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# The Closing Gates of Democracy: Frontier Anxiety Before the Official End of the Frontier

David M. Wrobel

Frederick Jackson Turner's contribution to the study of American history is perhaps unparalleled. His 1893 address, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," is probably the best-known work of American historical analysis. But Turner's reputation has clouded historical perceptions. There have been some excellent studies of the historical climate in which Turner conceived his essay, but these studies have, by their nature, reconstructed that climate only as it related to Turner.<sup>1</sup> Thus, pre-1893 expressions of concern over the closing frontier have been examined with an eye to their role in shaping Turner's thesis. Similarly, frontier-related concerns voiced after the appearance of Turner's essay are generally assumed to have been inspired by his thesis. The magnitude of the Turner phenomenon has obscured the significance of a widespread frontier anxiety pervading the last decades of the nineteenth century. Focusing rigidly on Turner, historians have debated at great lengths the finer points of his intellectual odyssey, the precursors of his frontier thesis, and its originality.

This study does not question the originality of Turner's thesis—that the frontier molded the nation's character. No attempt is made to belittle Turner by raising the laurels of others at his expense.<sup>2</sup> Turner provided the most scholarly and memorable expression of frontier anxiety. His masterful synthesis of the American past renders whimsical any questioning of his originality. Ideas do not spring to mind fully formed, and Turner would certainly not have claimed this of his frontier thesis.<sup>3</sup> Instead, it is suggested here that Turner's writings were symptomatic of a widespread frontier anxiety that emerged in embryonic form in the 1870s, and became more pronounced in the succeeding decade. At the same

time, this is not an examination of Turner's precursors. In fact, Turner warrants only a brief mention for his pre-1890 thoughts on the closing of the frontier.

The primary purpose of this analysis is to highlight some of the tensions of the 1880s as they related to anxiety over the closing of the frontier.<sup>4</sup> The focus is not on intellectual anxiety for its own sake, but rather that this concern seems to have influenced and helped shape the period under study. If the 1880s are viewed as a calm before the storm of the tumultuous nineties, an examination of frontier anxiety in those years suggests it was an uneasy calm at best.<sup>5</sup> When we consider that many Americans had, from the earliest years of their country's history, viewed it as an agrarian paradise, a Garden of Eden far removed from the evils of the Old World, it comes as no great surprise that the realization of the disappearing frontier of free land provoked a response from American thinkers. Contact with America's virgin soil, according to American tradition, meant release not just from poverty and oppression, but also from the immoral European mentality that bred these vices. But, by the 1870s, it was becoming starkly apparent, at least to a handful of intellectuals, that the continued existence of an American Eden was in peril.

Although there has been no major study of frontier anxiety in the late-nineteenth century, what historical consensus exists suggests it was almost exclusively a phenomenon of the 1890s. Perhaps because of the scholarly emphasis on Turner, or the historical assessment of the 1890s as a watershed, the historical field of vision has been too narrow.<sup>6</sup> Intellectual concern over the closing of the frontier did not appear suddenly in 1890 when the superintendent of the Eleventh Census declared that there was no longer an unbroken frontier line.<sup>7</sup> The Census Bureau announcement of 1890 has frequently been mentioned because it is a convenient device for historians who feel that frontier anxiety warrants a mention, but not an investigation, in their accounts of the late-nineteenth century. It has also been used by those trying to account for the factors that influenced Turner's essay. But the Census of 1890 gave fresh impetus to ongoing concerns. In fact, the census report of 1880, as will be seen, also played a very significant role in the genesis of frontier anxiety.

As early as the 1870s, observers were expressing their concern that much of the country's land had been settled or bartered away to railroad corporations and foreign syndicates. By the 1880s, a significant number of intellectuals began to question the nation's stability. Some began to respond to the gloomy state of affairs by seeking legislation to stem the tide of immigration. Worried by the threat of European-style overcrowding, they argued that America's changing status rendered her incapable of housing and transforming the world's unfortunates. In the same vein, and under the same rallying cry of "America for Americans," attempts were made to restrict and even eradicate alien landholding in the United States and her territories. The seemingly alarming growth of farm tenancy in the eighties heightened the anxiety further. Some intellectuals even proposed annexation, or at least union, with Canada to compensate for the apparent exhaustion of America's public lands. It seems reasonable to suggest

that these “frontier anxieties” helped shape a minor crisis as the 1880s unfolded, and formed a noteworthy prelude to the temperament of the anxious nineties. Any examination of frontier anxiety ought to begin with this formative period.

## I

The frontier of free or cheap land was, from the earliest years of the nation’s history, seen by many as the wellspring of American democracy. An almost mystical faith in the country’s written constitution was linked to a belief that the frontier facilitated the continued existence and growth of democracy. Such notions concerning the link between America’s democratic mode of government and her abundant resources were not new in the late-nineteenth century. There would have been no frontier anxiety in that period had there been no substantial agrarian heritage. The image of the New World as an agrarian utopia peopled by sturdy yeoman farmers was a strong and enduring one.<sup>8</sup> But it was also apparent to some writers that America could not remain in a state of arcadian bliss indefinitely. Linking their country’s good fortune to its abundance of land, many American observers had contemplated a crisis in the distant future.<sup>9</sup> And a good number of European intellectuals, too, forecast more turbulent times for the New World when the cheap lands ran out and the “safety valve” shut down.<sup>10</sup> The intellectual anxiety that emerged in the 1870s and developed into a significant force during the 1880s was an expression of concern over America’s future in the light of a changing situation. When the public lands became perceivably exhaustible, the problem was addressed with newfound urgency.

Less than a decade after the enactment of the Homestead Act—the intended capstone of the nation’s agrarian heritage—a young social critic pointed to great troubles in Eden.<sup>11</sup> Henry George had been quarreling with Horace Greeley’s famed advice to the downtrodden since the late 1860s.<sup>12</sup> In 1871 George wrote a crushing indictment of public land policy. His pamphlet, “Our Land and Land Policy,” went too far against the grain of popular assumptions to have much impact at that early date but did lay down the fundamental points of his most famous work, *Progress and Poverty*, which would set the tone for the frontier anxiety of the ensuing decades. George adopted a Malthusian approach to population growth, reckoning on a 24 percent increase each decade. He weighed these findings against the remaining 450 million tillable acres of unsettled public land, and concluded that within a generation people would “look with astonishment at the recklessness with which the public domain has been squandered.”<sup>13</sup> George also offered a case study of land policy in California. He attacked land monopoly in such a new state. A potential paradise for yeoman farmers tending medium-sized farms, California’s public lands, he said, had already passed into the hands of an exploitative class of landlords. George worried that the imminent polarization of classes resulting from this situation, not just in California, but all over the country, would eventually bring democracy to its knees. His words reached few ears at this early time. But George was not alone in expressing

concern in the 1870s over the abuses of public land policy and the exhaustion of the public domain.

In 1875, the Prussian-born journalist Charles Nordhoff viewed the frontier's recession as a "serious calamity to our country." "Cheap and fertile lands," he said, "have acted as an important safety-valve for the enterprises and discontent of our non-capitalist population." Nordhoff claimed that the eagerness with which American statesmen pursued the acquisition of new territory, "has arisen from their conviction that this opening for the independence of laboring men was essential to the security of our future as a free and peaceful state." Perhaps only one in every thousand poor laborers took advantage of the public domain, he concluded, but "it is plain that the knowledge that any one may do so makes those who do not more contented with their lot, which they thus feel to be one of choice and not of compulsion." Nordhoff felt that with these lands fully settled, America could not escape experiencing the pains that afflicted Europe.<sup>14</sup>

In the same year Brevet Major General William B. Hazen, in a pamphlet entitled "Our Barren Lands," declared that the region between the Missouri River and the Sierra Nevada mountains, and stretching from the Rio Grande to the Canadian Border, was not worth "a penny an acre." Hazen's article was just one episode in a virulent war of words with George Armstrong Custer, who ridiculed notions of Western aridity.<sup>15</sup> In a longer and less polemical article that appeared in the *North American Review* in the same month, Hazen declared that the country "was rapidly approaching the time when the landless and the homeless" would no longer be able to "acquire both lands and homes merely by settling them." Hazen had dropped a bombshell on the nation's confidence in the West. He argued that "the formation and rapid growth of new, rich, and populous states" would no longer "be seen in the present domain." Uncle Sam, he announced, was no longer rich enough "to give us all a farm . . . unless we take farms incapable of cultivation."<sup>16</sup>

Even more influential was John Wesley Powell's government-sponsored "Report on the Lands of the Arid Regions of the United States," which surfaced in a very limited edition in 1878 and then in a larger press run the following year.<sup>17</sup> Powell, the director of the United States Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region, had been expressing concern over the future of white settlement in the lands of the semi-arid West as early as 1873. Like Hazen, Powell had argued that the area between the Rockies and the Sierras lay under threat of constant drought. His explorations of the region in 1873, delivered in a report to the Secretary of the Interior the following year, had stated the "immediate and pressing importance" of "a general survey . . . for the purpose of determining the special areas which can . . . be redeemed by irrigation."<sup>18</sup> Little attention was paid to Powell's warnings until the emergence of his "Report on the Lands of the Arid Regions. . . ." In that work Powell made it clear that the semi-arid regions of the West could not be cultivated by yeoman farmers working medium-sized holdings. The remaining lands had to be properly classified and

changes brought to bear on public land policy to prevent prospective homesteaders from meeting with disaster.

Powell had swept aside hopeful fantasies about the West, offering hard realities in their place. His report helped spark a land-reform movement and convinced the Federal Government to take action. In 1879 a Public Land Commission was created for the purpose of apportioning the remaining lands in a more rational manner. Despite Powell's warnings, his realities proved too hard to swallow. Traditional assumptions held firm, and the land acts of the late 1870s continued to apply the old homestead principle to the semi-arid lands of the West. Worse still, settlers poured into this region, taken in by the popular myth that rain followed the plow.<sup>19</sup> This ill-founded optimism was not dispelled until 1887, when the prolonged period of drought that Powell had predicted set in.

## II

To at least a handful of observers before 1880 then, it seemed that the frontier was becoming less of a democratizing force in American life, and that tenancy and landlordism were fastening themselves on the New World, as they had in Europe. But these expressions of anxiety did little to dampen the confident national mood of the immediate post-Reconstruction years. The great "undeveloped" West was still reckoned to be the nation's trump card, and agrarian mythology was still confidently believed. But, from 1880 on, there was much worried commentary on the state of the public domain.

Although the censuses of 1860 and 1870 had indicated the presence of a number of large landholdings in the prairie states, it was not until 1880 that the full picture started to become clear. By that time the newly formed Public Land Commission had performed the monumental task of codifying all congressional legislation relating to the public lands.<sup>20</sup> Thomas Donaldson, one of the five members of the Commission (along with Powell), completed his massive official history, *The Public Domain, in 1880*.<sup>21</sup> More importantly, the statistics on tenancy had been gathered. The 1880 census revealed those statistics, and suggested that tenant farming, even in relatively new states like Kansas and Nebraska, had gained a foothold.<sup>22</sup> The 1880 Report was also the first to provide data on farm mortgages and the size of landholdings. Furthermore, it contained a series of maps showing the extent of the uninhabited area of the United States and its territories for every census year since 1790. Each map showed the density of population in different regions, and indicated the point that the "frontier-line" had reached.<sup>23</sup> Those who consulted the Census could gauge that the United States had more tenant farmers than any European country, that many farms were too heavily mortgaged to be profitable, that large estates were becoming more common, and that there was no longer an extensive frontier of free land that might serve to reverse the process.<sup>24</sup>

The appearance of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* that same year brought that message home to more people.<sup>25</sup> George attributed nearly every aspect of the national character to the abundance of unfenced land. "This public

domain," he said, "has been the transmuting force which has turned the thriftless, unambitious European peasant into the self-reliant Western farmer; it has given a consciousness of freedom even to the dweller in crowded cities and has been a well-spring of hope even to those who have never thought of taking refuge on it." George, like Nordhoff, stressed that for every American, "there has been the consciousness that the public domain lay behind him," adding that the knowledge of this fact had given Americans a sense of "generosity . . . independence, elasticity and ambition." Cheap land, he said, made America's institutions superior to those of other countries. But George's message was an ominous one. He stated that the republic had entered on a new era in which land monopoly was becoming the norm. Commenting on California, he stated that it would be "difficult to point the immigrant to any part of the state where he can take up a farm on which he can settle and maintain a family."<sup>26</sup>

George allowed the American people no great credit for their democratic achievements, believing that any nation possessing an "enormous common" would have accomplished as much. But with the great pool of public land seemingly close to drying up, comparisons of conditions in America and Europe would no longer continue to be so favorable to the former. In the same month that *Progress and Poverty* was published in New York, the *Atlantic Monthly* featured another pessimistic study that compared the effects of farm tenancy in England and America. The growth of the tenant farming system in America was seen as "an evil of the greatest magnitude." At least in England the rents were low and the land "thoroughly cultivated and improved." But in America, where rents were high and tenancy impoverished the land, there was "not one redeeming feature in the whole system."<sup>27</sup>

The ominous forebodings of 1880 were repeated and elaborated on as the decade unfolded. Efforts were made to locate the actual position of the receding frontier line.<sup>28</sup> The story of the rapid settlement of the West and the noble character of the pioneers was often recounted.<sup>29</sup> The "Garden of Eden," in its ostensible state of deterioration in the 1880s, was receiving as much attention as the prospering West had in any earlier decade. And the new question of concern that emerged was how to alleviate certain ills now that the frontier was seemingly less capable of performing that function.

### III

Henry George followed up on the success of *Progress and Poverty* with the publication of his second major work, *The Irish Land Question*, in early 1881.<sup>30</sup> He described the full extent and the terrible consequences of landlordism in Ireland. The attack, however, was directed as much against the American land system as the Irish one. Surely, he said, America, "with millions of virgin acres yet to settle," ought to be in a position to advise the British. But George claimed that such times had passed by. America could not counsel other countries because her states were witnessing "the growth of a system of cultivation worse in its social effects than that which prevails in Ireland."<sup>31</sup> His conclusion, that private

property in land was the root cause of the ills that existed in Britain and America, went too far against the grain of America's agrarian mythology not to cause a great stir. Very few writers reacted complacently to George's ideas. But if many Americans argued with his solutions, few who read his work could have been unaffected by his vivid accounts of the specific problems arising from land monopoly, and his constant reminders that free or cheap land was a rapidly diminishing commodity.

Thomas Donaldson, writing in the *North American Review* in August 1881, stated that the supply of lands suitable for homesteading was "practically exhausted in the West." At this early date Donaldson, unlike George, was not overly alarmed by the tendency toward monopolization. He felt the taxation powers of state legislatures were great enough to break down extensive holdings and thus provide more land for homesteading.<sup>32</sup> An editorial in *Century Magazine* in late 1882 expressed, without qualification, an even more optimistic opinion. The author urged young Easterners to go West and take advantage of the "career openings" in the sturdy yeoman farmer profession.<sup>33</sup> However, from 1883, when the findings of the last census were officially published, hopeful evaluations of the West became a rarer occurrence among experts on the public lands.<sup>34</sup> An influential article in the February 1883 edition of *Century Magazine* on "The Evils of Our Public Land Policy," by the economist Edward T. Peters, was indicative of the rising concern. Peters pointed to an alarming growth in the number of large farms. He calculated that between 1870 and 1880 the number of farms of more than 1,000 acres had risen from 3,720 to 28,578, a more than seven-fold increase. Though the system of large farming could be economical, any advantages reaped from it were "only to be had," he said, "by permitting gigantic monopolies of the soil, under which the lion's share of all the benefits . . . fall into the hands of a few persons." Peters noted the abuses and failings of the existing land policies, which made the public lands "the easy prey of the monopolist," and concluded that with America fast becoming as densely peopled as any other country, it might be appropriate to fix the ominous motto, "After us the deluge," to the nation's public land policy.<sup>35</sup>

The year 1883 also saw the publication of William Goodwin Moody's vicious attack on land monopoly, *Land and Labor in the United States*. Moody, an embittered social reformer, despairingly noted the transformation of the American farmer since the Civil War, from proud landowner to poor tenant. He recounted the process by which the farmer's lands became heavily mortgaged, then fell into the hands of railroads and bankers, then were reunited as bonanza farms on which the former owner would work as a seasonal tenant. Moody saw the central elements of the agrarian myth—unoccupied land and the yeoman farmer—fast disappearing from the American scene, and declared that his country "had taken immense strides" to place itself "in the position in which Europe is found after a thousand years of feudal snobbery."<sup>36</sup>

The typical American farmer, cultivating his own medium-sized property and developing aspects of an independent and "manly character," Henry George



lamented in 1884, was “the product of conditions under which labor is dear and land is cheap.” As these conditions disappeared, the yeoman farmer would “pass away as he had passed away in England.” Reserving to actual settlers what little arable land there was left, as the Land Commission proposed in 1884, was, in George’s opinion, “merely a locking of the stable door after the horse has already been stolen.”<sup>37</sup> The Land Commission, however, had at least alerted the government to the theft. In a long supplementary section in the 1884 edition of *The Public Domain*, Donaldson made the alarming, albeit erroneous claim that only five million acres of “purely agricultural lands” remained in public ownership in the West, and then proceeded to attack Congress for allowing the monopolization of the public lands.<sup>38</sup>

In 1885, the *North American Review* commissioned a special reporter, Thomas P. Gill, to investigate the problems of tenancy and landlordism. The report, which surfaced in January 1886, emphasized that America had more tenant farmers than England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales combined. The claim, whether numerically true or not, was a misleading one, but one designed to strike an emotive chord in the American psyche. Gill compared America’s great landlords to the absolute monarchs of past times. He saw the small proprietor becoming a “tenant-at-will,” little better off than a serf.<sup>39</sup> In the following month’s edition the *North American Review* featured another article on the same topic. Utilizing the findings of the 1880 Census, its author, Adam J. Desmond, pointed to the presence of more than one million tenant farmers in the United States. Desmond commented that this was “two hundred thousand more than Ireland had in the palmiest days of landlordism”—again, a striking, though misleading and inaccurate comparison, but one that struck quite a blow at the Myth of the Garden. Desmond’s figures on tenancy were lower than Gill’s, but his related comments were more revealing. After noting the favorable land-to-man ratio that America had possessed and squandered away to railroad corporations, Desmond voiced a widespread concern in claiming that the main beneficiaries of the subsequent sale of railroad lands were alien landlords.<sup>40</sup>

Alien landlordism had been a source of vehement public outcry in the prairie and plains states all through the 1870s. The most notorious alien landlord, the Irishman William Scully, had come to symbolize for Westerners the evils of land monopoly. “Landlordism” and “Scullyism,” along with “anti-Scullyism” and “anti-alien land ownership,” had become synonymous terms in the West before the major national magazines picked up on the issue in the eighties. Lists of alien holdings and recent acquisitions were widely published in Western newspapers to document the full extent of the danger.<sup>41</sup> The threat posed by these new developments appeared to be very real as land became a more precious commodity. The issue played a part in the 1884 presidential campaign as both parties called for restrictions on alien landholding in their platforms. The sustained outcry led to the passage of federal legislation in 1887, and soon after, action by certain states restricting alien landholding.<sup>42</sup>

Anxiety over the disappearing frontier had intensified opposition to all abuses of the public land laws and helped shape government policy in that area. Federal efforts to restore to the public domain the hundreds of millions of acres that had been fraudulently gained began in earnest during Grover Cleveland's first administration. The next Democratic Party platform demanded the forfeiture of 100 million acres, or approximately half of the land granted to Western railroad corporations. And in 1885 bonanza farming received a direct blow when an executive order mandated the removal of all fences.<sup>43</sup> In 1887 the Dawes Severalty Act secured millions of acres of Indian reservation lands for white settlement.<sup>44</sup> And, two years later, on April 22, 1889, when the extensive lands of the Five Civilized Tribes were opened, thousands of land-hungry homesteaders poured into the region at the crack of a starter's gun. It was apparent that anxiety over the closing frontier was not confined to the nation's intellectuals.<sup>45</sup>

#### IV

American Indians were not the only victims of anxiety over the perceived closing of the frontier. The cry of "America for Americans," directed at the opulent alien landholder in the 1870s and more virulently in the 1880s, was also levelled against the destitute foreign immigrant. Immigration reached unprecedented numbers in the eighties. Worse still to many, it consisted of ostensibly inferior elements from Southern and Eastern Europe. The influx of the "new immigration" seemed to coincide with the growth of urban squalor, political corruption and industrial discontent, and anxious observers had no trouble establishing a causal link. Much of this anti-immigrant feeling stemmed from racist assumptions that had surfaced more fully in the Social-Darwinist framework of the late-nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup> The historic traditions of American nativism—dormant since the fifties—re-emerged in the eighties to restrict the spread of the three ominous European "r's"—radicals, religion and races. Some anti-immigration agitators often merely utilized the factor of the closing frontier to augment their arguments. But at the same time, it was not difficult to see a link between the diminishing opportunities for escape to the West and the onset of urban problems. As early as 1881 a *New York Tribune* article stated that the nation had "reached the point in its growth where its policy should be to reserve its heritage for coming generations, not to donate it to all the strangers we can induce to come among us."<sup>47</sup> Thomas Donaldson, too, suggested that the immigrant who could possess land immediately upon declaring his intentions of becoming a citizen had an unfair advantage over those who had been born and had lived in the United States for twenty-one years, and who had no prior right to the land.<sup>48</sup> Donaldson elaborated on his position in the 1884 edition of *The Public Domain*. Pointing to the arrival of nearly 800,000 new immigrants in 1882, and in light of his findings on the state of the public domain, Donaldson declared the inexpediency of proclaiming "to all nations of the earth that whoever shall arrive in this country from a foreign shore, and declare his intention to become a citizen, shall receive a farm of 160 acres. . . ."<sup>49</sup>

Many intellectuals believed in the assimilative power of free land, the melting pot being strongly linked to the nation's agrarian heritage. If given yeoman status, the shiftless immigrant would transform both his social position and his character. As Henry George put it, the "virtue of new soil" was that it created "wholesome human growth" from "degraded and dangerous materials." He saw the North American continent as the world's last great frontier. It was, for George, "that expansion over virgin soil" that gave freedom to American life and "relieved social pressure in the most progressive European nations." According to George, the closing of America's frontier would have calamitous effects on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>50</sup>

In 1885 the evangelical missionary, Josiah Strong, claimed that the day was close at hand when the public land would be exhausted and immigrants would pour into the cities.<sup>51</sup> Strong had stated the correlation rather crudely (the city had been the immigrant's abode for decades), but his perspective was not uncommon. With the assimilative capacity of the New World apparently declining, the continued acceptance of Europe's immigrants seemed an open invitation to Europeanization. Thomas Gill viewed the problem in especially dramatic fashion. Seeing that America was seeking no conquests to add to her domain, he wondered how she could continue to invite the "overflow population of the world to take possession of her territory . . . giving to everyone the privilege of citizenship, that allows even aliens to possess her soil." If America continued on this reckless course, Gill added, it would suffer the same consequences that followed the mistakes of Ancient Rome.<sup>52</sup>

The Norwegian-American Hjalmar Hjorth Boyeson, a professor at Columbia College and a recognized authority on immigration, shared the outlook common among those of his adopted country. Boyeson blamed the changing social conditions on the continuing flow of immigration. He said that Americans were beginning to feel crowded "in spite of the magnificent dimensions of the continent." "Our cities are filling up," he went on, "with a turbulent foreign proletariat, clamoring for 'panem et circenses' as in the days of Ancient Rome. . . ."<sup>53</sup> Boyeson felt that the existence of the republic was threatened because the new immigrants were no longer being absorbed. With reduced opportunities in the New World, the new immigrant no longer had any respect for America's political institutions. And, not being animated by the American democratic spirit, the new immigrant would be even less assimilable. Boyeson had postulated a vicious circle of ills, which he reckoned could be broken only by anti-immigration legislation.

By the latter part of the decade these expressions of concern had taken their toll. The legislative action, begun in 1887 at both the federal and state levels, and aimed chiefly at non-resident landlords, also limited both the employment and landholding opportunities open to the less-affluent immigrant.<sup>54</sup> Frontier anxiety was certainly not the only factor that helped alter perceptions on the question of the continued utilization of America's resources by Europe's underclass. Moreover, some argued against restrictions on the grounds that American institutions

were holding up and could still speedily assimilate Europe's "poor apologies for mankind."<sup>55</sup> In fact, when it came to actually restricting immigration, the naysayers would hold sway until the beginning of the 1920s. But the seeds of discontent, apparent as early as the 1870s, had taken root in the 1880s, and would bear ominous fruit in 1894, when the national Immigration Restriction League was formed. Meanwhile, in the same period, another factor was beginning to enter the equation. With less cheap land on the one hand, and increasing land monopoly and steady immigration on the other, a few intellectuals considered increasing the public domain to offset the imbalance.

## V

Concern over the closing of the frontier in the eighties did not have the effect on American foreign policy that it had on public land policy. There is little evidence to suggest, as one notable historian did, that from the 1870s the closing of the frontier convinced agricultural elements to push the country towards a more active foreign policy in their search for overseas markets.<sup>56</sup> Other than Josiah Strong's prophetic announcement that "the pressure of population on the means of subsistence" in America would lead the Anglo Saxon race on a heightened course of overseas expansion, frontier related expansionist designs in the eighties were almost invariably directed toward Canada.<sup>57</sup>

*The Nation* and the *North American Review* in the early eighties featured a number of articles on the feasibility of annexing Canada, but until 1884 little mention was made of that country's vast resources in connection with America's diminishing land supply. When calls for annexation did begin to appear on those grounds, they came from both Americans and Canadians. Prominent figures in Canada's Liberal Party often proposed closer relations with the United States as a solution for the lethargy of their own economy. They were usually well-to-do capitalists who felt American trade and investment were crucial to the expansion of Canadian business and industry. Their entrepreneurial designs were being stifled by the ruling Conservative Party, which was favorable to British policy and shunned relations with the United States. The Liberals proposed everything from Canadian-American reciprocity treaties to outright annexation by America. When their more moderate proposals made little headway, they succumbed to the supposed inevitability of Canada's drifting into America's orbit.<sup>58</sup>

What is significant was the Liberals' utilization of a "frontier argument" to entice the United States into taking action, and the frequency with which American periodicals published the argument. In 1884 the *North American Review* featured a quite blatantly annexationist article by the Canadian physician and historian, Prosper Bender. Bender talked at length about Canada's "immense tracts of virgin soil" and the "splendid opportunities that would be afforded to . . . the hard-pressed toilers of Eastern factories, mines, and foundries, as well as the cultivators of sterile and worn out lands, by the rich, virgin territory of the North West." He reminded the reader that "the available first-class land awaiting settlement in the Republic is of no great extent," and that it would all be taken up

in the near future. Bender wondered how there could be any opposition in America to simply "going up and possessing the land." He concluded that the constant stream of European immigrants could then be directed up into Quebec and Ontario, thus relieving the build-up of social pressure in America's cities.<sup>59</sup>

By the middle of the decade a number of American journals, particularly *Forum*, *The Nation*, and the *North American Review*, were featuring articles that pointed to the imminence of Continental Union with Canada.<sup>60</sup> Great attention was focused on elections in Canada, the hope being that the Liberal Party would come out on top and establish reciprocity treaties with the United States. American political theorists assumed that Canadians would then see the benefits of better relations and press for a closer union. As it turned out, most Americans remained indifferent to these proposals, and most Canadians were hostile to them. But proposals for annexation continued to appear, and the closing American frontier was usually an integral element in the arguments.<sup>61</sup>

Erastus Wiman, a prominent Canadian capitalist, was the driving force behind the Liberals' United States-oriented policies. His articles regularly appeared in the *North American Review* in the late 1880s. Wiman continually wavered between the advocacy of Continental Union and outright annexation by the United States, but always stressed the vastness of Canada's resources, which he said would serve to offset "the strange sense of limitation" being felt in the United States, where there was "no more new territory left to occupy." Like Bender, he suggested the possibility of America's offloading its immigration problem onto Canada. He reckoned on a steady course from commercial union to political union, which, when established, would immediately take the pressure off American soil. A few months later, in June 1889, Wiman was considerably less of a gradualist. He suggested that if the fishing disputes then going on between the two countries led to outright hostility, the United States would be justified in taking Canada by military force. Wiman hoped that Canada might free herself from all ties to Great Britain, and then willingly divide itself into perhaps thirty states. If not, he felt that the United States should perform the task. By 1890 he was asking in plain terms "has not the time for the Capture of Canada come?"<sup>62</sup>

Few of those who addressed the Canadian situation at the end of the decade wrote so boldly as Wiman. The more common question was not "when shall we annex Canada?" but "Is Union With Canada Desirable?" And those who stressed the desirability of Union rarely failed to mention Canada's extensive wheatfields, timber and mineral resources.<sup>63</sup> America, of course, never came close to a Continental Union with Canada. Even reciprocity treaties were hard to come by in the late-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it is worth considering the intense interest with which American journals viewed Canadian affairs, and the frequency with which some Americans and Canadians proposed the utilization of Canada's abundance to offset America's diminishing returns. The frustration that some Americans experienced at the disappearance of these possibilities might certainly be viewed as a prelude to the expansionist temper of the nineties.

## VI

Meanwhile, as anxiety over the closing of the frontier helped to shape concerns in specific areas like public-land policy, immigration control and the nation's position vis-a-vis new territorial acquisitions, an increasing number of writers and intellectuals started to reflect on the disappearance of the old frontier West. Frontier anxiety had entered the general cultural milieu of the 1880s. At the start of the decade a young Frederic Remington came upon the realization that "the wild riders and the vacant land were about to vanish forever." And, as he later recalled the moment, Remington began "to try and recall some of the facts" about him, and "saw the living, breathing end of three centuries of smoke and dust and sweat." By 1881 Remington was chronicling in his art the closing moments of a more heroic age marked by a special breed of "men with the bark on."<sup>64</sup> Owen Wister journeyed out West a few years after his future friend and co-worker Remington, displaying a supreme optimism about the region's future. But Wister's vision was marred by a fear, as he recorded in 1885, "that the prairies would slowly make way for your Cheyennes, Chicagos, and ultimately inland New Yorks, everything reduced to the same flat . . . level of utilitarian civilization. . . ."<sup>65</sup> Around the same time the Western humorist Edgar Wilson Nye, in an article entitled "No More Frontier," lamented that the march of civilization had taken all the joy out of pioneer life. Nye remarked that the Old West was so far gone that a single day's ride could get a man to where he could see daily papers and read them by electric light.<sup>66</sup>

There were good grounds for making such assumptions about the passing of the Wild West. Indeed, by the early 1880s William F. Cody was turning that saga into a highly lucrative entertainment spectacle. On July 4th, 1882, Buffalo Bill Cody performed his first Wild West Show, advertised as the "Old Glory Blowout," outside of North Platte, Nebraska. By the middle of the decade the famous Sioux leader Sitting Bull had become a featured performer, though he would end his days in a more fitting fashion just prior to the real Wild West battle of Wounded Knee in December 1890. But three and a half years before Wounded Knee, in May 1887, the *New World* came face to face with the Old as the Wild West Show played in London to Prime Minister Gladstone, the Prince of Wales and Queen Victoria herself—as symbolic an end to the Wild West as Sitting Bull's last stand. A flood of Buffalo Bill novels began to appear in that year. And, by 1889, Cody's first imitator, Dr. W. F. Carver, a celebrated marksman, was touring Europe with twenty-five "performing Indians" hired from reservations. What was ominous food for thought for many intellectuals had become good business.<sup>67</sup>

But as the image of the cowboy was being deified for profit, the people of western Kansas were streaming back east at the end of the decade with "In God we trusted, in Kansas we busted" chalked on their wagons. The agrarian myth was beginning to crumble even as the cowboy acquired mythic status. The noble pioneer was fast becoming a rootless vagrant. Hamlin Garland had returned West

in 1887 only to see its romance fading away. The yeoman farmer, as Garland later recalled in his autobiographical work, *A Son of the Middle Border* (1917), was toiling incessantly for no reward and could no longer be consoled by his supposed separation from a more advanced, more corrupt civilization. All that was left, in Edgar Watson Howe's estimation, was the bitterly futile agrarian existence that he had portrayed in his first book, *The Story of a Country Town* (1883). That same year Mark Twain completed his *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), acknowledging the end of the frontier as Huck naively pondered the possibility of lighting out for the Territory ahead of the rest. Twain's comic style was a far cry from the darker broodings of Garland and Howe, but his black humor was as surely a part of the literary realism that emerged in the 1880s to throw a cynical light on the agrarian myth.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, Helen Hunt Jackson was taking a cynical view of the Westward march of white settlement. Her *Century of Dishonor* (1884) chronicled the crushing of Indian resistance that had characterized the Wild West, and she aroused sympathy for a dying culture in her novel *Ramona* (1885). Theodore Roosevelt was less concerned with the fate of the Indian, but reflected sadly on the rapid disappearance of the "old race of Rocky Mountain hunters and trappers, of reckless, dauntless Indian fighters," and formed the Boone and Crockett Club in late 1887 to preserve a little of the old frontier spirit.<sup>69</sup> *Century Magazine* provided a running commentary on the vanishing West in the last years of the decade. Roosevelt's "Frontier Types" series appeared from May to October, 1888, and was followed by two more six-issue series, "Pictures of the West," and "Pictures of the Far West," all of which were more concerned with preserving the last fragments of pioneer culture than with telling the reader about any great "unknown West."<sup>70</sup>

As the decade came to a close, two European observers (both of whom are generally cited as important precursors of Turner), the English Lord James Bryce, and the Italian economist Achille Loria, reflected on the problems they foresaw for the United States as a frontierless democracy. Loria, who had viewed free land as a factor in the development of political institutions since the 1870s, remarked in 1889 that "The cessation of economic freedom, because of the total occupation of the soil, is destroying democratic methods, the glory of American times."<sup>71</sup> Bryce was hardly less pessimistic, commenting that the hardy, venturesome, self-reliant Western pioneer type was fast disappearing from the scene as the West filled up. He stated that this region provided a "safety valve" for Eastern discontents, but was losing its effectiveness. As the frontier closed, "pauperism . . . would become more widespread, wages would drop, and work would be harder to find; the chronic problems of old societies and crowded countries, such as we see them today in Europe, will have reappeared on this new soil. . . . It will be a time of trial for economic institutions."<sup>72</sup>

Also in 1889, in *The Winning of the West*, Roosevelt commented on the harsh heroic lives of the Western pioneers "who have shared in this fast-vanishing frontier life."<sup>73</sup> A young historian, Frederick Jackson Turner, reviewed Roosevelt's

work that same year, pointing to the West as a fruitful field for historical study. But Turner would not play a role in the development of frontier anxiety for a few years yet.<sup>74</sup> In fact, before the census report of 1890 marked the official end of the frontier and prompted Turner to formulate his frontier thesis, frontier anxiety had helped shape the temper of the 1880s. That anxiety would become more acute in the nineties, but its earlier development was a factor of no small significance. That development, though interesting in a historiographical context for its bearing on Turner's intellectual odyssey, seems deserving of attention in its own right, in a more strictly historical context.

## Notes

1. See, for example, Lee Benson, *Turner and Beard: American Historical Writing Reconsidered* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1960), and "The Historical Background of Turner's Frontier Essay," *Agricultural History* 25 (April 1951), 59-82; Ray A. Billington *America's Frontier Heritage* (New York, 1966), *The Genesis of the Frontier Thesis: A Study in Historical Creativity* (San Marino, California, 1971), and *Frederick Jackson Turner: Historian, Scholar, Teacher* (New York, 1973); and Fulmer Mood's "The Development of Frederick Jackson Turner as a Historical Thinker," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 34 (Transactions 1937-1942), 283-352. On the other hand, Billington's essay "Frederick Jackson Turner and the Closing of the Frontier," in Roger Daniels, ed., *Essays in Western History in Honor of Professor T. A. Larson* (Laramie, Wyoming, 1971), and his *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise: The European Image of the American Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1981), concentrate more on placing Turner's "frontier anxiety" into historical context than on reconstructing that context around Turner. Excellent short summaries of these works and hundreds of others relating to Turner can be found in Vernon E. Mattson and William E. Marion, eds., *Frederick Jackson Turner: A Reference Guide* (Boston, 1985).

2. Characteristic of this approach are Benson's appraisal of Achille Loria in *Turner and Beard*; Wirt A. Cate, "Lamar and the Frontier Hypothesis," *Journal of Southern History* 1 (February 1935), 497-501; and Edith H. Parker, "William Graham Sumner and the Frontier," *Southwest Review* 41 (Autumn 1956), 357-65. See also Fulmer Mood, "The Concept of the Frontier, 1871-1898. Comments on a Select List of Source Documents," *Agricultural History* 19 (January 1945), 24-30; and "A British Statistician of 1854 Analyzes the Westward Movement in the United States," *Agricultural History* 19 (July 1945), 142-51.

3. Turner's dated and marginally notated books, and his voluminous notecard collection, leave little doubt that his conception of the thesis was a long and toilsome process. Billington's *The Genesis of the Frontier Thesis* is the best account of that process.

4. Patricia Nelson Limerick's recent seminal work, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Path of the American West* (New York, 1987), and William Cronon's recent article "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier: The Legacy of Frederick Jackson Turner," *Western Historical Quarterly* 18 (April 1987), both warn against "embracing frontier's that somehow close," and focus instead on the theme of continuity in Western history. Their point is well taken, though the focus in the present essay is not the question of when or whether the frontier closed, but the importance of perceptions of its closing, regardless of whether or not they were "technically" accurate.

5. It is particularly interesting that concern over the closing of the frontier should become a significant phenomenon in the 1880s, which were among the most prosperous years of the nineteenth century. This suggests that purely economic indices cannot give a full indication of the underlying tensions that mark certain periods. It is worth noting, too, that the decade of the 1870s (or at least the period from 1873 to 1878) was one of serious depression in the United States, (on this point see Herbert G. Gutman, "Social and Economic Structure and Depression in American Labor in 1873 and 1874," 11 (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1959)). Nevertheless, the link between real economic hardship and the recession of the frontier was less readily made in those years. For a fascinating insight into the economic realities of this period from a world perspective, see Walter Nugent's recent article, "Frontiers and Empires in the Late-Nineteenth Century," *Western Historical Quarterly* 20 (November 1989), 393-408.

6. See for example, Henry S. Commager, "The Watershed of the Nineties," in *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Character and Thought Since the 1880s* (New Haven, 1950), 41-54; and Richard Hofstadter, who talks of "the Psychic Crisis of the 1890s," in his "Manifest Destiny and the Philippines," in Daniel Aaron, ed., *America in Crisis* (New York, 1952), 172-200.



Both of these viewpoints are discussed in Marcus Cunliffe's "American Watersheds," *American Quarterly* 13 (Winter 1961), 480-94.

7. Gerald Nash questions the accuracy of the prophetic announcement made by Robert P. Porter, the Superintendent of the Eleventh Census in "The Census of 1890 and the Closing of the Frontier," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 71 (July 1980), 98-100.

8. See Henry Nash Smith's classic study, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950; rpt. 1978), 123-32; David Noble's excellent chapter on "The Crisis of 1890 in his *The Progressive Mind, 1890-1917* (Minneapolis, 1981); and J. G. A. Pocock's chapter "The Americanization of Virtue: Corruption, Constitution, and Frontier," in his *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, 1975), 506-52.

9. Among the most notable of these observers were Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and George Fitzhugh. See Smith, *Virgin Land*, 123-32, and 145-54. Also see Rush Welter, "The Frontier West as Image of American Society: Conservative Attitudes Before the Civil War," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 46 (March 1960), 593-614.

10. Included among the European observers were St. John de Crevecoeur, Alexis de Tocqueville and Georg Hegel—see Smith, *Virgin Land*, 123-32, and W. Stull Holt, "Hegel, The Turner Hypothesis and the Safety-Valve Theory," *Agricultural History* 22 (July 1948), 175-76. See also Thomas Carlyle, *Later-Day Pamphlets* (London, 1850), 17-18, 193; and Thomas Macaulay, "Lord Macaulay on American Institutions," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 54 (February 1877), 460-62. For an insight into utilization of the "Safety-valve" thesis for political purposes see William M. Tuttle, Jr., "Forerunners of Frederick Jackson Turner: Nineteenth Century British Conservatives and the Frontier Thesis," *Agricultural History* 41 (July 1967), 219-27; and G. D. Lillibridge, *Beacon of Freedom: The Impact of American Democracy Upon Great Britain, 1830-1870* (Philadelphia, 1955), especially pages 92-5.

11. Gilbert C. Fite provides a useful summary of the historiographical debate on the Homestead Act in "The American West of Farmers and Stockmen," in Michael P. Malone, ed., *Historians and the American West* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1983), 209-23. William F. Deverell's excellent article, "To Loosen the Safety Valve: Eastern Workers and Western Lands," *Western Historical Quarterly* 19 (August 1988), 69-85, is the most recent discussion of the operation of the Act.

12. See Charles A. Barker, *Henry George* (New York, 1955), 143; Horace Greeley, "Advice to American Farmers," in James Parton, *Life of Horace Greeley* (Boston, 1869), 595-96; and Roy M. Robbins, "Horace Greeley: Land Reform and Unemployment, 1837-1862" *Agricultural History* 7 (January 1933), 18.

13. Henry George, *Our Land and Land Policy* (New York, 1904), 11.

14. Nordhoff, *The Communist Societies of the United States: From Personal Visit and Observation* (New York, 1961), 12. Nordhoff had touched on the notion of the frontier as a "psychological safety valve." For a further discussion of this theme see Ellen Von Nardroff, "The American Frontier as a Safety-Valve: The Life, Death, Reincarnation, and Justification of a Theory," *Agricultural History* 36 (July 1962), 123-42; Lewis O. Saum, "Pat Donan's West and the End of the Age of Hate," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 60 (April 1969), 66-76; and Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage* 37-38. Lee Benson argues against this notion in his article "The Historian as Myth-maker: Turner and the Closed Frontier," in David M. Ellis, ed., *The Frontier in American Development: Essays in Honor of Paul Wallace Gates* (Ithaca, New York, 1969) 3-19.

15. The Hazen-Custer debate is the topic of Edgar I. Stewart's *Penny-an-Acre Empire in the West* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1968). "Our Barren Lands" is reprinted in that work, 139-83.

16. Hazen, "The Great Middle Region of the United States," *North American Review* 120 (January 1875), 1-36, 22; reprinted in *Penny-an-Acre Empire*, 185-216.

17. Powell, *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region of the United States*, ed., Wallace Stegner (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962), xi.

18. Powell, *Report of Explorations in 1873 of the Colorado River of the West and its Tributaries. Under the Direction of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, D.C., 1874), 10, 14, 143-45, 171.

19. The propogators of the myth that rain followed the plow are discussed in David M. Emmons, *Garden in the Grasslands: Boomer Literature of the Central Great Plains* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1971). Particularly interesting examples are the massive volumes of Professor Ferdinand V. Hayden, *The Great West: Its Attractions and Resources* (Bloomington, Illinois, 1880), and Linus P. Brockett, *Our Western Empire: Or the New West Beyond the Mississippi* (Philadelphia, 1882).

20. This codification, undertaken by Alexander T. Britton, spanned almost 1600 pages in three volumes. See Paul W. Gates' introduction to the 1884 edition of Thomas Donaldson's *The Public Domain* (New York, 1970), viii.

21. *Ibid.*, viii-ix.

22. The figure was 16 percent for Kansas, and 18 percent for Nebraska; see Paul W. Gates, *Landlords and Tenants on the Prairie Frontier* (Ithaca, New York, 1973), 166.

23. United States Census Office, 10th Census, 1880, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census* (June 1, 1880), xxxiii (Washington, D.C., 1883). For a fuller account

of the census see Rudolph Freund, "Turner's Theory of Social Evolution," *Agricultural History* 19 (April 1945), 78-87.

24. Of course it was only to be expected that a country the size of the United States would have more tenant farmers than much smaller European countries, but this factor, nevertheless, seemed an alarming one.

25. A very limited edition was published in San Francisco in 1879. A New York publication followed in January, 1880; see Barker, *Henry George* (New York, 1955), 265-303.

26. George, *Progress and Poverty* (New York, 1936), 389-90.

27. Anon., "The Bonanza Farms of the West," *Atlantic Monthly* 45 (January 1880), 35-45, 44.

28. An article by Francis A. Walker (superintendent of the Tenth Census, 1880) on "The Growth of the United States," *Scribner's Monthly* 24 (October 1882), 920-26, was probably the most important of these efforts. Also influential was Thomas Donaldson's article, "The Public Lands of the U.S.," *North American Review* 83 (August 1881), 204-13.

29. Thomas W. Higginson, "The Great Western March," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 69 (June 1884), 118-28; and N. C. Frederickson's review of the book, "The Development of the West," *The Dial* 3 (August 1882). James B. Walker, *Experiences of Pioneer Life in the Early Settlements and Cities of the West* (Chicago, 1881); and a review of it, Anon., "The Chronicles of a Western Pioneer," *The Dial* 2 (September 1881), 98-100.

30. The book's content was more wide-reaching than the original title suggested, and was subsequently published as *The Land Question: What It Involves and How Alone It Can Be Settled*. Quotations are from the 1898 edition (New York, 1898).

31. *Ibid.*, 73, 74.

32. Donaldson, "The Public Lands of the U.S."

33. *Century Magazine* 25 (December 1882), 599-601.

34. Comments on the 1880 Census results prior to 1883 suggest that the report was not an inaccessible item until that date.

35. *Century Magazine* 25 (December 1882), 599-601.

36. William G. Moody, *Land and Labor in the United States* (New York, 1883), quoted in Jay Martin, *Harvests of Change: American Literature, 1865-1914* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1957), 108. The process that Moody outlined, and the reaction to it at the grass-roots level, is treated in Michael Cassity's excellent recent study of Sedalia and Pettis County, Missouri, *Defending a Way of Life: An American Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, New York, 1989), 149-69.

37. Henry George, *Social Problems* (London, 1884), 303, 306-7, 267. Technically, of course, George was wrong on this count. Indeed, more lands would be taken up under the Homestead Act in the first two decades of the twentieth century than were in the whole of the nineteenth century; see Robert G. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth Century America* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1986), 32. Nevertheless, few could have foreseen in the 1880s that modern dry-farming techniques would make this land available to the average homesteader.

38. Donaldson, *The Public Domain*, 530-35.

39. Thomas P. Gill, "Landlordism in America," *North American Review* 142 (January 1886), 53-67.

40. A. J. Desmond, "America's Land Question," *North American Review* 142 (February 1886), 153-58, 153, 154.

41. Gates, *Landlords and Tenants*, 284-86.

42. Edward E. Crapol, *America For Americans: Economic Nationalism and Anglophobia in the Late 19th Century* (Westport, Connecticut, 1973), 23, 222. By 1900, 30 of the 45 states had passed statutes that distinguished between foreign and domestic owners.

43. Robbins, "The Public Domain," 106, 99. Robbins points out that scarcely two percent of this amount was ever restored to the public domain.

44. Land hunger, as well as genuine humanitarian sentiment, seems to have been a motivating factor in the campaign for passage of the Dawes Act; see D. S. Otis, *The Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1973).

45. The well-developed agrarian movements that began to appear in this period, and reached their height in the nineties, called for restrictions on land speculation, the size of holdings, alien acquisition of titles to American land, and seizure of all lands forfeited by railroads and other corporations. See Crapol, *America For Americans*, 112-13; and Gates, *Landlords and Tenants*, 293. John D. Hicks laid great stress on this factor in his pathbreaking work set in the context of the Turner thesis, *The Populist Revolt* (Minneapolis, 1931). These movements were sparked, first and foremost, by specific economic hardships, and they reacted vehemently to abuses of the land system. Agrarian leaders like Ignatius Donnelly did, however, utilize concerns over the closing of the frontier in their rhetoric. See Martin Ridge, *Ignatius Donnelly: The Portrait of a Politician* (Chicago, 1962), 324-25; and Norman Pollack, ed., *The Populist Mind* (Indianapolis, 1967), xxxii 156-58, 263.

46. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1955), 35-67.

47. *New York Tribune*, July 2, 1881, quoted in Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 38.

48. Donaldson, "The Public Lands of the United States."  
 49. Donaldson, *The Public Domain*, 535-36.  
 50. George, *Social Problems*, 31, 40.  
 51. Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and its Present Crisis* (New York, 1893), 44-61.  
 52. Gill, "Landlords and Tenants," 66. Gill's article expresses concern over abuses of public land policy, over immigration, and over America's non-expansionism, approaching all three topics from the premise that the frontier was closing.  
 53. Boyeson, "Dangers of Unrestricted Immigration," *Forum* 4 (September 1887), 532-42, 533, 536.  
 54. *Congressional Record*, 49 Congress, 1st Session, 7831, and 2nd Session, 2319-20. See also, Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 41-42.  
 55. J. Coleman Adams, "Is America Europeanizing?" *Forum* 4 (September 1887), 190-200, 195.  
 56. William Appleman Williams pushed this thesis in much of his writing. See especially, *The Roots of the Modern American Empire: A Study of the Growth and Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Marketplace Society* (New York, 1969). The problem with Williams' work is that his evidence rarely supports his elaborate framework.  
 57. Strong, *Our Country*, 175. John Fiske's influential essay, "Manifest Destiny," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 70 (1855), also stressed the expansionist nature of the Anglo-Saxon race.  
 58. Donald F. Warner, *The Idea of Continental Union: Agitation for the Annexation of Canada to the United States 1849-1893* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1960); and Milton Plesur, *America's Outward Thrust: Approaches to Foreign Affairs, 1865-1900* (De Kalb, Illinois, 1971), 182-97.  
 59. Prosper Bender, "The Annexation of Canada," *North American Review* 139 (July 1884), 42-50, 43, 50.  
 60. The best examples are Alex F. Pririe, "Canadian Prospects and Politics," *North American Review* 142 (January 1886), 36-49; David A. Poe, "The Position of Canada," *Forum* 30 (July 1887), 441-46, 61. See especially Wiman's article, "The Greater Half of the Continent," *North American Review* 148 (January 1889), 54-72.  
 62. Wiman, "What Is the Destiny of Canada?" *North American Review* 148 (June 1889), 665-75; and "The Capture of Canada," *North American Review* 151 (August 1890), 212-22, 212.  
 63. Justin S. Morrill, "Is Union With Canada Desirable?" *Forum* 6 (January 1889), 452-64.  
 64. Remington, "A Few Words From Mr. Remington," *Colliers* 34 (March 18, 1905), quoted in Harold McCracken, *Frederick Remington: Artist of the Old West* (Philadelphia, 1947), 34-5. In 1887, seventy-one Remington illustrations appeared in *Outing*. The following year 177 of his pictures were printed in *Harper's Weekly*, *Outing*, *Youth's Companion* and *Century*; see Ben Merchant Vorpal, *My Dear Wister: The Frederick Remington-Owen Wister Letters* (Palo Alto, California, 1972), 22.  
 65. *Wister's Western Notebook*, July 11, 1885, deposited in the Western History Research Center at the University of Wyoming, quoted in Vorpal, *My Dear Wister*, 19.  
 66. Nye, "No More Frontier," the *Ouray Solid Muldoon* (July 4, 1884), quoted in Atheam, *The Mythic West*, 11-12.  
 67. Billington, *Land of Savagery, Land of Promise*, 49; and William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination* (New York, 1986), 292-94.  
 68. For a fuller account of literary reactions to the closing frontier see Jay Martin, *Harvests of Change*, 116-25; Lucy L. Hazard, *The Frontier in American Literature* (New York, 1970), *passim*; and Harold P. Simonsen, *The Closed Frontier* (New York, 1970), *passim*. Also fascinating, though unpublished and unavailable, is Warren French's "Death of the Dream," a 114 page seminar paper done under the direction of Walter Prescott Webb at the University of Texas, Austin, c. 1952.  
 69. Theodore Roosevelt, "Frontier Types," 349, in *The Works Of Theodore Roosevelt*, National Edition, 23 vols. (New York, 1926), I: *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman, Ranch Life, & the Hunting Trail*.  
 70. *Century Magazine* 36 (May-October 1888); 37 (November 1888-April 1889); 38 (May-October 1889).  
 71. Benson, *Turner and Beard*, 8. Achille Loria, *Analisi della proprieta capitalista* (Turin, 1889), quoted in Lee Benson, *Turner and Beard*, 8.  
 72. James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 2 vols. (New York, 1908), II, 311, 850, 851, 857-58.  
 73. Roosevelt, *Works*, VIII: *The Winning of the West*, part I, xxxiii.  
 74. *The Dial* 8 (August 1889), 71-3.