

2

UNSETTLED PASTS, UNSETTLING BORDERS

Women, Wests, Nations

SHEILA McMANUS

WOMEN'S HISTORIANS have always unsettled the past. It is what we do. Narratives of the past that have been written to appear smooth and linear look a lot bumpier, more colourful and complex, after women's historians get their hands on them. This is perhaps most true when we look at the history of the North American West. The region has long been coded as quintessentially and exclusively male. The popular narratives of the American West have been and remain rather more "butch" than those of Canada, with much emphasis placed on famous explorers like Lewis and Clark, doomed soldiers like General Custer, cowboys and Indians, yeomen pioneers, and the violence of western colonization. The popular histories of the Canadian West highlight David Thompson, Louis Riel, the Great March of the North West Mounted Police, and a peaceful, law-and-order settlement.¹ Yet, as historians are

beginning to point out, these two Wests have a great deal in common, not the least of which is a primary narrative of white male penetration, exploration, and development. They share, for example, the symbolism of the transcontinental railroads conquering “empty” lands that had been passively waiting to play their part in teleological and nationalist narratives about brave white men. And one way or another, whites quickly assumed the dominant role over the Aboriginal groups of both Wests.

Thanks to three decades of outstanding scholarship in western women’s history, the North American West is now seen to contain a wide range of overlapping stories that extend far beyond those about what manly white men were doing on any given day. These historians have established that there was never just one West on either side of the border: there were always multiple Wests, multiple women’s Wests, multiple sites of identity, conflict, and community building.² Our work has always been about crossing lines and resisting earlier historiographical categories, because the women we write about crossed lines of space, nation, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Even native women, for whom what non-Aboriginal scholars call “the West” has been home for thousands of years, have had to confront, live through, and challenge the colonizers’ categories and demarcations.³

Yet the one line we have generally avoided crossing is that of the nation state, particularly the boundary between Canada and the United States. The border between the United States and Mexico has established a place in the historiography of North American women, as much for its racialization as its significance within the past and current political dynamic of the United States. Mexican Americans are recognized as a “visible minority” in the United States, while Canadians in the United States and Americans in Canada are, for the most part, invisible and unacknowledged minorities.⁴ We see the U.S.-Mexico border as a border, a border with a contested and artificial past and present, because so much of it is demarcated with razor wire, watch towers, and men with guns. Our eyes are drawn to it, which then makes it easier to look beyond it to the thus-clearly-demarcated Other side. By contrast, the Canada-

U.S. border is nearly three times as long but lacks the razor wire and watch towers, although it does now have the men with guns. Its history has not been racialized, and at the level of popular consciousness it often seems to disappear as a border altogether.

The 49th parallel is a line that western women's historians have taken very seriously; the border has fundamentally shaped the contours of our scholarship, bifurcating it into studies of what women have done in the "Canadian West" and what they have done in the "American West."³ In particular, we have situated our studies within a region called "the West" without challenging the nationalist category this assumes: one only has a "West" when one also has an "East," and thus a larger nation has to exist for a region called "the West" to exist. We have then proceeded to ask how race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality have intersected with gender within that pre-existing and unexamined spatial category. Historians of the women's West have in fact been historians of either the Canadian women's West or the American women's West, the terrain already shaped by each nation's narratives about its own, supposedly unique, West. One key problem with halting our studies and stories at the 49th parallel is that in doing so we are assuming that the line meant the same thing to the women we write about as it means to us. We know where the borders between the political entities called *Canada* and the *United States* would eventually wind up, we know what those borders have come to mean in today's geopolitical landscape, and so we proceed (quite anachronistically for historians) as if those borders were always there and had always had those meanings. Western historians have always implicitly dealt in borderlands because we pay attention to the places where two or more cultures, races, and classes "edge each other" on the same territory,⁶ but we have not yet embraced the national political border as an analytical concept. Borders are malleable, historical constructions that come to shape what happens within their limits.

Most Canadian and American women's historians have paid little attention to national political borders, and most Canadian-American borderlands scholars have paid little attention to gender.⁷ This has helped create a surprisingly reactionary reification of borders as gender-less, as

something to do with politics and nations and economics and little to do with the kinds of analysis that social historians have been developing for decades. And yet the two kinds of scholarship actually go together quite nicely.⁸ As described by Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa in her landmark 1987 book, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, “Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition.”⁹ Her work specifically addresses the U.S.-Mexico border, but her insights about the nature of borders and how they are expected to work are equally applicable elsewhere. Given the un-settling work women’s historians are already experienced with and the historiographical borders our field has erased, the groundlessness of the borderlands ought to feel like familiar territory.

So, say we do step across that line—what do we see? Women’s historians already accustomed to the different impact of race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality on women will not be surprised to discover that political borders mean different things to different women depending on the nature of their other relationships with the state. One characteristic of the modern nation state is the way in which it manages the people who live within its borders, categorizing and privileging individuals and groups according to their class, racial and ethnic background, language, gender, and sexuality, as well as where they live and what kinds of work they do. Michel Foucault, for example, has noted that the idea of “population” as a “technique of power” emerged in western Europe in the eighteenth century, coinciding with what Benedict Anderson has called “the dawn of the age of nationalism....”¹⁰ By developing into modern nation states in the nineteenth century, the United States and Canada took for granted their right to manage their populations as a tool for managing their borders. There were (and are) two very different nation-states at work in the North American West, but official assumptions about the intersecting uses of race and gender demonstrate some marked similarities. Western women’s historians are well-suited to analyze those differences and similarities.

To the largest and most marginalized group of women in the North American West, the border could make a world of difference at the same time as it meant nothing at all. Across the continent Aboriginal women have shared the experiences of disease, poverty, violence, and a staggering loss of land and resources. The legacy of their dispossession can be seen to this day. For Aboriginal nations, the creation of Euro-North American nations and their artificial borders was one of many proofs of the colonization of the continent, but those borders affected Aboriginal women differently than they did Aboriginal men and other women.

Anzaldúa has called the U.S.-Mexico border a “1,950 mile-long open wound / dividing a *pueblo*, a culture, / running down the length of my body.”¹¹ A similar wound runs through the land from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains, through the homelands of the Pikani, Kainai, Cree, and Lakota. Two examples highlight the impact of the 49th parallel on the lives and bodies of Aboriginal women across the northern Great Plains. The most familiar distinction the Canada-U.S. border created is that Canadian Indian legislation specifically defined “Indianness” as male: it excluded women who married non-native men and included non-native women who married native men. An Aboriginal woman who found herself on the north side of the 49th parallel after 1876 discovered that her identity, rights, home, culture, and final resting place depended on her marital status and the racial category of her husband.¹² The United States did not have a clear legal definition of who was an Indian, and it developed a “blood quotient” system instead, so most (although certainly not all) Aboriginal women who married white men south of the line could continue to live on the reservation along with their white husbands. The governments’ concerns about the morality of relationships between native women and white men thus played out differently on each side of the line. In Montana, for example, officials worried about the degradation of white manhood and the economic and political consequences that were thought to ensue when white men chose to live with Indian women on what was left of Indian land. Authorities wanted to force these men to marry the women they lived with to salvage some veneer of what the authorities considered respectability.¹³ In Alberta the law forced native women to leave their homes

and communities if they married white men, yet branded as “prostitutes” native women who left the reserve on their own.¹⁴ The Indian Act also unintentionally perpetuated Aboriginal women’s older colonial role as intermediaries between their home communities and the white newcomers. For example, during the 1885 Rebellion in Canada’s North-West, in which a small group of Métis, First Nations, and whites in what is now Saskatchewan tried to start an uprising against the Canadian government, a Siksika woman named Pokemi, who was living off the reserve with her white husband, informed her white neighbours in southern Alberta of the steps the Canadian government was taking to keep the Blackfoot from getting involved in the hostilities. She thus provided some much-needed reassurance for the frightened whites.¹⁵

A less familiar example of the impact of the creation of the border is the way it drastically reduced the mobility of Aboriginal women faster and more completely than it did for Aboriginal men. Before there was any such thing as a Canada-U.S. border along the 49th parallel, families and bands of the buffalo-hunting cultures of the northern Great Plains followed a seasonal route from one hunting camp to another. For many bands of the Blackfoot nations, this involved crossing and re-crossing the future line of the border. During the closing decades of the nineteenth century, as Canada and the United States struggled to make the border into a meaningful demarcation and make Aboriginal communities hold still on their reserves and reservations, Aboriginal women had fewer opportunities to continue to move through their traditional territories. Unlike young men who continued their horse raids across the line (frustrating white officials in both countries) or who could escape across the line to relatives to avoid charges related to the raids, the reality of the border as a barrier was brought home more quickly for women whose mobility, economic activities, and gender roles were more constrained. Flouting the line became a gender-specific activity.¹⁶

Women did find ways to resist the localized attempts to limit their mobility, however. For example, Father Lacombe, the Catholic priest who ran the federal government’s industrial school near High River, Alberta, spent most of his July 1885 report urging the government to

allow the school to forcibly remove children from the reserves and keep them at school because the parents “seem determined not to give up their younger children, unless compelled to do so.” Even when the school had managed to take in some children, he wrote, “the squaws—their mothers—came here a month or so afterwards, and demanded their children, pretending they were taken away without their consent.”¹⁷ Similar remarks do not appear in the reports from Montana, where the government’s schools were deliberately placed close to children’s homes to encourage attendance—a stark contrast with the explicit policy of separation pursued by the Canadian government. Aboriginal women were the largest group of women in the West, and the encroachment of the Canadian and American nation states produced a depressingly similar legacy of poverty and marginalization. However, these examples from the Blackfoot demonstrate that there were distinct inflections of race, gender, and sexuality, and distinct opportunities for resistance, on either side of the line.

Black women were one of the smallest groups of women in the West and confronted an official framework of racism and marginalization, but the border seems to have offered them some powerful opportunities. The 1880 census of Choteau County, Montana, counted only two “colored” women, compared to sixteen men, and the Canadian census of 1885 indicated that there were only four people of “African origin” in southern Alberta, but did not specify gender.¹⁸ Black women confronted identical racial slurs and the same menial spaces in the colonial economy no matter what side of the border they were on. May Flanagan remembered a black midwife in early Fort Benton, Montana, whom she called “old Aunt Leah” in her memoirs.¹⁹ Similarly, Mary Inderwick of southern Alberta wrote in an 1884 letter that she had started sending her laundry to an “aristocratic Auntie” in Pincher Creek.²⁰ Calling these women “Auntie” was a way of reinforcing their menial, racialized status as support staff to white settler communities, and it highlights the way racist stereotypes and labels could and did cross borders: Flanagan’s text linked the black woman’s presence and usefulness to the birth of one of the first white babies in the area, born to prominent local and cross-

border businessman George Baker, while the woman in Pincher Creek saved Inderwick from having to do her own laundry.

Black women did not passively play along with the racial hierarchies of the day any more than Aboriginal women did, and at least one woman attempted to use the border to claim a powerful new identity. The same letter from Inderwick gives another view of the “aristocratic Auntie” in Pincher Creek: Inderwick notes that the woman “boasts that she and the Police Commissioner’s wife were the first white ladies to arrive in the country.” Inderwick’s racialized representation of the woman does not match the representation the woman claims for herself. The woman says she is “white” and a “lady,” thus claiming a place in the colonial narrative of southern Alberta; Inderwick says she is “coloured” and calls her “Auntie,” thus removing her from that narrative. It is likely that she was American-born and, presumably, had a light skin colour, and consequently seized a chance to redefine her own identity after crossing the border into Canada. Her occupation would have been sufficient evidence for the rest of the town to agree with Inderwick, because a black woman was far more likely than a white woman to take in other people’s laundry in the nineteenth-century West. It is equally clear, however, that the woman did not let others’ perceptions change her self-identification.

White women were neither the largest nor the smallest group of women in the North American West, but they are certainly the most studied. Although they were highly privileged by virtue of their racial category, their gender meant that they had different relationships with the state than white men, and different relationships with the Canadian and American governments. The familiar example of this difference is that of land policy. The homestead provisions of the 1872 Canadian Dominion Lands Act were initially open to single women, mirroring the 1862 American Homestead Act. In 1876 however, the same year in which the consolidated Indian Act entrenched Indian-ness as male, the Canadian government amended the Dominion Lands Act to specifically bar single women.²¹ Whereas in the United States single women made up from 5 to 15 per cent of all homestead entries before 1900 and “proved up” at similar or better rates,²² single women in Canada had no such

access to the west's single biggest resource. Rather paradoxically, at the same time as Canada was limiting women's access to western land, the government was actively trying to recruit white women to settle the West, while the United States gave little thought to white women immigrants as anything other than an administrative problem.²³ Immigration officials in western Canada explicitly stated that white women were needed to help settle the west by marrying white men and having white babies, to forestall the "problems" that arose from the offspring of Aboriginal women and white men. The most explicit statement of this attitude came from Immigration Agent William Grahame in 1879, while he was stationed at Duluth, Minnesota. He noted that Canada needed to be doing more to attract "a good healthy class of domestic servants" to come to the North-West. Not only was it difficult to get a good domestic in the west, and young women could make more money in Winnipeg than in Montreal as a result, but they also would not have to stay in those jobs for very long. Women were guaranteed to find "good comfortable homes in the future" because "so many of our young Canadian farmers are settling alone in the North-West, and are compelled to lead a bachelor's life, or inter-marry with the Indian women, while the introduction of a number of good healthy young women into the Province and North-West, would have a tendency to elevate the morals of our young men, who would be very ready to embrace all the responsibilities of matrimony, were it possible to find good helpmates."²⁴ But these differences between Canadian and American approaches to white women were at the level of official policies and perceptions. On the ground, only one clear difference is evident in the writing of white women in the Alberta-Montana borderlands in the late nineteenth century: most of the American women, writing in the 1860s to the 1880s, were afraid of local native peoples, and few of the Canadian women, writing in the 1880s, expressed a similar fear. Carolyn Abbott Tyler, for example, was part of the Fisk Expedition that came from Minnesota up the Missouri River and then travelled west of Fort Benton in 1862. She wrote in her diary on September 10 that "every one thankful that Blackfeet had gone to their own country." The whites were told by a local Indian agent not to winter

in the valley of the Teton River because “it was claimed by all tribes as neutral ground” as a short-cut to get to the buffalo hunt, and the assumption was that a group of white people would be too much of a target if they were camped in the way.²⁵ Mary Douglas Gibson wrote of her first trip from Minneapolis to Fort Benton in 1882 that “the river was so low it was impossible to navigate at night, so we were anchored in mid-stream for greater safety from Indians as well as less danger from running aground.” When her group decided to travel the last section overland, she remembered that they “were obliged to travel very slowly for the officers had to remain with their men who were walking, because of possible attacks from the Indians.”²⁶

This anxiety is absent from the personal papers of the Canadian writers. There was no legacy of so-called “Indian Wars” as there was in the American West, and after the numbered treaties of the 1870s and before the 1885 Rebellion, Canada’s national discourse around plains peoples rested on the assumption that they had been contained on their reservations.²⁷ In 1883 for example, Mary Inderwick passed through Swift Current, Saskatchewan, and wrote in her diary that there were “Indians by the million,” but being outnumbered did not seem to worry her. Upon her arrival in Calgary two days later, she wrote that the town was “very nice but it is a village of tents and framed in Indians and squaws in plenty.”²⁸ Even numerous and highly-visible native peoples were merely a backdrop for her own journey.

The North-West Rebellion of 1885 was the only moment when whites in southern Alberta expressed the same kind of general fear of native peoples that was more common among whites in northern Montana. The rebellion was the main topic in twelve-year-old Julia Short’s diary in late March and early April of that year. Her family had a ranch south of Calgary on the Highwood River. The three Blackfoot nations (the Siksika, Kainai, and Pikani) did not participate in the uprising, but Short’s diary portrays a white community fraught with tension nonetheless. In her reminiscence she wrote that “for a few weeks the settlers all through the West lived in a state of terror. A big Indian Reserve lay to the east of us, two more Reserves were not far south, and there was the

chance that at any time they, or scattered bands of unruly young Indian Braves from these tribes, might sweep through the country, spreading death and destruction.” The Canadian government increased the food rations to the Blackfoot, and Short wrote that “this did much to calm and discourage any would-be aspirations to regain the territory given over to the white race.”²⁹ It is her reminiscence that mentions the efforts of the Siksika woman Pokemi, discussed earlier, to inform and reassure the whites.

While these different reactions to local Aboriginal people might serve to reinforce the traditional stereotypes of the “wild” American West and the “peaceful” Canadian West, the shared elements in white women’s writing, such as their reactions to western landscapes and their efforts to construct familiar communities, are more common. These elements draw attention to the similarities between the American and Canadian colonial processes, and the privileges those processes conferred on Euro-North Americans.

White women north and south of the line often used remarkably similar language when writing about their perceptions of and reactions to the landscape of the borderlands. American and Canadian writers generally admired or were even awestruck by the dramatic landscapes created by the open spaces and Rocky Mountains. For example, in 1878 Alma Coffin Kirkpatrick travelled with her two sisters up the Missouri River to Fort Benton and then overland to the mining camp in southwestern Montana where their father worked. She wrote in her diary on August 7, 1878, “I know now why people love the West. The beauty and grandeur of the mountains, rocks and trees, canyons and dashing streams! The vast landscapes revealed in the clear atmosphere are beyond all description.” A few years later she “tried to analyze the lure of the far west; its wonderful atmosphere so clear that the distant mountains appear near; the air so keen and invigorating, inspiring one to large undertakings...our valleys surrounded by mountain ranges that never appear twice the same....”³⁰ In Julia Short Asher’s reminiscence of her family’s journey from Selkirk, Manitoba, to High River, Alberta, in 1884, she wrote that the views improved considerably once her family made it to

the foothills of southern Alberta: “ahead of us were low rolling hills and shallow ravines covered with green grass and quantities of beautiful prairie flowers.” The Rocky Mountains seemed “close at hand...a great wall of white peaks with wide masses of dark green at their feet. Streamers of this green ran up in uneven stretches to fill and overflow the ravines, while the higher peaks towered above the timberline in their everlasting snow-crowned glory. Never had we seen such beauty and we thrilled with the joy of it.”³¹

A second similarity in the personal writings of white women in the borderlands was their efforts to create new communities for themselves through contact with other local white women. In northern Montana in the 1870s, for example, Lucy Stocking wrote in her diary on June 29, 1871, that prominent Fort Benton merchant Conrad Baker and his daughter had called at her ranch.³² And no sooner had Alma Coffin Kirkpatrick arrived in Fort Benton in July 1878 than she accompanied a “Captain Haney” on visits to three (presumably white) families. She wrote that “the ladies were at home and very agreeable. Their houses are small, but prettily furnished. One lady played and sang for us, charmingly.”³³ Similarly, Mary Inderwick’s 1884 diary indicates that, although their numbers were small, she managed to visit other women in her area on a regular basis. For example, during a two-week period she records at least three such visits. On January 24, she and “Mrs. M went to see Mrs. Battles. Think her very nice and nice baby.” On January 29 they headed to the Kainai Reserve for dinner with the minister and his wife, Reverend and Mrs. Trivett, and had lunch at “Mrs. Bourne’s” on the way. And on February 8 she wrote “Mr. & Mrs. Geddes here for coal—stayed about half an hour and I enjoyed it—She is so nice....”³⁴

Unlike native women, whose different relationships with the two federal governments meant that the border and its nationalist meanings were enforced more strictly in their daily lives, white women’s racial privilege seems to have allowed them to pay infrequent attention to the border and the nationalist identities it was supposed to instill. White women were permitted to cross the border, but if Sadye Wolfe Drew’s experiences can be taken as an indication of the relationship white

women had with the border, crossing the line had little nationalist meaning. Sadye was ten years old in the summer of 1893 when her family crossed the line twice, first heading to Alberta to homestead and then returning to the United States. They took the train from Shelby, Montana, to Lethbridge, Alberta, and decades later she recalled that “When we came to the line between Canada and the States the customs officers went thru our things. My aunt had twin babies and there naturally was a bag of soiled diapers and when the officials came to that they didn’t look any further.” The family returned to the States a few months later after the Alberta homestead proved to be a bust, and this time when they arrived at the line the officers “wouldn’t let us take our Indian pony across unless dad paid \$40. He didn’t have much money and besides he paid only \$5 for the pony and could buy another for a lot less than \$40. We kids were heart broken to have to give her up as we had enjoyed her so much.”³⁵ The Canadian and American governments wanted the border to mean something in nationalist terms, as evidenced by the early presence of customs officers, but for Drew it was remembered as dirty diapers and the loss of a beloved pony.

So when and how do borders matter to women? Do the gender and racial norms of a time and place reinforce or undercut the process of nation-building? Are women’s experiences fundamentally shaped by the political boundaries within which those experiences take place? The answer, it seems, is yes and no, and depends on a woman’s place within the political and social economies of colonization and citizenship and the historical specificity of her relationship to a particular border. Borders appear to have the biggest impact on a woman’s experiences when she occupies an additional category (be it racial or ethnic or religious or sexual) that is already marginalized by the nation state in which she resides or to which she is trying to gain entry. Yet it is clear that in other ways borders matter far less to women than they do to patriarchal nation-states, for which legitimacy through territorial control is a powerful concern. Nations are made and unmade at their borders, not in their heartlands, because a nation begins as a territorial claim. Whatever national identities and values are presumed to rest in the heartland,

whatever the heartland can take for granted as the “truth” about itself, must be imagined and defended first and most explicitly at the edges of the nation. It is at a nation’s borders that the real or imaginary defence against whatever is on the other side of the line takes place. Heartlands can only become the ideological centre of the nation if national borders are doing their work, because heartlands can only exist when their edges are clearly delineated. And recent scholarship has shown that states rely heavily on gender and race as border-making and nation-making tools.³⁶ Nations and nationalism have always been and are still about defining who is in and who is out, who belongs and who does not, and the goals and experiences of women and people of colour have little place in that project. Gender and race can therefore also be powerful tools for unmaking those nations and unsettling those borders, by throwing into question the taken-for-granted, essentialized, and normalized meanings ascribed to nations and their borders. This is an important project for feminist borderlands scholars if we want to continue redrawing the past or hope to shape the future with women’s diverse experiences at the centre.

But the past three decades of writing in western women’s history also makes two cautions appropriate. First, we cannot assume that there will be similarities in women’s experiences across a borderline just because they are women. Assuming the existence of an essential category of “women” is as problematic as assuming the existence of an essential category of “nation.” We must continue to pay attention, and possibly pay even more attention, to the different effects of race, class, gender, and sexuality on women’s lives and experiences on different sides of a border. Women’s historians already know, for example, that statements that may be true about white women or heterosexual women may not be true for black or Aboriginal women or lesbians. The same caution needs to be exercised when discussing the experiences of women living on different sides of a national border, particularly a border in a time that is not our own and one that might not yet have the meanings we automatically and unconsciously ascribe to it. It is easy to assume, for example, that white, heterosexual, middle-class women will have a lot in common no matter which side of a border they are living on. A borderlands

analysis, however, might reveal that even this highly-privileged combination of race, class, and sexuality will have its own subtle and unique inflections on the other side of a border. Then again, it might not, and either way the questions need to be asked and the answers are worth pondering.

The second caution is that historiographical exceptionalism, the assumption that the history of one country is more unique than the history of another country and yet can, simultaneously, be taken as a norm for other countries, has no place in borderlands scholarship. American historians have grappled for decades with the temptation of “American exceptionalism,” and Canadian historians, particularly those who are still invested in the stereotype that the “peaceful, law-abiding” Canadian West was superior to the “wild, violent” American West, need to resist the same temptation. A unique contribution that borderlands scholarship can make to larger national historiographies is to highlight the similarities between different histories and to note more closely actual differences. As the most mythologized region within each national narrative, the history of the North American West stands to gain a significant new depth and nuance from a more careful study of its many borders.

There is no doubt that western women’s historians will continue to un-settle the past, even if the past we are writing about deals with the European settlement of the North American West. Just as an inclusive women’s history continues to challenge our understanding of the history of the West, so too will these multiple histories challenge what we think we know about the histories of nations and the meanings of nationalism. We should not avoid asking why we think “our” West stops or starts at a national border. We cannot know if, when, how, or why borders matter to women unless we are willing to step across that line. And, as always when one is in the West, watch where you step.

NOTES

1. This stereotypical dichotomy was neatly captured by the title of a comparative course taught at the University of Calgary by Elizabeth Jameson and Sarah Carter in the fall of 2001 called “Mild West, Wild West?” Similarly, it can be seen in the title of *One West Two*

- Myths: A Comparative Reader*, ed. Carol Higham and Robert Thacker (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004). It is also evident in the amount of attention paid to the Lewis and Clark bicentennial in Montana and North Dakota's tourism advertising, as compared to the "law and order" emphasis at Canadian historic sites like Fort Walsh, Saskatchewan.
2. A very small sampling of this rich scholarship would have to include such American works as Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840–1880* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979); Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk, eds., *Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988); Joan M. Jensen and Nancy Grey Osterud, eds., *American Rural and Farm Women in Historical Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: The Agricultural History Society, 1994); and Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage, eds., *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); and Canadian studies such as Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg, MB: Watson & Dwyer Publishing; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Eliane Leslau Silverman, *The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier, 1880–1930* (Montreal: Eden Press, 1984); Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); and Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne, eds., *Telling Tales: Essays in Western Women's History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).
 3. See, for example, Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*; Carter, *Capturing Women*; Christine Miller and Patricia Chuchryk, eds., *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom and Strength* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996); Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman, eds., *Women and Power in Native North America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).
 4. For examples of the prominence of Mexican American women in American women's history, see such collections as Schlissel, Ruiz, and Monk, eds., *Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives*; Jameson and Armitage, eds., *Writing the Range*; Linda K. Kerber and Jane Sherron De Hart, eds., *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). The limited scholarship on Canadians in the United States and on Americans in Canada includes such works as Marcus L. Hansen and John Bartlett Brebner, *The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1940); Karel D. Bicha, *The American Farmer and the Canadian West, 1896–1914* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1968); Harold Martin Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply: Canadian Government Encouragement of Immigration from the U.S., 1896–1911* (Toronto: Griffen, 1972); Randy W. Widdis, *With Scarcely a Ripple: Anglo-Canadian Migration into the United States and Western Canada, 1880–1920* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998); Bruno Ramirez, *Crossing the 49th Parallel: Migration from Canada to the United States, 1900–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); John M. Findlay and Ken S. Coates, eds., *Parallel Destinies: Canadian-American Relations West of the Rockies* (Seattle: Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest in association with University of Washington Press; Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).
 5. For example, the two standard anthologies, Jameson and Armitage's *Writing the Range* and Cavanaugh and Warne's *Telling Tales*, contain no articles that cross the Canada-U.S.

- border. The same is true of the classic monographs, from Carter to Jeffrey. Only Sylvia Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties* is well-known, frequently-used, and transnational. As a result, the overall contours of the scholarship have created nation-specific Wests, in opposition to nation-specific Easts.
6. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2nd ed. (1987; repr., San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), 19. Citation is from the preface to the first edition.
 7. On the latter point see such recent examples as Findlay and Coates, eds., *Parallel Destinies*, and Beth LaDow, *The Medicine Line: Life and Death on a North American Borderland* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), which pay little or no attention to women or gender. The 2004 collection *One West Two Myths* contains only one article dealing with borderlands and gender: Sheila McManus, "Making the Forty-Ninth Parallel: How Canada and the United States Used Space, Race and Gender to Turn Blackfoot Country into the Alberta-Montana Borderlands."
 8. See, for example, the work of scholars like Nora Faires, McManus, and the articles in this volume that highlight the analytical advantages of paying attention to gender and borders: Faires, "Poor Women, Proximate Border: Migrants from Ontario to Detroit in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, no. 3 (Spring 2001): 88–109; McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).
 9. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 25.
 10. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 25; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 11.
 11. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 24.
 12. The most thorough critique of this aspect of Canada's Indian Act can be found in Kathleen Jamieson, *Indian Women and the Law In Canada: Citizens Minus* (Ottawa: Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1978). The most thorough discussion of American Indian policy remains Francis Prucha's *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).
 13. See, for example, "Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs E.A. Hayt," November 15, 1879, in U. S. Congress, Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 46th Cong., 2nd sess., House Executive Documents 1, Part 5, 77; and U. S. Congress, Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 48th Cong., 1st sess., 1883, House Executive Document 1, Part 5, xi.
 14. See, for example, "Report of John A. Macdonald, Minister and Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs," in Canada, Department of the Interior, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for Year Ended 31 December 1883," *Sessional Papers* 1884, vol. 3, no. 4, lii–liii, and the Report of W. Pocklington, Sub-Agent for Treaty 7 in the same report, 86.
 15. Julia Short Asher, diary excerpts and reminiscence, Short-Knupp Family Fonds, M1137, Glenbow Archives, Calgary, AB (hereafter cited as GA).

16. For three examples of Canadian and American officials complaining about the ongoing cross-border raids of Blackfoot men, see Cecil E. Denny, Report of Agent for Treaty 7, July 10, 1883, in Canada, Department of the Interior, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for year ended 31st December 1883," *Sessional Papers* 1884, vol. 3, no. 4, 78–79; R.A. Allen, Report of Blackfeet Agent, 15 August 1885, in U. S. Congress, Department of the Interior, "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior," 49th Cong., 1st sess., House Executive Documents 1, Part 5, 344; and Edgar Dewdney, Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for North-West Territories, 17 December 1885, in Canada, Department of the Interior, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for year ended 31st December 1885," *Sessional Papers* 1886, vol. 4, no. 4, 144.
17. "Report of Father A. Lacombe," 13 July 1885, in Canada, Department of the Interior, *Sessional Papers* 1886, vol. 4, no. 4, 77.
18. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880; Canada, 1885 Census of North-West Territories, vol. 1, 10–11.
19. May G. Flanagan, memoirs, SC1236, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, MT (hereafter cited as MHS).
20. Mary Ella Lees Inderwick, letter to sister-in-law Alice, ca. Fall 1884, M559, GA.
21. Canada, Department of the Interior, "Annual Report For Year Ending 30 June 1875," *Sessional Papers* 1876, vol. 7, no. 9, p. 6.
22. See Sherry L. Smith, "Single Women Homesteaders: The Perplexing Case of Elinore Pruitt Stewart," *Western Historical Quarterly* 22 (May 1991): 163–84; and Susanne George, *Adventures of the Woman Homesteader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).
23. Two of the few specific references to women in the American reports can be found in "Report of Joseph Wilson, Commissioner of General Land Office," 27 October 1870, in U.S. Congress, Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 41st Cong., 3rd sess., House Executive Document 1, Part 4, 9; and J. Fred Myers, Treasury Department, "Report on Immigration, and the Proper Transportation of Immigrants to and within the United States," in U. S. Congress, "Message from the President recommending Legislation in relation to the transportation of immigrants to and within the United States," 14 May 1872, 42nd Cong., 2nd sess., Senate Executive Document 73, 5. This relative silence, and the focus on women as administrative problems, is a sharp contrast to the Canadian government's reports, which mention women frequently.
24. William Grahame, Report of Duluth Agent, in Canada, Department of Agriculture, "Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture for 1878," *Sessional Papers* 1879, vol. 7, no. 9, 34–35. The scholarship around this growing cultural imperative for white women to marry white men in the Canadian west includes Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*; Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women*; and Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).
25. Carolyn Abbott Tyler, diary entry September 10, 1862, SC1430, MHS.
26. Mary Douglas Gibson, reminiscence, SC1476, MHS.
27. The numbered treaties were a series of treaties Canada made with First Nations communities across the West and North. The first seven treaties were signed between 1871 and 1877 and covered the whole of the southern prairies. This "peaceful" land grab is

one of the key components of the Canadian myth that their West was kinder and gentler than the American West.

28. Inderwick, diary entry 29 October 1883, M559, GA.
29. Short diary, Short Asher reminiscence, M1137, GA.
30. Alma Coffin Kirkpatrick, reminiscence ca. 1910, includes diary excerpts from 1878, SC940, MHS.
31. Julia Short Asher reminiscence, Short-Knupp Family Fonds, M1137, GA.
32. Stocking, diary 29 June 1871, SC142, MHS.
33. Kirkpatrick, reminiscence, SC940, MHS.
34. Inderwick, diary 24 January to February 8, 1884, M559, GA.
35. Sadye Wolfe Drew, reminiscence, SC1532, MHS.
36. See, for example, Ruth Roach Pierson and Nupur Chaudhuri, eds., *Nation, Empire, Colony: Historicizing Race and Gender* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998); Caren Kaplan, Norma Alarcon, and Minoo Moallem, eds., *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999); Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford and New York: Berg Books, 2000); and Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2000).

