

# Violence over the Land

INDIANS AND EMPIRES IN THE  
EARLY AMERICAN WEST



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## INTRODUCTION



# The Indigenous Body in Pain

“All of us, readers and writers, are bereft when criticism remains too polite or too fearful to notice a disrupting darkness before its eyes.” So concludes *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison’s forceful exposition of American literature’s deep “association with race.” Published in 1992, the year of the Columbian quincentenary, Morrison’s collection locates African Americans at the center of American cultural development, fusing “black” and “white” into a seemingly inescapable imaginary bond. As she and so many others have come to acknowledge, definitions of America are embedded in racial constructions: “the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less, but historical; not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny.”<sup>1</sup>

This book attempts to add to these equations. The narrative of American history, it argues, has failed to gauge the violence that remade much of the continent before U.S. expansion. Nor have American historians fully assessed the violent effects of such expansion on the many Indian peoples caught within these continental changes. Following Morrison’s critique, this work suggests that American history is considered a place of comfort, not one of pain; a realm of achievement rather than one of indigenous trauma.

Compared with Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, North America, in particular the region that would become the United States, has a short and linear history. Beginning in the early seventeenth cen-

tury, scattered groups of Anglo settlers discarded the constraints of Europe for the promises of a new land. Along the Atlantic, these economic and religious outposts grew and eventually united against England. A new polity and nation were formed, and a revolutionary experiment in politics and culture began, an experiment that not only continues to the present but also has spread through much of the world.

These are among the founding truths of American history, as are the United States' subsequent development and expansion as a superpower. Such truths are important. They underscore the achievements of a fledgling nation, and most indexes of American history support and reinforce this narrative. Cities sprouted where forests once stood, immigrants amassed great wealth, and industry grew and grew and grew. By the early twentieth century, such truths had become so accepted that many simply regarded American history as a process of nature: a promised "virgin land" uninhabited before European contact had supinely awaited its natural awakening, the fulfillment of its "destiny." On a narrative and discursive level, America represented the promise of prosperity, and the toil and suffering involved in achieving it simply confirmed the overarching potential and goodness of the nation. *Give us your tired, your poor, and your huddled masses yearning to be free*, and we shall turn them into prosperous citizens and adorn them with the vestments of the rights of man.<sup>2</sup>

Narratives about the past are in constant flux, and it is now commonplace to reject such portrayals as prejudiced and incomplete. Women, workers, racial and ethnic minorities do not fit easily into such contained mythologies. The primary function of myth, as Roland Barthes has argued, is to turn history into nature, and the past two generations of scholars have attempted to reconcile discordant views of our nation's past, to reconcile the mythic promise of America with its past and contemporary inequities, opening new fields of inquiry and reinterpreting canonical subjects. A deluge of scholarship on nearly all aspects of American life and culture now fills university press catalogs and the convention halls of our nation's academic gatherings.<sup>3</sup>

Yet a glaring absence remains at the heart of the field. Still missing from most narratives of American history are clear and informed anal-

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yses of our nation's indigenous peoples. Although "Indians" are emblematic of America and continue to excite the imaginations of the young both here and abroad, Indian history is no mere curiosity or sideshow in the drama of the American past. The two remain interwoven. North America was already inhabited when Europeans arrived, and from their first days on this continent, Europeans relied on Native peoples for guidance, hospitality, and survival. American historians since the days of the Puritans have tried to rationalize Europeans' takings of Indian lands and lives, and all Indian peoples have endured the many traumas of contact and colonization. Native and European peoples have interacted, intermingled, and coexisted since the first moments of encounter. They have also come into bitter and deadly conflict. Reconciling the dispossession of millions with the making of America remains a sobering challenge, an endeavor that requires reevaluation of many enduring historical assumptions. A generation of scholars has already begun this large task, and this book aims to contribute to it.<sup>4</sup>

### Historicizing Colonialism

Despite an outpouring of work over the past decades, those investigating American Indian history and U.S. history more generally have failed to reckon with the violence upon which the continent was built. Most scholarship has focused on colonial and early American history or, west of the Mississippi, on the decades of exploration and expansion in the nineteenth century. The Indians of the American Great Basin—the vast interior portions of the American West between the Sierra and Rocky Mountains—still figure little or not at all in the nation's vision of its past. The many Ute, Paiute, and Shoshone groups who have inhabited this region since time immemorial generally appear as distant shadows in historical texts, faint nameless traces of America's primordial past. Whether as hostile combatants against American migrants or as peaceful desert dwellers, Great Basin Indians are rarely seen as agents in histories of the region. They appear passive objects as history essentially rolls over them, forcing them into minor roles in a larger pageant, understudies in the very dramas remaking their homelands. From the first moments of conquest to the present

day, the experiences of these Indian peoples remain overlooked and bypassed on the thoroughfare of historical inquiry. These Indians, like so many others, remain nonparticipants in the epic of America.<sup>5</sup>

Such historical oversight is surpassed only by anthropology's treatment of these Native peoples. For nearly a century, many of those who have studied Great Basin Indians have consigned them to the distant netherworlds of "prehistory," to the very margins of "civilization." Because of their sparse technologies and migratory economies, anthropologists, including the influential ethnographer Julian Steward, have represented Great Basin Indians as the quintessential "peoples without history," the most "primitive" peoples in the world. Steward pioneered the field of Great Basin as well as American anthropology, using his research among the Nevada Shoshone to construct elaborate models of human organization in which Great Basin Indians supposedly remained the least "developed" cultures in the world. They represented antitheses of modernity and lived "simple" unchanging lives as endless desert wanderers, the first and definitive "hunters and gatherers." An entire language of cultural development arose from Steward's study of these Indian peoples, who became the sediment upon which others attempted to understand "Man's Rise to Civilization."<sup>6</sup>

Such environmentally determined cultural hierarchies have now become discredited, replaced by more relativistic and discursive notions of culture. In the Great Basin, however, as in many other parts of the Americas, the intellectual residue of primitivism remains. The region's indigenous peoples remain fixed within static definitions of culture, imprisoned in notions of essentialism. As a result of the pernicious, self-perpetuating logic of timelessness on the one hand, and of primitivism on the other, these groups remain outside of history, and any changes or adaptations they have made become only further evidence of their demise. When Native peoples adapt to foreign economies or utilize outside technologies, they are assumed to abandon their previous—that is, inferior—ways while in the process losing parts of themselves; they lose the very things that according to others define them. Once adaptation becomes synonymous with assimilation, change over time—the commonplace definition of history—becomes a death knell. The more things change, the greater the loss.<sup>7</sup>

This study takes direct aim at the intertwined ahistoricism and essentialism that pervade understandings of the Intermountain West. It

offers an alternative to this overlooked and overdetermined past. Far from being marginal actors in American history, Great Basin Indians in fact remain central to the development and course of western history. Furthermore, beneath the discourse of primitivism lie painful and traumatic pasts that defy summary analysis. From the spread of epidemic diseases, to the introduction of new economies, to the loss of lands, lives, and resources, these indigenous peoples, like so many others, have experienced epic ordeals. Moreover, they have done so largely outside the view of America's settler and immigrant populations. From their earliest recorded interactions with Europeans in the 1600s to their nineteenth-century struggles within an expansionist state, Great Basin Indians have witnessed the rise of new worlds and the collapse of old ones. Such challenges and changes remain fundamental to understandings of the region's past and are linked to larger imperial and national currents.<sup>8</sup>

These are not, however, simply *peoples with history* whose experiences can be molded or incorporated into common narratives of American history. As the pioneering Indian studies scholar Vine Deloria Jr. noted almost forty years ago, it does little good to add Indians into a flawed mosaic of American history without first reworking the temporal and spatial boundaries of the field. This book extends Deloria's critique and suggests that the experiences of Great Basin Indians force reconsideration of large portions of North American history, histories that after excavation offer far from celebratory portraits of America. Harrowing, violent histories of Native peoples caught in the maelstrom of colonialism define this and other regions and remain necessary foundations upon which other narratives must contend. Such painful histories also have contemporary legacies that continue to influence these communities and their descendants.<sup>9</sup>

Violence as both a subject and a method is at the heart of this book. That Native peoples endured violent attacks or responded to such attacks with force is not news. Indeed, the history of Indian-white relations, particularly throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reads like a series of constant wars. The following pages examine the nature of such chronic conflict—the seemingly endless raids, battles, massacres, and numbers lost on all sides. Ultimately, however, violence becomes more than an intriguing or distressing historical subject. It becomes an interpretive concept as well as a method for

understanding these understudied worlds. By charting the region's changing relations of violence, this work seeks to open up historical landscapes already altered by European contact, as violence provides the clearest and at times only windows into them. Violence provides the threads that weave Great Basin Indian history together and organizes the discussion in the following four ways.<sup>10</sup>

First, the earliest moments of postcontact Great Basin history become accessible only through analyses of the shifting relations of violence that remade the Intermountain West during the Spanish colonial era. As the first colonial power in North America, Spain initiated imperial intrusions that disrupted the everyday lives of Indian peoples throughout the continent. The demographic, economic, and environmental changes unleashed throughout northern New Spain have received much analysis, but few have considered the central role and effects of violence in these transformations. While many recognize the effects of Spanish horses, trade networks, and diplomacy, few link these changes to broader patterns of everyday life in the Spanish borderlands. Focusing on the easternmost Great Basin groups, principally on bands of Ute Indians in northern New Mexico and in Colorado, Chapters 1 through 4 examine worlds revolutionized by the irruption of new forms of colonial violence. From the earliest explorations and settlements in colonial New Mexico to the varying frontier successes of Spanish and later Mexican regimes, Ute bands adopted changing strategies of survival in response to colonial disturbance and remained critical to the region's balance of power. In response to the waves of violence engulfing their homelands, Utes became feared combatants, courted allies, and eventually gracious hosts whose changing economic and political decisions contributed to the composition of the Spanish borderlands.<sup>11</sup>

Ute adaptation in the face of imperial expansion is, however, neither celebrated nor glorified. Utes responded in kind to the shifting relations of violence sweeping throughout their homelands, redirecting colonial violence against their neighbors, Spanish and Indian alike. Carrying violence to more distant peoples in New Mexico's expanding hinterlands, Utes attempted to monopolize the trade routes in and out of the colony while besieging neighboring groups, particularly those without horses. As their power north of Santa Fe increasingly weighed upon the minds of colonial rulers, Utes forged genera-

tions of ties to New Mexico that wedded these societies together in new and surprising ways. However, Spanish-Ute accommodation carried high and deadly costs for Ute neighbors, particularly non-equestrian Paiute and Shoshone groups in the southern Great Basin, whose communities were raided for slaves by Utes, New Mexicans, and later Americans. Like their neighboring Indian and Spanish rivals, Utes remade themselves in response to the region's cycles of violence and did so at the expense of others, as violence and Indian slavery became woven into the fabric of everyday life throughout the early West. While sparsely documented, evidence of Great Basin Indian captivity and Ute slave trafficking underscores the transformative and violent nature of Great Basin Indian history. In short, before their sustained appearance in written records, Great Basin Indians endured the disruptive hold of colonialism's expansive reach, brought to them first by other Indian people.<sup>12</sup>

Violence organizes this study in a second and related way. The shifting relations of violence that remade Native worlds throughout the early West did so largely outside of colonial settlements and the purview of authorities. Often only faint traces remain of the waves of violence that swept out of New Mexico and transformed Native peoples from the Sierras to the Mississippi. Accessing the effects of such waves of violence is a fragile endeavor, the results of which must be viewed with skepticism. As in other contact zones and imperial hinterlands, Utes and other Great Basin Indians inhabited "new worlds for all," the genesis of which remains lost to historical inquiry. The history of these groups becomes, then, a history without clear or fixed origins. The earliest documentary histories of Great Basin Indians remain unfixed and untied to specific moments or locales. They remain histories in motion, accelerated by the revolutionary and violent impacts of European contact and colonialism. As Utes ferried Great Basin Indian captives into New Mexico, for example, colonial officials knew little of the natal origins of these slaves, often classifying them as "Yutas" on the basis of shared linguistic ties. These renamed Great Basin captives—overwhelmingly young women and children—provide the earliest sustained references to nonequestrian Great Basin peoples while also revealing the violence intrinsic to the region's history.<sup>13</sup>

Such attention to violence and motion, however, by no means discredits Ute and other tribal traditions that for strategic reasons empha-

size the permanent and immemorial existence of each nation in their respective homelands. Forged against narratives of erasure, such histories have often countered policies aimed at denying Indians access to lands and resources. Emphasis on these Native groups' changing relations of violence is intended here to recast the received categories of analysis that have so readily frozen these Native people. As the following pages suggest, understandings of Indian history, culture, and identity remain historically determined, located not in essential cultural traits but in the violent postcontact time and space of American history. No timeless ethnographic categories or political definitions characterize these Native peoples. Indeed, in this region, precise band names, territorial locales, and stable political designations are often unreliable, particularly given the violent shock waves that engulfed these Indian homelands before their sustained documentation. Hybridity, adaptation, and exchange more clearly characterize these histories than do fixed ethnographic categories, let alone the convenient dichotomies so common to narratives of American Indians. Colonial violence, in sum, characterizes these Native worlds as the violence that saturated communities on the margins of empire has also destabilized the categories of analysis used to describe them.<sup>14</sup>

While violence emerges as the overarching theme of this book, pain remains its implied object, particularly as experienced by Indian peoples. Elusive yet omnipresent, pain remains an uncommon subject in historical inquiry, partly because of language's inability to capture the experiential nature of another's pain. As Elaine Scarry has argued, bodily pain not only resists representation but also destabilizes it, casting this most elemental human experience into the realms of medical and biological sciences.<sup>15</sup>

While Scarry's work focuses primarily on the psychology of pain, several historians have utilized her findings in assessing, in Barbara Young Welke's words, "the irony that the tools of civilization were themselves the instruments of acute suffering." Colonialism's effects upon such indigenous "bodies in pain" necessitate deeper documentary and interpretive attention. Underrecognized corollaries to Europe's expansion into the Americas, violence and pain remain essential, if destabilizing, prerequisites in the study of American history.<sup>16</sup>

Third, violence weds the history of these Native groups to larger imperial histories. Despite accounts to contrary, Europe's colonization of

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North American Indian lands defines much of American history. In fact, pioneering American historian Frederick Jackson Turner was partially correct when he declared the process of American expansion as the foundational experience of American history. Although Turner's insistence on the self-democratizing attributes of "frontier" settlement has been recast, few have claimed the effects of such expansion on Indian peoples as equally foundational to, if not representative of, the American experience. This book attempts such suggestion. The violent transformation of Indian lands and lives characterizes European and American expansion. Neither natural nor inevitable, the violent deformations of Native communities locate these indigenous pasts within the broader field of European global colonialism. Historicizing the violent effects of colonialism and suggesting how enduring such effects have become remain objectives in the chapters to come.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, violence and the history of Native influences on imperial and national borderlands require alternative paradigms for understanding the nineteenth-century processes of American expansion. As Chapters 5 through 7 reveal, the United States expanded into worlds already affected by generations of European disruptions and remade these worlds through its own agents of empire. From the use of the U.S. Army to combat and confine Indian peoples, to the state-sanctioned theft of Indian lands and resources, violence both predated and became intrinsic to American expansion. Violence enabled the rapid accumulation of new resources, territories, and subject peoples. It legitimated the power of migrants, structured new social and racial orders, and provided the preconditions for political formation. From the initial moments of American exploration and conquest, through statehood, and into the stages of territorial formation, violence organized the region's nascent economies, settlements, and polities. Violence and American nationhood, in short, progressed hand in hand.<sup>18</sup>

American political formation in the Great Basin occurred through violence in the homelands of Native peoples, many of whom had forged generations of relations with colonial societies. In the 1800s such shared or mutually constructed worlds were overturned. Following a rapid succession of events, newcomers swarmed throughout the region, seizing the most fertile lands and resources for their own. Fur trappers, traders, and explorers either wrought the initial traumas or

laid the basis for subsequent ones. In the Great Basin, trappers vied with one another in scorched-earth trapping practices, emptying fragile watersheds of small game, while traders ferried resources into and out of the region, enmeshing Native communities in webs of economic dependency. Explorers and cartographers like Lewis and Clark initiated less immediate forms of violence, performing the geographical measurements required for subsequent disruptions. Armies, settlers, migrants, and their herds soon followed, forever altering the region's ecology and societies. In the span of one generation, from the Rocky Mountains to the Sierras immigrants became settlers, settlements became towns, and Indians became outsiders. Surveying the pre-reservation history of Colorado's and Utah's Native populations, the second half of this book highlights the divergent paths of diplomacy, warfare, and survival initiated by equestrian Utes and Shoshones in response to the pandemic relations of violence engulfing their communities.

### Great Basin Indian Struggles for Survival

Amidst such demographic and environmental turmoil, Great Basin Indians struggled to survive. Colorado Utes navigated political channels to protect territories within their familiar yet changing world, while Utah's Utes and Shoshones escalated their use of violence in response to settler and emigrant disruptions. Others became overwhelmed by the onslaught, as many Indian families migrated out of the region to neighboring areas where the federal government had created federally protected Indian lands called reservations. Such enclaves, or "laboratories" as later government officials viewed them, became intertribal refugee centers where previously unrelated peoples joined together in diaspora. Despite the U.S. Senate's ratification of treaties mandating the creation of reservations throughout the region, many Great Basin groups, particularly nonequestrians, received few federal protections and faced the ordeal of conquest on their own.<sup>19</sup>

In Nevada, eastern California, and central Utah, survival often necessitated integration into the region's evolving settler economies. Facing enduring economic and environmental crises, many Indian families attached themselves to white farms, mining communities, or ranches where Indian men and women worked in the most degraded

sectors. Great Basin Indian impoverishment—a common trope in American literary and travel narratives—became the clearest expression of such disruption, as everywhere Indian peoples appeared to be on the verge of extinction, impoverished beyond the hope of survival. Mark Twain’s infamous comments about the Goshute Shoshone of eastern Nevada encapsulate such perceptions: “It was along in this wild country . . . that we came across the wretchedest type of mankind . . . the Goshoot Indians. From what we could see and all we could learn, they are very considerably inferior to even the despised Digger Indians of California, inferior to all races of savages on our continent . . . Our Goshoots are manifestly descended from the self-same gorilla, or kangaroo or Norway rat, whichever animal-Adam the Darwinians trace them to.” What America’s most celebrated nineteenth-century writer failed to “learn” was that Indian poverty—masqueraded as “wretchedness” and “inferiority”—remained intimately linked to American colonization; these Native peoples were not relics of an ancient past but products of the most rapid territorial expansion in world history. Racial and cultural difference, however, more easily explained Indian misery.<sup>20</sup>

In the face of such impoverishment, Great Basin Indians fought to retain control over their communities and access to their homelands. Comparing the unique, though parallel, economic adaptations initiated by equestrian Utes and Shoshones, Chapters 6 and 7 link the region’s colonial period to the violent aftermath of American expansion. Surveying pre-reservation efforts of Native communities to maintain control over their subsistence lands while also highlighting their growing tensions around settler communities, it ends where many narratives of Indian history end, in bloodshed, with an examination of the January 1863 Bear River Massacre, when 500 Northern Shoshones fought for survival against Civil War volunteers, more than half dying in the morning snow.

The Epilogue meditates on the region’s divergent historical narratives. Contrasting Julian Steward’s seminal ethnographies with Western Shoshone family histories, it highlights the power of narrative both to define a people’s essence and to instill a deep sense of cultural pride. Steward, as powerfully as any American anthropologist, classified his subjects into reified cultural hierarchies and failed to see how the very people he interviewed and traveled among had responded to the challenges of conquest. More concerned with his evolutionary

typologies than with the everyday struggles of his informants, Steward went so far as to petition against Western Shoshone attempts to gain federal recognition and reservation lands under the auspices of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. He believed that the “traditional” political institutions of the Shoshone were so undeveloped that they could not manage as a “tribe”; their attempts to reinvent themselves politically were antithetical to, and thus threatened, their culture.

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

*Shoshone Beggars at the Railway Station, Carlin, Nevada.* Lithograph in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (New York), November 8, 1873. Images of Western and Goshute Shoshone impoverishment captured the attention of Indian agents, journalists, and travel writers throughout the 1800s, most famously by Mark Twain.

Steward and other American intellectuals, the Epilogue suggests, have perpetuated one of the most lasting legacies of conquest: they have erased violence and colonialism from discussions of the region's past, performing acts of representational violence whose power continues to misinform assessments of these Native people.<sup>21</sup>

Western Shoshone and other Great Basin groups have resisted such intellectual and political racism in many ways. Denied the guarantees of nineteenth-century treaties, particularly the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley, the Western Shoshone, for example, spent the entire twentieth century fighting for implementation of the treaty's articles, particularly its provisions for the establishment of Indian reservations in Nevada. Despite Steward's protests, Shoshone groups used the mechanisms of the Indian Reorganization Act to receive some new lands and federal recognition. After World War II, they navigated the equally complicated legal channels established by the Indian Claims Commission to file for their outstanding land claims, and throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s Shoshone groups fought for the return of Indian homelands. Unlike any other state in the union, over 90 percent of Nevada is "owned" by the federal government, which manages tens of millions of acres through Department of Defense and Bureau of Land Management offices, using the region for everything from nuclear testing to wildlife preserves. The origins of these (sometimes contradictory) policies date to 1863 and to the unconstitutional failure of the federal government to receive title from Shoshone groups. As the final chapter and the Epilogue detail, Shoshone political struggles mirror the social and economic ordeals of other Great Basin groups, in which the threat and legacy of violence also remain ever present.<sup>22</sup>

The Epilogue ends with two nonreservation Shoshone family histories, including my own. The young Shoshone woman in the photo, Mamie Andrews, was my great-grandmother, born in the 1890s in central Nevada during the second generation after American conquest. While Nevada acquired statehood relatively early in the West, institutionalizing the mechanisms of statehood took decades. Many Native peoples continued to live "outside the state," speaking their own language, living to themselves, and traveling, as they always had, seasonally for food, work, worship, and recreation. Their migratory and cultural practices contravened government policies aimed at confining

and classifying Native peoples and prompted increased surveillance through institutions of state control, particularly the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Born on a white ranch in Smoky Valley, Nevada, Mamie from her earliest days learned from her mother and aunts to cook and clean for white families, later becoming a domestic servant herself. Like the other Indian families who lived on ranches and in nearby mining towns, she grew up in intimate familiarity with whites, played with white and Indian children, and remained part of a community of ranchers and their Indian laborers. Never knowing her father, many

[To view this image, refer to  
the print version of this title.]

Mamie Andrews, about 1919. Eva Charley Family Collection. Photographed in a Nevada studio shortly before her confinement in the Nevada State Mental Hospital, Mamie Andrews left behind four Shoshone children in Smoky Valley, including Eva Charley, the author's grandmother.

believed her to be the result of the often nonconsensual sexual relations between Indian women and white men, which became commonplace in mining and ranching communities, where unequal gender ratios and racial hierarchies converged. Like most Indian laborers, Mamie received an English name. She married a handsome Indian man, Sam Johnson, and had one child with him, Eva, before leaving him for his half-brother, Bob Snooks, and having three more children.

Working hard with four children, Mamie and Bob became increasingly combative, especially during times when Bob drank with his friends and cousins after long days harvesting hay or mending endless cattle lines. Bob's excessive drinking and the aggressive behavior that followed from it paralleled that of other Indian men, whose poverty seemed only more glaring in contrast with the material possessions of whites and the countless images of fancy goods advertised in stores and newspapers. White insults, jokes, and generally disdainful manners fueled the need for escape. Whites owned just about everything, and the creation of liminal spaces outside of white control became as seemingly natural as Indian subjection. Indians traveled to regional Native festivals, called "fandangos," worked in seasonal labor groups, and migrated throughout the region.

After his return from one summer's fandango, Bob's attacks on Mamie became more severe, requiring her to seek assistance from local Indian healers as well as white doctors. Everyone in the community recalls that her second husband's abuse rendered Mamie unstable. Her crying and outbursts continued after Bob left, and her relatives grew concerned about little Eva and her two younger brothers and sister. Local authorities determined that Mamie required mental treatment, and in 1919, at the age of twenty-four, she was institutionalized in the state mental hospital, where she lived alone for her remaining fifty-seven years. The Epilogue traces the lives of Mamie and her parentless children and contrasts them with narratives emanating from anthropological, literary, and other outside commentators.

Mamie's oldest daughter, Eva, was my grandmother, and like her mother's, Eva's life was filled with poverty and hardship, testimony to the enduring challenges wrought by colonial expansion. As Native groups continue to recover from the aftermath of such collisions, these regional and personal histories bear witness to enduring historical truths. Throughout what we now call America, the nature of everyday life was forever transformed as violence swept over the land.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 91, 47, 52.
2. Studies of U.S. history have often maintained exceptional visions of the American experience, contradicting the American past with other national histories. For surveys of recent challenges to such currents, see David W. Noble, *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), esp. 250–286. See also Kerwin Lee Klein, *Frontiers of Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
3. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972). As Joyce Appleby has argued, “For a long time American historical writing simply explained how the United States became the territorial embodiment of liberal truths.” See Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 2–3.
4. “Indian” is a problematic designation for the indigenous peoples of the Americas, one that has undergone critical interrogation and, in Canada, abandonment, where First Nations, Native, and Aboriginal commonly designate the status of Canada’s First Peoples. In the United States, “Native American” has gained popularity, largely in an attempt to reject the homogenizing history of the term “Indian.” While recognizing the constraining, contested usage of such terminology, this

- study interchanges “Indian,” “Native,” and “indigenous” to describe aboriginal communities in North America, valuing the instructive past of such terms in an attempt to recapture and revise their representational power. While Indian history has recently become an honored subfield in American history, the field remains largely tied to the U.S. colonial period. See Ned Blackhawk, “Look How Far We’ve Come: How American Indian History Changed the Study of American History in the 1990s,” *Organization of American Historians’ Magazine of History* 19:6 (November 2005): 8–14.
5. Physiographically, the Great Basin begins west of the Wasatch Mountains in central Utah, while shared cultural traits, language, and historical experiences link Great Basin peoples to the Colorado Plateau and Rocky Mountains. See Charles B. Hunt, *Physiography of the United States* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1967), 308–347; Omer C. Stewart, *Indians of the Great Basin: A Critical Bibliography* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1982); and Warren L. D’Azevedo, “Introduction,” *HBNAI*, 11: 1–14.
  6. Eric Wolf, *Europe and the Peoples without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). For Steward’s legacies, see Richard O. Clemmer, L. Daniel Myers, and Mary Elizabeth Rudden, *Julian Steward and the Great Basin: The Making of an Anthropologist* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), and citations therein for Steward’s bibliography. For one example of Steward’s influence in establishing Great Basin Indians as the evolutionary floor of human development, see Peter Farb, *Man’s Rise to Civilization as Shown by the Indians of North America* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968).
  7. For anthropology’s imperialist legacies, see George W. Stocking Jr., *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).
  8. Homi K. Bhabha theorizes the intellectual quandaries incumbent upon being “amongst those whose very presence is both ‘overlooked’ and, at the same time, overdetermined.” See Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 236. See also Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), esp. 1–41.
  9. See Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).
  10. Max Weber pioneered the study of violence and state formation: “the relation between the state and violence is an especially intimate one . . . a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of*

*the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory . . . The state is considered the sole source of the ‘right’ to use violence”; H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. and trans., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78. The tensions between imperial historiographies and their simultaneous inability to grasp the colonial violence inherent in imperialism have forced reconsideration of innumerable national histories, especially in the aftermath of European decolonization and the enduring “postcolonial” challenge for former colonized populations. For a recent effort to expose such imperial currents in American cultural history, see Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

11. For syntheses of Spanish colonialism in northern New Spain, see Thomas Hall, *Social Change in the Southwest, 1350–1880* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988); and John L. Kessel, *Spain in the Southwest: A Narrative History of Colonial New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and California* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).
12. For North American imperial-indigenous accommodation, see Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For a related attempt to complicate indigenous-state relations in Latin America as “no longer a simple celebration of subaltern agency,” see Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), esp. 1–20.
13. Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
14. As R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead argue, “While the importance of history and the role of violent conflict may be readily seen, it is more difficult to know *what that recognition implies*: at the very least, it involves the need to revitalize our ideas about the ethnographic universe, going beyond the rejection of untenable notions of self-contained, stable local societies, and instead developing a conceptual framework for understanding conflict and change as part of the historical process underlying observed ethnographic patterns.” See Ferguson and Whitehead, “The Violent Edge of Empire,” in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, ed. Ferguson and Whitehead (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1992), 3 (emphasis added).
15. Physical pain, as Elaine Scarry argues, not only is “resistant to language but also actively destroys language,” a notion suggesting that representations, in this case of indigenous trauma, are always partial and cannot

- be fully measured. See Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 172.
16. Barbara Young Welke, *Recasting American Liberty: Gender, Race, Law, and the Railroad Revolution, 1865–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 126.
  17. For reassessments of Frederick Jackson Turner’s “frontier thesis,” see Klein, *Frontiers of Historical Imagination*. See also Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), esp. 17–32.
  18. As Cole Harris suggests, “Claiming political control of a territory was an act of imperialism, coming to know it was often another, but using it was far more intrusive than either.” See Harris, *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographic Change* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 182–183.
  19. For the formulation of U.S. Indian policy, see Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) and *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, abridged ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).
  20. Franklin R. Rogers, ed., *The Works of Mark Twain: Roughing It* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 144.
  21. See Clemmer et al., *Julian Steward and the Great Basin*.
  22. Steven J. Crum provides the most complete assessment of Western Shoshone history. See Crum, *The Road on Which We Came: A History of the Western Shoshone* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994) (cited hereafter as Crum). For an overview of the development of nuclear testing in Nevada, see Howard Ball, *Justice Downwind: America’s Atomic Testing Program in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 20–83.

### 1. Spanish-Ute Relations to 1750

1. *LFNMH*, 2: 147. For additional references to Indian ears as trophies in New Spain, see Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men’s Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540–1795*, 2d ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 603; Ana Maria Alonso, *Thread of Blood: Colonialism, Revolution, and Gender on Mexico’s Northern Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 38; Frank McNitt, *Navajo Wars: Military Campaigns, Slave Raids, and Reprisals* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972), 51; and Zenas Leonard, *Narrative of the Adventures of Zenas Leonard* (1839; facsimile