



## Call for Proposals

### “Risky Business”

Western History Association  
48<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

Salt Lake City  
October 22-25, 2008

Western history is filled with risky propositions. It's not easy to join a wagon train, or hop a freighter, or brave a wide desert. It takes guts to come out to your parents, or give birth on the side of the trail, or spend a day digging a well. Indeed, the West, past and present, is filled with individuals and communities who have taken risks. The Western History Association itself, surveys say, is at a moment of decision. Poised, it stands mature and self-possessed at the edge of change, while a next generation waits ambivalently, with both old-timers and next-wavers unsure whether to cast their lot with our motley crew.

On October 22-25, 2008, the Western History Association will gather in Salt Lake City for its 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Salt Lake City is a welcome venue for both this talk of risk and for risky talk. Carving a new mountain home for generations of faithful is surely a chancy endeavor, not to mention the grit required to journey thousands of miles from one's birthplace to pound railroad stakes for a living. The city is also well-known, of course, for its winter sports, short-term perils of downhill racers and long-term threats to stable mountaintops. The city too is poised, as newcomers from Latin America and the Pacific Islands mingle and mix with the long-settled, queer and straight alike.

To explore further the risky businesses of Western history, the 2008 program committee solicits proposals for sessions that themselves seek to re-imagine and re-invent the standard conference format. Possible sessions could follow new formats that give fresh legs to the faltering three-paper standard. Workshops could belly up to a range of topics: the perils of public history; the pitfalls of peer review; the problems and pleasures of crossing disciplines; books we couldn't, and could, do without; museum exhibits we would like to see funded, movies we'd like to make. Other sessions could consider a variety of media -- such as essays, web pages, dissertation chapters, K-12 teaching materials, music, public history projects, fiction, or short films—that might

be pre-posted electronically and made available through the WHA website. Given the vitality of Asian American history and the history of Pacific Islanders, we are especially eager to receive sessions and individual papers examining the Asian American and Pacific Islander experience in the West.

Submissions may be for an entire session, a panel discussion, or an individual paper. When submitting an entire session, include an abstract that outlines the purpose of the session, and designate one panelist or participant as the contact person. Each paper proposal, whether individual or part of a session, should include a one-page abstract and a one page c.v. including the address, phone, and email address for each participant. The committee will assume that all listed individuals have agreed to participate. Send all program submission materials to: Karen Merrill, Department of History, Williams College, Williamstown, MA 01267 ([kmerrill@williams.edu](mailto:kmerrill@williams.edu)). Submissions should be postmarked by 31 August 2007.