

# 15

## **GENDERED STEPS ACROSS THE BORDER**

*Teaching the History of Women in the American and Canadian Wests*

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THE HISTORY of the American and Canadian Wests has a long but rather thin and piecemeal pedigree. Occasional articles and books borrowing each other's theories or ideas trickle through the publications of both countries' western history. Similarly, case studies sometimes cross the border in a specific location or focus on a particular trans-border theme.<sup>1</sup> But the comparative mode, or combined Canadian-American approach, has been and remains elusive, unlike that of its counterpart in the Southwest.<sup>2</sup> There is a growing interest in the Mexican-American border and the impact of both countries on each other's past development. That contested area has frequently been viewed and discussed as a difference between whites and non-whites and between Anglos and Hispanics, whether in terms of language, politics, or culture. The Canadian-American boundary offers less visible and less threatening dimensions. Americans do not seem to be concerned about a foreign presence to their north, perhaps because it has been predominantly white and English-

speaking, perhaps because there has not been a major migration south into their heartland, and perhaps because they dominate their northern neighbour economically. Canadians, most of whom live near the lengthy international boundary, have tended to view the overwhelming force of the American presence from a position of economic inequality and have preferred to be perceived as a separate cultural entity rather than as an inferior or Americanized adjunct.<sup>3</sup>

Teaching the comparative history of two neighbours who have a considerable amount in common physically and share some cultural affiliations, but few institutional links, has proved difficult as much because of their different historical traditions as for the unavailability of source materials. In fashioning a course that facilitates an understanding of two societies at the same time as being educationally fulfilling, the main challenge has been to find reasoned grounds on which to compare the societies. Initially some framework was needed to enable individual stories and themes to add up to a unit that was accessible to students. Perhaps the edge of the picture need not be rigid, but it must be functional and be capable of taking on some recognizable identity. A handful of historians have already pioneered the comparative approach, and their work offers some potential models, but their dialogues are in part dependent on selections of two sets of texts that have not been directed toward comparative history and thus leave much to the imagination.<sup>4</sup>

Incorporating gender into, or, better still, engendering such a comparative unit has been much more demanding because the newer historical materials on women must be integrated with the older materials that claimed to be history but were actually HIS story. In the past quarter century women have certainly been portrayed on their own account as dynamic persons and are no longer ignored or marginalized. Yet they need to be placed in a symmetrical relationship with men. So far few books and articles on comparative western history are written with reference to both women and men.<sup>5</sup> Only for a few themes, like fur trading and farming, has gendering teaching become more viable as outstanding research has been accomplished and has changed the face of western history. Other themes have proved to be so demanding or lacking in new research that

traditional trajectories must be used because of practical difficulties finding evidence. Though the infamous counterfactual approach can offer some interesting speculative insights into the history that might be produced when gendered theoretical approaches have been worked out and research undertaken, the practical offerings and suggestions that can be made remain limited. It is thus important to retain clearly defined concepts of masculinity and femininity throughout a module. By persistently asking what was important for women and for men, and what difference did it make to experience western endeavours as a female or a male, module participants can be prompted to consider the existing written, visual, and oral evidence from two perspectives and then to come to a human viewpoint.

If teaching a comparative Canadian-American module in North America is unusual, then it is extraordinary in the United Kingdom.<sup>6</sup> Such a module, however, offers great potential for creating frameworks and discussing themes and ideas. Undergraduates start with little background and with access to limited resources, even given easy access to relevant websites. They may well know about the myths and images of the West from the media and literature, but this romantic West is much more likely to be American than Canadian. They are unlikely to have a solid factual grounding in western history. Furthermore, because all participants are outsiders “looking in,” they are detached from and are unrestrained by the academic cultures of either American or Canadian historians. Indeed they are likely to be critical of both traditions. So a new or a symmetrical template is possible.

Such a template must address the traditional male-focussed and romantic picture that has been spread in both the media and in the older western histories. Comparative analysis is an effective tool for deconstructing such legends. Both countries have created myths from historical events, but the heroes and images are different in subject matter and in method of treatment. By putting together such heroes as American cowboys and Canadian Northwest Mounted Police, or George Armstrong Custer and Louis David Riel, or by comparing American literary notions of the Great American Desert with Canadian literary views of the nor-

thern wilderness, students learn to analyse how, why, and for whom history has been constructed.<sup>7</sup> As the majority of North American romantic heroes are male, a greater awareness of masculinity is immediately visible. Such constructions of raw masculinity increasingly appear naïve because of the absence of any female presence let alone any female contribution.<sup>8</sup> Asking students to examine existing romantic and male-dominant visions, aided by some of the tools of literary criticism and by cultural approaches to history, has proved to be a valuable device for making history both more realistic and gender aware. Students then not only have the opportunity to question how history is written, but also why recognizing femininity as a social construct or discussing the female absence/presence is needed to make western history realistic.

Before considering any imagery, it is essential to establish the parameters and nature of the North American West. There may well be a geographical entity that is separated behaviourally and nationally by the 49th parallel, but for historians in both countries there are many Wests. In Canada the West can be considered to be that part of the nation west of Ontario that was accumulated after the British established the Dominion of Canada in 1867. This consisted of Rupert's Land or the Hudson's Bay Company Territory, comprising the Hudson's Bay drainage basin, and the North Western Territory, comprising the unappropriated crown lands of the Arctic drainage basin, lands that the British formally handed to the new Canadian federation in 1869. It also included British Columbia, which came into the Confederation in 1871. Even from its early years this West has been separated into what became the Prairie provinces and British Columbia. Both of these Canadian regions have in turn had little to do with the North. That area, consisting of the Northwest Territories and, more recently, Nunavut, are located above the Prairie provinces of [Manitoba], Saskatchewan, and Alberta, while Yukon Territory "tops" British Columbia. From an international perspective, the Territories are as "western" as the provinces, but Canadian historians frequently write about a tripartite division and separate identities.<sup>9</sup>

Yet this geographical division of the Canadian West has not proved to be as problematic for comparative purposes as have the strident con-

frontations of American historians discussing their West or their Wests. For some seventy-five years the Frontier Thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner dominated teaching and research, pointing to the West as a national experience. At one time in its history the entire nation had been part of the West. For Turner the West was also a character-forming experience and a positive achievement. Europeans or Euro-Americans migrated across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, building a modern democracy from wild nature.<sup>10</sup> More recently, New Western historians have claimed that the West is a region with a long and continuous history. It is that part of the United States that lies west of the Mississippi River, but for some historians it may be west of the Missouri River or perhaps the hundredth meridian. Usually the region stretches to the Pacific Ocean, but on occasions it also includes the geographically discrete states of Alaska to the north and Hawai'i in the Pacific Ocean. Yet for other western American historians, the Rocky Mountains more clearly divide the western prairies and plains from the coastal areas into two regions.<sup>11</sup> When outsiders examine the disputes on both sides of the border, it makes more sense to recognize the diverse methodological and geographical debates about the location of the various Wests and then to superimpose a much larger map that facilitates discussions of a West with flexible boundaries. Thereafter these boundaries or concepts can be determined by the thematic topics being examined.

Students, however, need some existing framework with which to start organizing and interpreting the larger and more flexible area. Taking the United States as a starting point, Europeans have the choice of Turner's Frontier Thesis, which has been applied, albeit erratically, north across the border. Or they can adopt one of the various approaches of the New Western historians. Practitioners like Patricia Limerick, Richard White, and Donald Worster have fragmented and rejected any canon for the lands below the 49th parallel. Within the New West as region, neo-imperialists sit side by side with environmentalists, who contest with social historians and those who prefer to consider a capitalistic exploitation of a boom and slump nature. More recently still, a newer meaning for American western history involving the common story of the

frontier-to-region process has been suggested in what might be called a greater West.<sup>12</sup>

In Canada students can also select from differing frameworks for examining their West. The staples thesis of political economist Harold Innis examines Canadian development and the expansion of finance and capital in a westward direction in terms of mercantile ties with Europe. His work offered an approach that was popular for many years in the early and mid-twentieth century. It was replaced by historian Maurice Careless's interpretation of metropolitanism that also connects the links between cores and peripheries, but which incorporates major cities with their class and ethnic patterns. Careless went beyond the pure environmental factors to add values. The literary critic Northrop Frye has challenged both of these interpretations, however, by raising issues of Canadian cultural identity. For Frye, every part of Canada is a separation with communities isolated from one another in a "garrison mentality." Historical geographer Cole Harris has also talked about islands of settlement from different parts of Europe and eastern Canada. These are discontinuous islands forming a fragmented human structure that is bound together economically by transport and communications and politically by provincial status. More recently, western historian Gerald Freisen has suggested that the Canadian West has a changing complexion. It has in the past been the two region vision of the Prairies and the Coast, but this has been replaced by a single economic and social experience. Yet within this single West are four provinces, each with distinctive political life and identity. Overall, however, these Canadian templates have had a much smaller impact on traditional or recent western Canadian scholarship than the assorted American templates have had on western American scholarship.<sup>13</sup> There is a welter of diverse options from which students can choose to adopt or adapt in order to construct a comparative western approach. Provided that students are aware of the origins and assumptions of these views, they can apply them across the border and then use a gendered lens emphasizing femininity and masculinity.

With the historical contexts discussed and a blank map to fill, the themes to be considered should raise questions about similarities and differences between the two Wests and the distinctive characteristics of

western Canadians and Americans. The themes must also be gendered, even within topics that are supposedly neutral. Focusing on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the North American West was occupied, settled, or invaded by European or Euro-American/Euro-Canadian migrants, the range of themes or topics is extensive. Possibilities include environment, land and its availability; peoples of the West, which needs to be subdivided between pre-Euro contact and in-migrants; western mobility, or transport and travel; making a living, which can be subdivided between exploiting and protecting natural resources and farming; and creating western communities, which include social networks like church and school, and institutional arrangements like law enforcement and government. Clearly behavioural patterns are connected to prior habits. There is a cultural continuity with family or ethnic arrangements. Yet there is also a response to a new geographical setting. Government actions further shape western identities. Women and men were frequently present together in the West, but they saw life from different viewpoints. Even when women were absent from some western spaces, their very absence shaped a masculine character that requires specific analysis.

To illustrate the potential of such a gendered North American module, three themes will be used as case studies. Farming is examined first, because it is accessible to comparative analysis through both women's and gendered history. The fur trade, though earlier in chronology, needs to be discussed second, because the research input has been very different on either side of the border. Fur trading has been studied in more sophisticated gendered ways in Canada than in the United States. The example set by Canadian historians has suggested gendered paths that Americans have recently started to follow. Thirdly, law, order, and violence offers much scope for comparative discussion, but the historian needs to understand and interpret myths as well as historical evidence. In romantic stories and media visions, the heroes and villains are rarely analyzed explicitly from gendered perspectives. The contrasts between the three themes suggest what is currently possible and what might be accomplished.

The North American West was settled primarily by farmers. There were relatively more of these in the Canadian prairies and the American plains, though farming was also a significant occupation in the coastal valleys across the mountains. The Pacific Coast states and the province of British Columbia may well have urbanized because of port functions and the extractive economy of minerals and lumber, but they still contained farming communities. So too did the northern areas of Alaska and the Canadian territories, though they were far fewer in number and importance. For traditional historians farming meant going west, whether from eastern parts of Canada or the United States or from Europe, squatting on land, buying it from governments or speculators, or homesteading it for free or very cheaply. Having acquired land, male farmers then worked hard to make a living, struggling against the elements, the machinery manufacturers, financial intermediaries, and transport companies. If they succeeded, theirs was a triumph of democratic capitalism in the United States or imperial development in Canada. If they failed, they became hired labourers either on farms or in urban enterprises to which they migrated. This traditional narrative of farming, often told at the macro-level in terms of the growth of wheat, dairy, or cattle belts rarely mentioned the contributions of women. Development, whether at the farm unit size or at the regional level, was assumed to be a product of male decision-making and male endeavours. Women did not feature as partners and workers. They were non-persons in that they did not vote and were subordinate to males, functioning as wife, mother, and housewife. Women infrequently owned farms, and when they did they were constrained to work within a male-dominated environment. The farmer's West was masculine territory.<sup>14</sup>

Women's history insisted on changing this perspective into one in which women were not only important but were central to survival and success. The female interpretation of pioneer farming in the North American West frequently used the lens of personal experiences. Recovering an abundance of information from personal letters, diaries, and farm accounts, women have become an essential part of any historical account of farm operation. They fulfilled the triple function of domestic labour,

barnyard work, and unpaid fieldwork. Rarely could a farm enterprise be successful without female input. Both the productive and reproductive functions of women in the home as wife, mother, and housewife were essential for health, well-being, and future labour supply. The barnyard work of raising and storing vegetables and looking after farm animals not only provided food year round, it contributed “butter and egg” money. The cash sales of this and other household produce could support a farm during difficult times or, in more prosperous years, were considered as female perks available to purchase store goods. Women further contributed directly to farm output in cereals and cattle raising by doing outdoor work, frequently at planting or harvesting times.<sup>15</sup> They were also significant in the undervalued social processes of farming activities: as central agents in cultivating reciprocal relationships both on the farm and within the rural community, farmwomen brokered both survival and success with a form of moral capital and a process of neighbouring.<sup>16</sup>

There are two sets of lenses: the male (and possibly the macro view) and the female (and possibly the micro view), and these need to intersect. Occasionally they have been placed together within the same framework when historians have discussed family ventures.<sup>17</sup> Then it has been possible to raise gendered issues in a social history setting. Women’s domestic roles and men’s outdoor labour were similar across the border. Indeed, when specifically discussing American women, Glenda Riley has suggested that the female farming frontier was more a repetitive experience focused on domesticity than a question of different responses to geographical circumstances, as with men.<sup>18</sup> But taking the generic problems of acquiring capital, altering the landscape, finding machinery, and getting crops to market, then men, too, faced similar problems. The differences between many Americans and Canadians lay in particular geographies and whether land was suitable to raise wheat, corn, livestock, or other cereal and animal products. Other patterns become complicated by institutional arrangements and ethnic cultures. The most visible of these differences has been the Canadian imperial and the American democratic agendas. Though some historians would argue that both governments had an affinity with the United Kingdom, one remained within the

British Empire while the other rejected the British authority. But the time-space matrix was also important in terms of technology. The availability of improving farm machinery and access to different modes of transport influenced the potential for both family survival and success. There are many ingredients that need a new gendered dimension.

So which fruitful comparative questions can be posed? Moving across the political boundary between the Canadian prairies and the American plains, it might be useful to consider how pioneer farming families migrating to Alberta in the early twentieth century found that their experiences differed from families who moved to Montana some quarter century earlier. How did families acquire their farms? If they bought them rather than homesteaded them, how did they raise the capital or acquire the credit? What difference did it make to Canadians to have benefited from the experience of their American counterparts? Did all farmers combine subsistence with market approaches? How was the farm technology different in both countries? Did those living in Alberta have better and cheaper access to rail transport than those living in Montana, and how did they market their crops? Did ethnic affiliation make a significant difference either to farming patterns or the social lives of families and especially women? Or were Mennonites, for example, on both sides of the border likely to run their farms in similar ways?<sup>19</sup>

Certainly there were institutional differences in legislation that affected women. In the United States single women over the age of twenty-one who were citizens or intending citizens could homestead or file for up to 160 acres of surveyed land in the public domain. In Canada the vast majority of women were excluded by regulations from access to homesteads available to any man over the age of eighteen. Only if she was the head of a household could a woman earn title to 160 acres provided she farmed this quarter section. Furthermore, married women in the West had no claim to a share in their husband's property. It was not until the second decade of the twentieth century that individual Prairie provinces passed laws to ensure that women were neither left homeless nor penniless.<sup>20</sup> Does such a difference mean that farmwomen north of the border were more likely to be involved in political activism than their American

counterparts? Or does it mean that they were acquiescent about their status and considered that they were part of a farming unit that was subject to impersonal market systems rather than being a woman without a formal stake in the family enterprise? Many more questions could be raised, but the answers may provide suggestions rather than a working template for gendered comparative history.

Looking at an earlier example of western development in the shape of the fur trade, two different historical traditions have developed on either side of the border even though the border itself was not a hindrance to business for many years. French merchants and trappers may have entered the fur trade using the St Lawrence waterway, but they spread across the Canadian prairies, down the Mississippi River to the Gulf Coast and up the Missouri River long before separate political identities were established. The British, in the shape of the Hudson's Bay Company, also crossed boundaries with impunity, and American fur companies were not averse to trapping and trading north of the border, whether in the Great Lakes region, the Rocky Mountains, or on the Pacific Coast. Though the companies retained their national identities, they did not worry whether their workers in the field were European or Native Americans; they were more concerned with profits. But while traders crossed boundaries, fur-trade historians have not often done so. If they had they would have benefited from cross-cultural approaches and methodologies.

Early studies of the fur trade tended to be company histories or biographies, using whatever archival materials were available. Historians of the Canadian trade were able to take advantage of the massive records kept by the Hudson's Bay Company to examine the cautious behaviour of the London-based operation. They also had access to the records of the more flamboyant North West Company, whose French and Scottish merchants worked from Montreal. American historians also wrote business histories of major companies or their owners, like John Jacob Astor and the American Fur Company, and Manuel Lisa and the Missouri Fur Company.<sup>21</sup> Such histories were male capitalistic enterprises and were viewed as such. But they also became the seat of adventurers, especially

in the United States. Romance flourished when the Euro-American trappers in the Rocky Mountains in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century became “mountain men.” These trappers, who wintered in the mountains and exchanged their beaver catch for several days’ worth of drink, gambling, and sex, became the heroic figures of many a “tall tale” and many traditional narratives. Masculinity oozed. The picture of the bearded trapper in buckskin leggings and fringed leather jacket contributed to the stereotypical male-dominated west.<sup>22</sup> There was no place for women in this triumphal wilderness where men were able to commune with nature. Certainly there was the occasional mention of a “squaw,” but the contributions of aboriginal women were apparently irrelevant to the triumphal masculine romp.

Such women were anything but irrelevant in Canadian fur-trade history. When female historians, educated by feminist studies and equipped with an awareness of multiculturalism, examined the archival records, native women became a central and essential part of the long chain of activities that constituted the fur business. They were intermediaries economically, socially, and politically. As workers in the business, they processed furs and supplied provisions; as sexual partners they provided family and kin for white traders and helped to create a society of mixed bloods, or Métis, who have handed down a distinctive legacy of cultural blending; as diplomats they negotiated trade relations with First Nations and acted as interpreters. Such revisionist history changed the face of the Canadian fur trade by moving it away from the leadership of the company elite or the visions of popular heroes to the previously unknown workers. It undermined the masculinity of fur trading by making women central. Furthermore it examined the relationships between the women who married “according to the custom of the country” and the incoming white wives of the traders in terms of race and community hierarchy. Social tensions at fur-trading posts were an important part of life affecting a range of activities. Though this centring of women has in turn been criticized, it is now impossible to consider the Canadian fur trade without recognizing gendered partnerships and integrating gender considerations of femininity and masculinity into any discussion.<sup>23</sup>

Historians of the American fur trade have been slow to follow the gendered and multicultural example set by the Canadians some twenty years ago.<sup>24</sup> Such a delay may stem from a variety of reasons. The American fur trade was smaller and shorter than its Canadian counterpart, and there has not been as much interest in or distinct identification of the descendants of native-European unions in the United States. Very few historians of American fur trading have been fully cognizant of the recent trends in women's and social history. Furthermore, New Western historians have set a different agenda for western history. It has remained for historians of the Middle West and the Great Lakes region to rise to the challenge. Here in the *pays d'en haut*, the French as well as the English were involved in fur trading, and they retained similar patterns of behaviour to those developed north of the Great Lakes. But American historians contemplating following the role model set by Canadian historians found that they could draw on a different historical tradition. For the New Indian History had already recognized the extensive cultural contact that took place between Euro-American incomers and Native Peoples. There was a trade and cultural exchange process that allowed different ethnic groups to negotiate a relatively peaceful existence. Fur trade historians recognized this exchange but placed much more emphasis on the role of women as cultural mediators and economic partners. As in Canada, native women were central to fur-trading enterprises, and further research on other American fur regions might be more inclusive and question the dominant masculinity so prevalent in traditional histories.<sup>25</sup>

Canadian and American historians have both paid much attention to issues of law and order and violence on both sides of and across their border, and they have had to negotiate with myths, media, and popular culture. The frequently used general concept, turned into a question rather than a description for the comparative course taught at the University of Calgary, is that of Wild West/Mild West? The wildness of the American west is an abstract ideal associated with a rugged freedom and masculine strength. The mildness of the Canadian west takes on some aspects of womanliness in being more orderly and relatively peaceful; it is often featured as having little or no bloodshed between incoming whites and

resident natives, unlike its neighbour to the south. The Canadian government negotiated seven numbered treaties with native peoples between 1871 and 1877 in which the aim was to compensate them for land cessions and to assign them to reserves. Furthermore, disputes among Anglo-Canadian settlers, and later between Euro-Canadian settlers or migrants, were resolved less aggressively because of the presence of the North West Mounted Police as agents of the Ottawa government. Formed in 1873 to keep the peace and to regulate prairie society, the Mounted Police were a disciplined and centralized organization with a flexible law enforcing function. They were able to ensure stable community development in the Prairies by being present prior to the settlement of the region and by becoming an authority in many aspects of society. They were also able maintain order during the Yukon gold rush, thereby offering a marked contrast to the chaos and violence of gold and silver rushes south of the border.<sup>26</sup> The Canadian West was perceived to be a safe place in large part because of the heroic role of the men in red coats.

American interpreters of the West traditionally viewed their heritage as one that was violent and bloody and often focused on land occupation, resource exploitation, and multiracial issues. Settlers moving west stimulated regular guerrilla warfare between newcomers and natives, interrupted by more formal or military warfare, usually undertaken by the American army. The federal army and state militias often managed relations with the natives, moving them westwards or onto reservations either with considerable bloodshed or subdued by passive despair.<sup>27</sup> This was masculine territory, and men were in charge. In disputes between competing white settlers and between white settlers and “others,” like Hispanics, Chinese, and African Americans, the quality of law and justice frequently depended on the local agents of enforcement, whether sheriffs, marshals, judges, vigilantes, or particular mediators, like Texas Rangers or Wells Fargo employees. But racism did not make for peaceful relations. Even when white settlers argued among themselves, individualism, malleable law officers, the constitutional right to bear arms, and the masculine code of “no duty to retreat” encouraged both violent confrontations and physical protests. The thousands of western movies pro-

duced in Hollywood and elsewhere, and the numerous dime and pulp novels, have only served to confirm a wild image and one that was most definitely male-dominant and masculine in character.<sup>28</sup>

Recent interpretations of western law and order in Canada and the United States have suggested moderating these long-standing interpretations of mild and wild. From the Canadian viewpoint, some analysts suggest that the order was not always as even-handed or as systematic as earlier portrayed. Native peoples faced major difficulties under the Treaty provisions, suffering from a policy of domination, malnutrition, and starvation. While the Mounted Police served as military, police, and civil officials for a generation after early settlement, they were unable to systematically patrol, let alone manage, such a vast area as the entire Canadian Northwest in the late nineteenth century. They certainly could provide an effective force in specific areas at specific times; for example, when their numbers were increased in the Yukon at the time of the gold rush. Yet their presence was often thin on the ground when local disputes emerged in the Prairies. Furthermore, they tended to use their discretion when intervening or not intervening in disputes and taking action against law-breakers. It would seem that the Mounted Police were not as reliable and impartial as traditionally suggested. Nevertheless, they did operate in a society in which respect for authority was more ingrained and in which the use of firearms was less flagrant.<sup>29</sup> There was both law and disorder in the Canadian West.

American historians might decide to come to a similar conclusion. Some of these are already suggesting that the western legal system offered protection to settlers and produced no more violence than existed in other parts of the United States. They argue that in newly settling communities, whether urban or rural, misdemeanours were more prevalent than serious crimes and that institutions providing order soon followed the arrival of families. Certainly there remains a view that law did not provide justice as seen within the well-established framework of “the western war of incorporation,” and that injustice for the “others,” whether sheep farmers, homesteaders, Mexican miners, or Chinese workers, led both to vigilantism and rapid punishment.<sup>30</sup> But what is emerging from

a new school of western legal historians is a call to ascertain more information about the mechanics of the western legal systems rather than continuing to deconstruct images of wildness. There are numerous layers of western legal history that have not yet been explored, and only careful examination of specifics within issues, like the law of cattle drives and the open range, law for Native Americans, water law, and mining law, can bring better understanding of the ways in which the legal order worked.<sup>31</sup> The relationship of violence to this order has complicated interpretations of all American society because of the question of firearms. As Americans claim the constitutional right to bear arms, the gun culture argument will neither go away nor be easily resolved, either in the American West of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries or in American society in general in the twenty-first century.

For all the long and sometimes acrimonious discussions of mild and wild Wests, very little progress has been made with raising gendered concerns. It seems to matter little where the West is or when it is analyzed. The relative scarcity of women in non-agricultural settlements has given law and order a masculine dominance, often in connection with alcohol, gambling, and brawling. Some women were featured in this masculine interpretation because they were prostitutes who broke the law and flouted the conventions of respectable femininity. Yet often these workers were tolerated, suggesting that masculine interpretation of the law was flexible. Though tolerated, little is yet known about the sexual harassment of or violent behaviour suffered by such sex-industry workers on either side of the border. In farming settlements where there was less likely to be a sexual imbalance there is little discussion about women's personal safety and their legal rights. Certainly there have been some idealistic notions about codes of male chivalry implying protection, and women themselves have been viewed as civilizers because of their domestic functions, but very little work has been done to ascertain the veracity of such prescriptions. Furthermore, little is known about domestic violence and the incarceration of women in mental asylums. It would seem that women were treated differently from men, and this treatment may have left them vulnerable as much as protected.<sup>32</sup> The traditional clarion call of

“missing from history” still applies to most attempts to give women a place in legal issues, let alone an equal treatment. As such, the framework for any gendered class discussion continues to be masculine. But such a discussion should not remain unchallenged. It may take much more work on gender, law, and justice on both sides of the border to answer specific questions, but at least the questions can be raised.

Some of the ideas advanced and the problems raised in connection with these three themes of farming, fur trading, and law and order may suggest that speculation sits side by side with historical research. Teaching a comparative module is sufficiently complex without insisting that gender relations and gendered issues be raised and discussed for each analytical theme.<sup>33</sup> But without at least attempting the framework and choosing the ingredients, both students and historians will not know which questions to ask and what kind of evidence must be recovered to advance an understanding of the gendered past. It may be necessary to wait for much more local research to be undertaken in the western American states and western Canadian provinces before viable syntheses will be accepted. But teaching is about provoking ideas and new strands of thought as well as about giving factual information and discussing cultural values. Working with what is available in a variety of sources and raising questions can provide an understanding of what gendered comparative history should be.

#### **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

The original version of this paper was given at the conference “Unsettled Past: Reconceiving the West through Women’s History,” University of Calgary, 13–16 June 2002. I was able to attend this conference thanks to a travel award from the British Academy and financial support from the University of Nottingham. The paper has been revised in the light of comments made at the conference, from listening to and reading the paper of my co-presenter, Mary Murphy, “Latitudes and Longitudes: Teaching the History of Women in the United States and Canadian Wests,” and from editorial suggestions. My original ideas have been greatly improved through teaching my final year module, *The North American West: Comparative American and Canadian Histories*, in subsequent years. I have learned more about comparative history, its strengths and its pitfalls, from preparing the module and from interacting with students than I could have imagined. The insistence that all classes, coursework, and the examination paper be as fully comparative as sources would allow has facilitated profitable

insights. Though all involved were challenged, the end results were rewarding both in terms of the comparative method and gendered possibilities.

#### NOTES

1. Three early and local trans-border studies, namely, Paul F. Sharp, *Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian and American West, 1865–85*, 2nd ed. (Helena: Historical Society of Montana, 1960); Alvin C. Gluek, *Minnesota and the Manifest Destiny of the Canadian Northwest: A Study in Canadian-American Relations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); and Karel D. Bicha, *The American Farmer and the Canadian West, 1896–1914* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1968), offer some insights into the central parts of the continent.
2. A useful source for ideas about comparative frameworks between the United States and Canada is Seymour R. Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1990). For southwestern history and the Spanish impact see David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992). For Canadian borders see W. H. New, “The Edge of Everything: Canadian Culture and the Border Field,” in *Borderlands: How We Talk about Canada*, ed. W. H. New (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 35–68. Two recent volumes have facilitated the teaching of the comparative Canadian and American Wests: C. L. Higham and Robert Thacker, eds., *One West, Two Myths: A Comparative Reader* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004) and Carol Higham and Robert Thacker eds., *One West, Two Myths II: Essays on Comparison* (first published as a special issue of *The American Review of Canadian Studies*) (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006).
3. See Lipset, *Continental Divide*. See also Jack Bumsted, “Visions of Canada: A Brief History of Writing on the Canadian Character and the Canadian Identity,” in *A Passion for Identity: Canadian Studies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. David Taras and Beverley Rasповich, 4th ed., (Toronto: Nelson Thompson Learning, 2001), 17–35.
4. See for example courses taught by Sarah Carter and Elizabeth Jameson, *Wild West/Mild West? Comparative History of the U.S. and Canadian Wests*, at University of Calgary; Mary Murphy, *Women in the U.S. and Canadian West*, at Montana State University; Royden Loewen, *Imagined Communities: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Canada and the United States*, at University of Winnipeg; Frances W. Kaye, *Intellectual History of the Great Plains*, at University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and John Herd Thompson, *The U.S. and Canadian Wests*, at Duke University.
5. The best examples are Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Simon Evans, Sarah Carter, and W. B. Yeo, eds., *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross Border Perspectives in Ranching History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000); Carol L. Higham, *Noble, Wretched and Redeemable: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians in Canada and the United States, 1820–1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); and Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

6. Canadian history is infrequently taught in the United Kingdom. It has been and continues to feature as part of imperial or commonwealth history, but as an entity in its own right it is a rare commodity. Since the Canadian High Commission has helped to support Canadian Studies in British universities, academics teaching Canadian materials have been added to existing American Studies departments or have become part of Centres for Canadian Studies. Further support has been given to stimulate the teaching of and research in Canadian Studies in the form of grants for the purchase of library resources and for encouraging other academics to enhance the teaching of Canadian materials. Modules featuring Canadian topics have become more visible, but often with a literary or cultural emphasis. Add to this paucity the declining interest in the academic study of American western history in recent years and a comparative western history course becomes a rare offering. My early knowledge of Canadian history was considerably deepened and widened by a Teaching Enhancement Award from the Canadian High Commission in the summer of 2001.
7. The classic volume of the American West as dream and image remains Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950). For general approaches to American myth and images see Robert V. Hine and John M. Faragher, "The Myth of the West," in *The American West: A New Interpretive History*, ed. Hine and Faragher (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 472–511; Anne M. Butler, "Selling the Popular Myth," in *The Oxford History of the American West*, ed. Clyde A. Milner, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandiweiss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 771–801. For Canada see Sherrill E. Grace, "Comparing Mythologies: Ideas of West and North," in *Borderlands: Essays in Canadian-American Relations*, ed. Robert Leckler (Toronto: ECW Press, 1991), 243–62; Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997); R. Douglas Francis, *Images of the West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690–1960* (Saskatoon, SK: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989); and Gerald Friesen, "The Imagined West: Introducing Cultural History," in *From Rupert's Land to Canada*, ed. Theodore Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens, and R. C. Macleod (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001), 195–200. There is an abundance of material on Custer and less, though still adequate information, on Riel. See, for example, Paul A. Hutton, ed., *The Custer Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Robert W. Utley, *Custer and the Great Controversy: The Origins and Development of a Legend* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Roberta E. Pearson, "The Twelve Custers or Video History," in *Back in the Saddle Again: New Essays on the Western*, ed. Roberta E. Pearson and Edward Buscombe (London: BFI Press, 1998), 197–213; Douglas Owram, "The Myth of Louis Riel," 11–29, Donald Swainson, "Rielana and the Structure of Canadian History," 30–41, and George F. G. Stanley, "The Last Word on Louis Riel: The Man of Several Faces," 42–60, all in *Louis Riel: Selected Readings*, ed. Hartwell Bowsfield (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988); and Maggie Siggins, *Riel: A Life of Revolution* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1994).
8. The discussion of manhood and masculinity in either the American or Canadian West has yet to be developed fully. Some interesting concepts have been put forward in articles, but as in history in general, men's history is thin on the ground. For thought-provoking ideas see Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau, eds., *Across the Great*

- Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Catherine Cavanaugh, “‘No Place for a Woman’: Engendering Western Canadian Settlement,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (1997): 493–518; Cecelia Danysk, “A Batchelor’s Paradise: Homesteaders, Hired Hands and the Construction of Masculinity, 1880–1930,” in *Making Western Canada: Essays on European Colonization and Settlement*, ed. Catherine Cavanaugh and Jeremy Mouat (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996), 154–85; Katherine Morrissey, “Engendering the West,” in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past*, ed. William Cronon, George Miles and Jay Gitlin (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 132–44; and Antonia I. Castañeda, “Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769–1848,” in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, ed. R. Gutierrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 230–59.
9. For different treatments of what might be called the Canadian West see Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); William R. Morrison, *True North: The Yukon and Northwest Territories* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Gerald Friesen, *The West: Regional Ambitions, National Debates, Global Age* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1999).
  10. Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920), 1–38.
  11. Walter Nugent, “Where is the American West? Report on a Survey,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 42, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 2–23; Margaret Walsh, *The American West: Visions and Revisions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–18.
  12. The recent debate on what is western history has become unproductive. For those who want to follow the gyrations of the discussions see Alan G. Bogue, “The Significance of the History of the American West: Postscripts and Prospects,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 24 (February 1993): 195–221; William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, “Becoming West: Towards a New Meaning for Western History,” in *Under an Open Sky*, ed. Cronon, Miles, and Gitlin, 3–17; Patricia N. Limerick, “What on Earth is the New Western History,” in *Trails: Towards a New Western History*, ed. Patricia N. Limerick, Clyde A. Milner, II, and Charles E. Rankin (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 83–88; and Gerald Thompson, “The New Western History: A Critical Analysis,” 49–72 and Malcolm J. Rohrbough, “The Continuing Search for the American West: Historians Past, Present, and Future,” 123–46, both in *Old West/New West: Quo Vadis?*, ed. Gene Gressley (Worland, WY: High Plains Publishing Company, 1994).
  13. Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, rev. ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1930; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), especially the conclusion, 383–402; J.M.S. Careless, “Frontierism, Metropolitanism and Canadian History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 35 (March 1954): 1–21; Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), 213–51; R. Cole Harris, “The Emotional Structure of Canadian Regionalism,” in *The Challenges of Canada’s Regional Diversity*, The Walter L. Gordon Lecture Series, 1980–1981, vol. 5 (Toronto: Omnigraphics Inc., 1981), 9–30; Friesen, *The West: Regional Ambitions*; Gerald Friesen, “The Evolving Meaning of

- Regions in Canada,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (2001): 530–45; R. Douglas Francis, “Turner versus Innis: Bridging the Gap,” 473–85, and Frances W. Kaye, “An Innis, Not a Turner,” 597–610, both in *American Review of Canadian Studies* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2003); and Lorry W. Felske and Beverly Rasporich, “Challenging Frontiers,” in *Challenging Frontiers: The Canadian West*, ed. Felske and Rasporich (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004).
14. For traditional interpretations of agriculture see Gilbert C. Fite, *The Farmer's Frontier, 1865–1900* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966); Fred A. Shannon, *The Farmers' Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860–1897* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1945); Vernon C. Fowke, *Canadian Agricultural Policy: The Historical Pattern* (1946; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Arthur S. Morton, *History of Prairie Settlement* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1938).
  15. There is an abundant and growing literature about women's lives on western farms. For the United States see Glenda Riley, *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988); Dee Garceau, *The Important Things in Life: Women, Work, and Family in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, 1880–1929* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Julie R. Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: “Civilizing” the West? 1840–1880*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Margaret Walsh, “From the Periphery to the Centre: Changing Perspectives on American Farm Women,” in *Working Out Gender: Perspectives from Labour History*, ed. Margaret Walsh (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1999), 135–50. For Canada see Eliane L. Silverman, *The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier, 1880–1930*, rev. ed. (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 1998); Mary Kinnear, *A Female Economy: Women's Work in a Prairie Province, 1870–1970* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 85–99; Eliane L. Silverman “Women and the Victorian Work Ethic on the Alberta Frontier: Prescription and Description,” 91–99 and Ann Leger-Anderson, “Saskatchewan Women, 1880–1920: A Field for Study,” 65–90, both in *The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan*, ed. Howard Palmer and Donald B. Smith (Vancouver: Tantalus Research Limited, 1980); Sara B. Sundberg, “Farm Women on the Canadian Prairie Frontier: The Helpmate Image,” in *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*, ed. Victoria Strong-Boag and Anita C. Fellman (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1986), 95–106; and Sheila McManus, “Gender(ed) Tensions in the Work and Politics of Alberta Farm Women, 1905–1929,” in *Telling Tales: Essays in Western Women's History*, ed. Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 123–47.
  16. Women's roles in the social processes of farming are best discussed in American sources. See, for example, Deborah Fink, “Sidelines and Moral Capital: Women on Nebraska Farms in the 1930s,” in *Women and Farming: Changing Roles, Changing Structures*, ed. Wava Haney and Jane Knowles (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 55–70; Hal. S. Barron, “Staying Down on the Farm: The Social Processes of Settled Rural Life in the Nineteenth Century North,” in *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*, ed. Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 327–43; and Mary Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900–1940* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

17. For family histories of American farming see John F. Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986); Lee A. Craig, *To Sow One Acre More: Childbearing and Farm Productivity in the Antebellum North* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1993). For a less detailed study of farming communities see Dean L. May, *Three Frontiers: Family Land and Society in the American West, 1850–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). A different view on gendered family farming can be located in Elliott West, *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 147–76. For Canadian western history see Kenneth M. Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba, 1870–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). For some comparative insights see John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890–1915* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).
18. Riley, *The Female Frontier*, 1–13.
19. Royden Loewen, “Ethnic Farmers and the Outside World: Mennonites in Manitoba and Nebraska,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 1 (1990): 195–214; Royden Loewen, “The Children, the Cows, My Dear Man and My Sister: The Transplanted Lives of Mennonite Farm Women in Manitoba and Nebraska,” *Canadian Historical Review* 73 (1992): 344–73; Royden Loewen, “Steinbach and Jansen: A Tale of Two Mennonite Towns, 1880–1900,” in *European Immigrants in the American West: Community Histories*, ed. Frederick Luebke, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 161–78; Randy W. Widdis, *With Scarcely A Ripple: Anglo-Canadian Migration into the United States and Canada, 1880–1920* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), 255–336; McManus, *The Line Which Separates*, 142–78.
20. For information on the Canadian Homestead legislation see Linda Rasmussen et al., *A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women* (Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1979), 148–49. For discussion of the dower campaign or the rights of a wife to have a share in her husband’s estate, see Catherine A. Cavanaugh, “The Limitations of the Pioneering Partnership: The Alberta Campaign for Homestead Dower, 1909–1925,” *Canadian Historical Review* 74, no. 2 (1993): 198–225; and Margaret McCallum, “Prairie Women and the Struggle for a Dower Law, 1905–1920,” *Prairie Forum* 18, no. 1 (1993): 19–34.
21. Marjorie W. Campbell, *The North West Company* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1957); John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson’s Bay Company as an Imperial Factor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957); Kenneth W. Porter, *John Jacob Astor Business Man*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931); Richard E. Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963).
22. There are many written accounts and pictorial images of “mountain men.” For a romantic appreciation of these workers see Ray A. Billington, *The Far Western Frontier, 1830–1860* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1956), 41–68 and John A. Hawgood, *The American West* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1967), 103–30. Paintings and sketches of “mountain men” were reproduced and popularized by such firms as Currier and Ives. See Bryan F. Le Beau, *Currier & Ives: America Imagined* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 131–40.
23. Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670–1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Jennifer

- S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Family Marriages in Indian Country* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980); Michael Payne, "Fur Trade Historiography: Past Conditions, Present Circumstances and a Hint of Future Prospects," 3–22; Jennifer S. H. Brown, "Partial Truths: A Closer Look at Fur Trade Marriage," 59–80; and Heather R. Driscoll, "'A Most Important Connection': Marriage in the Hudson's Bay Company," 81–107, all in *From Rupert's Land*, ed. Binnema, Ens, and Macleod; Arthur J. Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited and Key Porter Books, 1996), 160–77; Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 47–61; Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Role of Native Women in the Creation of Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670–1830," in *The Women's West*, ed. Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 53–75; Sylvia Van Kirk, "'What If Mama Is an Indian?': The Cultural Ambivalence of the Alexander Ross Family," in *The Developing West: Essays in Canadian History in Honour of Lewis H. Thomas*, ed. John E. Foster (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983), 123–36; Jacqueline Peterson, "Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Métis," *Ethnohistory* 25, no. 1 (1978): 41–67; and Elizabeth Vibert, "Real Men Hunt Buffalo: Masculinity, Race and Class in British Fur Traders' Narratives," *Gender & History* 8, no. 1 (1996), 4–21.
24. There are some examples of women's participation in a few articles on the Mountain West. See, for example, William R. Swaggerty, "Marriage and Settlement Patterns of the Rocky Mountain Traders and Trappers," *Western Historical Quarterly* 11 (April 1980): 159–80; John M. Faragher, "Custom of the Country: Cross Cultural Marriage in the Far Western Fur Trade," in *Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives*, ed. Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 199–215, and Michael Lansing, "Plains Indian Women and Interracial Marriage in the Upper Missouri Trade, 1804–1868," *Western Historical Quarterly* 31 (Winter 2000), 413–33. See also Barton H. Barbour, *Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 127–31.
25. For the new gendered American fur trade history see Susan Sleeper-Smith, "Women, Kin and Catholicism: New Perspectives on the Fur Trade," *Ethnohistory* 47, no. 2 (2000): 432–52; Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001). See also Tanis C. Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996). For other gendered developments of cultural and economic exchange in this region see Lucy E. Murphy, *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737–1832* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000). For discussions of Métis see Jennifer Brown and Theresa Schenck, "Métis, Mestizo and Mixed Blood," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002), 321–38. The most useful source on this subject in the New Indian History in this region and in this period is Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1659–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
26. Keith Walden, "The Great March of the Mounted Police in Popular Literature, 1873–1973," *Historical Papers of the Canadian Historical Association*, (1980), 33–56; R. C.

- Macleod, "Canadianizing the West: The North-West Mounted Police as Agents of the National Policy, 1873–1905," in *Essays on Western History: Essays in Honour of Lewis Gwynne Thomas*, ed. Lewis H. Thomas (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976), 101–10; Robert C. Macleod, "Law and Order on the Western-Canadian Frontier," in *Law for the Elephant, Law for the Beaver*, ed. John McLaren, Hamar Foster, and Chet Orloff (Pasadena, CA: The Ninth Judicial Circuit Historical Society, 1992), 90–105; Daniel Francis, "The Mild West: The Myth of the RCMP," in *National Dreams*, 29–51.
27. Violent encounters with the native population or problems of law enforcement connected to native peoples are usually discussed as part of either military history or the history of native peoples. For example, see Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: the United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), and Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian, 1848–1865* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981).
  28. Roundtable, "How the West Got Wild: American Media and Frontier Violence," *Western Historical Quarterly* 34 (Autumn 2000): 277–95; Philip D. Jordon, *Frontier Law and Order* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970); Wayne Gard, *Frontier Justice* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949); W. E. Hollon, *Frontier Violence: Another Look* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Richard M. Brown, *No Duty to Retreat: Violence and Values in American History and Society* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).
  29. For interpretations of Canadian policy to Native peoples see J. R. Miller, ed., *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). William A. Baker, ed., *The Mountain Police and Prairie Society, 1873–1919* (Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998) offers a collection of essays that demonstrate revisionist interpretations of the Mounted Police. His introductory essay, "Twenty-five Years After: Mounted Police Historiography Since the 1973–74 Centennial of the Force," (vii–xvi), provides a useful survey of changing views. See also William R. Morrison, *Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894–1925* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1985).
  30. Brown, *No Duty to Retreat*; Richard M. Brown, "Violence," in *Oxford History*, ed. Milner, O'Connor, and Sandweiss, 393–425; Richard M. Brown, "Western Violence: Structure, Values, Myth," *Western Historical Quarterly* 24 (February 1993): 5–20; Richard White, "It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": *A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 328–52; Patricia N. Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 222–92; Clare V. McKanna Jr., *Homicide, Race and Justice in the American West, 1880–1920* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997).
  31. Gordon M. Bakken, ed., *Law in the Western United States* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000); Sarah Barringer Gordon, "Law and the Contact of Cultures," 130–42, and Michael A. Bellesiles, "Western Violence," 162–78, both in *A Companion to the American West*, ed. William Devereil (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2004).
  32. There is an abundance of women's history on American prostitutes in western mining communities that offers insights into lives of prostitutes as workers. Their legal entanglements have infrequently found their way into general interpretations of law and order. See, for example, Anne Butler, *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the*

*American West, 1865–90* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Paula Petrik, *No Step Backwards: Women and Family on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier, Helena, Montana, 1856–1900* (Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1987), 25–58; Elizabeth Jameson, “Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers: True Womanhood in the American West,” 145–64, and Mary Murphy, “The Private Lives of Public Women: Prostitution in Butte, Montana, 1878–1917,” 192–206, both in *The Women’s West*, ed. Armitage and Jameson. There is less information on prostitution in western Canada. See S.W. Horall, “The (Royal) North-West Mounted Police and Prostitution on the Canadian Prairies,” *Prairie Forum* 10, no. 1 (1985): 1–16; Char Smith, this volume; Charlene Porsild, *Gamblers and Dreamers: Women, Men and Community in the Klondike* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 99–136. One of the few volumes on domestic violence in the American West remains David Del Mar, *What Trouble I Have Seen: A History of Violence against Wives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). For insights into the Canadian West see Terry L. Chapman, “‘Til Death do us Part’: Wife Beating in Alberta, 1905–1920,” *Alberta History* 26, no. 4 (1988): 13–22.

33. My module, *The North American West: Comparative American and Canadian Histories*, is not specifically gendered. The difficulties of obtaining sources is problematic, but so too is the perception of students who often do not wish to take a gendered module. Gender issues are raised in lectures and seminars and students are allowed to select their own essay titles. I have read several excellent essays that demonstrated understanding of gender issues in terms of female and male relationships, and some intriguing essays on myths that took up issues of masculinity.

