



PROJECT MUSE®

Making the White Man's West

Jason E. Pierce

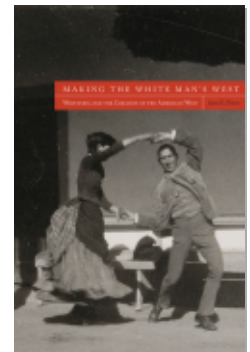
Published by University Press of Colorado

Pierce, Jason E.

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

1 ed. University Press of Colorado, 2016.

Project MUSE.muse.jhu.edu/book/44595.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/44595>

Access provided at 3 Apr 2020 11:45 GMT with no institutional affiliation



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

CONCLUSION

The Limits and Limitations of Whiteness

Being white mattered in the West. Whiteness conferred status and gave people easier access to positions of power and privilege. Although the US Congress extended citizenship to some non-whites—Hispanics after the Mexican-American War and African Americans after the Civil War—it was still something not every group could achieve. Furthermore, in practice, Hispanics and African Americans were often denied equal treatment in society. Immigration had always been tied to whiteness, and by the first decades of the twentieth century the nation increasingly tried to stem the tide of immigration using race and ethnicity. Being considered white therefore gained one acceptance into American society.

The year 1924 was a signal year for American immigration history as the 43rd Congress set about outlining the limits of citizenship. In April the US Senate voted in favor of the bill that would redefine immigration into the United States and therefore the country's racial and ethnic makeup.¹ The Johnson-Reed Act (more commonly known as the 1924 Immigration Act) would alter the course of immigration for a generation. The law officially

barred Japanese immigration and therefore all Asian immigration (which had largely stopped under the so-called Gentleman's Agreement in 1907). The act also established quotas of 2 percent of the number of foreign-born citizens of each European nationality. By 1927 the law called for a total quota of 150,000 immigrants who would be divided up in the same ratios as the national origins of white citizens in the United States.² This meant the admission of far fewer Southern and Eastern Europeans and many more Northern Europeans than were currently entering the nation. The result would be the preservation of a "desirable" Northern European racial stock for the nation.

Tatos O. Cartozian, a Portland, Oregon, rug merchant, knew this well. Cartozian, like many other immigrants, came to America in search of opportunity. He worked hard and became successful, and his years of struggling paid off when the government granted him US citizenship in 1923. It was a story repeated time and again in early-twentieth-century America, so common, in fact, that the rags-to-respectability story of immigrants became woven into the narrative of what it meant to be an American. Anti-immigrant hostility, however, had been steadily building in the first decades of the twentieth century. Racial restrictions on Asians, which began with the passage of the Page Law in 1875, became models for restricting immigration based on similar ethnic and racial standards.³ Eugenicists like Charles Benedict Davenport and Madison Grant warned that the indigestible tide of immigration would smother the Anglo-American stock that had made America great. In the spring of 1924, as Congress debated the question of immigration and the possibility of immigration restrictions based on race and ethnicity, Cartozian found himself in federal court in Portland. He had committed no crime, but the government hoped to strip him of his citizenship on the grounds that he "did not come from the white race."⁴

Cartozian, of Armenian ancestry, found himself in the odd position of proving his whiteness. Attorneys for the United States argued that the framers of the US Constitution had been clear that citizenship could only be extended to "free white persons." The courts, in an earlier case involving an East Indian man, had concluded that Indians, as Asians, could be barred entry into and denied citizenship in the United States. Cartozian, a Christian Armenian, came from the historical borderland between Asia and Europe. Authorities therefore found it difficult to determine his race. His defense team, in an effort to prove his racial background, collected depositions from some of America's

leading ethnologists: Paul Rohrbach, Roland B. Dixon, and Franz Boas. Each concluded that Armenians shared a European ancestry with ethnic groups permitted citizenship. The government countered, arguing that being white could best be determined by whether the “man on the street” considered a person white. The average American, the government’s attorneys argued, would not consider an East Indian, Filipino, or Armenian to be white; the Founding Fathers, passing the first naturalization law in 1790, would have reached a similar conclusion.⁵

Cartozian explained to the *Portland Morning Oregonian*’s correspondent that he had never been discriminated against and that his brothers belonged to the Masons, a group that allowed only whites to become members. “The Armenians,” he asserted, “are generally law-abiding people. They have been a Christian nation for more than 16 centuries. Those of them who are in the United States mingle on terms of equality with native Americans and frequently intermarry with them. We are loyal to the American government and value highly our American citizenship.”⁶

In May 1924 the trial began. John S. Coke, the US district attorney prosecuting the case, introduced extracts from scientists and ethnologists that proved, he claimed, Armenians’ Asiatic origins. Next he read extracts from the speeches of the Founding Fathers designed to show that they would not have considered Armenians to be white. The defense countered with testimony from several prominent Armenians, including Mrs. Otis Floyd Lampson, and members of numerous civic and benevolent orders that required all members to be white. Mrs. Lampson, an Armenian Christian, had immigrated to the United States to escape the Turkish genocide of 1919 and had taught in several private girls’ schools. After turning down a position at Vassar, she decided to study medicine. While in medical school, she met and married her husband, a prominent Seattle surgeon. Many Armenians, she asserted, had blue eyes and light skin, clear indications of their whiteness.⁷

Earlier cases had not cleared up the issue of which groups could be classified as white. Between 1878 and 1952 (when Congress finally ended the practice of basing naturalization laws on race and ethnicity), fifty-two federal cases on the issue of immigrant racial identity made their way through US courts.⁸ The courts heard seventeen of these cases between 1909 and 1916, a period of super-heated nativism. Of the seventeen cases, six involved Syrians, four East Indians, three Filipinos, one Armenian, one Japanese, and two German

Japanese. The courts, using the “man-on-the-street” approach, meaning that the legal standard of belonging to the white race depended on commonly held views of what being white meant, concluded that three of the Syrians were white while the other three were not; three of the four East Indians won, and the Armenian defendant also won. Results like these demonstrated that authorities faced complex problems in ascertaining whiteness.⁹ As Ian Haney López asserts, the man-on-the-street standard in essence exposed the inherent social construction of race and the importance of law in circumscribing the limits of whiteness.¹⁰ By the early 1920s, however, courts were continually contracting the geographic boundaries of whiteness, drawing a line around Europe. In *United States v. Thind* (1923) the court ruled that East Indians were not white.¹¹ However, in July 1925, a year after hearing the case, Judge Wolverton agreed with the defense and ruled that Tatos Cartozian was indeed white.¹²

As Cartozian defended his citizenship, a would-be prophet busied himself establishing his vision of a utopian society outside San Jose, California. William E. Riker dubbed his perfect society “Holy City.” Riker founded his colony in 1919 on the idea of strict racial separation. Indeed, strict racial separation of whites from other races was one of the few consistent views Riker held. In a pamphlet for one of his unsuccessful bids for governor he declared, “California is a white man’s home.” Singling out Asians as the source of California’s problems in the 1930s, he continued, “Their polluting undermining system of business must eternally stop in Our White Man’s Home and besides this, they must keep their polluting hands off our White Race Women; they belong only to us White Race People.” “Negroes and Orientals,” he declared during his first gubernatorial campaign in 1937, should remain as “servants in our White Man’s home and country.”¹³ Riker’s Holy City never prospered, though at its peak at least 100 people lived there. He promised that people who stopped at Holy City would learn about the “world’s perfect government,” but in practice his society amounted to little more than a dictatorship, with Riker owning all of the land and property and making all political decisions, which he no doubt felt was perfect. The commune, located along a busy highway, soon grew into a roadside attraction that offered—in addition to Riker’s version of political and religious enlightenment—an alcoholic soda pop stand, special healing spring water, a newspaper, a radio station, and a peep show of “ideal” women.

Once the desperation of the Great Depression gave way to World War II, Riker's idiosyncratic philosophy came into conflict with changing realities. He had been an outspoken supporter of Adolph Hitler, writing several letters of encouragement to der Führer during the 1930s. In 1942 the government charged him with sedition. Although the case ended in his acquittal, Riker never recovered and Holy City limped into the postwar years, its tourism base vanishing after the state rerouted the highway away from his utopian society/roadside attraction—a move he saw as a deliberate attempt to undermine the colony's economic survival.¹⁴

Cartozian and Riker could not have been more different. Cartozian simply wanted to be accepted as an American. Riker sought to limit the rights and privileges of citizenship (and salvation) to whites only, and his vision would remain on the fringe. Both men, however, understood the importance of whiteness in determining one's lot in life. States, railroads, and local boosters tirelessly promoted whiteness, encouraging the "right kind" of settlers, but despite their best efforts whiteness would never be the determining factor in the settlement of the region.¹⁵ In addition, the region would never become the Anglo-American refuge those like Riker wanted. Yet both men existed within the larger society, a society that had been uncertain of what it would look like. Indeed, while whiteness never dominated the region, it did play a prominent role in determining the West's characteristics.

Racial considerations fed into Americans' perceptions of the trans-Mississippi West. Initially, many Americans saw the new Territory of Louisiana, acquired in 1803, as a possible dumping ground for Indians and African Americans, given its distance and isolation from the heart of the republic. Prominent Americans, including President Thomas Jefferson, entertained the idea of creating new territories populated entirely by free blacks or American Indians. Thus America might consist of a pure white eastern core with a frontier composed of civilized Indian tribes and free blacks who had been removed beyond the Mississippi River. "Civilized" Indians could be given more time to become like whites, and anomalous free blacks could be allowed to live as they chose and still be separated from whites. Perhaps, in fact, slavery itself could be ended and all blacks could go west to a black territory.

Beyond these territories of relocated eastern Indians and free blacks, the lands would remain the haunt of supposedly savage Indian groups. While



FIGURE 9.1. Tatos Cartozian with his daughters, April 14, 1924. Cartozian, an Armenian immigrant and businessman, went to court to defend his whiteness. His was but one of several cases fought over the boundaries of whiteness in the first decades of the twentieth century. *Courtesy, Oregonian Collection, Oregon Historical Society, Portland; used with permission.*

the federal government never attempted to create a territory for freed blacks, it undertook Indian removal during the Jackson administration in the 1830s. The nation wanted nothing more from eastern Indians than their land, but the labor of blacks had to be retained. Indian Territory did come into being, but the larger vision of an America geographically segregated by race never materialized. Even Indian Territory would not remain remote for long. In little more than a decade, Americans had acquired Texas, California, and the rest of the Southwest. Indian Territory, designed to be forever on the edge of the country, instead became the geographic center of a continental nation.

Further, the nation did not solve its racial dilemmas. Expansion, in fact, created new racial tensions and brought to the fore the issue of slavery and its expansion. This new West, however, differed markedly in environment from

anything in the previous Anglo experience. Much of it was hot and dry, and, according to the leading scientific minds of the day, environment was the chief determinate of racial development. Anglo-Americans, as descendants of Northern Europeans, considered themselves the fittest, strongest race on the planet. This alleged fitness came as a result of the ancient struggle against Old Man Winter. This contest transformed them into strong, resourceful, hardworking people, the attributes needed for ongoing American and European domination of the globe. It seemed to follow that the native peoples of the West would be grossly inferior given the region's better weather. Americans considered the Indians savages, living off of whatever nature chose to give them. According to white commentators, the native Hispanics of the Southwest—residing in villages scattered from Texas to California—displayed the characteristics of racial degeneration that scientists like Samuel Stanhope Smith believed would result from settling in temperate climates. These descendants of once vigorous and proud Spanish conquistadors had grown weak and lazy from living too long in an environment that precluded struggle. Over time, almost every American observer of the nineteenth century claimed, Hispanics had degenerated into weakness, laziness, stupidity, deceitfulness, and superstition.

Americans who settled these lands might end up in a similar predicament. The scientists of the polygenic school tried to alleviate some of these fears, arguing that God created whites separately from the world's other races and therefore they would fare better, but not even these reassuring assessments could totally put to rest the fear that whites would degenerate racially if they settled in the West.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, as settlement continued apace, western proponents attacked assertions that settlement would lead to racial degeneration. The writer and magazine editor Charles Fletcher Lummis argued that California and the Southwest would not undermine white racial vigor. Instead, he countered, whites would advance to a state of development unprecedented in the history of the world simply because they did not have to struggle to survive. Their work ethic and ingenuity could instead be put in service of continued technological and material development. At the same time, he argued, it would also be healthy to occasionally rest and enjoy the blessings of a land of sunshine, the title, incidentally, of Lummis's magazine and chief vehicle for his crusade to elevate the status of the Southwest.

Another turn-of-the-century Californian took a slightly different tack. Joseph Pomeroy Widney argued that the roots of Engle-Americans (as he called white Americans) stretched back thousands of years to the nomadic tribes of the Asian steppe. There, in the grasslands of Central Asia, whites first developed. Over time, some of the descendants of the ancient Aryan horsemen moved into the colder, wetter environs of Northern Europe, but they carried, as a kind of race memory, those centuries of riding along the Asian plains. When they arrived in eastern North America, the Engle-Americans found a landscape that mirrored Europe's. Not surprisingly, therefore, they flourished. Two centuries after the Pilgrims landed on Cape Cod, Engle-Americans once again entered a new climate, leaving the East behind and heading west. According to Widney, this movement did not require Americans to adapt to an alien environment, since they carried their ancestors' experiences in their souls. Their arrival represented a return to the landscape of their genesis, this time to the Great Plains and the American West. Racial degeneration would not occur because the dry West resembled the Aryans' ancestral homeland—the Asian steppe. Both Widney and Lummis, therefore, actively tried to justify the settlement of the West and lay to rest the notion that the region was racially dangerous for whites.

Widney, Lummis, the California promoter Charles Nordhoff, and William Jackson Palmer, the president of the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, also asserted the inherent superiority of the West's population compared with that of the East. Rankling at the characterization of the West—the youngest region of the country—as backward and underdeveloped, late-nineteenth-century westerners argued that the East better exhibited the undesirable characteristics of a true frontier. In eastern cities such as New York and Boston, immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe annually poured through Castle Garden and, later, Ellis Island. These generally poor immigrants, westerners asserted, crowded into filthy, disease-ridden, lawless slums. Overwhelmed by these inferior hordes, Anglos struggled in vain to maintain their control of the levers of government and society, since, despite being not really white, these newcomers could nevertheless participate as equals in American democracy. In comparison, only the best, most talented, and wealthiest of these immigrants could escape the trap of tenements, slums, and political machines; these few migrated west, where they became desirable settlers alongside the region's dominant Anglo-Americans.

The cities and towns of the West, populated by the best old-stock Americans and a sprinkling of more recent immigrants, displayed a superior level of civilization and development, westerners claimed.

To be sure, the West had Indians, Hispanics, Chinese, and some African Americans, but none of these groups threatened Anglo-American dominance. American Indian peoples had been defeated and relegated to reservations located far from the region's growing cities and towns. Hispanics, though allowed citizenship, had little real power in most western states and territories. White Americans denied the Chinese citizenship, and legislation controlled their numbers, ensuring a small and largely powerless group. Finally, African Americans, as a result of their low numbers, wielded no collective power. Westerners celebrated the distinctiveness and romance the occasional Chinatown, adobe house, or Indian village gave to their region and lived without fear of losing their political and social domination.

Westerners like Lummis and Montana's Frank Bird Linderman even attempted to preserve the culture of these groups. Lummis and a number of Californians, including the author Helen Hunt Jackson, forged a romantic image of Southern California from the ruins of its Spanish past. Linderman saw a great deal of nobility in American Indians and sought to help protect their cultural traditions. An ardent opponent of the new immigrants, Linderman assailed the immigrant-heavy mining town of Butte as a blight on the social landscape, crusading for immigration restrictions. Indians, in his view, should be afforded a place in twentieth-century America, but not immigrants. Power played a key role in this debate. The comparatively powerless racial and ethnic groups of the West did not present the challenge to Anglo-American domination that European immigrants did in the East. The West evolved, therefore, into a kind of white racial paradise—or so Linderman, Lummis, and others claimed.

Although the white man's West was largely an intellectual construction, the brainchild of western defenders and developers, their claims reflected a partial reality. To be sure, historical, cultural, and economic processes worked to create the racial characteristics of the West, and they were too powerful for any group to control. The Southwest, for example, owed its high percentage of Hispanics to the old Spanish empire, with Texas and the territory acquired by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo accounting for virtually the entire Hispanic population of the country. It was this past that made

the area so different and appealing to people like Lummis and Jackson. This presence persisted long after the region's conquest by the United States.

Yet when boosters and developers could exert power over the construction of place, they did so. For example, the railroads and their land offices created entire communities populated by desirable farmers, influencing in no small measure the settlement of the northern Great Plains. Granted enormous tracts of public land with little discernible population and therefore anemic demand for their services, the railroads enthusiastically encouraged settlers to come to their lands, embarking on elaborate and expensive advertising campaigns. The first railroad to actively recruit settlers to the lands along its line was the Illinois Central Railroad (IC), which began construction in the 1850s. Receiving the first land grant given to the railroads by the US government, the IC recruited Germans and Scandinavians to relocate. Soon, thousands of settlers converged on the area, giving it a distinctively Northern European and therefore white cast. These settlers eagerly left their European nations behind, propelled by a scarcity of land and prohibitive prices, and settled in Illinois. The IC preferred Germans and Scandinavians to the other major group then immigrating to the United States: the Irish. IC executives, like many Americans, considered the Irish too boisterous and unreliable but believed the Germans were hardworking, sober, and centered on family life. Thus the line encouraged Germans and tried to discourage the arrival of many Irish settlers.

Beginning in the 1870s, the transcontinental railroads faced the same problem as the Illinois Central but on a much larger scale. Their land grants in many cases amounted to millions of acres spread out across the West. Much of this land, especially on the northern plains, was still in the hands of Indians like the fearsome Lakota as the lines commenced construction. The government entrusted the US Army with the mission of breaking Indian resistance, thereby enabling widespread settlement, but the fact remained that the railroads would not have a market for their services in most cases until settlers could be installed on the open land. These settlers would then use the railroads to ship their produce to market and, in turn, rely on the lines to bring manufactured goods to them. The supply would, in effect, precede the demand.

Where, railroad executives wondered, could settlers be found? Several possibilities presented themselves. They needed experienced, hardworking farmers willing to leave behind their homelands and strike out for a new country. Several European groups seemed likely candidates, but African

Americans fit the bill as well. By the late 1870s, as the lines actively recruited settlers, thousands of African Americans abandoned the increasingly hostile and segregated South and struck out for the West. Despite having little capital or experience in dryland farming, the “Exodusters” nonetheless settled towns in Oklahoma, California, Colorado, and, most famously, Kansas. Yet despite the clear desire for African Americans to head west, the railroads did nothing to appeal to them, and in the case of the Kansas Pacific some actually went to great lengths to discourage them. Only in the case of the Louisville, New Orleans and Texas Railroad did a line encourage blacks to settle on railroad land, and this, significantly, on land in the Mississippi Delta. To be sure, African Americans lacked the capital to afford to travel in luxury on railroad lines or to buy large tracts of railroad-owned farmland, but the railroads did allow reduced passage over their lines for white settlers and even extended credit to them when necessary. The transcontinental lines overlooked an eager, close group of settlers and instead sought out European settlers, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in the process. In doing so, they helped transform the West into a predominately white country.

The Northern Pacific Railroad opened offices in London and other Northern European cities, encouraging settlers from these nations. Immigration agents especially preferred the Mennonites, German-speaking pacifists who had emigrated to Russia. Accustomed to similar conditions on the Russian steppe, these experienced wheat farmers would likely thrive on the Great Plains, and numerous railroads—including the Northern Pacific—courted them, sending representatives to meet with them in person. As a consequence, Germans, Englishmen, Norwegians, Swedes, and Russian Mennonites overwhelmingly populated Minnesota, the Dakotas, and other northern states. This settlement pattern did not result by accident but rather from a deliberate effort on the part of railroad executives. The practice of preferring Northern Europeans over the Irish and completely ignoring African Americans does not appear to have resulted from much explicit racism. Rather, the lines believed that Northern Europeans made the best farmers, but by choosing to advertise to them, the railroads nonetheless created a region dominated by whites, a dominance that lingers in the region to this day.

Similarly, the Mormon stronghold of Utah became synonymous with a Northern European population. Utah’s population in no small measure resulted from Mormon efforts at proselytizing. Mormon theology until the

1970s stressed that Africans and African Americans had inherited the “curse of Cain,” making them unworthy of conversion. Elsewhere around the world, as a result of cultural and language differences, missionaries found themselves unable to reach out to peoples in Southern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Only successful efforts in the Pacific proved an exception, an accomplishment that surprised the missionaries themselves. These converts, however, remained in their homelands instead of coming to Utah. Missionaries had much more success in Northern Europe, in part because language did not prove as great a barrier—especially in the British Isles—and because the long tradition of Protestantism created an environment in which new religious ideas could compete. Mormon efforts in Southern Europe, led by the Italian mission, foundered because language and culture proved insurmountable. A heavily Northern European population resulted from these successes and failures. Whiteness therefore indelibly marked the Mormons of Utah.

Westerners also tried to enforce legal racial restrictions, which denied non-whites the right to settle in the region, and thus ensure a white population. As the debate over slavery and its expansion reached a critical mass, Oregon and California attempted to bar both slavery and African Americans. Both would successfully prevent slavery but fail at preventing African Americans from living in their territory. Neither state, however, saw a large influx of African Americans before World War II, so the population remained overwhelmingly white. Westerners had more success in limiting the number of Asians in the region. Legislation, like the Chinese Exclusion Act, and vigilante violence successfully led to the development of a small Asian population. Chinese and Japanese immigrants, however, persevered and fought to carve out a niche for themselves in the United States. Neither American Indians nor Hispanics disappeared, either; indeed, in recent decades both have reasserted their presence in the West. The racial and ethnic background of the West owed much to forces far beyond the racial and ethnic considerations of those who sought to create the white man’s West. Economic opportunity in particular pulled people from all corners of the world to the West. The population of Mormon Utah also reflected religious and cultural concerns. All of these forces greatly influenced who came west and why. Yet the pursuit of whiteness was not entirely fruitless. The desire to fashion a region where whites would remain powerful and non-whites would be relegated to the status of servants or

romantic anachronisms never entirely died. Indeed, while all these groups persisted and contributed to the culture of the West, there can be little doubt that political power and control lay in the hands of Anglo-Americans.

Today, the modern West is a racially diverse and more egalitarian society. If there were any doubts about the profound changes occurring in the West, the 2010 census must surely have settled the debate. While the states of the northern Great Plains and Rockies remain overwhelmingly white (North Dakota's non-Hispanic white population accounts for 89% of the state's total population; its southern neighbor's percentage is 84; Wyoming is at 85%; Idaho is 83% non-Hispanic white), the rest of the West is changing. Today, non-Hispanic whites constitute less than half of the population in California (40%), New Mexico (40%), and Texas (45%). Slim white majorities hang on in Nevada (54%) and Arizona (57%).¹⁶ Perhaps these numbers account for some of the acrimony over Arizona's Senate Bill 1070. Anglo-Arizonans hold a slim majority over the state's growing Hispanic population, but it is a majority in peril. In addition—unlike multiracial California, with its huge populations of whites, Hispanics, Asians, and African Americans—Arizona is much more a contest between Anglos and Hispanics (of the state's 6.3 million people, 4.6 million are white, which includes Hispanics in the census).

California in the 1990s provides an interesting parallel to what is happening in Arizona. After decades of unprecedented growth and opportunity, the California economy sunk into recession beginning in 1989. The split between the rich and the lower classes grew. Over 70 percent of the state's new arrivals were Hispanics, while the state also witnessed growth among Asians and African Americans. Whites, meanwhile, began to leave the state in droves, in part to get away from these newcomers. Between 1990 and 1994, 386,000 people (the vast majority of them white Californians) abandoned the Pacific Coast and moved to the interior (and whiter) West.¹⁷

California also provided a forerunner to Arizona's recent efforts to target undocumented immigrants with the successful passage of Proposition 187 in 1994. Prop 187 began as the "Save Our State" campaign in the largely non-Hispanic white suburbs of Los Angeles and Orange County. The ballot initiative gained widespread support from increasingly fearful non-Hispanic whites and made the ballot in the 1994 election. As the *Los Angeles Times* noted, "The movement tapped into unease with more than a decade of massive immigration, mostly from Latin America and Asia. Newcomers

caused a seismic shift in the state's demographic makeup." Proponents of the amendment to California's constitution asserted that the law would help save the cash-strapped state by not allowing undocumented immigrants access to welfare programs and education, and it required law enforcement to question suspects about their legal status and report undocumented people to the federal Immigration and Naturalization Service. These provisions of Prop 187, critics contended, amounted to little more than covert racism. A strong majority of 60 percent of California voters approved the initiative in the fall election, but the law soon found itself the subject of legal action and was ruled unconstitutional by US district judge Mariana R. Pfaelzer in 1998. Finally, it died when the administration of Governor Gray Davis, a Democrat who had opposed the proposition, decided not to appeal her ruling. Judge Pfaelzer ruled that most of the provisions of Prop 187 were unconstitutional on the basis of the federal government having the authority to regulate immigration.¹⁸ The role of the federal government to regulate immigration also influenced the fate of AZ SB 1070. While the US Supreme Court, in *Arizona v. United States* (2012), overturned much of the law, the court left the provision that allowed law enforcement to check the immigration status of people stopped for traffic violations intact.¹⁹ Both laws, however, reflected the concern of Arizona's and California's Anglo populations that massive Hispanic immigration diluted their power and control. That immigration and the demographic changes it birthed are continuing unabated throughout the West.

Nationally, the 2010 census noted that the non-Hispanic white population grew at a much smaller rate than all other racial and ethnic groups, slipping from 75 percent of the total US population in 2000 to 72 percent in 2010. Further, three-fourths of the growth in the white population was of Hispanic whites, and in fifteen states non-Hispanic whites declined in population, including California, which saw a 5.4 percent decrease. The census numbers quantified what most people know intuitively: Hispanics are becoming a larger and larger part of the nation's population, especially in the Southwest, and Anglo-American control of the region, forged over a century and a half, is slipping away.²⁰

However, whiteness is still shaping the West, if in limited ways. The interior West, for example, accounted for seven of the top ten whitest cities of over 100,000 people in the nation in 2010. Arvada, Colorado, a suburb of Denver, was second in the nation with a 94 percent white population, and all ten cities had populations that were more than 90 percent white.²¹ Certainly, the dream

of a region dedicated to the preservation of one racial group never came to pass—it was always an impossibility given the innate diversity of the region in the nineteenth century—but perhaps here in the interior West’s small towns and affluent suburbs it will make its last stand, slipping into irrelevance as an anachronism from a different age. The 2010 census numbers and the focus of immigration, “anchor babies,” and birthright citizens in the 2016 presidential campaign, however, suggest that the West is still wrestling with old visions of its past and new visions for its future.²² Despite all the changes, from the rhetoric of white supremacist groups to the angry vitriol of some in the anti-immigration movement, echoes of the white man’s West still reverberate

NOTES

1. “Immigration Bill Passes Senate by Vote of 62 to 6,” *New York Times*, April 19, 1924.
2. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 324.
3. See George Anthony Pepper, *If They Don’t Bring Their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration before Exclusion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).
4. “Racial Questions Involved in Trial,” *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], April 8, 1920. My thanks to Joshua Binus, a graduate student at Portland State University, for telling me about the Cartozian case.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. “Armenian Fight Begun in Court,” *Morning Oregonian* [Portland], May 8, 1924.
8. Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 4.
9. Elliott Robert Barkan, *From All Points: America’s Immigrant West, 1870s–1952* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 136.
10. López, *White by Law*, 9.
11. *Ibid.*, 221–25.
12. *United States v. Cartozian*, 6 F.2d 919 (1925).
13. Pamphlet reproduced in Paul Kagan, *New World Utopias: A Photographic History of the Search for Community* (New York: Penguin, 1975), 102.
14. *Ibid.*, 102–17.
15. David M. Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 173–76.
16. I derived these numbers by dividing a state’s total population from its “White alone, not Hispanic or Latino” category in table 4 of “The White Population: 2010:

2010 Census Briefs,” United States Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-05.pdf> (accessed July 12, 2012). The western and midwestern states are as follows, from the highest to lowest percentage of non-Hispanic whites:

<i>State</i>	<i>Non-Hispanic Whites as Percentage of Total Population</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Non-Hispanic Whites as Percentage of Total Population</i>
North Dakota	89	Washington	72
Montana	87	Colorado	70
Wyoming	85	Oklahoma	68
South Dakota	84	Arizona	57
Idaho	83	Nevada	54
Nebraska	82	Texas	45
Utah	80	New Mexico	40
Oregon	78	California	40
Kansas	78		

17. Walter Nugent, *Into the West: The Story of Its People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 362–69; William E. Riebsame, ed., *Atlas of the New West: Portrait of a Changing Region* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 95–96. The perceived decline of the American dream in California has been chronicled in two books by Mike Davis: *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage, 1992) and *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Vintage, 1998).

18. “Davis Won’t Appeal Prop. 187 Ruling, Ending Court Battles,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 1999.

19. Robert Barnes, “Supreme Court Upholds Key Part of Arizona Law for Now, Strikes down Other Provisions,” *Washington Post*, June 25, 2012.

20. US Census Bureau, “The White Population: 2010: 2010 Census Briefs,” 6, table four, table 6.

21. *Ibid.* Arvada, Colorado, was number two on the list. The number-one city was Hialeah, Florida, but 95 percent of its population was white Hispanics, according to the census, whereas the populations of the rest of the top ten were non-Hispanic whites. Fort Collins joined Arvada from Colorado; Boise and Spokane represented the Northwest; Fargo, North Dakota, made the list, as did Billings, Montana; and the affluent white suburb Scottsdale, Arizona, came in eighth.

22. Jose A. DelReal, “Jeb Bush: People Should ‘Chill Out’ on the ‘Anchor Baby’ Controversy,” *Washington Post*, August 24, 2015, accessed September 21, 2015, www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/08/24/jeb-bush-people-should-chill-out-on-the-anchor-baby-controversy/.