

would have been able to balance the goals of the two organizations, as do so many who enjoy hunting and the great outdoors.

BRAD TENNANT
Presentation College
Aberdeen, S.Dak.

Making the White Man's West: Whiteness and the Creation of the American West

Jason E. Pierce. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2016. 312pp. Illus. Notes. Biblio. Ind. Cloth, \$45.00.

Jason Pierce divides his work, *Making the White Man's West: Whiteness and the Creation of the American West*, into two sections, one focusing on theory and rhetoric, and the second demonstrating how this rhetoric was applied throughout the settlement of the trans-Mississippi West. Through this division, the author desires to show how "myth and reality became inseparable, each supporting the other" (p. ix). While establishing the population diversity that existed within the region, he explores how the idea of the West "as a white racial utopia" was developed, and at times, put into practice through violence or political and economic methods of control, forcing non-white populations to the fringes of society (p. 5).

The text revolves around the concept of whiteness, as this concept "proved critical to success in America because it conferred both citizenship and the right to own property" (p. 14). However, Pierce himself is the first to admit that terms such as "Anglo-Saxon" or "white" are "imprecise because they describe arbitrary and contested categories" (p. xxiii). Thus, Pierce not only clearly defines the terminology used throughout the text but also shows the fluidity behind these terms as he analyzes immigration and settlement in the West.

Pierce covers significant measures of geographic space and time throughout his argument. By including writings from the ear-

ly 1800s to the 1920s, the first section of the text is able to incorporate a diverse array of primary source documents from writers such as Washington Irving and Francis Parkman to Charles Fletcher Lummis and Frank Bird Linderman. The writings analyzed discuss everything from the fitness of the western climate for white immigrants to how white western development would further advance the nation. The sampling also exemplifies the rhetoric surrounding the creation of an "ethnically and racially homogenous" West (p. 96).

In discussing the whole of the trans-Mississippi West, Pierce is able to bring in a wide variety of examples in the second half of the text to illustrate how these authors' more abstract ideas were put into action throughout western settlement. One such example focuses on those whom the railroads encouraged to emigrate to the West. Another analyzes racial violence in California and Texas to learn how the use of force helped maintain the white hierarchy that developed within the West.

Painstakingly researched, these examples give concrete form to the discussion and serve as miniature case studies, which could provide the basis for classroom discussion on the topic of western expansion and settlement. One fascinating example analyzing a legal case in which an Armenian immigrant went to court to prove his whiteness, and thus his citizenship, is only briefly mentioned in the conclusion and would have made an excellent discussion on its own, as it leaves the reader wanting to know more about this case and others like it.

In both the introduction and conclusion, Pierce connects his argument with contemporary political issues, demonstrating the historical legacy surrounding whiteness in the West. This handling of his argument serves as an excellent reminder that historical inquiry can inform current political debate.

KELLY KIRK
Black Hills State University
Spearfish, S.Dak.