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CHAPTER FIVE

EXPLAINING COLONIAL AMERICAN HISTORY

Although three of the leading new western historians—Patricia Limerick, Richard White, and Donald Worster—discount Turner’s frontier theory as useful in explaining the history and origins of the American West, the theory was apparently well suited for providing an interconnected, intellectual scaffolding for early American history. William Cronon, a fourth member of the group, would probably accept that premise because he has written favorably on the frontier theory and has relied upon it as an intellectual threshold in his analytic study, *Nature’s Metropolis, Chicago and the Great West*.¹

To trace the origins of the Turnerian view and to observe its general acceptance by historians during the decades following 1893, one must turn to an obscure paper read by the University of Washington colonialist, Max Savelle. At a 1948 meeting of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, Savelle read a paper, “The Imperial School of American Colonial Historians,” which discussed the tendency of scholars to assume either an imperialist or a nationalist point of view. The imperialists, among whom were Herbert L. Osgood, George Lewis Beer, Charles M. Andrews, and Lawrence H. Gipson, tended to assume that since the colonies were integral parts of the British Empire, “their history should be studied as history of parts of the Empire.” The nationalists, including George Bancroft, John Fiske, and Edward Channing, took an entirely different view of early American history; they looked to the colonial period for the origins of the United States. Savelle

then named a third group of early American historians, the "so-called 'frontier school'" of Frederick Jackson Turner, who maintained that transplanted English ideas and institutions were modified and transformed by an ever-westward-moving frontier society.² Approximate as Savelle's classification was, its recognition of the existence of a third approach to colonial history indicated that a Turnerian interpretation of early American history was in fact being acknowledged. Indeed the popularity of Turner's frontier approach to colonial history has persisted in varying degrees until today.

The manner in which Turner influenced the historical profession is difficult to describe with any real degree of exactitude. We do know that his concept of the frontier-sectional theory's wider implications was embodied in his published writings, in his classroom and public lectures, and in the careful organization of the accumulating mass of his research materials that he later bequeathed to the Huntington Library.³ The advanced students who had the greatest exposure to him in everyday contacts and in correspondence after they left his seminars became his most loyal advocates.⁴ Some became leading historians who themselves set forth basic themes of the colonial frontier theory; among them were Louise P. Kellogg, James Alton James, Carl L. Becker, Homer C. Hockett, and Orin Grant Libby.⁵ Lesser known students, exemplified by the devoted Arthur H. Buffinton, published several articles on such topics as the colonial fur trade in the middle colonies.⁶ The charismatic power that Turner exerted over his pupils was described by Carl Becker as "the manner of one who utters moral truths."⁷

A hand-drawn map made by a group of his pupils pinpoints clusters of his former students teaching in leading university centers throughout the United States.⁸ In the period between 1907 and 1922 Carl Becker, Arthur M. Schlesinger, and Claude H. Van Tyne had already used basic themes of Turnerian theory to explain the causes of the American Revolution. Other followers included Frederic L. Paxson, Max Farrand, and Ulrich B. Phillips, all of whom incorporated aspects of the frontier-sectional theory in writings on early American history. Even Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, who in 1931 joined forces with those critics who questioned the validity of the Turnerian theory, quietly began to include many of the

theory's implications in his volumes on colonial history.⁹ In 1934 Curtis P. Nettles ventured to say that the frontier theory was an explanation of "a new order rising from native soil" of the colonial past.¹⁰ Paxson, though, writing on the Turnerian theme, tended to shortcut colonial history with a narrative that began after 1763.

During the 1920s and increasingly by the 1930s, historians of early American history published monographs with the words "Westward" or "Frontier" on the title page. For example, Albert T. Volwiler's carefully documented study, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741–1782*, was published in Cleveland by the Arthur H. Clark Company in 1926 before the company itself moved west to make its headquarters in Glendale, California. Volwiler's book was the first of Arthur H. Clark's "Old Northwest Series" that also included Louis Knott Koontz's 1941 biography, *Robert Dinwiddie, His Career in American Colonial Government and Westward Expansion*. A dedicated teacher at UCLA and a Turner enthusiast, Koontz attracted graduate students who worked on parallel topics. One of these was Kenneth P. Bailey, whose 1939 prize-winning study, *The Ohio Company of Virginia and the Westward Movement, 1748–1792: A Chapter in the History of the Colonial Frontier*, was also printed in the "Old Northwest Series." Koontz's colleague at UCLA, John Carl Parish, developed a friendship with Turner at the Huntington Library in the early 1930s,¹¹ and as the first editor of *Pacific Historical Review*, he fostered publication of articles on early American frontier history in that journal. Parish's investigation in colonial frontier history were linked with the westward movement as a whole, as he pointed out in a noteworthy essay, "The Persistence of the Westward Movement."¹²

While Koontz and Parish were stimulating the study of colonial frontier history at UCLA, Verner W. Crane at the University of Michigan was writing in the field and encouraging advanced students to carry on similar work. Crane's lively account, *The Southern Frontier, 1670–1732* (Philadelphia, 1929), was followed by a sequel, *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier, A Study of the Indian Relations, War and Land Problems in the Southern Wilderness, 1745–1775* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1944), written by John Richard Alden, one of Crane's pupils.

Ideas Turner had set forth were being further developed: Histo-

ries taking their inspiration from Turner's work are among the most important works of our own day. Thus Merle Curti's prize-winning *Growth of American Thought* (1943) is appropriately dedicated "to the memory of Frederick Jackson Turner." The title of the first section, "The American Adaptation of the European Heritage," and many of the chapter headings ("Colonial Conditions Modify the Old World Heritage," "The West Challenges Patriarchal Leadership") show how strongly Turner influenced Curti.¹³ John Richard Alden's writings on the emergence of the South contain interpretations that resemble Turner's,¹⁴ and Clarence Ver Steeg finds Turner's frontier theory relevant to his own discussion of the colonial era in *The Formative Years, 1607–1763*; he notes that the social mobility, which Turner recognized as a phenomenon closely connected with frontier life, was especially characteristic of the "Old West," the name used by Turner in 1908 to describe the area between the fall line and the Appalachians.¹⁵ Turner's discussion of social mobility is of continuing interest to contemporary specialists in early American history; his statement that the frontier is "a form of society rather than an area" has a strikingly modern ring.

Daniel J. Boorstin is another modern historian whose writings on early American history have been recognized for their expression of Turnerian themes. Moreover, Boorstin and Turner share a preference for the essay form, perhaps because their complex view of historical causation makes difficult the writing of a conventional narrative history. Indeed, Turner himself confided to his publishers: "My strength, or weakness lies in interpretation, correlation, elucidation of large tendencies to bring out new points of view and in giving a new setting."¹⁶

Boorstin has not been labeled a Turnerian simply because he writes historical essays stressing "new points of view" and "a new setting." As Cecilia Kenyon in her penetrating review of *The Americans* says of Boorstin, "Although he recognizes the importance of the intellectual and institutional baggage of these early settlers—Puritanism, Anglicanism, the common law, he is at heart a disciple of Turner. His emphasis throughout is on the way in which these ideas and institutions have been modified by the American environment, not on the way in which they shaped that environ-

ment."¹⁷ Kenyon, in her analysis of Boorstin's book, is disturbed by this portrayal of a colonial society in which the taming of the frontier, she says, plays so overwhelming a role. She thinks that Boorstin has oversimplified reality by suggesting that most Americans were governed almost completely by the practical facts of life.

This criticism of *The Americans*, although severe, has validity and brings to mind the hostility the late Perry Miller exhibited toward the frontier theory when it was applied to New England's history. One explanation of Miller's response is that he was unwilling to concede that the transforming force of the wilderness brought about significant changes in European culture. Miller seems to have been convinced that European ideas, especially English Puritan ideas, were all-important in determining the social structure and behavior of the colonists, even in shaping the environment of colonial New England. And like Miller, who identified Turner with "the ruling and compulsive power of the frontier" and considered him "the foremost victim—of his fallacy,"¹⁸ Cecilia Kenyon depicted the Turnerian view as an almost slavish devotion to the environmental-frontier theory. Even Page Smith in *The Historian and History* describes Turner as a man who thought "the richest soil produced the most outstanding people, almost as though human beings were a species of turnip."¹⁹

Turner's evolutionary approach to colonial history has been adopted to explain the enormous changes that occurred during the colonial era—to explain, for example, how thirteen colonies were transformed into an independent nation. Turner and other historians have often borrowed metaphors from nature to explain these changes. For instance, seventeenth-century writers referred to England as "mother," the colonies as "children," and the settling of colonies as "planting." Turner himself said that the colonies "evolved" and "matured," an appropriate metaphorical way to describe change. He also called the original colonies "mothers" of the new colonies in the West. But Turner often used metaphorical language to explain the reality of change and thus was responsible for injecting themes of environmental determinism into early American historiography.²⁰

Close examination of early American maps discloses that Turner was also responsible for certain misconceptions about the west-

ward movement, the fall line, and the Appalachian barrier. Clearly the frontier of settlement was not a "line" of land occupation. Maps of the eighteenth century do not show a cutting edge of land settlement moving westward or pausing temporarily at a fall-line boundary between the Piedmont and the coastal plain.²¹ The notion of the fall line linking the waterfalls or more specifically the rapids located on some of the coastal rivers flowing across the seaboard into the Atlantic is part of an environmental-determinism theory set forth by Turner and his disciple Ellen C. Semple that is not wholly substantiated in the sources. Turner stressed the idea in his classroom lectures²² and in his essays, and Semple expanded it in her influential book of 1903, *American History and Its Geographic Conditions*. Modern geologists have indicated that the falls, or rapids, are probably caused by the accentuated slope on the eastern part of the Piedmont. Nor is there evidence to show that certain urban centers or fall-line cities (Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; Columbia, South Carolina; and Trenton, New Jersey) originated because of the importance of being located beside these rapids. They became "carrying places" for traders moving into the interior. It is true that such carrying places were marked on early American maps, but generalizations about larger colonial populations following the fall line are of doubtful value.²³

Another Turnerian misconception about the colonial westward movement is that the Appalachians were an almost impenetrable barrier holding the colonists close to the coast. This theory, expanded by Semple, had been almost universally accepted. But early American maps, especially those of the eighteenth century, reveal that the colonists were not necessarily hemmed in between the Appalachian ranges and the seaboard. In fact, in the colonial era there were many thousands of acres of unoccupied land. Even the modern megapolis of the eastern seaboard encompasses large areas of woodland where in some places the deer population has increased more in the last fifty years than the human population.²⁴

A more reasonable explanation than the barrier theory is that if the colonists were confined to the eastern seaboard during most of the eighteenth century, it was partly because of the hostility of the French and Indians. Moreover, the reluctance of the British government to encourage land speculation and settlement west of the

proclamation line established in 1763 (revised in 1768) also discouraged westward migration. Turner himself seems to have accepted the idea of the "French barrier" to the colonial westward movement, for he used the phrase as a title for one of his lectures in his undergraduate course on the early American West.

Turner, to be sure, has been criticized for setting forth an oversimplified approach to early American history, but he would argue that the assumption that his views centered entirely on the frontier theory was mistaken. He would protest Perry Miller's assertion that the Turnerian view portrayed a "simple monolithic America." In answer to such complaints Turner would say, as he did on more than one occasion, that he was concerned with "multiple hypotheses"²⁵ and that his essays on sectionalism practically constituted a theory to do away with theories.

We can examine Turner's published and unpublished essays to obtain a better insight into his thinking. Among his papers is a manuscript essay of 1918, "What Is Colonial History?"²⁶ refuting his old friend Charles M. Andrews's assertion that the colonies should be studied "from some point outside themselves" so that "for the scholar there is only one point of observation, that of the mother country from which they came and to whom they were legally subject."²⁷ Turner's answer rejects the narrowness of this viewpoint; two vantage points of observation are necessary, he believed, "both the English home which the colonists left and the American wilderness to which they came."²⁸ Turner continues in a passage that anticipates some of our modern specialists in early American history: "Was not the more important thing the play of new influences, the grappling with unaccustomed conditions in new surroundings, economic life, the breaking of old customs, the creation of new institutions, the modification of the type?" Writing of the Massachusetts colonist, Turner points out that "whatever old names were attached to his institutions they became essentially different things in their operation, their adjustments, their modification to suit the American conditions. . . . Massachusetts was an American commonwealth at the same time that she was an English colony. She had the American forest at her back door as well as the Atlantic Ocean in front of her. She worked under both influences." Thus the two points of view, the concepts of Massa-

chusetts as “an English colony or an American commonwealth,” were, Turner wrote, “mutually interpretive.”²⁹ Turner’s own complex view of history quite naturally made him impatient with theories that imposed false limitations on scholarship.

Turner’s correspondence and his writings show that he never did abandon the germ theory. To do so would have been to accept an intolerable narrowing of the scope of his investigations. Moreover, he extended the theory by suggesting that the relation between the mother country and the colonies repeated itself as the mother country’s colonies themselves became “mothers” of new colonies in the West. Thus, describing a projected paper on the creation of new states in the West during the Revolutionary era, Turner in 1895 wrote J. Franklin Jameson,

It would be my purpose to bring into a single view the various efforts at state-making in the West in that period, considering the causes, processes, theories, and economic considerations involved in the movement. The paper would cast light upon American political thought in that era. My idea is something like this: the seventeenth century saw the planting of *European* men, ideas, institutions along the Atlantic coast. The close of the eighteenth century saw these coast settlements become, in turn, the mothers of new colonies in this western area of vacant territory. The interaction of American institutions and political ideas, with free land, makes the problem.³⁰

In his application of the germ theory to colonial history Turner showed a breadth of perception. His germ theory might seem to ally him with the imperialist school; in fact, however, he was not bound by their assumptions. Turner liked to think of himself as a man not bound by any theory—even a theory of his own developing: “I like to believe,” he wrote in 1928 to Merle Curti, “that inherited ideals persist long after the environmental influence has changed; but the environment does change, and society changes—otherwise not history.”³¹ And so Turner asserted that the historian must turn the theorem around, must look at the past in the light of the present: “The present and its tendencies do cast light upon historically significant events, institutions, ideas, which . . . may

have seemed of trivial importance."³² This germ theory in reverse would be congenial to the nationalists; like them, Turner was interested in examining the origins of the United States from the vantage point of the present. This is not to say that Turner really let go of his frontier-sectionalism theory. It stayed with him even as he argued that he did consider other theories of history.

A point to emphasize is that Turner, in his own mind, seldom drew a sharp line between suggested interpretations. When he wrote about the regulators, he consistently portrayed them as part of a far-flung colonial frontier ranging from the hinterlands of Pennsylvania to Georgia. The revolts of the late eighteenth century in Pennsylvania (the Paxton Riots) and in South Carolina shared certain common denominators with the regulators.³³ Turner also wrote about the rise of towns for retail merchants along the Piedmont frontier in the eighteenth century and pointed to the emergence of inland state capitals, such as Raleigh in 1791.

Turner's talents and inclinations, as he himself recognized, accounted for his fascination with what he called "mass history."³⁴ "My own work," he wrote Merle Curti, "emphasizes tendencies, institutions, mass movements rather than the exact truth as to details of events, motives of the individual."³⁵ Thus Turner, in "The Development of American Society," compared United States history to "a human sea—mobile, ever-changing, restless; a sea in which deep currents run, and over the surface of which sweep winds of popular emotion, a sea that has been ever adjusting itself to new shore lines, and new beds. By the side of this westward movement the story of the *individual leaders*, and the narrative of events sink to insignificance. For in America, whatever be the case elsewhere in history, society has shaped its men."³⁶ And Turner says of himself, "I have been more interested in studying a leader's environment, the society in which he lived, the lesser men whose support he needed and whose opposition modified his policy, than in minutiae of his personal life."³⁷ Yet even here, where one of Turner's convictions is involved, he tries not to be dogmatic. "I would not wish to stand for a purely social or deterministic view of historical processes," he wrote. "The individual

has a real part and sometimes his leadership creates public opinion, and within limits, opens new channels of tendency."³⁸ Turner again shows himself able to instruct us with a vivid generalization. But we must remember that his heroes were those individuals who, he maintained, represented the politics of the westward-moving pioneers from early American to modern times; he made an eloquent case for Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln. And we must also remember that he was always, and I stress always, talking about white male leadership.

Yet when pressed to state exactly what he stood for Turner drew back defensively and portrayed himself as a general philosopher of all American history. "But fundamentally," he wrote Carl Becker, "I have been interested in the inter-relations of economics, politics, sociology, culture in general, with the geographical factors, in explaining the United States of today by means of its history thus broadly taken."³⁹

For a historian whose interests were as wide-ranging as Turner's, America was the ideal field of study:

In America, as perhaps nowhere else in the world, we may trace the evolution of a vast population, almost under our gaze, from a handful of colonists lodged in the wilderness, in the presence of untold natural resources, up through a swift succession of changes social and industrial, to a democracy of nearly ninety million souls; from a thin line of European settlement fighting for existence on the edge of the Atlantic to a broad zone of civilization stretching across a continent and finding new problems beyond the rim of the Pacific.⁴⁰

This Turnerian concept of colonial history is recognized, as we have seen, in the writings of Daniel J. Boorstin and other scholars. Clinton Rossiter acknowledges that he owed much to Turner for interpretations in his perceptive *Seedtime of the Republic*. In his first chapter Rossiter argued:

If we may take the word "frontier" to mean not only the line of farthest settlement to the west, but also the primitive conditions of life and thought which in the seventeenth century extended throughout the colonies and during most of the eighteenth century

continued to prevail in many areas east of the Appalachians, we may point to at least a half-dozen indications of the decisive influence of the frontier environment.⁴¹

Rossiter further argued that “the all-pervading frontier” as well as other factors such as the English heritage of the colonists and the conflict between colonial and imperial interests were powerful forces that became basic themes in his book.⁴²

This general view of causation in early American history was also expressed by Frederick B. Tolles in his discerning essay, “New Approaches to Research in Colonial History.” Tolles stresses the need to know “*who voted*” in analyzing the attitudes “of the bulk of the colonial population.” We need to know more about “the ‘middling sort,’” the “voiceless,” says Tolles, and we need to study more closely the hierarchical social structure of colonial society.⁴³ This view suggests studies in colonial history in the vein of Merle Curti’s *The Making of An American Community*.⁴⁴ Curti’s approach is similar to Turner’s; far from centering attention exclusively on the influence of the frontier, he emphasizes the necessity of viewing colonial society as part of the most complex developmental process.

Edmund S. Morgan is another of our leading historians whose approach leads him away from the clear-cut path of traditional interpretation. In his essay “The American Revolution: Revisions in Need of Revising,”⁴⁵ Morgan reviews the familiar social and economic interpretations of the Revolution offered by Carl Becker and Charles A. Beard. He also contrasts the imperial view with the Namierian interpretation of the Revolution, which demonstrates that British statesmen of the period were too busy with local problems to control a far-flung empire. Morgan then strikes hard at the need to understand the minds of such leaders of the Revolution as Washington, Adams, Franklin, and Jefferson if we are to understand the true causes of the revolt. The crucial questions are, Morgan says, “How did Americans, living on the edge of empire, develop the breadth of vision and the attachment to principle which they displayed in that remarkable period from 1763–1789?” and “How did Americans generate the forces that carried them into a new nationality and a new human liberty?” According to

Morgan, the nationalist George Bancroft had tried to answer these questions. But the answer, Morgan says—and here we are strongly reminded of Turner—lies in the neglected field of American local institutions. “What kind of institutions produced a Jefferson, a Madison, a Washington, a John Adams? Not imperial institutions certainly.”⁴⁶ Morgan’s emphasis on local history and institutions, the origins of American liberty, and particularly on the interrelationships among social, political, and economic history shows some parallels with Turner’s views on local history and the relations among economic, social, and political history. Certainly this approach is a far cry from that crude environmentalism objected to by Cecilia Kenyon.

This view of colonial history is also characteristic of Bernard Bailyn’s analysis of early Virginia society and of Sigmund Diamond’s description of the social transformation of New France.⁴⁷ Both of these writers are concerned with the interplay of social, political, and economic forces, and they stress the importance of opportunity and free land. Moreover, they are informed scholars knowledgeable about the European background.

In his essay “What Is Colonial History?” Turner concluded that both the imperial concept and the frontier concept were important in understanding the origins of colonial America. One might wish that he had taken his own conclusion more seriously and not pushed so vigorously for the frontier idea in other essays.

But Turner, like Frederick Tolles and Edmund Morgan, was often raising complex questions rather than attempting to answer them. Indeed, among Turner’s papers we find a specific list of such questions that he asked during a Harvard Ph.D. examination:⁴⁸ “In a course on history of liberty in America, what topics would you treat in the colonial era?—Landmarks in history of franchise?”⁴⁹ Turner then asks about contributions made by various historians, including Beer, Osgood, Andrews, and Arthur M. Schlesinger. He also raises the questions of how Philip A. Bruce and William B. Weedon “differ” in their “treatment” of colonial economic history and of “how [to] find material available in English collections.” There are further notes on “*My Old West*” and on “Immigration,” but we are left with an intriguing question about the “greatest unused opportunity in colonial history.”⁵⁰

What Turner had in mind here is a matter of conjecture for us as it must have been for the candidate he was examining.

Turner liked colonial history but not for itself. For him early American history could not be divorced from the larger panorama of the American past. And the past was for him key in understanding the present. Social problems of the present, he believed, are made more understandable and perhaps more manageable if we understand the past that produced them. Turner was as unwilling to accept limitations on a specific period that he chose to study as he was to accept the bounds imposed by traditional historical scholarship. He made explicit the suggestions of the imperialists and the nationalists and then amplified those ideas by observing colonial history from the broadest possible perspective. In so doing he helped to lift much of our colonial heritage from the well of antiquarianism. Unquestionably, Turner prepared the way for the favorable reception of Beard's and Becker's social and economic interpretations of early American history. Charles Beard himself, one of Turner's most bitter critics, wrote in a 1928 letter, "Turner deserves everlasting credit for his services as the leader in restoring the consideration of economic facts to historical writing in America."⁵¹

As late as 1931, shortly before his death, Turner was perplexed by critics who misunderstood his views of early American history.⁵² In writing to Frederick Merk, Turner summarized his views on early American history:

I suppose that it is not unlikely that in my desire to modify current historical conceptions of American history I may have seemed to overemphasize the purely American aspects of our democracy. . . . What I was dealing with was, in the first place, the *American* character of democracy as compared with that of Europe or of European philosophers. . . . At any rate, it was not my idea that the Revolution was fundamentally a work of the West. So far as the colonial phase goes, I think it would be possible to show that in New England, for example, the interior towns and their problems had had a very important influence in modifying the form of government that the original Puritan leaders imposed;⁵³ and that in Virginia the development of the representative assembly, for in-

stance, was deeply shaped by the opportunity, and indeed the need, of giving concrete form to such speculations as those of Sandys and of adjusting the government to the idea of an assembly from particular plantations. These are phases of the subject which I have briefly touched upon in my class lectures and into which I have gone farther in my investigations and notes, but which I have not dealt with adequately in print. However, the data is existent.⁵⁴

The nature of Turner's assumptions about colonial history is revealed in these comments. It is, to say the least, fascinating to observe how easily Turner's explanations for social forces and social movements can be relied upon to give a special meaning to the early development of our democratic institutions. This was the thrust of Ray A. Billington's interpretative textbook *Westward Expansion*, first published in 1949, and Turnerian concepts were fundamental in the multivolume series that Billington sponsored as histories of the frontier.⁵⁵

What can we conclude about the Turnerian impact upon the writing of early American or colonial history? In talking about this topic with my friend colonialist Jack Greene at the April 1992 Chicago meeting of the Organization of American Historians, we both agreed that sometime in the 1960s, the Turnerian colonial histories experienced a quiet death.⁵⁶ Those already published in the Billington series on the early American frontiers, northern and southern, though carefully written by able scholars, were virtually ignored by a new generation of historians. "Nobody paid attention to them," Greene commented; and I added, "This was a time when there was a powerful impact of ethnohistory with important interpretive books on early American themes" written by Calvin Martin, Francis Jennings, and others.⁵⁷ My book, *Dispossessing the American Indian: Indians and Whites on the Colonial Frontier* (Scribners, 1972), actually attacked Turner and his frontier theory for negative views of Indians and for glorifying the fur traders' destruction of wildlife.

There is, however, a sign of life in the old body of Turnerian colonial history. Books in the 1990s with the word frontier in the title suddenly appeared—but not among publishers' exhibits of new volumes by historians. Who are these renegade scholars res-

urrecting these ideas that we believed had died? They are none other than the academic progeny of Turner's old friends who had invited him to speak at their national meetings, the historical geographers. Among these scholars I met a young man at the Chicago meeting who is spearheading studies of what he calls colonial "backwoodsmen." Turner, as of 1992, has risen again in a somewhat new but familiar guise, as patron saint of backwoodsmen and historical geographers.⁵⁸ Moreover, there is another sign of revival. In a lavish treatment of Turner's early West published by the Virginia Historical Society, *Away I'm Bound: Virginia and the Westward Movement*, a narrative commentary and catalog of a 1993 exhibition by David H. Fischer and James C. Kelly (see especially the first thirteen pages), it is argued that there is pictorial and documentary proof of Turner's explanation of early colonial history.