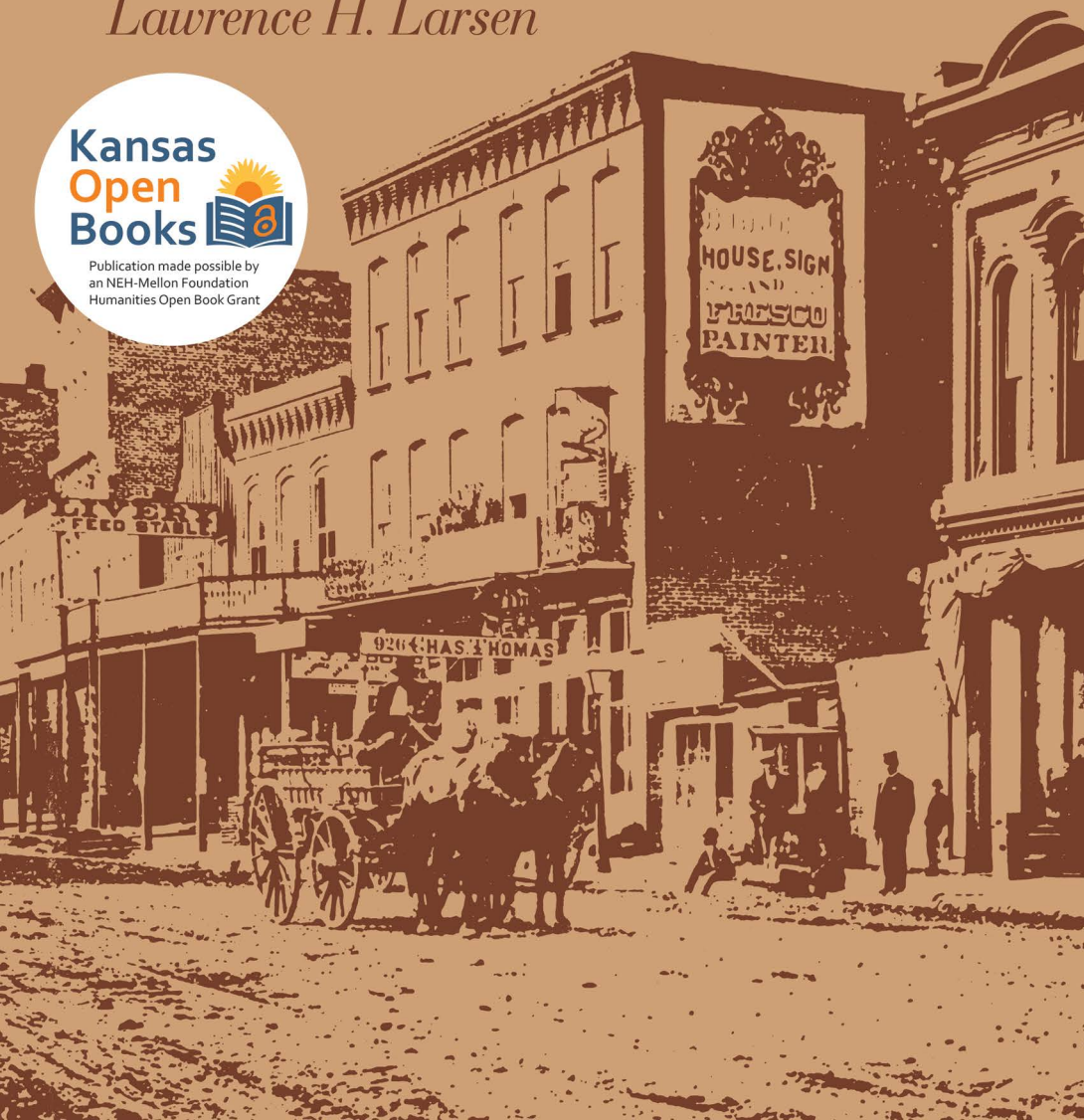


# THE URBAN WEST AT THE END OF THE FRONTIER

*Lawrence H. Larsen*

**Kansas  
Open  
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*by Lawrence H. Larsen*

THE REGENTS PRESS OF KANSAS  
*Lawrence*

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# Kansas Open Books Foreword

In the American imagination, the U.S. West remains a rural region that celebrates rugged individualism. When I ask my students to share their perceptions of the West, most usually describe uninhabited wide-open spaces, lawlessness, roaming buffalo, and a pioneering spirit. Despite generations of scholars endeavoring to dismantle romanticized westward expansion histories and narratives fueled by folklore, art, and cultural productions, these interpretations persist in the twenty-first century. Yet the reality of the American West is nothing like these characterizations. The vast area west of the ninety-fifth meridian is one of the most urbanized, most populous, and fastest growing in the nation.<sup>1</sup> According to U.S. Census Bureau data from 2019, the top four fastest growing cities—Phoenix, Arizona; San Antonio, Texas; Fort Worth, Texas; and Seattle, Washington—are located in the West. In addition, six out of the top ten most populous cities—Los Angeles, California; Houston, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona; San Diego, California; Dallas, Texas; and San Jose, California—are also in the West.<sup>2</sup> While this can be attributed to continued postwar growth, in reality, the area’s urban footprint has long

existed. For decades historians have studied these trends by focusing on the American West's urban experience, developing a robust body of literature on the subject. What scholars of the Urban West have proven time and time again is that cities were important anchors in the settlement and development of the region.

First published in 1978, Lawrence H. Larsen's *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* joined emerging scholarship exploring the urban experiences and processes in the American West. In line with historians of the time, Larsen centered cities as fundamentally accounting for the region's tremendous growth in the latter half of the nineteenth century. *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* examined twenty-four cities west of the ninety-fifth meridian (west of Kansas City) roughly between 1860 and 1890. Larsen assessed development by surveying urban planning, architecture, sewage, churches, schools, transportation, and police and fire protection. This method allowed the author to provide a holistic look at the urbanization process throughout the vast region of the West while making comparisons to eastern cities of similar sizes. Larsen concluded that urban development in the American West was not necessarily unique; instead, it embodied the "establishment of a society that mirrored and made the same mistakes as those made earlier in the rest of the country."<sup>3</sup>

Larsen's methodology and approaches to historical research brought refreshing and provocative models for future studies. *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* became one of the first scholarly works to "portray a sweep of the western urban experience."<sup>4</sup> Rather than focusing on a singular city or a region as in previous case studies, Larsen employed a large comparative framework to analyze the growth of frontier cities—a method later replicated by other historians of the Urban West.<sup>5</sup> At the time of the book's publication in 1978, the region remained understudied, a major obstacle when attempting to synthesize the history of twenty-four cities. Larsen creatively incorporated a variety of primary sources as well as secondary literature such as local histories and emerging scholarship in the field. But what made the study truly novel was his innovative use

of statistical data. Larsen owed his ability to make connections and comparisons between cities in the American West to the 1880 U.S. Census. *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* primarily relies on the *Report of the Social Statistics of Cities*, a large data set published in 1887. This report compiled information from the 1880 Census regarding cities with a population over 10,000 people in addition to a few secondary cities with regional importance. According to Larsen, “the 222 cities included constituted the backbone of American urban society.” The demographic data included categories such as economics, fire and police protection, industries, cultural institutions, sanitation authorities, schools, transportation, water sources, recreational spaces, and climate, among many others.<sup>6</sup> Without these sources, Larsen’s study would have been unable to vividly depict urban histories and experiences across the West. The *Report of the Social Statistics of Cities* became an impetus for Larsen’s future scholarly work.

Although numerous scholarly studies shed light on particular differences in city-building in the American West, Larsen found different conclusions. To be fair, he agreed that cities were key to our understandings of the West. Larsen, however, did not see a unique urbanization process in the region; instead, city-building in the American West followed a “carbon copy” model from eastern cities. He claimed that city planners ignored incorporating Indigenous and Spanish architectural traditions, that the ethnic and racial composition of the West resembled that of eastern cities, and that climate and the environment posed no unique or unfamiliar urban development challenges.

Scholarship of the Urban West proved Larsen’s conclusions somewhat inaccurate as the book’s greatest resource—the 1880 Census—also became its pitfall. Larsen’s focus on what he called “hard facts and statistics” obscured the region’s unique demographics and urban growth complexities. The American West has long been a multicultural space where the experiences of Indigenous people, ethnic Mexicans, Asians, Blacks, and Whites, among others, converged. As such, the cultural and racial dynamics of the region greatly differed

from the East Coast. Diminishing the voices of these underrepresented groups erased the well-established urban networks prior to the American colonization period as well as the reasons why White planners replaced existing architectural features and functions. Additionally, solely focusing on Census data regarding sewage, parks, and other infrastructure undermined the unique environmental challenges people faced in establishing western cities. In 1847, Mormons settled at the base of the Wasatch Mountains in present day Salt Lake City, Utah, where they designed an intricate irrigation system to sustain the community.<sup>7</sup> Phoenix, Arizona, a city not featured in Larsen's study due to its small population size in the 1880s, serves as another example. When settlers arrived in 1867, they expanded the existing Hohokam irrigation system, enabling the growth of a regional metropolis.<sup>8</sup> Settlers in the American West confronted arid conditions, water scarcity, mountainous regions, and high elevations, among many other challenges. Although city-building might have followed similar patterns from eastern cities, the unique conditions of the West required innovative solutions to enable rapid urbanization of the West at the turn of the twentieth century.

Larsen's work remains valuable as it provides a window into the evolution of American West historiography in the second half of the twentieth century. For decades, historians had studied the West through a rural lens—an idea perpetuated by Fredrick Jackson Turner's 1893 essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Turner claimed that as settlers moved westward, they tamed the region and brought civilization along with them. The settlement of the West followed a linear development that ended with the rise of cities and industrialization. Turner concluded that 1890 marked the end of the frontier, as the U.S. Census proclaimed no vast land remained uninhabited.<sup>9</sup> While scholars contested Turner's thesis for much of the twentieth century, it dominated studies of the American West. In 1959, Richard Wade's *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790–1830*, challenged Turner's view and argued that "towns were spearheads of the frontier. Planted far in advance of the line of settlement, they held the West for the approaching population."<sup>10</sup>

The publication of *The Urban Frontier* ushered in a new generation of historians, like Larsen, who reframed the study of the region by centering cities in the development of the American West.<sup>11</sup> *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* also rebutted Turner's thesis. Larsen's discussion of William Gilpin, a town promoter and "a prophet" of the Urban West, countered the frontier thesis's notion of the Rural West.<sup>12</sup> Larsen's use of the 1880 Census also became a strategic tool to challenge Turner. The *Report of the Social Statistics of Cities* undeniably demonstrated that the Urban West existed prior to the "end of the frontier" in 1890. Although Larsen's work came in at the tail end of this scholarly wave, he too proved that Turner's frontier thesis did not represent the realities of the region. Despite moving away from Turner, some historians of this generation remained tied to the concept of the frontier as a process that was too dependent on looking East to understand its development.

By the 1980s, while studies of the Urban West had won the battle, the field of western history had entered a crisis. As Patricia Nelson Limerick explained, "to many American historians, the Turner thesis was Western history. If something had gone wrong with the thesis, something had gone wrong with Western history." As historians abandoned Turner, American history abandoned the West. Limerick concluded: "Exploding the model made mainstream historians declare that the field was dead."<sup>13</sup> The newer generation of scholars, led by Limerick, William Cronon, Richard White, and Donald Worster, viewed the term "frontier" as Eurocentric and limiting to the advancement of the field. Unlike other subfields in history, the study of the American West had long resisted the inclusion of social history. This new wave of scholars reinvigorated the field by reframing the West as a place—a complicated space of conflict, conquest, violence, diverse human experiences, and environmental transformation. New western historians and their scholarly works transformed the field and opened the door for new studies of the American West.

Works like Larsen's *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* served as a prelude to the rise of New Western History and inspired numerous studies of cities across the region. Generations later,



scholars like myself continue to examine the American West's urban experiences through different vantage points, lenses, and intersections across time and space. Larsen's scholarship laid an important foundation for both urban and western historians. At the end of the day, scholars of the Urban West—both historically and presently—have had one common goal: to emphasize the centrality of cities in the making of the American West.

Throughout his career, Larsen's scholarship ventured into a plethora of topics, but his interests in the histories of cities, urbanization, and the West remained. *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* became a model for his later books analyzing urban growth across the United States during the Gilded Age. Larsen argued that the decade of the 1880s was "of crucial importance in shaping the American urban network and forging a national economy."<sup>14</sup> His interest in the decade and the large data set from the *Report of the Social Statistics of Cities* gave Larsen an opportunity to explore city-building on a national scale. In 1985, he published *The Rise of the Urban South*. In the book's prologue, Larsen expressed his hope to complete four volumes analyzing "the sectional aspects of urban growth" in this period, promising "monographs on the Midwest and Northeast to come."<sup>15</sup> Thirty years later his final book, *Prospects of Greatness: The Rise of Midwestern Cities during the Gilded Age*, became the third volume on his ongoing analysis of city-building in the United States. While the latter volumes followed his original approaches, methodology, and analyzed the same themes in city-building, his evolution as an urban historian is noticeable.

Lawrence Larsen passed away in 2017, leaving behind a prolific career. He was a professor of history at the University of Missouri–Kansas City (UMKC) for thirty-six years, where he taught courses on the American West, archival methods, and local and urban history.<sup>16</sup> Larsen was the author or coauthor of seventeen books on various subjects, including a biography on notorious Kansas City political boss Tom Pendergast, a study of Western Missouri's Federal District Court, and a pictorial history on the establishment of the University of Kansas Medical Center.<sup>17</sup> After his retirement from UMKC

in 2000, he completed other works, including the final volume for *A History of Missouri*.<sup>18</sup> Larsen often coauthored books with his wife Barbara J. Cottrell, an archivist at the National Archives with the Records Administration–Central Plains Region in Kansas City. Together, the two published an urban biography on Omaha, Nebraska, a book on the American Fur Company’s 1859 Missouri River Expedition, and their volume on Midwestern cities, which was published a month after Larsen’s death.<sup>19</sup>

I arrived at UMKC in fall 2016, long after Larsen retired. Although we never met and our approaches to researching and writing history greatly differ, our scholarly interests and professional careers connect in many ways. Every year I teach “Rise of the City in the United States,” a course developed and taught by Larsen during his tenure. His long-standing archival internship supervision left a blueprint for the History Department’s Public History emphasis, a program I now direct. Larsen unknowingly passed the baton to me. I carry his legacy forward not only through my own scholarly work on the Urban West but also by dispelling the myths of the region and in training the next generation of historians.

Lawrence Larsen never presented his work as the definitive studies of urbanization across the United States. In the three volumes, he admittedly hoped his books further encouraged new scholarship in the field. Although *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* has been out of print, this new digitized version now joins Larsen’s other volumes—already available in an electronic book format—in an effort to illustrate a comprehensive view of American urbanization during the Gilded Age.<sup>20</sup> I too hope that digital accessibility to these works produces new scholarly works on a topic and decade Larsen believed to be critical to U.S. history.

Sandra I. Enríquez  
Kansas City, MO  
July 2020

NOTES TO FOREWORD

1. Historians have long debated about the boundaries of the American West. For the purpose of this essay, I employ Lawrence Larsen's boundaries: the ninety-fifth meridian meaning anything west of Kansas City.
2. U.S. Census Bureau, "Fastest-Growing Cities Primarily in the South and West," May 23, 2019, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2019/subcounty-population-estimates.html>.
3. Lawrence H. Larsen, *The Urban West at the End of the Frontier* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978), 19.
4. Larsen, *Urban West*, xii.
5. A few examples are John Reps, *Cities of the American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); and Carl Abbott, *How Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).
6. Larsen, *Urban West*, 148.
7. Lisa Krissoff Boehm and Steven H. Corey, *America's Urban History* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 120.
8. Bradford Luckingham, *Phoenix: The History of a Southwestern Metropolis* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), 2.
9. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Holt, 1962).
10. Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790–1830* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 1. Wade's work was originally published by Harvard University Press in 1959.
11. Some examples include Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York: Knopf, 1968); Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); and Reps, *Cities of the American West*.
12. Larsen, *Urban Frontier*, 2.
13. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 20–22.
14. Lawrence H. Larsen, *The Rise of the Urban South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985).
15. Larsen, *Rise of the Urban South*, ix.
16. I would like to thank my colleague James S. Falls, professor emeritus of history, for helping me gather details of Larsen's career at UMKC.
17. Lawrence H. Larsen and Nancy J. Hulston, *Pendergast!* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997); Lawrence H. Larsen, *Federal Justice in Western Missouri: The Judges, the Cases, the Times* (Columbia:

- University of Missouri Press, 1994); Lawrence H. Larsen and Nancy J. Hulston, *The University of Kansas Medical Center: A Pictorial History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992).
18. Lawrence H. Larsen, *A History of Missouri: 1953 to 2003*, vol. 6 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004).
  19. Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell, *Steamboats West: The 1859 American Fur Company Missouri River Expedition* (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark, 2010); Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell, *The Gate City: A History of Omaha* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1982). *The Gate City* has had two reprints—one in 1997 and a second in 2007, renamed *Upstream Metropolis: An Urban Biography of Omaha and Council Bluffs*.
  20. The University Press of Kentucky released a digital version of *The Rise of the Urban South* in 2015.

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# Preface

During the frontier period Americans built cities west of the ninety-fifth meridian that were carbon copies of those constructed earlier in the older parts of the country. By 1880—the last federal census prior to the official closing of the frontier—there were twenty-four towns of eight thousand or more people in the West. Ranging in size from Lawrence, Kansas, to San Francisco, California, they constituted a vibrant urban society that mirrored the emerging social, economic, and political values of the Gilded Age. Western cities, made possible by tremendous advances in transportation and the railroad in particular, were in the traditions of American urbanization. San Francisco and Denver were “instant cities,” but so were Chicago and Minneapolis–St. Paul. Los Angeles was an “oasis,” just as Cincinnati was at an earlier date. “Privatism”—a made-up word relating to the dominant role of private enterprise in city building—functioned in Kansas City, along the same lines as in Philadelphia. There was as much “social mobility” in Omaha as in Boston. Little was unique or new about the young cities of the West.

The twenty-four cities grew for a variety of reasons. Omaha benefited from its role as the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad. St. Joseph was the railhead on the frontier for eastern lines for several years. Through entrepreneurial decisions, Kansas City obtained the first railroad bridge over the Missouri River, and, hence, regional supremacy. Atchison and Leavenworth were competing commercial centers that sought trunk railroads with limited success. Lawrence, started as an antislavery center, achieved

stability as an agricultural marketing point. State government accounted for the growth of Lincoln and Topeka. Gold and a superior harbor explained the rise of San Francisco. Oakland, a mere adjunct of the Golden Gate metropolis, rose from a squatters' field. San Jose, Sacramento, and Stockton survived the fate of many gold-rush cities by adroitly changing their economic bases from services connected with mining to agricultural activities. Gold made and broke Virginia City, high in the mountains of Nevada. Portland's strategic location in Oregon enabled its conservative leadership to hew out a prosperous hinterland in the Willamette Valley. At the end of the frontier, Los Angeles was essentially a real-estate promotion awaiting a boom. Galveston relied on ships and Houston on railroads, as the two cities fought to control the Texas economy. San Antonio was an old Spanish town that gained population rapidly after the arrival of the railroad, as did two newer communities, Austin and Dallas. Mineral wealth helped Denver in a limited way, but railroads made the Queen City the heart of the Rocky Mountain Empire. Leadville demonstrated that valuable ores alone were not enough to raise up a viable city. Religious convictions led to the establishment of Salt Lake City. The end result was an urban network that brought civilization to over two million square miles of the United States.

I hope that this analytical study will shed new light on the western urban experience and help other researchers in the field. The project evolved over a period of several years. It grew out of a conversation with the late George L. Anderson, a distinguished historian of the West who taught for many years at the University of Kansas. He felt that urbanization was one of the few remaining themes of the western experience that needed exploring by professional historians. As much as possible, I have tried to rely on hard facts and statistics to reach conclusions and to portray the sweep of the western urban experience. I have adopted a method that differs somewhat from the case-study approach, which has proved useful in studying urban history. In that method, a researcher deals with a single city or with one or two basic themes. Given the mass of data, this is the only practical way some subjects can be done. If enough studies are completed a synthesis is possible. What I have done is to deal with a cross section of urban life in twenty-four cities, and to use comparative data from the other sections of the country. Given the fact that until recently

historians have ignored the western city, this book would have been impracticable to undertake except for the availability of three things: the vast amount of urban materials in the 1880 United States census, the data in unstructured local and county histories, and a few works of high quality on western urbanization by professional historians.

So many people gave me encouragement and assistance that it would be impossible to acknowledge all of them. Robert L. Branyan, the graduate dean at Central Michigan University and a former colleague and collaborator, helped develop the concept of dealing simultaneously with many cities. The two of us co-authored an article on urban services in frontier communities. R. Reed Whitaker of the Kansas City Federal Archives and Records Center provided insights on federal archival materials and read the manuscript. Richard Elrod, a historian of Central European diplomatic affairs, patiently listened to material far afield from his interests and offered judicious suggestions. Other colleagues in the University of Missouri–Kansas City history department, Jesse V. Clardy, Herman Hattaway, Richard McKinzie, Louis Potts, and Stanley Parsons, gave help and encouragement. Charles N. Glaab, Patrick McLearn, Lyle Dorsett, James C. Olson, William Petrowski, and A. Theodore Brown all contributed in many ways. William E. Lass read the transportation sections, Philip A. Hernandez provided the formula on how to determine urban dwellers of Spanish and Mexican descent, James Walker explained census enumeration districts, Joseph Boudreau helped with information on San Jose, and Dwayne Martin delineated the Kansas City black quarter. At UMKC, Neal Willis, George Gale, and Van Rothrock, professors of psychology, philosophy, and international business and law, respectively, all offered advice. Helen L. Bennett and Bernice Miller of the UMKC General Library unlocked the gates of knowledge. James and Marian Cottrell furnished an island in Canada. Vernon Carstensen taught concepts of western history that bore fruit. Elizabeth Bailey typed the final draft. My wife, Barbara, contributed in many ways and typed earlier drafts of the manuscript.

Of course (though both custom and prudence demand it be said), I am responsible for errors of fact or interpretation.

LAWRENCE H. LARSEN



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## CHAPTER 1

# The Urban West

The concept that the West was a unit distinct from the rest of the nation played a major role in shaping the dynamics of American society. A certain vagueness associated with defining the precise boundaries of the vast territory added to the image; as pioneers moved across the continent, what was West in one decade became East in the next. Scholars found the moving frontier an apt subject for investigation and speculation. Frederick Jackson Turner argued in 1893 that the frontier was the cutting edge of democracy. Turner's thesis greatly affected formal scientific research and writing in western history.

For decades professional historians produced studies that supported or repudiated Turner and raised many questions. Were the Populists of Nebraska democratic? Did they practice anti-Semitism? Was the West a place of escape for dissatisfied eastern factory workers? If they moved there, what were their chances of acquiring land? Did federal legislation help individuals or corporations? What impact did foreign capital investments have on the cattle and mining industries? Was Indian policy a vicious negation of republican principles? Did quantitative analysis prove or disprove Turner? While intensive research on these and other subjects contributed in many ways to an understanding of the West, the studies did not tell us much about the people themselves. How many farmers living in sod houses in Nebraska thought in serious dialectic terms about the relationship of agricultural overproduction to the problem of industrial wage levels? How many frontier

soldiers worried about the consequences of national Indian policy? Turner's attempt to formulate a starting point for a chain of reasoning designed to go beyond the surface clutter of history became the end rather than the means.

When the frontier closed, the West consisted of the portions of the continental United States between the ninety-fifth meridian and the Pacific Ocean, meaning roughly half the country. It was about this expanse of territory that the dime novels of the nineteenth century and the horse operas of the twentieth projected images more vivid and meaningful to the general public than the Turner thesis. In the twentieth century millions of people unfamiliar with the academic impact of the hypothesis understood the difficulties encountered by the mythical marshal of Dodge City, Kansas.

Few of the thousands who pushed the frontier westward remained neutral about what they saw or experienced. To many persons the Great Plains, stretching for seemingly endless miles, was the Great American Desert, a barren waste to avoid; but to others the rolling, treeless country was a land of magnificent sunsets and open spaces. The mountain ranges—the Rockies of Colorado, the Grand Tetons of Wyoming, the Unitas of Utah, the Olympics of Washington, and the Sierra Nevadas of California—had a special kind of beauty that changed from hour to hour. Their treacherous passes challenged pioneers; their stores of mineral wealth beckoned fortune seekers. The Painted Desert of Arizona, the Great Valley of California, and the Columbia River basin of Oregon and Washington added uncommon qualities. Who in one page, a single monograph, or several books could hope to capture the sweep of the West? It seemed a testing ground, where life would differ markedly from that previously known in America. A West in which the cities would look and function the same as those in the East appeared an unlikely possibility. Yet that was what happened. The major frontier towns owed much more to their eastern counterparts than to the challenge of the western environment.

In the nineteenth century a few brave prophets of urban destiny conjured up visions of large cities scattered throughout the West. One of the most sophisticated was William Gilpin, best described as a composite of several western stereotypes. Achieving greatness in no field, but a degree of notoriety in sev-

eral, he was a combination explorer, politician, military leader, and town promoter. In the twilight of a career that spanned several decades he amassed a fortune through real-estate ventures in Colorado. He wrote and lectured about the West from both practical and theoretical standpoints. Discussing at one time or another every conceivable aspect of westernization, he always returned to his central theme: the operation of natural scientific laws ensured the growth of great metropolises throughout the region. He drew upon the elaborately constructed theories of the pioneer German geopolitician Alexander Von Humboldt, who stated that a wide climatic belt called the "isothermal zodiac" encircled the globe in the northern latitudes. Within the zodiac an "axis of intensity," which passed through the Western Hemisphere at roughly the thirty-ninth parallel, supposedly dictated the course of civilization and enabled accurate locational forecasting of future large centers.

Gilpin claimed a host of past examples proved the validity of the axis of intensity as a measurement of human progress. He urged settlers to follow this undulating line to the Kansas prairies, the Colorado gold fields, the mountains of Nevada, and the shores of California. He proclaimed, "Along this axis have risen successively the great cities of China and India, of Babylon, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Paris, London, in the old continents—and upon our continent the seaboard cities, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis. . . . We, then, the people of the centre, are upon the lines of intense and intelligent energy, where civilization has its largest field, its highest developments, its inspired form."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout his career, Gilpin viewed the West in exploitative as well as urban terms. He believed that almost inexhaustible farming, mining, lumbering, and fishing hinterlands would sustain the new cities. Although the concept of an urban frontier remained his central proposition, he carefully stressed the uncommon characteristics of the region, contending that geography dictated a West far different from the older and more settled parts of the land. Gilpin claimed that the Rocky Mountains were "stupendous longitudinal Cordillera" that divided the "physical globe" in half. "These two hemispheres present the basin of the Atlantic towards the rising sun," he said. "Here is the supreme meridian altitude up to which the whole globe slopes! To this crowning ridge

human society, emerging from the ocean basins, is at present climbing; the two halves front face to face; they march to meet—to unite and harmonize over this summit. . . . Hither the continental slopes mounting upwards from all the oceans converge and culminate: from hence all the descending waters radiate.”<sup>2</sup>

Inherent disadvantages of a site—the inconvenient location of natural resources, the enormous technological problems of water supply, the lack of transportation—did not mean that different methods were used to build a town. It was a normal practice in America to construct cities in advance of the development of agricultural hinterlands. Entrepreneurs founded Holyoke as a manufacturing town, Atlanta as a railroad junction, and St. Louis as a fur-trading post. Kansas City and Omaha antedated farming in Kansas or Nebraska. Denver helped to generate the mining boom in Colorado that made the Mile High City a distributing and transportation point. San Antonio’s establishment came long before the opening of the cattle frontier; Houston and Galveston aspired “to wear a city’s crown” prior to the peopling of most of Texas. Portland, Sacramento, and San Francisco predated solid regional commercial growth. Los Angeles and Dallas were founded before railroads provided outlets to markets.

The urban frontier was much less colorful than other aspects of the western experience. The platting of a town hardly had the drama of a massive cattle-drive north from Texas. The erection of a few wooden and tar-paper shacks scarcely compared with a gold strike in Nevada. The arrival of a small group of immigrants hardly had the impact of an Indian battle in Montana. The coming of the iron horse to a remote desert hamlet seemed mundane when considered against the building of railroads through the mountains of Colorado. Still, the undramatic process of organizing towns significantly shaped frontier society.

In the older sections of the country, a few cities had gained predominance over others: New York defeated Boston and Philadelphia to dominate the Northeast; Chicago emerged victorious against St. Louis in the Midwest; Baltimore, Louisville, and New Orleans shared control in the South. In the West, where the struggle for economic supremacy continued unabated, all except a few of the eventual victors had firm foundations by 1880. Of course, there were a few exceptions. Seattle was a small village until the arrival of the railroad in the mid-eighties; in 1900 it ex-

ceeded 100,000 in population. San Diego and Phoenix had never appeared to have bright prospects. They languished until the twentieth century. Aircraft manufacturing and naval activities accounted for dramatic progress in San Diego during the Second World War; Phoenix benefited from the postwar resort and land businesses. Oklahoma City and Tulsa remained unimportant until the 1900s. Started as cattle and marketing towns, they obtained metropolitan status as oil centers. Some other cities that progressed rapidly at an early age lost momentum. Stockton fell to San Francisco, Virginia City stagnated after the mines stopped producing, and Leavenworth gave up without much of a fight to Kansas City. It was axiomatic that a community, even one that experienced sudden expansion from a gold strike or cattle boom, could ill-afford to rest on its laurels. The stakes in town building were too high to allow complacency.<sup>3</sup>

Every place with aspirations needed promoters. With gusto these persons—sometimes owners of real estate, but frequently journalists with little personal wealth and at best a tenuous financial interest in the community they championed—portrayed even the smallest of way stations as the next Babylon and Tyre or, depending on the chief forms of business and recreation, Sodom and Gomorrah. A pamphleteer bragged in typical style: “No one can doubt that the sum total of Tacoma’s resources, domestic and foreign, together with the entire aspect of her own and the world’s present environments, are vastly superior to those of Chicago in 1852, and that it is only a question of TIME when a greater city than Chicago or New York will flourish on the more salubrious shores of Puget Sound.” A harder-sell booster in Austin wrote in 1877: “Hundreds of costly residences greet the eye on every side; a dozen church spires point aloft to the clouds; institutions of learning to prepare the youthful mind for the duties of maturer years are numerous. The daily papers carry the news from all quarters of the globe to their thousands of readers, while the hum of the mill-wheel, the ring of the anvil, and the scream of the steam-whistle attest the already developing manufacturing interests of the city.”<sup>4</sup>

Some promoters viewed the future of their chosen city in a broad context. They exhibited maps of “paper towns” in Kansas and Nebraska with lots set aside for the federal capitol, a national cathedral, a national university, and a national observatory. Fre-

quently, the plans pinpointed a massive union station, from which trunk lines radiated to all parts of the land. It made little difference that the place actually consisted of a gambling den, a brothel, and a few decrepit hovels.<sup>5</sup> Every place hoped to become a Chicago or even a Milwaukee or Indianapolis. No one denied that a few towns would survive out of the thousands platted in the early days of a new territory. The question was which ones, and that was a choice the promoters attempted to determine.

William Gilpin believed throughout the 1850s that a "Centropolis" of fifty million people would develop within a hundred years in the vicinity of Kansas City. "There must be a great city here," Gilpin declared, "such as antiquity built at the head of the Mediterranean and named Jerusalem, Tyre, Alexandria, and Constantinople; such as our own people name New York, New Orleans, San Francisco, St. Louis."<sup>6</sup> He said that Kansas City was in the center of the North American continent, a "symmetrical and sublime" concave bowl that focused all forces to the center, ensuring a harmonious pattern of social development. Of particular importance were the Missouri River and the plains of Kansas. He described the great river as a "glorious mirror" and "throne of the Invincible" that would ensure commercial greatness for Kansas City. He called rural Kansas the "Garden of the World," stating that the region's pastoral agriculture was destined to become "a separate grand department of national industry." He dismissed assertions that the area was actually a desert, contending that the "supreme engineering of God" would more than solve any irrigation problems. Even more fortuitous, Kansas City was within the isothermal zodiac, lay astride the axis of intensity, and had an ideal "gravitational" location. He pirated a theory of urban gravitation from S. A. Goodin, an obscure and unsuccessful Cincinnati promoter, to prove mathematically, using "leagues" as the common denominator, that Kansas City lay in the exact center of the "Great Basin" of the North American continent. Other major cities would grow by "natural law" around Kansas City in circle fashion every five hundred to seven hundred "leagues." After Gilpin moved to Colorado he blandly admitted an error in his calculations; the correct location of the great city of the world was at Denver.<sup>7</sup> Such shifts were common among promoters. Jesup Scott variously placed the great city of the world at

Cincinnati, Alton, and Chicago, before settling upon Toledo, where he had large property holdings.

In the 1880 census—the last before the official end of the frontier—the West contained twenty-four cities with populations of eight thousand or more (see Table 1-1). This was the breaking point used to differentiate between important and unimportant places; throughout the nineteenth century experts considered population statistics a measurement of progress. As in other sections of the country, most of the cities were on the borders of the region. Eight towns formed a jagged line near the ninety-fifth meridian: Omaha, Lincoln, Atchison, St. Joseph, Leavenworth, Lawrence, Topeka, and Kansas City. Eight cities were on or near the Pacific Ocean. Five were close together in northern California: San Francisco, which ranked ninth nationally, Oakland, Sacramento, San Jose, and Stockton. The remaining far western communities were Portland, Virginia City, and Los Angeles. On the Gulf Coast were Galveston and Houston. Three other Texas localities were of significant size: San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas. On Gilpin's vaunted eastern slope, in Colorado the solitary places of consequence were Denver and Leadville. Salt Lake City was in Utah Territory. Although the various cities constituted only a small percentage of the 286 in the United States of more than eight thousand, they formed a virile and propitious urban frontier.<sup>8</sup>

Vast distances separated the cities. It was over 1,800 miles from Kansas City to San Francisco and 2,200 miles from Houston to Seattle. Even within the subdivisions—the edge of the central plains, the Pacific Coast, the Texas plains, and the mountains—the towns seemed far apart in an age in which fast passenger trains averaged under 30 miles an hour. Dallas and San Antonio were 270 miles from each other, Lawrence and Omaha about 200 miles, Denver and Salt Lake City 500 miles, and Los Angeles and Portland almost 1,000 miles. Yet the distances were relatively unimportant except in terms of travel time. The cities were all small or nonexistent at mid-century, and many exploded into life as a result of minerals and rails. They all experienced boom and bust and, in the case of most, natural disasters. By the closing days of the frontier the road to stability and continued success was clearly marked. Urban leaders needed to consolidate the gains of the early years and to develop solid hinterlands rich with agricultural and mineral wealth. While they shared a common experience,



THE URBAN WEST AT THE END OF THE FRONTIER

TABLE 1-1  
FRONTIER CITIES AND THEIR 1880 POPULATIONS

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Populations</i>
<i>California</i>	
Los Angeles .....	11,183
Oakland .....	34,555
Sacramento .....	21,420
San Francisco .....	233,959
San Jose .....	12,567
Stockton .....	10,282
<i>Colorado</i>	
Denver .....	35,629
Leadville .....	14,820
<i>Kansas</i>	
Atchison .....	15,105
Lawrence .....	8,510
Leavenworth .....	16,546
Topeka .....	15,452
<i>Missouri</i>	
Kansas City .....	55,785
St. Joseph .....	32,431
<i>Nebraska</i>	
Lincoln .....	13,003
Omaha .....	30,518
<i>Nevada</i>	
Virginia City .....	10,917
<i>Oregon</i>	
Portland .....	17,577
<i>Texas</i>	
Austin .....	11,013
Dallas .....	10,358
Galveston .....	22,248
Houston .....	16,513
San Antonio .....	20,550
<i>Utah Territory</i>	
Salt Lake City .....	20,768

they also competed against each other. Their histories prior to 1880 afforded some indication of future prospects.

Kansas City had the best chance of exercising economic, political, and social mastery over the central plains. In 1821 St. Louis interests started a fur-trading post near the Kawsmouth. By mid-century the town of Kansas had few people and a flimsy economy supported by the Indian trade and the outfitting of immigrants. The fifties saw a flurry of railroad booms, which were ended abruptly by the Civil War. The first eastern rail connection, the Pacific Railroad, reached Kansas City from St. Louis in 1865. During the immediate postwar period, Kansas City and other Missouri River towns fought for dominance. Victory came when the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad decided to construct an extension of its main line through Kansas City into the Southwest. In 1869 the first railroad bridge over the Missouri River opened at Kansas City. Massive outlays of capital from Chicago started banks, packing houses, and stockyards; New York and Boston firms established regional headquarters for insurance companies and mercantile concerns. Kansas City became a major receiving and distributing point. The depression following the Panic of 1873 had no prolonged effect on the city. By 1880 Kansas City was the most important transportation hub in the nation west of Chicago.<sup>9</sup>

Omaha challenged Kansas City for supremacy in the central plains. The Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Co. founded Omaha in Nebraska Territory in 1854, laying out 322 blocks, each 264 feet square. Overcoming opposition from other towns in the territory such as Bellevue and Nebraska City, Omaha became the territorial capital and by 1857 had an estimated fifteen hundred people. "The spirit of speculation abroad over the whole country was speedily developed in that city," an old settler recalled. "Money was easily made; corner lots commanded absurdly inflated prices; 'wild cat' banks, established without authority of law, and having no substantial basis of capital, were numerous; city scrip assisted in increasing an already abundant currency, and the future of the place looked very bright to the owners of real estate within its limits."<sup>10</sup> Overnight, the situation changed. The Panic of 1857 severely affected Omaha—banks closed, real estate slumped, business and population dropped. Prosperity returned in 1859, when merchants equipped prospectors going to the Colo-

rado gold fields. A major turning point came a few years later. On 8 December 1863 construction started out of Omaha on the Union Pacific, the eastern half of the first transcontinental railroad. The road stimulated the economy and brought in more people. Promoter George Train called the city the place "where the Almighty placed a signal station at the entrance of a garden seven hundred miles in length." Things went so well that in 1867 local merchants dropped their opposition to moving the capital to another location. They felt that Omaha no longer needed government activities to sustain a flourishing economy. But, after the Union Pacific's completion in 1869, the slow settlement of the hinterlands and the national depression brought several bad years. In the late seventies an influx of newcomers into Nebraska led to a sharp upturn that caused Omaha leaders to entertain fond hopes of surpassing Kansas City as an urban center. Both places owed their success to adroit promotion and the fact that they were key rail links to other parts of the land. By 1880 they had thwarted many rivals, some of which had seemed blessed with more advantages a few short years earlier.

St. Joseph on the Missouri River had at one time entertained large aspirations. Organized in 1843 at the site of Joseph Robidoux's old trading post, it quickly vanquished nearby Sparta to dominate Missouri's Platte Purchase and become the county seat of Buchanan County. St. Joseph, according to boomers, was "the principal frontier town west of the Mississippi."<sup>11</sup> By 1859 the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad had reached St. Joseph, and the Pony Express ran through the city. The town of 8,932 inhabitants was an important national transportation center. Fifteen uninterrupted years of progress followed the Civil War, and by 1873 a magnificent \$1,500,000 railroad bridge spanned the Missouri River at St. Joseph. In 1880 the city had 2,000 more inhabitants than Omaha. However, while St. Joseph added 13,000 persons in the seventies, Omaha gained 14,000 and Kansas City 23,000.

On the western bank of the Missouri River, Leavenworth had delusions of grandeur. A company of thirty-two Missourians "claimed" and platted it in 1854 at the opening of Kansas Territory. They spent \$4,500 cutting timber and brush, and netted \$12,000 in a quick sale of lots. After this beginning, Leavenworth moved forward quickly. By 1860 it had 7,429 inhabitants, graded streets, churches, schoolhouses, and imposing homes. Impressive

mercantile buildings lined the main thoroughfares; river steamers crowded the levee. Unlike other border towns, it prospered during the Civil War, because of increased military activities at Fort Leavenworth. After the end of hostilities and the withdrawal of thousands of soldiers, the city entered a period of severe depression. The failure of Kansas to grow as expected hurt Leavenworth—at one time one-fifth of all the people in the state resided there—as did the defeat at the polls of several local bond issues intended to promote railroad construction. It gained a reputation as a dead town. During the 1870s Leavenworth, the erstwhile Queen City of the West, lost over a thousand residents and its metropolitan hopes.<sup>12</sup>

Twenty miles up river, the Atchison Town Company, controlled by seventeen Missourians, platted Atchison in 1854 at a “great curve” on the Missouri. “The peculiar configuration of the earth was not favorable for the easy building of a metropolis on the site of Atchison,” commented an observer. “Abrupt bluffs stood up from the banks of the river, rift only to allow an unromantic stream, with unstable banks, to empty its feeble current into the uncontrollable Missouri.” Two competitors, Doniphan and Sumner, were better situated. Nevertheless, Atchison survived and prospered. The village served as the headquarters for several overland freighters. It remained relatively free of the troubles in “Bleeding Kansas” and by 1860 had evolved into a fairly stable community of 2,616. Following the Civil War, Atchison thrived briefly and then experienced a prolonged downturn. Still, the population doubled in the seventies, primarily because of railroad construction. “Atchison is the natural gate-way of the West,” said the board of trade, “and as a distributing point has advantages superior to those of any other city in the Missouri Valley.”<sup>13</sup> By 1880 the community had a bridge over the Missouri, a \$120,000 union station, and several railroads. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was partially owned by Atchison interests. Despite optimism and aggressive leadership, Atchison could not alter fixed commercial patterns that limited its growth.

Political considerations were important in the settlement of three other cities. When Nebraskans selected Lincoln as a compromise choice for a capital in 1867, there was only one house at the site. Three commissioners surveyed lots, and construction proceeded on a capitol, penitentiary, university, and lunatic

asylum. These projects stimulated expansion; Lincoln added 11,000 residents in thirteen years.<sup>14</sup> Topeka progressed in much the same fashion. After winning a statewide election to choose a capital for Kansas, Topeka undertook a massive building program which led to an increase of over 10,000 inhabitants between 1870 and 1880. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe established its offices and machine shops in Topeka, and the future looked very bright. "The location of this city enables it to hold the key to the far new west," said the editor of a city directory. "It is nearer the base of frontier operations than any other town of pretensions."<sup>15</sup> The population of Lawrence, which lost the statehouse when Leavenworth voters, embittered over a railroad controversy, cast their ballots for Topeka, increased by only 190 persons in the same period. All things considered, the seemingly ill-starred municipality had done rather well. Founded with the assistance of Massachusetts and Connecticut emigrant aid societies, it became an anti-slavery center. Lawrence was first called Wakarusa, then Yankee-town, and after that New Boston. The early settlers adopted the name Lawrence out of respect for New England industrialist Amos Lawrence, who gave them a reported \$10,000 for "education purposes." Proslavery elements besieged and burned Lawrence twice in the 1850s. During the Civil War, Confederate raiders led by William C. Quantrill killed 180 people and wrought damage amounting to \$2,000,000. Rebuilding the town stimulated business, allowing Lawrence to flourish as an important local marketing town.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, halfway across the continent, San Francisco was attaining hegemony over northern California. In the spring of 1848 almost everyone in the old Spanish town of one thousand people had gone to the gold fields, leaving behind 135 houses, 10 unfinished structures, 12 stores and warehouses, and 35 shanties. But new settlers appeared within months, and fortune seekers transformed San Francisco into a roaring camp. Prosperity followed, despite disastrous fires that swept away inflammable tents and wood structures, hard times from fluctuations in mining, vicious criminals, and violent riots against Orientals by white workingmen. Vigilance committees were formed to maintain order. Mineral strikes in California and Nevada, along with expanding agricultural production in California, furnished a firm economic base. "The condition of affairs in San Francisco at the

present time is gratifying," the mayor asserted in 1880. "Much encouragement has been given to manufactures, and a determined effort is being made to procure the immigration to California of good settlers to assist in developing the resources of the state."<sup>17</sup>

The great commercial metropolis had a number of satellites, the most important of which was Oakland, directly to the east across San Francisco Bay. Squatters settled in the place in 1850; for the next decade and a half land-title cases clogged the courts and discouraged migrants. Plans to make the city the western terminus of the transcontinental railroad revived interest; after the arrival of the first overland train on 8 November 1869, Oakland enjoyed many years of economic well-being and rapid physical growth. It won the Alameda County seat and annexed neighboring Brooklyn. Harbor improvements and the construction of railroads throughout California encouraged commerce. Ferry lines ran from Oakland to San Francisco.<sup>18</sup> Of all these things, the ferries on the bay were the most significant, because they made Oakland an adjunct of San Francisco.

Sacramento, Stockton, and San Jose were the other jewels in San Francisco's crown. Sacramento, platted in December of 1848 near Sutter's Fort at the juncture of the American and Sacramento rivers, was a trading post and gambling den during the gold rush. Merchants averaged profits of 200 percent. A horseshoe cost sixteen dollars, a shot of whiskey fifty cents. According to an eyewitness, "every saloon was crowded and every table blockaded by an eager crowd of gamblers." The city survived severe floods, epidemics, squatters' riots, and fires. "After 1850 the place sank into a dignified tranquility," a local historian noted, "disturbed only by floods and fires, and such unromantic incidents as the entrance of the first railroad or the establishment of the state capital."<sup>19</sup> Serious problems impeded the founding of Stockton at the head of a navigable slough three miles from the San Joaquin River. Fear of Indian attacks led to the abandonment of settlement efforts in 1843 and 1844; an attempt in 1846 failed when the Mexican War began. After permanent settlement in 1847 the town survived epidemics, floods, and conflagrations that happened with clocklike regularity. Just before the Civil War, Stockton experienced what officials called the "transition from the gold period to the wheat period."<sup>20</sup> The community moved ahead, firmly connected to San Francisco by daily passenger steamers. San Jose,

organized in 1777 seven miles below the southern tip of San Francisco Bay in the lush Santa Clara Valley, had the twin distinction of being the oldest municipality in California and the meeting place of the first state legislature. Once a supply base for gold prospectors, it evolved into an emporium for surrounding agricultural lands.<sup>21</sup> San Jose and the other two cities had all successfully managed the difficult procedure of shifting economic bases at propitious times.

Virginia City failed to find an economic alternative to mining, with dire results. Started as a Nevada mining camp on Mount Davidson, Virginia City became a flourishing place with cultural pretensions, following the discovery in 1859 of the Comstock Lode. After overcoming nearby Gold Hill, it surged to an estimated population of twenty-five thousand in 1876. Then the mines were exhausted, and close to fifteen thousand persons left in the next four years. The future held little hope for Virginia City because it was impossible to develop an agricultural base in the surrounding mountains. Most of the \$300,000,000 in profits from the Comstock Lode went to San Francisco speculators. Indeed, even the houses on "Millionaires' Row" in Virginia City were dismantled and taken to San Francisco for reassembling.<sup>22</sup>

Portland, on the west bank of the Willamette River twelve miles from its juncture with the Columbia, was the largest of the other two West Coast cities. Chartered in 1851, it had a number of competitors. A contemporary noted, "Nearly every man in Oregon has a city of his own and it is impossible to tell what point on the Columbia will take the preference." William Gilpin, active in the region at the time, later took credit for laying out Portland, although he never presented proof. Even though the town had what promoters considered an excellent location, title controversies slowed progress until the mid-1850s. From then on, it enjoyed what spokesmen called a "remarkable" expansion based on the steady agricultural settlement of western Oregon, the opening of railroads and water navigation in the Willamette Valley, and the exploitation of mineral deposits. By 1880 Portland impressed visitors as having many New England attributes. A regional magazine claimed, "Invoke the spirit of the lamp and transport a resident of some Eastern city and put him down in the streets of Portland, and he would observe little difference be-

tween his new surroundings and those he beheld but a moment before in his native city."<sup>23</sup>

Los Angeles lay in what boosters called "semitropical" California. Situated twelve miles from the Pacific Ocean at a rather undesirable spot for commercial activities on the banks of the sluggish Los Angeles River, the town owed its origin in 1781 to a group of discharged Spanish soldiers from the neighboring mission of San Gabriel. When California entered the Union, Los Angeles had only 1,610 inhabitants, almost all of whom were Mexicans. In the 1860s and 1870s, during the first southern California land boom, speculators started the neighboring villages of Santa Monica, Anaheim, Long Beach, and Pasadena, allowing Los Angeles to gain a suburban dimension in advance of metropolitan status. Experts believed that the Los Angeles basin could sustain a population of one million. The main concern was transportation; the only locally owned railroad was the eighteen-mile long Los Angeles and Independence. The San Francisco-owned Southern Pacific Railroad, which ran through Los Angeles, charged high shipping rates.<sup>24</sup>

On the Gulf Coast, Galveston and Houston were fighting for urban supremacy in Texas. Galveston occupied the northeast portion of Galveston Island. Before the city obtained a charter in 1838 several communities, including the pirate town of Campeachy, had occupied the site. Galveston thrived as the port for the Republic of Texas, suffered in the first decade of American rule when other seaports cut deeply into foreign trade, staged a major recovery in the late 1850s with the reestablishment of some old connections, lost half its population during the Union blockade in the Civil War, and moved forward after hostilities. "We cannot help observing how rapidly business is increasing in Galveston," a newspaper editor wrote in May of 1865. "The wharves are already crowded by steamers and other craft laden with merchandise. Old stores are being fitted up; dwellings converted into shops. All our merchants seem busy. Galveston is rapidly regaining her former commercial position." In the seventies, Galveston was the nation's third largest cotton and fourth biggest coffee market.<sup>25</sup> A general increase in exports, coupled with the arrival of railroads and manufacturing industries, generated optimism.

Similar confidence existed fifty miles away on the shores of



Buffalo Bayou. The promoters who planned Houston in 1836, within months after the nearby Battle of San Jacinto assured Texas independence, wanted to construct a railroad terminal; they named the first roadway Railroad Street. Nothing came from this and other schemes until after the Mexican War, when New England capitalists invested in projected lines and the Texas legislature made liberal grants to the railroads. By the Civil War there were 357 miles of track in Texas, almost all of which radiated out of Houston. During Reconstruction a further influx of capital from northeastern investors prompted further construction. In 1879 the city's lines shipped 459,697 cotton bales, 2,000,000 pounds of hides, 250,000 pounds of wool, 8,000 hogsheads of sugar, 18,600 barrels of molasses, and 24,000 barrels of sirup.<sup>26</sup> Much of this traffic helped Galveston, just as that town's ocean trade aided Houston. The two rivals were dependent upon each other.

The Texas interior towns predated the railroads. San Antonio, founded as the capital of Spanish Texas in 1718, remained relatively small until the advent of American rule, when it flourished as the center of the Texas cattle industry and various military activities. After the arrival in 1877 of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad, almost every train brought new settlers. Manufacturing thrived at good water-power sites on the San Pedro and San Antonio rivers; the wool, hide, and cotton trades progressed. A Texan found many anomalies. "Old houses, whose fort-like appearance speaks of a time when Indian wars were a constant source of apprehension, stand side by side with the wooden warehouses," he said. "The old mission buildings of the pious Catholic priest look out upon the railroad station, and gas-pipes run through streets still intersected by the irrigation ditches of the early Spanish settlers." He called the city "almost a shrine" to "sons of Texas," for in the streets had "flowed again and again the blood of heroes, fighting for home, for liberty, and for independence."<sup>27</sup>

In 1837 a board of commissioners selected Austin, located on an unnavigable stretch of the Colorado River, as the capital of the Republic of Texas. Its final report, which dwelled on the "fertile and gracefully undulating woodlands and luxuriant prairies," predicted a "truly national city" worthy of serving as "the home of the brave and the free." Austin never realized those great ex-

pectations, although it finally became something more than a meeting place after the coming in 1871 of the Houston and Texas Central Railway.<sup>28</sup>

The Houston and Texas Central's main line reached Dallas in 1872, changing the thirty-one year old Peter's Colony village from a quiet county seat into an incipient commercial and manufacturing point. In 1880 a proud official commented, "Eight years ago the present prosperous city of Dallas was a little village of perhaps 1,500 inhabitants, contented and well-to-do, who little expected that their city, which had been thirty years in reaching the point at which they saw it, would in less than ten years increase over six times in population, while in importance it would pass from a quiet village to a thriving city."<sup>29</sup> The same statement applied to other Texas towns; railroads opened a whole new era.

Denver, founded by New England speculators as a "paper city" in 1858 at the base of the Colorado Rockies at the juncture of South Platte Creek and Cherry Creek, subdued several competitors in its immediate proximity and prospered temporarily as a trading and mining-supply hub. Enumerated at 4,749 in 1860, Denver added only ten people in the ensuing decade, surviving a disastrous fire in 1863 and a serious flood the following year. Railroad promotion was the key to community hopes. In the 1870s the city successfully contested with other places on the eastern slope for trunk connections. The Union Pacific-Eastern Division connected with eastern roads at Kansas City and the transcontinental at Cheyenne; the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad promised a link to the Southwest; and the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad served central Colorado. The population of Denver increased seven times over in the seventies. It profited from mineral strikes and obtained a great deal of capital from northeastern investors at the expense of once-promising Cheyenne. Denver hewed out the Rocky Mountain Empire so quickly that its sole remaining challenger in Colorado was left far behind. "Who can guess the future of this great city?" a booster trumpeted in 1880. "Before the ordinary course of events is likely to check our growth, Denver will at least double her present population and increase her wealth by at least one-half."<sup>30</sup>

In the heart of the Rockies, at an altitude of ten thousand feet, Leadville had managed to augment roads that were open part of the year with railroad connections to other parts of the region

via the Denver and Rio Grande and the Denver, South Park and Pacific.<sup>31</sup> But Leadville was unable to overcome serious handicaps. The precipitous mountains precluded agriculture; almost all investments went into mining. So, when the mines stopped producing or silver glutted the market, the city declined and became a decaying curiosity that catered to a small tourist trade.

Latter Day Saints led by Brigham Young platted Salt Lake City in 1847, at the base of the Wasatch Mountains and near the southeast shore of the Great Salt Lake. The arrival of a thousand to six thousand Mormons annually in Utah, most of whom first came or stayed in Salt Lake City, assured a hinterland for the city. "Taking up the connecting social links, it may be repeated that not only Salt Lake City, but all the cities of Utah grew up under the most perfect system of colonization that the world has seen in latter times," said an old settler. "Indeed the early travelers to California invariably spoke of it as a system of religious communism, which Brigham Young and his apostolic compeers were attempting to establish upon the Old and New Testament plans, in the virgin valleys of the Rocky Mountains, where a new social experiment seemed eminently proper, viewed from a strict sociological standpoint." Status as the territorial capital and the church headquarters counterbalanced floods, prolonged droughts, and insect plagues. The first major commercial activity occurred when merchants sold forty-niners provisions at high prices, including flour after harvest time at twenty-five dollars per hundred pounds. Usually, winter brought depression conditions. "Merchandise was supplied almost entirely by ox-teams from the Missouri river, 1,000 miles east, which could travel only in the summer," an official declared. "Most of the staple goods thus brought were generally sold out by Christmas or soon after, so that the market was thenceforth bare of them until fresh supplies were obtained." More hard times came in 1856 and 1858 when most people fled United States troops sent to subordinate Utah Territory to the federal government. More economic trouble followed the Panic of 1873.<sup>32</sup> Only the support of the church hierarchy kept the city ahead of other important Mormon settlements, Fillmore City, Logan, Ogden, and Provo. Without the religious motivation of the people, Salt Lake City might have remained small and unimportant.

The urban frontier represented a unique aspect of the west-

ern experience. City building was neither a proving ground for democracy nor a battlefield for cowboys and Indians. It was not a response to geographic or climatic conditions. Rather, it was the extension of a process perfected earlier, the promotion and building of sites no matter how undesirable into successful localities. Uncontrolled capitalism led to disorderly development that reflected the abilities of individual entrepreneurs rather than most other factors. The result was the establishment of a society that mirrored and made the same mistakes as those made earlier in the rest of the country.<sup>33</sup>

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## CHAPTER 2

# Demography, Society, and Economics

For years cowboy dramas delineated the western frontier population as white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. Until the 1970s few blacks appeared in these stories except in the most minor of supporting roles, although viewers of these dramatic productions tacitly understood that downtrodden Indians represented black victims of segregation. Almost all presentations depicted westerners as native Americans, born and bred in the region. With little apparent schooling, they spoke perfect English with just a trace of a western accent. Eastern tenderfoots, despite living in the nineteenth century, knew little about horses; “school marms” from Ohio or Vermont talked as if they had degrees from Vassar, Smith, or Mount Holyoke. Hardly anyone used a foreign vernacular; Indians spoke in a childlike tongue, and Mexicans—almost always coarse and sadistic bandits—conversed in a sing-song fashion that passed for a Spanish-American dialect. Immigrants were few and far between. The few Jewish peddlers, English adventurers, Scandinavian families, and Chinese cooks disappeared early, eliminated by bullets, disease, or dropped plot lines. The West of the back lots of the movie studios had few blacks, foreigners, or easterners. Actually, while the region as a whole was not as cosmopolitan as the rest of the nation, it was not significantly different. The ethnic and religious compositions of the western frontier cities were as diverse as their eastern counterparts.

A majority of the native Americans in the western cities in 1880 were from other sections. People’s origins reflected geography

and transportation. Large numbers of New Englanders had gone to Portland; it was easier for them to reach Oregon by sea than to go by land to Colorado or Texas. The San Francisco Bay region received a massive influx of prospectors from all over the nation, as gold fever overcame problems of accessibility. Northeastern abolitionists encouraged migration to Lawrence; religious beliefs brought persons from across the land to Salt Lake City. In most other places, the pioneers had traveled from neighboring states, following the traditional pattern. Omaha's nucleus came from Iowa, especially from Council Bluffs, where prospective homesteaders had waited patiently for the extinguishing of Indian titles and the creation of a new territory. The same happened in Kansas, where the first settlers in Atchison, Leavenworth, and Topeka crossed over from western Missouri. Called "Border Ruffians" by the northern press, which described them as depraved slaveholders, complete with whips, chains, and human chattels, the settlers almost invariably placed land speculation ahead of the slavery issue.

Population sources seldom remained fixed for very long. Civil War veterans from both sides went to Omaha to work on the Union Pacific. Unreconstructed Confederates moved to St. Joseph, believing the city proslavery in sentiment. Kansas City, which drew its early inhabitants from Missouri and Kentucky, gained large numbers of men from the Midwest and Northeast, who sought employment on the railroads and in the packing houses. The Americans in most western towns stayed on the move. People left in droves after staying a couple of years or less in one place. Few municipalities, large or small, could make the claim that Leavenworth did in the census: "No radical changes have occurred in the character of the population."<sup>1</sup>

In 1880 native Americans predominated in the three largest cities. San Francisco had 129,715 residents born in the United States, representing 55 percent of a total of 233,959. Native Californians numbered 78,144, or 33 percent of San Francisco's total population. All other states that contributed in excess of 1 percent were in the Northeast—16,001 came from New York (7 percent), 8,244 from Massachusetts (4 percent), 3,709 from Pennsylvania (2 percent), and 3,233 from Maine (1 percent). Fewer had moved from neighboring jurisdictions: 490 from Oregon and 484 from Nevada (each 0.2 percent), and 33 (0.01 percent) from

Arizona Territory. More people than that had journeyed halfway across the continent. An enumerated 1,334 (0.6 percent) migrated from Missouri, 2,152 (0.9 percent) from Ohio, 1,935 (0.8 percent) from Illinois, and 81 (0.03 percent) from Nebraska. In Kansas City 83 percent of 55,785 inhabitants were native-born. Missourians numbered 18,023, accounting for 32 percent of all Kansas Citians. Two northeastern states furnished sizable contingents: New York, 3,858 (7 percent), and Pennsylvania, 2,540 (5 percent). Kansas Citians from midwestern states included 3,347 from Illinois (6 percent), 3,340 from Indiana (6 percent), and 1,061 from Iowa (2 percent). There were few southerners. Kentucky sent 2,574 (5 percent), Tennessee, 1,113 (2 percent), and Arkansas, 126 (0.2 percent). Other aggregates numbered 1,317 (2 percent) from Virginia and 86 (0.2 percent) from South Carolina. Fewer residents than might have been expected were from Kansas: 1,629 (3 percent).

Denver's natives were primarily from the Northeast and the Midwest. While Americans totaled 26,924 out of 35,629 (76 percent), just 3,804 (11 percent) of all Denverites were from Colorado. This percentage was only slightly more than that for New York, which contributed 3,712 (10 percent). Additionally, 8 percent were from Illinois (2,795); 6 percent from Missouri (2,249), Ohio (2,211), and Pennsylvania (2,165); 3 percent from Iowa (1,233); and 2 percent from Kansas (615). Among individuals from other places were 119 (0.3 percent) from Minnesota and 47 (0.1 percent) from Utah Territory.<sup>2</sup> Taken together, the figures for the three municipalities showed the diverse nature of internal migration.

Western cities had significant minorities of blacks or foreign-born, and sometimes both. Generally, the mix reflected sectionalism. Places in or near the former slave states had more blacks; those settled from the free states contained larger numbers of foreigners. San Francisco, Kansas City, and Denver had black quarters—28 percent of Census Enumeration District 6 in Kansas City was black. (Table 2-1 indicates the number and percentage of blacks and foreign-born in the 1880 frontier cities.)<sup>3</sup> Kansas City had 9,301 immigrants and 8,143 blacks, the largest number in the West. San Francisco, with the biggest foreign-born population, 104,244, had 1,628 blacks. Houston and Topeka had more blacks and fewer foreign-born. Conversely, Omaha, Virginia City,



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TABLE 2-1  
FOREIGN-BORN AND BLACKS IN 1880

<i>City</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Number of Foreign- Born</i>	<i>Per- centage of Foreign- Born</i>	<i>Number of Blacks</i>	<i>Per- centage of Blacks</i>
<i>California</i>					
Los Angeles .....	11,183	3,204	29	102	1
Oakland .....	34,555	11,021	32	593	2
Sacramento .....	21,420	7,048	33	455	2
San Francisco .....	233,959	104,244	45	1,628	1
San Jose .....	12,567	3,834	31	101	1
Stockton .....	10,282	3,430	33	199	2
<i>Colorado</i>					
Denver .....	35,629	8,705	24	1,046	3
Leadville .....	14,820	3,918	26	279	2
<i>Kansas</i>					
Atchison .....	15,105	1,842	12	2,787	18
Lawrence .....	8,510	1,021	12	1,995	23
Leavenworth .....	16,546	3,382	20	3,293	20
Topeka .....	15,452	1,862	12	3,648	24
<i>Missouri</i>					
Kansas City .....	55,785	9,301	17	8,143	15
St. Joseph .....	32,431	5,656	17	3,227	10
<i>Nebraska</i>					
Lincoln .....	13,003	2,407	18	576	4
Omaha .....	30,518	9,930	33	789	3
<i>Nevada</i>					
Virginia City .....	10,917	4,791	44	96	0.1
<i>Oregon</i>					
Portland .....	17,577	6,312	36	192	1
<i>Texas</i>					
Austin .....	11,013	1,385	13	3,606	33
Dallas .....	10,358	1,323	13	1,921	19
Galveston .....	22,248	5,046	23	5,348	24
Houston .....	16,513	2,273	14	6,479	39
San Antonio .....	20,550	5,598	27	3,036	15
<i>Utah Territory</i>					
Salt Lake City .....	20,768	7,673	37	86	0.4

Denver, and San Jose had more foreign-born and fewer blacks. Two exceptions to the general rule relating to slave states and free states were in Texas and Kansas: Galveston and Leavenworth. Otherwise, the statistical relationships differed little from elsewhere in the country: South Bend was 26 percent immigrant and 2 percent black, Montgomery 4 percent immigrant and 59 percent black, and Lawrence, Massachusetts, 44 percent immigrant and 0.4 percent black.<sup>4</sup>

The large percentages of foreign-born in many western localities—45 percent in San Francisco, 44 percent in Virginia City, and between 30 and 37 percent in Omaha, Oakland, Sacramento, San Jose, Stockton, Portland, and Salt Lake City—made them as much “immigrant cities” as New York (40 percent), St. Paul (36 percent), Scranton (35 percent), and Cleveland (37 percent). Six other western towns had immigrant proportions of between 20 and 30 percent, and nine of from 12 to 20 percent. Writing about San Antonio at the end of the eighties, a resident concluded, “San Antonio is now probably the most cosmopolitan spot on the face of the globe. Representatives of every race of the earth have been counted here, except perhaps the aboriginal Oceanicans. The larger elements of the existing population are American, Mexican, German, Colored, with smaller groups of French, Italian, Poles, Irish and many other nationalities.”<sup>5</sup> The same thing could have been said about most other places. Yet even though no community was under 12 percent immigrant, the tendency was to think of ethnic ghettos in terms of crowded tenement blocks in the Northeast rather than congested districts in Denver, Leadville, or Galveston. Actually, only 2 out of 176 cities of ten thousand or more in the North were more than 40 percent immigrant, against 2 out of 23 in the West. Cities in the Midwest, Northeast, and West had about 30 percent foreign-born.

Most immigrants who arrived in the United States prior to 1880 were from northern and western Europe. The statistics for the frontier cities reflected this movement. Dallas, Austin, and Galveston, in keeping with early colonization trends in Texas, had disproportionate numbers of Germans when compared with the national totals, but so did St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Milwaukee. Portland received many foreign-born from Germany and Great Britain; those in Leavenworth were primarily from Ireland and Germany. Three nationalities accounted for at least 1 percent

of the people in Kansas City and Denver. The former had 3,526 Irish (6 percent), 2,209 Germans (4 percent), and 1,004 English (2 percent). The latter had 2,095 Germans (6 percent), 1,922 Irish (5 percent), and 1,436 English (4 percent). While Omaha contained Germans, Scandinavians, and Irish, sizable numbers of Czechs, most of whom worked in the packing houses, imparted a degree of Bohemian culture absent elsewhere. San Francisco was more cosmopolitan. The population included 19,928 Germans (9 percent), 15,077 Irish (6 percent), 4,160 French and 3,860 Canadians (each 2 percent), and 3,086 English and 2,491 Italians (each 1 percent).<sup>6</sup>

Cities on the West Coast in 1880 had large populations of Orientals. There were 21,745 Chinese enumerated in San Francisco, representing 9 percent of all inhabitants. Chinese in other places totaled 1,668 (9 percent) in Portland, 1,781 (8 percent) in Sacramento, 687 (7 percent) in Stockton, 1,974 (6 percent) in Oakland, and 634 in San Jose and 605 in Los Angeles (5 percent each). Away from the Pacific Coast, there were 519 Chinese (5 percent) in Virginia City and 238 (1 percent) in Denver. No other city had many Chinese. Omaha reported 14, St. Joseph 2, and San Antonio 7.<sup>7</sup> The only Japanese counted were 45 in San Francisco and 5 in Oakland. Throughout the West, whites disliked Orientals; in Portland officials called them "Mongolians." A California writer accused the Chinese of transacting "dark and devious affairs" involving "the smuggling of opium, the traffic in slave girls and the settlement of their difficulties." He claimed that in San Francisco's Chinatown, "The Chinese lived their own lives in their own way and settled their own quarrels with the revolvers of their highbinders." Only the "very lowest outcasts" among whites lived in the quarter.<sup>8</sup>

American Indians and Mexicans rounded out the ethnic components of western towns. Indians were few, with the most the 97 in Los Angeles, 76 in Virginia City, 45 in San Francisco, 37 in Omaha, and 11 in Salt Lake City. There were none in three places, Lincoln, Topeka, and Austin. San Antonio had the most persons with Hispanic last names, 4,876 (24 percent). Another southwestern city, Los Angeles, had the second largest percentage. There were 920, representing 8 percent of the population. In two other selected communities, there were 697 individuals (6 percent) with Spanish names in San Jose, and none at all in Topeka.<sup>9</sup> In San

Antonio there were Mexicans in all walks of life. Most of those in Los Angeles were laborers or farmers. The Indians were outside the mainstream of society.

Eighteen of the twenty-four cities had more males than females (see Table 2-2).<sup>10</sup> Women had a 52 percent to 48 percent statistical advantage in Salt Lake City, a special case for religious reasons. Other western towns in which females had an edge were Lawrence, Leavenworth, and Houston, all with 51 percent, plus Austin and Galveston, just over 50 percent. Females made up less than 45 percent of the inhabitants in several places: 44 percent in Omaha; 43 percent in Kansas City, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Stockton; 42 percent in Virginia City; 40 percent in Portland and Denver; and 27 percent in Leadville. In other sections of the country, northeastern localities of over ten thousand population tended to have more women than men, as did almost all such towns in the South and about half in the Midwest. The cities in the West required many manual laborers. Yet the totals reflected migration patterns to a greater extent than the needs of employers. A majority of early arrivals were young adult males lured by mining strikes and other speculative opportunities. Leadville (27 percent female) illustrated the short-term impact, while Leavenworth indicated how ratios evened out in the long-term.

Media productions, while concentrating on the depraved side of the western experience, carefully noted that religion played an important part in the lives of the "good people." Some stories concerned pastors trying to construct churches to bring the first vestiges of civilization to cow towns or mining towns. This was fairly close to reality and, if anything, underemphasized. In 1890 the census made its first successful comprehensive attempt to gather statistics on religion. The compilations for the sixteen former frontier cities surveyed that then had populations in excess of twenty-five thousand are shown in Table 2-3.<sup>11</sup>

Usually the cities had fewer church members than those of comparable size in other sections. Cincinnati with 296,908 people had 115,777 communicants (39 percent) as opposed to 92,872 (31 percent) in San Francisco (298,997 population); Bridgeport with 48,866 people had 19,983 communicants (41 percent) contrasted with 18,490 (38 percent) in Oakland (48,682 population); and Wilkes-Barre with 37,718 people had 15,738 communicants (42

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TABLE 2-2  
MALE AND FEMALE POPULATIONS IN 1880

<i>City</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Percentage of Females</i>
<i>California</i>			
Los Angeles .....	5,910	5,273	47
Oakland .....	18,117	16,438	48
Sacramento .....	12,271	9,149	43
San Francisco .....	132,608	101,351	43
San Jose .....	6,553	6,014	48
Stockton .....	5,870	4,412	43
<i>Colorado</i>			
Denver .....	21,539	14,090	40
Leadville .....	10,781	4,039	27
<i>Kansas</i>			
Atchison .....	8,616	6,489	43
Lawrence .....	4,181	4,329	51
Leavenworth .....	8,171	8,375	51
Topeka .....	8,140	7,312	47
<i>Missouri</i>			
Kansas City .....	31,999	23,786	43
St. Joseph .....	17,832	14,599	45
<i>Nebraska</i>			
Lincoln .....	7,140	5,863	45
Omaha .....	17,104	13,414	44
<i>Nevada</i>			
Virginia City .....	6,280	4,637	42
<i>Oregon</i>			
Portland .....	10,514	7,063	40
<i>Texas</i>			
Austin .....	5,473	5,540	50
Dallas .....	5,462	4,896	47
Galveston .....	11,066	11,182	50
Houston .....	8,029	8,484	51
San Antonio .....	10,673	9,877	48
<i>Utah Territory</i>			
Salt Lake City .....	9,953	10,815	52

TABLE 2-3  
 VITAL RELIGIOUS STATISTICS, 1890

<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Organi- zations</i>	<i>Church Edifices</i>	<i>Value of Church Property</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Percentage of Com- municants</i>
San Francisco .....	298,997	150	125	\$4,241,100	92,872	31
Omaha .....	140,452	95	81	1,990,825	18,658	13
Kansas City .....	132,716	123	101	2,672,355	31,600	24
Denver .....	106,713	98	81	2,884,142	33,613	31
Lincoln .....	55,154	49	37	490,932	8,653	16
St. Joseph .....	52,324	59	55	803,175	14,588	28
Los Angeles .....	50,395	78	62	951,507	18,229	36
Oakland .....	48,682	66	52	1,052,491	18,490	38
Portland .....	46,385	60	46	1,479,550	16,815	36
Salt Lake City .....	44,843	49	32	602,094	17,502	39
Dallas .....	38,067	55	45	619,425	11,711	31
San Antonio .....	37,673	40	39	460,850	11,102	29
Topeka .....	31,007	72	50	519,725	11,554	37
Galveston .....	29,084	33	38	606,950	13,748	47
Houston .....	27,557	52	49	379,650	8,712	32
Sacramento .....	26,386	30	22	337,100	9,059	34

percent) compared to 11,102 (29 percent) in San Antonio (37,673 population). Some exceptions were Chattanooga with 29,110 people and 9,830 communicants (34 percent) against 13,748 (47 percent) in Galveston (29,084 population), and Des Moines with 50,093 people and 16,142 communicants (32 percent) compared to 18,229 (36 percent) in Los Angeles (50,395 population). Normally, cities with large numbers of Roman Catholics reported a higher number of communicants. Both the Northeast and the Midwest had more Catholics than the West and the South.

Membership totals for religious faiths are shown in Table 2-4.<sup>12</sup> Every city had many different denominations. Nevertheless, in six places Roman Catholics accounted for more than half of all members: San Francisco (70,670 out of 92,872), Denver (18,039 out of 33,613), Portland (9,140 out of 16,815), San Antonio (6,283 out of 11,102), Galveston (8,200 out of 13,748), and Sacramento

TABLE 24  
COMMUNICANTS BY DENOMINATION, 1890

<i>City</i>	<i>Regular Baptist</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Lutheran</i>	<i>Methodist Episcopal</i>	<i>Presbyterian</i>	<i>Protestant Episcopal</i>
San Francisco .....	1,110	70,670	4,075	2,096	3,115	2,812	2,446
Omaha .....	1,107	7,675	1,035	1,277	1,859	1,708	1,228
Kansas City .....	4,490	11,900	825	838	3,195	1,333	1,143
Denver .....	2,498	18,039	895	540	2,858	1,896	1,820
Lincoln .....	681	2,570	27	531	1,625	696	301
St. Joseph .....	1,044	5,896	490	318	948	321	653
Los Angeles .....	1,282	6,154	460	375	3,002	1,873	979
Oakland .....	1,109	8,000	750	287	1,469	1,665	830
Portland .....	722	9,140	1,165	347	781	1,110	676
Salt Lake City .....	171	1,350	100	24	347	223	465
Dallas .....	2,250	3,275	200	90	445	164	518
San Antonio .....	1,075	6,283	200	500	590	130	525
Topeka .....	1,345	2,145	58	526	2,144	1,118	612
Galveston .....	734	8,200	850	787	841	95	670
Houston .....	1,265	3,350	75	....	935	....	591
Sacramento .....	370	6,000	250	148	458	256	330

(6,000 out of 9,059). Roman Catholics claimed the most communicants in all the other towns except Salt Lake City, where 14,276 of 17,502 church members were Mormons. Generally, religious ties reflected pluralism. Kansas City had 123 different organizations, Dallas 55, Galveston 33, and St. Joseph 59. There was great diversity among Protestant groups, with no special pattern throughout the section. Jews constituted the second largest denomination in San Francisco. Six synagogues had 4,075 members. In comparison there were 3,115 Methodists, 2,812 Presbyterians, and 2,466 Episcopalians. A number of other places had impressive Hebrew assemblies: Portland (1,165), Omaha (1,035), Denver (895), Galveston (850), and Kansas City (825). The western cities were no less or more religious than those in other parts of the country. As in the older sections, there were strong religious ties.

By 1880 all the frontier cities had public school systems. Well-organized administrative structures, long annual reports, comprehensive budgets, and detailed courses of study concealed serious deficiencies. Most teachers had neither professional training nor secondary diplomas. The curriculums stressed the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic; students bothering to attend normally appeared completely disinterested. Pedagogical methods were authoritarian—"scholars" marched to and from classes to the beat of drums, submitted to corporal punishment, and recited by rote. Instructional material was minimal, there was little equipment and less innovation; classes averaged sixty to one hundred students. Still, many places remained proud of their schools; Leavenworth authorities claimed that pupils completing the four-year high school had "little difficulty entering Harvard with no other preparation." An 1879 graduate of Central High School in Lawrence probably better caught the climate of education in Kansas. Decades later, she said, "I don't recall anything that was spectacular about those four years, and practically all of my vivid memories center around the extracurricular activities, the preparation for commencement and the commencement proper."<sup>13</sup>

Cities spent as little as possible on schools. Appropriations in 1879-80 ranged from \$15,346 in Houston to \$875,448 in San Francisco. Buildings were customarily converted houses or modest structures. A conspicuous exception was the Omaha High School,



erected in 1872 at a cost of \$200,000. The four-story building, which occupied a ten-acre campus at the city's highest point, had 17 classrooms, 4 large recitation halls, handsome offices, commodious library facilities, and several "apparatus rooms." More typical were the 19 wooden schools in St. Joseph, or the 10 with a total of 72 rooms in Kansas City. Teachers' salaries were low. Houston instructors made an average of \$41.50 monthly; Virginia City cut the pay of teachers to make up a budget deficit. No place had an adequate staff: 34 educators taught 3,060 students in Leavenworth, and 22 instructed 1,584 in San Antonio. St. Joseph's student-teacher ratio in two black schools was a hundred to one. High absentee rates abounded. In Topeka daily attendance averaged 1,288 out of 1,926 pupils; in Denver 1,953 attended of 3,210. Throughout the West a little less than half of those eligible matriculated in public schools. Even so, the few denominational institutions remained modest endeavors. Omaha's Episcopal St. Barnabas School had 60 pupils; Atchison's Roman Catholic academy had 200 students.<sup>14</sup> About the only consolation was that the places of learning in San Jose, Salt Lake City, and Leadville compared favorably with those in Norristown, Cedar Rapids, and Mobile.

What passed for higher education was modest in character. The University of Nebraska at Lincoln had 2 buildings, 10 faculty members, 90 students in college courses, and 2,700 library books. Over 250 persons attended Omaha's Creighton College, a Roman Catholic Jesuit institution housed in a new \$63,000 hall. The nondenominational St. Joseph College in St. Joseph claimed an enrollment of 177. In Lawrence the University of Kansas had 114 students and 16 professors. The library claimed to house 3,800 books, although a student thought the number closer to 200. There were two other small schools, all in Kansas: Congregationalist Washburn in Topeka, and Roman Catholic St. Benedict's in Atchison. Farther west, plans called for starting the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and reopening the moribund University of Denver. Aside from the University of California at Berkeley and the College of Santa Clara at Santa Clara, there were no other important learning centers in the entire region. Conditions were not much different from the older sections, where few schools approached Harvard College's 886 students and 187,300 books. Rutgers College had 101 students and 9,600 books, the University of Wisconsin 340 students and 4,000

books, and the University of Mississippi 184 students and 500 books.<sup>15</sup> Whether public or private, lower or higher, poorer or richer, the level of western urban education was as undistinguished as elsewhere. A Portland spokesman summed the matter up when he said, "Education is guided by Americans from New England and the northern states."<sup>16</sup>

The frontier cities boasted of many literary, musical, and artistic activities. Portland and San Francisco both had literary societies at an early date, and the latter saw the establishment in 1872 of the Bohemian Club for aspiring artists. Salt Lake City supported a variety of journals concerned with the Mormon community, Los Angeles promoters produced tracts designed to promote the "land of sunshine," and Portland interests began the magazine *West Shore* to glorify communities and individuals in the Northwest. Unfortunately, no real climate of cultural enrichment existed. There was not a single art gallery or library worthy of the name; serious musical fare failed to attract audiences. Hardly any successful author, artist, or musician remained long in the West. Most literary magazines died young. The *Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City and the *Golden Era* in San Francisco enjoyed their greatest days during the Civil War, when some aspiring literary figures went West to avoid the fighting. After the *Overland Monthly*, designed to draw entirely on West Coast talent, appeared in 1868 in San Francisco, distinguished personality Henry George predicted that writers in the city would soon make a living by practicing their calling rather than "digging sand, peddling vegetables, or washing dishes in restaurants." But the *Overland Monthly* changed its format after eight years of publication, and George, Bret Harte, Samuel Clemens, and others left, some returning to the East.<sup>17</sup>

Western newspapers were shrill, intense, promotional, and numerous. The *Leavenworth Times* and *Omaha Bee* devoted many pages to "puff" articles extolling the virtues of their respective communities. There were thirty-four papers in San Francisco during the mid-1870s, all of which a reader claimed were "not calculated to elevate, but rather to lower the tone of public feeling." He contended "the press does not strive to lead or educate the latter, but rather to follow it, and follow it down to a low depth." A Denver politician admitted that the city's four dailies challenged "the admiration of every one who appreciated pluck

and perseverance." Kansas City's journals, perpetuating a tradition started by editor Robert T. Van Horn of the *Journal of Commerce*, were little more than extensions of the business community. While the *Deseret News* in Salt Lake City spoke for the Mormon hierarchy, a succession of "gentile" sheets, including the *Salt Lake Tribune*, denounced theocracy and polygamy. One reader called the *Tribune* "a decided anti-Mormon journal." The *Portland Oregonian* dominated the news by successfully controlling the Associated Press wire.<sup>18</sup> Many people resented newspapermen.irate subscribers had already shot three San Francisco editors before William Randolph Hearst took over the *Examiner* in 1887. He recruited reporters skilled in the art of sensationalism to help perfect the techniques of "yellow journalism." When he applied the same methods in eastern dailies, critics associated the style with the West, ignoring the fact that since colonial days the press in America had frequently been accused of irresponsible reporting.

Various forms of urban recreation were much the same in the West as in the East. Voluntary associations were active everywhere. The Austin resident who noted that the community had "Masonic lodges, Odd Fellows' lodges, Hebrew Associations, and other secret and benevolent societies" could have been discussing just about any place in the United States.<sup>19</sup> Such fads as roller skating and bicycle riding quickly spread across the nation; westerners avidly followed boxing, horse racing, and baseball. Just as in the East, the newspapers carried the results of major sporting events. Several western towns built race courses. While some romanticists attributed racing to a county fair tradition, the sport owed its rise to the great eastern tracks: Belmont, Pimlico, Saratoga, and Churchill Downs. Prize fighting spread to the West after many eastern cities outlawed boxing as barbaric. San Francisco and Virginia City were important boxing centers. Baseball flourished; Houston had a team that competed with neighboring towns as early as 1861. In 1886 Kansas City gained a National League franchise. This first attempt by a western team to challenge the East in competitive athletics ended ignominiously. The club, characterized by poor hitting, pitching, and fielding, won 30 and lost 91 games. After one season it moved east to Indianapolis.<sup>20</sup>

Another significant aspect of urban diversions in the West evolved around private places of amusement. The combination

dance hall, gambling casino, restaurant, theater, hotel, and sporting house, which flourished in New Orleans, thrived in the West. Men coming out of the mines or off the range wanted to do as much as possible in a few hours. A tired pleasure-seeker could drink, eat, gamble, ogle the "girls," and watch theatricals without ever leaving his seat. Rough in the beginning, these saloons and casinos changed over the years into more respectable theaters and opera houses.

By 1880 all the twenty-four frontier cities had multipurpose entertainment centers. There was an indistinct line between them and so-called beer gardens, lecture halls, and opera houses. In Kansas City the Coates Opera House sat two thousand people, and the Gillis Opera House over twenty-two hundred. There were three open-air beer gardens and the gigantic outdoor Theater Comique, which claimed a capacity of six thousand. Denver had four theaters and halls, plus four large gardens that were "tolerably well patronized in summer." However, a booster admitted, "Denver, it must be confessed, is sadly deficient in places of legitimate amusement, though concert halls are unhappily only too plenty in the lower part of the city." He claimed the Denver Opera House was small, uncomfortable, and poorly ventilated. Two dance halls in Los Angeles had indifferent luck in securing a steady clientele. Austin had several large beer halls and two opera houses. Not to be outdone, Houston had an auditorium seating seven hundred and one seating eight hundred; San Antonio had three large halls, the smallest of which sat six hundred. Salt Lake City's pride was the fifteen-hundred seat Salt Lake Theater, built by Brigham Young from boards and nails abandoned by the United States Army. Another large structure, the Mormon Tabernacle, held several thousand. Twelve theaters operated in San Francisco. One was the Grand Opera House, the social and cultural heart of the city. On special occasions two thousand people, dressed in formal evening clothes, gathered amidst ornate splendor. The Chinese Royal and the Chinese Grand theaters served Chinatown. Citizens of all classes attended events at the four-thousand seat Woodworth Pavilion, operated in connection with a popular amusement park. Leadville had several large dance halls, with names as diverse as the Carbonate Beer Hall, the Gaieties, and the Academy of Music. They competed for male patrons with numerous houses of prostitution.

While many uplifting activities spiced everyday life, a Portland official admitted what was true throughout the section; the dance halls were "exceedingly well patronized, much more so than the theaters and lecture-rooms." Even so, western towns consistently provided better theatrical facilities than their eastern counterparts: Boston, with 362,839 people, had eleven theaters; a single decrepit hall dating from 1825 seating an estimated eight hundred served 90,758 Albany inhabitants.<sup>21</sup>

The western cities were old enough to have workers engaged in the wide variety of different occupations associated with urban areas. Because the towns functioned as marketing and distributing points, most employees were in commerce and related personal or professional services. There were, of course, exceptions. Men in Leadville and Virginia City labored in outlying mines; commuters in Los Angeles and Salt Lake City went daily to suburban farms, vineyards, and orange groves; several towns required many industrial workers.

San Francisco, Kansas City, and Denver had the largest working forces. Table 2-5 shows their main occupational components.<sup>22</sup> In San Francisco there were 7,867 laborers, 4,656 sailors and long-shoremen, and 2,070 draymen. Domestic servants totaled 9,666, traders 7,150, clerks 6,778, launderers 3,077, and hotel and restaurant workers 2,705. There were 2,155 commercial travelers, hucksters, and peddlers. Manufacturing operatives included 5,858 in textiles, 3,358 in boots and shoes, 2,938 in cigar making, and 2,613 in carpentering. Professional classifications showed 583 physicians, 765 musicians, and 249 journalists. In Kansas City there were 4,550 laborers, mostly in the packing houses. The number of clerks was 2,101, of domestic laborers 1,830, of railroaders 1,311,

TABLE 2-5  
MAIN OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN 1880

<i>City</i>	<i>Total Work Force</i>	<i>Professional and Personal Services</i>	<i>Trade and Transportation</i>	<i>Manu- facturing and Mechanical</i>
San Francisco .....	104,650	35,060	30,150	37,475
Kansas City .....	25,081	9,811	7,625	7,393
Denver .....	15,737	5,127	3,764	6,422

and of carpenters 1,301. Laboring (1,680) and carpentering (1,035) were the only occupations in Denver that employed over a thousand. More than half of San Francisco's workers were foreign-born: 67,181, of which 17,012 were from Ireland, 12,394 from Germany, and 6,076 from Great Britain. The Irish aggregated 2,461 of the domestic servants and 3,467 of the laborers. Most of Kansas City's 5,620 foreign workers were Irish (2,208) or German (1,375). Irish accounted for 1,226 and Germans for 1,242 of 5,247 foreign-born employees in Denver. Kansas City had the most black workers, many of whom were listed as laborers, laundresses, or domestic servants. Females in occupations aggregated 14,142 in San Francisco, 3,645 in Kansas City, and 1,681 in Denver.<sup>23</sup> The three cities, while having a low percentage of working women, had some of the largest proportions of persons gainfully employed compared with total population in the nation. Only eight other localities matched or surpassed the 44 percent for Denver and the 45 percent for San Francisco and Kansas City. The census explained, "This is due to the fact that great numbers of inhabitants of any one of these cities have recently gone thither to seek their fortunes, leaving the women, the children, and the aged behind in the older communities from which they came."<sup>24</sup>

Every western town claimed vast factories. A Dallas spokesman called attention to "6 large flour-mills, an extensive cottonseed-oil factory, 2 iron foundries, 3 planing-mills, several broom factories, and other flourishing establishments." Representatives of the Leavenworth Board of Trade proudly proclaimed in 1880, "From the feeble beginning made only a little more than a decade ago, the manufacturing industries of Leavenworth have increased and developed, grown and multiplied till the city is now everywhere recognized as the manufacturing center of the Great West, and occupies the same relation to the states west of the Mississippi that Pittsburg [*sic*] occupies to the Middle States."<sup>25</sup> In actuality, the "extensive" firms discussed in promotional statements were almost always two- or three-man operations with limited capital. Still, by 1880 ten of the twenty-four frontier communities had considerable manufacturing. Although the value of products of all except San Francisco ranked in the bottom fifty among the nation's hundred principal cities, the rise of industry added an important dimension to urban life in the West. The industrial statistics for the ten centers are shown in Table 2-6.<sup>26</sup>

TABLE 2-6  
INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS IN 1880

<i>City</i>	<i>Rank According to</i>		<i>Number of</i>	<i>Capital</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Value of</i>	<i>Value of</i>
	<i>Popu- lation</i>	<i>Value of Product</i>					
Denver .....	50	53	259	\$2,301,850	2,944	\$5,715,215	\$9,367,749
Galveston .....	82	94	170	871,350	684	1,283,246	2,375,065
Kansas City .....	30	69	224	2,147,305	2,548	3,723,916	6,382,681
Oakland .....	51	91	72	1,371,457	1,387	2,012,695	3,181,066
Sacramento .....	90	87	160	1,672,400	924	2,911,889	4,093,934
St. Joseph .....	57	77	238	1,423,650	2,238	3,210,080	5,143,585
Salt Lake City .....	93	95	166	860,415	928	812,736	1,610,133
San Antonio .....	96	100	71	310,050	361	328,476	642,412
San Francisco .....	9	9	2,971	35,368,139	28,442	47,978,072	77,824,299

The most extensive works were in San Francisco. The Bay metropolis had 2,971 establishments capitalized at \$35,368,139 that employed an average of 28,442 operatives producing products valued at \$77,824,299 annually. It ranked ninth nationally and had more establishments, capitalization, employees, value of materials, and value of products than all the other western cities combined. The largest single industrial category in San Francisco was foundries and machine shops. There were 58 capitalized at \$2,391,739, employing 1,921 laborers, and producing products valued at \$3,889,503. In addition there were 310 boot and shoe factories capitalized at \$1,090,772, 47 tanneries worth \$1,161,800, and 110 men's clothing businesses evaluated at \$1,126,164. These firms, plus a number with smaller overall capitalizations in women's clothing, corsets, dressed furs, millinery apparel, men's furnishings, gloves, and hats, gave San Francisco a virtual clothing monopoly on the Pacific Coast. Several other industries had a capitalization of more than \$1,000,000. These were 38 breweries (\$1,666,520); 152 printing plants (\$1,744,755); 56 shipyards (\$1,681,523); 147 tobacco, cigar, and cigarette makers (\$1,687,603); and 24 slaughterhouses (\$1,586,200). San Francisco produced just about every conceivable product: safes and explosives; guns and caskets; axle grease and carriages. It was a volatile industrial complex; severe rioting swept the city in 1877 and 1879. White operatives banded into workingmen's parties, advocating what their employers called "quasi-socialist" ideas, and assaulted Oriental laborers who supposedly worked for less money.<sup>27</sup>

The factories in other cities appeared capable of rapid expansion. Denver's plants supplied goods for a large area of virtually untapped potential. There were six \$100,000 lines: brick and tile, flour and grist, malt liquor, printing, foundries and machine shops, and carriages and wagons. Galveston, with 170 establishments capitalized at \$871,350, producing goods valued at \$2,375,965, had one large industry, printing and publishing. Five concerns had 134 employees and a capitalization of \$87,000. Three flour and grist mills worth \$40,000 producing products worth \$205,000 led manufacturing in San Antonio. The only two \$100,000 industries in Salt Lake City were malt liquor and printing; Oakland and Sacramento, in the shadow of San Francisco, had a wide variety of small concerns. The most important St. Joseph lines, all capitalized at over \$100,000, were malt liquor, printing



and publishing, flour and grist, and slaughtering and meat packing. Omaha and Kansas City had more extensive manufacturers. While the \$285,000 malt liquor industry was the largest in Omaha, the most important was slaughtering and meat packing. Five firms, evaluated at \$249,200, employed 148 and produced goods worth \$991,790. The value of products on the capital investment in packing houses was not on the surface as large in Kansas City, \$965,000 against a capital investment of \$437,500, but important holdings were outside the city limits. Capitalists had already consolidated meat packing into three companies. And, unlike Kansas City's other \$100,000 industries—foundries and machine shops, paints, and printing and publishing—meat packing had tremendous national potential in light of developments in refrigeration and availability of railroad connections.<sup>28</sup> As the frontier neared an end, many cities were going through a process experienced earlier in Racine and Selma, and before that in Lowell and Lawrence, Massachusetts.

The average capitalization of individual western factories in 1880 was small, and the annual wages varied markedly, as Table 2-7 indicates, helping to explain why neither western manufacturers nor workers held community power.<sup>29</sup> The proliferation of small plants impeded union activities and, at the same time, made it difficult for one or two men to speak for the industrial community. Manufacturers had not yet gained a dominant voice

TABLE 2-7  
AVERAGE CAPITALIZATION AND WAGES OF INDUSTRY IN 1880

<i>City</i>	<i>Average Capitalization Per Establishment</i>	<i>Average Annual Wage Per Establishment</i>
Denver .....	\$8,887.45	\$534.79
Galveston .....	5,125.59	730.68
Kansas City .....	9,586.18	557.58
Oakland .....	9,048.01	547.00
Omaha .....	11,920.77	430.63
Sacramento .....	10,452.50	592.74
St. Joseph .....	5,981.72	397.14
Salt Lake City .....	5,183.22	458.55
San Antonio .....	4,366.90	381.66
San Francisco .....	11,904.45	524.87

in most places. Nevertheless, they could take heart from past examples.<sup>30</sup>

By 1880 economic and political power throughout the West had passed into the hands of a privileged few. A succession of western frontiers fell to large operators. After the initial strikes in the gold fields of California, the silver lodes of Nevada, and the lead veins of Colorado, big corporations appeared, bought or crushed independents, and achieved monopolistic positions. The same thing occurred on the fishing frontier along the Columbia River, the lumber frontier in the Northwest, and the cattle frontier of Texas, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Agriculture had corporate characteristics from an early date in California, and when farmers moved onto the Great Plains they found themselves subservient to transportation interests that had benefited from the largesse of government in establishing empires of rail. People going west to find opportunity, instead discovered a closed society reigned over by "cattle barons," "bonanza kings," "lumber magnates," "silver millionaires," and "railroad tycoons." Because wealth translated into power, the rich held political control over state and territorial legislatures from Nebraska to Oregon, and Texas to Montana. Here, again, the West followed in the footsteps of the East.<sup>31</sup>

The extension of corporate tentacles into the western cities was incomplete in 1880, with the notable exception of San Francisco, dominated by a few families on Nob Hill—the Crockers, the Stanfords, the Huntingtons, and the Hopkinses. "The men we find at the head of the great enterprises of the Pacific Coast have a great business power—a wide practical reach, a boldness, a sagacity, a vim, that can hardly be matched anywhere in the world," an observer noted. "London and New York and Boston can furnish men of more philosophies and theories—men who have studied business as a science as well as practiced it as a trade—but here in San Francisco are the men of acuter intuitions and more daring natures; who cannot tell you why they do so and so, but who will do it with a force that commands success. Illustrations of such men and their bold and comprehensive operations may be seen in the Bank of California—the financial king of the Pacific States, with five millions of capital—the California and Oregon steam navigation companies, controlling the inland navigation of the two states, the great woolen mills and machine shops of San Fran-

cisco, the Wells-Fargo Express and Stage Company, in the mining companies, especially the Comstock lode, in the Central Pacific Railroad Company, even in the large farms of the interior valleys, and in the wheat dealing 'rings' of the city." Robert Louis Stevenson called the Stock Exchange "the heart of San Francisco; a great pump . . . continually pumping up the savings of the lower quarters into the pockets of the millionaires upon the hill."

Those who played important roles in the affairs of San Francisco came after the first wave of speculators. They made their fortunes elsewhere, in Sacramento and Stockton. The great transportation system that they thrust eastward had a western terminus in Oakland. They moved to San Francisco, not out of a desire to dominate the city, but because it was the place to go. When they made the decision to centralize their operations on Market Street, the Monarch of the West was already on a course toward urban greatness. They marshaled their wealth to wed the town to their own ends just as they had earlier planned and executed a Pacific railway strategy. Bitterly resented by some, condemned by many for vicious labor practices, and envied by all, their presence was a mark of San Francisco's preeminence. In the eyes of many, San Francisco was the Rome of the Pacific Coast; all roads led to it.<sup>32</sup>

Community leadership in western towns had first rested with those who had an early stake. Many times persons became casually involved in an Austin, San Jose, or Topeka. Kansas City was an excellent example. During the 1840s physicians, clergymen, and merchants received land payments in lieu of cash for services. Individuals with no speculative intentions found themselves with impressive holdings. In 1856 they founded the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. Over the next fifteen years, through abortive railroad booms, wartime adversity, and postwar success, they remained together in a period when the leadership in nearby Independence and other competitors overturned. Thus, Kansas City had a crucial edge in working for the railroad connections that brought regional ascendancy.<sup>33</sup>

The very success of Kansas City lessened the role of the original business leaders. They had functioned on the proposition that politics was divisive, and so, whether Republican or Democrat, they had assiduously avoided controversy in formulating an economic policy. Conditions changed following the obtaining of

trunk railroads, when Chicago, Boston, and New York transportation, mercantile, and financial interests moved to the city. Armour and Swift engaged in banking as well as meat packing. At the close of the frontier, Kansas City experienced what San Francisco went through earlier. In exchange for a life of ease, the older leadership allowed outsiders a major share of community power.

Houston and Omaha experienced upheavals in their business communities. In the Texas city the arrival of New England railroad speculators had important consequences. Using eastern money, they diversified their investments into a number of enterprises. They blended in with the local leaders, replacing them in some instances, and helped to establish an oligarchy that ran the city through two commercial organizations, the Houston Board of Trade and the Cotton Exchange. In Omaha an ambitious speculator intruded upon local interests. George Francis Train, a Union Pacific investor and organizer of the scandal-ridden *Crédit Mobilier*, formed *Crédit Foncier* to build towns along the UP's route. He used hard-sell techniques to promote Omaha, where he owned six hundred acres, and the town's hinterland. Train realized only modest gains; he moved to Denver, where he failed and died poor. After Train left, Omaha's power structure returned to a combination of real estate and mercantile interests, with a measure of influence granted the Union Pacific. Meat packing brought in Chicago capital. The growth of industry, plus the growing corporate impersonality of the Union Pacific, left a major share of economic decision-making in impersonal hands.

By 1880 the dominant power arrangements in a majority of places had fallen into deceptively settled patterns. Cautious merchants from New England managed Portland. Fiscal conservatism and a reluctance to take risks contributed to a failure to successfully check the rise of Seattle. The Mormon leadership in Salt Lake City, after looking unfavorably on "gentile" businesses and mining, became more liberal after severe economic reversals. In 1880 an observer claimed that Salt Lake City was the main street for one large mining camp. Increased cooperation between the church-sponsored Board of Trade and the "gentile" Chamber of Commerce helped achieve economic stability. At Denver, William Larimer, quoted as saying in 1859, "I am Denver," led an aggressive group of entrepreneurs, who demonstrated skill and zeal in taking advantage of mining strikes, in outmaneuvering

competitors for railroads, and in thwarting eastern investors. A small group of men in Galveston controlled the Galveston Wharf and Cotton Press Company, which monopolized activities in the port.

Other cities in the West of 1880 had little to fear from outside interests, because they had limited aspirations or, supposedly, little potential. Speculators with political connections in Nebraska directed Lincoln's fortunes; they encouraged the state to finance the exploration of nearby salt deposits, which ultimately netted \$100 annually, far short of expectations. Aggressive railroad promoters in Atchison had impressive local mansions and wide commitments in other places. A different set of mining interests predominated after every strike in Virginia City and Leadville. When they left, a few storekeepers remained behind. Merchants formed the main groups in Leavenworth, Topeka, and Lawrence. No threats appeared on the horizon; Kansas City's rise discouraged investment in lesser places. A tightly organized oligarchy in St. Joseph exhibited more interest in Kansas land and New York bonds than in St. Joseph's future. Stockton, Sacramento, San Jose, and Oakland retailers had no plans to challenge San Francisco. Businessmen in Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio believed that railroads offered opportunities for economic advances. They searched for ways to procure capital, unaware of oil deposits awaiting exploitation. For a time, however, the power arrangements appeared stable.

In Los Angeles a small group of merchants and speculators patiently awaited prosperity. Even though the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad had proved of limited value, the promoters of Los Angeles remained undeterred. They did not intend to give up easily. After all, they had paid the Southern Pacific a cash subsidy of \$600,000, plus numerous other concessions, to build through their town rather than behind the mountains to the east. Continuing to view a viable railroad as an absolute necessity to community progress, they placed their hopes in a rival line, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. When it arrived in 1887 spectacular results rewarded their efforts. On a single day, real-estate sales in the Los Angeles area were three times the amount of the subsidy paid the Southern Pacific, and for the year 1887 the city ranked third nationally in land sales. The bottom dropped out of the boom in 1888, destroying many paper cities and

resulting in an estimated \$40,000,000 in book losses. By then, Los Angeles was a well-established city. The business community, led by *Los Angeles Times* publisher Harrison Grey Otis, who organized the Chamber of Commerce and distributed promotional literature, emerged stronger than ever. The leading members made tremendous profits in real-estate transactions throughout the Los Angeles basin, and the survival of some of the boom towns added to the importance of the surrounding hinterland. A combination of rails, real estate, and patient businessmen made Los Angeles a success. Although there was no program for building a great city, the Los Angeles story came as close as any to providing a model account of how a band of entrepreneurs developed and followed a community policy that enabled them to stay in power during an unsettled period. When wealthy Henry E. Huntington moved from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1898 to construct interurban lines and real estate developments, he found a durable and prosperous business community.<sup>34</sup>

The dominant groups exercised enough control in the twenty-four cities so that city politics and city government were unimportant. No matter who won an election, the views of a privileged few prevailed. "Boss" or "reform" administrations had no alternatives; business leaders either ignored hostile officials or threatened to leave town. The structure of government flowed along traditional lines. Cities owed their existence to legislative action. While the granted charters of incorporation contained restrictive provisions on such matters as the selection of appointed officials and vote percentages needed to pass bonds, the question of "home rule" was not a burning issue; state constitutions allowed a considerable degree of self-government. The chief official was a mayor who presided over a council of varying size. The scope of activities was relatively small—Austin spent about \$70,000 annually. There were few employees, and elected officials served on a part-time basis.<sup>35</sup> Frontier city governments had no apparent means of developing innovative techniques. The legacy of the alliance between business and politics was a series of machines—Abraham Ruef's in San Francisco, James Pendergast's in Kansas City, and Robert Speer's in Denver. The innovative Commission Plan that evolved in Galveston after the tidal wave was the result of an accident of nature and had nothing to do with the frontier experience.

By 1880 the urban West clearly showed a debt to the East. The statistics for the native and foreign-born populations displayed no dramatically different characteristics. Religious affiliations were as diverse. Primary, secondary, and upper education copied national trends, as did literature and journalism. Sports moved directly west; places of amusement, while innovative, offered little new. No special occupational groupings evolved from the western urban experience. Manufacturers in California and Colorado sought to emulate counterparts in Michigan and Massachusetts. Large interests assumed dominant roles; smaller units hoped to maintain their status. The Turner thesis did not work in the city.

## CHAPTER 3

# Improving the Environment

The West offered an opportunity for urban environmental experimentation. A blending of the latest eastern architectural styles with Spanish and Indian designs held great hope. The missions of the Southwest, the haciendas of Santa Fe, the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde, and the pueblos of Taos combined beauty with forms that followed functions suited to the climate and the topography. Technological progress in Victorian America freed builders from the height and engineering restraints of antebellum days. During a period in which flux and innovation marked architecture, dramatic developments seemed within reach. Just as exciting was the possibility of major breakthroughs in urban planning. A golden opportunity existed to escape from the monotonous grid so prevalent in eastern cities. The hilly surface of the San Francisco Peninsula, the stark plains of Texas, and the foothills of the Colorado Rockies challenged the talents of planners. Few older communities had undertaken concerted efforts to design parks. The showcase projects that existed—Central Park in New York, Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and Fairmont Park in Philadelphia—had recent roots. The wide-open spaces in the West provided cheap land for meaningful and pleasing vistas aimed at enhancing the quality of life. Unfortunately, the same kind of commercial considerations that superseded esthetic factors in the Northeast, Midwest, and South prevailed west of the ninety-fifth meridian. And, no one seemed to care about another problem of everyday life: the condition of the streets. With few ex-



ceptions the parks were undistinguished, the planning poor, the architecture mundane, and the thoroughfares muddy.

Westerners sought to build cities that looked as much as possible like those in the older sections. They wanted to make Galveston another Mobile, Denver another Indianapolis, and San Francisco another New York. To achieve these goals cities used a progression of different architectural configurations that had no relationship to indigenous patterns. No place paid attention to the Indian experience; "Anglos" erected few structures in Texas or Southern California that even casually resembled Spanish architecture. San Antonio, despite its venerable missions, wore what one local writer called an "Anglo-Saxon skirt." He claimed that the city had "more of the appearance of an old world town than any in the Union—Boston not excepted." A dramatic negation of native cultural patterns occurred in Los Angeles, which had impressed a visitor in 1879 as "still a mere village,—mostly Mexican." By the start of the real-estate boom of the mid-eighties, downtown Spring Street looked much the same as College Avenue in Appleton, State Street in Madison, and Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee.<sup>1</sup>

During their early days, what passed for architecture in western towns was very primitive. Fur traders in Kansas City and St. Joseph lived in log cabins. Some of the first buildings in Leavenworth and Atchison were prefabricated structures transported from the East. Tar-paper shacks and clapboard stores with false fronts were familiar sights on the Great Plains. Tents sufficed in the mining towns; because there was a sudden influx of settlers building materials were scarce, and entrepreneurs were reluctant to invest in permanent construction until economic foundations were stable. A Sacramento leader, recalling gold-rush days, said, "While merchants, bankers, and corporations would hazard nothing in architectural ornament, gamblers were erecting magnificent saloons at enormous cost. A few poles stuck in the ground and covered with a wind-sail constituted the first gaming rendezvous. In the summer the famous 'Round Tent' was put up, where every species of gambling was carried on in its most seductive aspect."<sup>2</sup> A tent city was of short duration. Sometimes the tents literally folded, swept away by winds; a fire in a tent city was disastrous.

Successful communities gradually acquired more substantial

buildings patterned after those in the East. While single-family dwellings of one and two stories predominated throughout the section, a combination of high land values and topography in San Francisco led to the construction of low wooden row-houses reminiscent of brick ones in Baltimore and Washington. Local versions of Greek Revival and Romantic architecture predominated in Galveston. Two- or three-story buildings made up "business blocks" in western cities that were similar to main thoroughfares in the rest of the country. Some of the more ornate business districts contained arcades. Kansas City, San Francisco, and Portland had several impressive mercantile houses with cast-iron façades fabricated in James Borgardus' New York factory. The large packing houses in Omaha had counterparts in Chicago. Every western town had stone warehouses, pretentious brick hotels, elaborately decorated opera houses, magnificent churches with spires thrust toward the heavens, fine stores, and the beginnings of special sections for the wealthy containing rows of large mansions designed in the latest styles.<sup>3</sup>

Several localities had metropolitan trappings. The five-story Tabor Block in Denver was as impressive as any structure of its kind in the country. Built with money made in the Colorado mineral fields, it reflected the varied sources of commercial architecture in America. So did the three-story Pico House hotel and the neighboring Merced Theater in Los Angeles. Many stately Victorian Gothic mansions graced the bluffs above the Missouri River at Atchison. The business district in Leavenworth reminded visitors of those in northeastern centers. Of particular interest was the "mammoth" three-story Robert Keith & Co. building, which housed a furniture company. In Kansas City three- and four-story buildings of yellow and red brick housed commercial establishments on busy Delaware Street. The block-long Board of Trade symbolized community progress; the Pacific House Hotel hosted a generation of cattlemen, speculators, and gamblers. The city's leading hotel, the Coates House, stood a short distance away on Broadway in the heart of the theatrical district. Along prestigious Ninth Street, northeastern concerns had either built or planned to build gigantic offices; New York Life hired the nationally known firm of McKim, Mead, and White to design a regional headquarters. Because of their newness, many cities were in the forefront of the more eclectic aspects of the Romanesque Revival

movement, pioneered by Boston's Henry Hobson Richardson. Portland was so much like a New England city that a critic concluded that the town seemed old even in youth. A spokesman disagreed, stating it had "a metropolitan appearance unlooked for in a place of its size."<sup>4</sup> While other places made similar claims, there was really only one great western metropolis: San Francisco.

By the last stages of the frontier, San Francisco had numerous ornaments of urban aggrandizement. The imposing Bank of California dominated Market Street; the Lick House enjoyed a reputation throughout the West as a first-rate hotel. The Palace Hotel, constructed in 1876, sprawled over two and a half acres. The luxurious facility had 750 rooms, most of which opened on a large court. An English visitor called it a combination of the Louvre and the Grand Hotel of Paris. Most tourists saw the mansions on Nob Hill, the Seal Rocks from the multi-story Cliff House, and the clogged lanes of Chinatown. A resident said, "The Chinatown dwellings were old business blocks of the early days; but the Chinese had added to them, had rebuilt them, had run out their own balconies and entrances, and had given the quarter that feeling of huddled irregularity which makes all Chinese dwellings fall naturally into pictures." San Francisco already had a reputation as an interesting place to visit. Unlike its later cosmopolitan image as a "Paris on the Bay," the view in the eighties was that of an aggressive and flamboyant city; a western Chicago where the rich and poor toiled to create an urban center that evoked brute strength as its finest virtue. A foreigner caught some of the flavor in 1881, when he described the new city hall, considered by residents to rank with the guildhalls of Brussels and Amsterdam, as "an awkward pile of red bricks, with a huge tower somewhere, the whole caravansary having somewhat the appearance of those gigantic breweries to be found in the great cities of the Northeast."<sup>5</sup>

Western cities had an opportunity to advance the art of urban planning. Attempts at designing communities had started in the colonial period. William Penn produced comprehensive plans for Philadelphia; Williamsburg's design blended together landscape gardening and Georgian architecture. Later attempts ranged from Thomas Jefferson's proposals for "checkerboard" towns with squares laid aside for recreational purposes to the systematic plats prepared by paternalistic Boston capitalists for industrial "cities

in nature" throughout New England. Almost always economics dictated the course of events; buildings covered Penn's projected parks, and Jefferson's plans never gained popularity. Inadequate zoning thwarted the desires of manufacturers in the Massachusetts mill towns of Lawrence, Lowell, and Holyoke. Williamsburg remained beautiful, because it stayed a small governmental and educational center. More emblematic were the identical grids used by the Illinois Central Railroad for communities along its route. The printed maps contained a blank for the name of the town.<sup>6</sup> Urban planning in America was often done by drunken fur traders over a bottle of whiskey, who might draw a map for St. Louis based on their recollections of their native New Orleans, or by promoters, who crowded as many lots as possible into a small tract in the middle of a vast, uninhabited valley.

Commercial and exploitative reasons had determined the locations of the western frontier cities. Despite promotional claims of "natural advantages," geographical considerations were secondary. Leadville and Portland were cases in point. The "natural advantage" of Leadville over its rival, Independence, Colorado, was the proximity of mineral deposits. The flow of commerce favored Portland over Vancouver, Washington. Leadville's mining district had a radius of from fifteen to twenty miles, embracing the west slope of the Park Range and the east slope of the continental ranges. Leadville smelters treated and reduced ore from throughout the area. In addition, the town acted as a distribution point for food, tools, and other necessities. Portland was at the head of a valley 150 miles long in which over half the people in Oregon resided. While the founders of Leadville and Portland had attempted to find the best spots possible, taking under advisement the flatness of the site, the compactness of the underlying soil, the natural drainage, and the accessibility of drinking water, economics had predominated from the first. So, Leadville rested on the sloping and bleak treeless side of an alluvial plain at the foot of the Park Range, almost two miles above sea level, while Portland, high above the Willamette River, perched on basalt rocks covered with soil and trees. Both places had spectacular mountain views. The Colorado Rockies surrounded Leadville; persons in Portland could see the snow-capped summits of the Cascades.

The sites lent themselves to such design concepts as winding

roads, spacious open areas left in a natural state, and buildings set back on large lots to capture the best features of the surroundings. On the stark slopes high in the Rockies and in the hills of the Columbian basin, no planner designed western versions of Williamsburg, fitted the city into the environment, related the architecture to the beauty of the region, or fashioned new concepts of urban living. Both places lost the promise of pioneering new modes of planning. Leadville emerged as an almost rectangular town of small square blocks and undersized lots, split down the middle by a single main thoroughfare. The street plan was much like that of any number of older cities; Leadville appeared misshaped and jammed together.<sup>7</sup> While lost opportunity in Portland did not lead to ugliness, it resulted in an attempt to apply eastern concepts to a western location. With a great deal of determination, the men who platted Portland laid the streets out in a gridiron pattern, running them as straight as possible up the hills, creating a compact community in the wilderness. A map of Portland in 1880 resembled that of Des Moines. The difference was that the Iowa city occupied a relatively flat prairie. Portland retained a high degree of natural beauty, a circumstance that had absolutely no relationship to the planning process. A lack of vision prevented a different course.

Several western cities were on level land far removed from hills, mountains, and lush vegetation.<sup>8</sup> All owed their existence to entrepreneurs who had overcome many disadvantages. The hard give-and-take and high risks of town promotion had made major design expenditures impractical; survival took precedence over esthetic considerations. As might have been expected, none of the places emerged with imaginative, well-formulated, or interesting plats. Austin was on the Colorado River in country without marshes, ponds, or lakes. The town consisted entirely of rectangular blocks, with the principal streets running south toward the river. Houston's features were just as pedestrian. Dallas, by the Trinity River, on flat and sloping prairie, had an irregular layout because of new subdivisions built in the 1870s after the coming of the railroad. Prior to that the grid was a conventional one adjacent to the river. The opposite happened in San Antonio. "Although the modern business blocks and fine residences, with all their adjuncts in the way of the conveniences of civilization so largely predominate," stated an observer, "yet the

ancient looking houses here and there, the crooked streets and alleys, the plazas, the relics of an older and altogether different dynasty—lend the city a venerable air that is particularly pleasing to the visitor's eye so used to straight, wide streets and compact blocks laid out in the mathematical precision of a chess board."<sup>9</sup> The inconsistent features of the old Spanish districts contrasted with the American sections laid out in gridiron fashion.

Lincoln had an uninviting location, which the founders failed to improve. Only the grounds of various state agencies interfered with the gridiron street arrangement. Topeka had an even squarer lineament, cut by the Kansas River. Although a booster declared that the city stood "upon high ground, commanding a fine view of some of the most charming prairie-landscape scenery of the West," the site, near the edge of the tree line, was bleak and generally flat. Denver, with an elevation varying 125 feet from the lowest to highest points, which belied promotional claims that it occupied a "series of plateaus," had a commonplace outline.<sup>10</sup> Sacramento and Oakland had unexceptional plans, but they seemed almost like masterpieces of planning when compared to Stockton. The town was absolutely square, eleven blocks by eleven blocks, for a total of 122 blocks. Only the sloughs cut through the design. Seldom had the art of city planning fallen to as low a level. While Stockton was not altogether characteristic, the lackluster design further indicated the failure of westerners to do much more than the obvious in placing towns on level ground.

A number of frontier communities presented interesting planning possibilities. Galveston's island was low and almost level, being three to nine feet above sea level. Fine, sandy soil posed few construction problems. The loess prairie at Omaha rose gently away from the Missouri River bottom. Hills surrounded Atchison, transversed from west to east by White Clay Creek. Leavenworth, St. Joseph, and Kansas City were on tree-covered bluffs high above the Missouri River. Lawrence was in a wooded area in the Kansas River valley, at its juncture with the Wakarusa valley. Inside the city, Mount Oread rose 175 feet. The Wasatch Mountains towered above Salt Lake City. Mountainous Virginia City had an undulating surface. Luxuriant valleys set San Jose and Los Angeles apart from neighbors with fewer blessings.

Unfortunately, the quality of the planning had little relationship to location. Galveston, despite the curve of Galveston Island,

had an almost square grid. Straight streets and rectangular blocks stretched away from the river at Omaha. Railroad tracks and factories occupied the bottom lands; then came the downtown, and farther to the west most of the dwellings. In Atchison, which featured a grid, the main effort was to reduce grades and to flatten the White Clay Creek valley. Kansas City faced a more complex problem; the bluff dropped sharply to the bottoms from the hilly central business district. Land clearance projects facilitated the platting of a regular gridiron; earth machines made straight cuts through the bluff. Leavenworth and St. Joseph had streets that were as straight as possible, given the topography. At Lawrence, city fathers used a square plat with rather large rectangular blocks. Streets ran straight up precipitous Mount Oread. Salt Lake City had what an official called "an irregular and broad-faced L" design, with large square blocks and very wide streets.<sup>11</sup> Virginia City sprawled across Mount Davidson in no particular order. San Jose and Los Angeles had comparatively square contours.

San Francisco, which contained hills over four hundred feet in height, personified the failings of urban planning in the West. So intent were the builders on developing a square design that they ran streets up and down Telegraph and Nob hills with no regard to the grades, creating serious access difficulties for heavy vehicles. A New England tourist observed, "The early comers, having begun wrongly on the American straight line and square system of laying out the city, are tugging away at these hills with tireless energy, to reduce the streets to a grade that man and horse can ascend and descend without double collar and breaching help; but there is work in it for many a generation to come. They might have better accepted the situation at the first, made Nature engineer and architect in chief, and circled the hills with their streets and buildings, instead of undertaking to go up and then through them. Such a flank attack would have been more successful and economical, and given them a vastly more picturesque city. Boston had the advantage of cow-paths to establish its streets by; but no stray cow ever visited these virgin sand-hills of San Francisco, as innocent of verdure as a babe of sorrow or vice." A local observer admitted, "The hills are steep beyond conception. Where Vallejo street ran up Russian Hill it progressed for four blocks by regular steps like a flight of stairs. It is unnecessary to say that no teams ever came up this street or any other like it, and grass grew long

among the paving stones until the Italians who live thereabouts took advantage of this herbage to pasture a cow or two. At the end of four blocks, the pavers had given it up and the last stage to the summit was a winding path."<sup>12</sup> In the thirty years prior to 1880 the city spent \$30,000,000 to level sand dunes and gullies. The projects involved the filling in of over three hundred acres of San Francisco Bay.

The cities that blossomed in the eighties repeated the earlier design mistakes. At Tacoma a subsidiary land company of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which hired landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted to formulate plans and then ignored his proposals, attained little success in trying to achieve orderly settlement. Rudyard Kipling, after visiting Tacoma in 1889, wrote, "The town was thrown like a broken set of dominoes over all . . . hotels with Turkish mosque trinketry on their shameless tops, and the pine stumps at their very doors . . . houses built in imitation of the ones on Nob Hill, San Francisco—after the Dutch fashion."<sup>13</sup> Seattle went a step further and actually used hydraulic mining machines to regrade hills in order to make conventional square blocks. An even more bizarre failure occurred in the Los Angeles area, where developers deliberately followed a policy of real-estate decentralization intended to bring residential and commercial dispersal. The aim was to avoid congestion and to create a metropolis that blended together the best features of urban and rural life. The result was totally uncoordinated growth after idealism vanished and economic values became paramount.

Most of the western frontier cities did an inadequate job of providing parks, places of amusement, and grounds for leisure activities. Private interests often furnished the last two: Dallas had a forty-acre race track, and the Winter Palace amusement center operated in Galveston. Parks, almost always under public control, were a relatively new innovation in the United States. Several colonial cities, in particular Philadelphia and Boston, had parks; the original plans for Washington had called for landscaped malls. Praised at the time, they soon lost their original forms. Buildings occupied land originally set aside for recreation in Philadelphia, cows grazed on the Boston Common, and real-estate interests thwarted the Washington proposals. In the 1830s and 1840s four factors stimulated renewed interest in parks. First, Baron Von Haussman's beautification of Paris through boulevards



and park squares captured world attention. Second, cemeteries outside northeastern metropolises—Philadelphia's Laurel Hill, New York's Greenward, and Boston's Mount Auburn—featured landscape gardening, mowed lawns, and winding roads. These "cities of the dead" became tourist attractions and stimulated interest in similar projects for the living. Third, in an era before the acceptance of the germ theory of disease, anticontagionist medical authorities argued that parks purified the air by acting as "lungs" in congested sections. Fourth, popular writers, capitalizing on a nostalgia for the country shared by many city residents, argued that parks recaptured rural values in an urban setting.

In the 1850s the "City Beautiful" aspects of the park movement in the United States began with a prize competition to design Central Park in New York. The co-winner, Frederick Law Olmsted, directed construction and afterwards became the recognized national expert on park design. Projects that he directed in the 1870s, including Back Bay Park in Boston and Fairmont Park in Philadelphia, added to his reputation and generated interest in a number of other cities. By 1880 Baltimore and Washington had fine park systems; Detroit and Milwaukee had extensive plans. While most people recognized the need for parks, obtaining them was another matter: costs for land, plans, and beautification ran high, usually requiring the expenditure of tax dollars or the issuance of city bonds. Many medium-sized communities had no parks. Among these were Gloucester, Woonsocket, and Scranton in the Northeast; Alexandria, Norfolk, and Chattanooga in the South; and Fort Wayne, Youngstown, and Oshkosh in the Midwest. Numerous other places had inadequate facilities: Reading had a 5-acre unimproved tract, Covington a small grass plot, and Dubuque two squares covered with shade trees. In the West the frontier cities did little better or worse than their older counterparts.<sup>14</sup>

There were no parks in Atchison, Leadville, and Houston; several other places had hardly any worthy of the name. Austin's system consisted of four 1.7-acre plots and 23-acre Pease Park. They remained in a natural state; the city council balked at appropriating money for maintenance. Dallas had some small public picnic grounds. Galveston boasted 15 acres of squares regulated by the three aldermen of the Committee on Public Squares and Esplanades. Officials at Lincoln expended between

\$50 and \$100 per year on a 10-acre tract. Seventy-four acres designated as park land in Lawrence remained unimproved. The fencing of 6 acres donated at St. Joseph had cost about \$200. Denver residents generally avoided two small untended spaces. Each of the seven designated parks in Stockton were 300 feet square. Los Angeles, with 6 acres of municipal pleasure grounds valued at \$800, and Oakland, which had six squares "visited very little," claimed that numerous attractive lawns and gardens made any further action unnecessary. The mayor of Los Angeles said, "Our city is 6 miles square, contains 10,000 acres of orchards and vineyards, which answer for public parks." An Oakland official commented, "There are no large parks in Oakland, and, as most of the houses are surrounded by gardens, their want is not felt to any appreciable extent." While the arrangements may have dissatisfied many plain people—few probably found much recreational enjoyment looking at vineyards owned by farmers or the lawns of the wealthy—they were better than those in Kansas City. There, what had been done was as good as nothing at all. A bureaucrat admitted, "The city has one small park or block of ground, containing 2.11 acres, used originally for a cemetery, of which it retains possession from the fact of its still containing the remains of persons buried therein. There is no attempt at maintenance except mowing the grass." Families picnicked and little children played games among the gravestones.

A number of frontier communities had better than average parks. Salt Lake City had four squares in different parts of town. Brigham Young reserved three squares in the original plat; officials later purchased another for \$5,000. Fences, trees, and walks cost \$10,000. Fifty-acre San Pedro Park was the largest of three in San Antonio. At Portland, a 40-acre \$32,000 park, half a mile away from town on high rolling hills covered by fir and dogwood trees, annually attracted more than 35,000 patrons. Professional engineers planned Omaha's Hanscom Park. Sacramento and Leavenworth used grounds belonging to and maintained by other public agencies. The state of California owned Capitol Park in Sacramento, which contained 30 acres of terraced lawns, shrubbery, patent-stone walks, and shade trees. At Leavenworth the United States Army allowed access to the military reservation. "It is provided with graded and public ways, with romantic drives, with smooth grass plots, and shady and cleanly kept ground,"

Leavenworth's mayor stated. "It is a much finer, better, and far more extensive park and pleasure-ground than the municipality could afford to maintain, and being within 15 minutes' walk of the center of the city, it completely supplies the demand for public pleasure-grounds, and obviates the necessity of such a place maintained by the city."

The most magnificent parks in the West were in San Francisco. Among them was the nationally known Golden Gate Park of 1,050 acres, which was three miles long and half a mile wide. It had many roads and foot paths, plus thick foliage and thousands of trees not indigenous to the San Francisco Peninsula. The attendance figures for 1879 attested to the park's wide use; 748,000 persons entered in carriages, 826,000 on foot, and 35,000 on horseback. On an average, every San Francisco resident visited the grounds at least six times annually—a tribute to a lovely facility that remained in the ensuing decades a magnificent example of the better aspects of park planning.<sup>15</sup>

In keeping with national norms, many cities had undertaken concerted efforts to beautify their thoroughfares. Dallas fostered tree planting by paying a two dollar bounty for any that reached two years of age. Authorities in Houston advocated planting, leaving the matter to "individual taste." Galveston did better—the municipality set saplings along most streets. The city of Lincoln planted trees, requiring that lot holders pay all the expenses. Omaha requested citizens to place box elders, soft maples, or other rapidly growing species in front of houses. St. Joseph provided shade trees for the "better" districts; Kansas City placed maples and elms on "improved" property. Measures enacted in the late 1860s in Topeka promoted the planting of shade trees, with the aim of creating "a city in a forest." City ordinances in Salt Lake City required the placing of houses twenty feet back from the front line of lots, the intervening space designed for trees and shrubbery. In Denver abutters had almost universally put trees in front of their premises. Oakland authorities planted trees along most major avenues. Most homes in Stockton had some foliage. Portland encouraged trees; San Francisco discouraged them. An official in the California city reported, "The climate here is such that sunshine is preferable to shade, and, owing to the strong and continuous winds from the ocean, it is difficult to keep growing trees in an upright position." Trees failed to take

root in Leadville and Virginia City. Where practical, city governments nurtured the planting of trees for shade and beauty, usually asking householders to accomplish the task at their own volition.<sup>16</sup>

The streets beneath the mulberries, elms, maples, and oaks were uninviting. In 1880 few western cities had more than a small percentage of paved streets; officials made no attempt to improve upon eastern practices. In Austin a stretch of a main artery, Congress Avenue, had a broken stone finish. The other 72 miles of streets remained untreated on the grounds that the "mostly gravel" soil negated the necessity for improvements. "The streets become muddy under heavy rains," an observer contended, "but a few days of sun and wind restore them to good condition." Lincoln and Houston had no pavement at all. A Houston editor said that black mud was "a proverb in the mouths of people who stop in or pass through the city's precincts." Omaha attempted to improve only 0.4 of a mile out of 118 miles of roadways. During rainy periods the streets became virtually impassable. "Generally the water wanders around at its own sweet will," a functionary admitted, adding that the municipality planned to concentrate efforts on the construction of elevated wooden sidewalks. The 58 miles of Lawrence's streets were unpaved except for 1 mile surfaced with a combination of wood and broken stone. None of Denver's 200 miles of streets had any pavement. Kansas City, which had 89 miles of roadways, had 16.4 miles coated with broken stone and 1,500 linear feet surfaced with stone blocks. Work gangs in Leadville threw slag on muddy thoroughfares and hammered sidewalks out of worn-out pit timbers. None of the uniformly 137-foot wide streets in Salt Lake City received any treatment. Stockton's municipal force regularly shoveled fresh gravel on 1 out of 99 miles of roads. Los Angeles used broken stone on approximately 10 percent of 200 miles of streets, leaving the rest in a natural state. San Francisco spent an estimated \$15,000,000 between 1856 and 1880 constructing 500 miles of streets. Cobblestones covered 20 miles, stone brick 20, asphalt 5, wood 31, and broken stones 57.<sup>17</sup>

No one knew what substances worked the best; all existing types had drawbacks relating to cost, durability, traction, and cleanliness. Only a small percentage of American streets had any veneer other than gravel or broken stones. Many places experimented with entirely paved surfaces, including the city of Portland. There, over \$100,000 expended in 1879 on macadam, con-

sisting of broken stones cemented by bituminous material, went for naught. It melted on hot days and wore out in less than a year. Technology was not advanced enough to solve such problems, and the streets of Portland and other western towns continued to become quagmires when it rained and dusty traps when it did not.<sup>18</sup>

The urban frontier West failed to lead the nation in creating architectural masterpieces, designing cities, laying out parks, or building streets. Of course, not every town had as poorly tended thoroughfares as Omaha, as tedious a plat as Stockton, as undistinguished buildings as Los Angeles, and as inadequate parks as Kansas City. Outstanding mansions graced Atchison. A beautiful natural setting overcame design vagaries at San Jose. The parks of San Francisco were of a distinguished character. Portland made commendable attempts to improve streets. Yet there was no new society. The western towns borrowed basic concepts from the East, whether or not they suited the environment.

## CHAPTER 4

# Sanitation Practices

Nineteenth-century American cities were unpleasant places. Excrement collected on thoroughfares. Dead animals moldered at intersections. Garbage piled up in yards. Household wastes ran onto the ground or into open gutters. Privy vaults and cesspools overflowed and leaked. Sewers polluted streams and afforded poor drainage. Human wastes and industrial by-products contaminated drinking water. Inadequate cleaning practices ensured dirty towns in the eighties. A city force at Burlington, Vermont, swept the streets four times a year; Davenport spent \$500 annually to have the chore performed. Steubenville had no system of garbage disposal. Scavengers in Fitchburg turned offal into swill. In Baltimore people dumped household wastes into the streets. Laundry slops seeped into wells at Kalamazoo. Keokuk had no regulations regarding privies. No city worried about industrial waste: chemicals from the paper mills at Holyoke killed fish in the Connecticut River; Madison, Wisconsin, brewers discharged slops into Lake Monona. Neither Rockford, Illinois, nor Council Bluffs, Iowa, had systems of sewerage. Open ditches carried away sewage in Pensacola. Newark's forty-eight miles of sewers drained through exposed outfalls into the Passaic River or the tidal streams in the salt marshes. The waterworks at Erie pumped water directly from Lake Erie into mains; the Louisville Water Company drew five million gallons of Ohio River water daily into two distributing reservoirs and a standpipe. Poughkeepsie had one of the few waterworks, out of 598 in the nation, that filtered water.<sup>1</sup>

The frontier cities faced similar sanitation problems, and the results in the West were much the same as in the East. Street cleaning received modest attention. At the bottom of the spectrum were Stockton, Salt Lake City, and Kansas City. The Stockton city clerk said that "properly speaking," no municipal cleaning existed. "The city employs a man with his horse and cart every Saturday, at \$2.50 per day, to go around the principal streets and pick up the dirt and sweepings from stores and cart them away," he declared, "and that's all there is to it." In Salt Lake City, cleaning occurred intermittently. A clerk admitted, "The system is defective, and as the city becomes more densely populated a more effective one must be adopted." An unusual plan in Kansas City guaranteed inefficiency. For \$2,500 yearly, workers swept the more heavily traveled streets after three inches or more of "mud" had accumulated.

Most cities had procedures that were little better. St. Joseph spent \$10,000 annually to have the business district swept every other week. An official observed, "As a whole the system is very defective, but the class benefited by it, together with the force of habit, are powerful enough to continue it." Portland, using a method abandoned as impractical in New York in the 1830s, left chores to abutters. Sacramento and Lawrence combined public and private means. Property owners swept the leavings into piles in the middle of streets and municipal employees carted away the accumulations. Houston cleaned roadways sometimes as often as once a day, especially in what officials called the "sickly season." A public gang at Galveston scoured important routes three times weekly. Austin hired an "efficient" crew on a regular basis. Leadville daily employed "four mules and twelve men." Hogs supplemented the efforts of city workers in Los Angeles. Until the mid-nineteenth century many persons considered pigs, by virtue of their eating habits, an effective means of cleaning streets. In 1880 San Francisco had the only mechanical sweeping machines in the West—they followed a schedule that allowed busy streets to be swept once a week and lightly used ones every other month. However, even though special problems resulted from grades and drifting sand, the service had a low priority. This situation prevailed elsewhere: authorities believed adequate performance levels impossible.

Rapid urban population growth and conditions created by

the rise of heavy industry helped to emphasize the need for systematic corporate and technological responses to street cleaning. Against a backdrop of public concern over recurring epidemics, pioneers in the public health movement argued that municipalities must spend more for a variety of protective services, including street cleaning. These problems began to receive attention in technical journals, in monographic works, and in government compilations. The growing interest did not lead automatically to clean streets. The main thrusts of science and technology were in other directions, and other endeavors attracted the best available engineers. Firms selling cleaning equipment did little research and development. Early models of street sweepers, consisting of a primitive revolving-brush apparatus drawn by a horse, functioned so unreliably and cost so much that only a few cities bothered to purchase them. Unpaved streets continued to defy cleaning methods. Paving did not seem to help; many experts contended that it only created new problems. They noted that manure, which constant wagon travel supposedly worked into the surface of unpaved streets, turned paved ones into virtual cesspools. During an eight-hour working day a thousand horses left behind ten tons of manure and five hundred gallons of urine. A town the size of Leavenworth had over five thousand work animals. Whether a community did little cleaning or a lot, the "horse city" defied adequate cleaning.<sup>2</sup>

"Street dirt" collected in the western cities was disposed of in various ways. Austin and Dallas deposited the matter in the country, while San Antonio burned it inside the city limits. Sweepings at Houston covered "low places in the suburbs." Omaha relied upon "rain and overflows" to wash away loads tossed indiscriminately on the river bank. Crews in Lawrence shoveled leavings on "low places in back streets." Topeka sold manure to farmers; Denver "prisoners" carted it a mile away from town. Leadville dumped a "considerable" distance from habitations. Salt Lake City filled holes in vacant lots, and Stockton did nothing. A Los Angeles official claimed that the disposal of sweepings on the river bank had "no deleterious effects," because "trade-winds" carried the "smell" away. Kansas City and St. Joseph floated residue down the Missouri River; Oakland and San Francisco threw scrapings directly into San Francisco Bay. The ultimate disregard of human needs occurred at Galveston, where under cover of night



the municipal force buried "street dirt" on the public bathing beach.<sup>3</sup>

Dead animals were of special concern. Persons frequently left deceased beasts lying in the streets. Horses had a way of dying at inopportune moments. If no one was around, citizens of all classes were tempted to leave the scene rather than bear the burden of removal costs. Out of necessity, almost all governmental units had carrion regulations. Some cities left the disposal process to owners. In Austin they were required to take bodies to designated grounds a thousand yards beyond the city limits. Ordinances required individuals in San Antonio to bury remains at a depth of at least four feet in a local quarry. Such approaches worked haphazardly—only 50 large animals and 600 dogs were carried out of Austin in a typical year—so a few cities divided responsibility. At Lawrence, where measures called for removal of dead brutes within twenty-four hours, city crews buried those of unknown ownership on a Kansas River sandbar. The St. Joseph street commissioner sold abandoned animals to a glue factory. Other cities contracted for the service. A scavenger in Kansas City received about \$400 yearly; he sold the best carcasses to meat packers and threw the worst into the Missouri River. Omaha's contractor marketed bodies at a phosphate plant, located outside the town. Leadville's trash man charged \$4 to remove a large animal and \$1 for small creatures. He took about 240 bodies annually to a remote spot, burning them when they accumulated and when the wind seemed right. In some places the task was performed entirely by public authorities. Los Angeles included animal removal in the street-cleaning budget; Portland left matters to the police. These agencies considered the duty secondary to their primary responsibilities; neither approached the state of bureaucratic efficiency demonstrated by Oakland's "city pound-master." In 1879 he reported the dispatch into the bay at a cost of \$1,187 of 59 horses, 11 cows, 41 sheep, 14 goats, 95 hogs, and 69 calves.<sup>4</sup> Although rules and plans existed, dead animals continued to cause concern; in most towns newspaper editors frequently wrote about decaying horses lying by a curb for many days.

Garbage and ashes needed systematic attention. The time was past when householders could throw refuse into the streets; the health requirements of an age that accepted the germ theory necessitated more systematic responses. Licensed owners of butcher

carts removed garbage in Galveston. A poorly run city crew collected trash on an irregular basis in Leavenworth. Householders and the municipality shared responsibility in Lincoln, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas. A combination of the "chain-gang" and "swill-gatherers" carted away garbage and ashes at Sacramento. Contractors in Denver paid the city \$2,000 a year for the right to haul garbage, more than making up the amount by charging individuals \$2 annually. Under a poorly enforced garbage law in St. Joseph, dwellers buried some on their property, city workers threw some in the river, and scavengers fed some to hogs. In Leadville a contractor monopolized the garbage business. Kansas City and Omaha ordinances ordered residents to dump rubbish into the Missouri River. Portland stipulated that householders transport garbage out of the city during early morning hours; Oakland designated San Antonio Creek and San Francisco Bay as dumping points. Private garbage and ash collectors operated in both communities. Lawrence made householders take care of "offensive matter," with the same results that most other localities experienced. A frustrated and defensive city employee explained, "The system is good, but fails somewhat in execution by reason of laxity of individuals in entering complaint."<sup>5</sup>

Human waste generated severe problems. The refusal of late nineteenth-century sewage authorities to accept the germ theory of disease, despite conclusive evidence to the contrary, complicated things. Most were self-taught. No American university offered courses in sanitary engineering; persons established their credentials on the job or by taking guided tours of the sewers in London, Paris, and the Low Countries. In the seventies the leading expert was George E. Waring, Jr., a flamboyant reformer who entered the sanitation field after working as a scientific farmer, United States Army recruiter, and writer of horse stories for little girls. An ardent noncontagionist, he believed that "sewer gas" caused disease. Arguing that epidemics stemmed from foul-smelling house drains and drainage ditches, he attributed poisoned atmosphere to "the exhalations of decomposing matters in dungheaps, pigsties, privy vaults, cellars, cesspools, drains, and sewers . . . to the development of the poison deep in the ground, and its escape in an active condition in ground exhalations."<sup>6</sup> In the aftermath of the Memphis yellow-fever epidemic of 1878 that killed five thousand people, the federal government hired Waring to con-

struct a new system for the stricken community. There, he advocated the concept of "separate systems" designed to prevent fever outbreaks by avoiding the mixing of waste products that caused noxious odors. He proposed different mains for water runoff, household waste, and human excrement. The project had important results; it precipitated a nationwide boom in sewer construction. Previously, only a few larger cities, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, had extensive sewerages. The urban frontier ended before the full impact of the increased construction activities reached many towns, so most of them did not benefit from the new developments.

The largest sewerage system in the West was in San Francisco. The city had 126 miles of lines in 1880, of which 75 had been built in the previous four years under a plan prepared by William P. Humphreys, who agreed with Waring's approach. In advocating the design, Humphreys had sharply criticized the old system, which featured large three-by-five-foot mains with wooden outfalls that he called "elongated cesspools" badly choked with offensive matter. "This evil must go on increasing from year to year until some change is effected and some remedy applied," he had declared. "Each sewer appears to have been built independent of all others and without regard to the duty it has to perform." A noncontagionist, Humphreys believed that large mains made "sewer gas" a certainty. Furthermore, he asserted the existing outfalls at some points assured serious accumulations: "Along the busy water-front of the city some of the sewers do not extend out into the bay, but stop short, terminating inside of the rubble-stone bulkhead, where the offensive matter is deposited, and the liquid matter allowed to escape as best it can, rendering the slips between the wharves at times offensive to the last degree of endurance. All of these sewers should be carried out to the ends of the wharves. . . . Discharging at such points, the tide will speedily remove the sewage matter away from the city, and there will be no offensive smell about the wharves."<sup>7</sup> Humphreys converted the sewerage into a "combined system," with storm water and foul sewage carried by the same mains. Building an entirely new "separate system" would have cost too much money. Even so, San Francisco spent a great deal on sewers. During 1879-80 alone the city expended \$78,000 on 22,000 feet of lines.

Only five other cities in the West had anything resembling

sewerage systems. At Portland, where nearly every sewer had an outlet connection to a main, the sewers ran down hills to the swift-flowing Willamette River. The system featured clay pipes eight to twelve inches in diameter, conveniently located manholes, and outfalls extending to the river bottom. Oakland had forty-eight miles of cement and vitrified clay sewers, all laid in the 1880s. Most emptied into San Francisco Bay. Four miles of mains and six miles of laterals served Los Angeles. Because the terrain impeded disposal, workers collected deposits to use in fertilizing gardens, vineyards, and orchards. Ten and a half miles of sewers at Sacramento drained five hundred acres in the business district. Mains ran down alternate streets; laterals entered from alleys at right angles. Two employees regularly flushed the lines and removed sediment. Kansas City had some stone conduits in natural water-courses, with a few laterals hooked into the arrangement. The channels, of various sizes and shapes, did a poor job of handling human excreta. A creek in the downtown district supposedly carried waste to the Kansas River. At St. Joseph brick lines followed ravines and other drainage channels. Authorities realized that the system worked imperfectly; large laterals discharged into smaller mains, and no maps existed. It was little consolation that things were much worse in many other places.

The rest of the cities ignored sewage problems. At Leavenworth an eighteen-inch pipe ran the length of the main street to a discharge point in the Missouri River. A twelve-inch line in Lincoln serviced three downtown buildings. There were a few small sewers in Dallas. A number of places allowed human waste to run directly into open ditches. Typical was Salt Lake City, which had no plans to construct sewers. The Mormon center depended on surface drainage helped by the irrigation channels that followed the street plan. Supposedly, irrigation water flowed swiftly enough to prevent the accumulation of filth. While this seemed to work in suburban areas, the heavy discharges in the business district overloaded the ditches, causing very bad odors. In Stockton sewage thrown into gutters or onto backyards had contaminated the ground. Despite charges that the situation threatened to "produce a fatal result on the health of the city," the council had done nothing more than discuss the matter.<sup>8</sup>

In lieu of sewers most western cities disposed of liquid household wastes and human excreta in privy vaults and cesspools.

Privy vaults held sewage until persons pumped it out and carried it away; cesspool contents filtered into the subsoil. Authorities disagreed over which method worked the best. Advocates of the cesspool, while admitting that some sewage drained into the soil, argued that a natural purification process occurred. Privy vault supporters said that excreta poisoned underground springs. They defended their system on the basis of its alleged watertightness. Unfortunately, most vaults leaked and contaminated the soil as much as cesspools; it made little difference which approach a town followed. Few adopted totally one or the other, although the accepted method was to use privy vaults for excreta and cesspools for household wastes. In any event, both arrangements were widely used. In 1877 Washington had fifty-two thousand vaults and pools; Chicago had thirty thousand.<sup>9</sup> In using them, the West kept pace with the rest of the nation.

Household wastes gave rise to serious problems. In Austin kitchen slops ran into privy vaults and street gutters; in Dallas porous cesspools necessitated the abandonment of numerous wells in the center of town; and in Galveston laundry fluids flowed into alleys and leaky cesspools. Lincoln's kitchen slops ended up on the ground, Omaha's went into cesspools, Topeka's ran half into gutters and half into cesspools, and Denver's passed into cesspools or privy vaults. At Oakland health authorities attributed several cases of impure well water to pollution from the escape of the contents of pools and vaults. The mayor of Sacramento admitted that the subsoil was "to a very great extent highly charged with sewage." In St. Joseph overflowing cesspools had hurt the quality of the drinking water in the older parts of the city. The best disposal practices were in Portland. The sewers received nearly all household wastes; none entered street gutters, and very little flowed into cesspools. The placement of the water supply intakes a considerable distance from town on the Willamette River precluded the possibility of contamination.<sup>10</sup> Such practices were the exception elsewhere rather than the rule.

Human excreta that seeped into the ground represented a worse menace. A number of cities in 1880 still depended on cesspools: Topeka and Kansas City (50 percent of households), Leadville (99 percent), and Denver (20 percent). "Zymotic diseases" from wells located near cesspools plagued Salt Lake City. In Dallas at least a third of the privies leaked. To combat this, an

ordinance ordered privy vault owners to convert to the "dry-earth system" within a specified time interval. Measures in Galveston that required brick or stone privies had no effect; most fell into disrepair. Lawrence claimed to have watertight privies because ordinances rigorously regulated construction. In what may have represented more realistic assessments, officials in Omaha, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and St. Joseph—which had detailed laws—said that almost all privies leaked.<sup>11</sup>

Towns handled satiated privy vaults and cesspools in a variety of ways. San Antonio enforced a rough-and-ready rule: persons dug a hole, used it until nearly full, shoveled dirt into it, and dug another hole. Galveston dumped night soil into the harbor. Licensed scavengers in Houston sold box contents for fertilizer. In Topeka sealed wagons transported the product to farmers in the surrounding area. Vineyard and orchard owners near Los Angeles hauled away excreta. Farmers bought the contents of the many vaults in Salt Lake City and the few in Portland. Denver and St. Joseph both forbade selling night soil for fertilizer. Atchison and Kansas City dumped raw sewage into the Missouri River. Regulations stipulated that persons in Lawrence empty privies in the dead of night and bury the contents away from the city "near running water."<sup>12</sup> Given the casual attitude of westerners toward excreta, it made little difference one way or the other that no city had ordinances covering industrial pollution.

A problem closely related to the removal of wastes was the availability of water for households. In the beginning, wells were the major source of water in a town, unless a stream was near at hand. As a community grew, the need for a water system became imperative. Until the 1840s water service was furnished by private enterprise, except in Philadelphia and New York, which had public works. Promoters became increasingly reluctant or unable to undertake construction. This, coupled with a belief that something as basic as water should not be a source of profit, led to an increasing number of municipally owned waterworks. They cost a great deal of money, almost always requiring the issuance of bonds. La Crosse expended \$70,000 on a system erected in the 1860s, accounting for over 90 percent of the total amount of money spent by the city since its founding three decades earlier. At the conclusion of the Civil War, there were sixty-eight public and eighty private waterworks in the United States.<sup>13</sup> The trend con-

tinued, and by 1880 municipalities owned over half the works. The movement toward public proprietorship had not extended to the West, where urban dwellers seemed unwilling to pay the costs. Of the fifteen systems in operation, all except Sacramento and St. Joseph had private managers. Both Lincoln and Omaha intended to build municipal systems; Leavenworth had contracted for a private works. Several localities—Austin, Galveston, Lawrence, Topeka, and Salt Lake City—had no plans.

The frontier waterworks were about the same in quality as those elsewhere. Even in cities with waterworks, many inhabitants continued to draw drinking water from wells. "There was for some time but poor patronage for the water works," a San Antonio writer recalled. "People had to be educated to the importance of their new acquisition. Prejudice had to be overcome." Although surface water was often polluted, there was no assurance that water pumped through pipes was of a purer quality. Most works allowed only a brief period of "settling" to remove solid particles, and there was no treatment to eliminate bacterial or industrial pollution. Atchison, St. Joseph, and Kansas City drew water from a seriously contaminated source, the Missouri River. Atchison's private works did not bother to let water settle in the winter months, and during the summer waited only from eight to twelve hours before distributing water through eight miles of pipes. St. Joseph's public facility delayed delivery only a few more hours.

There were several different types of works in the West. The \$100,000 Dallas Water Supply Company pumped an average of 1.5 million gallons of spring water into a standpipe, from which it was distributed. At San Antonio two Worthington pumps driven by two large double-turbine waterwheels raised San Antonio River water to a distributing reservoir near the main plaza. Water from the Los Angeles River at Los Angeles was distributed through a gravity system that had twenty-three miles of pipe. The \$500,000 concern supplied an average of 125 gallons daily to each customer. Oakland's waterworks had a gigantic artificial lake, with a capacity of 20 million gallons, formed by an earthen dam three hundred feet long and seventy-five feet high. The \$3,000,000 mechanism brought 5 million gallons of water to the city through a larger conduit. Cotton cloth stretched on frames acted as a filter, which was cleaned every twenty-four hours. San Francisco's waterworks compared favorably with those in other metropolises. The works,

built at a cost rumored to be between \$8,000,000 and \$15,000,000, brought 2 million gallons daily to the city from three storage reservoirs with a combined capacity of 24 million gallons. There were five thousand water meters—the only ones in the West—in San Francisco. Powerful hydraulic pumps at Stockton raised water from deep wells to a water tower. Every western town strove to provide piped water, but the emphasis was on delivery rather than upon quality. No one in Houston objected when the waterworks drew water from the same placid bayou in which the municipality dumped sewage.<sup>14</sup>

In western towns, as in other American cities, the streets were clogged with filth, the garbage rotted, sewers functioned inadequately, privy vaults and cesspools leaked, and the water tasted bad. Urban dwellers on the frontier were not pioneers as far as innovative solutions to sanitation problems were concerned.



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## CHAPTER 5

# Health, Fire, and Police Protection

From ancient Alexandria, Tyre, and Babylon to frontier San Francisco, San Jose, and San Antonio, urbanites held certain basic fears in common. The psychological stresses and strains of people living in close proximity to one another in an environment that promoted an individualistic response on one hand and a collective one on the other, coupled with a nagging feeling that the city might represent some sort of evil and cancerous anomaly in society, led some city dwellers to think of the dangers of urban life. Urban dwellers realized that cities had risen and fallen before and that this might happen again. War no longer posed an immediate menace: the battlefields of Europe were far away, the Civil War was over, and the Indians had retreated into remote regions or had moved to reservations. Few individuals worried about earthquakes, tidal waves, tornadoes, or floods, for natural calamities were unpredictable. Technological solutions to some disasters seemed at hand, perhaps in the form of higher dikes or more substantially constructed buildings. Rather, the average city resident worried about three basic threats to safety. One of these was ravaging disease—the possibility of great epidemics of cholera, typhoid, smallpox, diphtheria, yellow fever, and even bubonic plague. Another was fire—a conflagration sweeping across the community, burning all in its path and leaving thousands homeless. The third was crime—lawless elements preying on the innocent and helpless. Because of these fears, all the western cities attempted to establish agencies to guard the health of the com-

munity, to organize fire fighting systems, and to provide a measure of police protection.

Every 1880 community except Lawrence and Salt Lake City had a board of health charged with the responsibility of preventing epidemics and combating them if they happened. The city clerk at Lawrence stated that the council had discontinued a board in 1870 and saw no reason to establish a new one. A Salt Lake City bureaucrat justified inaction by citing what he considered special circumstances: "The city for its population probably covers a larger area of ground than any other in the Union. Outside of the business center the houses are detached. The streets are mostly 137 feet wide, and the sanitary regulations of compactly built cities have not, to the present time, been found necessary here." Other places had profited from experience gained from past calamities, such as the 1850 Sacramento smallpox epidemic that killed several hundred people, including most of the physicians.<sup>1</sup>

The composition of the various boards differed considerably: Austin's consisted exclusively of medical doctors appointed by the mayor; in Dallas it was selected by the council and included a health officer, three physicians, and four laymen; and in San Antonio its members were the mayor and aldermen. Omaha's health organization included the mayor, the president of the council, and the city marshal. The city physician directed an independent body of four medical men in Leavenworth. Kansas City's board embraced the mayor, fire chief, police chief, city physician, and two appointees; Leadville's, the mayor, two aldermen, and one citizen. The most novel arrangements were in two California cities. The legislature stipulated that the board in Sacramento have five practicing physicians, all holding degrees from medical colleges of "recognized respectability." In San Francisco, where the mayor acted as *ex officio* president of the board, power rested with four physicians in "good standing" appointed by the governor for five-year terms. The body elected a health officer, who had to hold a medical degree and to live in San Francisco. In keeping with national trends, no single organizational pattern had developed in the West. Still, despite inconsistencies, the goals were similar.

Boards of health had the traditional duties associated with their functions since colonial times. Most had far-reaching inspection powers. Sacramento's could search any building for irregularities; Galveston's examined all vessels that entered port.

The burial of the dead and the regulation of cemeteries came under the jurisdiction of most boards. Several had authority over various public agencies—San Francisco's board supervised the almshouse and the industrial school; Stockton's observed conditions in the city jail. Boards exercised wide control over the regulation of contagious diseases. This involved the quarantine of victims, the display of flags on infected dwellings, the removal from school of pupils exposed to contagion, and the implementation of vaccination programs. During epidemics, health officials exercised sweeping prerogatives. In Austin the single restriction in emergencies was that the council continued to exercise authority over the appropriate funds. The board in Lincoln could apply "all lawful measures" to stop an epidemic; Leavenworth's could do "what becomes necessary." Topeka claimed to have "competent and efficient officers" who were "fully alive to the sanitary requirements of the age." Oakland's had the option of proceeding regardless of cost. An ordinance in Leadville allowed the board to take "such measures . . . deemed necessary to prevent the spread of contagion or infection." All this looked impressive on paper, but the boards of health had very little real power.

Limited annual budgets in 1880 made it impossible for boards of health to carry out their duties with efficiency and dispatch. The Austin board had no budget; the president received a yearly salary of \$600 in his capacity as a city official. Galveston had a deceptively large appropriation of \$6,500, but it included the costs of street sanitation. Annual expenses in Omaha totaled \$240, in Los Angeles \$1,500, and in St. Joseph between \$3,000 and \$4,000. Atchison spent a "nominal" amount of money; Leavenworth, none at all. The largest health expenditure in the West was the \$30,000 in San Francisco, where most of the funds went for the management of facilities unrelated to health care. Small amounts of money meant there were inadequate staffs. The Dallas board had one employee; its counterpart in Houston, a health officer and inspector. Los Angeles had two salaried employees, the chief health officer and an assistant called a "stewart." Oakland hired one full-time physician at \$100 monthly and three part-time at \$25 a month. These small organizations had hardly any chance of effectively guarding the populace. Of course, just as little money was available in other towns across the country: \$600 in Youngstown, \$100 in Concord, and \$300 in Lynchburg.

Monetary restraints severely restricted services. Inspectors made only one thorough survey of health conditions in Dallas once a year. Neither Omaha nor Atchison had full-time investigators. Houston, Portland, and Kansas City claimed to do better, although the uniformly low levels of inquiry had almost no effect on community health. Occasionally, a recurring problem required constant scrutiny. In San Francisco the annual death rate per thousand was 18.50 for Caucasians and 21.22 for Chinese. One-third of the deaths among whites were children under five years of age. Most of the Chinese population consisted of adults, so almost all the Chinese who died were over twenty-one. A disturbed official attributed the high adult death rate in Chinatown to underground quarters and improper ventilation that resulted in an unhealthy atmosphere. "I have over and over again urged the enforcement of the cubic-air law as the only means of correcting the sanitary evils of the Chinese quarters," he lamented. "By constant vigilance many nuisances are abated, and a great deal of money expended to make this portion of the city even tolerable; but so long as these people are permitted to live as at present in overcrowded dens, socially, morally, and in a sanitary point of view they are a curse to San Francisco." Boards of health had no real way of avoiding epidemics. After one started, the aim was to isolate the sick in a "pest house," which was normally a dilapidated building in an out-of-the-way place. Galveston maintained a quarantine station at the extreme eastern end of Galveston Island, San Antonio supported a small hospital conspicuously marked by a "small-pox flag," and Kansas City transported victims to a snake-infested island in the Missouri River.<sup>2</sup>

Statistics in the nonepidemic reporting period of 1879-80 for thirty-one selected American cities showed an average death rate per thousand of 22.28. The male rate was 23.99 and the female 20.72. For the entire nation, deaths totaled 18.0 per thousand. Table 5-1 shows the proportions of death in one thousand of the living population in four western communities.<sup>3</sup>

All the cities had lower death rates than the national average: Oakland's were among the best in the country. These statistics compared with those per thousand of 25.4 for New York, 22.2 for Indianapolis, and 18.2 for Nashville. Because of younger populations in general, western cities had lower death rates than those in the Midwest, Northeast, and South.

TABLE 5-1  
DEATHS PER THOUSAND FOR 1879-80

City	Number of Deaths			Deaths per Thousand of Living Population	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female
Denver .....	469	288	181	13.4	12.8
Kansas City .....	627	354	273	11.1	11.5
Oakland .....	336	178	158	9.8	9.6
San Francisco .....	4,798	3,073	1,725	23.2	17.0

Except in San Francisco, the mortality rate for children under one was generally lower than the national average in 1879-80, as illustrated by Table 5-2.<sup>4</sup> The deaths per thousand among babies born within 1879-80 in cities in other sections were as follows: 161.1 for males and 126.6 for females in Brooklyn, 116.7 for males and 122.4 for females in Chicago, and 167.9 for males and 157.5 for females in Washington. However, there was no solid evidence that western urbanites were significantly healthier than their contemporaries in other sections.

Frontier cities spent more money defending themselves against fires than disease. Blazes posed an ever-present danger for closely packed communities housed for the most part in wooden buildings. Sometimes, several small fires took their toll; at others, one conflagration could shatter a fine fire protection record. Between 1874 and 1880, Houston incurred \$2,000,000 in losses without suffering a large conflagration. The only two fires of importance in Lincoln during the seventies brought heavy losses. The state

TABLE 5-2  
MORTALITY RATE FOR CHILDREN IN 1879-80

City	Deaths per Thousand Among Those Born Within the Year		Deaths per Thousand of Living Population	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Denver .....	83.1	65.0	132.1	133.3
Kansas City .....	91.9	65.6	143.1	88.7
Oakland .....	64.9	46.3	86.1	68.0
San Francisco .....	179.2	151.0	74.8	62.7

insane asylum went up in flames, and an opera house burned shortly after its opening. In September of 1878 Omaha experienced its first serious fire when the \$200,000 "commodious and elegant" Grand Central Hotel burned to the foundations. Even though Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, and Oakland claimed in 1880 never to have had an important fire, the ringing of the fire bell caused as much apprehension in those places as in others with bad records.

Great conflagrations swept through the hastily built West Coast cities of gold-rush days. In San Francisco a \$2,000,000 fire that leveled a block in the heart of town on 4 December 1849 served as a portent of things to come. On 4 May 1850 flames caused \$4,000,000 damage, ravaging three blocks in the same vicinity as the first disaster. While new structures covered the area within ten days, the builders might as well have saved the trouble. Another great fire in the district on 14 June resulted in losses estimated at \$5,000,000. Hastily erected replacements lasted only a short time. Those that survived a \$300,000 blaze on 14 September turned to ashes in a \$1,000,000 catastrophe on 14 December. Incredibly, an even worse fire followed. On 4 May 1851 flames consumed 1,500 buildings valued at more than \$10,000,000 in the business district, and on 10 June a \$3,000,000 fire attacked ten blocks in another part of town. After that the construction of more substantial structures and the organization of a more efficient fire department sharply cut the number of conflagrations, although an 1876 fire consumed 142 buildings, and 62 more burned in a blaze the following year. Sacramento, built originally of muslin, calico, canvas, sails, logs, boards, tin, and boxes, did not experience a disastrous fire until 2 November 1859, when seven-eighths of the city burned, with damage estimated at between \$5,000,000 and \$6,000,000. Stockton had worse luck. The place burned to the ground in 1848 and 1851, while still a tent city. Then, after it acquired more permanent structures, fire destroyed the town twice in 1855 and once again ten years later. A Stockton leader rationalized the calamities by stating, "In fact these fires increased rather than depressed business, as in many cases the material used for the buildings was being prepared before the fire was dead."<sup>5</sup> This was obviously small consolation, given the scope of the destruction.

As the frontier drew to a close, many western communities

continued to rely on volunteer fire departments. Normally, a town progressed from an all-volunteer force, to part-volunteer and part-professional, and finally to an all-professional department. Atchison reached the first stage of upgrading on 1 January 1880, when it added a paid staff that included a chief, an assistant chief engineer, a fireman, a driver, a pipeman, and a night engineer. At a single stroke the city increased its annual payroll by \$3,000. The chief, who contended that "harmony" accompanied the change-over, admitted certain difficulties in his first annual report: "On assuming this . . . position . . . I was much embarrassed on account of the deficiency in apparatus to work with, a lack of a sufficient water-supply (for the first year at least), and the bad and un-serviceable condition we found the hose in, and with an inconvenient way to transport them to fires. During this time no provisions were made for fire alarms; consequently too much time was often consumed in finding out the locality of the fire. Some of these embarrassments have in part been overcome, such as a sufficient supply of water, the purchase of a new hose, horse-carriage, etc., but yet enough remain to prevent the organization of a good and efficient department, such as a city of the proportions and pretensions of Atchison demand." The apparatus owned by the department consisted of a "second-class" steam fire engine, a two-horse hose carriage, a two-wheel hand hose cart, a two-horse hook-and-ladder truck, six fire extinguishers, and fifteen hundred feet of usable hose. Conditions were so similar elsewhere that the chief's summary applied to many other western towns. Yet the volunteer method persisted, as it did in one other section, the Northeast, where many cities—including Norristown, Wilmington, and Reading—continued to count upon amateur firemen.

Two frontier cities that had professional departments were Galveston and Omaha. Both had forces representative of those in other medium-sized American cities. The former employed an eighteen-man contingent for around \$18,000 annually; the latter's fourteen fire fighters earned a yearly aggregate of about \$21,000. For the twelve months ending 30 April 1880, Omaha's itemized expenses included \$1,200 for the chief's salary, \$13,252.56 for maintaining three engine companies, \$1,585.52 for the hook-and-ladder, \$108.22 for fire alarms, \$456.40 for general expenditures, \$4,400 for a new engine, and \$676 for a piece of land. In terms of equipment, Galveston had six steamers, two hook-and-ladders, and



six hose-carriages. Omaha boasted four engines, including a hook-and-ladder. Galveston used nineteen horses to Omaha's twelve. Both cities needed good fire protection because of their large number of commercial and manufacturing establishments. Docks and packing houses contained many combustible materials. In an average year, in which the Omaha Fire Department responded to forty-three alarms, a single blaze in a meat-packing plant accounted for \$137,000 out of \$175,000 in losses.

Kansas City emphasized fire prevention more than either Galveston or Omaha. Ordinances divided the most heavily settled sections of the Missouri community into two fire districts. Within their limits regulations specified the thickness of outside walls, the use of incombustible materials for roofs and chimneys, and the necessity for the doors of theaters to swing outward. In an effort to improve efficiency, the twenty-man department used a telephone system to receive fire alarms. In 1880, 98 out of 118 alarms came over the telephone. Still, Kansas City suffered an unfortunate fire year, with \$342,310 worth of property destroyed.

Cities normally concentrated on increasing the size and efficiency of their protective forces. San Francisco had a fine fire department: 303 men operated a large number of engines, tenders, hose-carriages, and hook-and-ladders. The annual budget came to \$285,000, more than twice as much as in Pittsburgh, a city of similar size. San Francisco had 1,300 hydrants and 55 cisterns. Even more impressive were the 120 miles of wire and 150 signal boxes in the telegraphic alarm system. The San Francisco Fire Department held a high rank nationally, and so did the one in nearby Stockton. To counter the bad fires that had engulfed the community with depressing regularity, Stockton organized one of the world's largest, on a per capita basis, combination professional and volunteer departments. Some 240 men stood ready on a moment's notice to man 18 engines and a massive accumulation of other equipment. This "overkill" arrangement worked effectively; in 1880 the town incurred \$10,438.94 in fire damage—an average of less than a dollar per capita.<sup>6</sup> No force, however, could deal with a complete disaster, as the San Francisco department learned during the 1906 earthquake.

Police protection in western towns has become the subject of many stories of frontier days. In novels, movies, and television, stories are seldom constructed around a brave public-health

officer fighting an epidemic. If, indeed, the plot deals with a widespread outbreak of cholera or typhoid, the individual responsible for saving the town is a young physician in private practice. Then, too, no "western" ever features the fire chief as the hero. If a dance hall catches on fire, it is saved by a bucket brigade of volunteers. But law enforcement officers play heroic roles. Their lot usually is to appear as brave defenders of conventional morality, who face and gun down a wide variety of vicious criminals and paid killers who terrorize western towns.

In the morality plays about the American West the lawmen play a role analogous to the knights of old—they are brave, bold, resourceful, and honest in the extreme. While there may have been such men on the frontier, particularly in the cattle towns of Kansas and Texas, there were none in the cities of the urban frontier of the 1870s. The reason was obvious—almost all had regular and formally constituted police forces, copied in concept and organization directly from the East. Nationwide advancements in law enforcement had come with dramatic suddenness. As late as 1840, when most western European nations already had centralized and competent police forces, American cities relied upon inefficient constables by day and ineffective night watchmen. While some large places, including New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, created systematically structured forces in the 1840s and 1850s, low levels of municipal spending, the belief that strong police departments were incompatible with democratic institutions, and nefarious political practices precluded the establishment of organized police forces in most cities. New York police, originally appointed directly by the mayor, did not have uniforms until 1857, when the state legislature reformed the system and established a metropolitan police board. Although several other states followed suit by temporarily taking jurisdiction over departments in large cities, the building of police forces remained essentially a local endeavor.

Major improvements in the police came after the Civil War, when the full impact of urbanization and the attendant problems of labor unrest, family instability, overcrowding, transiency, ethnic tensions, and economic disparities raised serious questions about public safety. Widespread draft riots in both the Union and the Confederacy served as portents of things to come. In 1877 great civil disturbances swept through the East during a crippling rail-

road strike. On another level, organized criminal bands of former soldiers, who had acquired special wartime skills in logistics and explosives, posed another threat to urban stability. There was a general belief that crime and disobedience were on the increase, and the response was a simple and direct one that involved spending more money to upgrade police departments to what most people perceived as professional levels. This occurred so quickly that by the end of the seventies there were few qualitative differences between police forces around the country. Without much fanfare and without any federal assistance, cities had accepted the "police idea."<sup>7</sup>

An official called either the chief of police or the city marshal, or in the case of Oakland, captain of police, commanded western urban police departments. They obtained their posts in a number of ways. The board of police selected the Dallas city marshal; the mayor, the Lincoln chief of police; the police commissioners, the Los Angeles chief of police; the mayor and council, the Lawrence city marshal; the city council, the Leadville city marshal; and the mayor and two elected commissioners, the Kansas City chief of police. In Stockton the chief of police was chosen in an annual election. The head law enforcement officers were well paid. In 1880 average annual per capita income in the United States was \$175. It was \$392 in California, \$234 in Oregon, and \$134 in Utah.<sup>8</sup> Compared with these figures, chiefs or marshals received \$1,200 in Dallas, \$720 plus "certain fees" in Lincoln, \$1,200 in Omaha and Topeka, \$700 in Lawrence, \$2,160 in Leadville, \$4,000 in San Francisco, \$1,200 in Stockton, and \$2,000 in Kansas City. Police officials performed a variety of functions, ranging from supervising the issuance of building permits in Lincoln to the serving of special warrants issued by the police courts in Stockton. They seldom made arrests, contrary to the view conveyed in western stories. Their main job was to supervise the department. This important and responsible task left little time for the kind of life depicted in books or on film. The chief law enforcement officials of the frontier cities were essentially desk men and administrators. Others handled the more glamorous and perilous tasks.

The designations, duties, and pay scales of peace officers below the command level were much the same from place to place. Most men worked standard twelve-hour shifts and earned good wages.

As a rule of thumb, the ratio of officers on patrol to the general population was about one to one thousand. In all instances, the men were called "patrolmen," "police officers," or "policemen," never "deputies." The force in Austin consisted of nine men, with one on duty at the station, one on mounted patrol at night, one on guard at the jail, and six on night foot patrol. Daytime enforcement depended almost exclusively upon alarms. Many citizens carried whistles. Several other communities had safety precautions similar to those in Austin. Two sergeants and eighteen patrolmen in Leadville covered only the six-block area of town with the most taverns, dance halls, and houses of prostitution. Paid \$100 a month, they worked eight hours a day in the winter and twelve in the summer. Dallas had a deputy marshal who received \$75 per month, two mounted police compensated at \$65 monthly, and ten patrolmen on a monthly salary of \$55. Everyone worked twelve hours daily, making rounds throughout the entire town. San Antonio had two assistant marshals, one of whom received \$125 and the other \$100 per month, plus eighteen patrolmen paid \$70 monthly. Both San Antonio and Dallas had provisions for special police. Omaha's force of a deputy marshal and eight patrolmen, all of whom received \$840 per annum, walked beats exclusively in the downtown. Ten men in Atchison, making \$600 annually, each patrolled three miles of streets on twelve-hour shifts. Six men in Lawrence, compensated at a rate of \$700, worked twelve hours a day with no regular patrol routes. In Los Angeles ten men had annual salaries of \$800. Working an arduous schedule of eight hours on and eight off, two guarded the center of the city on horseback and eight covered the residential areas on foot.

Generally, the larger the city the bigger and better the department. Kansas City had a captain, one clerk, two sergeants, two roundsmen, two detectives, one special duty officer, two jailers, two mounted men, and twenty-four patrolmen. For salaries ranging from \$750 to \$1,140 yearly, the men worked twelve-hour duty tours. They were under strict regulations. Police faced dismissal if they consistently missed the 6:00 A.M. roll call, used unnecessary force in making arrests, beat prisoners, drank intoxicating liquor, or slept on duty. The rules warned officers not to enter "public houses, bawdy places, saloons, houses of assignation, or any other houses of public nature, unless called in officially."

In San Francisco, in addition to numerous high-ranking officers, 337 patrolmen helped uphold the law. Each man received \$1,200 a year and averaged nine hours a day. Forces in San Francisco, Kansas City, and elsewhere found themselves seriously limited in terms of coverage and response time. Almost all officers walked—the few mounted police were the exception—and carried a whistle. The portion of town invariably given the most attention was the business district, with residential property owners usually left to their own devices.

The police in all the western frontier towns but Lawrence and Stockton wore uniforms. Even in such “six-gun towns” as Dallas, Leadville, and San Antonio, officers made rounds attired in formal navy-blue clothing, usually with brass buttons, often double breasted, and sometimes with a vest. Additionally, men generally carried a billy club, a whistle, a single handgun—never two as in fictional accounts—and handcuffs. Most forces required patrolmen to purchase their own uniforms and appurtenances. It was not unusual for a recruit to spend between \$50 and \$100 before starting to maintain the peace. In Omaha the uniforms consisted of double-breasted frock coats and trousers of blue cloth and blue caps. The men carried a billy, a revolver, and “Philip’s patent police nippers.” Hardly outdone, the Oakland police dressed in dark-blue beaver cloth uniforms, complete with brass buttons, dress coats, and straight vests. They carried a variety of equipment, including a club and pistol. The Kansas City police walked their beats in stylish blue suits with shiny brass buttons. Besides paying \$75 for clothing, the officers furnished their own side arms and other equipment—a Colt revolver, a fourteen-inch club, and a pair of nippers. The most elaborate dress was in Portland, where the chief of police ran the clothing concession. He sold uniforms of blue beaver cloth, stiff round-top felt hats with gold cords, and matching overcoats, all for the “wholesale” price of \$110. The city furnished brass buttons, stars, and belts, requiring each man to procure his own short club and pistol.<sup>9</sup> Few motion pictures or television shows ever feature frontier lawmen in gaudy uniforms. No blue-coated “deputy” subdues a criminal by hitting him with a billy and adroitly applying handcuffs. Even so, more often than not that was what happened.

Over the years, one sensational account after another emphasized the lawless nature of frontier society. Indeed, a Topeka

promoter related crime to civic progress. "Criminals and disreputable characters are always, to a greater or lesser degree, attracted to the larger and more flourishing centers," he wrote. "Topeka, being the capital of the state, and a thriving, busy city, it is not wholly exempt from this rule."<sup>10</sup> In the West of myth, criminals came close to overpowering the righteous. Bad men robbed banks and killed the innocent until stopped by vigilantes or brave sheriffs. While the dime novels read so avidly in the East dwelled on the activities of paid gun hands and sensuous dance-hall girls, some of the stories had an urban dimension. The Barbary Coast on the San Francisco waterfront received attention as a "grand theater" of crime inhabited by a "stagnant pool of human immorality"—a sort of West Coast version of the Lower East Side in New York, the First Ward in Chicago, or the French Quarter in New Orleans. The "sins of the city" literature moved West.<sup>11</sup> The narratives differed from the traditional cowboy story because the settings could have been anywhere in the country, not just in a single region.

B. E. Lloyd's 1876 exposé, *Lights and Shades in San Francisco*, depicted the Barbary Coast as a cauldron of sin and corruption. "The material is ready at all times, and should the favorable circumstances transpire to kindle it into destructive activity, scenes as startling as those that won for the locality its christening, would be re-enacted," he wrote. "Even in the presence of a strong police force, and in the face of frowning cells and dungeons, it is unsafe to ramble through many of the streets and lanes in this quarter. Almost nightly there are drunken carousals and broils, frequently terminating in dangerous violence; men are often garroted and robbed, and it is not by any means a rare occurrence for foul murder to be committed. 'Murderers' Corner' and 'Deadman's Alley' have been rebaptized with blood over and over again, and yet call for other sacrifices. Barbary Coast is the haunt of the low and vile of every time. The petty thief, the house burglar, the tramp, the whoremonger, lewd women, cut-throats and murderers, all are found there. Dance-houses and concert saloons, where blear-eyed men and faded women drink vile liquor, smoke offensive tobacco, engage in vulgar conduct, sing obscene songs, and say and do everything to heap upon themselves more degradation, unrest and misery, are numerous. Low gambling houses thronged with riot-loving rowdies in all stages of intoxication are there.

Opium dens, where heathen Chinese and God-forsaken women and men are sprawled in miscellaneous confusion, disgustingly drowsy, or completely overcome by inhaling the vapors of the nauseous narcotic, are there. Licentiousness, debauchery, pollution, loathsome disease, insanity from dissipation, misery, poverty, wealth, profanity, blasphemy and death, are there. And hell, yawning to receive the putrid mass, is there also."<sup>12</sup>

Statistics in 1880 for San Francisco and other places did seem to indicate a high number of two of the elements associated at the time with a high crime rate: houses of prostitution and liquor saloons. The number of establishments admitted officially by local authorities were as shown in Table 5-3.<sup>13</sup> San Francisco had more saloons (8,694) than any other city in the United States except New York (9,067), which was five times larger. A city of comparable size to the Golden Gate metropolis, New Orleans, had 429. Galveston with 489 saloons had more than any other city in the country under 50,000 in population, and Leadville's 150 easily surpassed all places below 15,000. But other localities had numbers that did not seem out of line: 170 in Kansas City (55,789) against 178 in Cambridge (52,669), and 7 in Lincoln (13,003) as opposed to 65 in Macon (12,749). Authorities needed accurate statistics for these establishments for revenue taxing purposes. Houses of prostitution were another matter; they operated outside the law, so the totals were of questionable authenticity. Even so, there was no question that many western towns lived up to the section's "wide open" reputation. Only twelve cities in the United States claimed more or as many "resorts" as Leadville's 100. Galveston's 55 houses, Stockton's 40, and Portland's 30 ranked inordinately high. When it flourished, Virginia City certainly had more than the 20 listed. Of course, "vice" thrived in other places: houses numbered a national high of 517 in Philadelphia (847,170), the City of Brotherly Love. There were 365 in New Orleans (216,096), 166 in Toledo (50,137), 34 in Dayton (38,678), and 25 in Greenville, South Carolina (6,100). The number of people taken into custody for prostitution, soliciting, or entering houses of ill fame was as unimpressive in the West as elsewhere. Vice drives—such as the one on 5 houses in Lincoln that netted 95 "ladies of the night"—were exceptional occurrences. More typical was San Francisco, where no prostitutes appeared on the police blotters in 1880, although the police hauled

## HEALTH, FIRE, AND POLICE PROTECTION

TABLE 5-3  
 HOUSES OF PROSTITUTION AND LIQUOR SALOONS IN 1880

<i>City</i>	<i>House of Prostitution</i>	<i>Liquor Saloons</i>
<i>California</i>		
Los Angeles .....	12	70
Oakland .....	10	215
Sacramento .....	....	....
San Francisco .....	....	8,694
San Jose .....	....	....
Stockton .....	40	57
<i>Colorado</i>		
Denver .....	7	200
Leadville .....	100	150
<i>Kansas</i>		
Atchison .....	5	48
Lawrence .....	0	18
Leavenworth .....	6	120
Topeka .....	....	32
<i>Missouri</i>		
Kansas City .....	....	170
St. Joseph .....	10	200
<i>Nebraska</i>		
Lincoln .....	5	7
Omaha .....	17	147
<i>Nevada</i>		
Virginia City .....	20	....
<i>Oregon</i>		
Portland .....	30	110
<i>Texas</i>		
Austin .....	....	....
Dallas .....	5	52
Galveston .....	55	489
Houston .....	....	....
San Antonio .....	6	70
<i>Utah Territory</i>		
Salt Lake City .....	5	34



in 547 persons for pimping. Many other cities, including Omaha and Atchison, while noting apprehensions for prostitution, failed to cite specific numbers, evidently in an attempt to either look as moral as possible, to hide the laxity of enforcement, or to avoid indicating collusion between the authorities and vice elements.<sup>14</sup>

Recorded statistics suggest that the western cities—just as the smaller cattle towns of Kansas—were no more violent than those in the East. As in other parts of the country, an overwhelming number of arrests on the urban frontier involved drunkenness. The Sacramento chief of police tersely listed his biggest problem as “whiskey.” In 1880 Lincoln had 264 arrests, of which 121 were for being drunk and disorderly. San Francisco police apprehended 21,063, of which 9,127 were in the column for drunks; Portland had 2,578 arrests, including 1,466 for overindulgence. In the older sections, drinking accounted for 18,678 of 24,884 arrests in Boston 2,973 of 7,432 in Cleveland, and 4,391 of 13,558 in Washington.<sup>15</sup> Differences in arrest statistics related to a number of factors, including crime rates, police manpower, departmental enforcement policies, periods of civil unrest, and ethnic harassment. In Oakland 37 percent of all those arrested were Irish, who numbered 10 percent of the population, while native Americans, accounting for 68 percent of the population, had an arrest rate of 34 percent. In 1880 Oakland’s arrest rate was 62 per thousand population, Los Angeles’ 83, San Francisco’s 90, Sacramento’s 121, and Stockton’s 145. Overall, southern and western cities generally had higher rates than cities in the Midwest and Northeast.<sup>16</sup>

A special kind of crime existed in communities with significant numbers of Chinese. This was the use of opium. The police chief in Portland carried on a crusade against the drug: in 1879 he charged twenty-seven persons with keeping opium houses and sixty-four with visiting them. He explained in his annual report that the problem went far deeper than the Oriental population: “Another evil, and a rapidly growing one, is the habit of opium-smoking, which is ruining the health and destroying the minds of many of our young men and girls. There are a large number of these dens, kept principally by Chinese, where men and women, young men and girls—some not over 13 years of age—congregate and indulge in this vile and filthy habit, and sleep off the stupor, subject to the insults and indignities that may be committed upon

them by those not under the influence and by the Chinese themselves. Some of the females who frequent these places are married and have families, and young girls of the most respectable class of society. Could their names be published society would stand amazed. It is almost impossible for the police to find out these places, as they are generally in rooms to reach which it is necessary to pass through dark, winding passages and doors fastened and guarded, sometimes requiring a guide; and when the den is reached all is dark, the inmates having escaped over roofs and by underground passages. Some more stringent and severe measures should be taken to break up these dens of infamy. No wonder that so many of our young girls fall from virtue. From the best evidence I have, there are about 500 to 600 white males and females who visit these dens in this city."<sup>17</sup> Portland faced a crisis of major proportions, because the chief had brought to a head a situation ignored in other cities.

The proportions of murders in western towns were about the same as elsewhere. In 1880 New York led the nation with thirty-seven homicides and New Orleans was second with twenty. The number reported nationwide in 492 cities of five thousand or more in population was 294. In the West, Atchison recorded five killings; San Jose and Galveston both two. The mayor of Omaha set the tone in noting, "It is a remarkable fact that during the past year [1880] no commission of a capital crime has occurred in the city, nor has there been scarcely a case of street robbery or garroting." Police work did not appear particularly dangerous, even though the Stockton force was the single one that carried neither guns nor clubs. Only a few municipalities in 1880 reported police casualties. In Atchison a man described as a "drunken Negro" shot and killed a patrolman, and in Leavenworth an officer died when he fell off a wagon. But fatalities were the exception rather than the rule.<sup>18</sup> There were no classic "OK Corral" or "High Noon" shootouts. More representative was the situation in Sacramento, where the sole injury to a peace officer the entire year was a broken wrist.

While their basic job was to uphold the law, the police in several cities claimed commendable crime-solving records, doing exceptionally fine jobs in recovering stolen items. During 1880 in Austin police returned \$3,307 in property to owners out of \$5,472 stolen, in Lincoln \$250 out of \$1,000, in Oakland \$8,432

out of \$15,687, and in Portland \$7,339 out of \$8,874. In San Francisco, in spite of the possibilities for easy fencing, the police recovered \$43,708 out of \$104,303 in pilfered goods. Although western urban lawmen did not always "get their man," they did well enough to draw the envy of many places outside the section that had larger numbers of detectives.

Many persons arrested served some time in jail. Almost always, the correctional facilities were despicable places on the order of the one in Omaha. Describing the quarters, the mayor wrote, "They are unfit to be the recipient of the vilest prisoners. . . . To keep prisoners confined in their present rooms during the summer would be an act of inhumanity." In 1880, 100 of the 867 individuals arrested in Omaha served time behind bars. In Oakland 1,177 of 2,141 persons arrested went to jail. The Oakland mayor stated in an annual report that most members of the chain gang were Chinese. "They cannot earn a dollar a day easier," he said, "as prison does not disgrace them with their own class." He argued that most would pay their fines if the city instituted a new policy of cutting off prisoners' pigtales. At Portland the number incarcerated was 889 out of 2,578. The total jailed in San Francisco came to a low 2,030 out of 21,063 arrested—a statistic explained by the fact that large numbers of men and women were apprehended for such nonjailable offenses as using obscene language (1,037), committing misdemeanors (1,745), and obstructing traffic (576). Of course, the courts did not convict everyone arrested. In Portland the judicial authorities fined 1,917 persons, sent 889 to jail, dismissed 194, and held 104 for later appearances. St. Joseph judges fined 1,013 and jailed 686 out of 1,712 arrests, discharging only 13. All in all, for annual public expenditures ranging from \$9,000 in Lawrence to over \$500,000 in San Francisco, the western towns received a high level of police protection.<sup>19</sup>

The exigencies of urbanization necessitated better protection for people crowded together in packed quarters. At times the growth of cities threatened to outstrip progress in protection. The public health movement in Europe in the 1830s and 1840s did not flourish in America until after the Civil War. Fire protection methods throughout the nineteenth century remained much the same as in the previous one. Disciplined police appeared

in New York over a decade after their introduction in London. In the new cities of Kansas, Texas, and California the local leaders showed an interest in determining on the basis of past and existing knowledge the means of protecting their communities. The extent to which they succeeded or failed depended on existing norms and not upon new methods that originated in the West.

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## CHAPTER 6

# The Application of Technology

The nineteenth century witnessed a number of technological achievements that affected the quality of urban life. Many changes followed logically after breakthroughs occurred. The perfection of gas service systems made possible much better lighting than that furnished by kerosene lamps. Gas brightened streets, illuminated homes, offices, and factories, lengthened the winter day by making close work practicable in the evening hours, and changed the sleeping habits of millions of people. The incandescent electric lamp and the electric carbon arc lamp, both introduced in 1879, increased the efficiency and inevitability of a process already under way. A somewhat similar evolution affected the transmittal of information. The telegraph, which spanned the nation by the Civil War's end, speeded the flow of personal and business news, and wrought the almost instantaneous dispatch of data from city to city. The telephone in 1876 held promise of improving the transmission of messages, although problems remained with transmitters, switchboards, and wire noises. Still, even limited advances in fields like communication and lighting had profound impacts.

Just as important was the transportation revolution in the nineteenth century. The introduction of steamboats following the War of 1812 greatly improved river and lake travel. The perfection of the railroad in the 1850s allowed for a rapidity of traffic previously unknown, making feasible in the 1870s the creation of national markets. On another level, the development of improved

urban transportation represented a great technological triumph. The 1820s saw the introduction of the omnibus, the 1850s the general use of the horsecar, the 1860s the construction of the steam-powered elevated, the 1870s the operation of the cable car, the 1880s the application of electric power, and the 1890s the development of subways.

As western communities grew, the problem of moving people from one part of town to another became more critical. One type of conveyance used to carry commuters was the ungainly horse-drawn omnibus, which crowded from twelve to twenty persons into a small space. Dallas was one of the few frontier cities that had a sizable line. It consisted of six vehicles, thirty horses, and ten employees. The fare of 25¢ a mile was one of the highest in the United States. By contrast, in Denver an omnibus company that owned seven carts charged 50¢ a ride to take riders anywhere inside the city limits. Lincoln had a herdic line; small two-wheel horse-drawn omnibuses with side seats and an entrance in the back carried passengers for 5¢ a trip. While many towns had a couple of omnibuses that wandered the streets looking for fares, other communities either had none or preferred lines running on regular schedules. Lawrence and Leavenworth had no public transportation. While Austin and Houston had horsecar railroads, neither community had omnibuses. The heavy omnibus, which badly damaged streets during rainy weather, was sometimes a total solution and at others only a supplement to other forms of transportation.

By 1880 almost every American city of more than five thousand population had a horsecar railroad. In that year there were about three thousand miles of track and nineteen thousand cars in operation. Despite detractors who derided horsecar railroads as slow, dirty, and unsuitable for long distances, animal power was more practical for most communities than steam, the only other source of locomotion available prior to electricity. Steam engines caused unpleasant vibrations and scattered oil and hot ashes on pedestrians, particularly when used on elevated tracks or in subways. Steam generators for cable-car lines were so expensive that the systems were worth the cost only on steep grades. Horsecar railroads delivered passengers to their destinations in relative safety and had numerous advantages. The heavy cars moved on surface rails without danger of sinking into the mud, the braking

systems stopped the vehicles within relatively short distances, the average speed of three to five miles an hour was more than adequate for all except the largest metropolises, the regularity of routes increased the efficiency of commuting, and the drivers needed little training.

A horsecar railroad proclaimed a city's pretensions of urban greatness. Leadville, at the bottom of the pretension list, had less than a mile of track on the main street. The route operated only three months of the year, charging 10¢ a ride. Los Angeles and Oakland had somewhat more elaborate systems. The former, with 11 miles of track, employed 10 cars, 40 horses, and 15 men. The latter operated with 13 miles of track, 29 cars, 115 horses, and 46 men. Los Angeles charged 5¢ a ride. Oakland sold four tokens for 25¢, making its single rate 6¼¢. The railroad in Portland had 1.5 miles of track, in Stockton 2 miles, in Austin 1.5 miles, and in Houston 3 miles. Portland's line used 9 employees, 5 carriages, and 25 horses. The 5 men, 13 horses, and 4 carts of the Stockton Street Railroad Company annually carried 100,000 passengers. Austin's 6 cars, 14 horses, and 9 workers hauled 20,000 riders in 1879. The firm in Houston owned 16 cars, 2 horses, and from 50 to 55 mules. Employees numbered 37. The most impressive animal-powered operation was in Kansas City. Over 17 miles of track carried some 60 cars—several of diminutive size to conform with the city's precipitous grades—pulled by 360 Missouri mules.<sup>1</sup> The hilly terrain had already stimulated discussions that ultimately led to a combination elevated and cable system.

San Francisco had already turned to cable cars as a solution to its serious grade difficulties. Andrew Smith Hallidie, a Scottish immigrant, designed the first cable systems. A grappling device attached to a moving cable towed cars along at speeds up to ten miles an hour. Original plans called for running over fairly flat surfaces. Traction companies in Chicago and Philadelphia built extensive lines, but heavy upkeep costs and frequent cable breaks prevented successful competition with horsecar railroads. The hills of San Francisco gave the cable car a new lease on life. Horses could not pull loads up the abrupt elevations, some of which rose as much as eighty feet in a four-hundred-foot block. In 1873 Leland Stanford's California Street Cable Railroad Company built the first line in the city. It ran up Nob Hill to Stanford's palatial mansion. By 1880 there were ten miles of track, in which local



residents took great pride. The cars efficiently solved the question of rapid and cheap transportation of passengers over precipitous grades.<sup>2</sup>

A city official described the cable-car operation in detail: "On these lines a trench 3 feet deep is dug between each line of rails from one end of the road to the other, and a permanent channel, either of wood or iron, constructed therein. This channel is connected with the street above by a slot from  $\frac{7}{8}$  of an inch to 1 inch wide. In the channel is stretched a wire rope running on sheaves, and driven by an engine placed at some convenient point. The passenger cars are attached to a 'dummy,' which also has seats for passengers, with which is connected the 'grip,' that drops down through the slot in the roadway and grasps the moving cable. The cars are thus easily hauled up the steep grades. When it is desired to stop a car the grip in the cable is unloosed and the cable is allowed to run through it, while the dummy is at rest. Of the roads now in operation one passes over a hill 325 feet high, another over one hill 300 feet high, and another 280 feet high, while the highest point reached by the other two roads is 200 feet. When the roads were first constructed it was thought that they must all be laid on straight streets without any curves; but a road is now in course of construction which will have a curve of about 60°, and around this the cars will be allowed to run by force of gravity, the grip on the cable to be relaxed just before the curve is reached. When one cable road crosses the other at right angles the cars pass over the point of intersection by force of gravity. In this case the grip, having been loosened and raised, passes above the intersecting cable and grasps it again on the other side."<sup>3</sup> The bumping and lurching cars, complete with their characteristically surly grip men, had become a regional curiosity, and some people visited the city just to ride the cars. Of course, even as the cable car emerged as an important community symbol, the horsecar railroad continued as the major source of public transportation; there were thirty-five miles of line, much double-tracked. Still, although the San Francisco horsecar routes were the most extensive in the West, nothing caught the public fancy as much as the cable cars.

Many other communities hoped that gaslights would identify them as being successful and prosperous. All towns of consequence tried to light their streets. Inevitably, a private concern gained a franchise to do the work. The cost per individual lighting unit

varied greatly, from \$60 a year for the lamps of Galveston to \$22 for Kansas City. The number installed differed from place to place. Leadville's citizens strolled in the glow of 100 lamps; Leavenworth's population made do with 60. There were sharp variations in quantity and quality. St. Joseph had 430 street lights, Kansas City 605, Omaha 160, Galveston 179, and San Francisco 3,500. Besides contracting with municipalities, gas companies when possible made the service available for other purposes. Major buildings usually had gas jets, as did a number of dwellings. The price varied; a Los Angeles producer charged customers \$4.50 a thousand cubic feet, while Kansas City and St. Joseph users obtained the same amount for \$2.50. Other cities fell between the two extremes; the cost was \$3.50 in Oakland and \$3.00 in Denver. There was no relationship between volume of production and price. Kansas City and St. Joseph paid the same, although the works in the larger city manufactured seven times as much gas, which theoretically should have resulted in a lower charge. In 1880 Salt Lake City had already installed Bush System electric lights on East Temple Street. Denver issued a contract in the spring of 1880 for a limited number of electric lights.<sup>4</sup> Thus, western cities continued to show a willingness to introduce the latest eastern improvements.

Another tremendously important invention, the telephone, quickly reached frontier communities. Even though the systems that existed in 1880 were either losing money or turning small profits, few believed this situation would prevail for very long. The telephone companies for western cities enumerated in Table 6-1 loomed as "blue chip" investments. The 148 American telephone companies that the census gathered statistics on had 32,734 miles of wire and a net income of \$770,516. A Colorado observer boasted, "It is said that Denver is far ahead of any city of twice her size in the matter of telephone connections, and one of the local papers wittily remarks that the city is almost darkened by its network of telephone wires in every direction."<sup>5</sup> Technological innovations played important roles in western cities and in creating a spirit of community. Even so, gas lines, telephones, and horse-cars were not enough to sustain progress; continual development and expansion of the hinterlands were needed. In the nineteenth century this meant building a regional transportation network with strong national connections. While highways and rivers

THE URBAN WEST AT THE END OF THE FRONTIER

TABLE 6-1  
STATISTICS ON TELEPHONE COMPANIES IN 1880

<i>City</i>	<i>Name of Company</i>	<i>Miles of Wire</i>	<i>Net Income</i>
<i>California</i>			
San Francisco	Pacific Bell Telephone Co. ....	565	\$7,158
San Jose	American District Telegraph and Telephone Co. ....	15	\$2,100
<i>Colorado</i>			
Denver	Bell Telephone Co. ....	....	....
Denver	Colorado Telephone Co. ....	700	\$18,178
Denver	Western Union Telegraph Co. ....	....	....
Leadville	Leadville Telephone Co. ....	220	\$ 555
<i>Kansas</i>			
Atchison	Atchison Telephone Exchange Co.	45	\$ 547
Leavenworth	Leavenworth Telephone Exchange Co. ....	175	\$1,303
Topeka	Topeka Telephone Co. ....	80	\$ 590
<i>Missouri</i>			
St. Joseph	St. Joseph Telephone Exchange Co. ....	225	\$1,596
<i>Nebraska</i>			
Omaha	Omaha Electric Co. ....	179	\$4,145
<i>Oregon</i>			
Portland	Portland Telephone, Telegraph, and Electric Co. ....	100	\$1,362

formed important parts of plans, the railroad was the key. The iron "T" rails, the standardized gauge, the production of more substantial trains and engines, the perfection of reliable air brakes, the construction of bridges that stood up under continual heavy loads, the use of better signals, the development of steel tracks, and numerous other advances made feasible the lengthy systems needed in the West. A high degree of corruption, vision, and enterprise marked the building of the first transcontinental line and other components of the Pacific railroad strategy. By the 1870s rails spanned the continent and ribbons of steel spread like octopuses' tentacles over the wastes of New Mexico and Arizona, the plains of Kansas and Texas, the mountains of Colorado and Nevada, and the valleys of California and Oregon.

All communities anticipated the day they would see the first smudge of black smoke on the horizon and hear the rumbling sounds associated with the arrival of the first train, and believed it would usher in a veritable new age of commerce and industry. "The work is done," trumpeted a Kansas City editor after a key railroad decision. "The anxiety and toil of ten years is ended! . . . Let the heathen [rival Missouri River cities] rage . . . sunk in the turbid waters of the river, are many of the cities of this valley. Oblivion has sealed the fate of many a place deemed immortal!"<sup>6</sup> When the iron horse was slow in coming, optimists prepared in advance for the great day. Atchison interests constructed a railroad bridge in 1874–75 over the Missouri River. Leaders boasted about the details of the project: its wrought-iron structural parts rested upon a stone foundation, its length was 1,182 feet, its drawspan swung on a large circular pier, its approaches were 2,000 feet long, and its flooring was capable of handling any kind of traffic. Eulogizing the local builders of the bridge, the Atchison Board of Trade stated, "The mere fact that a company of capitalists are willing to undertake an enterprise involving so large an outlay of money during a period of such general depression, proves conclusively that Atchison has commercial advantages possessed by no other city in the Missouri Valley. For these gentlemen are building the bridge as a legitimate business enterprise, firmly convinced that it will pay for the investment. They have carefully calculated both the cost and the business it will do, and found that a bridge is needed to accommodate the trade already centered here. . . . The investment is a good one, upon which a handsome profit can be realized."<sup>7</sup> The failure to immediately gain railroads from the East and the loss of key trunk lines in Kansas dampened enthusiasm and severely curtailed aspirations. The iron horse failed Atchison at a crucial juncture, just as it did Leavenworth, Portland, and Leadville. But it favored Kansas City, Los Angeles, and other places, helping fundamentally to shape the western urban mosaic.

The steel bands of imperial destiny bridged the gaps of distance and helped end the frontier. The thrust of rails changed geographical identities. By the conclusion of the railroad-building period, as the area entered the new century, the cities on the eastern fringe—Omaha, Lincoln, Leavenworth, Atchison, Topeka, Lawrence, St. Joseph, and Kansas City—were no longer considered western towns. The railroads that they sought explained the

reason: the great technological strides were so fundamental and successful that places like Kansas City and Omaha, which continued to look westward for their prosperity, were no longer part of the region. They were in the western approaches of the Midwest. Such was the legacy of railroad building.

By 1880 several western towns had already impressive railroad connections. Kansas City had the best. Ten railroads radiated from the city. The Kansas City, St. Joseph and Council Bluffs Railroad connected at Council Bluffs with the transcontinental system. The Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad, the Chicago and Alton Railroad, and the Missouri Pacific Railroad linked Kansas City with Chicago. Another line, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, entered Kansas City over Hannibal and St. Joseph tracks. The Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific Railway ran to Indianapolis. The Kansas City and Eastern Railway operated over forty miles of narrow-gauge tracks to Lexington, Missouri. To the west of Kansas City, the Union Pacific Railroad ran to Denver. This line, first called the Union Pacific-Eastern Division Railroad and later the Kansas Pacific Railroad, afforded the original outlet for cows driven to the Kansas cattle towns. A relatively new route, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, led the thrust of Kansas City rails into the Southwest.<sup>8</sup> The important Kansas City, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad tied in with routes running into Texas at either Fort Scott or Joplin. Kansas City was a great national railroad center. It handled most of the country's livestock trade. Its growth had been a hard one, involving everything from sheer luck to weighty decisions made in eastern board rooms.

The rise of Kansas City was illustrative of the struggle of western cities to obtain railroads.<sup>9</sup> The Kansas City railroad boom started in the 1850s, when local promoters planned state and regional lines. It was one thing, however, to plan roads in every direction and quite another to construct them. The Kansas Citians never had enough money to invest heavily in railroads, so they concentrated on persuading outside interests to build them. The community had certain assets that promised to help in achieving the ultimate objectives. Its able propagandists presented reasonable arguments that emphasized a strategic location at the juncture of major rivers. There were no well-established special interests to oppose railroads as the barge and steamboat owners

obstructed projects in numerous eastern cities. A small group of men in the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce worked together harmoniously. More fundamental was the view that partisan politics was a divisive luxury that interfered with orderly progress.

From 1855 to 1861 Kansas City's leadership generated an almost continual railroad boom. Speeches, mass meetings, rallies, parades, and barbecues aroused enthusiasm for numerous projects. The hallmark of the city was the iron horse, and it taxed the imagination of orators and editors to devise new versions of the metaphor: the iron horse slaking his enormous thirst at the Kawsmouth, the iron horse echoing along the Blue River, and the iron horse serenely surveying the majestic Kansas plains. Most promotional efforts prior to the Civil War centered on persuading the Pacific Railroad, a St. Louis line later called the Missouri Pacific, to build into Kansas City. The road broke many promises, and at the start of hostilities there was a railhead seventy miles to the east at Sedalia. Its tracks finally reached Kansas City on 21 September 1865. By then the Kansas City leaders had sought another and more desirable eastern route. The hidebound owners of the Pacific Railroad seemed primarily concerned with protecting St. Louis interests in Missouri. Moreover, even though the first Texas cattle-drives had gone to Sedalia, the directors failed to see the importance of the Union Pacific-Eastern Division, which started west from Wyandotte, across the Kansas River from Kansas City, in 1864. In fact, the Pacific management would make a horrendous blunder in refusing to give favorable rates to livestock shipper and promoter Joseph McCoy.

Kansas City leaders correctly perceived that the key to reaching Chicago markets was a railroad bridge over the Missouri River. This would allow a direct route that would not have to dip south through St. Louis, the Illinois city's rival for economic supremacy in the Midwest. There was a possibility at the Civil War's end that the first bridge to span the Missouri River would be at either St. Joseph or Leavenworth. If that happened, Kansas City might find itself off the mainstream of transportation. The line that proposed to erect the first structure over the Missouri, the Hannibal and St. Joseph, controlled the best access to Chicago. All the contending cities realized the importance of the bridge, concluding that the winner would become the regional metropolis. Kansas City emerged victorious in 1866 when the railroad decided

to shift its main line from St. Joseph; to turn it south some fifty miles to the east at Cameron, Missouri; and to cross the Missouri River at Kansas City. There were several reasons behind the decision. Kansas City business leaders convinced Boston and Chicago capitalists holding large blocks of Hannibal and St. Joseph stock that most of the fifty-mile roadbed between Cameron and Kansas City had been graded before the Civil War as part of the never-finished Cameron Road. While this stretched the truth considerably—a surveyor had walked the projected route—it was a telling argument. The railroad owners did not want to check too closely, because they had already decided to bridge the river at some place other than St. Joseph or Leavenworth. They erroneously believed the grades west of St. Joseph excessive, and wanted the shortest possible way to Texas markets. Leavenworth had a notoriously bad record of passing railroad bonds, and its leadership appeared badly divided. In addition, James F. Joy, the president of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, which controlled the Hannibal and St. Joseph, played a crucial role in the negotiations, strongly favoring Kansas City, where he owned extensive properties. Some persons claimed he obtained the holdings after a visit by a delegation of Kansas City businessmen, although there was no proof one way or the other.

Following the transactions, Kansas City gained the support of powerful interests. Unfortunately, an impasse remained. The contract with the railroad stipulated that the Cameron Company of Kansas City complete the roadbed. The Kansas Citians, always better promoters than builders, found it impossible to raise the money. At this juncture, Joy arranged for the Hannibal and St. Joseph to purchase the Cameron Company. After that, construction proceeded rapidly. The bridge opened on Saturday, 3 July 1869.<sup>10</sup> This assured Kansas City's future. About \$740,000 of local money went into railroad projects in the twenty years prior to the building of the bridge; hardly an excessive amount in terms of the return on railroad investments when compared with other towns. Baltimore spent \$18,000,000 in the 1830s and 1840s; Louisville granted over \$2,500,000 in aid during Reconstruction.

Omaha, Denver, Oakland, and San Francisco were other important western railroad centers.<sup>11</sup> The main tracks of the Union Pacific extended west from Omaha to Ogden, Utah, where they joined the Central Pacific Railroad. Across the river from Omaha

at Council Bluffs, the Union Pacific met four Chicago roads, providing the "best of connections with all points to the East." In Nebraska, Omaha was the center of a network of state railroads. The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad had several divisions. It served such Nebraska towns as Lincoln, Columbus, Kearney Junction, and Nebraska City. Finally, Omaha was the terminus of the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad, which ran through Sioux City and on to Minneapolis. Denver's roads, while not as extensive in numbers as those in Omaha, helped make the city. The Union Pacific; the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad; the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad; and the Colorado Central Railroad helped build the Rocky Mountain Empire. Oakland, in addition to the Central Pacific Railroad, was a division point for the Southern Pacific Railroad and the South Pacific Coast Railroad. Large ferries transported freight cars and passengers from Oakland to San Francisco, which an observer described as the "practical terminus" of western rails. San Francisco had numerous regional lines. The Central Pacific's Northern Division went to Calistoga and Willows, the Oregon Division to Redding, and the Southern Division to Tulare. The Southern Pacific Coast Railroad had tracks to Santa Cruz; the North Pacific Coast Railroad terminated in Duncan Mills; the San Francisco and North Pacific Railroad stopped in Cloverdale. The Southern Pacific Railroad had built south through Los Angeles and on into Arizona, pressing toward an 1881 juncture at El Paso with the Texas and Pacific Railroad. A San Francisco official said: "In fact, all the country touched by the many railroads centering here may be said to be tributary to the city, and a large portion of the wheat crops of the state come to San Francisco to be shipped."

Railroads obviously helped some towns more than others. The building of extensive lines came at crucial times for Denver and Omaha. If the eastern leg of the transcontinental line had started in one of the other cities listed in the Pacific Railroad Act, Omaha might have remained a small town, another Rulo or Peru, two promotional failures in Nebraska. Denver might have remained unimportant if the local entrepreneurs who acquired the moribund Union Pacific-Eastern Division had failed to obtain the necessary federal legislation to build from Mile Post 405 in western Kansas through Denver to Cheyenne. The railroad



brought prosperity for Oakland that temporarily led to great expectations of breaking San Francisco's domination of the area—expectations dashed when the Pacific Coast railroad projects were centered at the Golden Gate, tightening the chains of regional domination.

For several western cities in 1880 the railroad seemed to hold promise of future greatness. Texas already possessed a regional network. At Galveston the Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railroad connected with other routes at Houston. Another line, the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway, which passed west of Houston at Rosenberg's Junction, thrust north via Temple and Fort Worth to Denison. Houston remained the railroad center of Texas. To the north the Houston and Texas Central Railroad ran to Denison; the International and Great Northern Railroad, to Longview. The Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway had a western terminus in San Antonio; the Texas and New Orleans, an eastern one at Orange on the Sabine River. Other short roads, in addition to the Galveston, Houston and Henderson, were the narrow gauge Houston, East and West Texas Railway that stopped at Patterson, plus the Texas Transportation Company that terminated at Clinton. At San Antonio the International and Great Northern passed through town on tracks owned by the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio. The International and Great Northern ran through Austin, crossing the tracks of the Houston and Texas Central. The latter route's main line pushed through Dallas, which had two other railroads: the east-west Texas and Pacific Railroad, and a short line to Dallas called the Dallas and Wichita Railroad. Almost all observers recognized that the Kansas City connections made at Denison were the key to the success of regional railroad plans, because of needed speedy and direct access to the Midwest and Northeast. Unconsolidated lines in the South, most of which operated on other than standard gauge rails and which suffered from the effects of Reconstruction, offered unattractive alternatives.

Railroads failed to enhance the chances of a number of towns. In 1880 St. Joseph, according to a leader, was "well supplied with railroad connections." The St. Joseph and Western Division of the Union Pacific joined the main line at Grand Island, furnishing a link to the Far West. The Kansas City, St. Joseph and Council Bluffs was an imposing north-south artery. The St. Joseph and

Des Moines ended at an unimportant railhead in southern Iowa. The basic problem, however, was a direct western connection. The decision of the Hannibal and St. Joseph to divert its main line and the construction out of Omaha of the Union Pacific crippled St. Joseph's hopes at crucial junctures. Atchison had trouble obtaining an eastern line; the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and a short branch of the Kansas City, St. Joseph and Council Bluffs arrived too late to influence the course of events. Two other roads had only regional significance. The Burlington and Missouri River Railroad went straight west to Lenora in Central Kansas. The Missouri Pacific's north-south route swung through Atchison. The main line of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, upon which promoters had based great hopes, no longer started in Atchison. Sacramento's situation was more dismal. Unable to take advantage of its status as the starting point of the "Pacific Railroad," the city soon became just another division point on the Central Pacific. Several branch lines provided service to the northern California communities of Placerville, Shingle Springs, and Napa Junction. Portland would soon experience the same railroad expectations followed by bitter disappointments. In 1880 two roads, the Oregon and California Railroad to Roseburg and the Western Oregon Railroad to Corvallis, seemed to place Portland in a position to continue dominating the Northwest after the arrival of eastern rails. Of course, this failed to happen, although it did happen in another town that eagerly waited for cross-country connections—Los Angeles.

For other localities the railroad had limited effect or led to domination by more powerful centers. Lincoln, unimportant until the 1870s, was fortunate to have as good connections as it did. The Union Pacific built a branch into the city from its main line, north of the Platte River, at Valley. The Burlington and Missouri River, with offices in Lincoln, had constructed lines throughout southern Nebraska and on into Colorado and Kansas. Blunders by Leavenworth interests in dealing with railroads doomed the town to secondary status prior to the coming of any major connections. By the end of the seventies, Leavenworth had a branch of the Union Pacific and a trunk of the Missouri Pacific. Two fast express trains daily made eastern connections at St. Louis. A local route, the Kansas Central Railroad, had tracks from Leavenworth to Minneapolis in central Kansas. Topeka and

Lawrence failed to benefit in a larger sense from the main lines of the Union Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. They were too far east to turn the cattle drives to their advantage and too close to Kansas City to do much more than augment already existing marketing arrangements. Leadville's location mitigated against serious railroad plans. The community was fortunate to have two Denver roads, the South Park and the Denver and Rio Grande. The Southern Pacific, the South Pacific Coast, and the Central Pacific ran through San Jose, increasing the city's subservience to San Francisco. Stockton, on the Central Pacific, had no chance of prospering as a rail center, despite the construction by local promoters of two insignificant roads: the Stockton and Copperopolis Railroad that terminated thirty miles away at Milton, and the Stockton and Visalia Railroad that had thirty-four miles of track running to Oakdale.

Salt Lake City had the worst railroad links of any major frontier town. There were only three short routes. The Utah Western Railroad terminated thirty-seven miles to the west at an uninviting spot in the salt flats. The Utah Southern Railroad ended at Frisco, Utah; the Utah Northern Railroad connected with the Central Pacific at Ogden. Salt Lake City lay south of the transcontinental, which passed around the northern rim of Great Salt Lake. While direct east-west rail communications were not crucial to the continued growth and development of the city, construction activities helped Ogden and Logan. In fact, they might have gained supremacy in Utah if they had succeeded in overcoming the strong commitment of the Mormon hierarchy to Salt Lake City. While rails alone sometimes failed to bring victory, as many places learned to their sorrow, no one denied that they increased the chances of success. An inability to obtain railroads had the seeds of disaster, as Virginia City, without any lines, learned.

Wherever the railroads went they established superiority over other land transportation. By the time of the building of important railroads, roads and trails extended to all western cities. The Oregon Trail, the Central Overland Road, the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Route, the Santa Fe Trail, the Southern Overland Mail Route, the California Trail, the Smoky Hill Road, and other wagon trails snaked across the vast expanse of the West. These famous routes of the Indians, the explorers, the mountain

men, and the pioneers tended to follow the easiest grades and to lead to water. Crudely built and inadequately maintained local and private roads complemented the main stems, surveyed and laid out by the United States Army and the Department of Interior. Over the vast network rumbled the broad-wheeled wagons of the emigrant trains, the heavy wagons of the commercial freighters, and the stages carrying mail and passengers.

By the 1860s large numbers of people and tremendous amounts of freight moved over the roads. The towns along the Missouri served as outfitting points for migrants, and as supply points for mining operations, army bases, and Indian agencies. Denver and Salt Lake City sold supplies for the trail. Thousands of tons of provisions moved with regularity. In 1865, according to one observer, 1,256 men, 4,197 wagons, 27,685 oxen, and 6,164 mules moved 42 million pounds of freight out of Atchison alone. Equally impressive were the entrepreneurial dimensions of the California Stage Company, a Sacramento concern. The line operated stages every twenty-four hours on a regular seven-day schedule over a 700-mile route between Sacramento and Portland, as well as numerous feeder routes in California. This system, which employed close to 200 men, used 1,000 horses and 134 coaches for twenty-eight daily runs over 2,000 miles of road.

Just how significant roads were in determining the final patterns of urban development was a moot consideration, because of the railroad. Moreover, it would have taken advances in vehicle design and far better road construction to serve an increasingly large population. As it was, roads enabled San Francisco and Salt Lake City to capture important hinterlands and Atchison to establish itself as a medium-sized city before the arrival of railroads. The connections aided places like Lawrence, San Jose, and Dallas in hewing out local marketing areas. Draft animals and wagons remained in wide use following the completion of railroads. Some main routes, though, lost most long-haul freight almost immediately: overland stage and wagon lines went out of business on the Santa Fe Trail after 1878 when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad reached New Mexico. Even so, long wagon trains remained a common sight until railroads started running special "immigrant trains" in the 1880s.<sup>12</sup>

Traffic on inland and coastal waters formed another part of frontier transportation. Canals were never extensively used, be-

cause of a combination of topography and the passing of an era. The canal boom east of the Mississippi ended with the Panic of 1837. In 1880 there were only two short canals of significance in the West, one aiding Galveston and the other Portland. The Brazos Canal between Galveston and the Brazos River, dug in 1850-51, was 38 miles long. Eight miles were canal; the rest, lake and coastal waters. The canal, open to vessels with a draft of up to four feet, allowed passage over 150 miles of previously unreached rivers. Of equal importance was the Willamette Canal at Oregon City. Two-thirds of a mile long, it by-passed a falls. Completed in 1873, it annually handled over 30,000 tons of freight and carried around 30,000 passengers.<sup>13</sup>

Steamboats were of greater consequence, in spite of the limited navigability of Western streams. As a general rule, steamboating grew in direct correlation to settlement and declined in relationship to railroad construction. Still, some steamboating held on tenaciously, often in combination with railroads. While the "Arizona fleet" of the Colorado Steam Navigation Company running between San Francisco and Yuma, via the Gulf of California and the Lower Colorado River, came to an abrupt end when the Southern Pacific reached Yuma, paddle- and side-wheelers continued to churn along the Gulf Coast and on the Texas rivers, the Missouri and its tributaries, and in Pacific coastal regions. Texas shipping interests moved large numbers of passengers and substantial quantities of freight on the serpentine Brazos and its tributaries, some of which were open to traffic only a couple of weeks a year. On the Missouri River railroad extensions interrupted the long hauls by steamboats, but the boats continued to operate profitably for years between the railroads. Forty-four steamers operated on the Missouri, Platte, and Kansas rivers, along with the Red River of the North. Twelve thousand tons of boats represented a capital investment of \$500,000. They carried over 100,000 passengers and 200,000 tons of freight. More impressive were the statistics for the Pacific trade, with 319 inspected craft. Of these, 178 were in California, 89 in Oregon, and 52 in Washington. The steamboats averaged slightly over 300 tons and cost around \$20,000. During 1880 they hauled two million tons of freight and transported seven million passengers. The service had been even more important before railroad competition forced several lines out of business.

Pacific Coast steamboats carried a substantial share of traffic. They chugged in California along the Sacramento, San Joaquin, and American rivers, and conducted ferrying operations on San Francisco Bay. In Oregon and Washington the Columbia River had 300 miles of navigable waters from its mouth, except for railroad portages of 6 miles at the Cascades and 15 miles at the Dalles. Steamboats traveled 155 miles of the Willamette, and worked such streams as the John Day's, Umatilla, Walla Walla, Snake, Rogue, Coos, and Coquille. By the seventies the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company, owned indirectly by the Northern Pacific Railroad, dominated the larger share of the business.<sup>14</sup> Still, impressive statistics aside, steamers played an inconclusive role in furthering urbanization. They helped Portland, Kansas City, Galveston, and San Francisco to develop extensive hinterlands. They allowed Stockton, Atchison, and Sacramento to expand their economic bases. But they failed to generate the rapid expansion needed to make impressive cities out of the "steamboat towns" of Fort Benton, Yuma, and Yankton. Yuma's markets fell before the onslaught of the Southern Pacific. The Missouri River had enabled Yankton, South Dakota, and Fort Benton, Montana, to build vast hinterlands, but both lost their trade after being by-passed by railroads. Shippers routed most of the old Yankton traffic through Minneapolis-St. Paul and Bismarck, and railroads boomed Great Falls, Montana, at Fort Benton's expense.

Ocean trade was more crucial in the building of an urban West. The towns helped the most had excellent natural harbors and good connections into the interior. San Francisco was a major American port. "From his windows on Russian Hill one saw always something strange creeping through the mists of the bay," a long-time resident recalled. "It would be a South Sea Island brig, bringing in copra, to take out cotton and idols; a Chinese junk after sharks' livers; an old whaler, which seemed to drip oil, home from a year of cruising in the Arctic. Even the tramp windjammers were deep-chested craft, capable of rounding the Horn or of circumnavigating the globe; and they came in streaked and picturesque from their long voyaging."<sup>15</sup> In 1880 the customs district reported the entering and clearing of 1,291 ships engaged in the foreign trade and 531 in the coastal trade and fisheries. Imports totaled \$41,265,317 and exports \$37,213,443. By way of comparison, Boston in the same year ranked second nationally in imports,

with \$68,609,658 worth, and third in exports, with an amount of \$58,023,587. San Francisco dominated the Pacific Coast trade as far north as Alaska and south as Panama. The only other Pacific ports of consequence were Oakland and Portland. On the Gulf of Mexico, Galveston had wharfage for approximately 100 vessels and numerous small craft. In 1880 some 368 ships in the foreign trade entered or cleared, with imports of \$1,107,241 and exports of \$16,712,861.<sup>16</sup> Over the next several decades new ports—Houston and Corpus Cristi on the Gulf, and San Diego, Long Beach, Seattle, and Tacoma on the Pacific—would rise. But San Francisco and the others garnered enough trade to remain important in the face of new competitors.

The frontier communities profited from the technological advances of the nineteenth century. Gaslights brightened the night, telephones speeded the transmission of messages, and interurbans eased travel. The railroads, the steamboats, and the horse-drawn wagons bound the West together, while at the same time changing sectional boundaries. Equally significant was the readiness of westerners to draw on technological achievements perfected in other places. Gaslights and telephones had appeared swiftly on the frontier. Once in a while a western city led in using specialized new means, as San Francisco with the cable car and Denver with electric lighting. The application of inventive genius helped urban life as understood by easterners to move to the West very quickly. By 1880 the cities of the "Great West"—despite the mythology fostered by pulp magazines and dime novels—were no longer frontier outposts.

## CHAPTER 7

# The West of Magnificent Cities

Town promoter William Gilpin was born into a wealthy Pennsylvania family in 1813 and died in 1894. In the course of a colorful life he participated in numerous western promotional projects. Some of his designs failed, most notably his schemes for making vast sums of money at "Linn City," an early name for Portland, or at "Centropolis," his designation for the Kansas City area. On another occasion his grandiose San Luis Valley project in Colorado met with less than success. He never made much money on the 600,000-acre tract. Investors did not respond positively to his claims that the "immense elliptical bowl" was a "colossal staircase" and "elevated bench" of "constant brilliancy" abounding in "crevices charged and infused with the richest ores."<sup>1</sup> While no great cities sprang from the wilderness of the San Luis "gold belt," temporary setbacks seldom discouraged Gilpin for very long. He cut his losses and moved on to another venture.

After the Civil War, Gilpin concentrated on promoting Denver, which he called "Cosmopolis." In an 1870 address he linked the growth of Denver to broader aspirations. "It is to the infallible judgements and the intrepid valour of the pioneers that the American people owe the selection of Colorado and the auspicious site of Denver," he said. "With the pioneer army rests the glory which has vindicated the mission of America, which preserves, enlarges, and perpetuates the Continental union of the states . . . enervated by nepotism to the foolish fashions of Europe. . . . Advancing to meet and embrace this fresh and splendid arena



. . . the pioneer army selects *Denver*." Viewing the Rocky Mountain city as the center of the world, he declared: "Here the geography and drainage of the Atlantic comes to an end; that of the Pacific is reached. Infallible instinct adheres to the Isothermal Axis! Here is the propitious point to receive the column from Asia, debouching from the ocean and the mountains to radiate and expand itself *eastward* over the unobstructed area of the Mississippi Basin! We consent to face about! The rear becomes the front! Asia in the front; Europe in the rear! . . . *Denver* is . . . a focal point for the great radiating rivers, six in number, whose channels form a multitude of unbroken grades descending to the Atlantic."<sup>2</sup> Gilpin made a large amount of money in Denver real estate. He indicated without undue modesty that he "found no great difficulty in making a million or two of dollars."

In the twilight of his life Gilpin continued to write and lecture widely on the importance of the American West. He took a measure of satisfaction from his financial success and the coming to pass of many of his early assertions. Observers who had once considered him a buffoon or lunatic finally began to take him seriously. As early as 1853 he had believed that a transcontinental railroad was essential to human progress. He stated that the road would reverse "a standing inconvenience in the pathway of mankind" by bridging a gap in the "universal comity of all nations of all continents." Removal of the "distracting barrier" would "fill out and complete the cricle in which three continents and a hundred nations bind the hemisphere of the north in one endless and graceful zodiac." By 1890 his "harmonizing railroad" assumed international proportions. A "Cosmopolitan Railroad" would cover all the continents, crossing oceans on bridges and car ferries. It would create a vast marketing community designed to further trade and understanding between races, assuring generations of peace. "The cosmopolitan railway will make the world one community," he asserted. "It will reduce separate nations to families of one great nation."

He saw the urban West as the unifying element in the "Cosmopolitan Railroad." Shortly before his death he commented, "The future is not fulfilled. It is still in its infancy. I was laughed at nearly half a century ago and can afford to be laughed at now. I probably shall not live to see it, but the future generations will build a railroad up through Alaska and cross the Behring Strait to

Siberia, and on through to China, India and the Russian empire. There are 100,000 live, wide-awake engineers in this country, who could build a railroad to the moon if you would give them money enough. . . . My old Centropolis, Cosmopolis, and Linn City, will be as I predicted. My prediction of the building of this great railway does not seem half so wild as my old theory did to the Missouri farmers when I wanted to lay off a townsite and call it Centropolis, where now nearly a quarter of a million people live, but this greatness is only in its infancy!"<sup>3</sup>

Gilpin died peacefully in his sleep during the early hours of 20 January 1894, half a year after Frederick Jackson Turner read a paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," before a summer meeting in Chicago of the American Historical Association. Discussing the importance of the 1890 census announcement of the closing of the frontier, Turner stated, "The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people—to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life. . . . From the conditions of frontier life came intellectual traits of profound importance. . . . The result is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier. . . . And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period in American history."<sup>4</sup> In general terms Gilpin would have agreed with Turner, particularly on the greatness and uniqueness of the West. However, Gilpin considered urbanization a continuing phenomenon that would carry forward long after there was no more free land. The rise of cities would not stop with Kansas City, Denver, and San Francisco. Although

Gilpin died before Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Oklahoma City became major components of the American urban network, he would hardly have expressed surprise.

By 1890 the frontier had ended for towns that ten years earlier were citadels of civilization in the barren expanses of the West. They emerged from their formative years as mature communities that could not afford to rest upon their laurels. The cruel process of town building continued unabated. To remain a contender for great urban honors, a city needed to constantly generate increased economic growth to sustain rapid population growth. Certain developments had already seemingly set various cities on unalterable courses. Regional dominance followed Kansas City's obtaining the first bridge over the Missouri River, and Denver became important by manipulating the route of the Union Pacific-Eastern Division. Stockton, Lawrence, and Lincoln appeared doomed to the second rank. Natural disasters lay ahead for Galveston (the tidal wave of 1900) and San Francisco (the earthquake of 1906). Dallas and San Jose appeared to have limited prospects. And, while hope abounded in Los Angeles, in 1880 it ranked nineteenth in size on the urban frontier and two hundred and third nationally. Cities established by aggressive promoters and sustained by decades of optimistic propaganda seldom accepted defeat. They persevered, whatever the odds, as long as there was a chance of success.

Nine of the old frontier cities had growth rates in excess of 100 percent in the 1880s, as Table 7-1 shows.<sup>5</sup> The spectacular growth rates for Omaha and Lincoln showed the impact of increased settlement in Nebraska. Most of Los Angeles' 350.64 percent enlargement came after the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe reached the community. New Texas trade areas brought upward movement in Dallas. Portland lost ground in terms of economic importance in the Northwest, even with a 163.90 percent augmentation. Because of a forty thousand jump in suburban residents, Kansas City actually did better than its recorded 137.91 percent. Salt Lake City's growth disappointed local leaders and reflected the relatively sluggish economy of Utah Territory. Topeka's 100.67 percent left it far in arrears of Kansas City.

Nine other of the twenty-four communities grew faster than the national average of 26 percent, as Table 7-2 illustrates. Economic progress in Texas allowed San Antonio's population to rise

THE WEST OF MAGNIFICENT CITIES

TABLE 7-1

NINE FRONTIER CITIES WITH GROWTH RATES OVER 100 PERCENT IN THE 1880s

<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>		<i>Increase</i>	
	<i>1890</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Dallas .....	38,067	10,358	27,709	267.51
Denver .....	106,713	35,629	71,084	199.51
Kansas City .....	132,716	55,785	76,931	137.91
Lincoln .....	55,154	13,003	42,151	324.16
Los Angeles .....	50,395	11,183	39,212	350.64
Omaha .....	140,452	30,518	109,934	360.23
Portland .....	46,385	17,577	28,808	163.90
Salt Lake City .....	44,843	20,768	24,075	115.92
Topeka .....	31,007	15,452	15,555	100.67

by 83.32 percent, Houston's by 66.88 percent, Austin's by 32.34 percent, and Galveston's by 30.73 percent. St. Joseph had a growth rate of 61.34, although it fell behind Omaha and Kansas City. San Francisco's 27.80 percent seemed small, but it represented a population aggrandizement of 65,038. San Jose, Oakland, and Stockton added people too slowly to attain economic independence.

Three towns had rates below the national average, and three others actually decreased markedly, as shown by Table 7-3. Sacramento's growth rate was unimpressive, compared with other Cali-

TABLE 7-2

NINE FRONTIER CITIES THAT GREW FASTER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE IN THE 1880s

<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>		<i>Increase</i>	
	<i>1890</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Austin .....	14,575	11,013	3,562	32.34
Galveston .....	29,084	22,248	6,836	30.73
Houston .....	27,557	16,513	11,044	66.88
Oakland .....	48,682	34,555	14,127	40.88
St. Joseph .....	52,324	32,431	19,893	61.34
San Antonio .....	37,673	20,550	17,123	83.32
San Francisco .....	298,997	233,959	65,038	27.80
San Jose .....	18,060	12,567	5,493	43.71
Stockton .....	14,424	10,282	4,142	40.28

TABLE 7-3  
SIX FRONTIER CITIES THAT GREW MORE SLOWLY THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE  
IN THE 1880s OR LOST IN POPULATION

City	Population		Increase	
	1890	1880	Number	Percent
Atchison .....	13,963	15,105	-1,142	- 7.56
Lawrence .....	9,997	8,510	1,487	17.47
Leadville .....	10,384	14,820	-4,436	-29.93
Leavenworth .....	19,768	16,546	3,222	19.47
Sacramento .....	26,386	21,420	4,966	23.18
Virginia City .....	8,511	10,917	-2,406	-22.04

fornia medium-sized towns. Leavenworth, Lawrence, and Atchison suffered from Kansas City's increasing dominance of Kansas trade. The discontinuance of mining activities brought sharp drops of 22.04 percent in Virginia City and 29.93 percent in Leadville. The day was at hand for these communities to reassess and scale down the aims that had sustained them at the height of their eminence.

During the 1880s a number of places underwent the initial stages of urbanization. Eight localities achieved populations of 15,000 or more: Fort Worth, Texas; Kansas City and Wichita, Kansas; Pueblo, Colorado; Tacoma, Seattle, and Spokane, Washington; and San Diego, California. The cattle town of Fort Worth became a serious rival of Dallas, going from a population of 6,663 to 23,076, a gain of 246.33 percent. Another cattle town, Wichita, crushed such local rivals as El Dorado, Caldwell, and Wellington in a spirited battle for domination of a flourishing regional market in south-central Kansas and Oklahoma Indian Territory. At the start of the eighties, Wichita had 4,911 inhabitants; in the next ten years it grew by 385.71 percent to 23,853. Kansas City, Kansas, by incorporating several adjoining localities, rose from 3,200 to 38,316 people, an increase of 1,097.38 percent. Pueblo gained 663.38 percent, going from 3,217 to 24,558 residents, in the course of hewing out a trading area in southern Colorado. Tacoma and Seattle were small villages of 1,098 and 3,533, respectively, in 1880. During the decade they advanced with incredible speed; Tacoma by 3,179.23 percent and Seattle by 1,112.48 percent. The former had 36,006 persons and the latter 42,837. More fantastic was the rate of 5,592.00 percent for Spokane,

where railroads and lumber combined to start a great boom. The number of citizens rose from 350 to 19,922 in ten years. San Diego's 512.78 percent enlargement, which translated into a population increase of from 2,637 to 16,159, seemed almost small by comparison.

The future held various degrees of hope and brightness for these towns. Kansas City, Kansas, had no real prospects of achieving an independent identity. Wichita had vast possibilities if it could corner the Oklahoma trade. Pueblo had a chance to establish a promising subregion, if it succeeded in countering vigorous competition from Trinidad and Colorado Springs. Fort Worth posed a major threat to Dallas, with both cities already engaged in a bitter struggle. San Diego's fine harbor engendered a high measure of optimism among the business leadership. The progress and prosperity that followed the arrival of the railroad in Tacoma and Seattle convinced promoters that both cities might advance within a short time to the status of a major metropolis. Spokane looked confidently ahead to solidifying authority over eastern Washington, northern Idaho, and western Montana.

The rapid ascent of new centers signified that urbanization in the West had entered another era. Numerous cities that moved from small beginnings in 1880 to between 8,000 and 15,000 by 1890 reflected the changed conditions. The building of trunk and feeder railroads opened vast territories to settlement and speculation. The movement of farmers into Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas; the spreading of the cattle industry into eastern Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana; the mining of mineral wealth in the mountains of Montana, Arizona, and New Mexico; and the cutting of timber in Idaho, Washington, and northern California had a tremendous impact. These developments created a need for a network of marketing communities within the hinterlands of already established or emerging regional metropolises.

The 1890 census reported that "all over the west smaller cities have sprung up as if by magic." In Texas, Denison increased from 3,975 to 10,958, Laredo from 3,521 to 11,319, Waco from 7,295 to 14,445, El Paso from 736 to 10,338, and Paris from 3,980 to 8,254. These places all enjoyed growth rates of more than 100 percent; El Paso led with 1,304.62 percent. Kansas towns that crossed the 8,000 mark were Arkansas City (1,012 to 8,347), Fort Scott (5,372 to 11,946), and Hutchinson (1,540 to 8,682). Six

Nebraska towns surged beyond 8,000: Beatrice from 2,447 to 13,836, Hastings from 2,817 to 13,584, Kearney from 1,782 to 8,074, Nebraska City from 4,183 to 11,494, Plattsmouth from 4,175 to 8,392, and, within a few years after its founding, suburban South Omaha to 8,062. On the upper Great Plains, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, climbed from 2,164 to 10,177, for a 370.29 percent advance. In the Wyoming High Country the trading and railroad town of Cheyenne, after many false starts, added 8,234 people in the eighties, reaching a total of 11,690. At the base of the Rockies, Colorado Springs jumped from 4,226 to 11,140. Ogden, Utah Territory, grew from 6,069 to 14,889, and Butte, Montana, from 3,363 to 10,723. Alameda, the port for Oakland, moved from 5,708 to 11,165. Another California town, Fresno, expanded from 1,112 to 10,818.

In 1880 only twelve western towns had populations between 5,000 and 8,000. Five—Alameda, Fort Scott, Fort Worth, Ogden, and Waco—surpassed the 8,000 figure ten years later. Three experienced disappointing increases. In Texas, Marshall moved from 5,624 to 7,207; Sherman from 6,093 to 7,335. Vallejo, California, edged ahead from 5,987 to 6,343. Three others suffered losses: Tucson, Arizona Territory, dropped from 7,007 to 5,150 for a 26.50 percent decline; Santa Fe, New Mexico Territory, retrogressed 6.78 percent, going downward from 6,635 to 6,185; the mining town of Silver Cliff, Colorado, plummeted from 5,040 to under 2,500. The remaining place, Wyandotte, Kansas, no longer existed as a separate incorporation.

Twenty-six new communities had entered the 5,000 to 8,000 category by 1890, for a grand total of thirty-one in that range. Texas contained six: Corsicana (6,285), Gainesville (6,594), Palestine (5,838), Brenham (5,209), Brownsville (6,134), and Tyler (6,908). Despite a growth rate of 185.10 percent in Tyler, no place added as many as 4,500 inhabitants. There were seven towns in Kansas: Emporia stood at 7,551, Newton at 5,605, Ottawa at 6,248, Parsons at 6,736, Pittsburg at 6,697, Salina at 6,149, and Winfield at 5,184. There were 6,380 people in Independence, Missouri. Two Nebraska cities crossed the mark: Grand Island (7,536) and Fremont (6,747). Fargo, North Dakota, had 5,664 residents, and Laramie, Wyoming, 6,388. In Colorado there were 5,523 persons in Trinidad, 5,161 in Highlands, and 5,108 in Aspen. Four other places were in California: Santa Barbara

(5,864), Santa Cruz (5,596), Santa Rosa (5,220), and Berkeley (5,101). The Oregon coastal city of Astoria showed an enumeration of 6,184. The undramatic nature of the addition over ten years of 2,601 people in Newton and 3,297 in Trinidad obscured important changes. Even though few of the localities had chances of sustaining a rapid rise, they added flesh to the bones of western urbanization.

The West added population at a greater rate than the rest of the nation from 1880 to 1890. One state, Nevada, lost 16,505 residents, suffering a drastic drop of 26.51 percent; a "stand-still" in mining disarranged the economy. New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah territories experienced small dilations, and only a quickening of agricultural settlement in Colorado prevented a reduction. However, the accelerated pace elsewhere more than made up for losses or slowdowns. The Dakotas increased by 278.41 percent, Nebraska by 134.06 percent, Kansas by 43.27 percent, and Texas by 40.44 percent. Many pioneers moved into the newly opened portions of Oklahoma Territory. Wyoming grew rapidly. Montana and Idaho soared, the former by 237.49 percent and the latter by 158.77 percent. Washington vaulted ahead fivefold, experiencing a 365.13 percent rise. Oregon gained 79.53 percent; California's ratio was 39.72 percent. "Mining, commerce, and manufactures in the western states and territories are in a much more advanced stage, as shown by the greater proportion of the urban element," wrote the compilers of the 1890 census. "Considered as a whole, the urban element in the Western division in 1890 constituted 29.99 per cent of the whole population, while in 1880 it constituted 23.97 per cent. It has therefore gained somewhat more rapidly than the total population."<sup>6</sup>

Fifty-four of the 448 cities of over 8,000 in the United States in 1890 were in the West. Four of these were among the twenty-eight metropolises of more than 100,000. San Francisco ranked eighth, Omaha twenty-first, Kansas City twenty-fourth, and Denver twenty-sixth. During the eighties the nation's urban population enlarged from 11,318,547 to 18,284,385, so that at the decade's end 29.10 percent of 62,622,250 Americans resided in places of 8,000 or more. In the same period the number of western urban dwellers almost tripled, going from 603,493 to 1,753,543. The 1890 census concluded that only Idaho, Arizona Territory, New Mexico Territory, North Dakota, and Oklahoma Territory



had no "urban populations." Five states were over 20 percent urban. California at 40.98 percent and Colorado at 37.07 percent were far above the national average. Washington was 28.27 percent urban, with all the growth having occurred in a ten-year period. In the same span, Utah Territory went from 14.43 percent to 28.73 percent; Nebraska from 9.62 percent to 24.46. Five other states had urban components of over 10 percent: Oregon (18.14 percent), Nevada (18.60 percent), Wyoming (19.26 percent), Montana (18.58 percent), and Kansas (11.62 percent). South Dakota was only 3.10 percent urban; over 30 percent of Missouri's urban residents lived in Kansas City and St. Joseph. Though the statistics may have disappointed some boosters, they afforded further proof that the urban frontier had ended.

In building cities western pioneers followed what they understood best. They rigidly copied older concepts of urban planning. Architecturally, they ignored Indian and Spanish forms. The governmental structures followed earlier norms. Police, fire, sewerage, street, and health departments displayed no changed features. Schools and churches moved westward almost *in toto*. The telephones and telegraphs, the railroads and steamboats, and the horsecars and cable cars were hardly unique. The ethnic composition of western communities resembled those in the land's other parts. Entertainment furnished no novelties, and the same applied to the general pursuit of culture. Neither promotional frenzy nor the pursuit of economic power was confined to the West.

The frontier cities were similar to those throughout the rest of the nation. Omaha's grid was much like that of Milwaukee. The buildings in St. Joseph resembled those in Terre Haute. Packing houses in Kansas City produced the same products as those in Chicago. The structure of government in San Jose and Atchison differed little from that in Shreveport and Akron. Police in Denver operated the same as those in Pittsburgh. Sacramento's fire department adhered to the same standards as its counterpart in Evansville. The sewerage of Los Angeles was the same quality as that of Newport, Rhode Island. San Antonio's street department functioned along the same lines as the one in Troy. The public health department in Dallas paralleled that in Winona. Schools in Lawrence and Leavenworth hardly varied from pedagogical establishments in Bangor and Petersburg. About the same

percentage of parishioners attended church in Topeka as in Lansing. San Francisco and Chicago had telephones, railroads, steamboats, horsecar lines, and cable cars. The ethnic composition of Lincoln compared with that of Council Bluffs. Opera houses in Leadville and Virginia City catered to the identical needs as the ones in New Orleans and East Saginaw. Portland, Oregon, and Portland, Maine, wanted exemplary cultural institutions. The promoters of Stockton, Austin, and Salt Lake City worked as hard as those in Chicopee, Macon, and Rockford. All cities—in the West as well as in the East—hoped to achieve greatness and used comparable means as they strove for success.

The cities of the West represented an extension of a process older than the Republic—exploration, settlement, and growth, a process that resulted in a nation of cities. This trend was already under way in 1880, when the West no longer meant fur-trading operations in Idaho, gold rushes in California, or cattle drives in Texas; instead, it meant street-cleaning machines clattering up the hills of San Francisco and steam engines moving freight in Houston. The urban frontier saw cities stretching from Kansas City to Los Angeles. This was the vision that Gilpin held, and this was what happened.

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# Notes

## CHAPTER 1: THE URBAN WEST

1. Much has been written about William Gilpin and his role in the development of the West. The most recent biography is Thomas Karnes, *William Gilpin: Western Nationalist* (Austin, 1970). Still, his life and ideas must be pieced together from a variety of sources. Gilpin, never averse to promoting his own activities, paid \$1,000 for a short biography by Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of the Life of William Gilpin* (San Francisco, 1889). Gilpin gave an interview to a Colorado friend, Will C. Ferrill, which the *Rocky Mountain Herald* in Denver reprinted on 4 January 1913. In addition to numerous articles, Gilpin authored three books: *The Central Gold Region* (Philadelphia, 1860), *Mission of the North American People* (Philadelphia, 1873), *The Cosmopolitan Railway* (San Francisco, 1890). Bernard De Voto revived interest in Gilpin in "Geopolitics with the Dew on It," *Harper's Magazine* 188:313-323 (March 1944). See also Charles Vevier, "American Continentalism: An Idea of Expansion, 1845-1910," *American Historical Review* 65:325-326 (January 1960); Kenneth Porter, "William Gilpin: Sinophile and Eccentric," *The Colorado Magazine* 37:245-267 (October 1960); Charles N. Glaab, "Visions of Metropolis: William Gilpin and Theories of City Growth in the American West," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 45:21-31 (Autumn 1961). There is a perceptive essay on Gilpin's influence in James Malin, *The Grasslands of North America: Prolegomena to Its History* (Lawrence, 1947). Of less importance is James Willard, "William Gilpin," *Dictionary of American Biog-*

- raphy* 7:316 (New York, 1931). Crucial to understanding Gilpin is J. Christopher Schnell, "Urban Promotion: The Contribution of William Gilpin in the Rise of the American West" (Master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1968). For a short summary see my article, "The Isothermal Zodiac + Concentric Circles + William Gilpin = Kansas City, Center of the Universe!" in *KC: The Kansas City Magazine* 64:28-29 (May 1974). The quotation is from Schnell, "Urban Promotion: The Contribution of William Gilpin in the Rise of the American West," 74-75.
2. Quoted by Christopher Schnell, "William Gilpin: Advocate of Expansion," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 19, pt. 3:30-37 (July 1969).
  3. There is an excellent description of town building in Chapter 5, "Town-Building and Development of Resources," in Glenn Quiett, *They Built the West: An Epic of Rails and Cities* (New York, 1934), 82-112. See also Patrick McLearn and J. Christopher Schnell, "Why the Cities Grew: A Historiographical Essay on Western Urban Growth, 1850-1880," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 27:162-177 (April 1972); Gilbert Stelter, "The City and Westerward Expansion: A Western Case Study," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 4:187-202 (April 1973). See also my article, "Chicago's Midwest Rivals: Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Milwaukee," *Chicago History: The Magazine of the Chicago Historical Society* 5:141-151 (Fall 1976).
  4. The Tacoma quote is from Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown (rev. by Charles N. Glaab), *A History of Urban America*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1976), 112; the Austin quote is from George E. Waring, Jr., comp., "The Southern and Western States," *Report of the Social Statistics of Cities (Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, vol. 19, pt. 2, Washington, 1886), 303. The latter massive compilation is a basic source on the characteristics of the American city in 1880. It contains detailed information on such things as location, topography, railroad communications, waterworks, places of amusement, drainage, municipal sanitation, police, fire protection, public schools, and cemeteries and historical background for almost all American cities of ten thousand or more in 1880, plus certain smaller ones of regional importance. The 222 cities covered constitute the backbone of the United States' urban society in the late nineteenth century. Part I of this indispensable study is entitled "The New England and Middle States." Herein-after cited in this and ensuing chapters as *Social Statistics of Cities*, either 1 or 2.*
  5. Typical was New Babylon, Kansas Territory. On paper a flourish-

- ing city, it had only one permanent structure, a small saloon. John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton, 1965), figures 218-219. See also J. Christopher Schnell and Katherine B. Clinton, "The New West: Themes in Nineteenth Century Urban Promotion," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 30:75-88 (January 1974).
6. Gilpin, *Mission of the North American People*, 76.
  7. Christopher Schnell, "William Gilpin and the Destruction of the Desert Myth," *Colorado Magazine* 46:131-144 (Summer 1969); Charles N. Glaab, "Jesup W. Scott and a West of Cities," *Ohio History* 73:3-12 (Winter 1964).
  8. Short and concise summaries on the rise of the urban frontier can be found in Glaab and Brown, *A History of Urban America*, 105-116; Bayrd Still, *Urban America: A History with Documents* (Boston, 1974), 217-224. The best survey of a single region of the West is Chapter 6, "The Power of the Metropolis," in Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York, 1965), 120-164. See also Earl Pomeroy, "The Urban Frontier of the Far West," John Clark, ed., *The Frontier Challenge: Responses to the Trans-Mississippi West* (Lawrence, 1971), 7-30, and Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York, 1975), 61-91.
  9. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:554-555. See also A. Theodore Brown, *Frontier Community: Kansas City to 1870* (Columbia, Mo., 1963). The latter is the only "urban biography" done on the early stages of Kansas City's history by a professional historian, but there are numerous other compilations that deal with the history of the community. These include Theodore S. Case, *History of Kansas City, Missouri* (Syracuse, 1888); Roy Ellis, *A Civic History of Kansas City* (Springfield, Mo., 1910); Darrell Darwood, *Crossroads of America* (New York, 1948); Henry C. Haskell, Jr., and Richard B. Fowler, *City of the Future* (Kansas City, 1950); Charles Spalding, *Annals of the City of Kansas City* (Kansas City, 1858); Carrie Whitney, *Kansas City, Missouri: Its History and People, 1808-1890*, 3 vols. (Kansas City, 1890). Similar kinds of local history studies exist for the other cities.
  10. The first quotation is from *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:544-545. Valuable information on the early history of Omaha can be found scattered through Alfred Sorenson, *Early History of Omaha, or, Walks and Talks Among the Old Settlers: A Series of Sketches in the Shape of a Connected Narrative of the Events and Incidents*

of *Early Times in Omaha, Together with a Brief Mention of the Important Events of Later Years* (Omaha, 1876). Sorenson was editor of the *Omaha Bee*. He updated his earlier work in Alfred Sorenson, *History of Omaha from the Pioneer Days to the Present Time* (Omaha, 1889). See also William Bradfield, *Stories of Omaha: Historical Sketches of the Midland City* (Omaha, 1898): Train is quoted in George Leighton, *Five Cities: The Story of Their Youth and Old Age* (New York, 1939), 140.

11. The quotation is from *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:561-562. See *History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Mo.: From the Time of the Platte Purchase to the End of the Year 1915* (St. Joseph, 1915). The *St. Joseph Daily News* published an earlier edition of this work in 1898. Information on community origins can be found in W. A. Wood, "Beginning of the City of St. Joseph," *Magazine of American History* 26:107-114 (August 1891).
12. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:762. Valuable data on the growth and economic character of Leavenworth can be found in W. S. Burke and J. L. Rock, *The History of Leavenworth, the Metropolis of Kansas and the Chief Commercial Center West of the Missouri River* (Leavenworth, 1880). The local board of trade claimed to have issued fifty thousand copies. Of far more limited value are two "local histories," H. Miles Moore, *Early History of Leavenworth City and County* (Leavenworth, 1906), Jesse A. Hall and Leroy T. Hand, *History of Leavenworth County Kansas* (Topeka, 1921). A recent book, J. H. Johnston III, *Leavenworth: Beginning to Bicentennial* (Leavenworth, 1976), contains much valuable material.
13. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:751-752; the quotation is from Atchison, *The Railroad Center of Kansas: Its Advantages for Commerce and Manufactures* (Atchison, 1874), 13. Of limited value are Sheffield Ingalls, *History of Atchison County Kansas* (Lawrence, 1916), 64-83; *Atchison Centennial: 1854-1954* (Atchison, 1954). See also Joseph Snell and Don Wilson, "The Birth of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad," *The Kansas Historical Quarterly* 34:113-142, 325-364 (Summer and Autumn 1968).
14. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:739-740. See also *Lincoln: The Capital City and Lancaster County, Nebraska*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1916).
15. Samuel Rades, comp., *Rades' Biennial Directory to the Inhabitants, Institutions, Manufacturing Establishments, Business Firms, Etc., of the City of Topeka, for 1876-1877* (Topeka, 1875), 30. See also *Topeka Illustrated, Its Progress and Importance: A*

- Descriptive and Statistical Review of Her Resources, Advantages and Facilities in Trade, Commerce and Manufactures, Together with a Delineation of Her Representative Establishments* (Topeka, 1887). Less useful are *Historical Sketch of Shawnee County, Kansas: Prepared for the Occasion of the Centennial Celebration* (Topeka, 1876) and Mary Jackson, *Topeka Pen and Camera Sketches* (Topeka, 1890). The statehouse battle is covered in F. W. Giles, *Thirty Years in Topeka: A Historical Sketch* (Topeka, 1886), 246-255. There is no historical sketch of Topeka in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2.
16. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2: 757-758. Most of what has been written about Lawrence has dealt with its early history and the subsequent disasters. With little exaggeration, one author has written, "More, perhaps, was spoken and written about Lawrence, Kansas Territory, in the 1850's than about any other town in the nation" (Allen Crafton, *Free State Fortress: The First Ten Years of the History of Lawrence, Kansas* (Lawrence, 1954), preface). Richard Cordley, *A History of Lawrence, Kansas from the First Settlement to the Close of the Rebellion* (Lawrence, 1895), provides a detailed narrative account of the town's trials and tribulations. There are a number of accounts of Quantrill's Raid: Joseph Boughton, *The Lawrence Massacre by Quantrill August 21, 1863, as Given by Eye Witnesses of the Barbarous Scene Unparalleled in the History of Civilized Warfare* (Lawrence, 1884); John C. Shea, *Reminiscences of Quantrill's Raid Upon the City of Lawrence, Kas.: Thrilling Narratives by Living Eye Witnesses* (Kansas City, 1879); S. W. Brewster, *Incidents of Quantrill's Raid on Lawrence, August 21, 1863: The Remarkable and Heretofore Unpublished Personal Experiences of Hon. Henry S. Clarke* (Lawrence, 1898); C. R. Green, ed., *Quantrill's Raid on Lawrence* (Lyndon, Kans., 1899); *Quantrill's Raid, Aug. 21-1863; From the Autobiography of Peter D. Ridenour, Who Survived the Raid*, *Historical Society* (Lawrence, 1963). It would almost seem as if nothing else of importance happened in Lawrence. A refreshing change from blood and gore is an unpretentious little memoir of a woman who grew up in Lawrence in the 1860s and 1870s, Agnes Emery, *Reminiscences of Early Lawrence* (Lawrence, 1954).
17. The mayor is quoted in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2: 800-803. The best condensed account of the rise of San Francisco is Quiett, *They Built the West*, 182-255. He noted in his bibliography that material on San Francisco was "practically limitless." The spirit of the town prior to the earthquake is caught in a forty-seven page account, Will Irwin, *The City That Was* (New York, 1906). See



- also such varied works as Samuel Huhell, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco, 1878); *The Bay of San Francisco: The Metropolis of the Pacific Coast, and its Suburban Cities: A History* (Chicago, 1892); John Young, *San Francisco: A History of the Pacific Coast Metropolis* (San Francisco, 1912); Bailey Millard, *History of the San Francisco Bay Region* (San Francisco, 1924); Charles Dobie, *San Francisco: A Pageant* (New York, 1933); Bernard Taper, ed., *Mark Twain's San Francisco* (New York, 1963); Robert Mayer, *San Francisco: A Chronological and Documentary History, 1542-1970* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., 1974); Robert W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York, 1974); Barth, *Instant Cities*.
18. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:783-784. See also Joseph E. Baker, *Past and Present of Alameda County*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1914); Edgar Hinhil, Jr., and W. E. McCann, *Oakland, 1852-1932*, 2 vols. (Oakland, 1939); Peter Conmy, *Beginnings of Oakland* (Oakland, 1961). Material on Oakland can be found in many of the books on San Francisco.
  19. The quotation is from *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:789-793. See the appropriate selections on Sacramento's early history in Rodman Paul, *The California Gold Discovery: Sources, Documents, Accounts and Memoirs Relating to the Discovery of Gold at Sutter's Mill* (Georgetown, Calif., 1969), and also in Julian Dana, *The Sacramento: River of Gold* (New York, 1939).
  20. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:817-818.
  21. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:816. The sketch on San Jose is short and incomplete. See also Amaury Mars, *Reminiscences of Santa Clara Valley and San Jose* (San Francisco, 1901).
  22. Lucius Beebe, "Virginia City," *The Encyclopedia Americana: International Edition*, 28:165 (New York, 1970); Quiett, *They Built the West*, 222-230. See also George Lyman, *The Saga of the Comstock Lode: Boom Days in Virginia City* (New York, 1934), which covers the period to 1865. There is no material on Virginia City in *Social Statistics of Cities*.
  23. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:823-824; the quotation on city building is from Glaab, *History of Urban America*, 114; the quotation on the New England flavor is from Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 135-139. See Quiett, *They Built the West*, 339-399; Dean Collins, "Portland: A Pilgrim's Progress," Duncan Aikman, ed., *The Taming of the Frontier* (New York, 1925), 157-200; Joseph Gaston, *Portland, Ore.: Its History and Builders* (Chicago, 1911).
  24. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:779-780. The best urban biog-

- ographies of Los Angeles are Remi Nadeau, *Los Angeles from Mission to Modern City* (New York, 1960), and Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Cambridge, 1967). Actually, nothing much happened in an urban way in the Los Angeles basin prior to the boom that started in 1887 when the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad reached the area. The boom is covered in Glenn Dunke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (Los Angeles, 1944). See also Charles Willard, *The Herald's History of Los Angeles City* (Los Angeles, 1901); James Guinn, *A History of California and an Extended History of Los Angeles*, 3 vols. (Los Angeles, 1915); Boyle Workman, *The City that Grew* (Los Angeles, 1935); William Robinson, *Los Angeles from the Days of the Pueblo* (San Francisco, 1959); Lynn Bowman, *Los Angeles: Epic of a City* (Berkeley, 1974). There are some excellent old photographs of Los Angeles in Laurance Hill, *La Reina: Los Angeles in Three Centuries* (Los Angeles, 1929). An article of importance is Oscar Winther, "The Rise of Metropolitan Los Angeles, 1870-1910," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 10:391-405 (August 1947).
25. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:315-318; Howard Barnstone, *The Galveston That Was* (New York, 1966), 55. See also Joseph Dyer, *The Early History of Galveston* (Galveston, 1916); S. C. Griffin, *History of Galveston, Texas: Narrative and Biographical* (Galveston, 1931); Samuel Graham, ed., *Galveston Community Book: A Historical and Biographical Record of Galveston and Galveston County* (Galveston, 1945). The first decades of Galveston—as well as Houston, Austin, and San Antonio—are covered in fine fashion in Kenneth Wheeler, *To Wear a City's Crown: The Beginnings of Urban Growth in Texas, 1836-1865* (Cambridge, 1968).
  26. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:323-324; David McComb, *Houston: The Bayou City* (Austin, 1969), 41. The latter is a well-done urban biography. See also Marilyn Sibley, *The Port of Houston: A History* (Austin, 1968); Benjamin Carroll, ed., *Standard History of Houston, Texas, from a Study of the Original Sources* (Knoxville, 1912).
  27. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:327-329. There is considerable interesting material in William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar* (San Antonio, 1890). Of less worth are Boyce House, *City of Flaming Adventure* (San Antonio, 1949); Sam and Bess Woolford, *The San Antonio Story* (San Antonio, 1950); Edward Heusinger, *A Chronology of Events in San Antonio: Being a Concise History of the City Year by Year* (San Antonio, 1951). See also Ray

- Broussard, *San Antonio During the Texas Republic: A City in Transition* (El Paso, 1967).
28. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:301-303.
  29. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:311-312. See John William Rogers, *The Lusty Texans of Dallas* (New York, 1951); Stanley Walker, *The Dallas Story* (Dallas, 1954). Given the great importance of the place, there is a need for an analytical urban biography of Dallas.
  30. The quotation is from W. B. Vickers, *History of the City of Denver, Arapahoe County, and Colorado* (Chicago, 1880), 241. This is a massive compilation of 652 pages, containing a great deal of undigested research material. Denver's struggle for transportation is recounted in Quiett, *They Built the West*, 143-181. See also Jerome Smiley, ed., *History of Denver: With Outlines of the Early History of the Rocky Mountain Country* (Denver, 1901); Nolie Mumey, *History of the Early Settlements of Denver (1599-1860)* (Glendale, Calif., 1942); Nolie Mumey, *Prof. Oscar J. Goldrick and His Denver: Together with His Address on the Early History of Denver, July 4, 1876* (Denver, 1959); Agnes Spring, *The First National Bank of Denver: The Formative Years, 1860-1865* (Denver, 1960); Caroline Bancroft, *Denver's Lively Past* (Boulder, 1964); Bo Griffin, *Spirit of Denver* (Denver, 1964); Sandra Dallas, *Yesterday's Denver*, Seeman's Historic Cities No. 10 (Miami, 1974); Barth, *Instant Cities*; Lyle Dorsett, *The Queen City: A History of Denver* (Boulder, 1977). There is no historic sketch of Denver in the *Social Statistics of Cities*.
  31. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:773. See Duane Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington, 1967), and Rodman Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880* (New York, 1963). There is colorful material on social conditions in Forbes Parkhill, *The Wildest of the West* (New York, 1951).
  32. The public official is quoted in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:829-831. Much has been written about the Mormons, but relatively little about Salt Lake City. The best local history is an old book, Edward Tullidge, *The History of Salt Lake City and Its Founders* (Salt Lake City, 1885). However, it contains much information that does not relate directly to Salt Lake City. The quote about the glories of the Mormon experiment is on page 631. There is information on Salt Lake City's economy in Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, 1958). Social and intellectual conditions are covered in Barth, *Instant Cities*, 39-60.

See also Richard Burton, *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountain to California* (New York, 1862).

33. This conclusion was first stated in an article by myself and Robert L. Branyan, "The Development of an Urban Civilization on the Frontier of the American West," *Societas—A Review of Social History* 1:35-50 (Winter 1971). It is discussed in Bradford Luckingham, "The City in the Westward Movement—A Bibliographical Note," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 5:299 (July 1974). Luckingham states, "By 1880 the development of an urban civilization in Western America was plainly visible. City life familiar to easterners had moved west with the people. Adopting a host of urban characteristics, newer cities drew on the history of the older urban centers. Lawrence H. Larsen and Robert L. Branyan . . . point out that a western city would occasionally lead the way in innovation, but more common was the fact that 'as the United States became a nation of cities, the physical characteristics of western urban centers differed little from their eastern counterparts.' The urban frontier was not an area demanding experiment, but it did provide an opportunity for the extension and proliferation of existing trends, and 'for better or worse, western settlers, drawing on their previous experience, carried the accepted eastern norms throughout the American West.' "

## CHAPTER 2: DEMOGRAPHY, SOCIETY, AND ECONOMICS

1. The quotation is in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:762. The best available social mobility study of a western city is Howard Chudacoff, *Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha, 1880-1920* (New York, 1972).
2. Table XV, "Native Population of Fifty Principal Cities," *Statistics of the Population of the United States (Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, vol. 1, Washington, 1883), 536-537.
3. Table IX, "Population, as Native and Foreign-born, of Cities and Towns of 4,000 Inhabitants and Upward: 1880 and 1870," *Ibid.*, 447 (California and Colorado), 449 (Kansas), 452 (Missouri, Nebraska, and Nevada), 454 (Oregon), 455 (Texas), 456 (Utah Territory); Table VI, "Population, by Race, of Cities and Towns of 4,000 Inhabitants and Upward: 1880 and 1870," *Ibid.*, 416 (California and Colorado), 418 (Kansas), 421 (Mississippi, Missouri, and Nebraska), 324 (Oregon), 424 (Texas), 425 (Utah Territory). The material on black housing patterns in San Fran-

- cisco and Denver is from Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York, 1975), 287; for Kansas City, from a seminar paper by Dwayne Martin, "The Hidden Community," presented 14 December 1976, in my "Urban Factors in American History" graduate seminar at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.
4. Table IX, *Ibid.*, 448 (South Bend), 447 (Montgomery), 451 (Lawrence); Table VI, *Ibid.*, 418 (South Bend), 416 (Montgomery), 419 (Lawrence, Massachusetts).
  5. William Corner, ed., *San Antonio de Bexar: A Guide and History* (San Antonio, 1890), 2; Table IX, *Ibid.*, 453 (New York), 451 (St. Paul), 455 (Scranton), 454 (Cleveland).
  6. Table XVI, "Foreign-born Population of Fifty Principal Cities, Distributed, According to Place of Birth, Among the Various Foreign Countries: 1880," *Ibid.*, 538-539.
  7. Table VI, *Ibid.*, 416 (California cities and Denver), 423 (Portland), 421 (Virginia City), 421 (Omaha and St. Joseph), 424 (Texas). The table lumps Chinese and Japanese together. However, they are broken down in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:800 (San Francisco), 783 (Oakland). Only 149 Japanese immigrated to the United States between 1871 and 1880. Masako Herman, ed., *The Japanese in America, 1843-1973: A Chronology and Fact Book* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., 1973), 3. The Japanese government did not legalize labor emigration until 1884. Yamato Ichihashi, *Japanese in the United States: A Cultural Study of the Problems of Japanese Immigrants and Their Children* (Stanford, 1932), 93. For the Chinese see Betty Lee Sung, *Mountain of Gold: The Story of the Chinese in America* (New York, 1967); Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Universal Impact: The American Image of the Chinese, 1785-1882* (Berkeley, 1969).
  8. The quotation is from Will Irwin, *The City That Was* (New York, 1906), 43-45; *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:824.
  9. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:779 (Los Angeles), 800 (San Francisco), 743 (Omaha), 829 (Salt Lake City), 739 (Lincoln), 766 (Topeka), 301 (Austin). An 1879 city directory for San Antonio contained the names of 3,470 people of Mexican descent. Boyce House, *City of Flaming Adventure* (San Antonio, 1949), 164. An authority on Texas urbanization estimated that a decade earlier the population was between a third and a half Mexican. Kenneth Wheeler, *To Wear a City's Crown: The Beginnings of Urban Growth in Texas, 1836-1865* (Cambridge, 1968), 147. Using the 1880 manuscript census, I counted persons with Hispanic surnames for Los Angeles, San Jose, San Antonio, and Topeka.

I then added 10 percent to the total, applying a formula developed at Mexican universities and suggested by Philip A. Hernandez of the University of Colorado at Denver. Mexicans born in the United States are not identified by race in the printed schedules for 1880. See *1880 Census Population Schedules, California, Texas, Kansas*, Los Angeles County, Microfilm T-9, Rolls 66-67; Santa Clara County, Microfilm T-9, Rolls 81-82; Bexar County, Microfilm T-9, Roll 1291; and Shawnee County, Microfilm T-9, Rolls 396-397, in the Kansas City Federal Archives and Records Center, Kansas City, Mo. There is a need for books on the Mexican-American elements. See Livie Duran and H. Russell Bernard, ed., *Introduction to Chicano Studies: A Reader* (New York, 1973), and Wayne Moquin with Charles Van Doren, *A Documentary History of the Mexican Americans* (New York, 1973). The statistics for Indians in Virginia City are from the *1880 Census Population Schedules, Nevada*, Storey County, Microfilm T-9, Roll 759, in the Kansas City Federal Archives and Records Center, Kansas City, Mo.

10. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:739 (Lincoln), 743 (Omaha), 554 (Kansas City), 561 (St. Joseph), 751 (Atchison), 759 (Lawrence), 761 (Leavenworth), 766 (Topeka), 301 (Austin), 311 (Dallas), 315 (Galveston), 323 (Houston), 327 (San Antonio), 779 (Los Angeles), 783 (Oakland), 789 (Sacramento), 800 (San Francisco), 816 (San Jose), 817 (Stockton), 832 (Portland), 769 (Denver), 773 (Leadville), 829 (Salt Lake City). While the population of each city is broken down by sex in the *Social Statistics of Cities*, it is not in other parts of the 1880 census. So, there are no statistics for Virginia City in the printed schedules. The figures used are from the *1880 Census Population Schedules, Nevada*, Storey County.
11. Table 1, "Summary of Denominations for 124 Cities, by Cities," *Report on Statistics of Churches in the United States (Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890, vol. 50, Washington, 1894)*, 91.
12. Table 7, "Communicants or Members in Cities Having a Population of 100,000 to 500,000," *Ibid.*, 98-99; Table 11, "Communicants or Members in Cities Having a Population of 25,000 to 100,000," *Ibid.*, 112-115. These tables are hard to use. A recent study of Jews on the frontier concludes that by 1876 they "were primarily an urban group who held occupations and reflected the opinions of urban America and not necessarily of western America" (Robert E. Levinson, "American Jews in the West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 5:289 [July 1974]).
13. W. S. Burke and J. L. Rock, *The History of Leavenworth, The*

- Metropolis of Kansas and the Chief Commercial Center West of the Missouri River* (Leavenworth, 1880), 30; Agnes Emery, *Reminiscences of Early Lawrence* (Lawrence, 1954), 38-39.
14. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:748-749 (Omaha), 565-566 (St. Joseph), 756 (Atchison); *Report of the Commissioner of Education: 1880* (*Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, vol. 3, Washington, 1882), 22 (San Francisco), 311-312 (Houston and San Antonio), 188 (Kansas City), 202-203 (Virginia City), 102 (Leavenworth and Topeka), 32 (Denver).
  15. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:565-566, 748-749, 756; Table IX, "Statistics of Universities and Colleges for 1880," *Report of the Commissioner*, 640-675; Emery, *Reminiscences*, 93.
  16. The official is quoted in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:824.
  17. Western literary trends are lucidly discussed in Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York, 1965), 158-160. See Franklin Walker, *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (New York, 1939).
  18. Edward Tullidge, *The History of Salt Lake City and its Founders* (Salt Lake City, 1885), 589. The *Tribune* in Salt Lake City started as a pro-Mormon paper called the *Mormon Tribune*. After a "gentile" acquired it in the early 1870s, he changed both the name and the editorial policy. Pomeroy feels that western journalism had a distinctive flavor. "Although the press moved along with the theater into national orbits, drawing increasingly on the standardized offerings of the syndicates and deferring to styles set primarily in the East, it had a more distinctively regional flavor, even in the early years when the written word moved across the continent far more easily than performers and stage scenery," he says. "Westerners seemed to seek diversion, escape, and familiar entertainment on the stage; controversy in their newspapers" (*The Pacific Slope*, 154-157). Of course, the same thing could be said about other parts of the nation. The Denver material is from W. B. Vickers, *History of the City of Denver, Arapahoe County, and Colorado* (Chicago, 1880), 30-31. Robert T. Van Horn was an important Kansas City promoter in his own right. He is a leading figure in Charles N. Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads: Community Policy in the Growth of a Regional Metropolis* (Madison, 1962). Histories of newspapers tend to be self-serving. One of the best is William Rice, *The Los Angeles Star: 1851-1864* (Berkeley, 1947). The standard source on newspapers remains Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1962).
  19. The quotation is from *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:302. Most

- local histories contain lists of voluntary organizations. They were not unique in Austin. See also Bradford Luckingham, "Associational Life on the Urban Frontier: San Francisco, 1848-1856" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Davis, 1968).
20. Chapter 11, "The Rise of Sport," in Foster Rhea Dulles, *A History of Recreation: America Learns to Play*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1965), 182-199, summarizes post-Civil War trends in sports. The Houston team and its fortunes are discussed in David McComb, *Houston: The Bayou City*, 60. For information on the Kansas City franchise see *The Baseball Encyclopedia: The Complete and Official Record of Major League Baseball* (New York, 1969), 117. In 1884 a Kansas City team in the Union League won 16 and lost 63 and folded with the league.
  21. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:556 (Kansas City), 770 (Denver), 781 (Los Angeles), 325 (Houston), 331 (San Antonio), 832 (Salt Lake City), 776 (Leadville), 826 (Portland), pt. 1:454 (Boston), 111 (Albany); Vickers, *History of the City of Denver*, 291. There is a detailed theatrical history of Salt Lake City in Tullidge, *The History of Salt Lake City*, 735-767.
  22. *Statistics of the Population*, 855-859.
  23. Table XXXVI, "Persons in Selected Occupations in Fifty Principal Cities, etc.: 1880," *Ibid.*, 875 (Denver), 881 (Kansas City), 902 (San Francisco).
  24. *Ibid.*, 707.
  25. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:312; Burke and Rock, *History of Leavenworth*, 23.
  26. Table VI, "Manufactures of 100 Principal Cities by Totals: 1880," *Report of the Manufactures of the United States (Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, vol. 2, Washington, 1883)*, 379-380. The manufacturing census is discussed in terms of structure and reliability in Meyer Fishbein, *The Census of Manufactures: 1810-1890 (National Archives and Records Service Information Paper No. 50, Washington, 1973)*. Unfortunately the manuscript non-population schedules for all places of eight thousand or more in 1880 have been lost.
  27. Table VI, *Report of the Manufactures*, 436-437; *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:803.
  28. Table VI, *Report of the Manufactures*, 398 (Denver), 403 (Galveston), 435 (San Antonio and Salt Lake City), 419 (Oakland), 431 (Sacramento), 432 (St. Joseph), 420 (Omaha), 407 (Kansas City). The same statistical information appears in *Social Statistics of Cities*.
  29. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:722 (Denver), 322 (Galveston),



- 559-560 (Kansas City), 788 (Oakland), 749 (Omaha), 799 (Sacramento), 566 (St. Joseph), 835 (Salt Lake City), 332 (San Antonio), 813-815 (San Francisco).
30. The Workingmen's Party of California, which was violently anti-Chinese, elected mayors of San Francisco and Sacramento but lasted only three years, from 1877 to 1880. It was a portent of things to come. In the following decades antagonism between labor and capital became almost the norm in western labor relations, as both sides moved into positions of power. See Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 179-184; Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities*, 150-151.
  31. Numerous accounts deal with this well-known aspect of the western experience. See such works as Gilbert Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier: 1865-1900* (New York, 1966); Hiram Drache, *The Days of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of the North* (Fargo, 1964); Louis Atherton, *The Cattle Kings* (Bloomington, 1962); Thomas Cox, *Mills and Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry* (Seattle, 1974); C. B. Glasscock, *The War of the Copper Kings: Builders of Butte and Wolves of Wall Street* (New York, 1935); Duane Smith, *Horace Taber: His Life and the Legend* (Boulder, 1973); Glenn Quiett, *They Built the West: An Epic of Rails and Cities* (New York, 1934); Vernon Carstensen, "The Fishermen's Frontier on the Pacific Coast: The Rise of the Salmon Canning Industry," John Clark, ed., *The Frontier Challenge: Responses to the Trans-Mississippi West* (Lawrence, 1971), 57-60; Gene Gressley, *Bankers and Cattlemen* (New York, 1966); William Turrentine Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot: Investors in the American West after 1873* (Edinburg, 1968).
  32. The San Francisco leadership is discussed in Samuel Bowles, *Our New West* (Hartford, 1869), 340-341; Stevenson is quoted in Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 127.
  33. The author of a study of the early Kansas City business community states, "The example of Kansas City suggests that a major source for business profits in the development of the West lay in a nearly complete identification with the fortunes of the town site from the first stages of its growth" (Charles N. Glaab, "Business Patterns in the Growth of a Midwestern City," *The Business History Review* 33:156-174 [Summer 1959]).
  34. There is a need for analytical leadership studies of western cities. The founding of the dominant business organizations in Houston is discussed in David McComb, *Houston: The Bayou City* (Austin, 1969), 51. Information on the early leadership of Galveston,

Austin, and San Antonio can be found in Wheeler, *To Wear a City's Crown*. See also John Williams Rogers, *The Lusty Texans of Dallas* (New York, 1951). Quiett, *They Built the West*, has some material on the leaders of Omaha, Los Angeles, Denver, and Portland. Business interests in Los Angeles, Portland, Virginia City, and Salt Lake City are analyzed in Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*. Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Cambridge, 1967), contains valuable material, as does Glenn Dunke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (Los Angeles, 1944). There are no decent leadership studies for Stockton, San Jose, Sacramento, and Oakland. For Leadville see Duane Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington, 1967). Some material on Leavenworth can be found in Burke and Rock, *The History of Leavenworth*. For Atchison see Atchison, *The Railroad Center of Kansas: Its Advantages for Commerce and Manufactures* (Atchison, 1894). The dominant groups in Lincoln, Lawrence, and Topeka have to be pieced together from local histories. The evolution of economic power in St. Joseph is detailed in John D. McCaskey, "The First Family of Banks: St. Joseph, Missouri" (Master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1971).

35. Expenditures in Austin for the year ending 20 October 1879 ranged from \$563.57 for the city cemetery to \$12,505.59 for streets and bridges (*Social Statistics of Cities* pt. 2:309-310). Most local histories contain lists and sketches of leading public officials. In some instances they even detail major political controversies. Few books about the frontier deal adequately with the connection between business interests and politicians in framing community policy. One of the few that does is Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads*. See also the early sections of Walter Bean, *Boss Reuf's San Francisco* (Berkeley, 1952). Machinations in smaller western communities are covered in Robert Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York, 1968).

### CHAPTER 3: IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

1. William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar* (San Antonio, 1890), 2; the Los Angeles quotation is from Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York, 1965), 141. A picture on page X of the illustrations in Pomeroy's book shows Spring Street in 1885. Most local histories contain drawings or photographs of varying quality.

2. The quotation is from *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:791.
3. Will Irwin, *The City That Was* (New York, 1906), 15, comments on the low buildings in San Francisco prior to the earthquake and fire of 1906. Howard Barnstone, *The Galveston That Was* (New York, 1966), 19-88, has fine material on Galveston's architecture. A basic study of architectural trends is James Marston Fitch, *American Building: The Forces That Shape It* (New York, 1948). See also Thomas E. Tallmadge, *The Story of Architecture in America* (New York, 1936); Christopher Tunnard and Henry Hope Reed, *American Skyline: The Growth and Form of Our Cities and Towns* (New York, 1955); Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (New York, 1969). Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown (rev. by Charles N. Glaab), *A History of Urban America*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1976), 137-138, related Bogardus' contribution to urbanization.
4. Quoted in Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 137-138; Sandra Dallas, *Yesterday's Denver*, Seeman's Historic Cities Series No. 10 (Miami, 1974), 35; Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York, 1975), 185-187; Lawrence Hill, *La Reina: Los Angeles in Three Centuries* (Los Angeles, 1929), 18; *Atchison Centennial: 1854-1954* (Atchison, 1954); W. S. Burke and J. L. Rock, *The History of Leavenworth, The Metropolis of Kansas and the Chief Commercial Center West of the Missouri River* (Leavenworth, 1880), 39; Giles Mitchell, *There Is No Limit: Architecture and Sculpture in Kansas City* (Kansas City, 1934), 12-17. There is a fine clipping file on early Kansas City buildings in the Missouri Valley Room of the Kansas City Public Library. See also *Hughes Annual Kansas City Views, 1896* (Kansas City, 1896). In a special category is a beautiful book about the city, Creative Staff of Hallmark Editions, *Kansas City: An Intimate Portrait of the Surprising City on the Missouri* (Kansas City, 1973).
5. The Chinatown quote is from Irwin, *The City That Was*, 43; the other quotation is from Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 125-127; Barth, *Instant Cities*, 187-189.
6. John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America* (Princeton, 1965), figure 233. This magnificent book is the standard work on the history of urban planning in the United States.
7. There are small topographical maps for many of the towns in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:301 (Austin), 311 (Dallas), 327 (San Antonio), 739 (Lincoln), 743 (Omaha), 773 (Leadville), 800 (San Francisco), 817 (Stockton), 823 (Portland), 829 (Salt Lake City), 554 (Kansas City), 561 (St. Joseph), opposite 752 (Atchison),

- opposite 762 (Leavenworth), opposite 784 (Oakland), opposite 796 (Sacramento). The street design of the other cities have to be pieced together in other ways—from photographs, atlases, and observations.
8. Statements on topography for many cities appear in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:304-305 (Austin), 312 (Dallas), 318 (Galveston), 325 (Houston), 330 (San Antonio), 740 (Lincoln), 746 (Omaha), 753 (Atchison), 758 (Lawrence), 763 (Leavenworth), 767 (Topeka), 770 (Denver), 774 (Leadville), 780 (Los Angeles), 784 (Oakland), 794-795 (Sacramento), 804 (San Francisco), 816 (San Jose), 818 (Stockton), 825 (Portland), 831-832 (Salt Lake City), 555 (Kansas City), 562 (St. Joseph). The topography of Virginia City is mentioned in Lucius Beebe, "Virginia City," *The Encyclopedia Americana: International Edition* 28:165 (New York, 1970). There is a picture of Virginia City in 1861 as the frontispiece of George Lyman, *The Saga of the Comstock Lode: Boom Days in Virginia City* (New York, 1934).
  9. Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar*, 2.
  10. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:767 (Topeka), 770 (Denver).
  11. *Ibid.*, 831.
  12. The New England tourist was Samuel Bowles, *Our New West* (Hartford, 1869), 335; the San Francisco resident was Irwin, *The City That Was*, 17. See also *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:804.
  13. The quotation is in Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope*, 147-149. Reps, *The Making of Urban America*, 410-412, discussed Olmsted's plan.
  14. There is a short and clear discussion of Olmsted's career in Tunnard and Reed, *American Skyline*, 109-111. Chapter 12, "Cemeteries, Parks and Suburbs: Picturesque Planning in the Romantic Style," Reps, *The Making of Urban America*, 325-348, traces the origins of the "City Beautiful" movement. There is good material in William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City* (Columbia, 1964), xiii-xvii. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 1:210 (Gloucester), 385 (Woonsocket), 883 (Scranton), 878 (Reading), pt. 2:67 (Norfolk), 137 (Chattanooga), 446 (Fort Wayne), 429 (Youngstown), 680 (Oshkosh), 58 (Alexandria), 113 (Covington), 732 (Dubuque).
  15. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:754 (Atchison), 776 (Leadville), 325 (Houston), 305 (Austin), 313 (Dallas), 319 (Galveston), 759 (Lawrence), 770 (Denver), 819 (Stockton), 781 (Los Angeles), 785 (Oakland), 556 (Kansas City), 832 (Salt Lake City), 330 (San Antonio), 826 (Portland), 745-746 (Omaha), 795-796 (Sacramento), 764 (Leavenworth), 805 (San Francisco). See also Barth, *Instant Cities*, 200.

16. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:312 (Dallas), 318 (Galveston), 740 (Lincoln), 746 (Omaha), 563 (St. Joseph), 556 (Kansas City), 770 (Denver), 785 (Oakland), 819 (Stockton), 826 (Portland), 805 (San Francisco), 775 (Leadville); F. W. Giles, *Thirty Years in Topeka: A Historical Sketch* (Topeka, 1886), 402-404; Edward Tullidge, *The History of Salt Lake City and its Founders* (Salt Lake City, 1885), 55.
17. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:305 (Austin), 740 (Lincoln), 325 (Houston), 746 (Omaha), 759 (Lawrence), 770 (Denver), 556 (Kansas City), 775 (Leadville), 832 (Salt Lake City), 818-819 (Stockton), 780 (Los Angeles), 805 (San Francisco); David McComb, *Houston: The Bayou City* (Austin, 1969), 100.
18. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:825-826. See also George A. Soper, *Modern Methods of Street Cleaning* (New York, 1909), 7, 9, 11-12, 21-22; Winston A. Walden, "Nineteenth Century Street Pavements" (Master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1967), 6-7, 16, 20, 23, 29, 38, 40, 45, 49, 53; Blake McKelvey, *The Urbanization of America: 1860-1915* (New Brunswick, 1963), 88-89; Otto L. Bettmann, *The Good Old Days—They Were Terrible!* (New York, 1974), 3.

#### CHAPTER 4: SANITATION PRACTICES

1. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 1:83 (Burlington), 206 (Fitchburg), 22 (Baltimore), 634 (Rome), 225 (Holyoke), 709 (Newark), 611 (Poughkeepsie), 758 (Erie); pt. 2:723 (Davenport), 417 (Steubenville), 636 (Kalamazoo), 737 (Keokuk), 659 (Madison), 539 (Rockford), 705 (Winona), 719 (Council Bluffs), 124-125 (Louisville).
2. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:820 (Stockton), 833 (Salt Lake City), 558 (Kansas City), 565 (St. Joseph), 827 (Portland), 798 (Sacramento), 760 (Lawrence), 326 (Houston), 320 (Galveston), 308 (Austin), 777 (Leadville), 782 (Los Angeles), 811 (San Francisco). See my article, "Nineteenth-Century Street Sanitation: A Study of Filth and Frustration," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 52:237-239 (Spring 1969).
3. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:308 (Austin), 314 (Dallas), 331-332 (San Antonio), 326 (Houston), 748 (Omaha), 767 (Topeka), 771 (Denver), 777 (Leadville), 833 (Salt Lake City), 565 (St. Joseph), 787 (Oakland), 811 (San Francisco), 320-321 (Galveston).
4. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:308 (Austin), 332 (San Antonio), 760 (Lawrence), 565 (St. Joseph), 558 (Kansas City), 565 (Omaha), 777 (Leadville), 782 (Los Angeles), 827 (Portland), 787 (Oakland).

5. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:321 (Galveston), 765 (Leavenworth), 742 (Lincoln), 811 (San Francisco), 782 (Los Angeles), 331 (San Antonio), 308 (Austin), 314 (Dallas), 798 (Sacramento), 771 (Denver), 555 (St. Joseph), 777 (Leadville), 558 (Kansas City), 748 (Omaha), 827 (Portland), 787 (Oakland), 760 (Lawrence).
6. George E. Waring, Jr., *The Sanitary Drainage of Houses and Towns* (Boston, 1898), 10. See also James W. Cassedy, "The Flamboyant Colonel Waring," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 36:163-176 (March-April, 1962); George A. Soper, "General Edwin Waring," Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* 19: 456-457 (New York, 1946); Charles Zueblin, *American Municipal Progress* (New York, 1916), 78-80.
7. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:807-808.
8. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:826 (Portland), 785-786 (Oakland), 781 (Los Angeles), 796 (Sacramento), 556-557 (Kansas City), 764 (Leavenworth), 313 (Dallas), 832 (Salt Lake City), 819 (Stockton).
9. Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown (rev. by Charles N. Glaab), *A History of Urban America*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1976), 155.
10. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:308 (Austin), 314 (Dallas), 320 (Galveston), 748 (Omaha), 767 (Topeka), 771 (Denver), 787 (Oakland), 565 (St. Joseph), 796 (Sacramento), 727-728 (Portland).
11. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:767 (Topeka), 558 (Kansas City), 777 (Leadville), 771 (Denver), 834 (Salt Lake City), 314 (Dallas), 321 (Galveston), 760 (Lawrence), 748 (Omaha), 782 (Los Angeles), 798 (Sacramento), 565 (St. Joseph).
12. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:332 (San Antonio), 321 (Galveston), 326 (Houston), 767 (Topeka), 782 (Los Angeles), 834 (Salt Lake City), 728 (Portland), 771 (Denver), 565 (St. Joseph), 755 (Atchison), 558 (Kansas City), 760 (Lawrence).
13. Nelson Blake, *Water for the Cities: A History of the Urban Water Supply Problem in the United States* (Syracuse, 1956), 266-269. This book is the basic historical work on the subject. See also Walter G. Elliott, "Report on the Water-Supply of Certain Cities in the United States," *Reports on the Water-Power of the United States (Tenth Census of the United States, vol. 17, pt. 2, Washington, 1887)*, 1-3. The material on La Crosse is in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:653.
14. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:754 (Atchison), 563 (St. Joseph), 556 (Kansas City), 312-313 (Dallas), 330 (San Antonio), 780 (Los Angeles), 785 (Oakland), 806 (San Francisco), 819 (Stockton).

The San Antonio quotation in the previous paragraph is from William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar* (San Antonio, 1890), 55.

**CHAPTER 5: HEALTH, FIRE, AND POLICE PROTECTION**

1. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:760 (Lawrence), 792 (Sacramento); the quotation is from pt. 2:833 (Salt Lake City). The historical evolution of boards of health is discussed in an old, but still basic study for various aspects of public administration, John Fairlie, *Municipal Administration* (New York, 1901), 157-175. The "Public Health Movement" is covered in Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown (rev. by Charles N. Glaab), *A History of Urban America*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1976), 155-157.
2. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:307 (Austin), 313 (Dallas), 331 (San Antonio), 747 (Omaha), 765 (Leavenworth), 558 (Kansas City), 776-777 (Leadville), 797 (Sacramento), 809-810 (San Francisco), 320 (Galveston), 820 (Stockton), 741-742 (Lincoln), 786-787 (Oakland), 781 (Los Angeles), 564 (St. Joseph), 754-755 (Atchison), 325-326 (Houston), 827 (Portland), 430 (Youngstown), 63 (Lynchburg); pt. 1:46 (Concord). *Topeka Illustrated, Its Progress and Importance: A Descriptive and Statistical Review of Her Resources, Advantages and Facilities in Trade, Commerce and Manufacturers, Together with a Delineation of Her Representative Establishments* (Topeka, 1887), 34.
3. Table XIII, "Population, Births, and Deaths, with statement of Ratios, and Deaths from certain specific causes," *Report on the Mortality and Vital Statistics of the United States (Tenth Census of the United States, vol. 12, Washington, 1886)*, 180-183. The census began to report mortality statistics in 1860.
4. Table XII, "Population, Births, and Deaths, with Statement of Ratios, and Deaths from Certain Specified Causes," *Ibid.*, 180-183.
5. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:324 (Houston), 780 (Los Angeles), 831 (Salt Lake City), 784 (Oakland), 801-802 (San Francisco), 818 (Stockton). The census asked cities to report their major fires.
6. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:756 (Atchison), 321 (Galveston), 748 (Omaha), 559 (Kansas City), 812 (San Francisco), 820-821 (Stockton); pt. 1:908 (Wilmington), 772 (Norristown), 880 (Reading). See Fairlie, *Municipal Government*, 150-157.
7. Fairlie, *Municipal Government*, 150-157, covers the transfer of efficiently organized police forces from London to New York, and then through the rest of the United States. Another basic work is Raymond Fosdick, *American Police Systems* (New York, 1920).

- Of more recent vintage is James F. Richardson, *Urban Police in the United States* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1974). Robert Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York, 1968), shows that places on the Kansas frontier such as Dodge City and Abilene were rather tame, with little lawlessness. See also James Richardson, "The Police in the City: A History," Raymond Mohl and James Richardson, *The Urban Experience: Themes in American History* (Belmont, Calif., 1973), 164-181. Most of what historians have written about police has tended to be bureaucratic, speculative, and general.
8. Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York, 1965), 373; *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:314 (Dallas), 742 (Lincoln), 782 (Los Angeles), 777 (Leadville), 820 (Stockton), 767 (Topeka), 760 (Lawrence), 811 (San Francisco), 559 (Kansas City). I presented some of the material on western police in a paper, "Urban Police Forces after the First Hundred Years of the Republic," at "A Conference on Historical Perspectives on American Criminal Justice," held 22-23 April 1976, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.
  9. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:309 (Austin), 777-778 (Leadville), 314 (Dallas), 332 (San Antonio), 748 (Omaha), 755 (Atchison), 760 (Lawrence), 782 (Los Angeles), 559 (Kansas City), 811-812 (San Francisco), 820 (Stockton), 788 (Oakland), 828 (Portland); *1879 Kansas City Police Regulations* (Kansas City, 1879). Many local histories contain information on police—usually lists of names and organizational characteristics. There are also some histories of individual departments that are relatively uncluttered with worthwhile information.
  10. *Topeka Illustrated*, 33.
  11. See Eugene Arden, "The Evil City in American Fiction," *New York History* 35: 259-279 (July 1954).
  12. B. E. Lloyd, *Lights and Shades of San Francisco* (San Francisco, 1876), 79.
  13. Table CXXXVI, "Police Statistics for 1880 of Cities in the United States Having 5,000 or More Inhabitants," *Report on the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes of the Population of the United States (Tenth Census of the United States, vol. 21, Washington, 1888)*, 566-574. See also Philip Jordan, *Frontier Law and Order: Ten Essays* (Lincoln, 1970), 138-139.
  14. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:742 (Lincoln), 812 (San Francisco), 748 (Omaha), 755 (Atchison).
  15. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:798 (Sacramento), 742 (Lincoln), 812 (San Francisco),



- 827 (Portland), 385 (Cleveland), 48 (Washington); pt. 1:119-120 (Boston).
16. Paper presented by Robert V. Percival, "Municipal Justice in the Melting Pot: Arrest and Prosecution in Oakland 1872-1910," at "A Conference on Historical Perspectives on American Criminal Justice." This excellent paper contains a wealth of valuable comparative data. Percival notes that in Oakland, "the percentage of arrests that are made for serious crimes today is substantially higher than a century ago and dramatically higher than at the turn of the century."
  17. *Ibid.*, pt. 2:827.
  18. Table CXXXVI in *Report on the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes of the Population of the United States*, 566-574; *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:755 (Atchison), 765 (Leavenworth), 798 (Sacramento).
  19. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:309 (Austin), 742 (Lincoln), 788 (Oakland), 827 (Portland), 812 (San Francisco), 748 (Omaha), 765 (Leavenworth), 565 (St. Joseph), 760 (Lawrence). The quote by the Oakland mayor is in Percival, "Municipal Justice in the Melting Pot."

## CHAPTER 6: THE APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

1. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:312 (Dallas), 770 (Denver), 741 (Lincoln), 759 (Lawrence), 764 (Leavenworth), 305 (Austin), 325 (Houston), 780 (Los Angeles), 785 (Oakland), 826 (Portland), 819 (Stockton), 556 (Kansas City). For general information on street transportation systems see Blake McKelvey, *The Urbanization of America 1860-1915* (New Brunswick, 1963), 75-85; Bayrd Still, *Urban America: A History with Documents* (Boston, 1974), 84-88; Frank Rowsome, Jr., *Trolley Car Treasury: A Century of American Streetcars—Horsecars, Cable Cars, Interurbans, and Trolleys* (New York, 1956), 17-34. See also Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York, 1975), 221-225.
2. George W. Hilton, *The Cable Car in America: A New Treatise upon Cable or Rope Traction as Applied to the Working of Street and Other Railways* (Berkeley, 1971), 185-233. This work, complete with fine photographs, is the basic book on cable cars.
3. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:805-806. See also W. W. Hanscom, *The Archaeology of the Cable Car*, compiled and edited by Walt Wheelock (Pasadena, 1970).

4. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:319 (Galveston), 556 (Kansas City), 776 (Leadville), 764 (Leavenworth), 563 (St. Joseph), 746 (Omaha), 806 (San Francisco), 780 (Los Angeles), 770 (Denver); John Fairlie, *Municipal Administration* (New York, 1901), 281-285.
5. Quoted in W. B. Vickers, *History of the City of Denver, Arapahoe County, and Colorado* (Chicago, 1880), 239. The statistics are from Table I, "General Financial Exhibit: 1880," *Report on the Agencies of Transportation in the United States, Including the Statistics of Railroads, Steam Navigation, Canals, and Telephones* (Tenth Census of the United States, vol. 4, Washington, 1883), 788-792. There are census statistics for only one Denver system, the Colorado Telephone Co.
6. *Kansas City Daily Journal of Commerce*, 1 December 1866.
7. *Atchison, the Railroad Center of Kansas: Its Advantages for Commerce and Manufactures* (Atchison, 1874), 19; *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:752.
8. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:555; *Map of the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad Lines and Connections*, 1883, in the Kansas State Historical Society. A detailed railroad map proved very difficult to obtain. Robert W. Richmond, the Kansas State Archivist, found the map used in this study in Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad papers. The map proved invaluable in piecing together the western railroad net.
9. Charles N. Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads: Community Policy in the Growth of a Regional Metropolis* (Kansas City, 1962), tells the story of Kansas City's railroad development from the 1850s through the 1880s.
10. The Missouri River proved difficult to bridge. Octave Chanute, the director of the project, told about it in Octave Chanute and George Morison, *The Kansas City Bridge* (New York, 1870). Over a hundred years later, the bridge still stood, continuing as it had since 1869 to serve as a major railroad artery into Kansas City. The French-born and largely self-trained Chanute built well. He later played a major role in constructing the New York elevated system.
11. The best account of railroad building remains Glenn Quiett, *They Built the West: An Epic of Rails and Cities* (New York, 1934). See also Oscar Winther, *The Transportation Frontier: Trans-Mississippi West 1865-1890* (New York, 1964), 105-119; Ray Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 4th ed. (New York, 1974), 546-562. The 1880 census requested towns of importance to list their railroad connections. They did, but with imperfect results—many times using the names

of roads previously consolidated. In addition to Kansas City, the connections for the cities included in this study are listed in *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:304 (Austin), 312 (Dallas), 318 (Galveston), 324 (Houston), 329 (San Antonio), 740 (Lincoln), 745 (Omaha), 753 (Atchison), 758 (Lawrence), 763 (Leavenworth), 767 (Topeka), 770 (Denver), 774 (Leadville), 780 (Los Angeles), 784 (Oakland), 794 (Sacramento), 804 (San Francisco), 818 (Stockton), 825 (Portland), 831 (Salt Lake City), 562 (St. Joseph). The census received no information on railroads from San Jose and did not solicit any from Virginia City. There is a complete list of the names of railroads in the United States in Table II, "Index to Physical Characteristics of Railroads," *Report on the Agencies of Transportation in the United States, Including the Statistics of Railroads, Steam Navigation, Canals, and Telephones*, 639-647. A basic descriptive survey is Robert Riegel, *The Story of Western Railroads* (New York, 1926). For specific lines see Robert G. Athearn, *Union Pacific Country* (Chicago, 1971); Charles Edgar Ames, *Pioneering the Union Pacific: A Reappraisal of the Builders of the Railroad* (New York, 1969); Stuart Daggett, *Chapters on the History of the Southern Pacific* (New York, 1922); Neill Wilson and Frank Taylor, *Southern Pacific: The Roaring Story of A Fighting Railroad* (New York, 1952); Keith Bryant, Jr., *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway* (New York, 1974); V. V. Masterson, *The Katy Railroad and the Last Frontier* (Norman, 1974); George L. Anderson, *Kansas West* (San Marino, Calif., 1963); William Edward Hayes, *Iron Road to Empire: The History of 100 Years of the Progress and Achievements of the Rock Island Lines* (n.p., 1953); Richard Overton, *Burlington Route: A History of the Burlington Lines* (New York, 1965); Richard Overton, *Gulf to Rockies: The Heritage of the Fort Worth and Denver-Colorado and Southern Railways, 1861-1898* (Austin, 1953). The Texas routes are surveyed in S. G. Reed, *A History of Texas Railroads* (Houston, 1941). For information on individual towns—usually the names of the early railroad leaders and key dates on the arrival of the first trains—consult the appropriate local histories.

12. Winther, *The Transportation Frontier*, 25-43. See also W. Turrentine Jackson, *Wagon Roads West* (New Haven, 1965); Raymond W. Settle and Mary L. Settle, *Empire on Wheels* (Stanford, 1949); William E. Lass, *From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake: An Account of Overland Freight* (Lincoln, 1972).
13. "History of Operating Canals in the United States," *Report on*

- the Agencies of Transportation in the United States, Including the Statistics of Railroads, Steam Navigation, Canals, and Telephones*, 21.
14. "History of Steam Navigation in the United States," *Report on the Agencies of Transportation in the United States, Including the Statistics of Railroads, Steam Navigation, Canals, and Telephones*, 21-31; Winther, *The Transportation Frontier*, 74-91. See also William E. Lass, *A History of Steamboating on the Upper Missouri River* (Lincoln, 1962); Pamela Ashworth Puryear and Nath Winfield, Jr., *Sandbars and Sternwheelers: Steam Navigation on the Brazos* (College Station, 1976).
  15. Will Irwin, *The City That Was* (New York, 1906), 18-19.
  16. *Social Statistics of Cities*, pt. 2:812 (San Francisco), 784 (Oakland), 825 (Portland), 321 (Galveston); pt. 1:149-151 (Boston).

## CHAPTER 7: THE WEST OF MAGNIFICENT CITIES

1. J. Christopher Schnell, "William Gilpin and the Destruction of the Desert Myth," *The Colorado Magazine* 46:141-143 (Spring 1969).
2. The Denver quotation is from William Gilpin, *Notes on Colorado; and Its Inscription in the Physical Geography of the North American Continent* (London, 1870), 32-33.
3. Quoted in J. Christopher Schnell, "William Gilpin: Advocate of Expansion," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 19, pt. 3:30-37 (July 1969).
4. See Chapter 1, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920), 2, 37-38. Turner's thesis has been reprinted in many places. Turner is the subject of a very fine biography, done fittingly enough by a historian of the West, Ray Allen Billington, *Frederick Jackson Turner: Historian, Scholar, Teacher* (New York, 1973).
5. Table 5, "Aggregate Population of Cities, Towns, Villages, and Boroughs Having 2,000 Inhabitants or More in 1890, with Population for 1880 and Increase during the Decade," *Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890 (Eleventh Census of the United States, vol. 1, pt. 1, Washington, 1892)*, 442-452.
6. "Progress of the Nation," *Ibid.*, lxxiii.

# Essay On Sources

The material used in this study was gathered over a period of several years. The bulk of it is from published federal census records, local histories, and scholarly monographs. These range all the way from Table XV, "Native Population of Fifty Pincipal Cities," *Statistics of the Population of the United States (Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, vol. 1, Washington, 1883)*, to Samuel Rades, comp., *Rades' Biennial Directory to the Inhabitants, Institutions, Manufacturing Establishments, Business Firms, Etc., of the City of Topeka, for 1876-1877* (Topeka, 1975). All the pertinent sources have been cited in full in the notes to the text. The following essay is selective and is designed to give an indication of the items found most helpful.

Of special importance is George Waring, Jr., comp., *Report on the Social Statistics of Cities (Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, vol. 18, 19, pt. 1, 2., Washington, 1886)*. This massive compilation constitutes the basic source on the 1880 American city. It contains detailed monographic and statistical information for almost all cities with a population of ten thousand or more in 1880, plus certain smaller ones of regional importance. The tabulated index indicates the vast range of subjects that the census considered important enough to collect data about: "Cemeteries," "Climate," "Commerce and navigation," "Distance chart," "Drainage," "Financial condition," "Fire department," "Garbage," "Gas," "History," "Infectious diseases," "Inspection," "Interments," "Location," "Manufactures," "Monuments," "Municipal cleansing," "Parks," "Penal, reformatory, charitable, and healing institutions," "Places of amusement," "Police," "Population by decades, and by present division," "Public buildings," "Railroads," "Sanitary authority," "Schools and libraries (public),"

"Streets," "Topography," "Tributary country," "Water-courses, harbors, etc.," "Waterworks." The 222 cities included constituted the backbone of American urban society at the time. Waring solicited information from officials in twenty-three of the twenty-four cities west of the ninety-fifth meridian with populations in 1880 in excess of eight thousand. All responded, except for those in San Jose. Virginia City authorities were not contacted, despite the fact that the Nevada community had a population of 10,917. The *Social Statistics of Cities* proved indispensable in the writing of this book. Unfortunately, Waring retained custody of the manuscript schedules, and they apparently have been lost.

There is a wealth of information in other federal records. Several volumes of the *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880* (24 vols.) augment the *Social Statistics of Cities*. Vital statistics on the number of blacks, natives, foreign-born, females, males, and workers can be found throughout the *Statistics of the Population of the United States*. Industrial statistics for one hundred principal cities are in *Report of the Manufactures of the United States* (vol. 2, Washington, 1883). Waterworks in selected localities are discussed in *Report on the Water Power of the United States* (vol. 17, pt. 2, Washington, 1887). *The Report on the Mortality and Vital Statistics of the United States* (vol. 12, Washington, 1886) has information on population, birth, and death ratios. Police statistics are tabulated in the *Report on the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes of the Population of the United States* (vol. 21, Washington, 1888). There are lists of railroad and telephone companies in the *Report on the Agencies of Transportation in the United States, Including the Statistics of Railroads, Steam Navigation, Canals, and Telephones* (vol. 4, Washington, 1883). The most comprehensive source for educational trends is the very detailed and extensive *Report of the Commissioner of Education: 1880* (*Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, vol. 3, Washington, 1882). Two volumes of the *Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890*, have itemized religious and population statistics: *Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890* (vol. 1, pt. 1, Washington, 1892), and *Report on Statutes of Churches in the United States* (vol. 50, Washington, 1894). Old-fashioned type faces, difficult-to-use indexes, and sometimes confusing tabulations, all complicate the task of the researcher. Working with late-nineteenth-century federal documents requires a high degree of patience.

Manuscript census population schedules for enumeration districts of all twenty-four towns are available through National Archives and Records Service T publications. For persons enumerated the 1880 census shows address; name; relationship to head of family; sex; race;

age; marital status; born within the year; married within the year; profession; occupation or trade; number of months unemployed during census year; whether person was sick or temporarily disabled so as to be unable to attend to ordinary business or duties; if so, what was the sickness or disability; whether blind, deaf, dumb, idiotic, insane, maimed, crippled, or bedridden; attended school within the year; ability to read and write; place of birth or person, father, and mother. While some research was done in most of the western city schedules, the greatest use was made of those for Virginia City to determine the percentage of women, and of those for Los Angeles, San Jose, San Antonio, and Topeka to tabulate individuals with Spanish last names. The census-takers wrote in longhand, some less legibly than others, and the quality of the ink used varied. Thus, one Los Angeles enumeration district is almost unreadable, while others are easily read.

Numerous county and local histories exist for the towns of the urban frontier. These works vary in content and quality. Characteristically, they are poorly organized; but most contain information not found elsewhere on town promotions, dominant groups, population trends, industrial developments, and social life. The accompanying biographical volumes, sometimes called "Mug Books," have sketches of community leaders. Some of the local histories are old enough to be considered primary sources in their own right. These include Alfred Sorenson, *Early History of Omaha, or, Walks and Talks Among the Old Settlers: A Series of Sketches in the Shape of a Connected Narrative with a Brief Mention of the Important Events of Later Years* (Omaha, 1876); Atchison, *The Railroad Center of Kansas: Its Advantages for Commerce and Manufactures* (Atchison, 1874); and Samue Huhel, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco, 1878). Books found especially valuable are Theodore S. Case, *History of Kansas City, Missouri* (Syracuse, 1888); W. S. Burke and J. L. Rock, *The History of Leavenworth, The Metropolis of Kansas and the Chief Commercial Center West of the Missouri River* (Leavenworth, 1880); *Topeka Illustrated, Its Progress and Importance: A Descriptive and Statistical Review of Her Resources, Advantages and Facilities in Trade, Commerce and Manufactures, Together with a Delineation of Her Representative Establishments* (Topeka, 1887); Laurance Hill, *La Reina: Los Angeles in Three Centuries* (Los Angeles, 1929); William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar* (San Antonio, 1916); W. B. Vickers, *History of the City of Denver, Arapahoe County, and Colorado* (Chicago, 1880); and Edward Tullidge, *A History of Salt Lake City and Its Founders* (Salt Lake City, 1885). In a special class are two short and worthwhile reminiscences, Will Irwin, *The City That Was* (New York, 1906), about San

Francisco, and Agnes Emery, *Reminiscences of Early Lawrence* (Lawrence, 1954). Some other representative local histories are Carrie Whitney, *Kansas City, Missouri: Its History and People, 1808-1890* (Kansas City, 1890); *History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Mo.: From the Time of the Platte Purchase to the End of the Year 1915* (St. Joseph, 1915); *Lincoln: The Capital City and Lancaster County, Nebraska* (2 vols., Chicago, 1916); Joseph E. Baker, *Past and Present of Alameda County* (2 vols., Chicago, 1914), about Oakland; Joseph Gaston, *Portland, Ore.: Its History and Builders* (Chicago, 1911); Joseph Dyer, *The Early History of Galveston* (Galveston, 1916); Boyce House, *City of Flaming Adventure* (San Antonio, 1949), about San Antonio; and Jerome Smiley, ed., *History of Denver: With Outlines of the Early History of the Rocky Mountain Country* (Denver, 1901). Most of these, plus many others cited in the notes, can be found in the Snyder Collection on Western Americana in the University of Missouri-Kansas City General Library.

Until recently, professional historians tended to ignore frontier urbanization and to concentrate on other aspects of the western experience. The current state of the art is discussed in Bradford Luckingham's article, "The City in the Westward Movement—A Bibliographical Note," in the July 1974 issue of *The Western Historical Quarterly*. Any discussion of the urban West starts with Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York, 1965). His chapter "The Power of the Metropolis," which has excellent social and economic information, helped to shape this book. Anyone writing about the urban West is frustrated by the lack of analytical urban biographies. Fortunately, the few in print are of high quality. The emergence of a "regional metropolis" is traced in A. Theodore Brown, *Frontier Community: Kansas City to 1870* (Columbia, Mo., 1963). Brown directed the well-financed Kansas City Project, which produced a series of case studies. Los Angeles emerges in Remi Nadeau, *Los Angeles from Mission to Modern City* (New York, 1960), and has its economic development explained in Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Cambridge, 1967). Robert W. Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York, 1974), covers the early days of the city by the Golden Gate. David McComb has written a basic study, *Houston: The Bayou City* (Austin, 1969). Lyle Dorsett's *The Queen City: A History of Denver* (Boulder, 1977) supplants all previous histories of the Rocky Mountain metropolis. Gunther Barth's *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York, 1965) deals with broader themes. His monograph compares European and American urbaniza-



tion, provides insights about the social history of western cities, and has a good bibliography. Another valuable contribution is Kenneth Wheeler, *To Wear a City's Crown: The Beginnings of Urban Growth in Texas, 1836-1865* (Cambridge, 1968).

A number of books, articles, and theses deal directly with various western urban themes. The analyses of William Gilpin's views found most helpful are Charles N. Glaab, "Visions of Metropolis: William Gilpin and Theories of City Growth in the American West," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 45:21-31 (Autumn 1961), and J. Christopher Schnell, "Urban Promotion: The Contribution of William Gilpin in the Rise of the American West" (Master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1968). John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton, 1965), has maps of several communities in the West. Community economic policy is examined in Glenn Dunke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (Los Angeles, 1944); Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, 1958); and Charles N. Glaab, *Kansas City and the Railroads: Community Policy in the Growth of a Regional Metropolis* (Madison, 1962). A stimulating essay on the reasons cities prospered is Patrick McLear and J. Christopher Schnell, "Why the Cities Grew: A Historiographical Essay on Western Urban Growth, 1850-1880," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 27:162-177 (April 1972). The development of one of the major ports in the West is covered in Marilyn Sibley, *The Port of Houston: A History* (Austin, 1968). Duane Smith writes about mining camps in *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington, 1967). Robert L. Branyan and I give an overview of urban services in "The Development of an Urban Civilization on the Frontier of the American West," *Societas—A Review of Social History* 1:35-50 (Winter 1971). Population patterns in a western city are traced in Howard Chudacoff, *Mobile Americans: Residential and Social Mobility in Omaha, 1880-1920* (New York, 1972). One of the few studies of the creation of a business community is Charles N. Glaab, "Business Patterns in the Growth of a Midwestern City," *The Business History Review* 33:156-174 (Summer 1959). Robert Dykstra, *The Cattle Towns* (New York, 1968), develops several western urban themes. A significant trend is explored in Bradford Luckingham, "Associational Life on the Urban Frontier: San Francisco, 1848-1856," (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Davis, 1968). While some materials were more valuable than others, they all contributed to the final synthesis.

The study required the use of a wide variety of general and specialized works. There is much urban material in Glenn Quiett,

*They Built the West: An Epic of Rails and Cities* (New York, 1934). Some of the information on Oriental settlement came from Masako Herman, ed., *The Japanese in America, 1834-1973: A Chronology and Fact Book* (Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., 1973), and Betty Lee Sung, *Mountain of Gold: The Story of the Chinese in America* (New York, 1967). Jews are viewed in an urban context in Robert E. Levinson, "American Jews in the West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 5:289 (July 1974). Franklin Walker, *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (New York, 1939), cover literary matters, and Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960* (3rd ed., New York, 1962), journalistic ones. Representative of the accounts of economic exploitation are Louis Atherton, *The Cattle Kings* (Bloomington, 1962); C. B. Glasscock, *The War of the Copper Kings: Builders of Butte and Wolves of Wall Street* (New York, 1935); and Vernon Carstensen, "The Fishermen's Frontier on the Pacific Coast: The Rise of the Salmon Canning Industry," John Clark, ed., *The Frontier Challenge: Responses to the Trans-Mississippi West* (Lawrence, 1971). There is some good Los Angeles material in Glenn Dunke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (Los Angeles, 1944). Architectural trends are discussed in James Marston Fitch, *American Building: The Forces That Shape It* (New York, 1948); Christopher Tunnard and Henry Hope Reed, *American Skyline: The Growth and Form of Our Cities and Towns* (New York, 1955); and Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism* (New York, 1969). Information on street surfaces can be found in Winston A. Walden, "Nineteenth Century Street Pavements" (Master's thesis, University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1967). The key book on waterworks is Nelson Blake, *Water for the Cities: A History of the Urban Water Supply Problem in the United States* (Syracuse, 1956). There is valuable data in a paper by Robert V. Percival, "Municipal Justice in the Melting Pot: Arrest and Prosecution in Oakland 1872-1910," presented at "A Conference on Historical Perspectives on American Criminal Justice," held 22-23 April 1976, at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Urban transportation is covered in Frank Rowsome, Jr., *Trolley Car Treasury: A Century of American Streetcars—Horsecars, Cable Cars, Interurbans, and Trolleys* (New York, 1956), and George W. Hilton, *The Cable Car in America: A New Treatise upon Cable or Rope Traction as Applied to the Working of Street and Other Railways* (Berkeley, 1971). The best treatise on railroad building remains Robert Riegel, *The Story of Western Railroads* (New York, 1926). There are a number of books on specific lines, including Keith Bryant, Jr., *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway* (New York, 1974), and Richard Overton, *Burlington Route: A History of the Burlington Lines* (New York,

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