



Taking Land, Breaking Land: Women Colonizing the American West and Kenya, 1840-1940

Glenda Riley

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In spite of considerable similarities, the American West and Kenya have rarely been compared or contrasted by historians, until now. This book examines the lives of women colonists on the American and Kenyan frontiers to demonstrate the importance of gender and race in shaping women's frontier experience. Although the West and Kenya are half a world apart, have natives of different races, and developed at different periods, the lives of women colonists show remarkable parallels.

On both frontiers, white women were active agents of colonial conquest. They believed in the necessity of imposing their culture upon native peoples to bring about "civilization." In turn, the colonized responded by resisting, which meant that women of color seldom allied with white women.

Riley's discussion of the historical experiences of these two frontiers addresses such crucial issues as women's roles in the continuation of colonization in the U.S. West as opposed to their roles in its collapse in Kenya. Although she uses postmodern theoretical concepts of self and other, of resistance and adaptation, her writing will appeal to a broad audience of students, scholars, and general readers.

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