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Earl Pomeroy, *The American Far West in the 20th Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009, £25.00). Pp. 570. ISBN 978 0 300 12073 8.

Earl Pomeroy (1915–2005) was emeritus professor of history at the University of California, San Diego, and emeritus professor of history at the University of Oregon, Eugene, and had a long, distinguished career in the field of western history. This posthumous volume forms another key part of his legacy, bringing together a very broad survey of materials charting the shifts in western economic, social and political history from 1901 to the 1980s. It reads as a series of sweeping commentaries, drawing in anecdotes and historical sources to account for the rapid development of the West during this period. The work in this collection demonstrates why Pomeroy is often seen as a forerunner of the new western history, primarily due to his serious consideration of the twentieth century as a legitimate field of study. Frederick Jackson Turner's notion of the closing of the West in 1890 has been long refuted in Pomeroy's writings, as here, where he analyses changes in the western economy, transport systems, land use, and demographics, whilst employing them as prisms through which to explore what he calls "social relations," "social attitudes," and "cultural bases." Particular key themes emerge around his tracing of immigrant communities' contribution to this changing West, for example charting how peoples' attitudes were affected by "agencies of acculturation" such as journalism and, increasingly, television, binding different groups into what he calls the "variously Far West" (264).

In chapters on economic growth, agriculture, transport, and politics, amongst other things, Pomeroy describes a modern West that has become increasingly urban, transnational, and multicultural; a West he captures throughout the narrative as existing in a sense of tension between those responding to it as a place where people "move on," as he says, and those who see themselves as "residents rather than sojourners away from home" (403). In accounting for the reasons and consequences of these tensions, the book touches on many significant themes taken up by more recent and younger cultural historians of race, gender, and new critical regional studies. Although traditional in its approach and remarkably untheorized by today's standards, he examines with immense detail the West's transition from an agricultural to an urban region, whilst recognizing the gradual shifts in population and racial mix across the West. At times he observes beautifully telling ironies that say much about the region, such as the overheard conversation by tourists at Yosemite: "Being here makes the television mean so much more to us" (298). Although a point of reference he would never use, such moments remind us of the endlessly represented and simulated West written about by the likes of Jean Baudrillard.

Although quirky in places, for example in omitting Texas because he considered it more of a southern state, and restricting its references to secondary texts published before 1995, this is nonetheless an important and insightful book by a major historian whose influence has been apparent in the work of later writers.

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