The Industrial Far West: Region and Nation in the Late Nineteenth Century

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Joseph Warren Matthews experienced the industrial Far West late in life. Seeking wages, the fifty-one-year-old Californian took a temporary job at Claus Spreckels's Watsonville sugar refinery in 1893 but soon left for the better pay offered on a nearby ranch. Matthews worked the next two years laying pipe for the Hollister Water Company. "This is my birthday," Matthews scribbled in his diary on June 6, 1896. "I am 54 years old. I worked all day filling in [the] ditch." He earned $18.70 from "the Water Co." that month. Eventually laid off, Matthews sought employment during the following three years wherever it could be found: mining quicksilver in California; wage labor in the Alaskan goldfields; road work for a Pacific Northwest lumber company; smelting ore for the San Jose Copper Company; and finally, an irrigation job in the San Joaquin Valley for Miller & Lux, the massive land, cattle, and water company. Now fifty-seven years old, Matthews drew less than a dollar per day "plus found" working on one of the firm's night irrigation crews. He left Miller & Lux's employ after thirty-eight days and died six months later from a work-related accident.[1]

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1. Joseph Warren Matthews Papers, Bancroft Library, University of Califor-

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Matthews was no migrant bindle stiff. He had lived in California for forty years before embarking on his itinerant work life, and he owned a small farm south of San Francisco Bay for much of that time. He was a church elder and strong temperance advocate, preaching the virtue of sobriety to friend and foe alike. Bad harvests, declining agricultural markets, and mounting debts during the 1890s financial panic forced Matthews to seek wages away from home while his wife Rebecca tended their heavily mortgaged farm. On the road, Matthews joined an itinerant labor force gathered from around the world, mostly desperate "hard travelers" who sought opportunity in the chaos of western industrial life.[2] Blasting rock in the New Idria quicksilver mines or irrigating at night for Miller & Lux may seem at odds with Matthews's status as a western farmer and community leader. Nevertheless, his jobbing across California and the Pacific Coast mirrored a common strategy used by many struggling small farmers to navigate the insecurity and turbulence of this burgeoning capitalist society. Matthews had entered the heart of the industrial Far West.

The work life of western laborers, however, provides only one window into the region's industrial society. The Far West that emerged after the 1849 California Gold Rush featured an instant market economy, dynamic urban cores, and large corporate enterprises.[3] In short, the West had a "machine in the

nia, Berkeley. Matthews's eleven-volume diary covers the years 1869 through 1901. "Plus found" refers to the meals and temporary lodging that Miller & Lux supplied its migrant workers in addition to wages.

2. For an excellent recent treatment of western wage labor and migrant workers, see Carlos Arnaldo Schwantes, *Hard Traveling: A Portrait of Work Life in the New Northwest* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1994). On the labor forces of specific industries, see Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Boston, 1939); Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1869–1910* (Berkeley, 1986); David M. Emmons, *The Butte Irish: Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town, 1875–1925* (Urbana, Ill., 1989); William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon, 1850–1986* (Seattle, 1988); Daniel A. Cornford, *Workers and Dissent in the Redwood Empire* (Philadelphia, 1987); Gregory R. Woirol, *In the Floating Army: F. C. Mills on Itinerant Life in California, 1914* (Urbana, Ill., 1992); and Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis, 1996).

3. I use the term "Far West" to refer to essentially the same region that Earl Pomeroy designated the "Pacific Slope," a term I will use interchangeably with "Far West." For my purposes, the region's coherence has less to do with political boundaries and more to do with patterns of trade, investment, social intercourse, and natural resource flows. Thus, the Far West's dimensions constantly changed over time. As this essay will illustrate, California (and San Francisco in particular) remained the region's nerve center prior to 1900; or, as Pomeroy wrote, its "catalyst, banker,

garden" that moved across the region with shocking speed. This transformation raises important questions about both the region and the nation's industrial development. Was the Far West a "plundered province" in which primitive business operations merely answered eastern industry's demands for raw materials?[4] Did these firms develop from their own economic and natural environment, and could they compete with the East's vertically integrated corporate machines? Finally, should the study of western industrialism ultimately direct our attention to national patterns or to the particularities of place? Western regionalists are drawn in the latter direction, given their attempts to distinguish the region as a unique social and ecological landscape.[5] Borderlands and comparative historians, on the other hand, seek out the broader global relationships imbedded in capitalist transformation.[6] This essay attempts to merge these two perspectives and asks: How should we understand the region's rapid incorporation within the context of the larger industrializing nation?

Such a study and recognition of the Far West's complex

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and base of operations." Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York, 1966), vi.

4. Bernard DeVoto, "The West: A Plundered Province," *Harper's*, 169 (1934), 355–364.

5. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York, 1987); Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* (Norman, Okla., 1991); and Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York, 1985). Evaluations of this approach and recent western historiography include: Stephen Aron, "Lessons in Conquest: Towards a Greater Western History," *Pacific Historical Review*, 63 (1994), 125–148; William Deverell, "Fighting Words: The Significance of the American West in the History of the United States," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 25 (1994), 185–206; William Robbins, "Laying Siege to Western History: The Emergence of New Paradigms," *Reviews of American History*, 19 (1991), 313–332.

6. For a very brief sampling of borderlands and comparative literature, see David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821–1846* (Albuquerque, 1982); Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* (New York, 1974); Edward W. Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533–1960* (Tucson, 1962); Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco, 1987); James O. Gump, *The Dust Rose Like Smoke: The Subjugation of the Zulu and the Sioux* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1994); Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, "Comparative Frontier History," in Lamar and Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven, Conn., 1981); and David G. Gutiérrez, "Significance to Whom? Mexican Americans and the History of the American West," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 24 (1993), 519–539. For a summary of this literature that poses a "postwestern" perspective, see Kerwin Klein, "Reclaiming the 'F' Word, Or Being and Becoming Postwestern," *Pacific Historical Review*, 65 (1996), 179–215.

character moves us beyond the confines of western regionalism and initiates a broader discussion about the modernizing nation. The typical narrative of U.S. industrialism emphasizes eastern factories and European immigrant laborers, manufacturing and Wall Street financiers, vertical chains of production guided by the "visible hand" of salaried managers. This narrative is rooted in a particular model of industrial expansion that accounts well for the emergence of manufacturing and transportation but fails to register the diversity of modern enterprise and its multifold consequences.[7] As a result, the usual story of U.S. industrialization offers vital lessons about that well-trod beltway from Lowell, Massachusetts, to Detroit, but remarkably little about Butte copper mines, corporate land reclamation, or industry's environmental context.[8]

The need for this broader picture derives partially from the glaring absence of western industrialism in American history textbooks and general syntheses, as well as more specialized studies. Alfred Chandler's *The Visible Hand*, although published almost a quarter-century ago, still maintains a powerful hold

7. The most influential study of industrial enterprise remains Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977). Chandler's narrow focus on capital-intensive, manufacturing sectors as the basis of industrial enterprise distorts both modernizing industry's trajectory and impact. Recent critiques of Chandler include Martin J. Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890–1916* (Cambridge, Eng., 1988); Naomi R. Lamoreaux and Daniel M. G. Raff, eds., *Coordination and Information: Historical Perspectives on the Organization of Enterprise* (Chicago, 1994); and Michael Storper and Richard Walker, *The Capitalist Imperative: Territory, Technology, and Industrial Growth* (Oxford, Eng., 1989). For broader studies on the origins and impacts of industrialization, see Walter Licht, *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1995); Thomas Cochran, *Frontiers of Change: Early Industrialism in America* (New York, 1981); Olivier Zunz, *Making America Corporate, 1870–1920* (Chicago, 1990); Hal S. Barron, *Mixed Harvest: The Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870–1930* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1997); Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York, 1982); and Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York, 1967). On industrialization in the South, see Douglas Flamming, *Creating the Modern South: Millhands and Managers in Dalton, Georgia, 1884–1984* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992); and James C. Cobb, *Industrialization and Southern Society, 1877–1984* (Lexington, Ky., 1984). A good synthesis of Chandler and more recent studies is Richard R. John, "Elaborations, Revisions, Dissents: Alfred D. Chandler, Jr.'s, *The Visible Hand* after Twenty Years," *Business History Review*, 71 (1997), 151–200.

8. For an approach to industry's environmental context, see Theodore Steinberg, *Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England* (New York, 1991), 10–17.

over the field of business and industrial history.[9] In his model, the "modern business enterprise" emerged from the integration of mass-production manufacturing and marketing, gave rise to a new class of middle managers, and "grew and spread with surprising swiftness." Yet Chandler's representative firms "spread" only so far. Despite his attempt to chart the rise of this "most powerful institution . . . in the *entire* American economy," the westernmost portion of that economy and its industrial activity received no attention.[10] American industry was therefore defined by its northeastern manifestations. The concept of regional "paths" to industrialism appeared more prominently in Walter Licht's recent synthesis, *Industrializing America* (1995). The late nineteenth century witnessed the creation of "a wide belt of industry that covered New England, the Middle Atlantic states, and the Midwest," Licht writes, as well as "new marketing centers in the West, and mineral discoveries in the mountain states." If Licht now had the opportunity to address the contours of far western industrialism, he quickly dismissed that opportunity because western developments "occurred as extensions of the industrial core of the country that stretched from Lynn, Massachusetts, to Philadelphia and west to Chicago." The West is clearly peripheral to the *real* story of American industrialization, and, according to Licht, major developments in the Pacific Coast states "would not occur until the twentieth century and would pale in comparison to the industrial heartland fashioned a century earlier."[11]

In these and many other histories of American industrialization, close attention to regional variation is trumped by a preoccupation with big manufacturers ("by whatever route they took to size," Chandler writes) as the most important form of modern capitalist enterprise.[12] Studies that depart from this focus on the manufacturing "giants," such as Philip Scranton's provocative book *Endless Novelty* (1997), suggest that significant

9. On the continuing power of Chandler's work in the field, see John, "Elaborations, Revisions, Dissents," 173–175.

10. Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, 285–286. Emphasis added.

11. Licht, *Industrializing America*, 117.

12. Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, 347. For the limited geography in other works, see Zunz, *Making America Corporate*, 10; Thomas C. Cochran, *Two Hundred Years of American Business* (New York, 1977), 93–97; Albert Niemi, Jr., *State and Regional Patterns in American Manufacturing* (Westport, Conn., 1974), 3–28.

business innovations *did* transpire throughout the "infrequently visited sections of the American industrial terrain."[13] Scranton's "tour" of the nation's industrial terrain, however, still stops short of the American West. A similar inattention to western corporate geography is apparent in the leading journal of U.S. industrial enterprise, *Business History*—which has offered no article during the past decade on late nineteenth-century western business and industry.[14]

Western historians have an opportunity to expand this narrow perspective by explicating regional paths as part of national trends.[15] Fortunately, a number of western studies already point in this direction. Earl Pomeroy's provocative synthesis *The Pacific Slope* (1966) rejected the image of the Far West as a place dominated by small-scale frontier enterprises prior to its rapid transformation during World War II. Instead, Pomeroy described a late nineteenth-century Far West commanded by major industries, rising metropolises, and politically savvy entrepreneurs. Pomeroy's Pacific Slope, however, often leaned too heavily in an eastward direction: Bernard DeVoto's "plundered province" thesis echoed throughout his study and turned the Far West into a semi-dependent offspring of eastern capital.[16] By shortchanging

13. Philip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865–1925* (Princeton, N.J., 1997), 7, 9.

14. Between 1990 and 1999 *Business History* published three articles on twentieth-century firms or industries located in California, and one on a Montana-based department store. None of these studies attempted to treat regional characteristics in a broad, conceptual manner.

15. Studies emphasizing the decentralized and spontaneous growth of industrial capitalism support such an approach. See François Weil, "Capitalism and Industrialization in New England, 1815–1845," *Journal of American History*, 84 (1998), 1334–1354; Flamming, *Creating the Modern South*; Storper and Walker, *The Capitalist Imperative*; and Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1990).

16. Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 83, 85, 88–89, 119. According to Pomeroy, "[The Pacific Slope] was not so much behind the East in the manner of the new agricultural territories and states of the Mississippi Valley as it was committed to a different kind of development. Its economy was basically colonial and rested on the extraction of nature's bounty, which seemed likely to flow eastward along with those who extracted it"(p. 83). See also DeVoto, "The West," 355–364. For recent statements of the plundered province thesis, see Richard D. Lamm and Michael McCarthy, *The Angry West: A Vulnerable Land and Its Future* (Boston, 1982); Robert Bunting, *The Pacific Raincoast: Environment and Culture in an American Eden, 1778–1900* (Lawrence, Kans., 1997), 128–134. On the West's industrial growth during World War II, see Gerald Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington, Ind., 1985).

the autonomous ambitions of western capitalists, Pomeroy underestimated the dynamism and innovation that characterized the region's investment patterns and business structures. William Robbins's *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (1994) cast western industry in a stronger mold. Building on recent studies by historians and economic geographers, Robbins explored the West's dual identity as resource-provider and capitalist powerhouse. This dialectic, Robbins suggested, gave the region a central position in the modern world's "constantly changing network of capitalist relations."[17] Despite the different conclusions reached by Pomeroy and Robbins, they both detailed extensive industrial activity in the Far West prior to its widely acknowledged twentieth-century transformation.[18] They also grappled with a rich vein of literature on western industries left untouched by historians who limit their purview to the nation's industrial heartland.

A remarkably diverse literature is available to historians ready to produce this much-needed reassessment of the industrial Far West. Carey McWilliams, Rodman Paul, and Vernon Jensen pioneered the study of three leading business sectors: agriculture, mining, and timber. Paying close heed to the industries' shifting locations, technologies, and labor forces, they revealed the rapid consumption of the western terrain by extractive enterprise. The continuing scholarly output on these three industries joins a proliferation of studies on other western business activities: irrigation and land reclamation, oil, fisheries, manufacturing, and the railroads. Individual firms, of course, often directed industrial growth in different sectors. Eschewing the tired and triumphalist approach to business history, recent

17. William G. Robbins, *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (Lawrence, Kans., 1994), xi; and Robbins, "In Pursuit of Historical Explanation: Capitalism as a Conceptual Tool for Knowing the American West," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 30 (1999), 277–293. Richard Maxwell Brown's research on western violence and culture also gives serious attention to nineteenth-century western capitalist relations. See Richard Maxwell Brown, *No Duty to Retreat: Violence and Values in American History and Society* (Norman, Okla., 1994); Brown, "Western Violence: Structure, Values, Myth," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 24 (1994), 5–20.

18. More common are studies that chart industrialization and capitalist development in the twentieth century. See Mark S. Foster, *Henry J. Kaiser: Builder in the Modern American West* (Austin, Texas, 1989); Felice A. Bonadio, *A. P. Giannini: Banker of America* (Berkeley, 1995); Gerald D. Nash, *A. P. Giannini and the Bank of America* (Norman, Okla., 1992); Nash, *The American West Transformed*; Mansel G. Blackford, *The Politics of Business in California, 1890–1920* (Columbus, Ohio, 1977).

works on the Southern Pacific Railroad, Anaconda Copper, the Kern County Land Company, and Great Western Power offer a range of cross-disciplinary analyses.[19] Add to these approaches the latest developments in western labor history, community studies, and Borderlands and environmental history, and the opportunity to reconceive the Far West as an industrial nexus raises intriguing possibilities.

This essay will utilize the large-scale firms at the center of far western industrialization to explore regional characteristics within a national context. These corporations shared several fundamental traits. First, built with private capital, western firms utilized public officials and the larger political state to secure vast holdings of land and natural resources. Second, investment capital and industrial entrepreneurship were remarkably dynamic; many companies created vertical production chains and spun off subsidiaries in different business sectors. Third, these corporations operated out of metropolitan cores and incorporated peripheral hinterlands into urban markets and business networks.[20] San Francisco (and California as a whole) propelled

19. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*; Rodman Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848–1880* (New York, 1963); Paul, *The Far West and the Great Plains in Transition, 1859–1900* (New York, 1988); Vernon H. Jensen, *Lumber and Labor* (New York, 1945); Worster, *Rivers of Empire*; Nancy Lynn Quam-Wickham, "Petroleocrats and Proletarians: Work, Class, and Politics in the California Oil Industry, 1917–1925" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1994); Arthur F. McEvoy, *The Fisherman's Problem: Ecology and Law in the California Fisheries, 1850–1980* (New York, 1986); William Deverell, *Railroad Crossings: Californians and the Railroad, 1850–1910* (Berkeley, 1994); Michael P. Malone, *The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864–1906* (Seattle, 1981); Gray A. Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley, 1999); Jessica Teisch, "The Drowning of Big Meadows: Nature, White Coal, and Corporate Power in California, 1880–1920" (M.S. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1997); Terry L. Anderson and Peter J. Hill, eds., *The Political Economy of the American West* (Lanham, Md., 1994).

20. William Cronon's magisterial *Nature's Metropolis* suggested the importance of this dynamic to western historians. See Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York, 1991). For the highly critical response to Cronon's work by some geographers, see *Antipode*, 26 (1994). A sampling of the city-systems approach includes: Allan Pred, *Urban Growth and City-Systems in the United States, 1840–1860* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980); Michael P. Conzen, "The Maturing Urban System in the United States," in David T. Herbert and Ronald John Johnston, eds., *Geography and the Urban Environment* (New York, 1981); David Ralph Meyer, "A Dynamic Model of the Integration of Frontier Urban Places into the United States System of Cities," *Economic Geography*, 56 (1980), 120–140; Carl Abbott, "Regional City and Network City: Portland and Seattle in the Twentieth Century," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 23 (1992), 293–322; Eugene Moehring, "The Comstock Urban Network," *Pacific Historical Review*, 66 (1997), 337–362.

this regional system. Finally, industrial enterprise in the Far West thrived by engineering natural landscapes and mobilizing large labor forces. Rather than two separate phenomena, changing nature and exploiting labor reinforced one another throughout the region.[21] These characteristics were certainly not exceptional to western industry; indeed, they illustrate some of the common processes through which industry emerged across the nation. At the same time, they represent the particular emphases and shared foundations of far western firms, allowing us to conceptualize an industrializing America that incorporates regional patterns, a greater diversity of enterprises, and the natural environment.

The corporate land rush: Claiming Western resources

The 1849 rush to California's goldfields captured worldwide attention. During the five years following James Marshall's discovery at Sutter's Mill, miners extracted over $400 million in gold from the Sierra placers. By 1875, $1 billion in gold and $300 million in silver had been sifted and blasted by mining corporations from the Far West's landscape.[22] This wealth created enormous capital for regional and national investment, while the inflow of merchants and laborers turned the Far West into a microcosm of the world's business community. The simultaneous rush on Pacific Slope lands, however, received less attention than the rush on western minerals. Settlers of modest means grabbed small plots by hook and crook, while capitalized investors utilized land laws and public networks to carve out vast expanses of the region's terrain. Rather than regulating access to the public domain, federal land policy represented an institutional acquiescence quickly exploited by Gold Rush profiteers

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21. For a concise statement on the relationship between nature and human labor in the West, see Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York, 1995).

22. No precise figures for gold production exist. These figures are compiled from various sources in Richard Walker, "California's Debt to Nature: Nature Resources and the Golden Road to Capitalist Growth, 1848–1940," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* (forthcoming). See also the production figures for 1848 through 1874 compiled in Rodman Paul, *California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West* (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 345–348. The most recent collection of essays on the Gold Rush is the sesquicentennial issue of *California History*, James J. Rawls and Richard J. Orsi, eds., *A Golden State: Mining and Economic Development in Gold Rush California* (Berkeley, 1998/99).

to accumulate western acres *en masse*, including the prime estates of debt-ridden *rancheros*.[23] Industrial enterprise across the Far West secured its footing on this basis, quite literally from the ground up.[24]

The extractive character of most Pacific Slope industries made extensive landownership a crucial and powerful corporate asset. For instance, California and Pacific Northwest timber companies clear-cut large stretches of old-growth redwood, ponderosa pine, and Douglas-fir based on private rights to millions of acres. Highly capitalized mining corporations extracted the Far West's deposits of gold and silver through contiguous mineral claims and quickly reinvested their profits in other land-based operations. The Southern Pacific and Northern Pacific railroads, financed by government gifts of public lands, remained the region's largest landowning corporations throughout the nineteenth century. By striking private deals with western industrialists, these railroads passed their bounty into the hands of other rising business enterprises. Land, therefore, provided the means for capitalized industries to expand across the Far West.[25]

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23. Some scholars, most notably Paul Wallace Gates, contend that California's land monopolists derived their holdings in large measure from Mexican *rancheros.* Such analysis holds true for a small group of California landlords, but it fails to recognize that the majority of landed enterprises secured their property from the public domain. See Paul Wallace Gates, *Land and Law in California: Essays on Land Policies* (Ames, Iowa, 1991). For critiques of Gates, see Ellen Liebman, *California Farmland: A History of Large Agricultural Landholdings* (Totowa, N.J., 1983); and David Igler, "Industrial Cowboys: Nature, Private Property, and Region in the Far West, 1850–1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1996).

24. The continuity with earlier land speculation can be seen in the methods of acquisition and use of public offices. But the Far West also suggests historical discontinuities, particularly in terms of land use and the goals of land monopolists. For examples of earlier speculative activities, see Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York, 1995); Steven Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore, 1996); and Paul Wallace Gates, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier: Studies in American Land Policy* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1973).

25. John Osborn, *Railroads and Clearcuts* (Spokane, Wash., 1995); Thomas R. Cox, *Mills and Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry to 1900* (Seattle, 1974); Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*; Joseph E. King, *A Mine to Make a Mine: Financing the Colorado Mining Industry, 1859–1902* (College Station, Texas, 1977); Richard Peterson, *The Bonanza Kings: The Social Origins and Business Behavior of Western Mining Entrepreneurs, 1870–1900* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1977); John Opie, *The Law of the Land: Two Hundred Years of American Farmland Policy* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1987), 70–92.

Few firms better exemplify this process than the land, cattle, water, and meatpacking enterprise Miller & Lux. Henry Miller and Charles Lux arrived in Gold Rush San Francisco in 1850 and soon formed a meat wholesaling partnership.[26] Cultivating strong ties with San Francisco's leading bankers, the two partners began integrating the business backwards by purchasing herds of cattle, acquiring extensive rangeland, and developing irrigation systems to grow fodder. At the center of the business lay the lucrative meat markets that fed San Francisco's burgeoning population. From there, Miller & Lux's business fanned out into the Santa Clara and San Joaquin valleys, northern Nevada, and eastern Oregon. Through the artful use of public land laws and government agents, the firm soon owned over 1.25 million acres, though Miller suspected his company's strategically located riparian water rights allowed it to "control ten times the land we actually own."[27] With meat sales totaling over $2 million dollars annually and a 1,200-person labor force to rival most eastern factories, Miller & Lux ranked among the *nation's* top 200 "industrial enterprises" at the turn of the century.[28]

The staggering scale of Miller & Lux's landholdings represents only a magnification of the pattern for ranching and industrial agriculture in the Far West. By 1870 the thirteen largest landowners in the San Joaquin Valley (most of whom lived in San Francisco) owned on average 238,464 acres each.[29] Isaac

26. On Miller & Lux, see M. Catherine Miller, *Flooding the Courtrooms: Law and Water in the Far West* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1993); David Igler, "Industrial Cowboys: Corporate Ranching in Late Nineteenth-Century California," *Agricultural History*, 69 (1995), 201–215; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 28–39; Edward F. Treadwell, *The Cattle King: A Dramatized Biography* (New York, 1931); and William D. Lawrence, "Henry Miller and the San Joaquin Valley" (M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1933).

27. Henry Miller, "Autobiographical Statement," Hubert Howe Bancroft Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

28. See Thomas R. Navin, "The 500 Largest American Industrials in 1917," *Business History Review*, 44 (1970), 360–386.

29. *Biennial Report of the State Board of Agriculture for the Years 1870 and 1871, Journals of the California Senate and Assembly*, 19 sess. (Sacramento, Calif., 1872), 3:15–16. A "mixed" pattern of landholding emerged early on in California, with massive operations in some parts of the state and smaller, market-oriented farms in others. See David Vaught, "Factories in the Field Revisited," *Pacific Historical Review*, 66 (1997), 149–184; Steven Stoll, *The Fruits of Natural Advantage: Making the Industrial Countryside in California* (Berkeley, 1998), 162–173.

Friedlander's huge spread of San Joaquin land produced wheat that his chartered ships carried directly to Great Britain. William Chapman mixed extensive agriculture, cattle raising, and canal development in the valley with the nation's largest "land scrip" business in San Francisco. Hugh Glenn developed the largest wheat operation on the Sacramento River before blazing a trail to eastern Oregon's unclaimed expanse—a trail soon crowded with other California land monopolists.[30]

Agricultural, ranching, and railroad companies provide obvious case studies of extensive landownership serving the needs of corporate enterprise. Early lumber firms reveal similar consolidations: the California Redwood Company, the Pacific Lumber Company, the Oregon Lumber Company, and the Baker City Lumber Company amassed enormous holdings of timberland between 1850 and 1900. A whole new phase in this industry's land consolidation commenced when the Weyerhaeuser Company relocated from the Great Lakes region to the Pacific Northwest in 1900 and purchased 900,000 acres from the Northern Pacific Railroad.[31] Other Pacific Slope land-based industries operated at smaller scales of acquisitiveness. Oil, irrigation, and mining enterprises sought riches through strategic claims of land, minerals, and water. In these business sectors, a claim's utility and performance—rather than its size—drove industrial success.[32]

How should these firms with their massive land acquisitions influence our view of industrial America? The rush to the land by industrial enterprises reflected a strategic awareness of the region's untapped wealth and the means through which to tap

30. Donald J. Pisani, "Land Monopoly in Nineteenth-Century California," *Agricultural History*, 65 (1991), 15–35; Gates, "Corporate Farming in California," in Gates, *Land and Law in California*, 329–352. On the motives of speculators, see Gerald Nash, "Henry George Reexamined: William S. Chapman's Views on Land Speculation in Nineteenth-Century California," *Agricultural History*, 33 (1959), 133–137.

31. On the lumber industry, see Nancy Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares: The Paradox of Old Growth in the Inland West* (Seattle, 1995); William G. Robbins, *Lumberjacks and Legislators: Political Economy of the United States Lumber Industry, 1890–1941* (College Station, Texas, 1982); Cox, *Mills and Markets.*

32. Richard H. Peterson, *The Bonanza Kings: The Social Origins and Business Behavior of Western Mining Entrepreneurs, 1870–1900* (Norman, Okla., 1971), 50–51; Malone, *The Battle for Butte*, 34–45; Paul Sabin, "Petroleum Polity: Law and Politics in the California Oil Economy, 1910–1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2000).

it. In the region's highly competitive marketplace, the supposedly "open" space of the Far West produced a "sooner" mentality toward landownership that put Oklahoma's notorious line-jumpers to shame. A careful reading of Land Office records and government land laws, however, suggests that far western industrialists also developed highly rational land acquisition strategies. This business behavior, which utilized state institutions to further private enterprise, paralleled rather than borrowed from eastern industrial tactics. As Thomas McCraw has argued for *eastern* enterprise, the roots of western corporate development *also* "lay deep within the political state."[33]

The Far West's business leaders consistently relied upon private-public reciprocity and professional expertise to build their firms on the public domain. George Hearst, who left the Comstock Lode with enough silver to become truly rich in the Black Hills and Butte, repeatedly enlisted U.S. Geological Survey mineral experts to study his mines. Government geologists were only too happy to oblige, since Hearst had supported their survey during his tenure on the California State Committee of Mines and Mining Interests.[34] Generous land grants to western railroads (24 million acres to the Southern Pacific, 7.3 million acres to the Central Pacific, 40 million acres to the Northern Pacific, 19.1 million acres to the Union Pacific) represented extreme cases of political lobbying and corporate welfare.[35] Such grants directly aided private railroads and indirectly supported other western industrialists who received insider information on railroad land sales. Foreign capitalists also learned the ropes. When alien exclusion land laws in the 1870s threatened the interests of British mining investors, they sought help from California Senator Aaron A. Sargent. Sargent responded to the British lobby with an 1875 bill protecting their mineral claims.[36]

33. Thomas K. McCraw, "Business and Government: The Origins of the Adversary Relationship," *California Management Review*, 26 (1984), 50.

34. Peterson, *The Bonanza Kings*, 103.

35. Frederick Cleveland and Fred Wilbur Powell, *Railroad Promotion and Capitalization in the United States* (New York, 1909), 251.

36. The British lobby was headed by Foreign Minister Sir Edward Thornton. Clark C. Spence, *British Investment and the American Mining Frontier, 1860–1901* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1958), 191–205. Sargent was only one of many western senators assisting land barons and industrialists in this manner. Other prominent senatorial plunderers include California's Leland Stanford, Nevada's William Stewart and

Indeed, Sargent proved one of the most industrious allies of far western enterprise. In 1877 he pushed through the Desert Lands Act at the behest of James Haggin's Kern County Land Company, allowing Haggin to consolidate over 100,000 acres of Kern County real estate by employing hundreds of "dummy" entrymen, many of whom were public servants at the San Francisco mint.[37]

Such land grabs have provided some of the richest (and often misleading) anecdotes in U.S. history. To claim vast stretches of alleged swampland under the Swamp and Overflowed Lands Act, Henry Miller (of Miller & Lux) supposedly sat in a rowboat perched atop a horse-drawn wagon that was pulled across entire townships of California grassland, allowing cohorts to testify that Miller had crossed the terrain in a boat.[38] Miller's dubious captaincy offers a great story, but it unfortunately distorts the very modern and corporate methods by which the firm raided the public domain. Miller & Lux *did* claim over 200,000 acres of "swampland" between 1860 and 1890. Yet this cumulative land grab resulted from the firm's careful coordination of information by an entire cadre of agents: public surveyors, land scrip dealers, lobbyists in Sacramento and Washington, and eventually, county tax assessors.[39] For a modernizing enterprise like Miller & Lux, the boat proved unnecessary.

The colorful land acquisition story should not obscure the early formation and trajectory of industrial expansion in the Far West. Through extensive landownership or smaller strategic claims, these enterprises consolidated their control over the re-

John P. Jones, and Montana's William Clark. Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field of California also played an extremely powerful role in shaping the legal landscape on behalf of corporate interests. See Harry Scheiber, "State Law and 'Industrial Policy' in American Development, 1790–1987," *California Law Review*, 75 (1987), 425–444; Brown, *No Duty to Retreat*, 107–108. I thank an anonymous reader for suggestions on this point.

37. James B. Haggin, *et al.*, *Desert Lands of Kern County, California: Affidavits of Various Residents of Said County* (San Francisco, 1877); Margaret Aseman Cooper Zonlight, *Land, Water and Settlement in Kern County California, 1850–1890* (New York, 1979); Philip J. Fitzgerald, *The Kern County Land Company: A Story of Science and Finance* (San Francisco, 1939).

38. Miller and his mythic boat were apparently omnipresent in the Far West. The same story was reported in California, Oregon, and Nevada during the late nineteenth century.

39. Igler, "Industrial Cowboys," chapter 3.

gion's resources. While landownership and resource extraction functioned to varying degrees in eastern and southern industrial development, the drive to consolidate land and resources as a long-term business strategy played out most dramatically in the Far West. It was here in a region where extractive enterprises demanded unparalleled assets in land that property acquisitions held the greatest importance for the nation's industrial development. The dominance of extractive industries in the Far West, however, has led many western and U.S. historians to view the region as merely an "economic colony" or a business "frontier" of the industrial East.[40] While eastern capitalists certainly reached west of the Mississippi for resources and investment opportunities, the Far West had no lack of venture capitalists and industrialists ready to exploit all market niches.

The dynamism of Far Western enterprise

The West as "plundered province" or "colony" thesis—argued most forcefully by Bernard DeVoto in 1934 but inspired over fifty years before—has always relied upon a particular characterization of the region and its business enterprises.[41] The West was imagined as an untouched warehouse of natural resources prior to American rule, with delivery clerks quietly awaiting their opportunity to "unlock" the "treasure vaults."[42] The new American managers of this vast natural wealth were junior partners in plunder, ready to "pour [the region's] resources into the expanding productive system."[43] The western-based firms that existed, furthermore, survived in a state of arrested development. Large, cumbersome, and purely extractive in purpose, they did not pursue the organizational trends that reshaped American industry during the postbellum decades. In the fam-

40. Bunting, *The Pacific Raincoast*, 159; Cochran, *Two Hundred Years of American Business*, 94.

41. DeVoto clearly saw the West as an industrial region but one constructed by and benefiting Easterners. Such development "has not made the West wealthy. It has, to be brief, made the East wealthy." See DeVoto, "The West," 358. Pomeroy echoed this sentiment; see Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 83, 85, 88–89, 119. Gerald Nash remains the most prominent scholar of pre-World War II western colonialism. See Nash, *The American West Transformed*, vii.

42. Henry George, "What the Railroad Will Bring Us," *Overland Monthly*, 1 (1868), 297–298.

43. Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America*, 23.

ily snapshot of American business, western firms remained the ugly cousins to the captains of industry.

Recent literature on the region's business structures and strategies challenges this image.[44] Many far western firms were among the most dynamic capitalist enterprises in the nation, a dynamism not deriving from eastern trends but instead springing from their own social and ecological surroundings. Pacific Coast industrialists recognized both the scope of business opportunities and the scale of regional, national, and international markets. Certainly, the far western terrain had its share of homespun snake oil salesmen and debt-ridden speculators. But a different sort of business enterprise had a more lasting impact on the region's economy and society: highly rationalized, vertically integrated firms directed by imperious and innovative leaders.

The Central Pacific Railroad's phenomenal growth, so legendary that it seems almost preordained, should caution us against reading the firm's ultimate success backward into history. When east met west on May 10, 1869, the future of California's railroad venture looked promising. The Big Four (Leland Stanford, Collis Huntington, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins) controlled both the main artery of commerce into the Far West and millions of acres of land along that artery. Rails and land provided a sound foundation for constructing a western empire, but the Central Pacific's subsequent actions transformed it into a truly dynamic enterprise. First and foremost, Stuart Daggett explained, was the creation of a "comprehensive system" of ownership and management "held together by leases and stock control."[45] By the fall of 1870, the Central Pacific had gained control of most smaller lines in the Far West—the Western Pacific, the California & Oregon, the San Joaquin Valley, the San Francisco & San Jose, and the San Francisco, Oakland, & Alameda railroad companies. The Big Four next created a giant parent company, the Southern Pacific, to manage all subsidiary operations and build up new transportation hubs like El Paso for the Southwest.[46] Corporate coordination

44. See Malone, *The Battle for Butte*; Robbins, *Colony and Empire*; Anderson and Hill, eds., *The Political Economy of the American West*; Schwantes, *Hard Traveling*; Peterson, *The Bonanza Kings*.

45. Stuart Daggett, *Chapters in the History of the Southern Pacific* (New York, 1922), 140, 142.

46. Niles M. Hansen, *Border Economy: Regional Development in the Southwest*

on a grand scale resulted. As in eastern industrial firms, five departments organized the different lines, distinct departments oversaw various corporate functions, and hundreds of mid- and upper-level managers carried out daily operations. The owners concentrated their energies on marketing the region's most valuable products: agricultural land, townsites, political offices, and the California Dream itself. Far from a *fait accompli* in 1869, William Deverell argues, the Southern Pacific's highly organized decision making and "corporate expansion at a fearsome rate" led to its dominant role in the region.[47]

Other large-scale enterprises in the Far West also organized their corporate structures for long-term growth and competitive advantage. Miller & Lux developed different departments for land management, cattle production, political lobbying, engineering, accounting, marketing, and so on. The firm thereby addressed particular business concerns through different channels. The two partners handled major deals (such as negotiating preferential shipping routes and freight rebates from the Southern Pacific), the slaughterhouse superintendent determined the flow of cattle into the abattoir, and the firm's land and engineering departments carried out reclamation projects to ensure irrigated rangeland in times of drought.[48] Foreign companies also found the Far West a particularly friendly environment for corporate innovation. The British grain shipping firm of Balfour, Guthrie & Company opened its San Francisco office in 1869 to take advantage of California's booming markets and wheat production. The 1870s depression prompted the firm's conservative managers to respond creatively by branching into mining, insurance, oil development, real estate, and other businesses in San Francisco, Tacoma, Portland, Seattle, and Los Angeles. By 1900 Balfour, Guthrie's organizational capacities facilitated dozens of thriving subsidiaries.[49]

(Austin, Texas, 1981), 45; Richard Orsi, "*The Octopus* Reconsidered: The Southern Pacific and Agricultural Modernization in California, 1865–1915," *California Historical Quarterly*, 54 (1975), 197–220; Orsi, "Railroads in the History of California and the Far West: An Introduction," *California History*, 70 (1991), 2–11; Robbins, *Colony and Empire*, 32.

47. Deverell, *Railroad Crossing*, 27; Orsi, "*The Octopus* Reconsidered."

48. See Igler, "Industrial Cowboys," chapters 2–4.

49. Morton Rothstein, "A British Firm on the American West Coast, 1869–1914," *Business History Review*, 37 (1963), 392–415.

In the mining industry, corporate expansion through spin-off subsidiaries developed as a common strategy against business risks. Following the early lead of California bankers and businessmen William Sharon and William Ralston, the San Francisco-based silver kings John Mackay, Jim Fair, James Flood, and William O'Brien (also known as the Irish Big Four) operated a handful of banks and mining companies in the Comstock region, supplying their mines with water through the subsidiary Virginia and Gold Hill Water Company.[50] In Montana, Samuel T. Hauser controlled numerous mining companies during the 1880s (including the Helena Mining and Reduction Co., the Livingston Coke and Coal Co., and the Gregory Consolidated Mining Co.) before consolidating them all into the Helena and Livingston Smelting and Reduction Company.[51] The Anaconda Copper Mining Company managed a staggering array of smaller firms in mining, water, coal, and lumber, while the Anaconda itself represented just one of many operations controlled by its owners.[52] In the end, charting the interests of the Far West's mining industrialists is a dizzying exercise.

Corporate spin-offs and consolidations, however, reveal something significant: These firms were not behind the organizational curve but actually primary agents of managerial and industrial innovation. Diversification, as the above examples suggest, offered a means for western companies to control different layers of the production process in a highly competitive market. Vertical integration moved these firms beyond resource extraction in one industry to multiple extractive sectors, followed by the processing and marketing of products. Diversification also allowed firms to experiment in developing markets or transcend geographic boundaries and develop subsidiaries across vast distances. Beneath the Far West's seemingly haphazard, hit-and-run business activity lay an innovative and coordinated form of corporate capitalism—a form entirely missed by historians who limit their perspective to the "industrial belt which stretched from the eastern seaports to the Great Lakes."[53]

The dynamism of U.S. business enterprise relied in part on

50. Stephen Birmingham, *California Rich* (New York, 1980), 131–135.
51. Peterson, *The Bonanza Kings*, 108, 137.
52. Malone, *The Battle for Butte*, 34–56.
53. Zunz, *Making America Corporate*, 10.

cutting-edge technology and expertise, and the Far West excelled in this sphere of industrial experimentation. California companies developed explosives and mineral-processing methods (like the Washoe mercury process) for use throughout the region, and such technology soon "fanned out across the globe."[54] The region attracted many of the world's leading railroad, irrigation, and petroleum engineers, who utilized the Far West as an experimental station for the latest technological innovations. Mining expert John Hays Hammond, railroad engineer William Hood, and petroleum geologist Edwin T. Dumble all worked in western ventures before taking their expertise abroad.[55] California State Engineers William Hammond Hall and James Schuyler developed the nineteenth century's most detailed land and irrigation surveys that agriculture, oil, and power companies exploited for decades to come.[56] A crucial asset to the region's major industries, the migration of technical expertise also shows how western corporations successfully harnessed the constant flow of information and technology for their specific needs.

Business enterprise in the Gilded Age had no scarcity of failed schemes, and the Far West did not differ in this regard.[57] At the other end of the spectrum, however, many firms grew in size and power by tapping technical expertise, adapting multilayered corporate structures, and creating modern managerial systems. Eastern industry did not monopolize these innovations; indeed, the Far West's leading enterprises moved to the forefront of organizational trends. They integrated vertically, to control both production and marketing, and expanded horizontally across space, to capitalize on the hinterland's vast terrain. Moreover, they devised innovative techniques (in mining, timber,

54. Richard Walker, "Another Round of Globalization in San Francisco," *Urban Geography*, 17 (1996), 63–67; Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 64–65.

55. Jessica Teisch, "Imperial Visions: Nature's Managers in San Francisco, 1860–1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2000); Paul Sabin, "Home and Abroad: The Two 'Wests' of Twentieth-Century United States History," *Pacific Historical Review*, 66 (1997), 305–335.

56. William Hammond Hall, *Report of the State Engineer to the Legislature of the State of California, Session of 1880* (Sacramento, Calif., 1880).

57. For instance, see W. Turrentine Jackson, "The Infamous Emma Mine: A British Investment in the Little Cottonwood District, Utah Territory," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 23 (1955), 339–362.

agriculture, and oil production) to modernize traditional extractive practices. Investors from around the globe amassed large returns on the region's industrial growth, and many investors undeniably viewed the place as merely a resource colony. But the Far West developed its own network of power brokers, and, for most of the late nineteenth century, they operated out of San Francisco.

Creating an urban system

Exhibiting no lack of ambition, Gold Rush San Francisco ignored the prospect of a colonial childhood and strove immediately to build an economic empire. The city's adopted name signified this aspiration. It was known under Spanish and Mexican rule as the port of Yerba Buena (though the mission and presidio were called San Francisco), but Yankee merchants appropriated the name of San Francisco Bay in 1848 to attract the world's ship captains to their side of the bay. The ploy worked exceedingly well. San Francisco quickly grew while the town sites across the bay languished.[58] The city immediately became the conduit through which international migrants rushed to the gold country. Capital arrived with these global immigrants, complementing the unprecedented flow of wealth from the mineral-rich Sierra. Both sources of capital fueled San Francisco's investments in its widening hinterland, and city leaders used this window of opportunity to establish extensive networks. By 1870 the "Pacific Coast Metropolis" had secured its regional position at the nexus of a "sprawling financial web."[59] To the extent that

58. This and many subsequent developments of San Francisco lend support to Allan Pred's "asymmetric" model of urban expansion. Pred argues that a city's extraregional relationships are often more significant than its connection to the surrounding hinterland. As the following discussion suggests, San Francisco was tied to a global economy from its inception (and even prior to American rule, when Californios exchanged hides and tallow with international traders). At the same time, central place theory (and William Cronon's recent revision of it) still holds a great deal of analytical power when applied to the case of San Francisco and its periphery, particularly in respect to specific firms that grew outward from the city center. See Allan Pred, *City-Systems in Advanced Economies* (London, 1977); Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis.*

59. Robbins, "Western History: A Dialectic on the Modern Condition," *Western Historical Quarterly,* 20 (1989), 436. On San Francisco, see William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865–1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley, 1982); Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Fran-*

we conceptualize industrial America around the growth of powerful cities (not just manufacturing centers), San Francisco merits considerable attention.

San Francisco's regional power stemmed in large measure from the city's centralization of finance capital, legal offices, and corporate boardrooms. The early San Francisco "bank crowd" included entrepreneurs from around the country: John Parrott of Missouri, William Tecumseh Sherman and William Ralston of Ohio, Darius Ogden Mills of New York, and the St. Louis banking house of Page & Bacon. Gold Rush lawyers and partnerships—Henry Huntley Haight, Aaron A. Sargent, Tobin & Tobin, and Halleck, Peachy & Billings—set up shop and quickly turned real property into a highly liquid commodity. Merchants and transplanted capitalists from all walks of life drew upon these financial and legal talents to expand their operations, engross the public domain, and turn city-based ventures into vast regional enterprises.[60] In each arena, the rising business elites were rarely the pure, rugged individualists they imagined themselves. Like their eastern brethren, San Francisco capitalists forged alliances in the city's dynamic marketplace and coordinated their activities through powerful networks.

For much of the late nineteenth century, the headquarters of almost every leading western enterprise was situated within a few city blocks of San Francisco's California Street. This business district, like those of Boston, New York, and Chicago in previous years, organized trade relations with its emerging hinterland communities. But perhaps more than anywhere else in the nation, urban-based enterprises on the Pacific Coast quickly moved beyond commercial trade and began building their factories in the fields. Claus Spreckels's sugar empire is a case in point. Between the Civil War and the depression of the 1890s, Spreckels built one of the nation's largest sugar corporations through his consolidation of the San Francisco-based California

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cisco and Denver (New York, 1975); Richard Walker, "Industry Builds the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850–1945," *The Journal of Historical Geography* (forthcoming); Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*; Roger W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846–1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York, 1974).

60. Issel and Cherny, *San Francisco*, 23–52; Walker, "Another Round of Globalization in San Francisco," 60–94; Gunther Barth, "Metropolism and Urban Elites in the Far West," in Frederic Cople Jaher, ed., *The Age of Industrialism in America: Essays in Social Structure and Cultural Values* (New York, 1968), 158–187.

Sugar Refinery Company, the Oceanic Steamship Company, and the Spreckelsville sugar plantation in Hawaii. Through this process, Spreckels successfully integrated transportation, factory production, marketing, and a large labor force to realize economies of scale and scope. However, Spreckels's ownership of hinterland resources—over 40,000 acres of sugarcane fields in Hawaii and a larger sugar beet plantation in California's Salinas Valley—provided his means of controlling sugar production.[61] From its corporate headquarters in San Francisco, Spreckels's sugar enterprise bridged the nineteenth-century hinterland of rural California with the emerging Pacific Rim business frontier.[62]

Industrial development in the Far West often made the binary division between "urban" and "rural" places unstable at best. The mining industry's growth illustrates this point and challenges Walter Licht's claim that industrial production "does not transpire in the countryside."[63] As surface mining gave way to hydraulic and quartz mining (with the need for greater capital, technology, and skilled labor), a succession of industrialized mining towns appeared in San Francisco's periphery.[64] The first of these urban clusters outside of California itself, Nevada's Comstock Lode, offered a highly profitable proving ground for San Francisco's industrial planners. Following the silver and gold strike at Washoe in 1859, the Comstock boomed as capital and laborers traveled east from San Francisco to Nevada while high-grade ore was sent the opposite direction. The growth of the Comstock—financed in large part by San Francisco capitalists D. O. Mills, William Ralston, George Hearst, Lloyd Tevis, and the partnership of Mackey, Fair, Flood & O'Brien—sent values on the San Francisco Mining Exchange through the roof, causing it briefly to surpass the New York Stock Exchange as the largest stock market in the world.[65] Between 1859 and

61. Jacob Adler, "The Oceanic Steamship Company: A Link in Claus Spreckels' Hawaiian Sugar Empire," *Pacific Historical Review,* 29 (1960), 257–269; Adler, *Claus Spreckels: The Sugar King in Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1966).

62. See Sabin, "Home and Abroad," 305–335.

63. Licht, *Industrializing America,* xiv.

64. Michael Malone, "The Collapse of Western Metal Mining: An Historical Epitaph," *Pacific Historical Review,* 55 (1986), 455–464.

65. Joseph L. King, *The History of the San Francisco Stock and Exchange Board*

1882, the region's sixty principal mines generated an estimated $292,726,310 in precious metals.[66]

As the Comstock thrived, an urban network of towns emerged surrounding Virginia City—the city Mark Twain called "half colony and half suburb" to San Francisco.[67] But how should we define the Comstock region: as urban, rural, colony, or suburb? Like many eastern industrial sites, the Comstock held many different location characteristics as its capital output ebbed and flowed. Yet, as Eugene Moehring contends, it remained one "subsystem" in a larger whole during its boom years, "a peripheral extension of the California urban system created by the earlier Gold Rush" and supporting San Francisco's market expansion.[68] When San Franciscans saw diminishing returns on their investments, they took their profits to the next promising site in the urban system. In the wake of San Francisco's industrial machine sat a "junkyard of dreams," a rusting and depleted Comstock region that looked like so many other postboom settlements.[69] Unlike the permanence of eastern manufacturers, industrial production in the Pacific states had a far more dynamic and transitory nature.

As industrial expansion reshaped both urban and rural places, it also supported U.S. expansion and conquest. Stephen Aron and others have argued that U.S. expansion played out through overlapping patterns of "conquest, colonization, and capitalist consolidation" across a "Greater West" from Appalachia to the Pacific.[70] Far western industry played a major role in this process during the late nineteenth century. In the Comstock, for instance, violent attacks against Nevada's Paiute Indians during the 1860 Pyramid Lake War transpired at the height of San Fran-

(San Francisco, 1910). On the Comstock, see Eliot Lord, *Comstock Mining and Miners* (1883; Berkeley, 1959); and Maureen A. Jung, "The Comstocks and the California Mining Economy, 1848–1900" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1988).

66. Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West*, 83; Walker, "California's Debt to Nature," 8.

67. Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 125.

68. Moehring, "The Comstock Urban Network," 353.

69. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York, 1992).

70. Stephen Aron, "Lessons of Conquest," 126; Aron, *How the West Was Lost*; Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest.*

cisco's capital investments in the region.[71] Here and elsewhere across the West—George Hearst's subsequent move into South Dakota's Black Hills serves as an obvious example—industrial interests functioned as co-conspirators in the charge against native peoples. What Richard Brown has termed the "western war of incorporation" ultimately included a range of violent participants, from Indians and labor leaders to company henchmen and the U.S. cavalry. But it was corporate enterprise that repeatedly sought out and received government aid for its campaigns.[72]

The decline of San Francisco's regional power at the turn of the century derived in part from increased competition by eastern investors and corporations. Land reformer Henry George had forecast this development as early as 1868, and the following decades witnessed greater pressures by national conglomerates on regional business systems.[73] But an equally important factor for San Francisco's waning power was the city's very success at industrial expansion. San Francisco capitalists invested heavily in other West Coast cities between 1860 and 1890: Darius Ogden Mills in Portland, Leland Stanford, Henry E. Huntington, and E. J. "Lucky" Baldwin in Los Angeles, and dozens of San Franciscans in the bayside communities of San Jose and Oakland.[74] For the short term, investments in these peripheral cities strengthened San Francisco's position as the regional financier. The window of opportunity San Franciscans had once enjoyed began to close, however, when they faced the simultaneous challenge of national corporations from the East and urban upstarts on the city's periphery.

Engineering an industrial landscape

On a most basic level, industrial capitalism transformed the relationships between people, work, and their communities. When a master craftsman in New York City assumed the new post of factory foreman or when a domestic worker sought em-

71. Ferol Egan, *Sand in a Whirlwind: The Paiute Indian War of 1860* (Reno, Nev., 1985), 171–250; Moehring, "The Comstock Urban Network," 340.

72. Brown, *No Duty to Retreat*, 87–127.

73. George, "What the Railroad Will Bring Us."

74. Walker, "Another Round of Globalization in San Francisco," 68; E. Kimbark MacColl, *Merchants, Money, and Power: The Portland Establishment, 1843–1913* (Portland, Ore., 1988), 223; Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 140–143.

ployment in a textile plant, the result included significant shifts in personal identity and community memberships. Industrial work, a growing body of literature tells us, reshuffled the social bonds and tensions in nineteenth-century America.[75] Yet the major studies of U.S. industrial workers find little of interest in the American West, beyond occasional references to the Western Federation of Miners.[76] Even the premier journal in the field, *Labor History*, gives scant attention to far western workers and industry, and almost no mention of the period before World War I.[77] As a result, the perspectives of laborers like Joseph Warren Matthews are left unaccounted. Matthews—whose story opened this article—attempted to retain title to his small farm in California by earning wages from a series of corporate enterprises across the Far West. This new work life altered his social status and personal identity, to say nothing of his wife's added responsibilities on their farm. Matthews, however, rarely wrote about such issues. Instead, his diary and letters are filled with observations of his new natural surroundings and the work tasks that enmeshed him in the landscape.

Matthews's experiences reveal one of the primary characteristics of the industrial Far West: The extraction and processing of nature's wealth demanded large labor forces constantly engaged with the physical surroundings. This was not an endgame of "conquering" nature but a daily interface linking

75. For a sampling of different approaches to the social impact of industrialization, see Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York, 1976); Tamara K. Hareven and Randolph Langenbach, *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory-City* (New York, 1978); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850* (New York, 1984); Daniel Nelson, *Managers and Workers: Origins of the Twentieth-Century Factory System in the United States, 1880–1920* (Madison, Wisc., 1995); Wiebe, *The Search for Order.*

76. Herbert Gutman, "The Workers' Search for Power: Labor in the Gilded Age," in Ira Berlin, ed., *Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class* (New York, 1987), 70–92; Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1989); David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Eng., 1993); Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society*; Nelson, *Managers and Workers.*

77. A brief survey of *Labor History* between 1990 and 1999 reveals one article dealing with the late nineteenth-century West and approximately one article per volume on the twentieth-century West. Most of these essays focus on either Los Angeles or Seattle and the Pacific Northwest.

workers with natural landscapes.[78] For instance, in 1899 Matthews described the process of breaking and irrigating a new 800-acre alfalfa field on a corporate ranch:

There is an immense crowd of men and horses and mules working at this job. . .about 60 or 70 men and from 200 to 250 animals working at it. First the land has to be surveyed off so as to tell where to excavate the ditches and throw up the levies. . . . These ditches and levies are then excavated and thrown up by ditching machines each drawn by ten mules then the high places are plowed and scraped off so as to level up the land inside of each check. Then followed the Stockton gang plows and each check is plowed separately to keep from tearing the levies down then comes the seed sower which sow a light seeding of barley which is harrowed in then follows the seed sower which sows the alfalfa seed on the same land to be followed by other harrows for covering it. Then follows the box hole diggers who dig holes in the canals for putting in lumber gates for damming up the water for flooding the land then comes the carpenters box and bridge builders then the boxes have to be filled around with dirt and puddled in with water. Then the land must be flooded to bring up the seed.[79]

Then, Matthews failed to add, came *his* work. After preparing the land for irrigation, laborers like Matthews spent their days and nights moving the water across a series of irrigation checks and keeping the canal walls in proper shape. Each stage of the process involved shaping the landscape. Multiply this 800-acre field by the many millions of irrigated acres in the Far West, and one can appreciate industrialized agriculture's demand for wage labor.[80]

Wage laborers—both landless bindle stiffs and wage-seeking farmers like Matthews—filled the payrolls of all Pacific Slope

78. Richard White's *The Organic Machine* addresses this issue in relation to the damming of the Columbia River. Robert Kelley's *Battling the Inland Sea: American Political Culture, Public Policy, and the Sacramento Valley, 1850–1986* (Berkeley, 1989), although not directly concerned with this dynamic, contains important insights on the public realm of engineering the West's waterscape.

79. Joseph Warren Matthews to Rebecca Matthews, April 2, 1897, Matthews Collection.

80. See Paul S. Taylor, "Foundations of California Rural Society," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 24 (1945), 193–228; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*; Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California, 1850–1880* (Madison, Wisc., 1963); and Cletus Daniel, *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers, 1870–1941* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1981).

companies, populating not just industrial cities but also the rural hinterlands organized by capitalist enterprises. Lured by reports of high wages in the Far West, this complex laboring population often received less pay than expected and ample opportunity to keep moving on.[81] "It wasn't getting here that mattered," concluded one of John Steinbeck's pioneer characters, "it was movement and westering."[82] The region's boom-and-bust economy and the seasonal nature of many extractive industries certainly contributed to phenomenally high transience rates; but the oversupply of skilled labor also allowed employers to hire and fire at will and thereby construct an army of unemployed migrants.[83] Matthews may have been privileged in this regard. His working route across California, Alaska, and Washington took place over a decade rather than a year, and it included numerous long-term positions. Matthews was also fortunate in his ability to return home when he desired. "I don't expect to stay here [in my present job]," Matthews wrote his wife one spring morning from the San Joaquin Valley, "[I] am getting real homesick and don't think I can stand to stay away much longer."[84]

The region's workforce exhibited as much racial and ethnic diversity as any in the world. Late nineteenth-century migrants from around the globe mixed and competed with the earlier migrants from Asia, Europe, Mexico, the eastern states, and resident borderland populations. Matthews appeared to accept this social diversity as simply one part of industrial wage labor. His road work crew in rural Washington was composed largely of Scandinavian immigrants; in the Watsonville sugar plant he worked side by side with Mexican Americans; and in Alaska he joined an international cast of workers thrown to-

81. Schwantes, *Hard Traveling*, 25–45.

82. John Steinbeck, *The Long Valley* (New York, 1938), 302.

83. For one example of this, see Paul Parker, "Along the Dirty Plate Route," *California Folklore Quarterly*, 3 (1944), 16–20. For figures on western transience, see Robert A. Burchell, "Opportunity on the Frontier: Wealth-Holding in Twenty-six Northern California Counties, 1848–1880," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 18 (1987), 177; Brown, *No Duty to Retreat*, 118–120. On the undersupply of skilled harvest workers, see David Vaught, "'An Orchardist's Point of View': Harvest Labor Relations on a California Almond Ranch, 1892–1921," *Agricultural History*, 69 (1995), 563–591.

84. Joseph Warren Matthews to Rebecca Matthews, April 2, 1897, Matthews Collection.

gether by gold rush conditions. As in eastern industrial sites, far western work crews often became ethnic enclaves where group membership offered a chance at steady employment. But the region's industrial employers also saw social diversity as a factor to administer and control. For instance, Matthews's fellow irrigators (while employed by Miller & Lux) were almost exclusively Italian immigrants; the ranch cooks were Chinese; and the vaqueros were Mexican. Miller & Lux's long-term employees (foremen, superintendents, and managers) were either native-born whites or northern European immigrants.[85] Some of these ethnic and racial boundaries were permeable—hence, Matthews's placement on a work crew comprised of Italians—but in the vast majority of cases these boundaries were crossed only by the privileged Anglo workers.[86]

If the social composition and work assignments of western laborers varied across industrial sectors, the overarching task of engineering the natural landscape remained remarkably consistent. Reducing this process to the simple "exploitation" of natural resources fails to credit far western enterprise with much ingenuity; indeed, it fails to recognize industry's goal of creating an orderly and efficient landscape. The Northwest timber industry, for example, harvested trees with the greatest speed allowed by technology. But those same companies and work crews also constructed roads and rails to transport the harvest, built dams on rivers to hold logs, cut fire breaks, and constructed mills to finish the product.[87] Each component of work sought to replace complex natural systems with efficient systems of production, and each stage placed laborers in the midst of this transformation.

Engineering the land often required an industry to cross extractive sectors and alter the land in multiple ways. As mining evolved from early sluices to hydraulic and hard-rock technologies, companies increasingly turned rivers from their beds and clear-cut surrounding hillsides of timber to provide supports for

85. For Miller & Lux, ethnic segmentation rationalized such factors as wage differentials, duration of employment, and job assignments. See Igler, "Industrial Cowboys," chapter 5.

86. For data on the firm's labor segmentation practices among irrigation workers, see the Dos Palos "Time Books," 1899–1901, carton 737, Miller & Lux Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

87. Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares*, 80-85.

mine shafts. Commenting in 1876 on the need for lumber in Nevada's mining districts, journalist Dan De Quille noted: "The Comstock lode may truthfully be said to be the tomb of the forests of the Sierras. Millions on millions of feet of lumber are annually buried in the mines, nevermore to be resurrected."[88] When timber played out on Lake Tahoe's east side, De Quille observed, mining companies sent their agents back across the summit to harvest timber on the lake's west side. The firms built elaborate networks of railroads, ferries, sawmills, and flumes to transport the lumber for the mining district's underground skeleton.[89] Thus, reorganizing the landscape's natural systems held an array of environmental and social consequences—some easily recognizable, others not apparent for decades.

Environmental changes directly affecting human communities received the most immediate attention. Deforestation led to wildlife declines and unsightly vistas, but clear-cut logging also polluted the rivers used by local agriculturalists. The resulting complaints by downstream irrigators were made primarily on utilitarian grounds; they demanded protection of their precious water supply, particularly in drought years.[90] Hydraulic mining in the Sierra (and elsewhere) created similar tensions by flooding rivers with sludge and tailings. As a result, Sacramento Valley agriculturalists in the 1860s and 1870s faced the impossible task of holding their streams in one location while the riverbeds filled with mining debris.[91] The 1884 *Woodruff v. North Bloomfield* ruling severely curtailed such pollution by hydraulic mining companies, marking the ascendancy of agribusiness over mining interests in one locale. But *Woodruff* did not lead to a reassessment of watershed destruction or other problems caused by the industry, such as the dumping of poisonous quicksilver into a water supply, massive riparian erosion, and toxic air pollution in cities like Butte and Leadville.[92] Toxic emissions raised periodic complaints by workers and their families, but the standard industry response left little room for argument: "The

88. Dan De Quille, *The Big Bonanza* (1876; New York, 1947); quoted in Duane A. Smith, *Mining America: The Industry and the Environment, 1800–1980* (Lawrence, Kans., 1987), 12.

89. Moehring, "The Comstock Urban Network," 46–47.

90. Langston, *Forest Dreams, Forest Nightmares*, 91.

91. Kelley, *Battling the Inland Sea*, 67–137.

92. Smith, *Mining America*; Malone, *The Battle for Butte*, 203.

thicker the fumes the greater our financial vitality, and Butteites feel best when the fumes are thickest."[93] Whether in Homestead, Pennsylvania, or Butte, Montana, risks like respiratory disease came with the job description.

If some environmental problems gained attention for their immediate social costs, the more gradual shifts in ecological communities usually escaped notice. The San Joaquin land upon which Joseph Warren Matthews worked his night irrigation shift had teemed with wildlife and free-flowing rivers until the 1840s. European grasses had gradually been replacing native vegetation prior to this time, but grassland changes accelerated when market hunters cleared the ranges for domesticated cattle and sheep. Both the ranching industry and large-scale agriculturalists channelized the valley's waterscape in order to regulate its hydrological processes. The result was mixed: Agribusiness flourished on the landscape due to engineering technology and armies of migrant laborers, but extremely high levels of salinity soon caked much of the topsoil, a situation resolved by workers like Matthews flushing the salt downstream or into wastewater dumps. Decades later those wastewater dumps (containing a toxic brew of salinity and selenium) would teem with deformed wildlife.[94]

Environmental impact, however, was always a two-way street for Pacific Slope extractive industries. Far western firms razed the region's forests, excavated its mountainsides, rerouted its rivers, and reclaimed its wetlands, but natural forces still conditioned industry through factors beyond human control. Resource depletion forced many mining and timber enterprises to be as migrant as their workers. Natural cycles and chaotic events—from flood and drought to forest fires and tectonic shifts—presented constant risks to businesses built on the land. The conditions that nature prescribed to industry were rarely understood or followed, yet those limits nonetheless repre-

93. *The Butte Miner*, n.d.; quoted in Smith, *Mining America*, 75.

94. Arthur W. Kilness and Jerry L. Simmons, "Toxic Effects of Selenium on Wildlife Species and Other Organisms," *Selenium and Agricultural Drainage: Implications for San Francisco Bay and the California Environment* (Tiburon, Calif., 1985), 52–60. On the transformation of the San Joaquin Valley, see Gerald Haslam, Robert Dawson, and Stephen Johnson, *The Great Central Valley: California's Heartland* (Berkeley, 1994), and William Preston, *Vanishing Landscapes: Land and Life in the Tulare Lake Basin* (Berkeley, 1981).

sented an additional concern to the usual risks experienced by eastern manufacturing enterprises. In the end, the natural environment shaped the industrial process as much as land-based firms shaped their natural surroundings.

The prevailing emphasis on the eastern "factory system" as the "symbol" of the industrializing nation suggests the triumph of modern enterprise and the separation of production from the natural environment.[95] The factory walls surrounding industrial workers symbolized this bifurcated world: Inside the modern factory industry held sway, while outside the walls remained traditional forms of production and natural resources.[96] This narrative explains a great deal about the transition to industrial capitalism. But if industrialism obscured the connections between production and the natural environment for many Americans, it clarified that connection for laborers employed by land-based corporate enterprises. Making the desert "blossom as a rose" for industrial agriculture or razing the hills of Seattle to shape a new city placed workers in direct contact with the environment, and these endeavors were part and parcel of western large-scale enterprise. Industrialization took place in an environmental context. By ignoring this dynamic (despite recent studies by environmental historians), we miss a powerful force of ecological change as well as the human agents of that change.[97]

Conclusion

The Southern Pacific Railroad, Anaconda Copper, the Pacific Lumber Company, the California Sugar Refinery Company, and Miller & Lux—such far western enterprises offer crucial insights to the nation's divergent industrial paths, and yet they rarely appear in general syntheses or more specialized accounts of the nation's transformation. Even the most comprehensive works like Alfred Chandler's *The Visible Hand* consign important western enterprises to the appendices and endnotes.[98] Eastern

95. Nelson, *Managers and Workers*, ix.

96. Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 340.

97. Steinberg, *Nature Incorporated*, 10–17; Smith, *Mining America*, 5–24; Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 13–70.

98. A large number of western firms actually do appear in Chandler's tables and appendices, which makes their lack of treatment in the text all the more disappointing. See Chandler, *The Visible Hand*, 503–513.

firms ultimately define the processes of business modernization and economic consolidation that reshaped the nation during the late nineteenth century. From Andrew Carnegie's steel conglomerate to the Chicago meatpacking companies, the growth of modern industry symbolized the nation in the midst of dynamic change. While companies merged, integrated production, and built marketing systems to feed consumer demands, small proprietors faced increased competition and workers searched for security in new organizational forms. Despite the restricted geography and contested meanings of this narrative, it still signifies a crucial transition in American political, economic, and social history. By recognizing that far western firms operated at the heart of this activity, we can understand industrialism as a historical process that enveloped an entire nation *and* contained important regional contingencies.

How should we proceed toward a more inclusive reading of late nineteenth-century industrial America? What will that new image offer? One place to begin is by appreciating the diversity of the nation's industrial landscapes. Studies of eastern industry largely emphasize the built environment. Eastern manufacturers centralized production and the laboring population in one-industry towns, manufacturing cities, and industrial suburbs—all urban clusters centered on the traditional factory system. The massive and imposing factory symbolized both industry's modern character and its dominant landscape. The Pacific Slope's land-based enterprise, on the other hand, often dispersed production and workers across vast rural areas. The work locations frequently changed as industries exhausted resources, but the rural landscape nonetheless remained a primary environment for laborers and their work. The Far West therefore highlights the fact that industrialization knit urban and rural landscapes together in multiple ways. This broader industrial geography is germane not just to this region but can be investigated across the nation.

Reconceptualizing industrialism also requires paying closer attention to various environmental transformations. Indeed, by listening to the people employed by the Far West's largest enterprises, we discover that changes to the natural landscape held great meaning for laborers as they struggled to understand the industrial forces reshaping their lives. José Messa, for example, worked for a series of corporate enterprises in California during the late nineteenth century. He witnessed the mining boom, the spread of ranching and irrigation companies, the oil industry's sudden emergence, and the phenomenal growth of agribusiness after 1900. But when asked to consider the most important transformation during his lifetime, Messa remembered above all the vast wetlands that once covered the San Joaquin Valley where he grew up, and replied, "the disappearance of the water."[99] Messa understood the impact that industry had on the land, and he knew that seemingly simple environmental changes could signify far larger social and economic trends. His memory, although specific to just one western locale, reveals that the personal experience of industrial workers involved a range of factors beyond the shop floor—and often included the reorganization of ecological communities. The Far West provides a compelling site to explore the dynamic between industrial and environmental change and a model for investigating industrialism's broadest impacts elsewhere.

Greater attention to incipient causes and resulting paths should also figure more prominently in a new understanding of industrial America. The Far West's industrial economy sprang initially from the phenomenal Sierra gold strikes and the vast terrain seized during the Mexican-American War. The subsequent rush on land and resources constituted a pivotal phase in U.S. expansion and the growth of extractive industry.[100] The region's capitalist enterprises thereafter developed clear emphases: innovative and multilayered approaches to resource extraction and processing, vast land acquisition to consolidate assets and overcome environmental risks, and large itinerant labor forces to engineer the physical landscape. Geopolitical lines posed few insurmountable barriers. As Samuel Truett and others have shown, western firms quickly expanded across the U.S.-Mexico borderlands in pursuit of resources and markets.[101] The

99. José Messa, oral history recorded by Frank Latta, Oct. 5, 1939, box ML 4 (1), Latta Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

100. For recent assessments of the Gold Rush as a pivotal event, see the essays by Maureen Jung, Daniel Cornford, David J. St. Clair, and Gerald Nash in Rawls and Orsi, eds., *A Golden State*, 52–104, 185–208, 276–292. A provocative counterpoint is Richard White, "The Gold Rush: Consequences and Contingencies," *California History*, 77 (1998), 43–54.

101. Samuel Truett, "Neighbors By Nature: Rethinking Region, Nation, and Environmental History in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands," *Environmental History*, 2 (1997), 160–178; Robbins, *Colony and Empire*, 22–39.

point is not that these developmental and geographic characteristics were exceptional to western industry. Rather, they textured a national process with regional and transnational significance, revealing how different factors gave multifaceted shape to the central institution of the industrial revolution—the corporation.

Conceptualizing the Far West as a distinctly industrial region serves many ends. It encourages western historians to view the region's cultural conflicts and social-ecological tensions within a framework of dynamic capitalist relations.[102] It allows us to appreciate the interplay between western society's transience and simultaneous desire for permanence. Joseph Warren Matthews, in this regard, was not simply a stable western farmer forced into the labor market to hold title to his land. Rather, he personified the experience of many rural Americans who struggled for security in a new economic environment. Emphasizing industrial change in the Far West also forces us to confront the growing conflicts between regional economies and national integration at the century's turn. Miller & Lux, for instance, encountered just this problem in the 1890s when the Chicago Beef Trust appeared on the Pacific Coast and battled San Francisco meatpackers for market share. Finally, situating far western industrialism within a national context challenges all U.S. historians to write more inclusively about the growth of modern enterprise, its social and ecological repercussions, and its complex variations.

The image of a highly industrialized and corporate Far West outlined here is offered to make a point: Our studies of western incorporation will influence the larger picture of U.S. industrialization insofar as they establish regional patterns in national and international contexts. "Place" matters a great deal—it can reveal important distinctions about business origins, landscape change, and social responses to incorporation. But a retreat to western (or eastern) exceptionalism will fail to appreciate industry's powerful manifestations throughout the entire country. A broader perspective on the nation's dynamic transformation is overdue. One place to start is with the relationship of industrial change to region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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102. Robbins, "Western History: A Dialectic on the Modern Condition," 437.