

Anglo-American Progress:
British Engagement in the American West,
1870-1890

Charlie Driver

Professor Malchow

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In popular imagination, the American West was a lawless place, full of cowboys fighting Native Americans and buffalo roaming free. In many ways, it was the heart of Americanness—unbridled nature clashing with the determined grip of the American man, taming wilds in the name of his country. The reality of the West, however, was less American and much less wild, especially by the tail end of the expansion movement in the 1870s and 1880s, after national infrastructure had expanded enough to bring the sides of the country closer together and make travel to the West simple rather than dangerous and extremely long. Over the following decades, the wildness of the West gave way to urban and economic development, and an influx of people brought the region away from the popular images of buffalo, cowboys, and prospectors.

This new economic and urban culture of the West was created by a different group of people than the pioneers who had initially settled the area. Rather than being the sole work of the American “manifest destiny,” the West was subject to the wide-ranging influence of the British people and their money. The development of the American rail system, which started with the 1869 completion of the Transcontinental Railroad and continued as companies built a massive east-west and north-south rail system, made shipping easier, increased business profits, and cut travel time and cost for passengers seeking to visit or emigrate. Britons were able to interact with the region on a larger scale, and that was exactly what they did. Investing, emigrating, and visiting, the British made an indelible mark on the western portion of the United States, supporting its development and acculturation while also leaving their own personal mark, a little bit of Britishness in the most American part of the nation.

This paper seeks to provide a broad look at British engagement in the American West during the decades of the 1870s and 1880s, when the flow of British people and capital to the region was at its peak. Examining three different ways that the British used the region—as a field

for investment, a place to emigrate, and as a destination to visit—it will be possible to show not only the many ways that the British contributed to the West’s development during the period, but also to demonstrate the links between the three that made each feasible. The literature on this topic fails to explore the history in this way, preferring to focus on a specific group or industry. There are works that focus individually on investing in cattle or mining, books that focus on aristocratic emigration and tourism, and books that focus on the development of particular states or cities.¹ But there is no major work that attempts to look at the British development of the West writ large. This paper will endeavor to fill that gap.

There are many ways to define the American West. For the purposes of this work, that definition will build upon the work of the historian Walter Prescott Webb, whose 1931 book *The Great Plains* argued that the American West started along the 98th meridian, the line of longitude along which the Great Plains, and by extension the rest of the American West, began.² The 98th meridian cuts through the most eastern parts of the Dakotas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. For the purposes of this paper, the West will be considered as all states and territories west of this line, with the exception of the West Coast states, since they were not included as Western states in the U.S. censuses of 1870 and 1880, and Utah, due to the ongoing settlement and society of Mormons there.³ California’s location and gold rush and Utah’s religious settlement meant that they developed fundamentally differently than their neighbors, and as such

¹ For the mining and cattle industries, see Clark C. Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1995); Maurice Frink, *When Grass Was King: Contributions to the Western Range Cattle Industry Study* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1956). Regarding aristocrats settling and traveling, refer to Peter Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2012); Kenneth Rose, *Unspeakable Awfulness* (New York: Routledge, 2014). For a book on Colorado, see Kathleen Brosnan, *Uniting Mountain and Plain: Cities, Law, and Environmental Change along the Front Range* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002). For Colorado Springs, refer to Marshall Sprague, *Newport in the Rockies: The Life and Good Times of Colorado Springs*, 4th ed. (Athens: The Ohio University Press, 1987).

² Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1931).

³ Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 14.

will not be examined. The West this paper describes consists of the Great Plains and the Mountain West, both of which were affected by British capital and people during the 1870s and 1880s.

British Capital—Profiting from and Funding the West

The West's rapid development in the second half of the 19th century would have been much slower, if not impossible, without the consistent flows of British capital into large and small nascent industries in the region. British investors were keen to take advantage of abundant natural resources by investing in mining and agriculture, and keen to profit from settlers' need for money and infrastructure. In many ways, the idea of the American Dream—that anyone could go to America and rapidly accumulate a fortune—translated itself to the foreign investment market. Britons with money saw the western United States as a safe investment opportunity compared to more unstable colonial industries, a resource and people-rich area that could take an inheritance or savings and turn it into a fortune. This enthusiasm led to the West's fast economic growth, but flawed management, investment strategy, and luck did not provide many of the British investors with the same return-on-investment.

The mass influx of British capital in the West was facilitated by a favorable investment landscape in the United Kingdom. By 1870 British money, and the number of people who controlled it, had grown much larger.⁴ For the first time, there was a British class of new money. At the same time, the aristocracy that held a considerable amount of British wealth was experiencing economic hardship, as an agricultural downturn meant that their tenants could not pay rent and fund the noble way of life. In order to counter their dwindling coffers, aristocrats

⁴ Roger V. Clements, "British Investment in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1870-1914, Its Encouragement, and the Metal Mining Interests," *Pacific Historical Review* 29, no. 1 (1960): 35.

expanded their involvement in investment.⁵ The confluence of a bigger moneyed class and a less secure aristocracy created a large group of Britons hoping to invest to grow their new money or maintain their old wealth.

Simultaneously, mid-century British legislation changed the way investment affected investors, introducing a system of limited liability.⁶ Limited liability meant that, in the event of an investment becoming unprofitable or failing, the investor would only be responsible for the value of the stock he owned instead of being liable for some or all of the company's outstanding debt. The creation of limited liability further opened up the field of potential investors, because less wealthy people could invest without fear that a company's misfortune would lead to their own personal malaise. It also became easier to form investment groups; any seven people could create a joint-stock company with privately-held or publicly-owned stock.⁷ In the 1870s, there was British money ready to be invested and a financial system ready to facilitate it.

The American West became a target for investors because of its financial and cultural allure. The United States was a known commodity in Britain—it shared a language and culture, and, was, if not identical, similarly centered around capitalist ideals and a representative government.⁸ The frontier had also gained a place in the imagination of the British people. News coverage of the area as well as novels and travel memoirs all carried stories of the West back to the isles.⁹ These accounts glorified the West, making it a more enticing and exotic place for a British investor. The West was also known as a resource-rich area primed for use. Minerals were

⁵ Mona Rico, *Nature's Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 50.

⁶ W. Turrentine Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968), 6.

⁷ Jackson, 6–7.

⁸ Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 13–15; Clements, “British Investment in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1870-1914, Its Encouragement, and the Metal Mining Interests,” 35.

⁹ Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 13–15; Robert G. Athearn, *Westward the Briton* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953).

prevalent, and it was covered in nearly-untouched forests, plains, and mountains.¹⁰ This strong investment region existed within an American nation that was continually becoming increasingly open to foreign investment. Following the Civil War, European capital, much of it British, poured into America, especially into bonds and railroads.¹¹ In 1873 a depression hit the United States, driving down domestic investment, compounding the need for foreign funds.¹² For the West, in the middle of full-scale development, new sources of capital were vital, and the British were happy to step in and provide it.

The first major focus of British investment in the 1870s was the mining industry. The continued interest prompted by the California gold rush, as well as the discovery of Nevada's Silver-rich Comstock Lode, prompted investors to look to American earth for their money, and they did so on a massive scale. As *The Economist* remarked in 1875, the mining boom brought \$100 million of new British capital into the industry in five years.¹³ Much of that new capital contributed to American economic development but failed to circle back to help the personal economic development of the British investors. In 1881 D.C. Davies, a leading British mining commentator, explained that "the most unsuccessful mines in Northwestern America are those worked by English companies and under English management."¹⁴ Historian Clark Spence estimates that only 11% of mining companies returned any dividends to their stockholders, and, of these, even fewer returned significant dividends that could go toward an investor recouping

¹⁰ Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 12.

¹¹ Jackson, 12–13; Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 2–3.

¹² Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 12.

¹³ Clements, "British Investment in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1870-1914, Its Encouragement, and the Metal Mining Interests," 40.

¹⁴ D.C. Davies, *A Treatise on Metalliferous Minerals and Mining* (London, 1881), 397; quoted in Roger Burt, "British Investment in the American Mining Frontier," *Business and Economic History; Williamsburg* 26, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 516.

the cost of his initial investment.¹⁵ British investors were extremely keen to invest in mining outfits, yet rarely, if ever, profited off of their companies.

A major barrier to successful British mining investment during the period was the lack of knowledge of the Britons seeking to involve themselves in the industry. Typically, each mine had its own joint-stock company, comprising different groups of investors—foreign mining investment was not the domain of conglomerates.¹⁶ This vast field allowed for a wide range of investors, very few of which came from mining backgrounds. Only about 14% of officers of British companies invested in Western American mining had any experience investing in or working with mining enterprises in Britain.¹⁷ The new moneyed class in Britain was seeking to invest in an unfamiliar industry.

This lack of experience meant that mines were sold through headlines, dollar signs, and name drops. In press and literature, promoters discussed potential profit above all else. Mining pamphlets were keen to note the multi-million-dollar yield of mines in their focused region, describing a region full of operational mines while omitting the less-successful ones.¹⁸ Many travel memoirs were incomplete without a trip to one of the West's major mines; Arthur Pendarves Vivian, a British MP and industrialist, visited the Comstock Lode for his 1879 memoir, writing an account not only of the logistics of mining, but the massive dividends it paid out to its stockholders.¹⁹ The British press was also quick to promote mining investment opportunities, regardless of the true value of the lode. *The Times* of London listed American

¹⁵ Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 68.

¹⁶ Burt, "British Investment in the American Mining Frontier," 517.

¹⁷ Burt, 518.

¹⁸ Frank Fossett, *Colorado, Its Gold and Silver Mines, Farms and Stock Ranges, and Health and Pleasure Resorts*, 2nd ed. (New York: C.G. Crawford, 1880); Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 19.

¹⁹ A. Pendarves Vivian, *Wanderings in the Western Land* (London, 1879), 379–420.

mining share prices in every issue.²⁰ An 1875 *Economist* article reported on unconfirmed mining discoveries in Nevada, describing a \$500 million valuation while also noting the success of other major mines in the region.²¹ Articles like this, even as they placed caveats on reliability of American reports, combined with literature and promotional pamphlets to present investment in mining as a literal and figurative gold mine.

Mining investment promotion lacked regulation to ensure investment opportunities were accurately portrayed. One systemic flaw was the use of “experts” to evaluate mines before purchase. An expert’s positive inspection could indicate potential riches and entice more people to invest. In 1879, the Connolly Mine advertised an abridged prospectus in London’s *The Standard*, which almost wholly deals with reports from two experts, one of whom writes that potential investment “would shortly be returned with a handsome profit.”²² The issue with the reliance on experts was that there were no firm requirements to be one. As a result, they came from vastly different backgrounds—most were acquainted with American or British mining, but some were academics, military men, or lawyers without any knowledge of the industry.²³ Companies could hire people without mining knowledge to add legitimacy to their operation and cover up potential flaws.

Beyond hiring, the companies themselves also had leeway to say and do whatever they wanted. Joint-stock companies could not be punished for printing false or misleading information in mining prospectuses that were distributed to press and investors if they explained that they believed that the information was true when it was written.²⁴ Ownership groups could

²⁰ Isabella L. Bird, *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains* (London: John Murray, 1879), 225–27.

²¹ “Alleged Mining Discoveries in Nevada,” *The Economist*, February 6, 1875, The Economist Historical Archive, 1843-2014.

²² “The Connolly Mine (Limited).,” *The Standard*, May 13, 1879.

²³ Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 69–70.

²⁴ Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 143.

also prop up their chances of attracting investors by enticing a man of renown, like an MP, to be on the board, even going as far as paying them for the use of their name recognition.²⁵ The ease in deception led to some, though not many, instances of fraud. The most notable was the \$5 million sale of the Emma Silver Mine in Utah, led by a group of owners that paid the ambassador to Britain to take up the post of director and falsely marketed the mine as a motherlode. The case went to court but failed to result in any convictions.²⁶ The mining investment industry could be manipulated with little fear of punishment in order to present a more positive view of mines.

The end of the 1870s saw British investors lose much of their interest in mining and turn to new speculative pastures. Economic depression hit Britain in the latter half of the century, while many investors became aware of the poor track record of their predecessor's investment choices. The industry would continue to receive some attention, but not nearly at the levels of the first half of the decade.²⁷ Instead of mining, investors now turned toward the food industry and the American West's many grazing grounds, as cattle became the major focus of the late 1870s and early 1880s.

The appeal of cattle to British investors started as a result of rising demand and importation of American beef to the UK. Disease had killed much of the European livestock supply in the 1860s, causing Britain to start looking more to America to buttress its food supply. At the same time, industrialization led to urban population growth, increasing the demand for food. Technology adapted to facilitate beef exportation. Advancements in refrigeration allowed for the shipping of dead meat rather than live cattle, making it cheaper and safer to ship beef on a

²⁵ Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 53; Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 143–44.

²⁶ “The Emma Mine Swindle: The Suit Against Park, Baxter, and Stewart Begun.,” *New York Times*, 1876; Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 139–91.

²⁷ Clements, “British Investment in the Trans-Mississippi West, 1870-1914, Its Encouragement, and the Metal Mining Interests,” 40.

larger scale.²⁸ By the late 1870s, Britain was clamoring for foreign beef in massive quantities, which meant large imports from America; 71,000 head of cattle were imported in 1879, double the number that had been imported in 1878.²⁹ America's livestock industry broke into the British market in the years before investors took note.

Reports on the field of American cattle investment portrayed it as a safe and profitable venture. In 1879 the British government's newly-created Royal Commission on Agriculture described cattle ranching as the most lucrative part of the American agriculture industry.³⁰ The explanation for this was the low cost of starting and sustaining a ranching business. Just before the Royal Commission's report, the end of fighting between Native Americans and the army and the near-extinction of the plains Buffalo population opened up a vast swath of land for free grazing between the Great Plains and the Northern reaches of the Rockies.³¹ While previously the majority of ranching land had been state-owned, now most of it was federal land, and American law dictated that unless being homesteaded, it could be used freely.³² Bigger cattle firms could still purchase land to graze their cattle on, but the free range opened up the industry to a wider group of investors.

Free range grazing also meant that starting a cattle company only required the cost of animals and labor, both of which were cheap. A company could buy each cow for a few dollars, and only a few men, being paid a small fraction of total income, were necessary to take care of a herd of thousands.³³ While an initial purchase of cattle had to be made, subsequent acquisition costs declined quickly, since the animals would reproduce until the herd became fully self-

²⁸ Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 74.

²⁹ William Baillie-Grohman, "Cattle Ranches in the Far West," ed. John Morley, *Fortnightly Review*, May 1865-June 1934; London 28, no. 166 (October 1880): 438.

³⁰ Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 74.

³¹ Baillie-Grohman, "Cattle Ranches in the Far West," 441.

³² Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 237.

³³ James Brisbin, *The Beef Bonanza*, New (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 36-50.

replenishing.³⁴ Shipping cattle to slaughter was cheaper and faster too, since cattle could be sent by train to Chicago slaughterhouses.³⁵ Using these low costs, promoters eagerly projected massive profits for small and large enterprises alike—General James Brisbin, writing on the industry in 1882, printed a claim that an initial free-range investment of \$5,000 could turn into \$100,000 in only 11 years of ranching, and later wrote that an initial purchased-land investment of \$200,000 could be doubled in four years and return dividends of 8% to investors.³⁶ While mining was unreliable and required heavy outlay, cattle ranching was portrayed as easy money.

British investors, including a number of aristocrats, were convinced enough by cattle ranching to put their money into the range. The first major investor was Lord Airlie, who invested £200,000 in cattle and land in New Mexico and Texas for his Prairie Cattle Company. He and his stockholders' profits were big—in 1882 the company paid a dividend and bonus of 20%, while the following year it paid 28%.³⁷ Airlie was a keen advocate for ranching investment and wrote articles about the available dividends from free ranching, bringing more wealthy Britons into the cattle business.³⁸ Investors pumped millions of pounds into the industry. In 1882 alone, investors registered over 1500 cattle companies, and by 1883, total British investment in cattle ranching was £5.2 million.³⁹ American cattle was featuring on Britons' tables and balance sheets by the early 1880s.

Investing in beef was not as fool-proof as it was made out to be. Like in mining, there were instances of falsified information being provided to investors—Scotsman John Clay Jr., one

³⁴ Brisbin, 64.

³⁵ Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 74.

³⁶ Brisbin, *The Beef Bonanza*, 52–64, 193.

³⁷ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 234.

³⁸ Airlie, "The United States as a Field for Agricultural Settlers.," ed. James Knowles, *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, Mar. 1877-Dec. 1900; *London* 9, no. 48 (February 1881): 298–300.

³⁹ Richard Graham, "The Investment Boom in British-Texan Cattle Companies 1880-1885," *The Business History Review* 34, no. 4 (1960): 429; Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 89.

of the pre-eminent ranch managers and inspectors during the period, would often falsify reports on investment opportunities to make them seem more favorable.⁴⁰ Once investors had signed on, they still did not receive an accurate presentation of their business. Due to the distance between themselves and their investors, and the investors' lack of understanding of the business, ranch managers could fiddle with statistics or omit negative details in order to stay secure in their employment.⁴¹ British companies could also hurt their chances of success by appointing a poor manager. It was common for a British board of directors to choose a British manager, and the lack of experience in American ranching that those men had often resulted in them hurting their companies' balance sheets.⁴² Ranching management could take a promising investment and drive it toward failure.

Instead of small instances of dishonesty or incompetence, overinvestment and bad luck would prove to be the problems that ended the British cattle boom. Contrary to the reporting of General Brisbin, who wrote in 1882 that cattle investors "need have no fear of overstocking the beef market" before the 1890s, the glut of new cattle interests would cause oversupply issues by 1883.⁴³ Too many cattle were out on the range, and they overgrazed the grasses, leading to malnourished herds that fetched less money from buyers.⁴⁴ Then, at the end of 1884, one of the worst winters on record hit the range. The major cattle companies all suffered large cattle casualties, which equated to large financial losses that could never be recouped.⁴⁵ Dividends declined drastically over the following years, and by 1885, four of the twelve largest British cattle companies were returning nothing to their stockholders, and no company paid dividends of

⁴⁰ Lawrence M. Woods, *John Clay, Jr.: Commission Man, Banker and Rancher*, Western Frontiersmen 29 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 61.

⁴¹ Rico, *Nature's Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West*, 72–73.

⁴² Frink, *When Grass Was King: Contributions to the Western Range Cattle Industry Study*, 9.

⁴³ Brisbin, *The Beef Bonanza*, 15.

⁴⁴ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 261.

⁴⁵ Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 116–17.

more than 10%.⁴⁶ In the years that followed, new investment in cattle ranching was rare, and profits never returned to their previous heights.⁴⁷ The promise of ultra-profitable cattle investment faded away between 1883 and 1885 and never returned.

British investors also made their mark in other fields throughout the 1870s and 1880s. British hands profited off of American settlers at each stage of their westward movement. Settlers could get money to support their homesteading by taking out loans with other British companies.⁴⁸ Once established on a plot, new farmers would need to work with other British-controlled enterprise. Companies were set up with British money to sell land to aspiring farmers and build and provide the irrigation that their crops would need.⁴⁹ Others could use lumber cut by British companies in the Pacific Northwest to build their houses or businesses.⁵⁰ British capital was involved in most major industries in the American West during the late 19th century.

A belief that the untapped frontier was an easy way to strike it extremely rich drove British investment in the American West. Fueled by a promoter class that was liberal with the realities of investment, a wealthy class of new and old British money bought into mining, ranching, and other industries, with mixed success. Some found their expected returns, but many more lost what they had put in. By the end of the 1880s, for all of their self-interested involvement, British investors had left a mark on the West with their capital by funding and facilitating construction, homesteading, agriculture, and more generally the life of the area's

⁴⁶ "American Cattle Companies In 1885," *The Economist*, March 20, 1886, The Economist Historical Archive, 1843-2014.

⁴⁷ John Baumann, "On a Western Ranche," ed. Frank Harris, *Fortnightly Review, May 1865-June 1934; London* 41, no. 244 (April 1887): 519; Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 262–63.

⁴⁸ Brosnan, *Uniting Mountain and Plain: Cities, Law, and Environmental Change along the Front Range*, 79; Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 27–30, 218.

⁴⁹ Roger V. Clements, "British-Controlled Enterprise in the West between 1870 and 1900, and Some Agrarian Reactions," *Agricultural History* 27, no. 4 (1953): 136–37; Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 262–63.

⁵⁰ Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*, 220–32.

residents. Living thousands of miles away, British investors helped develop America's frontier, and occasionally earned some money back for their effort.

British Emigrants—Working and Living in the West

British capital shared the West with British people. Men and women of all ages and social classes left the United Kingdom during the 1870s and 1880s to seek prairies new, traveling west to get dragged upward by the region's rapid economic development. For laborers who left home, the West provided an opportunity to break free of an economic system that restricted their ability to own land and earn money. For the middle class, it was a way to avoid competing with more established business presences and make a fortune. And for the aristocracy, the West was a way to escape the nebulous role of being a second son in a system of primogeniture. Britons from all classes who went west became important parts of the economy, regardless of the success of their assimilation process.

British emigration to the American West was a significant event in the 1870s and 1880s. According to the 1870 census, there were 23,206 Britons already living in the region, but mostly in Utah, which had a British expat population of just shy of 16,000. By 1890 that number had quadrupled. The census found 84,652 Britons living in the West. This population was much more geographically spread out—while 26,766 lived in Utah, there were 20,828 in Colorado, 8,788 in Montana, and 4,551 in Idaho, three states whose combined British population in 1870 had been just 3,000.⁵¹ Britons flocked to the West alongside British capital.

Just as promoters advertised American business opportunities to potential British investors, candidates for emigration were recruited heavily. Companies set up emigration offices

⁵¹ Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 14.

in a wide range of British cities to provide information and assist people looking to start their life anew in America.⁵² From these offices, emigration agents worked to get the word out about their opportunities, whether in person or on paper. In Bristol in 1871, E.A. Mathews, of Colorado, addressed a crowd on the benefits of emigration, using statistics and paintings of the region's natural beauty to win over his audience to the idea of going west.⁵³ Some promoters wrote newspaper articles that would be reprinted by papers around the country.⁵⁴ Many more chose to pay for a press spot, buying advertisements that featured phrases like "emigration to America" in large, unmissable text.⁵⁵ If a Briton wanted information about emigration schemes, agents made sure that he or she knew where to get it.

These emigration schemes sought to attract working class Britons to a life in western farming or mining, and leveraged economic considerations to convince people to make the transatlantic and transcontinental move. William Bell, a British promoter of Colorado Springs and Manitou, in central Colorado, appealed to farmers and merchants alike in a pamphlet promoting English emigration. Alluding to the farmer's difficulty owning land and keeping profits and the merchants' difficulty in breaking into business against much larger firms, Bell presents emigration as a means of escape—they "would come up again in prosperity without a shadow of a doubt," in the American West.⁵⁶ Promoting mining in 1880, one writer in the *Cornishman* newspaper alleged that a miner moving to Nevada could expect to earn more in a

⁵² "Emigration to America. Unreal Openings for Tenant Farmers," *Tadcaster Post, and General Advertiser for Grimston*, July 25, 1872, British Newspaper Archive; "Emigration to America," *Jedburgh Gazette*, May 10, 1884, British Newspaper Archive; "Emigration and North-Western States and Territories in America," *Reading Mercury*, July 19, 1884, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵³ "Emigration to Colorado," *Western Daily Press*, August 17, 1871, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁴ "Emigration to America. Unreal Openings for Tenant Farmers."

⁵⁵ "Emigration to America."

⁵⁶ William Bell, "The Colonies of Colorado in Their Relation to English Enterprise and Settlement" (London: Labour News Office, 1874), 12–13.

year than he would in his entire life should he remain.⁵⁷ Promoters pitched the opportunity to improve their socioeconomic position by practicing their trade in the West.

Railroad companies often ran emigration schemes, hoping that settlement along the tracks could bolster their business. Bell's calls for settlement of Colorado Springs were directly linked to the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, which owned the colony and employed Bell.⁵⁸ The Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway company operated colonies for Scottish and English emigrants in South Dakota.⁵⁹ Bringing new settlers to an area would increase ticket sales for passenger trains, but also give the trains business transporting freight; the railway that had facilitated initial development would transport all the wheat and meat from new farms and ore from new mines.⁶⁰ Confident in these future profits, many railways, as well as transatlantic steamship operators, cut prices to facilitate emigrants moving to their new home.⁶¹ Railroads promoted settlement as a way to expand their business.

Workers from the tin-rich region of Cornwall comprised some of the most highly-demanded and skilled workers recruited to settle in the West. Experienced in the type of mining that took place in western mines, Cornish miners soon became the backbone of many mining operations.⁶² They occupied a place above many of the American miners, getting placed into management or shift captaincy roles. With these better jobs came wages that, as advertised, were higher than those they had received in Cornwall.⁶³ Well-respected, well-paid, and well-employed, Cornish miners in America found much to like.

⁵⁷ "The Cornish Miner at Home and Abroad," *Cornishman*, September 16, 1880, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁸ Bell, "The Colonies of Colorado in Their Relation to English Enterprise and Settlement," 14.

⁵⁹ "Emigration to America."

⁶⁰ Bill Marvell, *The Rock Island Line, Railroads Past and Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 48.

⁶¹ Bell, "The Colonies of Colorado in Their Relation to English Enterprise and Settlement," 15; "Emigration and North-Western States and Territories in America."

⁶² Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 13.

⁶³ Burt, "British Investment in the American Mining Frontier," 516.

However, there were unadvertised aspects of Cornish emigration for mining. While miners could be placed directly into higher positions, there was practically no upward mobility available; the only people who earned any riches from the mining industries were the investors in the Northeast or in Britain.⁶⁴ Wages failed to account for the high price of housing and supplies in mining camps, which, though expensive, were of a poor quality.⁶⁵ On top of this, the mining life in the West was not a particularly pleasant one. Cornish miners faced harsh treatment from superiors at work, regardless of whether they were American or fellow English, and were scorned by American colleagues, who believed that immigrant labor was driving down their wages.⁶⁶ Socially, it was hard for a miner to lead a fulfilling life. Mines were located far from established towns and cities, and mining camp residents relied heavily on alcohol for entertainment in absence of culture. This caused problems for miners and miners' wives alike, both of whom were at risk of falling victim to alcoholism.⁶⁷ There was a hidden dark side to the Cornish mining experience that did not appear in promotional materials, and cast doubt on the true value of emigrating to America to pursue mining.

Compared to the experience of the Cornish miners, who mostly followed the same path, the fortunes of British emigrants who went west for agriculture were more varied. The British who moved west to farm were built up on the idea that they would be able to own their land and keep their profits, which had been impossible at home. Owning land was an achievable goal; it could be had for a relatively low amount of initial capital, especially compared to Britain, where

⁶⁴ Burt, 516.

⁶⁵ Vivian, *Wanderings in the Western Land*, 384.

⁶⁶ Vivian, 384; "The Cornish Miners in America," *Western Morning News*, January 17, 1870, British Newspaper Archive.

⁶⁷ "The Cornish Miner at Home and Abroad"; "Of Cornish Miners," *The Cornish Telegraph*, June 4, 1873, British Newspaper Archive.

free and affordable land was practically impossible to come by.⁶⁸ While this and the discount fees for transport to whatever new homestead a settler would decide on made emigration to farm in America seem like a relatively affordable undertaking, in reality it was only open to farmers with a certain level of savings. A farmer would need to purchase or build a house, acquire and build housing for livestock, get crops, and potentially hire labor to help work the fields. None of this was cheaper than it was in Britain, and labor was actually much more expensive.⁶⁹ Starting to farm on one's own required heavy amounts of savings.

It was possible for more impoverished farmers to work their way up to this level of independence in America, but with great difficulty. A Briton could become hired help, saving up money by working under a landowner in exactly the same way as he had before emigrating, before eventually buying a plot of his own.⁷⁰ This left no guarantee of success, especially given that the land available for cheap was less suitable for farming than the soil used by larger, pre-established farms, and using farm animals bought for cheap had a negative effect on profits.⁷¹ A farmer could take out a loan from a British-funded mortgage company to support his dreams of agricultural prosperity, but that necessitated turning enough of a profit in the following years to pay off the loan.

The odds of farmland turning a profit were slimmer than promoters let on. Advertisements promised that American farming was profitable—one, printed in London's *Broad Arrow* newspaper, claimed that the land would return double the initial investment each year.⁷² This was doubtful. Very few farmers were able to plant crops in their first year on the

⁶⁸ Bell, "The Colonies of Colorado in Their Relation to English Enterprise and Settlement," 9–11; "100,000 Acres of the Finest Farming Land in America for Sale," *Broad Arrow*, January 1, 1876.

⁶⁹ "Farming in America," *Glasgow Herald*, March 23, 1882, British Newspaper Archive.

⁷⁰ "Prairie Farming in America," *Bury and Norwich Post*, October 16, 1877, British Newspaper Archive.

⁷¹ "Prairie Farming in America."

⁷² "100,000 Acres of the Finest Farming Land in America for Sale."

prairie, let alone break even.⁷³ Further, a successful English farmer could not seamlessly adapt to the American climate; harsh winters, a different growing season, and problems with pests like locusts presented emigrants with a potentially steep learning curve.⁷⁴ A Colorado-based British farmer, three years into his life there, wrote to potential emigrants in *Fraser's Magazine*, cautioning them that “if you wish to get rich at once, you cannot do so.” He forecast that for a farmer with sufficient capital to buy 500 acres and thirty cows, it would take a decade to become independent.⁷⁵ Essentially, British emigrant farmers in the West could aspire to own their land and escape debt, but making a profit was out of the question.

The promises of finding riches and freedom in the West were limited to the most privileged members of the emigrant population, who were either already established businessmen or independently wealthy. The businessmen who went West followed connections and their own investments to support British companies. In mining, site inspectors with and without mining backgrounds would often travel to America, inspect a mine, and then become its manager when operations began.⁷⁶ The situation was similar for agriculture; large farms and cattle companies needed local management and ownership, and knowing the right person could be enough to get a job.⁷⁷ Independent business operation also required connection and personal wealth. Reginald Aldridge, who built his own cattle company after emigrating to Kansas in 1877, was only able to do so by knowing an American to be his partner and having enough independent wealth to buy cattle and hire hands.⁷⁸ The people who moved into high positions in Western business were already members of the privileged British class.

⁷³ “Colorado,” *Fraser's Magazine; London* 18, no. 107 (November 1878): 622–30; “Prairie Farming in America.”

⁷⁴ “Prairie Farming in America”; “Farming in America.”

⁷⁵ “Colorado,” 628.

⁷⁶ Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*, 69–70.

⁷⁷ Woods, *John Clay, Jr.: Commission Man, Banker and Rancher*, 65.

⁷⁸ Reginald Aldridge, *Life on a Ranch* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884).

The prototypical example of a British businessman making his name in American ranching is John Clay Jr.⁷⁹ Clay, a Scot born into a farming family, became involved in agriculture through his direction of the Clydesdale Horse Society, and later became involved in the ownership group of a Canadian farm. In 1879, with the help of his father, Clay was placed on the Royal Agricultural Commission, and soon was leading the report on ranching that helped spur the cattle investment boom. Clay moved to America shortly after and capitalized on the boom, first by taking commissions to write reports on potential ranching ventures, and then becoming a manager of multiple British-owned ranches. Building up his personal fortune, Clay created his own investment company, which he would maintain alongside his management ventures until his death.⁸⁰ John Clay Jr. was able to go to America and use the West to make his fortune, but he was only able to do it by banking on the connections and money from his privileged background.

In a similar vein, William E. Bell, the Colorado promoter working under the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, gained a fortune from the development of Colorado Springs and Manitou, but only by leveraging his privilege. Bell was the son of one of London's leading physicians, and went West for the first time to draw up a report for his father. There, he befriended General William Jackson Palmer, and the two of them later used Bell's father's connections to secure enough British investment to build the Denver and Rio Grande branch line southward from Denver. Bell soon moved out to Colorado Springs, a new colony started by Palmer along the railroad, where he began working as a promoter, soliciting British investment and emigration and accumulating a personal fortune.⁸¹ Like Clay Jr., Bell's successful business

⁷⁹ Clay Jr. was actually the fourth in a line of John Clays, but since he went by Jr. he is identified as such here.

⁸⁰ Woods, *John Clay, Jr.: Commission Man, Banker and Rancher*.

⁸¹ Sprague, *Newport in the Rockies*, 3–70.

career in America would have been impossible without connections and capital drawn from his family and acquaintances.

There was another class of privileged emigrants who went West not to seek out riches, but to establish a life of their own. These were the so-called “remittance men,” aristocrats who were born with wealth but without any career prospects. In British society, the nobility’s land passed entirely to the first-born son on the father’s death, leaving any other sons with nothing but a portion of the deceased’s money as inheritance. As such, from adulthood it was necessary for these sons to seek a life of their own, although by the 1870s that was much harder than it had been in the past. Traditional jobs for second sons—soldier, politician, lawyer, and other respected positions—now hired based on qualification, rather than connections, and the decline in importance and pay of the clergy eliminated the idea of going into the priesthood.⁸² With opportunities limited at home, many went to America, seeking to find a new life of frontier fortune and adventure. Doing so, they became remittance men, named for the monthly sum of money to live on that they often received from their families in Britain.

The lives of remittance men varied greatly, as did their level of assimilation into their new homes. Some sought to recreate their aristocratic lifestyle almost exactly, settling in colonies restricted to Britons of high class, like Victoria, located in Kansas. These settlements, designed to be self-sustaining pioneer havens for the expat elite, failed to catch on due to the settlers’ generally poor adaptation to a farming lifestyle and general misfortune with weather, disease, and soil.⁸³ Others took up emigration offers from new towns and cities, like William Bell’s Colorado Springs. There, the unofficial socialite-in-chief was the brother of the Marquis to

⁸² Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West*, 51; Larry McFarlane, “British Remittance Men as Ranchers: The Case of Coutts Marjoribanks and Edmund Thursby, 1884-95,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1991): 53.

⁸³ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 180-94.

Cholmondeley, Francis “Chumley” Thornton.⁸⁴ Having fallen in love with his niece’s nurse, Chumley went to Colorado Springs and became Bell’s assistant, a rancher, and a mainstay of a town filled with 2,000 British expats—so many that it was nicknamed “Little London.”⁸⁵ Some remittance men settled together on the plains or in municipalities.

Other noble sons eschewed the company of fellow Britons, preferring to throw themselves into the American way of life. These were people like Coutts Marjoribanks, a former Member of Parliament, and Edmund Thursby, a veteran of American aristocratic colonies, who each set up ranches next to each other in North Dakota in the mid-1880s. They purchased enough cattle for a mid-size herd—about 500 heads—and made enough money to get by. The pair did not limit themselves to ranching and became part of their largely-American communities. Thursby went into local politics, becoming a fixture in the county Republican Party, while Marjoribanks joined the schoolboard and advocated for infrastructure.⁸⁶ According to one travel memoir, some former aristocrats even hid their identity upon arrival, pretending to be Americans in order to have an entirely new start.⁸⁷ Some remittance men completely reinvented themselves in America.

That is not to say all remittance men who worked in farming and ranching pushed away the vestiges of their nobility. Moreton Frewen, an aristocratic second son, frittered away his inheritance on luxuries and, with a loan from his brother, turned to ranching in Wyoming to make his fortune back.⁸⁸ Frewen soon made enough to buy out his brother and secure £300,000

⁸⁴ The nickname is the pronunciation of his family’s seat, Cholmondeley.

⁸⁵ Sprague, *Newport in the Rockies*, 68–72.

⁸⁶ McFarlane, “British Remittance Men as Ranchers: The Case of Coutts Marjoribanks and Edmund Thursby, 1884–95.”

⁸⁷ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 242.

⁸⁸ Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West*, 49; Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 248.

backing from a British duke.⁸⁹ From his base, a large wooden lodge on the Powder River, Frewen, with the help of a poor winter in 1886, mismanaged his cattle company into the ground, being forced out as director and manager in 1887, a year before its ultimate liquidation.⁹⁰ During his time in Wyoming Frewen kept a tight connection to the aristocracy he had left. The ranch was frequented by visitors and family, who came to visit and hunt.⁹¹ There was a more permanent connection too, as other remittance men joined Frewen in the area, setting up their own manorial ranches and creating a social community of gentleman ranchers.⁹² Frewen never engaged with western society, retaining his Britishness while living overseas. There were plenty of remittance ranchers who held tightly to their Englishness from thousands of miles away.

The idea of the American Dream sold Britons on emigration to the West—writers and promoters said that the region could allow a settler to break free of the static inequality of the British economy. In reality, however, the British who chose to emigrate thinking that they were getting a cure for their economic woes were being sold snake oil. Starting life anew as an independent farmer or rancher was impossible without having a large amount of savings or accumulating an insurmountable amount of debt, and mining in Nevada or Colorado was almost identical to the experience of mining in Cornwall, with no room for promotion. The people who could make a fortune from the West were the people who had had the ability to make a fortune before emigrating: landowning gentry and nobility. Sticking in largely British circles, most found a way to profit from the West without giving up the privilege and culture that they had left behind. In coming over, British emigrants to the West contributed to the economy and helped

⁸⁹ Moreton Frewen, *Melton Mowbray, and Other Memories* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1924), 212.

⁹⁰ Rico, *Nature's Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West*, 73–75.

⁹¹ Frewen, *Melton Mowbray, and Other Memories*, 204–8.

⁹² Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 253.

fuel the economic development of the region with their labor and business, but a majority found that they did not receive as much in return as they had hoped.

British Tourists—Visiting and Hunting the West

Tourism was another way a Briton could make his or her mark on the American West during the 1870s and 1880s. Taking advantage of new infrastructure, businesses, and information, middle- and upper-class British tourists were able to go west for a myriad of purposes, including sightseeing and hunting. Permanent British engagement in the region through investment and settlement only helped bolster its popularity as a tourist destination; visitors were never far from a familiar accent, even amidst an altogether alien landscape. While tourism was spread throughout the region, the vast majority of it took place in and around Colorado, thanks to rail, promotion, and nature.⁹³ By flocking to the West, British tourists inadvertently facilitated the region's economic development, opening up parts of the state that had been scarcely settled before.

The expansion of American rail made western travel and tourism feasible in a new way. The golden spike completing the railroad was driven in at Promontory Point, Utah, on May 10, 1869, cutting travel time to the American West from Liverpool to 17 days.⁹⁴ Soon after the tourist industry began building its clients' trips around train travel.⁹⁵ George Crofutt, the most famous travel guide writer of the time, published *The Great Trans-Continental Railroad Guide* in 1869, laying out itineraries along the railroad's route. The guide proved immensely popular, spawning multiple competitors. In 1870, with Crofutt having changed the book's name to *The*

⁹³ Utah was heavily visited as well, but this section will focus on Colorado, since Utah development occurred in a much different way from the rest of the region, thanks to the settlement of Mormons in the area of Salt Lake City.

⁹⁴ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 165.

⁹⁵ J. Valerie Fifer, *American Progress* (Chester: The Globe Pequot Press, 1988), 145-8.

Great Trans-Continental Tourist's Guide, promoters, among them the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads, began to distribute the guides around Europe, to glowing reviews.⁹⁶ The publication of travel guides like Crofutt's that promoted the transcontinental railroad as a tourism tool created a British appetite for western adventure.

Various industries took advantage of the newfound desire for and feasibility of travel. The Pullman company developed new cars to cater to wealthy and foreign travelers, which resembled hotels as much as they did train cars. Tourists could buy tickets for these trains directly from the railroads, or they could find cheaper travel in the recently founded travel agency industry. No travel agency was bigger than that of London's Thomas Cook, who had started organizing tourist trains in 1841. In 1872, Cook teamed up with guide publisher Crofutt to design an American version of his highly successful British and Continental tours. Cook brought the idea of the package tour with him to the United States—instead of booking hotels, excursions, and travel separately, British tourists could go to the West with a “tourist ticket” containing tickets and reservations for an entire trip's itinerary.⁹⁷ The encouragement of tourism in publications like Crofutt's paired with a tourism industry led by Thomas Cook to facilitate British travel to an underexplored tourist region.

Visitors traveling by train brought new money to western cities, allowing them to develop their infrastructure and shape themselves around their visitors. An excellent example of the effect of the tourism boom was Denver, Colorado, which was connected to the transcontinental railroad by a Union Pacific branch line.⁹⁸ The city, which had mainly been defined by the surrounding mining industry, changed completely in the years after the completion of the transcontinental

⁹⁶ Fifer, 171–73, 182–86.

⁹⁷ Fifer, 187–88, 205–6.

⁹⁸ Robert G. Athearn, *The Coloradans* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 99.

railroad, in large part due to its location, which led five train lines to pass through it.⁹⁹ Though it retained some of the western influence that had led it to be maligned by tourists in the decade prior as development began in the early 1870s, by the end of the decade it had become distinctly European—Arthur Pendarves Vivian wrote in his travel memoirs that Denver “seems as comfortable a place of residence as any European town.”¹⁰⁰ Many travelers noted that, in terms of infrastructure, the city was still a work in progress, but they were quick to praise its amenities, which included high-end hotels and a regular selection of plays and lectures.¹⁰¹ Denver changed from a mining outpost to a metropolitan destination as a result of the expansion of railroad tourism.

Denver’s Europeanized development served as a microcosm of the territory, and later state of which it was capital, Colorado.¹⁰² Tourists flocked to Colorado not just because of its central location, but also because of its air, which was believed to have curative powers, leading promoters to refer to the state as “the Switzerland of America.”¹⁰³ William Baillie-Grohman, who passed through Colorado on a western hunting trip, described the air, writing, “dry and sparkling as perhaps none other on the globe, it seems to be composed of not one-fifth, but five-fifths oxygen.”¹⁰⁴ Isabella Bird, a British woman who spent extensive time in the state, alleged that nine out of ten settlers she encountered were recovered invalids, who had gone west to treat various maladies.¹⁰⁵ Colorado’s health benefits gave the state an extra means to attract tourists, and attract tourists it did—by 1880, Denver was receiving over 200,000 visitors a year.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Athearn, *Westward the Briton*, 38–43.

¹⁰⁰ Vivian, *Wanderings in the Western Land*, 125.

¹⁰¹ Athearn, *Westward the Briton*, 43–4.

¹⁰² Colorado would gain statehood in 1876.

¹⁰³ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 164.

¹⁰⁴ William A. Baillie-Grohman, *Camps in the Rockies: being a Narrative of Life on the Frontier, and Sport in the Rocky Mountains, with an Account of the Cattle Ranches of the West* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1882), 3.

¹⁰⁵ Bird, *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 77–78.

¹⁰⁶ Fifer, *American Progress*, 266.

The rest of the state would soon play host to tourists as it developed over the 1870s and 1880s. The architect of Colorado's emergence as a major western state and tourist destination was Civil War General William Jackson Palmer, founder of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Palmer saw Colorado's potential, and believed that constructing a north-south railroad from the Transcontinental's stop in Denver could open it up to settlement, industry, and resort tourism.¹⁰⁷ To complement the new railroad, Palmer created a subsidiary company and established the town of Colorado Springs at the base of Pike's Peak, south of Denver. Palmer envisioned Colorado Springs as a resort town, taking advantage of nearby natural springs and Colorado's medicinal reputation to draw in tourists.¹⁰⁸ He later purchased land at the nearby Manitou mineral springs, and, delegating it to his colleague William Bell, set up another resort town there built around the springs' water.¹⁰⁹ Colorado Springs and Manitou developed into major health resorts in a matter of years to use the newly-expanded rail system to create a Coloradan tourist industry.

Bell and Palmer made Colorado Springs and Manitou a comfortable destination for the British tourists they sought. Beyond its growing population of British emigrants, solicited by Bell to settle and contribute to the tourist economy, developers structured cities to feel like home to a British tourist. The two constructed buildings, including their personal homes, using British architectural styles, and outfitted hotels with croquet lawns, bandshells, and other trappings of aristocratic comfort.¹¹⁰ The area's British minority asserted itself, creating a British culture that overwhelmed the American one. Residents and visitors could shop at a tailor associated with

¹⁰⁷ Denver and Rio Grande Railway Company, "Annual Report," 1872, 5–8.

¹⁰⁸ Brosnan, *Uniting Mountain and Plain: Cities, Law, and Environmental Change along the Front Range*, 104.

¹⁰⁹ Fifer, 252-5.

¹¹⁰ Sprague, *Newport in the Rockies*, 74; Fifer, *American Progress*, 258.

London's Bond Street to purchase the latest European clothing.¹¹¹ An Englishman, J.E. Liller, edited a weekly newspaper out of Colorado Springs, *Out West*, that was printed in England as well as America.¹¹² The most aristocratic tourists could even go fox hunting in the lands around the town, substituting local animals like coyotes for foxes.¹¹³ The brainchild of an American general, the Colorado Springs area became unambiguously English, the "Little London" of Colorado's "England beyond the Missouri."¹¹⁴

The allure of tourism in places like Colorado Springs was not solely a result of their Britishness. The natural beauty of the West was a major draw. Britons were typically struck by the natural beauty of the West from their train as they exited the relative monotony of the Great Plains.¹¹⁵ Promoters sought to sell the accessibility of awe-inducing scenery at all times. William Crofutt, explaining different Coloradan rail tours in his *Grip-Sack Guide of Colorado*, wrote detailed descriptions of the natural scenery on view from rail cars, punctuated by full-page illustrations of particularly beautiful canyons or rock formations.¹¹⁶ The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad's tourism book about Manitou, provided free of charge to any requesting business in the city, focused less on the spa town than the surrounding wilds, giving natural histories of potential excursions to mountains, gorges, and forests.¹¹⁷ An 1889 *Illustrated London News* article promoting Colorado Springs describes the area's "various natural marvels" alongside descriptions of opera houses and hotels with "every modern convenience and luxury."¹¹⁸

¹¹¹ Sprague, *Newport in the Rockies*, 73.

¹¹² Fifer, *American Progress*, 256; Athearn, *Westward the Briton*, 118.

¹¹³ Sprague, *Newport in the Rockies*, 74.

¹¹⁴ Fifer, *American Progress*, 257-8.

¹¹⁵ Rose, *Unspeakable Awfulness*, 223.

¹¹⁶ George A. Crofutt, *Crofutt's Grip-Sack Guide of Colorado*, Vol. II (Omaha: Overland Publishing Company, 1885).

¹¹⁷ S. K. Hooper, *The Story of Manitou*. (Denver: Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, 1890).

¹¹⁸ "Colorado Springs," *Illustrated London News*, August 17, 1889, British Newspaper Archive.

Tourists were sold on visiting Colorado with the promise of accessing otherworldly nature without having to leave the modern life to which they were accustomed.

Fulfilling Palmer's vision, tourists, many of them British, would flock to Colorado Springs and Manitou. By the early 1880s, almost every Thomas Cook tour, even those centered around California, passed through Colorado so British tourists could experience the air and stunning natural scenery.¹¹⁹ The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, which established offices in London and New York, sold its own package tours to compete with Cook and promote travel within the state.¹²⁰ By 1886, the Denver and Rio Grande was carrying over 330,000 annually, having started carrying only 25,000 in 1872.¹²¹ Colorado Springs, which only received its first visitors in 1872, hosted 30,000 tourists in 1880 and 200,000 by 1890.¹²² Palmer's decision to build a branch line and establish resorts was paying dividends, and bringing a large number of Britons to central Colorado.

British tourism was not limited to resort towns angling for tourists like Manitou and Colorado Springs. Many came West to explore the frontier wilderness and hunt exotic beasts like Bison or Elk.¹²³ By the start of the 19th century, Britain's hunting grounds were sparse due to industrial buildup, and had never been home to major trophy beasts that could be found around the globe, like the Elephant in Africa or the Buffalo in North America.¹²⁴ These vacations were generally restricted to the wealthiest British men, who could spare the cost and time for travel, outfitting, and paying others for support. Adventure tourists relied heavily on others from the

¹¹⁹ Fifer, *American Progress*, 301-3.

¹²⁰ Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Company, "Annual Report to the Stockholders of the Denver and Rio Grande R.R. Co.," 1887, 1; Athern, *The Coloradans*, 101.

¹²¹ Denver and Rio Grande Railway Company, "Annual Report," 9; Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Company, "Annual Report to the Stockholders of the Denver and Rio Grande R.R. Co.," 26.

¹²² Brosnan, *Uniting Mountain and Plain*, 99, 104.

¹²³ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 85.

¹²⁴ Tara Kathleen Kelly, "Sportsmen of the Breed: British and American Hunters," in *The Hunter Elite* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018), 157-84,159.

start of the journey. Arthur Pendarves Vivian, preparing for a hunt with his brother-in-law, the Earl Dunraven, explained that he had no knowledge of western hunting, and as such relied on a former soldier and a knowledgeable grocer to do all the ordering, purchasing, and equipping for him.¹²⁵ Having relied on townsfolk to outfit them, travelers would then have to rely on hired guides for the life of the trip.

These wilderness guides came from diverse backgrounds, but all sought to embody the West as much as the territory they were guiding tourists through did. Intentionally or not, they hewed to stereotypes and stories of American frontier masculinity established in popular literature and history.¹²⁶ Part of the allure for British hunting tourists was the ability to fit into this American frontier narrative, since the rural, wooded Britain lacked any real parallel to catch popular imagination.¹²⁷ At one point in her travels, Isabella Bird was led through the northern Colorado wilderness by “Mountain Jim” Nugent.¹²⁸ Mountain Jim formed the image of a quintessential trapper. One-eyed, with long, unkempt hair, he wore deerskin pants and “three or four ragged, unbuttoned waistcoats,” one of which contained his revolver.¹²⁹ His imposing demeanor gave way to a welcoming personality, evident in his love of his dog, Ring, and his leading of a “Star Spangled Banner” singalong around the campfire.¹³⁰ Playing up this vision of Americanness, the most famous guides would become Europeans’ vision of the West on British soil as performers—“Buffalo Bill” Cody and “Texas Jack” Omohundro, who both served as guides for Earl Dunraven, showing him the West while making him feel like a mountain man

¹²⁵ Vivian, *Wanderings in the Western Land*, 15.

¹²⁶ Mona Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 97-99.

¹²⁷ Kelly, “Sportsmen of the Breed,” 172.

¹²⁸ Bird alleged that Mountain Jim was the son of a British army officer who ran away to the West to start a new life. This would position him in the extreme range of remittance men. However, Bird’s account is uncorroborated, and Nugent puts forth a number of other backgrounds, including that of a trapper.

¹²⁹ Bird, *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 100.

¹³⁰ Bird, 104-5.

rather than a noble one, famously went abroad in the late 1880s to tour Cody's Wild West show.¹³¹ British tourists encountered the real West thanks to guides who accentuated the region with their appearance and personality.

These tourists were keen to hunt, and their guides were obliging in finding quarry. The 1850s and 1860s had been the time to chase and massacre herds of bison, but starting in 1870 hunters, among them William Baillie-Grohman, a professional hunter-writer, moved away from the Great Plains and to the Rockies, turning to the slightly more difficult target of elk.¹³² Hunting elk served two different purposes on these trips—they provided sustenance for the entire outfit as well as souvenir for the Briton. In leaner times, felling an elk could cure extreme hunger, as was the case with Baillie-Grohman when his outfit was caught in a snowstorm in the Rockies and the group devoured four elk like “savages.”¹³³ Generally, however, the head and antlers of an elk represented less food and more proof of a hunter's derring-do; Baillie-Grohman describes the majesty of a taxidermized elk head hanging in his home, while Vivian, praising the quality of venison from one of his kills, laments to the reader that he “should have much preferred a bull with less good meat and a head with horns,” to display back in Britain.¹³⁴ The Earl of Dunraven described the elk as a “glorious animal” that is a joy to hunt.¹³⁵ On British big game expeditions, hunting was a necessity for survival, but also a game with a trophy to win.

Britons who explored the wildernesses of the West were awestruck by the natural and living terrain. In three lyrical pages of writing, Isabella Bird compared the area around Estes Park, Colorado, to a work of art. She ended a list of beautiful natural features by describing a

¹³¹ Rico, *Nature's Noblemen*, 98-100.

¹³² Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 158; Baillie-Grohman, *Camps in the Rockies*, 121.

¹³³ Baillie-Grohman, *Camps in the Rockies*, 121.

¹³⁴ Baillie-Grohman, 122; Vivian, *Wanderings in the Western Land*, 195.

¹³⁵ The Earl of Dunraven, “A Colorado Sketch,” *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature (1844-1898)*; *New York*, November 1880.

waterfall, which “comes tumbling down with such an apparent feeling for the picturesque, that I am almost angry with nature for her close imitation of art.”¹³⁶ The flora of northern Colorado appealed to Bird as much as the fauna, and she keenly wrote of the “majestic wapiti,” the “superb big-horns,” and the “great ‘grizzly.’”¹³⁷ Near North Park, Colorado, Vivian came into a view of a mountain range, scenery that was “unsurpassed by any that it had been my fortune as yet to come across.”¹³⁸ Animals and people took on a better-than-real-life appearance too. Baillie-Grohman spends more than five pages crafting an elk-hunting narrative where he gives the elk a level of description and analysis on the level of a human.¹³⁹ Moreton Frewen, on one of his hunting trips by Wyoming’s Mount Wakashie, described the area as a beautiful “sporting paradise,” where the best specimens every variety of game filled the eye anywhere it looked.¹⁴⁰ Examining humans instead of elk, Baillie-Grohman described the scene at one of the hunting camps he stayed like a work of art, highlighting two men and a boy around the campfire as “all aglow with Rembrandt colors.”¹⁴¹ Britons in the wilder parts of the West affectionately used flowery language to describe the world they saw there.

The combination of beautiful scenery and plentiful hunting could inadvertently turn some natural wildernesses into popular resort areas of their own. Around 1870, when the Earl of Dunraven first visited Estes Park, Colorado, it had two residents who lived fifteen miles apart: Isabella Bird’s future guide, Mountain Jim, and a Welsh trapper named Griff.¹⁴² Dunraven, who had made a fortune from the rich coal veins under his Welsh lands, was enamored with the

¹³⁶ Bird, *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 123.

¹³⁷ Bird, 120.

¹³⁸ Vivian, *Wanderings in the Western Land*, 229.

¹³⁹ Baillie-Grohman, *Camps in the Rockies*, 125-130.

¹⁴⁰ Frewen, *Melton Mowbray, and Other Memories*, 159.

¹⁴¹ Baillie-Grohman, *Camps in the Rockies*, 86.

¹⁴² Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin Dunraven, *Past Times and Pastimes*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1922).

natural beauty and abundant hunting of Estes Park, and was inspired to purchase, through legally questionable means, much of the area's land for himself.¹⁴³ The Earl's vision of being able to vacation in an oasis of his own was undone, in part by his own actions. His controversial purchase, using American proxies to acquire land he, being British, could not purchase, made news domestically and internationally.¹⁴⁴ Adding to the notoriety of Estes Park, both he and high-class visitors like Arthur Vivian and Isabella Bird published works full of praise for the area.¹⁴⁵ Settlers and visitors began overrunning Dunraven's paradise, leading the Earl to construct a hotel and build rudimentary infrastructure. Soon he was saddled with legal issues due to his purchase, land taxes, and unpleasant neighbors. Not living full-time in Colorado, the Earl made the decision to give up Estes Park, creating a shell company and selling it off. He would never return.¹⁴⁶ In the case of Estes Park, British tourism led to the unforeseen development of a once-untouched section of wilderness.

This was the reality of British tourism in the West during the 1870s and 1880s. To profit from the natural beauty of the West on a large scale, it was necessary to develop it, thereby eroding it. In Colorado Springs, a cog railway was developed to ease travel to the summit of Pike's Peak, which had previously only been accessible on foot. The railway was built at a major natural cost, requiring the destruction of a portion of the mountain to clear space for rails.¹⁴⁷ Building railways and constructing new towns was, in many ways, was a case of addition by subtraction, expanding the United States and bolstering people's lives and the economy, but disrupting the natural order that existed on the frontier. Even the less invasive approach of big

¹⁴³ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 148; Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin Dunraven, *Past Times and Pastimes*, (London, 1922), 142, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/yale.39002014419320>.

¹⁴⁴ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 170–72.

¹⁴⁵ The Earl of Dunraven, "A Colorado Sketch."; Bird, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*, 119; Vivian, *Wanderings in the Western Land*, 130–40.

¹⁴⁶ Dunraven, *Past Times and Pastimes*, 140–43.

¹⁴⁷ Brosnan, *Uniting Mountain and Plain*, 113–15.

game expeditions damaged the West through overhunting. In North Park, Colorado, Bison and Bighorn Sheep went extinct from overhunting by 1880.¹⁴⁸ The Earl of Dunraven noted that elk suffered from overhunting in an article that year, cautioning that they would soon completely disappear from “civilized districts.”¹⁴⁹ Interest in the West from British and Americans helped develop the region, but that development had side effects.

With the construction of the transcontinental railroad and subsequent branch lines, Britons could travel to the West faster, allowing it to become a vacation destination. Accordingly, railroads and a nascent tourist industry worked to develop the region for tourists, creating resort towns like Colorado Springs and selling guide books and package tours to make touring easier. The West was a destination for British tourists, who were surprised and enamored with the amount of Europeanization in many of their destinations, a result of ongoing British investment and emigration. Tourism contributed an influx of money and interest that helped develop the West even more, helping its growth from a collection of farms, mines, and settlements to a region with cities, culture, and an economy. While British tourism contributed to the early erosion of the West’s resplendent nature, it did help the West, and by extension America, grow.

Conclusion

At the start of the 1870s, a relatively laissez-faire approach from the American government toward the territories and states of the American West let unbridled capitalism free in the region. This allowed the mass entry of British capital and people and facilitated the development of the Western society and many of its residents and investors’ personal fortunes.

¹⁴⁸ Brosnan, 169.

¹⁴⁹ The Earl of Dunraven, “A Colorado Sketch.”

Some wealthy investors in Britain like Lord Airlie became even richer investing in mining or cattle ranching, and many upper-middle class middlemen like John Clay Jr. or William Bell made a fortune from report writing, management, and small-scale investment. Cornish miners were able to travel over and make more money than they could have elsewhere. British tourists, hoping to experience natural beauty and a healing atmosphere, brought money into the region that directly supported regional development and Western producers and workers. Upper class Britons came in with money and rarely lost it. The 1870s and 1880s opened floodgates that allowed a massive flow of money into the American West, in the form of investment and tourism, that would help make some British investors and emigrants and American residents extremely wealthy.

However, the money that helped develop the region did not find its way to everyone. Many of the wealthy Britons who were convinced to invest by promoters and their fanciful or dishonest pamphlets found themselves losing large amounts of money as mines proved worthless or herds perished from disease. They helped the region by providing it the capital to grow but got nothing back for their pains. The British emigrants who traveled to support these new British-funded companies—ranches, mines, resorts, and farms—were enticed to work by promoters' promises of unparalleled opportunity but mostly found economic constraints similar to those at home. Miners and service-industry workers received their wages while their bosses and investors took home massive profits. Farmers who went out on their own often found themselves saddled with debt and barely scraping by or working under a landlord, just as they had been before emigrating. Early emigrants also found that the rapid pace of development destroyed the lives that they had built for themselves—Griff, the Welshman who lived in solitude at Estes Park, became surrounded by tourists following the development under Earl Dunraven. Among the

British who helped shape the American West in the 1870s and 1880s, there were considerable economic barriers and malaise despite promises to the contrary.

After the transcontinental rail system brought the West closer to the rest of the United States, and, by extension, Europe, the British adopted American enthusiasm for the West. Starting in the 1870s and continuing throughout the 1880s, British settlers, tourists, and capital traveled across the Atlantic and North America, helping the West build a society, an economy, and an identity. The region benefitted more from its interaction with the British than the British did in return; some Britons made it rich from the West, but many more found nothing more from their time and money there. While the early American West is built up as a region of distilled national identity, thousands of Britons and millions of their pounds left an undeniable mark on the region at the end of the 19th century.

This role that Britain had been playing in the development of the West officially ended in 1887, when President James A. Garfield signed the Alien Land Act. The act, which followed on similar measures passed earlier by individual states, prohibited Britons, and other non-citizens who were not emigrating to become Americans, from buying land on US soil. It also banned land purchases by foreign companies; any corporation buying up American land now had to have its stock ownership be 80% American and limit its purchasing to 5,000 acres.¹⁵⁰ The amount of British capital that had been flooding into the West was almost entirely cut off, as was the ability of many among the upper class to easily emigrate with their Britishness intact. There were ways around the law, similar to how Dunraven used a proxy owner to acquire Estes Park. But even if it was not a true death sentence for the British relationship with the West, the Alien Land Act was still a sign that times were changing.

¹⁵⁰ Pagnamenta, *Prairie Fever*, 280; Clements, "British-Controlled Enterprise in the West between 1870 and 1900, and Some Agrarian Reactions," 139–40.

The British and their money had helped the West develop rapidly over the previous two decades. Developing businesses and building settlements, working and running mines and ranches, and traveling West to spend their pounds as tourists, Britons had facilitated the growth of the Western American economy in a way that was far from insignificant. As the West no longer needed massive amounts of foreign capital to develop new industries, British investors began to look elsewhere for massive profits. At the same time, Western Americans no longer wanted the same British presence; British investment and emigration had the side effect of crowding out Americans from becoming involved in the region's economy, leading in part to the rise of the populist granger movement among farmers as well as the advocacy that caused the first of the alien land acts on the state level. By the passage of the 1887 law, most potential British settlers and investors were no longer needed or wanted. In the 1870s and 1880s, the British had helped fill the American West's need for capital, labor, and development. With that development completed, the era of the direct British engagement was more or less over.

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