of an untamed land, or drags who wanted men to bathe, shave, stop drinking and philandering, go to church, and settle down.[69] Their stories became private family tales, not history.

Mary Rushton, Margaret Belgarde, Marguerite Azure, Rose Sheridan, Mahidiweash, May Wing, and Beulah Pryor are just a few of the diverse western women whose histories we've recovered. Some of their stories belonged to specific times and particular Wests; some experiences crossed the lines of nation, class, and race. Their complex variety can help us discern what has been particular about place and gender in the North American Wests, and what histories might bridge social, spatial, and national divides.

The impediments to those histories are significant. It is not easy to find narrative forms for separate but connected stories. It is hard to confront histories in which differences of gender, race, and nationality were forged through power and domination. To bridge these human and conceptual divides demands unsettling the categories and terrains of the histories we know. It also entails practical issues of power. States, after all, fund history programs, adopt the textbooks, and rarely want cherished histories unsettled.

Returning once more to *Lone Star*, a scene at a PTA meeting captured these struggles over content, as angry parents confronted school personnel about what their children learned in Texas history classes.

An impassioned Anglo mother exclaims, "You're just tearin' everything down! Tearin' down our heritage, tearin' down the memory of people that fought and died for this land." A Chicano father responds, "We fought and died for this land, too! We fought the U.S. Army, the Texas Rangers." An Anglo father interrupts: "Yeah, but you lost, buddy! Winners get the bragging rights, that's how it goes."

Histories of winners and losers establish power, but they don't explain the Wests we inhabit, told from all sides of the history. It is those alternate stories that the Anglo father in *Lone Star* wants to silence: "You may call

it history," he says, "but I call it propaganda. I'm sure they got their own account of the Alamo on the other side, but we're not on the other side, so we're not about to have it taught in our schools!" [70]

This is not a new debate. The high school edition of *Out of Many* drew fire in Texas for two paragraphs on sex workers that stated that "perhaps 50,000 women engaged in prostitution west of the Mississippi during the second half of the nineteenth century."[71] The debate is not new, it is not settled, and it matters. In September 2015 over five million Texas school children opened new social studies textbooks that barely mentioned segregation and that treated slavery as a "side issue to the Civil War."[72]

It is hard enough to adopt textbooks that don't erase legacies of racism, and harder still to address gender. The casts of western histories have expanded since my childhood to include more people of color, more grassroots activists, more women, a few identified LGBTQ2S+ individuals. Those expanded casts stretch the histories I learned, and the power they encode, but they have not dissolved the categories, assumptions, and narratives that marginalize women. I grew up in a racist and sexist culture and still wrestle with its assumptions. From an uncertain threshold, somewhere between dishwashing and the West, I interrogate the values I assign to wheat or butter, to mining gold or hot school lunches, to battles, dates, and dirty dishes.

Hope animates these challenges—the hope that history can be a bridge, that histories that cross the lines of nations, of social boundaries, and households can help us see humanity on the other sides of those borders, and history beyond the thresholds of domesticity. Within that primitive social organization based on the family, people sometimes made choices to build schools or start social movements or changed behaviors that began to transform social relationships, as Beulah Pryor's mother did when she walked away from abuse.

Halfway across the lines of gender, race, class, or other borders of difference lie the thresholds to histories that are more accurate, more truthful, and that hold the hope of reconciliation. Truth comes before reconciliation, and the truth is that the histories that marginalize and erase women and relationships of gender are inaccurate and incomplete; they deny interdependence and connection. The problem is not simply histories in which winners claim the bragging rights. It is histories intended to buttress relationships of power—that insist that slavery was a side issue in the Civil War or that patriarchy is civilizing.

The histories of the past half century bring us to an uncertain threshold. Imagining new histories of the people and social relationships that have made the West is not easy work, and once imagined, such histories can be hard to teach because they don't fit narratives that most of our students or fellow citizens recognize. It is necessarily an incremental journey, imaginatively and practically.

The historical threshold at which I always stand is the present moment, halfway across the line from the past that shaped my world to the future I want my grandchildren to inherit. History—truthful history—can serve that intention. I want to write women into western history because people who don't see themselves in history don't know that they make history. I want those histories, not to be politically correct, but to be historically accurate and humanly compassionate. I want my grandchildren to inherit a world in which history is not about winners and losers, where history is made not only on the battlefields of San Jacinto, Wounded Knee, and Batoche, but also at the PTA—where the goal is not the right to tell the winners' story but the ability to hear all the stories. There are no roadmaps to those histories or those futures. They begin when women and men meet each other halfway across the lines of the histories that have separated us. Histories that map social divides can begin to bridge them. Gloria Anzaldúa voiced the challenge eloquently: "To bridge is to attempt community, and for that we must risk."

NOTES

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1 *Lone Star*, written and directed by John Sayles (Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers, 1996); Dennis West and Joan M. West, "Borders and Boundaries: An Interview with John Sayles," *Cineaste* 22:3 (Summer 1996): 14.

2 *Lone Star. Un jefe muy respetado*: a very respected leader. *Ay, que milagro!*: Ay, what a miracle! *Mi amigo*: my friend. *Camion*: truck.

3 Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press, 1981).

4 Gloria E. Anzaldúa, "Preface: (Un)natural bridges, (Un)safe spaces," in *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, eds. Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Analouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3.

5 Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 13.

6 Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Women's Lives: The View from the Threshold* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 3.

7 Miriam Amanda (Ma) Ferguson was elected Governor in 1924 after her husband, James Ferguson, was impeached and convicted of misapplication of public funds. She served two terms as Governor, from 1925–1927 and 1933–1935. See Ouida Ferguson Nalle, *The Fergusons of Texas, or "Two Governors for the Price of One": A Biography of James Edward Ferguson and His Wife* (San Antonio: Naylor, 1946).

8 Race, like gender and class, is a historical and cultural construct. In the contexts of 1950s Galveston, "White" generally excluded Mexican Americans.

9 Sarah Carter, "Categories and Terrains of Exclusion: Constructing the 'Indian Woman' in the Early Settlement Era in Western Canada," *Great Plains Quarterly* 13 (1993): 147–61.

10 Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670–1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press and Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980); Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980); Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown, eds., *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985); William R. Swagerty, "Marriage and Settlement Patterns of Rocky Mountain Trappers and Traders," *Western Historical Quarterly* 11:2 (April 1980): 159–80; and Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800–1860* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

11 I distinguish women, as subjects, from gender as a category of analysis and as a mutable array of identities and roles. For an assessment and critique of the progress incorporating women and gender in western history, see Elizabeth Jameson, Margaret D. Jacobs, Susan Lee Johnson, and Karen J. Leong, "If Not Now, When?: Gender, Power, and the Decolonization of Western History," *Pacific Historical Review* 79:4 (November 2010): 573–628, a forum including Elizabeth Jameson, "Looking Back to the Road Ahead," 574–84; Margaret D. Jacobs, "Getting Out of a Rut: Decolonizing Western Women's History," 585–604; Susan Lee Johnson, "Nail This To Your Door: A Disputation on the Power, Efficacy, and Indulgent Delusion of Western Scholarship That Neglects the Challenge of Gender and Women's History," 605–17; and Karen J. Leong, "Still Walking, Still Brave: Mapping Gender, Race, and Power in U.S. Western History," 618–28.

12 The phrase as caricature was taken out of context from Gerda Lerner's serious discussion of the process of reconceiving history from gendered inclusion. Gerda Lerner, "The Challenge of Women's History," in Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 169.

13 Elliott West, "A Longer, Grimmer, But More Interesting Story," in *Trails: Toward a New Western History,* eds., Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles E. Rankin (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 107.

14 For surveys of some of the extensive scholarship on western women, see Joan M. Jensen and Darlis A. Miller, "The Gentle Tamers Revisited: New Approaches to the History of Women in the American West," *Pacific Historical Review* 49:2 (May 1980): 173–213; Elizabeth Jameson, "Toward a Multicultural History of Women in the Western United States," *Signs* 13:4 (1988): 761–91; Marian Perales, "Empowering 'The Welder': A Historical Survey of Women of Color in the West," in *Writing the Range: Race, Class and Culture*

in the Women's West, eds. Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 21–41; and Elizabeth Jameson, "Bringing It All Back Home: Rethinking Women and the Nineteenth-Century West," in *A Companion to the American West*, ed. William Deverell (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 179–99. For Indigenous and settler women in colonial contexts, see Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*; Adele Perry, *On The Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) and *Colonial Relations: The Douglas-Connolly Family and the Nineteenth-Century Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); and Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mothers to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

15 R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones, and Donald B. Smith, *Journeys: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Thompson Nelson, 2006); Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, *Canada: A National History*, 2nd ed.(Toronto: Pearson Longman, 2007); John Mack Faragher, Mari Jo Buhle, Daniel Czitrom, and Susan Armitage, *Out of Many: A History of the American People*, Combined Volume, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006); Jacqueline Jones, Peter H. Wood, Thomas Borstelmann, Elaine Tyler May, and Vicki L. Ruiz, *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*, Brief Edition (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005); Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). For more detail, see Elizabeth Jameson, "This Bridge Called Women's Stories: Private Lore and Public History," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association/Revue de la Société historique du Canada* 18:2 (2007): 255–75.

16 The 6 percent was from Hine and Faragher, *The American West;* the high end of the six texts came from White, *It's Your Misfortune*. Thanks to Amy McKinney and Erin Millions who counted 30 women among 368 names in the index of White, *It's Your Misfortune*, and 35 of 478 in Hine and Faragher, *The American West*.

17 Mary J. Rushton Homestead Claim File, National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 49, Washington, D.C. (Hereinafter cited as Homestead Files). See chapter 9 for a more complete treatment of the women who had won title to their homesteads by 1893. By 2015 the study had expanded to cover the first two decades the Devils Lake Land Office operated, 1883–1903, and included 773 women rather than the 121 discussed in chapter 9.

18 Rushton Homestead File. The Timber Culture Act of 1873 required forty acres of trees; as amended in 1878, it required ten acres.

19 Rushton Homestead File.

20 Originally called the Creelsburg Land Office, it became the Devils Lake office November 7, 1884, when the town of Creelsburg was renamed Devils Lake. North Dakota became a state in 1889; before that it was part of Dakota Territory. I use North Dakota for simplicity.

21 Despite increasing numbers of claimants from the first decade to the second, the proportions of women remained fairly constant: 107 women, 9.7 percent of 1100, filed their final claims during the first decade, August 21, 1883–August 20, 1893; another 666 women, 10.3 percent of the total, filed final proofs between August 21, 1893 and August 20, 1903. All figures were calculated from the Homestead Files of 773 women who filed final proof statements at the Devils Lake Land Office by August 20, 1903. Histories of women homesteaders began with Sheryll Patterson-Black's pathbreaking article, "Women Homesteaders on the Great Plains Frontier," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 1:2 (Spring 1976): 67–88. For an excellent study of North Dakota women homesteaders,

see H. Elaine Lindgren, *Land in her Own Name: Women as Homesteaders in North Dakota* (1991; repr., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). See also Katherine Benton-Cohen, "Common Purposes, Worlds Apart: Mexican-American, Mormon and Midwestern Women Homesteaders in Cochise County, Arizona," *Western Historical Quarterly* 36:4 (2005): 429–52; Dee Garceau, "Single Women Homesteaders and the Meaning of Independence: Places on the Map, Places in the Mind," *Frontiers: A Journal* of *Women Studies* 15:3 (1995): 1–26; and Sherry L. Smith, "Single Women Homesteaders: The Perplexing Case of Elinore Pruitt Stewart," *Western Historical Quarterly* 22:2 (May 1991): 163–83.

22 These figures are necessarily imprecise, but these three nationalities predominated. The nativity of 66 women is unknown. If all were native born, that total would rise to 44 percent. Fourteen women renounced their allegiance to the Queen of England without disclosing their countries of birth. If all were Canadian, that figure would rise to 137, or almost 18 percent. And twenty women renounced allegiance to the King of Norway and Sweden, but did not identify themselves as either Norwegian or Swedish. If all were Norwegian, that total would be 165, or 21 percent. Calculated from Homestead Files. Lindgren, *Land in Her Own Name*, 20–22, found that 24 percent of the women in her case studies were Norwegian, but only 5 percent were Canadian, and 65 percent were native-born Americans. Only two of her counties were along the 49th Parallel where the Canadian women clustered, and neither was in the Devils Lake Land Office Territory. My figures are based on all the women who filed final proof statements in one land office; Lindgren's sample of 306 women, which was spread throughout the state, was gathered by advertising for information about women homesteaders, and yielded richly detailed information about some women.

23 Sarah Carter, "'Daughters of British Blood' Or 'Hordes of Men of Alien Race': The Homesteads-For-Women Campaign In Western Canada," *Great Plains Quarterly* 29 (Fall 2009): 269–70.

24 For other examples, see Sarah Carter, "Transnational Perspectives on the History of Great Plains Women: Gender, Race, Nations and the Forty-ninth Parallel," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 33:4 (Winter 2003): 565–96 and *Imperial Plots: Women, Land, and the Spadework of British Colonialism on the Canadian Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2016), esp. 147–244.

25 Tonia M. Compton, "'They Have as Much Right There as Bachelors': Provisions for Female Landowners in Nineteenth-Century Homestead Legislation," paper presented to the Western History Association, Oklahoma City, October 2007; Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building* in *Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press and University of Alberta Press, 2008). Until 1985 the Canadian Indian Act stipulated that Indigenous women lost Indian status if they married a non-status man.

26 See for instance Norma J. Wilson, "Essential Servants: Immigrant Domestics on the Canadian Prairies, 1885–1930," in Armitage and Jameson, *The Women's West*, 207–18; Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, and Anne Wheeler, *A Harvest Yet To Reap: A History of Prairie Women* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976), 12–13, 18–21.

27 Twelve were deserted, four were divorced, one was a nun, and the marital status of twenty-nine was unknown. Most of the widows filed for their homesteads as widows; some inherited their husbands' claims when the men died after filing their homestead claims but before making final proof.

28 Belgarde's given name on her Homestead Claim File was Margaret; it appears as Margaret or Marguerite on different documents, and I have used both names.

29 "North Dakota: Turtle Mountain," https://www.ndstudies.gov/curriculum/high-school/turtle-mountain, accessed May 15, 2021.

30 Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press and Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), 22–23, 29–30. Chippewa, Ojibwe, Ojibwa, and Ojibway refer to the same people. I use Ojibwe, and also Chippewa because it was the name the U.S. government used for bands and reservations.

31 Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 42. Kittson, who was born in Lower Canada, was a business partner of future Minnesota Governor Henry Sibley.

32 Belgarde Homestead File; *Minnesota Territorial Census Schedules, 1849–1855* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2000); 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Pembina County, Dakota Territory. Margaret Belgarde died February 12, 1893, and was buried in Pembina.

33 Forty-three of 123 Canadians (35 percent) settled in Bottineau County and 29 (24 percent) in Rolette County. Calculated from Homestead Files.

34 Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 198–99.

35 Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line,* 199.

36 This is a brief summary of the much more complex issues surrounding who, over time, "belonged" to which communities, and who could settle on the Turtle Mountain Reservation or claim Chippewa status. For more on this issue see Nicholas Vrooman, *"The Whole Country was... 'One Robe'": The Little Shell Tribe's America* (Helena: Drumlummon Institute, 2012); George T. Skibine, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, *Summary under the Criteria and Evidence for Final Determination Against the Federal Acknowledgment of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana Prepared in Response to a Petition Submitted to the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs for Federal Acknowledgment that this Group Exists as an Indian Tribe* (Washington, D.C.: October 27, 2009), hereinafter called *Montana Little Shell Final Government Report*; Gregory S. Camp, "Working out Their Own Salvation: The Allotment of Land in Severalty and the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Band, 1870–1920," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 14:2 (1990): 19–38; Gerhard J. Ens, "After the Buffalo: The Reformation of the Turtle Mountain Métis Community, 1879–1905," in *New Faces of the Fur Trade: Selected Papers of the Seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1995*, eds. Jo-Anne Fiske, Susan Sleeper-Smith, and William Wicken (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 139–52. I am grateful to Heather Devine and Michel Hogue for advice on this section.

37 See Rhoda R. Gilman, Carolyn Gilman, and Deborah M. Stultz, *The Red River Trails: Oxcart Routes Between St. Paul and the Selkirk Settlements, 1820–1870* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979).

38 Quoted in *Montana Little Shell Final Government Report*, 23.

39 *Montana Little Shell Final Government Report*, 133–34.

40 Marguerite Azure Homestead Claim File, Testimony of Claimant, July 4, 1891.

41 Canadian scrip commissions determining eligibility for Métis scrip also tried to determine whether a person was north or south of the 49th Parallel on July 15, 1870, the day the Manitoba Act went into effect, bringing Manitoba into the Canadian Confederation.

42 Testimony of Claimant, Azure Homestead File. The racial ethnic patterns of homestead settlement varied throughout the West, and within the Devils Lake Land Office territory. For a different pattern of ethnic homesteading around the Devils Lake Sioux Reservation (now the Spirit Lake Sioux Reservation) during the implementation of the Dawes Act,

see Karen V. Hansen, *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and the Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890–1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

43 Rose M. Sheridan Homestead Claim File. The two witnesses who supported her final proof statement, Phidoleme (or Phidolenne) Robarge and Napoleon Robarge, confirmed that she was absent as teacher and superintendent of the mission school. Both stated that the value of her homestead was $1000. Their testimonies were unusual in that they were not identical and did not simply repeat Sheridan's testimony. Testimony of Witnesses, Sheridan Homestead File.

44 Brenda J. Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 22–27. Child discussed Cherokee and Iroquois women in this passage, but went on to discuss Ojibwe agriculture, and her observation fits the Hidatsa as well. On third gender roles among Indigenous tribes, see Evelyn Blackwood, "Sexuality and Gender in Certain Native American Tribes," *Signs* 10:1 (1984): 27–42; and Beatrice Medicine, "Warrior Women–Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women," in *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women*, eds. Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (Latham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 267–80.

45 Gilbert L. Wilson in *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden* (1917; repr., St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1987), 6–7. Originally published as Gilbert Livingstone Wilson, *Agriculture of the Hidatsa Indians: An Indian Interpretation* (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1917). Buffalo Bird Woman's Hidatsa name is often spelled Maxidiwiac, but Michael W. Stevens, *Biographical Dictionary of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara* (New Town, ND: Fort Berthold Library, 2003) gives Mahidiweash as the first spelling; it more closely approximates the Hidatsa pronunciation. http://lib.fortbertholdcc.edu/FortBerthold/TATBIO.htm, accessed July 24, 2015.

46 Gilbert L. Wilson, *Waheenee: An Indian Girl's Story* (1921; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 7; Wilson, *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden,* 7–8.

47 Wilson, *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden* and *Waheenee.*

48 Hidatsa-Mandan Report, Fort Berthold Reservation 1912, Gilbert L. and Frederick N. Wilson Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, vol. 11, 36 (hereinafter cited as Wilson Papers, MHS); Wilson, *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden*, 119.

49 "'INDIAN LIFE IN FORMER DAYS COMPARED WITH THE PRESENT LIFE' Related on Aug. 1918 by Buffalobird-woman, Hidatsa, born about 1841," Hidatsa-Mandan Report, Fort Berthold Reservation, 1918, vol., 22, 375, Wilson Papers, MHS. Wilson changed Mahidiweash's presumed birth year at times, dating it between 1839–1841.

50 William Cronon, Howard R. Lamar, Katherine G. Morrissey, and Jay Gitlin, "Women and the West: Rethinking the Western History Survey Course," *Western Historical Quarterly* 17: 3 (July 1986): 269–90.

51 Elizabeth Jameson, *All That Glitters: Class, Culture, and Community in Cripple Creek* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 132; Susan Armitage, "Making Connections: Gender, Race, and Place in Oregon Country," in *One Step over the Line: Toward a History of Women in the North American Wests*, eds. Elizabeth Jameson and Sheila McManus (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press and Athabasca University Press, 2008), 62. See also "Guns to Butter: Reconceiving the American West," chapter 2 in this volume.

52 Wilson, *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden;* Child, *Holding Our World Together,* 22–27; Cheryl J. Foote and Sandra K. Schackel, "Indian Women of New Mexico, 1535–1696," in *New Mexico Women: Intercultural Perspectives*, eds. Joan M. Jensen and Darlis A. Miller (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 17–40; 18–21; Joan M. Jensen, "Cloth, Butter, and Boarders," in *Promise to the Land: Essays on Rural Women* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 193–94; Jensen, *With These Hands: Women Working on the Land* (Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1981), 107–8, 112,

145. For a dairy that financed a ranch herd, see Teresa Jordon, *Cowgirls: Women of the American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982; 1992 ed.), 120.

53 Jensen, "Cloth, Butter, and Boarders," 94; "Margarine," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/margarine/, accessed July 28, 2015.

54 "United Farm Women of Alberta," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/united-farm-women-of-alberta/, accessed July 28, 2015; Nanci Langford, *Politics, Pitchforks and Pickle Jars: 75 Years of Organized Farm Women in Alberta* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1997).

55 May Wing interview, Victor, Colorado, October 21, 1978.

56 May Wing interview, Boulder, Colorado, March 6, 1976.

57 Mary Pardo, "Mexican American Women Grassroots Community Activists: 'Mothers of East Los Angeles'," in Jameson and Armitage, *Writing the Range*, 553–68. Pardo's article first appeared in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 11:1 (1990): 1–7. Hugh Dellios, "Group Preaches Gospel of Water Conservation," *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1995; Marilyn Martinez, "Legacy of a Mother's Dedication," *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 1995; "Mother's Group Fights Back in Los Angeles," *New York Times*, December 5, 1989; Michael Quintanilla, "The Earth Mother," *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 1995; Louis Sahagun, "The Mothers of East L.A. Transform Themselves and Their Community," *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 1989; Nina Schuyler, "LA Moms Fight Back," *Progressive* 56:8 (August 1992): 13; "'Mothers of East LA' Takes On Air Quality at Boyle Heights Schools," EGP News.com, Eastman Group Publications, Inc., August 4, 2011; "Mothers Open Meat Market to Fund Scholarships," *Los Angeles Times,* October 7, 1999; Connie Koenenn, "To Protect the Children of East L.A.," *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 1991.

58 Beulah Pryor interview, Colorado Springs, Colorado, May 6, 1979.

59 For this distinction between the U.S. and Canadian Wests, see for instance George F. G. Stanley, "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis," Canadian Historical Association, *Report of the Annual Meeting, 1940*, 105–14. On the legacy of Canada's residential schools for Indigenous children, see Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume One: Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., Publishers, 2015).

60 May Wing interview, Colorado Springs, February 16, 1979.

61 Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *History, Frontier, and Section*, ed. Martin Ridge (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 82; Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of History," in Ridge *History, Frontier, and Section*, 49. This essay was originally published in the *Wisconsin Journal of Education* in 1891.

62 Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life,* 13.

63 Wilson, *Waheenee*; Edward Goodbird as told to Gilbert L. Wilson, *Goodbird the Indian: His Story* (1914; repr., St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1965); Carolyn Gilman and Mary Jane Schneider, *The Way to Independence: Memories of A Hidatsa Indian Family, 1840–1920* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1987), Museum Exhibit Series No. 3.

64 Wilson, *Waheenee,* 121–27. Wilson gave more detailed attention to Mahidiweash's first brief marriage to Magpie. He ended chapter 13, about her first marriage to Magpie, with Waheenee saying simply "And so I was wed." He began chapter 14, "A Buffalo Hunt" with: "My young husband and I lived together but a few years. He died of lung sickness, and, after I had mourned a year, I married Son-of-a-Star, a Mandan," *Waheenee*, 126–27.

Hidatsa-Mandan Report – Fort Berthold Reservation, 1915 (part 1.), vol., 17, 318, 323–24, Wilson Papers, MHS.

65 Hidatsa-Mandan Report – Fort Berthold Reservation, 1915 (part 1.), vol. 17, 329, Wilson Papers, MHS.

66 Hidatsa-Mandan Report – Fort Berthold Reservation, 1915 (part 2.), vol., 18, 450, Wilson Papers, MHS.

67 Told in the summer of 1914, by Buffalobird-woman, an Hidatsa born about 1839," Notebook – Hidatsa-Mandan Indians, 1910–1916, 1918, vol., 30, 84, Wilson Papers, MHS.

68 Wilson, *Waheenee,* 175–76.

69 See Beverly Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed: The Image of the Frontier Woman," *Journal of American Folklore* 88:347 (January–March 1975): 27–31; Rayna Green, "The Pocahantas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 16:4 (1976): 698–714.

70 *Lone Star*. The ethnic labels (Anglo, Chicano) are the ones Sayles used in the screenplay.

71 Faragher, Buhle, Czitrom, and Armitage, *Out of Many*, 481. For the controversy, see "Religious Right Groups Join Forces to Select Texas Textbooks," *Church and State*, October 2002; "Textbook Publishers Learn to Avoid Messing with Texas," *New York Times*, June 29, 2002; Dr. Ricky Dobbs, Assistant Professor of History, Texas A&M University at Commerce, "High School American History (After Reconstruction) Textbook Review," Texas Public Policy Foundation, State Board of Education Textbook Hearing, August 23, 2002.

72 "Texas officials: Schools should teach that slavery was 'side issue' to Civil War," *Washington Post*, July 6, 2015.