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Source: *Journal of Archaeological Research* , September 2014, Vol. 22, No. 3 (September 2014), pp. 177-228

Published by: Springer

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/24018072

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J Archaeol Res (2014) 22:177–228
DOI 10.1007/s10814-013-9071-3

Historical Archaeologies of the American West

Kelly J. Dixon

Published online: 19 January 2014
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Abstract Historical archaeology in western North America includes a vast collection of research that underscores the region's dynamic cultural heritage. Here, I review a sample of the literature related to this research and organize them into four conceptual themes: colonialism and postcolonialism, landscape transformation, migration and diaspora, and industrial capitalism. I conclude that the future of historical archaeology in the West will be grounded in research that integrates these themes. As the region continues to experience human dilemmas related to issues such as balancing resource extraction with sustainable conservation and lingering issues of colonialism, these archaeologies have value for transcending the nature–culture divide and for understanding the ways in which humanity can navigate pressing issues relevant to our modern world, including vulnerability, risks, adaptation, resilience, and sustainability.

Keywords American West · Historical archaeology · Aridity · Colonialism · Diaspora · Industrial capitalism · Global change · Landscape transformation · Migration

Introduction

> [We] trap out the beaver, subtract the Mandan, infect the Blackfeet and the Hidatsa and the Assiniboin, overdose the Arikara; call the land a desert and hurry across it to get to California and Oregon; suck up the buffalo...kill off the nations of elk and wolves and cranes and prairie chickens and prairie dogs; dig up the gold and rebury it in vaults somewhere else...kill Crazy Horse, kill Sitting Bull; harvest wave after wave of immigrants' dreams and send the

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> wised-up dreamers on their way; plow the topsoil until it blows into the ocean; ship out the wheat; ship out the cattle; dig up the earth itself and burn it in power plants and send the power down the line...dry up the rivers and springs, deep drill for irrigation water as the aquifer retreats...(Frazier 1989, pp. 209–210).

The epigraph above—"the punch line of two hundred years on the Great Plains"—brutally summarizes the swift and vast changes that have taken place in the American West over the last several centuries (Frazier 1989, pp. 209–210; see also Worster 1991, pp. 4–6). The outcomes of these relatively sudden and dramatic transformations in the American West have relevance for decisions we make today (cf. Rockman and Flatman 2012) and underscore our growing sense of obligation to address questions related to anthropogenic influences on the environment. Analysis of Spanish California's 18th-century mission complexes, for example, has drawn attention to the ways that churches, outlying structures, and fields served as vectors for floral and faunal invaders that sparked ecological transformation of the landscape (Allen 2010b, pp. 69–70).

Four common theoretical themes have emerged from historical archaeological inquiry on the American West: colonialism and postcolonialism, landscape transformation, migration and diaspora (with subthemes of transnationalism, identity, and ethnogenesis), and industrial capitalism. Four intertwined subthemes of industrial capitalism (extractive industries, labor, transportation, and communication) often intersect with the first three themes. Examples of such studies are categorized in Table 1, yet these often crosscut the four themes, serving as a reminder that integration of these themes is essential to practicing historical archaeology in the region. For example, analyses of gender are often couched within a framework of various topics that include race and class, colonialism, and agency (e.g., Cooper and Spude 2011; Dixon 2005; Hardesty 2010, 2011a; King 2011; Lightfoot 2005; Mills and Martinez 1997; Mullins 2008a; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992a, 2001; Silliman 2004; Thornton 2011; Timmons 2007; Voss 2008a, b; Wilkie 2010).

Western historians have long been concerned with many of the topics listed in Table 1, emphasizing issues related to aridity, extractive industries, dependence on the federal government, and the mythic quality of the so-called western "frontier" (Guy and Sheridan 1998; Malone 1989). These regional historians are generally divided into "Old" and "New" Western historians. Turner's (1893) essay, "The Significance of the Frontier to Western History," sparked a century of debate between Old Western historians, who considered this to be a "cornerstone" of Western history, and the New Western historians who objected to Turner's views because they overlooked a more "shameful side of the westward movement" (Worster 1991, p. 10; see also Hall 2009; Hardesty 1980, 1985, 1991a; Lazarus 1991; Lightfoot 1995; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Limerick 1987, 1991, p. 62; Robbins 1991, 1994). Much of the history of the region was overtly influenced by myths, many of which were perpetuated by dime novels, the media, and booster propaganda, whereby nonindigenous residents of the West promoted the influx of outside capital, manipulating associated rhetoric to serve their own interests (Brooks and Prine 1996, p. 89; Dixon 2005, 2006; Schablitsky 2007).

Table 1 Examples of historical archaeological topics in the American West

Topic	Sample sources
Battlefields	Laumbach et al. (2001); Scott (2005); Scott et al. (1989); Wilcox (2009)
Diasporas	Chung and Wegars (2005); Dixon (2011); González-Tennant (2011); Greenwood and Slawson (2008); Merritt (2010a); Schulz and Allen (2008); Voss (2005); Voss and Allen (2008); Wegars (1993)
Overland emigration	Dixon et al. (2011); Hardesty (1997); Hawkins and Madsen (1990); Novak (2008)
Forts	Merritt (2010b); Mills (2008); Mueller (2011)
Gender roles	Chung (1998); Hardesty (1998a, 2010); Purser (1991); Spude (2005, 2011); Timmons (2007); Voss (2008b)
Great Depression	Alanen (2000); White (2012)
Historic inscriptions/ rock art	Turpin (1989); Urbaniak and Rust (2009)
Homesteading	Buechler (1990); Church (2002); Clark (2011); Haught (2010); Heilen and Reid (2009); Kroll (2012); Mallios (2009); Towner and Creasman (2010)
Labor	Camp (2011b); Ludlow Collective (2001); Saitta (2007b); Silliman (2004); Spielmann et al. (2009)
Mining	Hardesty (1991b, 2003, 2010); Spude et al. (2011)
Missions	Allen (1998, 2010a); Arkush (2011); Blind et al. (2004); Lightfoot (2005); Spielmann et al. (2006)
Ranching, *Vaqueros*, Cowboys	Fischer (2007); Pavao-Zuckerman and LaMotta (2007); Ziesing (1997); see also Clayton et al. (2001); Starrs (1998)
Mortuary behavior, memory	Chung and Wegars (2005); Connolly et al. (2010); Kraus-Friedberg (2008, 2011); Mallios and Caterino (2007, 2011); Novak (2008)
Urbanization	Delgado (2009); Ringhoff and Stoner (2011)
Transportation	Corbin (2006); Corbin and Rodgers (2008); Griffin and Gurcke (2011); Hammer (2011); Van Tilberg (2007)

The 1960s cultural milieu spawned the New Western History, and the difference between traditional and New Western History (e.g., Brooks 2002; Brugge 1985; Clayton et al. 2001; Gutiérrez 1991; Hall 1989; Hämäläinen 2003, 2008; Hurtado 1996; James and Raymond 1998; Johnson 2000; Limerick 1987; Murphy 1997; Robbins 1991, p. 186; Rohe 1982, 1996; Van Kirk 1984; West 1998; White 1991a, b; Worster 1994; Wrobel and Steiner 1997; Zappia 2012) can best be summarized as the "West of mountain men, cowboys, Indians, gunfighters, prospectors, and outlaws" versus the new, "counterclassic history of wage earners, women, minorities, urbanization, industrialization," and colonialism (Hardesty 1991a, p. 4; see also Silliman 2005).

New Western historians' research is making contributions to American Indian, African American, Asian American, Latin American, feminist, environmental, legal, social, and urban history (Limerick 1991, pp. 64–65). Likewise, historical archaeology in the West is also making contributions to these and related topics (Chicone 2011a, b; Clark 2011; Dixon 2011; Lee et al. 2002; Ludlow Collective 2001; Mallios 2009; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001; Truett 2004; Zedeño 2007). Historical archaeology's tendency to emphasize power relations, class, race, and gender (Little 1994; Orser 1999, 2007, 2010; Paynter 2000a, b) has created a

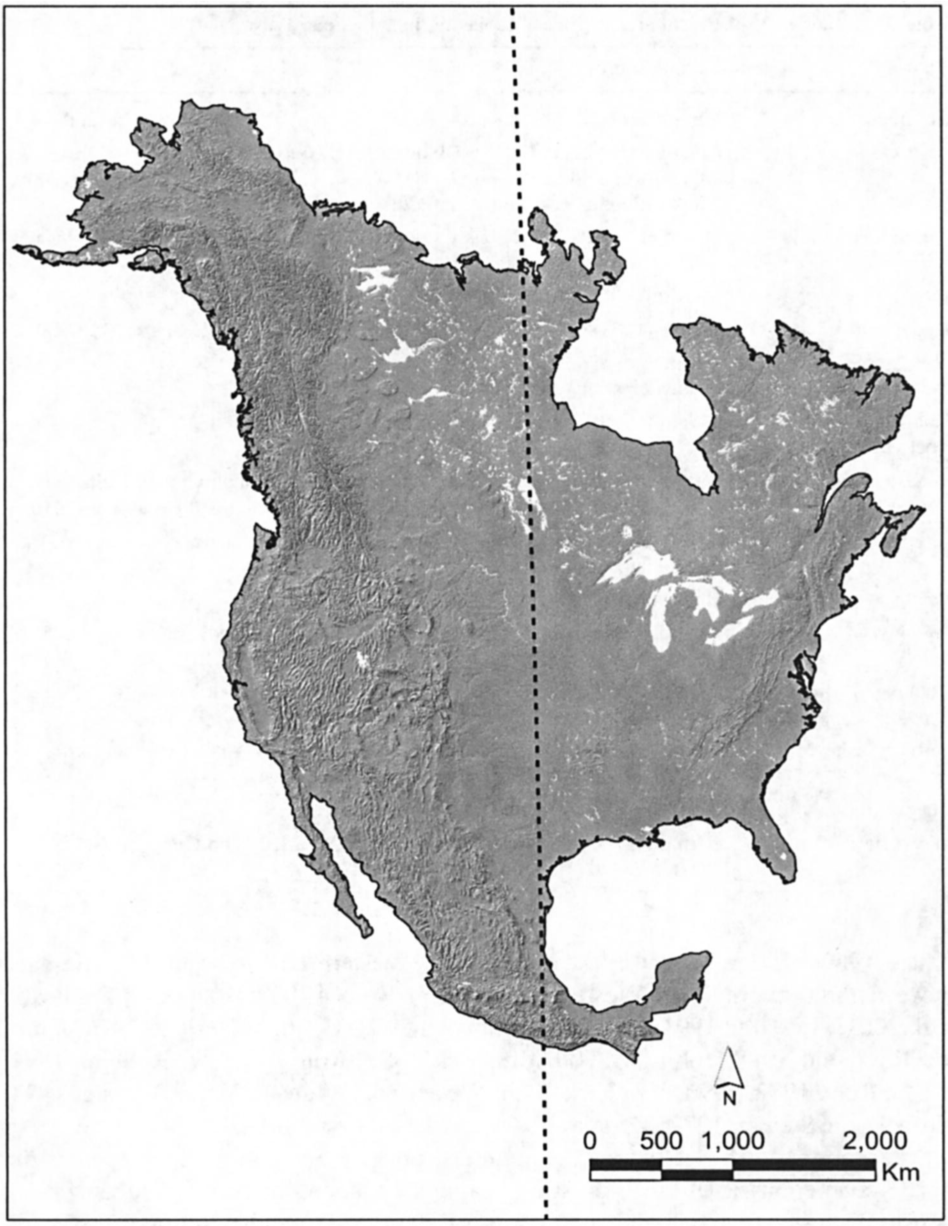

Fig. 1 Map of North America with the "American West" situated west of the 98th meridian, inserted as the dashed line running through the center of the continent (map courtesy of Diane Whited)

bibliography that parallels that of Western historians, fostering opportunities for collaborative research between the overlapping areas of inquiry shared by the New Western historians and historical archaeologists (James 2012).

The Northern American West itself, as a region, requires a brief introduction. The definition of the "American West" evolved as the United States expanded

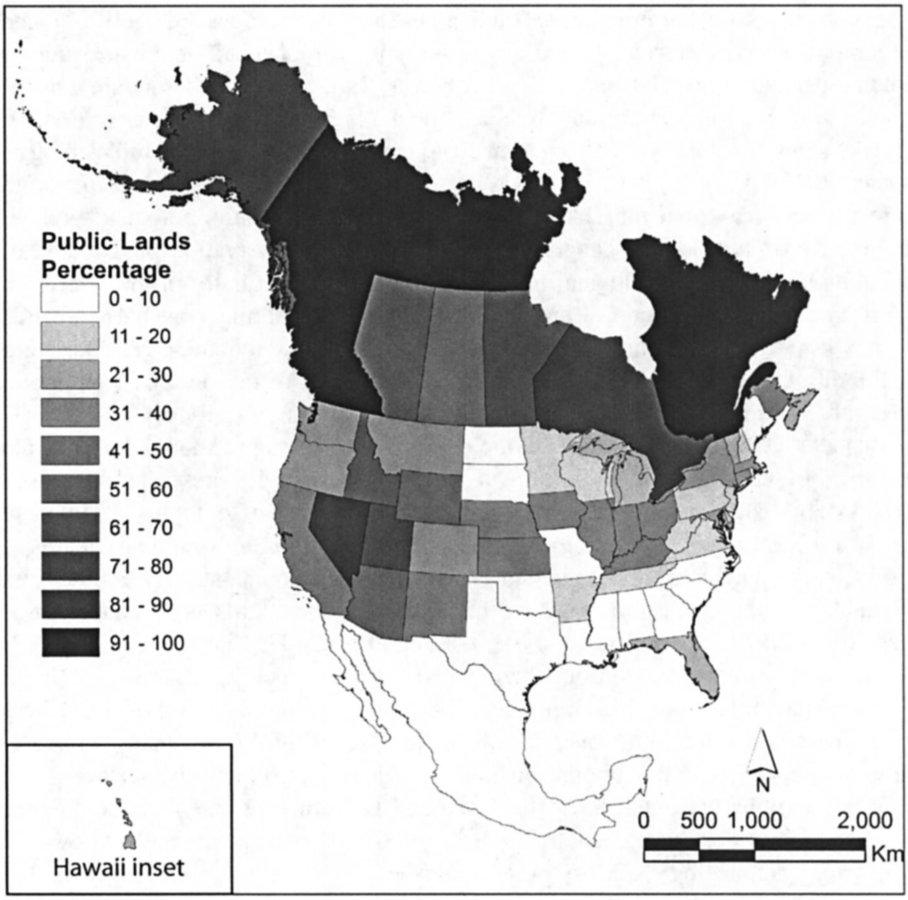

Fig. 2 Map showing the amounts of public land across North American states and provinces, shown as a percentage of total state land area (map courtesy of Diane Whited)

westward, extending from the Appalachians prior to the 19th century, then to the Mississippi River during the 19th century, then to the Pacific Coast, and then to the Rocky Mountains and Great Basin in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Beck and Haase 1989; Hardesty 1985, 1991b; Pomeroy 2008; West 1994). Here I define the American West as the geographical area situated west of the 98th meridian (Fig. 1) in North America, and including the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, the Great Basin, the desert Southwest (Sonoran, Mojave, and Chihuahua Deserts), the Pacific Coast, the temperate rainforests of the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, and, technically, Hawai'i (see also Fischer 2007, p. 372; Hardesty 1991a, p. 3; Meinig 1998). The western United States encompasses over half of the land area of the nation, and significant portions of these states are public land (Fig. 2). Canada and Mexico also have a "West," including the area south of the U.S.-Mexico border and remote reaches of the Yukon and Alaska. Nevertheless, the archaeological examples examined here primarily represent projects from the western United States.

My focus is on anthropological and archaeological sources, as well as some geographical and historical sources, with an emphasis on works published during the first decade of the 21st century. Nevertheless, the examples I present are a rather small sample of the important archaeological research on the American West. Thanks to an "explosion of information…[in] contemporary historical archaeology" (Orser 2010, p. 112)—and in the American West—I had to be selective and unfortunately leave out the research of many exceptional anthropologists, archaeologists, bioarchaeologists, geographers, historians, and preservationists. Because of the abundance of archaeological research being carried out daily in the American West by academic and consulting archaeologists, the resulting gray literature fills agency libraries with multidisciplinary data. When possible, I include gray literature in this discussion, but access to this material is limited to my own past work and research, along with the fact that gray literature is not necessarily centralized.

Readers interested in delving into the region's gray literature should contact state historic preservation offices (SHPOs) and tribal historic preservation offices (THPOs) to gather additional reference material pertinent to topics of interest. Because historic preservation offices have partnered with interdisciplinary teams to produce summaries of site types and related research domains, there are sources available via these agencies that can be used as springboards for archaeological research (e.g., Brooks and Jacon 1993; Church et al. 2007; Lindström et al. 2007; White et al. 1991). In addition, there are metabases, such as tDar (The Digital Archaeological Record) by Digital Antiquity (www.digitalantiquity.org), where researchers can delve into troves of information about the West's many archaeologies. Even so, given the amount of literature, these just scratch the surface.

Most examples presented here date from the past several centuries, a period referred to as "modern world archaeology" (Orser 1996, 2010) but commonly known as "historical archaeology." Most practitioners of "historical" archaeology in the American West study, promote, manage, and preserve cultural heritage associated with the proto- and post-Columbian period of transition, when "complex interdigitations of cultures and practices" (Hall and Silliman 2006, p. 4; but see Lightfoot 1995, p. 200) were—and still are—rampant in the region (Carter et al. 2005; Thackeray 2012; Warner and Baldwin 2004; Wilcox 2009, 2010a, b; Zimmerman 2007).

Colonialism and postcolonialism

Considering that the eastern United States (and much of eastern Canada) developed under European influence, the lands in the American West represented the first "true" colonies of the United States (Corbin and Rodgers 2008, p. 7; see also Jordan et al. 1997, p. 4). Colonialism is distinct from colonization. Colonization refers to processes of migration and settlement, which inherently included "contact" between the colonizers and the colonized. Colonialism, on the other hand, involves power, such as the exploitation of people and lands in one region by people from another. "Colonialism is the major cultural and historical fact of the last 500 years and to some extent the last 5000 years…," and although we purportedly live in a postcolonial world, the economic, social, and intellectual consequences of colonialism and memory politics endure (Gosden 2004, pp. 5–6; see also Orser 2010, p. 138; Silliman 2005).

Archaeological theoretical discussions recently emphasized the lingering context of colonialism where American Indians and Canadian First Nations "...continue to be second-class citizens in the cultural resources world of North America...in a system supposedly designed to protect their heritage..." (Watkins 2003, p. 283; see also Hegmon 2003 and Moss 2005; but see examples of long-term success in Prentiss 2012). The complex repercussions of colonialism are evident in recent archaeological studies in the American West (Allen 2010a, b; Carter et al. 2005; Liebmann 2006; Lightfoot 2005, 2006; Mills and Martinez 1997; Pavao-Zuckerman and LaMotta 2007; Rothschild 2006; Silliman 2004, 2005; Thomas 1989; Wilcox 2002, 2009, 2010a, b; Zimmerman 2007), revealing the influence of postcolonial theory on archaeology (Orser 2010, p. 136). Postcolonial approaches question the "knowledge about and the representation of colonized 'Others' that has been produced in colonial and imperial contexts," providing a "theoretical stance" to investigate and challenge the discourses of colonialism (Liebmann 2008, pp. 2–4).

In reaction to "internal dialogues and external critiques" calling for increased involvement of descendant communities (Nicholas and Hollowell 2007, p. 59), postcolonialists strive to contribute to our understanding of colonial experiences, emphasizing the agency of indigenous peoples and investigating the ethnogeneses that have developed amid the context of colonialism (Liebmann 2008, p. 2). Even though modern archaeology is laden with a worldview that is grounded in Western science, amid the postcolonial theoretical climate, it is a discipline that is clearly "bereft without embracing other ways of...knowing and doing as valid alternatives" (Nicholas and Hollowell 2007, p. 61, 64; see also Blackhawk 2006). Such alternatives may include tools for sustainability and will require data from sociohistorical contexts in which most historical archaeologists work, which tend to be contexts where indigenous peoples are marginalized and subordinated to dominant structures and policies, with many places still feeling their effects (Orser 2010, p. 136). Figure 3 shows the reservations where many of these communities reside; please note that there are a number of indigenous groups in the West not represented in Fig. 3, since those groups remain unrecognized by the federal government. Those reservations represent a new set of cultural landscapes (e.g., Ambler et al. 2008; Medicine Crow 2003; Neihardt 1979; Old Coyote and Old Coyote 2003; Stands in Timber and Liberty 1969), set against the backdrop of mainstream and predominantly Eurocentric Western narratives.

When the Spanish arrived and established the colony of New Mexico in 1598, they found a region already settled and subsequently documented Pueblo, Navajo, Apache, and Ute people and villages (Liebmann 2006; Preucel 2002; Spielmann et al. 2009; Staski 2005; Wilcox 2009). Indian–Spanish interactions in colonial New Mexico during the 16th and 17th centuries were not without conflict. In August 1680, after living for 80 years under Spanish subjugation, Pueblo leaders in New Mexico planned an insurrection—the Pueblo Revolt—launching a series of attacks on Spanish civil and religious institutions throughout north-central New Mexico. Surviving Spanish fled to El Paso del Norte, making this one of the most successful indigenous revolts in the history of the Americas. In 1692, the Spanish returned with

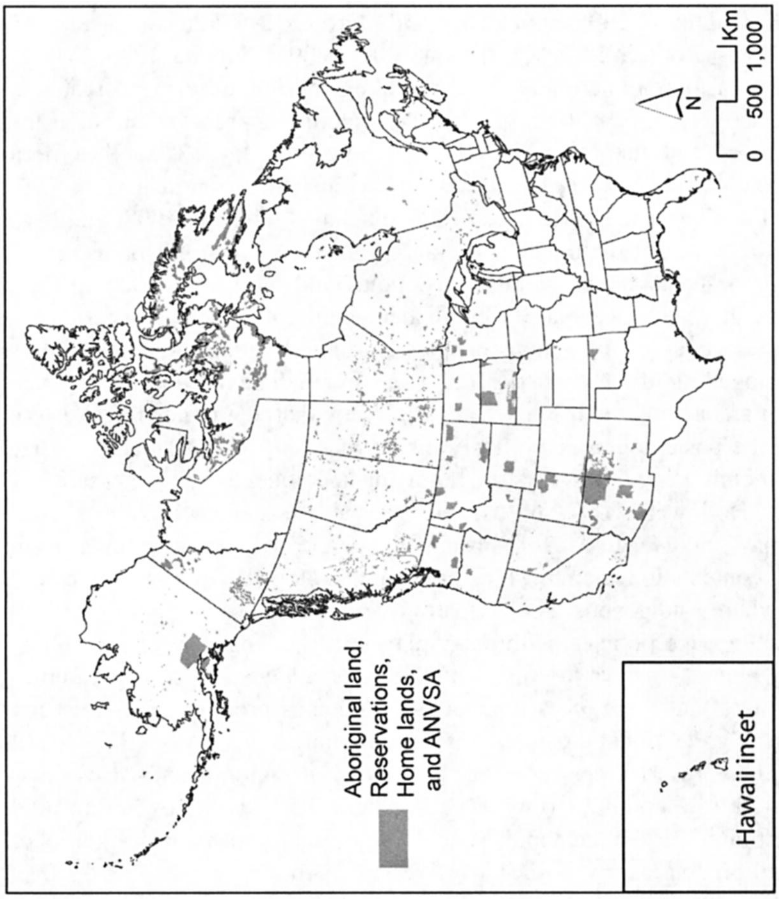
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Fig. 3 Map showing the current locations of American Indian and First Nations reservations in the US and Canada (map courtesy of Diane Whited). Please note that there are a number of indigenous groups in the West not represented in this figure since those groups remain unrecognized by the federal government

hordes of colonists and indigenous allies; however, to avoid any more insurrections, the Spanish authorities recognized Pueblo land rights and permitted indigenous religious practices (Wilcox 2009), driving a postcolonial revitalization movement among Pueblo people in the American Southwest (Liebmann 2006).

Integrated archaeological evidence, oral native histories, and written records of events surrounding the 1680 Pueblo Revolt also support the argument that Puebloan peoples were never conquered. Rather, during the 16th and 17th centuries they successfully resisted Spanish hegemony and survived with their cultural identity intact by reoccupying sites on defensive mountainous terrain that had agricultural potential, was extensively occupied during prehistory, and provided safety during times of stress (Wilcox 2009, p. 28; see also Kulisheck 2003; Preucel 2002; Reséndez 2005).

Centuries after the Pueblo Revolt, American colonization sprawled across the Great Plains and into Intermountain West between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. Abundant material remains of this late 19th-century expansion, and its subsequent impact upon indigenous peoples, dominates the archaeological record of this area (Hardesty 1991b, p. 29). By the mid-1860s, transportation routes and settlement drastically increased across the western two-thirds of the nation as more Americans than ever before resumed the quest for land, gold, and commerce. The hundreds of military posts (i.e., "forts") established throughout the American West, particularly those established prior to the Spanish-American War (1898–1901), were created to "control" American Indians (Frazer 1965, pp. xix–xxiii). "The showdown between the older Americans and the new, between two ways of life that were basically incompatible, was at hand...," and when given the choice to surrender or fight, many chose to fight (Stewart 2005, p. 321). The decades of skirmishes, pursuits, massacres, raids, expeditions, and battles between the U.S. Army and allied tribal nations in the American West in the years following the Civil War has come to be known as "the Indian Wars." Archaeological and bioarchaeological investigations of associated battlefield landscapes have yielded evidence about the art of war as well as violent expressions of culture contact (Fawcett and Lewelling 2000, pp. 43–44; Fox 1993; Fox and Scott 1991; Greene and Scott 2004; Laumbach 2001; Laumbach et al. 2001; Liebmann 2006; Madsen 1985; Merritt 2010a; Merritt et al. 2013; Milter 2013; Preucel 2002; Scott 1994; Scott et al. 1989; Scott and McFeaters 2011, p. 118; Wilcox 2009).

The Sand Creek Massacre represents another scene of violence from this period. On November 29, 1864, during the Pike's Peak Gold Rush, volunteers from Colorado's First and Third Regiments, under the command of Methodist minister and Civil War veteran Major John Chivington, attacked an unsuspecting encampment of Cheyenne people, including the villages of Chiefs Black Kettle and White Antelope along Sand Creek in eastern Colorado, slaughtering hundreds of Cheyenne villagers, "mostly women and ...fleeing children [who] became moving targets for marksmen, and several still-living Cheyenne were scalped..." (Thomas 2000, p. 53). The site of the Sand Creek Massacre still evokes the intensely personal and spiritual nature of the place and is sacred ground for Cheyenne and Arapaho (Greene and Scott 2004; National Park Service 2012; see also Nighthorse Campbell 2005; Whitacre 2005).

The Rosebud and Little Bighorn battlefields are among many other sacred places associated with this era. These battles, like the massacre at Sand Creek, were linked with a mining boom. The 1870s Black Hills Gold Rush, with boomtowns like Deadwood, South Dakota, caused thousands of emigrants to flood into the Black Hills, which had been granted to the Sioux in the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. During the winter of 1875, the Sioux, allied with Northern Cheyenne, spent the winter off reservation, on traditional hunting grounds, including areas in what is today southeastern Montana. Orders were sent out that any such groups needed to be back to reservation land within a few months or be considered hostile. Soon thereafter, the U.S. Army set out to locate those who had not returned to the reservation. Aware of being pursued by the soldiers, Northern Cheyenne, Sioux, and Arapaho allied to defend their villages.

On June 17, 1876, just one week before the Little Bighorn Battle and about 30 miles away, a battle took place along Rosebud Creek (Battle of the Rosebud), which is one of the largest battles fought between the U.S. Army and Native American forces during the "Great Sioux War," with 1,000 soldiers assisted by 300 Crow and Shoshone warriors against 1,500 Cheyenne, Sioux, and Arapaho warriors. The Cheyenne, Sioux, and their allies unified and amassed their forces to face the Army; their efforts were successful at the Rosebud, as they sparked enough fatigue and damage to cause the U.S. command to return to base camp near Sheridan, Wyoming. As a result, that command did not join up with and provide backup for the Seventh Cavalry under George Armstrong Custer at the Little Bighorn the following week (Merritt et al. 2013). Archaeological research associated with the Little Bighorn Battlefield has contributed greatly to the numerous histories of that battle and demonstrated the relevance of systematic archaeological research to forensic firearms analysis, military history, Native American studies, and Western history (Fox 1993; Scott et al. 1989, p. xiii; see also Scott 2005; National Park Service 2012). Interdisciplinary studies of these and other battlefields (Laumbach et al. 2001; Scott and McFeaters 2011; Scott et al. 1998; Wakeman and Laumbach 1997) are stark reminders of the many ways of remembering and documenting just one event, with "some of the most striking examples of individuated perspectives on the landscape" coming from archaeological analyses of battlefields (Pauls 2006, p. 70). Indigenous histories of those battles provide compelling evidence that demonstrates such individuated perspectives (e.g., Neihardt 1979, pp. 70–99; Powers 2011; Welch and Stekler 2007; Wooden Leg 2003).

The examples presented above are among countless "microhistorical" shades of the recent colonization in the American West (see also Beaudry 2011; Brooks et al. 2008). To more completely understand the intersection of these microhistories, colonialism, and the wars fought over the region's important places, it is important to consider other military endeavors. The U.S. Army was scattered throughout the American West at hundreds of small forts, posts, outposts, and stations. In addition, the Spanish conquistadores also established presidios and missions where archaeological investigations have revealed intersections of colonialism, landscape transformation, migration and diaspora, and industrial capitalism (Ayres 1995; Bertando 1997; Blind et al. 2004; Cordell and Fowler 2005; Farnsworth 1989; Staski 1998). Much of this research has long been associated with "contact" studies because these tended to be outposts that had daily interactions with local, indigenous groups, but these were much more than "contact" situations (Silliman 2005). Rather, they were complex processes, an understanding of which is necessary for critical, informed, and sophisticated archaeologies of the American West. Research related to archaeologies of colonialism (i.e., indigenous archaeology) is becoming more prevalent (Carlson 2006; Carter et al. 2005; Kulisheck 2003; McDonald et al. 1991; McNiven and Russell 2005; Silliman 2004, 2005; Warner and Baldwin 2004; Watkins 2000; Wilcox 2009, 2010a, b), and helping "shift the register" to better understand the "process of colonization from the perspective of the colonized" (Hall and Silliman 2006, p. 5; Lightfoot 2006).

Archaeology is one among several fields used in Lightfoot's (2005) historical anthropological study of California Indians to examine the ways in which past events affect living Indians today, such as issues related to acquiring tribal recognition. Using ethnohistory, ethnography, native texts, and archaeology, Lightfoot found little evidence to support the assertion that coastal Indians of central and southern California had become culturally extinct or entirely "Hispanicized" as a consequence of their colonial experiences. Rather, he observed that indigenous peoples reproduced their cultural identities and practices despite Spanish colonial and Russian commercial endeavors, explaining his findings by underscoring that "native agency in colonial settings involved the dialectical struggle between native intentions and desires and the dominance hierarchies these confronted" (Lightfoot 2005, p. 19; see also Mills 2002).

In another case, centered on the investigation of a historic Spanish mission in southern Arizona, the Sobaípuri-O'odham people, who chose to adopt the new, mission-based way of life, became targets of hostility from "kindred who remained free and from groups of other affiliations that rejected attempts at missionization" (Seymour 2007, p. 293). The northern California Miwok dealt with another level of colonial transformations, working as field hands, cowboys, artisans, cooks, and servants on bustling livestock, agricultural, and manufacturing operations in Mexican California (Silliman 2001, 2004). Many other examples demonstrate the perseverance of "precontact" ways of life in California (Allen 1998; Arkush 2011; Gamble and Zepeda 2003; Hull 2009, pp. 218–219; but see Haley and Wilcoxon 2005). Cultural perseverance and continuity were similarly representative of life on the Canadian Plateau of British Columbia, where early 19th-century contacts between Secwepemc (Shuswap) people and fur traders occurred at a Secwepemc village established adjacent to the Hudson's Bay Company's Thompson's River Post. Archaeological excavations of several house pits in that village unearthed a small number of "European" artifacts, including such household goods as bottle glass and metal basins; raw materials such as pounded copper; personal items including glass beads, clay pipe fragments, brass pins, and buttons; and lead shot for hunting (Carlson 2006, p. 224). The application of postcolonial theory to examine the remains of this village and to emphasize local contexts and historical processes revealed subtle changes and a continuum of local, indigenous traditions that have characterized Salishan cultures in the British Columbia interior for thousands of years, "regardless of the acceptance of some of the material items of colonial powers" (Carlson 2006, p. 238). The strategies that the Secwepemc people developed during the fur trade era fostered an indigenous cultural identity despite the overall changes brought about by colonial expansion.

Several other examples demonstrate instances of resilience, continuity, and the maintenance of cultural identities throughout the recent colonial period (Oland et al. 2012; Preucel 2002; Reséndez 2005; Spielmann et al. 2009; Schrieber and Mitchell 2010; see also Lightfoot 2005); my final example comes from architectural interpretations of structures on the Crow Reservation in eastern Montana. There, a powerful narrative associated with the young chief Plenty Coups' vision quest to Montana's Crazy Mountains in the 1850s helped shape and add meaning to the built environment created by and for Crow (*Apsáalooke*) people as they moved onto reservation land in south-central Montana in the early 1880s; in turn, this became an example of the ways in which the Crow coped with and survived the onslaught of regional environmental transformations brought about by ranching, extractive industries, and water control (Carter et al. 2005, pp. 97–98).

Relevant archaeologies of colonialism and the accompanying influence of postcolonial theories can, certainly, help "shift the register" (Hall and Silliman 2006, p. 5) in the American West by including indigenous landowners in the identification, documentation, and interpretation of archaeological resources. The value of such collaborative endeavors has been duly noted, with applications including interdisciplinary research into topics such as fire ecology (Mason et al. 2012), where traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) was integral to the biological and fire scientists' understanding and management of cultural landscapes and traditional cultural places (see also Zedeño and Bowser 2009).

Such interdisciplinary ventures provide a model for the ways in which TEK and information from the natural and social sciences can be integrated to transcend the nature–culture divide and to better understand and prepare for human vulnerability, risks, adaptation, resilience, and sustainability over time, particularly as humanity continues to coexist with inevitable environmental changes (e.g., Flores 2001). The methods fueling such avenues of inquiry will need to be drawn from the "maturing relationships" (cf. Murray 2011) between scientific techniques and indigenous ways of knowing (e.g., Ross and Pickering 2002; Silliman 2005; Tarka 2007; Tsuli and Ho 2002: Turner et al. 2000). Saitta (2007b) argued that, as a method, it is imperative to consider diverse knowledge systems not as competitive but as a means of evaluating "truth-claims" by converging diverse knowledge systems. Many of these diverse knowledge systems converge and sometimes collide when it comes to land use and landscape, particularly considering the relevance of postcolonial archaeologies of landscape transformation to broader social and environmental issues.

Landscape transformation

Environmental archaeological research on the American West demonstrates the impacts of "ecological and biological transformation" that accompanied colonization (Allen 2010a, p. 90). Each wave of settlers—intentionally or not—brought increasing numbers of foreign biological and cultural menageries in the form of flora, fauna (including domesticated beasts of burden, beetles and other insects, parasites), disease, religion, colonialism, capitalism, and industrialization. Collectively, these generated relatively sudden landscape transformations, with European plants and weeds swiftly dominating coastal California in less than a century (Allen 2010a, pp. 69–70; see also Melville 1994).

In a synthesis of environmental and economic historical archaeologies, Mrozowski (2010) drew attention to the ways in which capitalism, colonialism, and industry have collectively impacted the environment. The introduction of cattle to vulnerable locations like Hawai'i provides an example of the ways that newcomers had dramatic effects on the islands' ecosystems, as well as Native Hawaiians, who "confronted a new world of alien biota, shifting social and economic relations, and eventual political subjugation" (Fischer 2007, p. 372). The cattle industry transformed not only the landscape but also the economy of Hawai'i, fueling colonial expansion into the Pacific (Fischer 2007, p. 372; see also Mills 2002 and Mills and Martinez 1997; Orser 2012).

Perhaps one of the more important considerations when looking at human–environment interactions in the American West is the fact that various groups, often drastically foreign to each other, came into relatively sudden contact and each had culturally constituted perceptions of land and landscape (e.g., Church 2002, p. 223; Makley and Makley 2010; Thomas 2005; Weisiger 2004; see also Anschuetz et al. 2001; Basso 1996; Pred 2008). What was sacred to some became a source of profit for industrialists and new homes for many settlers for whom the land also became sacred.

Landscape transformations that took place over the past several centuries (and millennia) have much to teach us about land use in the West, providing parables with relevance to modern world concerns, particularly those related to climate change, with place-based lessons of "landscape learning" (Rockman and Steele 2003). Archaeological studies of the last 500 years offer opportunities to document the transformation of nature into culture (through the process of learning), which can, in turn, be placed into a pedagogical set of tools to outline culturally and historically informed conservative conservation ethics and protocols that span vulnerability to sustainability (Hardesty 2003, p. 81; Rockman and Steele 2003; Rockman and Flatman 2012). The interdisciplinary nature of the archaeology of the historical period in the American West can serve as an interpretive bridge to understand the relatively rapid natural and cultural changes occurring before, during, and after the last 500 years of colonialism, industrial capitalism, and their intertwined repercussions of migration and landscape transformation (Hardesty 2010, pp. 183–184; see also Hämäläinen 2003; O'Connor 2004).

When Europeans, Asians, and Africans began global diasporas in the 15th century, they sparked changes that have shaped the modern world, including an "army of biological agents who silently began their own colonizing efforts" (Mrozowski 2006, p. 23; see also Orser 2010, 2012). Icons of the recent natural history of the American West, horses and tumble mustard (tumbleweeds), represent only two of the vast numbers of fauna and flora introduced during the last several centuries. The earliest documented emergence of "Old World" plants and animals in California dates to the mid-18th century, when Spanish and Mexican colonization introduced the mission system to the region in what is today southern California. Even though historians tend to agree that most European plants in California date from after the 1848–1849 Gold Rush, Allen's (2010b, p. 71) research indicates that "rapid ecological change occurred in the lands surrounding the Franciscan missions, well before the Gold Rush and the later American occupation." Biogeographical studies have similarly found that Mediterranean annuals moved into California before the first missions were founded (Mensing and Byrne 1998).

Landscape transformations from European-introduced plant species in central Mexico took over 300 years, and "the magnitude of the change, good and bad, was almost greater than the mind could encompass or the heart endure. The metamorphosis was more than political or religious or intellectual or technological; it was biological" (Allen 2010b, p. 78; Crosby 1994, pp. 47–48). In comparison, the archaeological record at several California missions has indicated that such alterations took just over 70 years in coastal California and had a "profound effect on both the native and nonnative human population" (Allen 2010b, p. 78; see also Crosby 2005).

The reintroduction of the horse to North America in the 17th century left a wake of cultural and ecological changes, particularly among Plains tribal groups, who rapidly incorporated horses into their daily lives (e.g., Haines 1938; Osborn 1983). The spread of horse culture to the Plains began with the expulsion of the Spanish from New Mexico during the Pueblo Revolt in 1680, at which time the victorious Pueblo Indians captured thousands of horses and other livestock and then traded the animals to the Plains Indians (Haines 1938, pp. 429–431). In a relatively short time, groups such as the Comanche adapted to a fully mounted, nomadic lifestyle by the 1730s (Hämäläinen 2003, 2008). Other indigenous Plains groups soon adopted horses into their lifestyles, creating a powerful and iconic ethnogenesis based on the return of the horse to North America (Hämäläinen 2003).

While American Indian groups experienced an ethnogenesis by way of introduced livestock, Spanish colonists, even with all of their European imports, struggled in the new landscape. While settling among the Pueblo villages in New Mexico, the Spanish built homes, *estancias* (ranches), Franciscan missions, planted crops, raised livestock, and imported ceramics, tools, and textiles (Trigg 2004, p. 223). Throughout most of the 17th century, documentary sources indicate distress at a Spanish colony in New Mexico, with the land Eurocentrically described as "sterile, lacking in everything necessary to support human life," with crops failing year after year, with a "great many Indians perished of hunger, lying dead along the roads, in the ravines, and in their huts...," and with the colonists low on food because their herds were dying (Trigg 2004, p. 223). Despite this foreboding transition, the initial Spanish presence persisted for almost a century before the colony was abandoned after the Pueblo Rebellion of 1680 (see discussion above). Colonists soon realized that finding food in these unfamiliar environments required practical decisions about their cuisine, and they became dependent on indigenous people. In turn, indigenous people coped with relatively extreme landscape transformations and changing social relations associated with the influx of "people intent on acquiring their lands," which had long represented the basis of their food production (Trigg 2004, pp. 245–246).

During the 18th century, the Navajo (Diné) in the Four Corners area integrated Spanish livestock, namely, sheep and goats, into their lives. This was a significant change, as the people living in this area were not yet pastoralists when the Spanish arrived—they were farmers. As pastoralism took hold, growing numbers of flocks caused families to spread out across the region, promoting the adoption of transhumance, an ancient pastoral pattern involving seasonal migrations to various ecological zones to sustain herding in arid lands (Weisiger 2004, p. 253). This lifestyle was distinct from the Diné's Apache forebears, but it had repercussions. By the early 20th century, the booming population of livestock sparked the consequences of overgrazing, which meant the landscape could no longer sustain vigorous forage. Conflicts associated with grazing areas increased, and, in this case, pastoralism eventually proved unsustainable (Weisiger 2004, p. 270). The Diné story gives pause for reflection, especially considering that the lesson of an unsustainable practice in one of the West's arid regions took less than three centuries.

Another example draws attention to the fact that U.S. land use laws generated in the well-watered East ineffectively governed settlement in the arid West (Church 2002, pp. 222–223). Indigenous residents, Spanish-speaking New Mexican (Hispaño) settlers, and European American homesteaders interacted with land and water in diverse ways amid southern Colorado's arid environment. Even though each group had different ways of dealing with landscape transformations, all skirted federal law concerning homestead settlement since those laws were inappropriate for subsistence in an arid region. When Spanish-speaking New Mexicans came to southern Colorado in the 1860s–1870s, they were accustomed to an indigenous-influenced way of dealing with aridity, whereby each family had both irrigable and nonirrigable lands, with territory divided along river bottoms into private holdings. Then, through inheritance over generations, these were further subdivided into smaller strips, but they all still had water frontage. As a result, northern New Mexico villages displayed a vernacular, long, narrow field pattern resulting from generations of such inheritance (Church 2002, p. 226). On the other hand, the U.S. one-mile-square Township and Range arbitrary grid system, established by the Northwest Ordinance in 1787, was integral to the Homestead Act of 1862 since that relied on land bounded "regularly and arbitrarily, with no consideration of water availability, local topography, arability, or grazing potential" (Church 2002, pp. 226–227). The indigenous-inspired, Hispaño ways of living in an arid environment were far more suitable for the land than laws created for the East's relative abundance of rainfall (Fig. 4).

Lack of rainfall and scarcity of easily accessible water did not deter the groups rapidly colonizing arid lands in the American West, especially those seeking to capitalize on the region's extractive industries, which became harbingers of landscape transformation in the region. The decaying remains of these types of archaeological sites can be used as labs for fleshing out valuable information about landscape transformations stemming from the intersection of extractive industries, capitalism, urbanization, labor, and identity (e.g., Spude et al. 2011), but also about human ecological studies of risk, adaptation, and innovation. Many of the West's extractive industries tended to be situated in arid areas with low and/or unpalatable water supplies, and so complex engineering systems became prevalent to support mining ventures and the infrastructure accompanying those ventures. The well-watered East relied upon relatively simple water-gathering systems, but the West's

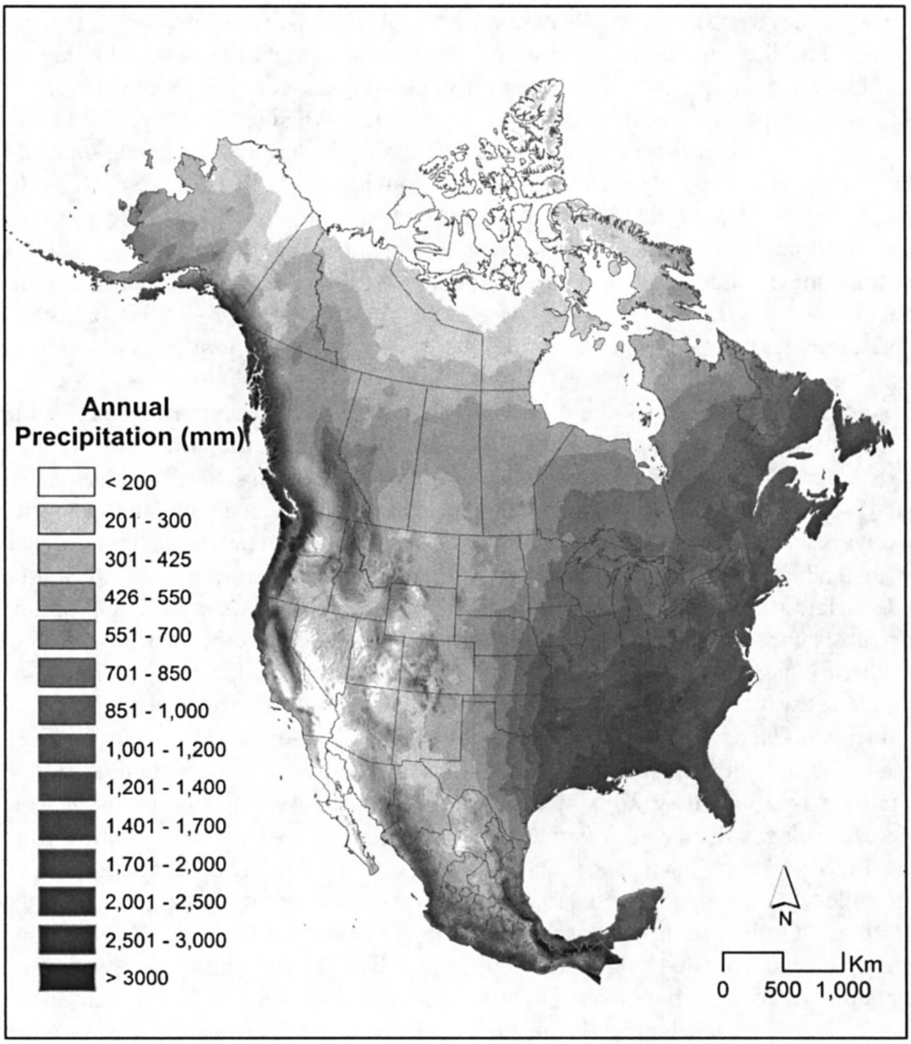
Annual
Precipitation (mm)
< 200
201 - 300
301 - 425
426 - 550
551 - 700
701 - 850
851 - 1,000
1,001 - 1,200
1,201 - 1,400
1,401 - 1,700
1,701 - 2,000
2,001 - 2,500
2,501 - 3,000
> 3000
N
0 500 1,000 Km

Fig. 4 Map showing a summary of the annual rainfall in North America between 1950 and 2000, showing the distinct change that occurs around the 100th meridian, with the well-watered East receiving much more annual rainfall than the arid West (map courtesy of Diane Whited; climate data available at <http://worldclim.org/current>

"low volume of streams" required "complex and extensive water-gathering systems consisting of flumes, ditches, and canals…sometimes…dozens of miles long…[drawing] water from several watersheds" (Reynolds 1996, p. 6; see also Dixon 2005, pp. 82–87; Schamberger 1969). Water supplies, population growth, urbanization, and industrialization were all factors that fueled significant landscape changes in the mining West (Hardesty 2003, 2007). On the one hand, those landscapes represent drastic changes to indigenous ways of life (e.g., Hattori 1998). On the other hand, the mining landscapes themselves are stunning examples of humanity's earth-moving and water-controlling capabilities and have become historically significant and worthy of documentation (Ballard 2004; Baxter 2002; Mills 2011; Noble and Spude 1992; Quivik 2000, 2003, 2007; White 2003). Examples include hydraulic mining ventures that created "badlands," such as the Malakoff Diggins, an industrial capital enterprise known for drastically reconstructing landscapes in the foothills of northern California's western Sierra Nevada (Hardesty 2003, p. 84; see also Baxter and Allen 2005). The Berkeley Pit in Butte, Montana, an open-pit copper mine opened in 1955 by the Anaconda Company, was the largest truck-operated open-pit mine in the U.S., 1,600-feet deep and spanning 7,000 × 5,600 feet. The pit closed in 1982 and by the 1990s superfund cleanup was [and still is] underway. Butte's mining landscape can be seen as an industrial artifact, with its complexes of industrial buildings, linear/transportation corridors, neighborhoods, and topographical features (e.g., mine cuts, Berkeley pit, waste dumps). Analyses of these industrial landscapes are becoming more relevant to the modern world's concerns with how best to navigate anything from global changes to energy needs (Quivik 2000, 2007).

There has been resilience of some natural resources in areas affected by mining, with one example coming from Death Valley, California. An environmental (soils) study of Death Valley's historical mining landscapes indicated that there was a relatively fast, roughly 70-year recovery of native plants in some—but not all—mining communities that went bust and were abandoned in one of the area's mining districts (Brown 2000; see additional discussion in Hardesty 2007). Although there is much more environmental archaeological work to be done on soils associated with mining sites, it is also crucial to accept the reality that the region's landscapes "may return to a similar condition over a given period of time, but will never again contain exactly the same suite of plants, animals, and general environmental conditions" (Fisher et al. 2009b, p. 6; see also Locke and Deardon 2005).

Mining and other extractive industries required railroads to transport materials to and from work camps and urban centers, and railroads caused yet another series of landscape changes (Merritt et al. 2012). There were thousands of rail lines—large and small gauge—leaving extensive dendritic networks of railroad grades, trestles, and tunnels throughout the West. These not only altered the landscape in the immediate wake of the rail lines themselves but also swiftly and conveniently transported resources, supplies, information, and people in and out of the region.

Places like the globally significant waterfront and gold rush port of San Francisco, California, demonstrate maritime travel's influence on the creation of urban landscapes. Using data from buried ships and collapsed buildings from the 19th-century boomtown's wharves, Delgado (2009) explored the rapid rise of San Francisco from 1849 to 1856, arguing that the discovery of gold was not necessarily an instigator of the city's growth as it changed from a small village of a few hundred to a "city of thousands" in a few years (Delgado 2009, p. 1). The "Bay Area" underwent an accompanying coastal landscape transformation that created a new maritime environment with the Yerba Buena cove (San Francisco Bay), which had the appearance of a forest of masts and rigging from hundreds of wooden ships anchored throughout that cove (see also Arnold and Keyes 2000; Pastron and Delgado 1991).

A poignant example of all that can be learned from the West's well-preserved urban archaeological resources, San Francisco's Gold Rush maritime origins and buried waterfront survived as an archaeological site, buried beneath the ruins of several catastrophic fires, 22 million cubic yards of landfill, and urban development. "The rapid pace of change and the massive amount of physical redevelopment of Yerba Buena into San Francisco completely erased most traces of the Gold Rush city" (Delgado 2009, p. 113), but archaeological investigations have revealed the fate of numerous old ships that burned and/or were trapped and buried by the landfill used to build up the original waterfront (see also Byrd et al. 2012). Maritime archaeological studies, as well as urban redevelopment, in places like Anchorage, Portland, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Tucson, and Seattle, promise to expand our understanding of urbanization and transportation hubs—and the landscape transformations they heralded—within the web of colonialism, industrial capitalism, and modernization in the American West (e.g., Fitzsimons 1996; Hess 1996; Roth 2000; Shapiro 2008; Thiel 2002; Williams 1996). The droves of people passing through and building these cities moved into the region from all reaches of the globe, representing a series of large-scale migrations and diasporas worthy of their own theme.

Migration and diaspora: Transnationalism, identity, and ethnogenesis

Migration refers to the processes related to vast numbers of settlers flooding into a region. Published historical archaeological studies of overland emigration "sites" are relatively few considering the impacts this process had on the American West (Buck 1994; Hardesty 1997; Hawkins and Madsen 1990; Lingenfelter 1986; Morgan 1963). A small number of emigration events ended in tragedy, such as the Donner Party's ordeal with survival cannibalism (Dixon et al. 2010, 2011; Grayson 1990; Hardesty 1997, 2011b; Johnson 1996; Willey and Hardesty 2000; see also Goodyear 2006) or the Mountain Meadows Massacre (Novak 2008; Novak and Kopp 2003). These unfortunate episodes endure as popular tales of the risks taken by settlers traveling overland, adding fuel to the "mythic aura" of the region (Malone 1989; Wylie 1993). Despite such accounts of trepidation, desperation, and violence, waves of settlers continued to move into the region.

Diaspora generally refers to the dispersion of people from their original homeland. People from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Mexico rapidly colonized the American West from various parts of the world, sometimes leaving unique archaeological signatures, such as Basque sheepherders, who left graphic carvings called arborglyphs, including names and dates, on aspen throughout areas like the Intermountain West (Crawford 2005; Mallea-Olaetxe 2000); or Chinese miners and woodcutters, who left distinctive stone hearths at their isolated, rural work camps (Merritt 2011; Smith and Dixon 2005); or Italian railroad workers who left distinctive stone ovens in their camps (Wegars 1991). These archaeological signatures provide examples of global connections, which have called for a transnational way of approaching migration and diaspora.

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The concept of transnationalism is inherently bound to any given diaspora, demonstrating the ways in which researchers need to trace the "flows of ideas, objects, services, and people" (González-Tennant 2011, p. 513) to understand the nuances of cultural changes that occurred as various groups became dispersed from their homelands. A transnational approach can be seen as one methodological tool to interpret resources related to diasporas throughout the world (González-Tennant 2011; cf. Orser 2007; Ross 2011; Voss and Allen 2008, p. 16). Recognizing that transnational frameworks require working with local heritage (including descendant) communities, engaging with other archaeologists and historians, as well as colleagues in African, American Indian, Asian, Chinese, Hispanic, Irish, etc., studies (cf. Voss and Allen 2008, p. 20), it is possible to integrate resources to better understand marginalized populations, particularly those with little or no related historical documentation about their cultural heritage. For example, in telling the story of the Hispanic population living in southeastern Colorado, Clark noted that their "status as nonlandowners mutes their documentary presence" (Clark 2011, p. xix), which, in turn, required methodological challenges to investigate Hispanic sites in that region. Clark's and other archaeological analyses continue to flesh out intricacies of transnational, cultural, economic, and engendered identities over the past few centuries amid colonial and environmental contexts (e.g., Burley et al. 1992; Church 2002; Dixon 2011; Fawcett and Lewelling 2000; Flexner 2012; Hardesty 1998a; Hattori 1998; Lightfoot 2005; Spude 2011; Voss 2008a, b).

Diaspora studies in the American West provide critical insights to "understanding the early composition and development of modern African American, European American, Hispanic, and Native American cultures" (Lightfoot 1995, p. 201). Examples presented in all themes of this article draw from research related to the experiences of various cultural groups in the West who tend to be underdocumented or misrepresented in mainstream histories of the region.

The history of Africans in the American West is as old as the recent colonization period being examined here, starting with the story of Estevanico (Esteban), an enslaved Moroccan traveling with Spanish conquistadores. Esteban's travels "initiated the tripartite meeting of Indian, Spanish, and Anglo cultures that was to shape much of the region's history" (Taylor 1998, pp. 28–29, 2000, p. 103). African Americans who moved to this region during the era of slavery tended to find more social and economic opportunity in western states and territories (Billington and Hardaway 1998, p. 240; Captain 1995, pp. 42–44). After the Reconstruction experiment "ended" in 1877, thousands of former enslaved people left the South and sought the opportunities of the West (see also Smith 2011).

People of African ancestry who lived in Virginia City, Nevada—and who visited the surrounding Comstock Mining District during the latter portion of the 19th century—found themselves amid a complex political climate that overtly and subtly pervaded many aspects of their lives, demonstrating a pattern of integration, marginal survival, and success (Dixon 2011; James 1998, pp. 7, 152–153). On the one hand, they appeared to have had more freedom and opportunity than people of color living in many other parts of the country in terms of economic successes and an overall tone of integrated living that often included neighborly acceptance. On the other hand, they consistently experienced racist undertones and overtly restrictive attitudes and laws (Rusco 1975, pp. 23, 42–44). In short, historical research has indicated that people of African ancestry lived amid a complex juxtaposition of integration and prejudice in the American mining West.

Such variation in the treatment of people of color was common elsewhere in the West, as noted by Schubert (1971, p. 411) in his examination of African American soldiers stationed throughout the region. The 25th Infantry Regiment, the Buffalo Soldiers, was stationed at Fort Missoula, Montana, between 1888 and 1898, where local folklore suggests they were treated well and with respect (Sorenson 2012, pp. 64–65). A recent analysis of a dump assemblage from Fort Missoula initially sought to better understand the material remains of the Buffalo Soldiers stationed there; however, the dump did not provide enough information to determine the sources of the historic trash in that site (Mueller 2011; see also Laumbach et al. 2001).

In another case from Oakland, California, urban archaeological excavations recovered remains of households occupied during the 1890s primarily by African American Pullman car porters working for the Southern Pacific Railway, the "aristocracy of African American railroad workers" (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001, p. 650). Among the materials excavated from this site were kitchenwares associated with genteel dining rooms and reminiscent of the Victorian era's culture of gentility. Even though status among African Americans at this time was by far more affiliated with education, rational morality, and a general denial of material wealth (see Captain 1995; Mullins 1999, p. 27), considering artifacts as an information system, as well as the sociohistorical context of this archaeological case, the porters' purchase of goods "above their status…" was explained as a "form of resistance among African Americans at this time, since being well dressed and furnishing one's home with genteel artifacts contradicted racist assumptions" (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001, pp. 645–646, 651).

A final example of an African diaspora archaeological investigation includes the work at the African American-owned Boston Saloon, which intended to build on the existing historical and political foundations for people of African ancestry in 19th-century Nevada (Dixon 2011; James 1998, p. 153; Rusco 1975). The archaeological remains of the Boston Saloon suggest that it was on the more elegant end of the city's saloon spectrum. Revisiting Praetzellis and Praetzellis' (2001) discussion, such remains can certainly be interpreted as contradicting and combating late 19th- and early 20th-century racist assumptions (Dixon 2005, 2011, pp. 128–130).

As is the case for other cultural groups discussed below, historians have established a contextual foundation for archaeological investigations of the African diaspora in the American West (e.g., Billington and Hardaway 1998; James 1998; Katz 1996; Lang 1998; Meredith 2007; Rusco 1975; Taylor 1998; see local research tools such as http://mhs.mt.gov/research/AfricanAmerican/AfricanAmericanInMT.asp). Even with such a foundation—and despite the fact that the most significant *unforced* migration of people of African ancestry occurred after 1849 as African Americans moved westward (Captain 1995, p. 55; Woods 1983)—there have been only a few archaeological examinations of postbellum free African and African American populations in the American West (e.g., Cox 2007; Dixon 2006, 2011;

Guenther 1988; Mallios 2009; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992b, 2001; Wood et al. 1999). Archaeological studies of postemancipation life for people of African ancestry in the American West have the potential to expand our understanding of African American life in a racialized society (Barnes 2011, p. 5; see also Fennell 2011; Mullins 2008b).

The Chinese diaspora was the result of mass migrations of Chinese citizens, most of whom came from Guangdong province near the port city of Guangzhou (Canton) and who set up communities throughout western North America, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i (Voss and Allen 2008, pp. 5–6, 8–9). In the U.S. mainland, the first wave of Chinese immigration was prompted by the California Gold Rush, starting with news of the 1848 discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill. Prior to 1849, no more than 50 Chinese (mostly scholars, merchants, former sailors, and performers) lived in the continental U.S., most in urban port cities in the North Atlantic. After the Gold Rush, that number grew to over 20,000 by the early 1850s (Voss and Allen 2008, pp. 8–9).

Overseas Chinese archaeology has flourished over the past few years, with archaeological investigations into Chinese shipwrecks and maritime culture (Layton 2002; Van Tilberg 2007), mining ventures (Norman 2012), urban communities known as Chinatowns (Costello et al. 2008; Fosha and Leatherman 2008; Greenwood 1978, 1996; Praetzellis et al. 1987; Rossillon 2008), Chinese farm workers associated with the California Gold Rush (Van Bueren 2008), engendered approaches to material culture (Voss and Williams 2008; Wegars 1993, 2003), studies of material distribution (Michaels 2005; see also Yoffee and Crowell 2006), analyses of the anti-Chinese movement (Baxter 2008), investigations of social organization (Chen 2001; Merritt 2011), studies of railroad construction camps (Baxter and Allen 2008; Merritt et al. 2012; Rogers 1997; Rossillon 1984; Wegars 1991), and research comparing Chinese and Japanese salmon cannery workers' dining habits (Ross 2011). These topics illustrate the ways that archaeology has expanded our understanding of the diversity of Chinese experiences in the West. Archaeologists are fortunate that many of the challenges involved in such research have already been encountered by historians of the Chinese diaspora and by scholars in Asian studies and Asian American studies, whose theoretical and interpretive frameworks can guide archaeologists in their discipline's growing involvement in scholarship related to Overseas Chinese communities (Voss and Allen 2008, p. 5; see also Mullins 2008a).

Overseas Chinese archaeology is part of a broader subfield known as Asian American archaeology. The cross-cultural comparisons of Japanese and Chinese salmon cannery workers (Ross 2011) is one example among a growing field dedicated to fleshing out the distinctions between Chinese and Japanese identities and communities, as these and other Asian immigrants moved into the North American West. Such studies are well underway, with transnational political interpretations of ethnic (i.e., national) identity on gravestones associated with a Japanese plantation worker cemetery in Pāhala, Hawai'i (Kraus-Friedberg 2011), as well as transnational identity and mortuary material culture associated with the Chinese plantation worker cemetery in Pāhala, Hawai'i (Kraus-Friedberg 2008). Bringing 20th-century archaeology into focus, recent research at Japanese internment camps is providing avenues to better understand WWII-era social and cultural issues (Kamp-Whittaker 2010; Shew 2010; Skiles and Clark 2010).

Archaeological studies also have underscored Spanish colonial and Mexican American identities (Butzer and Butzer 2000; Camp 2011a; Church 2002, 2008; Clark 2005, 2011; Heilen and Reid 2009; George 2008; Voss 2008b, 2012; see also Villalpando 2002), with intriguing examinations of such topics as the significance and ubiquity of Hispanic influence on the western cattle industry (Clayton et al. 2001; Fischer 2007; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001; Ziesing 1997). Other examples involving Spanish colonial and Mexican American communities were already discussed above since they crosscut the colonialism and landscape themes.

There are numerous other colonizing groups who have been equally marginalized in most primary sources. Irish Canadians (Smith 2004; see also Pyszczyk 1989), Hawaiians (Bayman 2009; Mills 1996, 2008, 2009; Rogers 1993), Metís (Burley 1989, 2000; Burley et al. 1992, 1996; Hanks and Pokotylo 1989), Mormons (Leone 1973; Merritt 2006; Scarlett 1999, 2006; Scarlett et al. 2007), and Russians (Black 2004; Blee 1985, 1989, 1990; Blee et al. 1986; Mills and Martinez 1997; Veltre and McCartney 2002) are among some of the other groups representing diaspora populations with transnational connections and multicultural histories. Whether immigrants or people just passing through, this convergence of cultures from all over the world in the North American West was powerfully fueled by industrial capitalism.

Industrial capitalism: An intersection of transportation, extractive industries, labor, and communication

The major theoretical paradigms driving historical archaeological studies in general have spanned the symbolic (Deetz 1977) and commercial dimensions of material culture (Leone 1995), with much of the field emphasizing archaeologies of capitalism. Despite the Eurocentric nature of the study of capitalism (Orser 2010, p. 114, 2012), it is nearly impossible to overlook the power of industrial capitalism in the American West, especially considering such topics as extractive industries, labor, transportation, and communication (cf. Hardesty 2010; Purser 2011).

Exploration, transportation, and the establishment of outposts were among the first grappling hooks of colonization associated with an emerging capitalist economy that had foundations in mercantilism (Orser 2014). El Camino Real, the first long-distance route established by European colonists in the western hemisphere, spanned some 1,600 miles (2,575 km), connecting Mexico City with Santa Fe between 1598 and 1880. Although it fell out of use in 1880 because of the rise of railroads, archaeological investigations of this and other early transportation systems (e.g., Staski 2005, p. 231; White 1991b) have much to reveal about vectors for the social and ecological transformations described under the landscape transformation theme above.

Over 200 years after the Spanish created El Camino Real, Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery (1804–1806) set out on their epic journey. Archaeological studies of segments of the trails used by Lewis and Clark indicate that once the

Corps of Discovery had to cross the Rocky Mountains and go overland instead of traveling via waterways, they took advantage of complex, existing prehistoric trail systems (e.g., Karuzas 2008; McLeod 1984; see also Hall et al. 2003; Karsmizki 2004; Saraceni 1998). They made their way to the region associated with the Oregon coast and spent the winter of 1805–1806 at Fort Clatsop along a Columbia River estuary, inland from the Oregon coast, compiling geographical and other information and preparing for the return trip. This was the United States' first military transcontinental expedition dedicated to exploring the American West's resources with an aim of economic exploitation (Fritz 2004; Ronda 1998, 2003).

Extractive industries soon followed, and archaeological analyses of these properties highlight the ways in which early transportation corridors across the American West facilitated resource extraction, with extractive industries accelerating "conquest" (Hardesty 1991b, p. 32). Mining and the fur trade have been prominent in the published literature related to studying the social and cultural nuances of extractive industries in the American West. Nevertheless, the ruins of many other extractive industries lay across the region's wide, open spaces, representing harbingers of industrial capitalism, transnationalism, landscape transformation (urbanization), and colonialism, including archaeologies of logging and lumbering sites (Dixon 1996; Dixon and McQueen 1997; Hunt 1982; Paullin 2007), charcoal making (Hill 1987; Lindström 1993; Reno 1996), ceramics operations (Allen et al. 2013; Matero 2012; Merritt 2006; Scarlett 2006; Scarlett et al. 2007), and irrigation and water control (Hardesty and Buhr 2001; Reynolds 1995, 1996).

The fur trade was the earliest wave of industrial capitalism to work its way throughout the region. By the first decade of the 19th century, the Louisiana Purchase inspired a fur trade boom in the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest. Fur-trading outposts, including the Russian outpost at Fort Ross in northern California, were "typically founded by commercial companies that had in common an agenda of exploiting available resources (land, animal, mineral, and people) for great profits" (Lightfoot 2005, p. 7). Fur companies hired "mountain men" to travel to these regions to trap fur-bearing animals and/or trade with Indian trappers.

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, two British companies, Hudson's Bay Company (North America's oldest commercial corporation) and the North West Company, along with American companies (American Fur Company and the Pacific Fur Company), dominated the fur trade in the U.S. and Canada. The Russian-American Company controlled the trade in the North Pacific. As the large fur-trading companies moved westward from the northeast, establishing themselves in St. Louis, Missouri, they—and westward-moving colonists—required and therefore influenced intricate maritime and land transportation networks along waterways. The Missouri River connected St. Louis with the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, creating a "natural riverine highway to the west from the Mississippi" (Corbin and Rodgers 2008, p. 7) that became a vector for trade, migration, and the establishment of extractive industries in the region. A maritime archaeological study of early steamboat development and the subsequent 19th-century expansion of the upper Missouri West (Fig. 5) centered on an analysis of the wreck of the steamboat *Red Cloud*, which struck a snag and sank en route to Fort Benton in July 1882 and drew attention to the ways that inland waterways were instrumental during Manifest

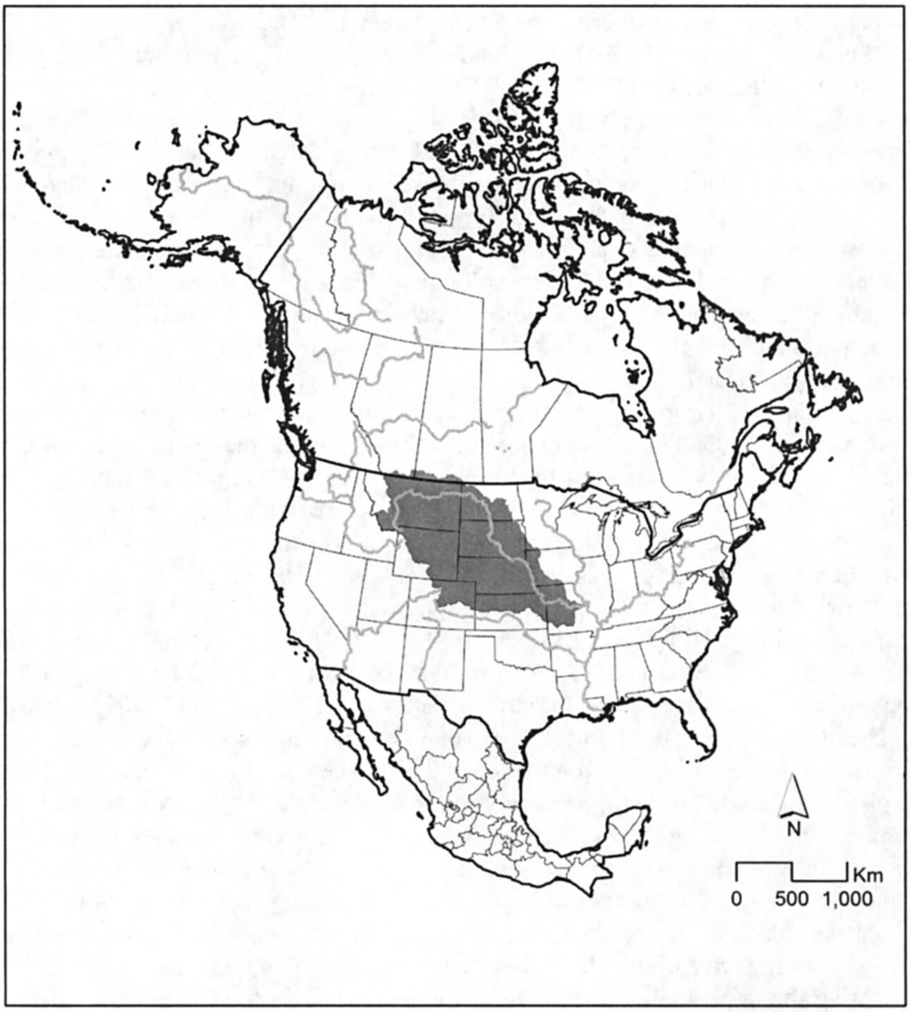

Fig. 5 Map showing the Missouri River Watershed. The inland waterways facilitated westward migration, with Manifest Destiny and settlement connecting the upper Missouri West continent (map courtesy of Diane Whited)

Destiny's mid-19th-century (1845–1849) context of westward migration (Corbin 2006).

Archaeological studies of the fur trade during this era have often focused on outposts referred to as "forts." Forts of the American West included fortresses established by fur trading companies, but "fort" also was used to describe military posts and private enterprises. Thus, the term "fort" was applied to the hundreds of military forts, presidios, and trading posts established throughout the American West (Frazer 1965). Archaeologists have conducted research at presidios (e.g., Barker et al. 1995; Blind et al. 2004) and military forts (e.g., Mueller 2011; Staski and Reiter 1996; Woodward 1958). Given the transnational connections of these outposts—along with relationships between with local, indigenous cultures—the fur-trade-era archaeological research can help us understand "modern world system" interconnections between relatively remote outposts and the rest of the world (Burley et al. 1996; Hamilton 2002; Pfeiffer 1981, 1982, 2006; Sudbury 2009; see also Wallerstein 1974, 1980) and is producing data that are ripe for studies in ethnogenesis and social organization (Burley 1989, 2000; Burley et al. 1992, 1996; Carlson 2006; Ewen 1986; Hamilton 2002; Lightfoot 2005; Pyszczyk 1985, 1989). Many of these investigations illustrate the ways that colonialism, landscape transformation, migration, and industrial capitalism (labor) overlap.

For example, Russian merchants along the Pacific Coast intensely harvested terrestrial and marine mammals and exploited indigenous peoples to procure and process furs and to work as porters and manual laborers; unlike the missionaries, who interacted with California Indians to transform values and cultures, the Russian merchants interacted with them in order to exploit them as cheap labor (Lightfoot 2005, p. 7; see also Silliman 2004). The success of the Russian-American Company in Alaska (an estimated 50,000 fur seals were killed each year between 1798 and 1821) was based on the "unsurpassed" hunting skills of Aleut labor (Veltre and McCartney 2002, p. 11). Similarly, the Iñupiat Eskimos of the western Arctic became an essential labor force for commercial whalers, representing an example of the global expansion of European American industrial capitalism and its increasing needs for more labor and raw materials. Nevertheless, the Iñupiat capitalized on the system, introducing a newfound material wealth that "did not destroy the fabric of Iñupiat life" and representing an excellent example of social adaptation (Cassell 2005, pp. 148–149).

Mining ventures represent another extractive industry undergoing extensive archaeological analysis in the West. Spanish "explorers and settlers searched for the mythical El Dorado" as soon as they ran aground in the region, developing mineral and metal mines in the American Southwest and southern California and introducing mining technologies developed in medieval Europe (Hardesty 2010, p. xiii; see also Van Bueren 2004). The lure of mining brought mass migrations of people, planned impermanence, and extreme landscape changes (Brand 2012; Hardesty 2010; Spude et al. 2011).

Mining rushes are considered episodes of colonization because they "involve the establishment of colonies or groups of people in places distant from their homeland and previously unknown to them," and each rush left behind a distinctive material expression of the colonization events (Hardesty 2003, p. 82). Examples of these mining-based colonization events range from studies related to the history of mining technology to the social and cultural histories of mining communities and their social and physical environments (Dixon 2005; James 1998, 2012; Hardesty 1991a, b, 1994, 1998a, b, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2011a; Mills 2011; Mills and Spude 2011; Quivik 2000, 2003, 2007; Spude et al. 2011; Timmons and Dixon 2014; West 1979; White 2003, 2006).

In 1848, the discovery of gold at Sutter's Fort, Coloma, California, became the first of a series of global mining rushes in the American West, with mining communities springing up along the Fraser River in British Columbia and Pike's Peak, Colorado, in the 1850s and in Nevada's famous Comstock Mining District during the 1860s and 1870s (Hardesty 2010; Lawrence 2005). During the latter portion of the 19th century, mining rushes persisted throughout the West, with archaeological investigations documenting and understanding the complexities of these extractive ventures, including examples from such places as the Cariboo region of British Columbia (Chen 2001); Bannack, Alder Gulch, and the Garnet Range of Montana (Mathews n.d.; Timmons 2007); Leadville and Cripple Creek, Colorado (Sweitz 2012); Idaho's Clearwater Basin (Rice 1977); and the Black Hills of South Dakota (Fosha and Leatherman 2008). By the late 19th century and into the early 20th century, the Klondike Gold Rush became the new "Eldorado" (Spude and Mills 2011, p. 1). Additional 20th-century mining booms took place at various locations throughout the American West, with communities like Butte, Montana, becoming the focus of historical studies that are in need of archaeology (Emmons 1990; Finn 2012; Glasscock 1935; Malone 1981).

Although "longer-term historic interactions between Native Americans and the mining industry [have] largely evaded scholarly attention" (White 2006, p. 5), research related to the impacts of mining on indigenous populations, much like archaeologies of labor, cut across the multifaceted milieu of colonialism, industrial capitalism, and landscape transformations in the American West. Hattori's (1975, 1998) ethnohistorical and archaeological analyses "shifted the register" to view Nevada's Comstock Mining District's rapid urbanization and mining landscape development from the vantage of the northern Paiutes. As with other extractive industries, mining on the Comstock was destructive to the traditional economy of the indigenous residents. "Faced with displacement from their homeland and almost certain starvation, some northern Paiute Indians modified their traditional lifestyles and created a distinctive, urban ethnic group within Virginia City's [Nevada] cosmopolitan population" (Hattori 1998, p. 229).

Recent studies related to cultural resource management of mining resources in Alaska are "creating narratives that are both more inclusive and [that] provide a more accurate continuity with today's First Nations and Alaska Native communities" (Purser 2011, pp. 77–78). For example, by integrating Chilkoot and Chilkat Tlingits coped with the swift transformations brought about by 19th- and early 20th-century mining, as their hunting and fishing grounds and coastal–inland trade routes were usurped by the Klondike Gold Rush (Thornton 2011, p. 95; see also King 2011; Mills and Spude 2011, p. 92).

Mining communities in the West included families, bachelor communities, and all-female households, all of which navigated intersections of culture, class, and gender-based identity on a daily basis. They are laboratories for social or technical or "sociotechnical" archaeological questions (Hardesty 2003, 2010, 2011a). They also have provided springboards for studying archaeologies of labor (see also Camp 2011b; Silliman 2001, 2006, p. 156; Wolf 1982, p. 75) and collective action such as the prolific research emerging from the archaeological sites at Colorado's Berwind coal camp and Ludlow tent colony, both of which were related to the infamous 1913–1914 labor strike in southern Colorado coal fields (Ludlow Collective 2001; McGuire 2008; McGuire and Reckner 2002; Saitta 2007a, b; Walker 2003; Walker and Saitta 2002; Wood 2004).

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Other archaeological analyses of industrial capitalism in the West explicitly highlight the role of men and women—and masculinity and femininity—as the center of their inquiry (Hardesty 1998a; Higgs and Sattler 2011, p. 305; Spude 2005, pp. 89–91, 2006, pp. 309–310, 2011; Thurlo 2010, p. 90; Timmons 2007; see also Lawrence 1998). Archaeological studies of prostitution, a social and economic institution of the 19th-century American city (Seifert 2005, p. 1), serve as reminders of boomtown entrepreneurs capitalizing on the bachelor communities associated with extractive industrial communities (Meyer et al. 2005; Purser 1991; Spude 2005). Given the prevalence of the American West's bachelor communities and the relative dearth of masculinity research in anthropologies of gender (Gutmann 1997), studies of masculinity are integral to understanding the nuances of gender roles in communities associated with military activities, extractive industries, and other pursuits in the region, including fraternities (Wilkie 2010).

Gender roles were among the social networks being created and recreated in the West's communities associated with extraction industries. These networks were strengthened by the advent of relatively rapid innovations in communication. While not technically an extractive industry, communication was necessary for industrial capitalism. The iconic nature of the Pony Express, its role in connecting the American West to the rest of the world, and the potential for communication sites have been the subject of archaeological inquiry, with a focus on two stations in central Nevada that were subsequently used as telegraph stations after the Pony Express went out of existence (Hardesty 1978, 1979). These communication and transportation systems were integral to larger ideological processes transforming perceived "wilderness" into perceived "civilization" (Blanchard 2010, pp. 2–3). Electronic communications during the 19th and 20th centuries profoundly affected the development of the modern world, connecting isolated communities in the American West with the rest of the nation and the far reaches of the globe. The transcontinental telegraph was completed in 1861, effectively shutting down the Pony Express and allowing extremely rapid transmission of information and connection to an international market (Blanchard 2010; Hardesty 2010, pp. 176, 184).

The Pony Express route and telegraph stations often used stagecoach routes and stations, a reminder that communication and transportation were interconnected. In terms of transportation, roads and trails can be interpreted as material expressions of regional connections that span economic, political, and social relationships and boundaries (Purser 1989, 1992; see also Brooks and Prine 1996). Rivers provided another means of access into the region. While it had once been part of a "frontier" to the eastern states, the Mississippi, by the late 19th century, had become the center of the country. The Missouri River connected St. Louis with the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, creating a "natural riverine highway to the west from the Mississippi" that hosted a bustling steamboat industry which connected "frontier" settlements along the Missouri River with the goldfields in California and the Rocky Mountains (Corbin and Rodgers 2008, pp. 7, 113–114).

By the 1880s, railroads replaced steamboats as the driving force of America's transcontinental expansion. Transcontinental railroads were essential to the nation's growing information and transportation networks, connecting financial and political interests with the West's resources and urban centers and carrying natural resources from the American West to factories in the eastern U.S. They also conveyed information and lavish goods (e.g., oysters chilled in refrigerated cars) from coasts to remote communities in the interior of western North America. Archaeologies of railroad construction camps are providing fodder for more educated ways of considering the impacts of diasporas, landscape transformation, and industrial capitalism on railroad construction and use (Kraus 1975; Lake 1994; Landreth and Condon 1985; Merritt et al. 2012; Rossillon 1984; Wegars 1991).

Eventually, the automobile became the catalyst for additional changes to the American West's communication and transportation networks (e.g., Monaghan 2002). Dedicated in 1913 for the automobile, the Lincoln Highway was first "highway" across the West, connecting New York City's Times Square with Lincoln Park, San Francisco. Pristine segments of this Lincoln Highway still exist and have been documented as part of National Register of Historic Places evaluations (Dixon 1996). Another thoroughfare, Route 66, which connected Chicago with Los Angeles, has become the most internationally famous highway in the American West (Lamb 2012). The hotels, souvenir shops, cafes, and other commercial forms of Americana represent the most recent, visible heritage along the Route 66 landscape. The Society for Commercial Archaeology has worked to preserve the kitsch cultural heritage of Route 66 and other places associated with the recent transportation and tourist history of the American West. Beyond Route 66 but within the context of this modern, pop heritage of the West, archaeologists are also studying subjects like the cultural landscape of Las Vegas and its uncanny appeal to popular culture (Holtorf 2005) and the archaeology of temporary gatherings, such as Burning Man (White 2013).

Transportation corridors and technological innovations also created opportunities for tourism. Historical archaeological studies of tourist sites represents a relatively new field of study (Corbin and Russell 2010) but one with astounding potential, given the historical significance of tourist destinations, including national parks and monuments in the West. These large tracts of conserved land signify areas that have ecological significance because they have been protected from transformations brought about by extractive industries and other development. Yellowstone was the first national park in the world, established March 1, 1872; now 126 countries use this as a model to protect ecosystems (Locke and Deardon 2005).

A postcolonial, industrial, transnational, and transformed region: Discussion and directions for future research

As a whole, historical archaeological investigations are demonstrating a variety of ways in which the recent, global colonization of the American West has heralded rapid cultural and environmental transformations and has fueled "processes of conquest and conflict over political borders, resources, land ownership, and people" (Heilen and Reid 2009, p. 147). There is much that can collectively be learned from these examples to help us understand and adapt to the modern cultural successors of issues that include ethnogenesis, landscape ethics, law, and postcolonial coping (Dalglish 2012; Hardesty 1999, 2007; Little 2009; McKoy 2002–2003; Rockman and Flatman 2012). Archaeological inquiries related to the past few centuries have implicated colonialism as a trigger for land degradation caused by "unintended...unexpected, and relatively sudden" (Hill et al. 2009, p. 256) changes associated with the "...disruption of traditional practices" (Fisher et al. 2009b, p. 10; see also Butler 2004; Fisher 2004; O'Connor 2004) taking place over the past several centuries in the American West.

Colonizers, as a rule, implemented Western scientific knowledge "to the exclusion of indigenous knowledge, yet failed to locate a sustainable balance between consumptive uses and conservation of natural resources" (Ross and Pickering 2002, p. 196). Significant historical archaeological contributions will be those that strike a balance between cultural and natural resource management and that integrate tribal collaborations, traditional ecological knowledge, and colonial histories in order to present lessons and case studies focused on issues such as adaptation, resilience, and sustainability in the American West (e.g., Bowser and Zedeño 2009; Carter et al. 2005; Cassell 2005; Fawcett and Lewelling 2000; Fowler 2000; Lightfoot 2005; Mason et al. 2012; McDonald et al. 1991; Nevers and Rucks 2011; Stoffle et al. 2001; Weisiger 2004; Zedeño 2007). There also are models to follow by looking at advances in Australian cultural heritage, where responsibilities for and decisions about land and resources management are being returned to traditional owners so that indigenous people are "equal partners in land management decision making" (Brockwell et al. 2013; Ross and Pickering 2002; see also Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2000; Burke and Smith 2010; Guilfoyle et al. 2009; Patterson 1993).

Collaborations with descendant communities have demonstrated the ways in which scientific and historical data can be integrated with traditional ways of the indigenous people using and managing the North American environment. Despite this potential, historical archaeology's "material culture paradigm...has often given short shrift to the environment" (Mrozowski 2010, p. 123). While not all research in the American West is outwardly dedicated to studying the historical contingency of environmental issues, the conceptual themes around which I organized this article indicate that historical archaeology in the region demonstrates the ways in which sociocultural and environmental matters are inherently connected. I argue that the future of historical archaeology in the West will be grounded in research that integrates the themes outlined herein and transcends the nature–culture divide. Such research will establish the relevance of archaeologies of the recent past to assist with modern-world decisions and inevitable global changes. Because archaeologists are in a "privileged position to understand and make sense of the impact of [issues such as] climate change on human populations" (Mitchell 2008, p. 1095), historical archaeological research that emphasizes the integrated socionatural spectrum of topics in the West, including aridity, adaptation, vast landscape transformation, and sustainability, will certainly have a "place in the archaeology of the future" (Mrozowski 2006, p. 23, 2010, p. 123; see also Fisher et al. 2009a; Hardesty 2007).

Taking into account the importance of archaeology's power to provide relevant data for the future, and considering the aridity of most environments in the West, archaeological analyses of water issues represent a vital direction for future research in the region. Western historians and the region's archaeologists and anthropologists are clearly aware of the significance of the region's aridity and have been so for decades (Church 2002; Clark 2011; Fiege 1999; Grayson 1993; Hardesty 2007; Hardesty and Fowler 2001; Malone 1989; Steward 1955; White 2006; Worster 1992). The American West's vast stretches of arid land have long influenced anthropological and historical interpretations of prehistoric and historic cultures in the region. Ideological and practical means of coping with aridity need to be considered a core feature of the region's culture; they also need to be integrated with other themes, including colonialism, ethnogenesis, urbanization, urban ecosystems, industrialization, Victorianism, and agency (Brooks and Prine 1996, pp. 87–88, 94; Grimm et al. 2008; Hardesty 1980, 1991a, p. 3).

The deserts of the Southwest and Northwest Mexico are dealing with a whole other set of problems related to cultural influences and water use in "resort cities," as there continue to be obvious concerns over scarce water supplies supporting places like Las Vegas (Moehring 1989; Reisner 1986; Solomon 2010; Wilds 2010). Clearly, archaeologies of water rights, use, and sustainability are relevant to guide planning and decision-making as the West's water sagas—and "water wars"—evolve (Brady 2009; Cederberg 2012; Montana PBS 2012; see also Butte-Silver Bow Public Works 2012). Indeed, many of the archaeological studies examined here underscore the significance of water in some manner, even if water was not necessarily the focus of the research (Barker et al. 1995; Church 2002, 2008; Clark 2011; Crawford 2005; Fee 1993; Fowler 1950; Hardesty 1980, 1991a, b, 2010; James 2012; Laumbach et al. 2001; Mallea-Olaetxe 2000; Reynolds 1995, 1996; Stoffle et al. 2001; Van Bueren et al. 1999; White 2006). In addition, there also are archaeological studies related to the lives of worker villages associated with the construction of dams during the West's period of dam building to harness the region's great rivers (Maniery 2002; Rogge et al. 1995; Van Bueren 2002).

These archaeological investigations of water use underscore the ways that human behavior has sparked relatively sudden extreme cultural and environmental transformations in the West. Related archaeological resources represent a bridge to better understanding the impact of the world's most recent mass colonization by providing a foundation for considering "contemporary human activities, as well as the historic sweep of past environmental change" in the archaeologies of a region where it is possible to still observe and document the phases of such changes (Fisher et al. 2009b, p. 3), and where it is still feasible to include the memories of descendant communities in archaeological inquiry (González-Tennant 2011; King 2011; Orser 2010, p. 134; Voss 2005, pp. 434–435; Voss and Allen 2008; Yang and Hellman 1998; but see McGhee 2008; Silliman 2010).

Research that addresses such anthropogenic influences on the landscape has become increasingly significant to other fields, particularly since the natural sciences are now seeking insights from the social sciences to better address the "new environmentalism" of the 21st century (Watts 2007). Historical archaeologies in the American West have the potential to change consciousness and direct action (cf. Barnes 2011, p. 3; see also McGuire 2008, p. 14), particularly as the region continues to experience human dilemmas related to balancing resource extraction with sustainable conservation—especially in arid areas (Flores 2001). Research related to understanding such topics as past cultural responses to climate change, industrial capitalism, landscape transformations, and colonialism can be "instructive for assessing modern societal preparedness for a changing and uncertain future" (deMenocal 2001, p. 672).

Given the American West's vast cultural and natural landscapes, the region's archaeology is poised to make significant contributions toward the complex environmental transformations, human–environment interactions, and relevant landscape lessons from the past few centuries, possessing the "power to make people think about key issues in new ways" (Sabloff 2008, p. 51). As "the insanity of doing nothing becomes increasingly obvious" (Kolbert 2012) amid "humanity's greatest environmental crisis" (Tainter 2000, pp. 331–332), the current generation of archaeologists has an obligation to take action by plotting a course of responsible stewardship and sustainability. Historical archaeologies in the American West are highlighting the ramifications of the swift cultural and environmental changes that are still affecting western North America and have already begun to make contributions that will help us navigate the challenges associated with the modern world.

Acknowledgments My sincere gratitude goes to Gary Feinman, Linda Nicholas, and the *Journal of Archaeological Research*'s editorial staff; reviewers Rebecca Allen and Ron James; five anonymous reviewers; an Institute on Ecosystems award from the NSF EPSCoR Program, Track-1 EPS-1101342 (INSTEP 3); and the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (GA-2255-11-024). I am grateful to C. Riley Augé for her work with *Historical Archaeology's* online database; to Ma'chellee Allison for editorial assistance with the first of many bibliographies; to Diane Whited for producing the maps; and especially to Giles C. Thelen for taking the time to review a series of drafts and to assist with bibliographic revisions. Finally, it is essential to acknowledge the thriving cadre of students and colleagues working with the University of Montana's Department of Anthropology, which is where much of the inspiration for this paper was forged.

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