This Companion provides a comprehensive introduction to one of the most vibrant and expansive traditions in world literature. The American West occupies a unique place in the global imagination, and the literature it produced transcends the category of “region” in theme and form. Written by prominent international scholars, the essays cover a diverse group of key texts and authors, including major figures in the Native American, Hispanic, Asian American, and African American movements. Treatments range from environmental and ecopoetic to transnational and transcultural, reflecting the richness of the field. This volume places the literature in deep historical context and features a chronology and bibliography for further reading. It will be an essential guide for students of literature of the American West and of American literature generally.

Steven Frye is a professor of English at California State University, Bakersfield. He is president of the Cormac McCarthy Society, editor of The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy, and author of Understanding Cormac McCarthy and Understanding Larry McMurtry.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book.
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
THE LITERATURE OF THE
AMERICAN WEST
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CONTRIBUTORS

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STEVEN FRYE is a professor of English at California State University, Bakersfield and president of the Cormac McCarthy Society. He is the author of *Historiography and Narrative Design in the American Romance: A Study of Four Authors, Understanding Cormac McCarthy*, and *Understanding Larry McMurtry*. He is the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy*, *Critical Insights: The Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe*, and *Critical Insights: The Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*. He is also the author of numerous articles on Cormac McCarthy, Herman Melville, and other writers in the American Romance tradition.

ERIC GARDNER is a professor of English at Saginaw Valley State University. His *Unexpected Places: Relocating Nineteenth-Century African American Literature* won the Research Society for American Periodicals Book Award and was a *Choice* “Outstanding Academic Title” in 2010. His second monograph, *Black Print Unbound: The Christian Recorder, African American Literature, and Periodical Culture*, was drafted with the support of a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities and explores the early years of the African Methodist Episcopal Church’s weekly newspaper. Gardner has also edited three volumes, and his shorter work has appeared in venues ranging from *American Literary History* to *PMLA*. 
CONTRIBUTORS

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SUSAN KOLLIN is a professor of English at Montana State University, where she teaches courses on Western fiction and film, transnational American literature, and environmental humanities. She is the author of *Captivating Westerns: The Middle East in the American West*, and the editor of *A History of Western American Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2014). She is also a former Fulbright Scholar at the American University in Cairo.

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NICHOLAS MONK is an associate professor at the University of Warwick, specializing in twentieth-century American fiction, and director of the University’s Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning. His monograph on Cormac McCarthy will
be published in 2016. He is also the editor of *Intertextual and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cormac McCarthy*, to which he contributed the introduction and an essay titled “Versions of the Seeleroman: Cormac McCarthy and Leslie Silko.” He teaches the MA module, “Literatures of the American Southwest,” as well as modules on identity, drama, and performance. A coauthored piece “Letting the Dead Come Out to Dance: An Embodied and Spatial Approach to Teaching Early Modern Drama” appears in *Performing Early Modern Drama Today*, from Cambridge University Press. His other principal research interest is interdisciplinary and collaborative pedagogy – he is the lead author of *Open-Space Learning: A Transdisciplinary Pedagogy*.

**Marguerite Nguyen** is an assistant professor of English at Wesleyan University, where she teaches and researches American and Asian American literature. Her publications have appeared in *Minnesota Review* and *Asian Americans in Dixie: Race and Migration in the South*, and a coedited special issue of *MELUS* titled “Refugee Culture: Forty Years after the Vietnam War” is forthcoming. Her current book project, *Games with Time: Vietnam, U.S. Empire, and American Literature*, examines Vietnamese-American literary connections from the nineteenth century onward to understand how U.S. empire has depended on managing competing notions of time. A second project is under way on Asian American racialization in New Orleans culture, with an emphasis on the relationship between literary form, local discourses of race, and Pacific routes of migration.

**Linda Rader Overman** is an adjunct professor of English at California State University, Northridge. She holds a PhD in creative writing from Lancaster University (United Kingdom) and a master of fine arts in creative writing from California State University, Chico. Her debut novel, *Letters Between Us*, was selected as a finalist in the 2008 National Best Books Awards, in the category of Fiction & Lit: Chick Lit/Women’s Lit. Her work has appeared in many anthologies.

**Stacey Peebles** is director of film studies and an associate professor of English at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. She is the author of *Welcome to the Suck: Narrating the American Soldier’s Experience in Iraq* and the editor of *Violence in Literature* as well as a forthcoming book on Cormac McCarthy and performance. She is the editor of *The Cormac McCarthy Journal* and the author of a number of articles on McCarthy’s work and the representation of war in literature and film.

**Rafael Pérez-Torres** is a professor of English at University of California, Los Angeles. He has published numerous articles on Chicano/a literature and culture, postmodernism, multiculturalism, and contemporary American literature in *Cultural Critique, American Literary History, Genre, Aztlán*, and *American Literature*, as well as in numerous edited collections. He served as co-curator for the art exhibit “Just Another Poster? Chicano Graphic Arts in California,” and he sits on several editorial boards. He is the author of three books: *Mestizaje: Critical
**Contributors**

*Uses of Race in Chicano Culture; To Alcatraz, Death Row, and Back: Memories of an East L.A. Outlaw* written with Ernest B. López; and *Movements in Chicano Poetry: Against Myths, Against Margins*. His current work addresses the role of modernity and modernization in the shaping of Chicano culture.

**Robert Thacker** is Charles A. Dana Professor of Canadian Studies and English at St. Lawrence University. Among his publications are *The Great Prairie Fact and Literary Imagination* and *Alice Munro: Writing Her Lives*; four coedited critical volumes, two on comparing the Canada-U.S. Wests and two on Willa Cather. He is now at work on another volume of *Cather Studies* and a collection of essays on Munro by various hands. Forthcoming in 2016 is Thacker’s *Reading Alice Munro, 1973–2013*, a selection of his essays on the 2013 Nobel Laureate.

**Gioia Woods** is an associate professor of humanities and President’s Distinguished Teaching Fellow in Northern Arizona University’s Department of Comparative Cultural Studies. She is the author of the Western Writer’s Series monograph *Gary Paul Nabhan* and the coeditor of *Western Subjects: Autobiographical Writing in the North American West*. She was president of the Western Literature Association in 2010 and continues research and publishing in Western American literature and culture, and ecological criticism. Her current project is a cultural biography of City Lights Bookstore and Press.

**Daniel Worden** is an associate professor of English at the University of New Mexico. He is the author of *Masculine Style: The American West and Literary Modernism*, which received the Thomas J. Lyon Book Award in Western American Literary and Cultural Studies. He is also the coeditor of *Oil Culture* and the editor of *The Comics of Joe Sacco: Journalism in a Visual World*.
Anasazi (ancestral Pueblo) culture widespread in Four Corners area. Approximately five hundred specialized small tribes are living in California.

Hohokam culture brings large areas in southern Arizona under irrigation.

Mesa Verde cliff dwellings constructed.

Chaco culture emerges in New Mexico; includes 125 planned towns.

Pueblo and Hopi villages active in their present locations.

Oraibi (Arizona) established.

Navahos arrive in the Southwest from the north.

Severe drought in the Southwest.

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca shipwrecked on Gulf Coast; begins eight-year journey to Mexico.

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado begins an exploration from Arizona; over the next two years, travels as far northeast as Kansas. One of his officers, Don García Lopez de Cardenas, takes a trip with twelve other men and sees the Grand Canyon. They are the first Europeans to do so.

Juan de Oñate colonizes northern Mexico.

Santa Fe founded; “Palace of the Governors” built.

Pueblo Indians revolt and drive the Spanish from New Mexico.
**Chronology**

1692  Don Diego de Vargas reconquers New Mexico.

1769  Father Junípero Serra founds mission at San Diego; in the next thirteen years, he establishes nine of the twenty-one Franciscan missions in California.

1774–1776  Juan Batista de Anza leads colonizing parties from Mexico to the San Francisco Bay area.

1776  Fathers Dominguez and Escalante travel much of Colorado and Utah.

1783  Treaty of Paris concludes Revolutionary War, sets United States at Mississippi River.

1803  Thomas Jefferson buys Louisiana Territory from France, doubling the size of the United States.

1804–1806  Lewis and Clark cross the Louisiana Territory and go on to the mouth of the Columbia River; they return with information about the West. Their *Journals* become an American classic.

1805–1807  Zebulon Pike explores Colorado and New Mexico.


1819  Naturalist Thomas Nuttall makes a solo journey up the Arkansas River drainage onto the plains; describes the trip in *A Journal of Travels into the Arkansas Territory, During the Year 1819*.

1821  Mexico gains independence; assumes control of the Southwest.

1824  Jedediah Smith, Jim Bridger, and other trappers cross South Pass, enter Great Basin, and discover the Great Salt Lake. Mountain-man era begins.

1826–1827  Jedediah Smith accomplishes immense explorations through Great Basin, California, and Oregon. Records these trips in his journal, *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith: His Personal Account of the Journey to California, 1826–1827*.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Mountain man Joe Walker leads a group across Great Basin to California; he sees Yosemite Valley, the first Euro-American to do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Washington Irving meets J. J. Astor; working from Astor’s documents, writes <em>Astoria</em> (1836).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Washington Irving meets Capt. Benjamin Bonneville, buys his journal, and writes <em>The Adventures of Capt. Bonneville U.S.A.</em> (1837), the first account of the Western fur trade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>John K. Townsend, <em>Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains, to the Columbia River, and a Visit to the Sandwich Islands, Chili, &amp; c.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Last mountain-man rendezvous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842–1844</td>
<td>John Charles Fremont surveys the West for the government; writes <em>Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843–44</em> (1845).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Journalist John L. O'Sullivan coins the phrase “Manifest Destiny.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>Francis Parkman takes post-college tour into eastern Wyoming; writes <em>The Oregon Trail</em> (1849). Thousands of immigrants travel the Oregon and California Trails; Donner Party becomes trapped by Sierra Nevada snows.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Mormons cross from Nebraska to Salt Lake City.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848–1849</td>
<td>Discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill on the American River inspires fortune hunters and others to enter California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>California becomes a state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Approximately one hundred thousand prospectors and miners are at work in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>Gadsden Purchase sets border with Mexico along its present lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Mountain Meadows Massacre in southwest Utah; Mormon settlers, with Piute accomplices, kill somewhere between 90 and 115 members of a wagon train bound for California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858–1860</td>
<td>Gold rushes in Nevada, Colorado, and Idaho add to the Western population. San Francisco becomes the West’s first literary center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>House of Beadle and Adams, New York, begins publication of popular fiction with frontier and Western themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Telegraph connects Eastern and Western United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Homestead Act precipitates Western settlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>The “Colorado Volunteers” destroy a village of Cheyenne Indians at Sand Creek. President Lincoln sets aside Yosemite Valley as a protected reserve. Majority of Navaho tribe is captured in Arizona and taken to New Mexico, where they are held until 1868.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Appointment of General Philip Sheridan as commander of the Department of the Missouri signals increased militarization of U.S. policy toward Western Indians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer leads the 7th Cavalry in massacre of a Cheyenne village on the Washita River in Oklahoma.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CHRONOLOGY

The *Overland Monthly* begins publication in San Francisco, under editorship of Bret Harte.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>“Golden Spike” driven at Promontory, Utah, completing the transcontinental railroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Muir’s first summer in the Sierra Nevada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Wesley Powell and party descend the Green and Colorado Rivers, make the last “discoveries” of a mountain range (the Henry Mountains) and river (the Escalante) in the continental United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Clarence King, <em>Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mark Twain, <em>Roughing It</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yellowstone National Park created; world’s first reserve of its kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Barbed wire patented; “open range” days numbered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George A. Custer, <em>My Life on the Plains</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Wesley Powell, <em>The Exploration of the Colorado River and Its Tributaries</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>George A. Custer leads 7th Cavalry into disaster near Little Bighorn River, Montana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Sarah Winnemucca (Northern Piute), <em>Life among the Piutes</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Last significant shipment of buffalo hides from the Plains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Five hundred forty-one buffalo remain alive in the United States; of these, an estimated eighty-five are living in the wild.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Ghost Dance takes place, followed by the massacre of Indian village at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, conducted by the 7th Cavalry; 102 Lakota men, 44 women, and 18 children are killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yosemite National Park is created, as suggested by John Muir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Census Bureau declares frontier closed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chronology

Mormon leader Wilford Woodruff issues manifesto against polygamy; in succeeding decades, Mormon society becomes increasingly “mainstream.”

1891
President Harrison creates Forest Reserves.

1893
Frederick Jackson Turner promulgates “frontier thesis.”

1894

1897
Klondike Gold Rush

1899
Frank Norris, *McTeague.*

1900
First motor vehicle reaches south rim of the Grand Canyon.

1902
Owen Wister, *The Virginian.*
Newlands Act establishes Bureau of Reclamation, inaugurating era of large, federally sponsored water projects that will affect much of the West.

1903
Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain.*

1904–1907
Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels,* a thirty-two-volume set of narratives by explorers and early travelers.

1905
Los Angeles voters approve bonds for an aqueduct that will supply the city by taking the Owens River, 250 miles north.

1906
Much of San Francisco destroyed by earthquake and fire.

1911

1912
Zane Grey, *Riders of the Purple Sage*

1913
Congress authorizes reservoir in Hetch Hetchy, within Yosemite National Park.
Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*

1915
Rocky Mountain National Park established.
Taos Society of Artists founded.

1916
National Park Service created.
**Chronology**

Jeanette Rankin of Montana becomes the first woman elected to Congress.

Federal Aid Highway Act authorizes government road subsidies; federal highway building will have a major effect on the West.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Willa Cather, <em>My Antonia</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Sinclair Lewis, <em>Main Street</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Willa Cather, <em>One of Ours</em> (Pulitzer Prize, 1923). Colorado River Compact apportions that stream’s flow among Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, and California; clarifies federal government’s role in Western natural resource development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923–1924</td>
<td>Teapot Dome oil scandal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Mary Austin, <em>The Land of Journeys’ Ending</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Oliver LaFarge, <em>Laughing Boy</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>Depression era enlarges federal presence in the West. In per capita assistance received through the New Deal, fourteen Western states lead the nation. Farm support and work relief programs contribute significantly to Western sustenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Vardis Fisher, <em>Dark Bridwell</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td><em>The Lone Ranger</em> debuts on station WXYZ, Detroit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chronology

1934
- Thomas Hornsby Ferril, Westering.
- Taylor Grazing Act sets aside public domain for federal management, not for sale to the public.

1935
- H. L. Davis, Honey in the Horn.
- Frank Waters, The Wild Earth’s Nobility.

1936
- D’Arcy McNickle [Cree/Irish], The Surrounded.
- Boulder Dam completed, largest federal project to date.

1937
- John Steinbeck, Of Mice and Men.

1939
- Vardis Fisher, Children of God.
- Franklin Walker, San Francisco Literary Frontier.
- Nathanael West, The Day of the Locust.

1940
- Walter Van Tilburg Clark, The Ox-Bow Incident.

1941
- Entrance of United States into World War II. By 1943, the federal government has become the largest single employer in the West.

1942
- One hundred ten thousand Americans of Japanese descent are removed from the West Coast and placed in camps.
- Frank Waters, The Man Who Killed the Deer.

1943
- Wallace Stegner, The Big Rock Candy Mountain.

1943–1945
- Atomic bombs are developed in a secret project at Los Alamos, New Mexico.

1944

1945
- Walter Van Tilberg Clark, The City of Trembling Leaves.

1947
- A. B. Guthrie Jr., The Big Sky.
- Bernard DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri.

1949
- Jack Schaefer, Shane.
- Walter Van Tilberg Clark, The Track of the Cat.

1950s
- Military presence in the West and defense industries leads to increasing dependence of the area on Cold War spending.
Chronology

                      Harvey Fergusson, *Grant of Kingdom*.
1954      Frederick Manfred, *Lord Grizzly*.
1955      Poetry reading at the Six Gallery in San Francisco inaugurates the “Beat Generation.”
1956      Wright Morris, *The Field of Vision*.
1957      John Okada, *No-No Boy*.
1958      First ascent of Yosemite’s El Capitan.
1960–1990s      Flourishing electronics and aerospace industries, along with growing Pacific trade, solidify the West’s economic strength.
1960      John Graves, *Goodbye to a River*.
                      Vardis Fisher, *Orphans in Gethsemane*.
1962      John Steinbeck wins Nobel Prize for Literature.
                      California becomes the most populous state.
                      William Stafford, *Traveling through the Dark*.
                      Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi in Two Worlds*.
                      César Chávez organizes National Farm Workers Organization.
1965      Luis Valdez organizes El Teatro Campesino in support of César Chávez and the California farm workers.
1966      Frank Waters, *The Woman at Otowi Crossing*.
                      Larry McMurtry, *The Last Picture Show*.
1968      Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire*.
                      Leslie Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American*.
Chronology

N. Scott Momaday, *House Made of Dawn*. 
Larry McMurtry, *In a Narrow Grave*. 

1969 
Gary Snyder, *Earth House Hold*. 
Wallace Stegner, *The Sound of Mountain Water*. 
Indians occupy Alcatraz in protest against federal policies. 

1970 

1971 
Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*. 
Frank Waters, *Pike's Peak*. 

1972 
Rudolfo Anaya, *Bless Me, Ultima*. 

1974 
Gary Snyder, *Turtle Island*. 
James Welch, *Winter in the Blood*. 
Ann Zwinger, *Run, River, Run*. 

1975 

1976 
Wallace Stegner, *The Spectator Bird*. 
David Wagoner, *Collected Poems*. 
Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*. 

1977 
Gary Soto, *The Elements of San Joaquin*. 
Leslie Silko, *Ceremony*. 
Frederick Manfred, *Green Earth*. 
Richard Hugo, *31 Letters and 13 Dreams*. 

1978 
Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit*. 
Barry Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*. 

1979 
Wallace Stegner, *Recapitulation*. 

1980 
Sam Shepherd, *True West*. 

1981 
Frank Waters, *Mountain Dialogues*. 
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## Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>John Okadu</td>
<td>No-No Boy</td>
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<td>Gerard Haslam</td>
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<td>Raymond Carver</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>Louise Erdrich</td>
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<td>Sandra Cisneros</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>Cormac McCarthy</td>
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<td>Donald Worster</td>
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<td>Gretel Ehrlich</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>James Welch</td>
<td>Fools Crow</td>
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<td>Barry Lopez</td>
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<td>Louis L'Amour</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>Patricia Nelson Limerick</td>
<td>Legacy of Conquest</td>
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<td>A Literary History of the American West</td>
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<td>William Kittredge</td>
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<td>Vera Norwood and Janice Monk</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>John Haines</td>
<td>The Stars, the Snow, the Fire</td>
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<td>Amy Tan</td>
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<td>Maxine Hong Kingston</td>
<td>The Woman Warrior</td>
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<td>1990</td>
<td>William DeBuys</td>
<td>River of Traps</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gary Snyder</td>
<td>The Practice of the Wild</td>
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<td>Linda Hogan</td>
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<td>James Welch</td>
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<td>Gerald Haslam</td>
<td>The Other California: The Great Central Valley in Life and Letters</td>
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<td>Douglas Peacock</td>
<td>Grizzly Years</td>
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Chronology

1991
- Terry Tempest Williams, *Refuge.*
- Rick Bass, *Winter.*
- Charles Bowden, *Desierto.*

1992
- First captivity-bred California condors are released into the wild.
- James Galvin, *The Meadow.*
- Rick Bass, *The Ninemile Wolves.*
- Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerners.*
- Wallace Stegner, *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West.*
- Cormac McCarthy *All the Pretty Horses.*

1993

1994
- Cormac McCarthy, *The Crossing.*
- Gerald Haslam, *Condor Dreams.*
- James Welch, *Killing Custer.*

1995
- Wolves are reestablished in Yellowstone National Park.
- Ann Zwinger, *Downcanyon: A Naturalist Explores the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.*
- Linda Hogan, *Dwellings: Reflections on the Natural World.*
- Rick Bass, *In the Loyal Mountains.*
- Maria Helena Viramontes, *Under the Feet of Jesus.*

1996
- Gary Snyder, *Mountains and Rivers Without End.*

1997
- Rick Bass, *The Sky, the Stars, the Wilderness.*
- Nora Okja Keller, *Comfort Woman.*

1998
- Cormac McCarthy, *Cities of the Plain.*
- Western Literature Association, *Updating the American West.*
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon initiate the post-9/11 era. United States invades Afghanistan in search of Osama Bin Laden and to displace the Taliban.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>United States invades Iraq to displace Saddam Hussein. Dao Strom, <em>Grass Roof, Tin Roof</em>.</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Maria Helena Viramontes, <em>Their Dogs Came With Them</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Record drought begins in the western United States, primarily California.</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A heartfelt thanks to all the colleagues, friends, and family members who have helped bring this volume to fruition. I would first like to express appreciation to the contributors, all of whom wrote their essays with supreme dedication and good will, with a deep commitment to the field of the literature of the American West. The many tasks involved in bringing an edited collection to print are quite challenging, and the advice and support of numerous colleagues, named and unnamed, have been indispensable. I would like to thank the editorial team at Cambridge University Press, particularly Ray Ryan and Caitlyn Gallagher, for their attention to detail and tremendous effort. My special appreciation goes to Susan Kollin, whose insight into the proposal helped reshape the volume’s conceptual structure. Thanks to Stacey Peebles for her wise advice along the way, and appreciation too for the steadfast collegiality and friendship of Eric Carl Link, Greg Trine, and Andy Troup. A special thank you to Curt Asher and Christy Gavin at the Walter W. Stiern Library at California State University, Bakersfield. Their efforts in assisting with research were invaluable. As always, thank you to my parents, Ed and Joann Frye, and to my sister, Laura Myers, for their lifelong support. And particular acknowledgment to my lovely wife, Kristin, who for more than twenty-five years has taken the time to listen and care. Special appreciation goes to my daughter, Melissa, who served as editorial assistant and was always ready with the necessary words of encouragement, empathy, and insight. Finally to my son, Thomas, now away at college, who as I worked was usually in the background playing music. As I think of this collection, I will faithfully conjure in my memory the sweet sound of his strings.