

## *Introduction*

The existence of the Western frontier has altered the course of the United States. It was the creation of states west of the thirteen original colonies that led to the establishment of democracy as our system of government. The “west” shaped and distinguished the character of our citizens, rugged individualism and optimism. Frederick Jackson Turner, said the frontier was the meeting place between civilization and savagery, it provided an outlet for social discontent, placing free land in hands reach of anyone willing to take a risk. In this assignment we will examine the introduction to the book, *Legacy of Conquest* by Patricia Limerick. Limerick reinvigorated the study of Western history, which seemed to be considered a dead genre. I chose only the introduction of the book because it fully sums up the creation of New Western history and gives a historiography of Western history.

## *What is Historiography?*

Historians do not always agree on the interpretations of historical events. In fact, the job of the historian is one of perpetual arguments over these interpretations. Historiography is the study of historical interpretation through time. Historians use primary sources to make inferences on certain historical issues, then produce an interpretation of the events. Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouris define "historiography" as "the study of the way history has been and is written--the history of historical writing... When you study 'historiography' you do not study the events of the past directly, but the changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians."1

## *Assignment Instructions*

**Please discuss the change in the study of the history of the Western United States. How do the views of Turner and Limerick reflect the changing perceptions about the continuity of Western History?**

## *Assignment Standards*

- Assignment must be minimum of 750 words. I will deduct ten points for every 50 words below the limit.
- Assignment should be properly formatted with a heading.
- You should cite your sources, assignments without footnotes will be deducted 25 points.
- Assignment should be submitted to the correct places, see syllabus.