Introduction

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Buck: Which way are you ridin', Preacher?
The Preacher: Well, that's not exactly settled in my mind yet.
Buck: Well, you got three possibilities.
The Preacher: Oh?
Buck: North, south or east.
The Preacher: What happened to west?
Buck: We're going west.[1]

The 1972 film *Buck and the Preacher* tells the story of black migrants leaving the south in search of economic opportunity, self-determination, safety, and black power in the American West. Buck's (Sidney Poitier) declaration to the Preacher (Harry Belafonte) that he and his travel companions were "going west" (and implying that the Preacher should not accompany them) reads as a declaration and a provocation. As the film reveals, formerly enslaved Blacks imagined the West as a place where they could cut ties with the Old South and their former owners, and with the aid of Native Americans, establish all-black towns where they could thrive and escape Jim Crow. Blacks would go west and challenge anyone who attempted to thwart them. As a "black power" western in the revisionist tradition, *Buck and the Preacher* tapped into an over 100-year tradition of black performances and representations of the Black West as a site of resistance and becoming. Black communities and individuals occupied, defined, imagined, and deployed the Black West to their own ends, ever mindful that their presence in the West provided counter-narratives to the mythic Wild West

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replete with *white* cowboys, pioneers, gunslingers, homesteaders, sex workers, and marauding "savage" Indians. In doing so, they not only demanded that their presence be acknowledged in Western narratives, but also critiqued the dominant white framing of the West as a utopian space for rugged individuals and frontier democracy. The cultural work performed by *Buck and the Preacher* and other black westerns echoed that of novels, museums, plays, paintings, photographs, nonfiction texts, and other mediums dedicated to preserving histories and articulating visions of the Black West.

In the academy, the study of the Black West has primarily included historians, many of whom are concerned with correcting narratives of Western settlement featuring cowboys, Indians, and intrepid "pioneers." Interest in black cowboys, "black Indians," black homesteaders, and the famed Buffalo Soldiers fueled historical scholarship beginning in the 1970s. Kenneth Wiggins Porter's *The Negro on the American Frontier* and William Loren Katz's *The Black West: A Documentary and Pictorial History* both appeared in 1971. A year earlier, the University of Nebraska's PBS station NET had released a four-part documentary series "The Black Frontier" that sought to place Blacks firmly in the histories of the West. Nell Irvin Painter's *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (1976) and Robert Athearn's *In Search of Canaan: Black Migration to Kansas, 1879-80* (1978) offered more critical analyses of black migration westward. Historians were not alone in paying attention to the black presence in the West in the 1970s, as the aforementioned *Buck and the Preacher* (a clear narrative break from John Ford's 1960 revisionist western *Sergeant Rutledge*) and several blaxploitation westerns—*Soul Soldier* (1970), *The Legend of Nigger Charley* (1972), and *Boss Nigger* (1974), to name a few—sought to place Blacks (primarily men) at the center of cinematic Westerns. Documentaries like *Black Rodeo* (1972), narrated by Woody Strode the star of *Sergeant Rutledge*, drew on black cowboy histories to explain the significance of the New York rodeo invitational.

The 1990s became the most significant decade for literary production, particularly by Black women, in the genre of western historical fiction. Writers produced reinterpretations of historical spaces, geographic migrations, and the realities of social relationships in the "new" frontier. Examples include Pearl Cleage, Toni Morrison, Jewell Parker Rhodes and others who turned their attentions westward in an attempt to reconstruct prosperous and thriving communities destroyed by white capitalism, racism, and terror. Other authors like Octavia Butler frequently positioned the west as a platform for Afrofuturism and reimagined black power.[2]

During this same period scholars produced multiple critical histories of blacks in the West—that is, histories that did not focus solely on including Blacks in Western historiography, but rather interrogating the significance of the West for understanding black subjectivities and mobility, as well as African Americans' pursuit of freedom since the founding of the United States. Key to this interven-

tion was pulling back the veil on the myth of a democratic frontier where rugged individualism guaranteed liberty and financial independence.

Quintard Taylor's *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (1994) was arguably the first monograph to inaugurate a new Black Western history. Rather than cast the West, particularly the Pacific Northwest, as a haven for black settlers, his research revealed the conflicts between public policies supporting equality and integration and private practices buttressing American racist ideologies and practices. Works by Douglas Henry Daniels, Lynda Dickson, Albert Broussard, Kenneth Porter, Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, Robert O. Self, Tiya Miles, Fay Yarbrough, Stacey L. Smith, Charlotte Hinger, Tyina Steptoe, Andrew Torget, and other scholars[3] have added to our knowledge of what Taylor claimed as "five centuries of African American history in the West" in his 1996 *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* article. Much of this scholarship utilizes social, political, gender, critical race, and movement history approaches—with some exceptions. Increasingly, intellectual, cultural, and borderlands historiographies have influenced current scholarship on black western experiences.

Thinking about the African American West in a literary context, Eric Gardner, in his introduction to *Jennie Carter: A Black Journalist of the Early West* (2007), comments that "We should have long ago discovered the black literary West, because we should have known that where there were active black communities, there was most probably black literature," even if the black voices in those communities "may often have circulated in what, for many generations, was dismissed as ephemera," such as newspapers published for an African American readership (xxxi). "If we are to have a fuller sense of black women, black literature, and the black West," Gardner continues, "we need to use the archive more and to build that archive into something much more widely accessible" (xxxi). For those of us in the field of literary or cultural studies, doing so requires us to recognize the intellectual and aesthetic value of objects we may have dismissed, as ephemera, as unimportant, as uninteresting.

Gardner's observations point toward an enduring sense of both the possibilities and the problems associated with the field of black western studies. As Gardner comments, "research means searching again and again," and without the continuing work of recovery, without the continuing development of new ways of understanding and conceptualizing African American western experience, we will not hear the "countless other voices in the black West that we have misheard, heard only quietly, or not heard at all" (xxxi). To hear those voices in their full range of qualities, we need the aid of multiple disciplines, each one of which brings methods capable of recovering and understanding different types of objects and artifacts.

Since the publication of *In Search of the Racial Frontier* (surely the most-frequently quoted scholarly text in the field of the Black West), there has been continuing and expanding interest in black western studies—even as there have been continuing absences and gaps, as "large areas of the African American

past in this region" continue to be largely unknown. However, the expanding scholarly interest has been paralleled by developments in a variety of cultural forms. Over the past decade there has been a return more generally to an interest in the American West in intellectual and artistic production. Scholars, such as Neil Campbell, address the advent of "neo-Western," "anti-Western," or post-Western cinematic and television productions, which claim to reinvent the Western even as they reify the tropes foundational to classic Westerns.[4] Several critically acclaimed television series, films, music albums, and literary texts are rooted firmly in western historical legacies. As there has been a renewed interest in the American West in popular culture (from the HBO series *Deadwood*[5] to the Coen Brothers' *True Grit* to the Christopher Bale and Wes Studi western *Hostiles*), conventional and science fiction westerns such as HBO's *Westworld*, AMC's *Hell on Wheels*, Netflix's *Godless*, USA Network's *Damnation*, and films such as *Django Unchained*, *The Book of Eli*, and *The Magnificent Seven* have featured black characters (even as they have continued to render the mythic West primarily a "white" space). For example, one of *Damnation*'s main characters is Bessie Louvin, a black female sexworker who works in a brothel in rural Iowa during the Depression. Louvin appears to have little connection to black Iowa communities that date back to the nineteenth century. In contrast, *Godless* features a nameless all-black New Mexican settlement that becomes the target of the Mormon zealot and his gang after the white women running the town refuse to acquiesce to their demands. The attack on the settlement and massacre of the black family is another example of a repeated genre convention for black characters—a second act death that removes them from the story, and which is ultimately more about the white characters than the African American ones. Their deaths serve the primary purpose of underscoring the villainy of the gang, which is what the story is about, rather than being about the interesting lives of the black settlers.

The relationship between Blackness and western geographical and cultural identity has been explored in various disciplinary genres. From film, music, literature, and art to theatre, architecture, and museum studies, what it means to read the American West as a Black space presents varied and deep possibilities. But still, as the above examples suggest, with few exceptions, black cowboys have been and continue to be one of the more visible elements of the African American West, in historical scholarship, literature, and popular culture. Within these realms recovery projects persist. For example, African American Deputy U. S. Marshal Bass Reeves (1838-1910) was an important figure in the history of the West, his actual exploits as a western lawman just as compelling and potentially legend-making as Wyatt Earp, Pat Garrett, or Bat Masterson. Only recently has his story started to emerge from obscurity, not only through Art Burton's biography *Black Gun, Silver Star: The Life and Legend of Frontier Marshall Bass Reeves* (2008) but also through a variety of popular culture forms: the *Bass Reeves: Frontier Marshall* western short stories series (volume one published in 2015), a 2010 film (*Bass Reeves*, with James House in the title role), and several

other film projects about Reeves currently in production. Reeves has also made appearances as a character in episodes of the ABC series *Timeless* (2017) and the SyFy series *Wynonna Earp* (2017). The enduring appeal of the black cowboy as a scholarly topic can be seen most recently in the collection *Black Cowboys in the American West: On the Range, On the Stage, Behind the Badge* (2016; edited by Bruce A. Glasrud and Michael N. Searles). Returning to literary and cultural studies, Blake Allmendinger's *Imagining the African American West* (2008) and Michael K. Johnson's *Hoo-Doo Cowboys and Bronze Buckaroos: Conceptions of the African American West* (2014) have examined the representation of African American experience in a variety of literary, cinematic, and televisual texts.

While Allmendinger and Johnson consider the West in general terms, Emily Lutenski's *West of Harlem: African American Writers and the Borderlands* (2015) conceptualizes the West as a borderlands of multiethnic communities, as a place of complex networks of relationships between different groups.[6] It is an approach suggestive of what Neil Campbell refers to as the study of "the *regionalities* of the American West," an investigation of western places as involving the "intersection of many entangled lines" rather than the more traditional approach of "understanding region as straight lines, neat borders, simple rootedness, or fixed points."[7] "The West," Campbell writes, is "mired in a universal claim to centrality and dominance," to Manifest Destiny, to the centrality of whiteness in the telling of western history. Regionality, Campbell argues, "places the emphasis upon process and becoming rather than established ground and invariance so that the circled unanimity is challenged by multiple processes, little refrains, local histories."[8]

Being attentive to "local histories" has been particularly productive as a strategy for amplifying the misheard, unheard, and softened voices of the Black West. This is evident when one considers the expanded geographies of the North American west and the inclusion of western Canada. Important scholarship, which uncovers the "quieted" and often forgotten histories of those living on the Canadian prairies and founding cities on the western coast, speaks to the precarity of belonging and national identity. Colin Thomson's *Blacks in Deep Snow* (1979), R. Bruce Shepard's *Deemed Unsuitable: Blacks from Oklahoma Move to the Canadian Prairies in Search of Equality in the Early 20th Century, Only to Find Racism in Their New Home* (1997) and literary and artistic production by Cheryl Foggo, Esi Edugyan and Wade Compton, among many, require an interpretation of what it means to be both African Canadian (to borrow terminology from George Eliot Clarke) and black Canadian on the western prairie.

Likewise, from Rudolph Lapp's *Blacks in Gold Rush to California* (1977) to Gardner's study of San Francisco *Elevator* writer *Jennie Carter* to Daniel Widener's *Black Arts West: Culture and Struggle in Postwar Los Angeles* (2010), Herbert G. Ruffin II's *Uninvited Neighbors: Blacks in Silicon Valley, 1769-1990* (2014), and Kellie Jones' *South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s* (2017), the study of African American labor and cultural production in California and in specific California locations and cities,

for example, has provided an important means of illuminating black western experience more generally through the lens of a particular locale.

As Jones points out, the specific journeys of individual African Americans to California is also tied to the larger history of black migration:

> African American migration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was nothing less than black people willing into existence their presence in modern American life. It represents their resolve to make a new world in aftermath of human bondage and stake their claim in the United States. It is a narrative that stretches out one hundred years from the moment of freedom, a tale with a genesis in southern climes that then moved north and west. And it is a tale of the role of place in that claim, particularly the role of the West as site of possibility, peace, and utopia.[9]

Rather than re-inscribing a sense of western exceptionalism, Jones places movement to California in the larger context of black migration, showing us that "the West became interchangeable with other locales that African Americans imagined offered prosperity and freedom from brutality and second-class citizenship. Was it a space in this country or a space in the world? Was it California, Africa, or Kansas?"[10]

"Black migrations," Jones writes, "were spatial movements, bodies creating new paths to selfhood and enfranchisement," their activities in the places where they arrived "assertions of space—cultural or political, as land or property—that create place, whether actual sites in the world or positions in the global imagination."[11] The work of the artists Jones examines (Charles White, Noah Purifoy, Betye Saar, and others) both reflects the creation of place and contributes to that creation, their work indicative of the particular articulations of selfhood and belonging found in Los Angeles as well as being attentive to the friction between the imagined possibilities of place (and the effort to realize those possibilities) and "their inversions: the negative valences of apartness, constriction, refusal," segregation, "the denial of space . . . its compression and restriction."[12] The story of the African American West may be part of a longer telling, but studies of individual places are attentive to the particularities of those places, the particular valences of the voices that emerge to articulate the "multiple processes," the "many entangled lines," the "little refrains," the developing networks of relationships that may disrupt established cartographies and contribute to a remapping of social, cultural, and physical space.

The scholars featured in this volume take their lead from the rich black western historiography discussed above, but using disciplinary and interdisciplinary methodologies and approaches, they seek to move the field of black western studies forward in new directions that recognize literary studies, cultural studies, and film studies as integral to the study of the history, culture and politics of

blacks in the West. Moreover, these scholars are concerned with manifestations of black agency in the American West. Three major themes run through this collection—displaced communities, gentrification, and cultural production. Not surprisingly, the articles focus on the most populous states (California and Texas), as sites where we see these themes play out historically and contemporarily. As recent television series like *Black-ish* and *Insecure* demonstrate, California remains central to images of Blacks in the American West. The new directions embodied in these articles, are accordingly interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary in approach, as well as new ways of writing about California as a "black space." Historical studies about Texas and race often focus on it as a Latinx borderlands space. However, recent works, such as Julian Lim's *Porous Borders: Multiracial Migrations and the Law in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (2017) and Tyina L. Steptoe's *Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City* (2015) remind us of the importance that waves of black migration to Texas played in shaping the Lone Star State's twentieth century landscape. The field needs more studies like these and those found in this special issue, and it also needs studies that focus on other places in the North American West as well. Notably, Herbert G. Ruffin II, Dwayne A. Mack, and Quintard Taylor's *Freedom's Racial Frontier: African Americans in the Twentieth-Century West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018) includes essays that take up this charge.

In this special issue, the politics of location, economics, and erased black memories feature prominently. The lead article is **Emily Lutenski's** "Dickens Disappeared: Black Los Angeles and the Borderlands of Racial Memory." Here she builds on earlier published work in critical regionalism and borderlands studies during the Harlem Renaissance. In her contribution to this collection, she foregrounds her analysis on the precarity of a desired "post-racial" America during one of the most socially tumultuous periods in recent national history. Lutenski moves her observations across borders as well. She guides the reader back and forth across the margins of the novel while demonstrating how the author, characters, and realities of 21st century Los Angeles interact.

Lutenski notes the irony of living in a time where "xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and sexism" reign supreme in an era in which at the time *The Sellout* was published (2015) the titular character reminds the reader that the "black dude" had just become president. For Lutenski, the power in Beatty's novel is a contestation of the established, yet porous borders of the west that divide the local Los Angeles community, and the walls that are being torn down to make room for redesigned and reimagined (formerly Black and Chicanx) communities. She notes how gentrification through the "rebranding" of iconic and historical places like South Central L.A. creates a battleground upon which the main characters must fight to preserve their cultural pasts as well as understand their own identities.

Meina Yates-Richard's "'In the Wake' of the 'Quake: Mary Ellen Pleasant's Diasporic Hauntings," presents as a recovery project. Through a close examination of literary and cultural artifacts, Yates-Richard seeks to reconstruct the life

of famed, San Francisco businesswoman, Mary Ellen Pleasant. Yates-Richard argues that Pleasant's presence in the west and eventual "mammification" by the white population evokes memories of a plantation black women are never allowed to escape, even when they were not there at all. Through a close examination of *Free Enterprise* by Michelle Cliff, *Buses* by Denise Nicholas, and Tim Powers' *Earthquake Weather*, Yates-Richard re-members Pleasant piece by piece.

In an ethereal manner, Cliff gives space for Pleasant, who moves within and outside of the African Diaspora as subject and object, to challenge the way her legacy has been constructed and offer alternatives to the "official record" which is always a "lie." Subsequently, Nicholas carves out a slave auction and plantation within the western geography of the San Francisco pier. Yates-Richard's presentation of Powers' novel returns Pleasant's mystery and cultural fluidity—this time exploring her supposed Haitian roots and Vodou routes. Each textual treatment of Pleasant asks us to consider the role of black women in the making of the west, and California, generally. While Yates-Richard suggests that "one cannot understand California's spiritual cartographies without [Pleasant]," she also acknowledges that she is "obscured from broad historical view." Thus, Yates-Richard argues, Mary Ellen Pleasant exists as "a haunting."

In 'I'm a Artist and I'm Sensitive About My City': Black Women Artivists Confronting Resegregation in Sacramento," **Jeanelle Hope** introduces readers to "artivism" or art activism in Northern California. Her study focuses on Black women entrepreneurs, creatives, and activists who are working together to preserve the cultural history and communal legacies in the Oak Park neighborhood of Sacramento. Hope lays out the current landscape: rising rents, displaced long time homeowners, and a visible shift in the composition of a (former) black community. Hope interviews community members and artists invested in rewriting the narrative of gentrification. She considers the theoretical import of western cartographies and considers how artivism can be drawn onto the schema. In other words, if we are to consider a future in light of the demographic and economic shifts in urban communities and cultures, how can we think of that differently in the west? Hope attempts to answer this through an inclusion of "Afrofuturism" which she says:

> provide[s] a new lens to examine new directions of Blacks in the west, both scholarly and at the grassroots. Given the precarious futures of many Blacks living across California's urban cities, afrofuturism in this context can provide a vision and new reality for communities to rally behind, and a sense of hope in the face of displacement and other adversities.

Felicia Viator's "West Coast Originals: A Case for Reassessing the 'Bronx West' Story of Black Youth Culture in 1980s Los Angeles" reconsiders the rise of Hip Hop in Los Angeles and the west, generally against the standard narrative of mimicry embedded in a "Bronx West" description of West Coast urban culture.

Viator challenges the accepted perception that the musical styles, phrasing, and dance at the foundation of West Coast rap/hip hop is really a gift from the eastern U.S. She writes, of the problematic the "scholarly tradition of viewing black culture in the West through the prism of the urban East" poses.

Instead, her article revisits the role of the mobile DJ in establishing an underground music scene in Los Angeles. Viator traces the establishment of the mobile DJ as a turning point where musicians and artists (re)claim the west as musical frontier, innovating with a style and substance that foregrounds the rise of West Coast rap collectives and legends still influencing the game. For Viator, the historians of popular culture are negligent in their dismissal of the impact western cultural movements have had on the nation and the world. She is concerned that, "few writers have explored why Los Angeles became such a fountainhead. Instead, they have concentrated on the westward drift of New York art and attitude. Many of the most inspired scholars of hip-hop have proven quite old school in their thinking about the history of the West and, more specifically, the Black West." Therefore, Viator sees what can be called a recent turn in scholarship and interest in the left coast as a return to the source.

We turn to Texas with the final article, "From Buffalo Soldiers to Redlined Communities: African American Community Building in El Paso's Lincoln Park Neighborhood," by **Miguel Juarez**. In this article, Juarez "situates Black Western Studies within the borderlands in the urban and rural spaces in West Texas," with a specific focus on El Paso, which Juarez investigates as a site of African American resistance. Juarez notes that not many people consider El Paso the complete west and even fewer associate "blackness" with the city. However, as we consider the vast possibilities for blacks in the west, we must revisit those places where a black presence seems least likely, and El Paso reveals a long history of African American community making (often in the face of efforts to disrupt those communities). Through interviews, mapping, and historical analysis, Juarez is able to reconstruct the Lincoln Park community before and after redlining and freeway construction forced a "divestment" in the neighborhood.

When the contributors to this volume convened for a two-day workshop and a roundtable at the Western History Association 2017 Conference "Against the Grain,"[13] we understood that the papers went "against the grain" of traditional western historiographies. What we discovered over two days of dialogue (including lively and engaging feedback from the audience at the roundtable discussion) is how we all thought about the Black West—real and imagined—as a site for ongoing struggles for and articulations of black agency. The Black West has and continues to speak to the resiliency of black people and the dynamism of black culture and thought. To that end, we believe that the essays gathered here together offer new insights into black western subjectivities and we hope, encourage new dialogues.

Notes

1. *Buck and the Preacher*, directed by Sidney Poitier (1972).

2. Pearl Cleage, *Flyin' West and Other Plays* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1999); Toni Morrison, *Paradise* (New York: Knopf, 1997); Jewell Parker Rhodes, *Magic City: A Novel* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997); Octavia Butler, *Kindred* (New York: Doubleday, 1979), *Parable of the Sower* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993), *Parable of the Talents* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998).

3. See Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites: A Social and Cultural History of Black San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Lynda Dickson, "Lifting as We Climb: African American Women's Clubs of Denver, 1890-1925," *Essays in Colorado History* 13 (1992); Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993); Kenneth W. Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People* (University Press of Florida, 1996); Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, *To Place Our Deeds: The African American Community in Richmond, California, 1910-1963* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) and *Sweet Freedom's Plains: African Americans on the Overland Trails, 1841–1869* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of Carolina Press, 2005) and *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Fay A. Yarbrough, *Race and the Cherokee Nation: Sovereignty in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Stacey L. Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2015); Andrew J. Torget, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Charlotte Hinger, *Nicodemus: Post-Reconstruction Politics and Racial Justice in Western Kansas* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016); and Tyina L. Steptoe, *Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).

4. Neil Campbell, *Post-Westerns: Cinema, Region, West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).

5. The recent *Deadwood* movie features two black characters—Aunt Lou and Samuel Fields (aka the "Nigger General"), and includes scenes with unnamed black female sex workers in the saloon.

6. Emily Lutenski, *West of Harlem: African American Writers and the Borderlands* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2015).

7. Neil Campbell, *Affective Critical Regionality* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 2.

8. Ibid., 173.

9. Kellie Jones, *South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 3.

10. Ibid., 5.

11. Ibid., 7.

12. Ibid., 8.

13. Special thanks to the Western History Association Programming Committee and Program Co-Chairs Andrew R. Graybill, Katherine Benton-Cohen, and Kelly Lytle Hernandez for allowing us to workshop and present the featured essays-in-progress at the 2017 conference. Thanks to the attendants at the roundtable for your feedback. Lastly, special thanks to Kelly Lytle Hernandez for hosting and sponsoring our workshop.