

America's Last Frontier

The American frontier was the line separating areas of denser settlement from "unsettled" territory. From a different perspective, the frontier divided areas where traditional native peoples lived, often as nomadic hunter-gatherers, from those areas where more technologically advanced peoples drastically altered the landscape by creating farms, ranches, towns, and cities to meet their needs. Since the arrival of the first colonists, the American frontier—or line of advanced settlement—had shifted steadily westwards.



Almost a century ago, Frederick Jackson Turner, a prominent American historian, argued that the existence of the frontier was one of the most important influences in shaping America. According to Turner, the essential American character was

forged in the West, not the East. Rugged individualism, social equality, democracy, and a spirit of optimism had all been fostered by the conditions of American frontier life. The frontier had also acted as a "safety valve," allowing ambitious and discontented people in the East to escape to the West, where they could recreate themselves as "self-made" men and women.

The Last Frontier: The Great Plains and the Far West

By the end of the Civil War, the United States controlled all of the territory from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Much of this vast area was settled and divided into states, reaching from Texas to Minnesota. American settlers had also occupied lands along the Pacific Coast from California to Oregon. Between these regions remained a vast expanse of territory—almost equal in size to the rest of the United States—consisting of the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains,

the Great Basin, and the deserts of the Southwest. This was the final frontier, with largely unsettled territories that had yet to apply for statehood.

The Great Plains were rolling, treeless plains that stretched from Texas to North Dakota. They received little rainfall, especially on their western side closer to the Rockies. In 1870, the plains were covered with short, thin grasses, which provided a home

The United States in 1870





both to millions of American buffalo and to the Great Plains Indians who lived off them. The Great Plains were only vaguely known to most Americans as the "Great American Desert." In reality, the soil of the northeastern plains was extremely fertile. In the short space of twenty years, between 1870 and

1890, most of the buffalo were killed, the Indians were forcibly moved to reservations, and the Great Plains were divided up into ranches and farms. In 1890, the U.S. Census Bureau officially announced the frontier was "closed"—no areas remained with fewer than two people per square mile.

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Factors Leading to the Settlement of the Last Frontier

Geographers point to a combination of "push" and "pull" factors to explain the migration, or movement, of people from one place to another. "Push" factors are those that push people to leave a place. People may leave to escape from religious persecution, ethnic prejudice, war, drought, or grinding poverty. "Pull" factors are those that attract people to a place—such as hopes for religious freedom or the promise of economic opportunity. In the decades after the Civil War, a number of "pull" factors encouraged migration to the American West.

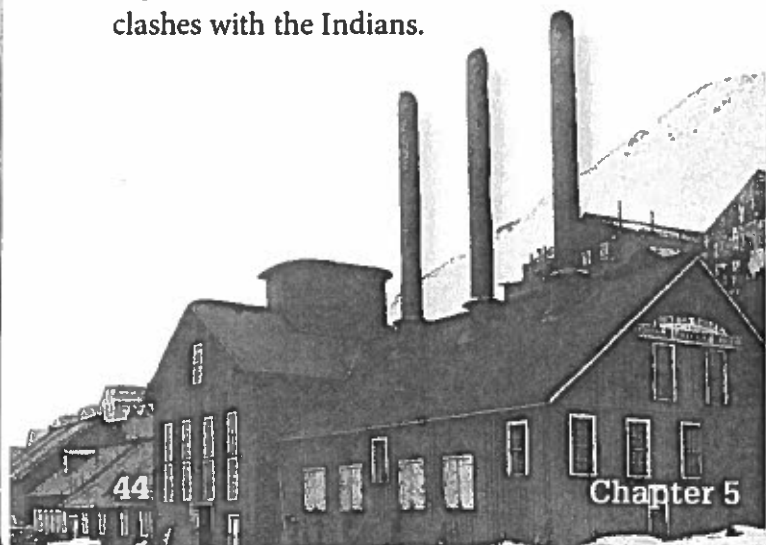
The Discovery of Precious Metals

The California Gold Rush of 1849 and later discoveries of gold and silver in Colorado, Nevada, South Dakota, Arizona, and other western states brought prospectors westward, led to the growth of mining towns, and often resulted in clashes with the Indians.

The Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad

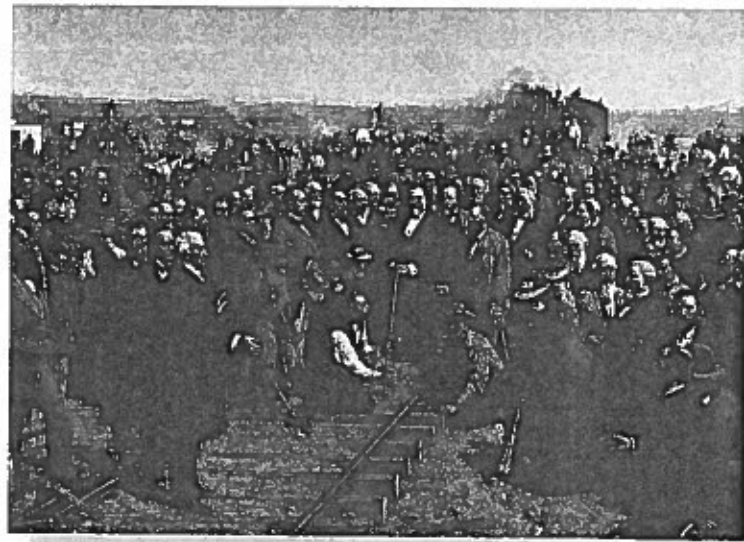
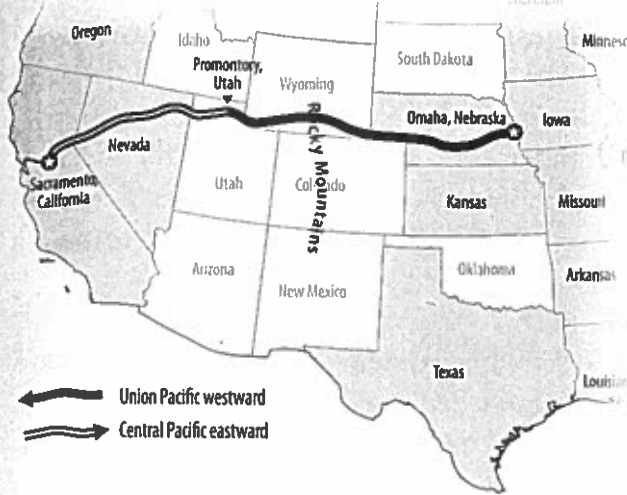
In the days before the Civil War, only a few stage coach lines, the telegraph, ships sailing to the Pacific Coast, and, for a brief period, the Pony Express, kept the Far West in contact with the rest of the country. During the war, Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act and the federal government put aside land for the first **transcontinental railroad**. Construction began in 1863, while the Civil War was still raging. Laborers, mainly Irish immigrants, worked on building the Union Pacific line from Omaha westwards,

Precious Metals in the West



"Go West!"

Transcontinental Railroad



The painting, "The Last Spike," depicts completion of the the transcontinental railroad in Promontory, Utah.

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while crews of Chinese workers laid the track for the Central Pacific Railroad from Sacramento, California eastwards. After 1865, these workers were joined by army veterans and African-American freedmen. The first transcontinental railroad was completed when the two sides met in Utah in May 1869. A six-month sea voyage was suddenly replaced by a train ride that took just over a week. Four more transcontinental lines were built over the next 25 years.

The railroads provided the principal stimulus for the settlement of the Great Plains:

- ▶ They made it easier for settlers to move westward and to receive supplies from the East.
- ▶ They made it possible for farmers and ranchers to ship their grain and cattle to Northeastern urban markets for sale.
- ▶ The railroads sold the government land grants they had received to settlers.
- ▶ Railroad advertising in Europe and the United States encouraged westward migration.

The Relocation of the American Indians

Before the new settlers could divide up the Great Plains, its existing inhabitants had to be relocated. In fact, back in 1830, Congress had already ordered the removal of all Indians in Southern states to west of the Mississippi. Nearly one-quarter of the Cherokee tribe had perished on their journey westward, which became known as the "Trail of Tears." Forty years later, some of the tribes found on the Great Plains were the very same ones that had been forcibly moved westward, like the Cherokee. Others, like the Sioux and Cheyenne, had lived on the Great Plains for centuries, where they had developed a distinct way of life, based on the large buffalo herds.

The "Indian Wars" of 1864–1890 The completion of the transcontinental railroads made these western lands highly desirable. Even where the Indians had been promised particular lands, they were asked to move again if settlers found their territory attractive. The Indians naturally resisted further resettlement. Clashes between land-hungry miners, ranchers and farmers with the Indians of the Great Plains became inevitable. A series of skirmishes, known as the "Indian Wars," lasted about twenty-five years. Federal troops, stationed in forts in the West, acted to protect the settlers. A large number were African-American troops, sometimes known as the "Buffalo soldiers." Some of the heaviest fighting occurred in the Southwest against the Apache Indians in Arizona and the Comanche in Texas and New Mexico. The federal





Buffalo Soldiers

government had guaranteed a vast expanse of territory to the Cheyenne in the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851. When gold was discovered, this was greatly reduced. In 1864, Union troops

attacked a Cheyenne camp at *Sand Creek* in eastern Colorado. Despite a white flag, soldiers killed more than a hundred Indians, mainly women and children.

Farther north, the Great Sioux War lasted from 1876 to 1877 (see next page). In the Pacific Northwest, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce tribe led a band of 200 warriors on a 1,200-mile retreat towards Canada in 1877. They defeated federal troops several times before their final surrender just miles from the Canadian border.

Indian warriors were generally no match for federal troops, battle-hardened from the Civil War and assisted by such superior weapons as the revolver and the Winchester rifle. In the end, their technological superiority and greater numbers simply overwhelmed the Indian tribes. Because most Americans did not regard the Indians as equals, they were quite willing to break their treaties with them.

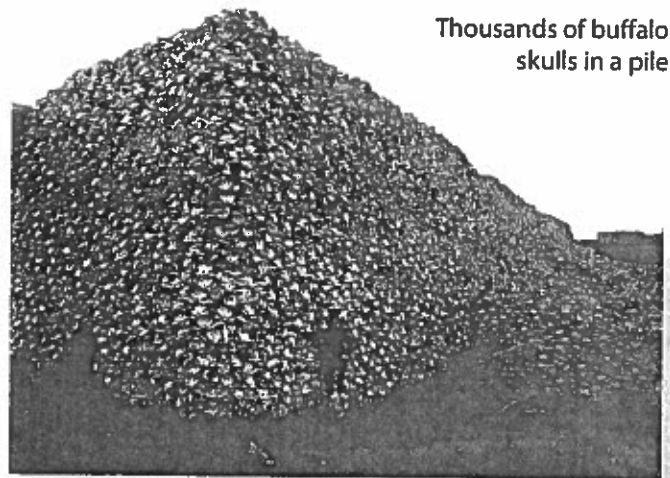
With the completion of the transcontinental railroad, sharpshooters began shooting at the massive herds of buffalo that roamed the plains, to collect

and sell their hides. After only a few years, the American buffalo was on the edge of extinction. The destruction of millions of buffalo in the early 1870s took away the main source of food for the Plains Indians and sealed their fate. In the end, they had no choice but to submit to federal authority, and were confined to ever smaller and more remote "reservations."

The Reservation System Once a tribe of Indians submitted to federal authority, they were settled on a **reservation**. The government "reserved" particular lands for the tribe and signed a treaty with them. The tribe promised not to go beyond the borders of its lands. Those who did were captured and brought back. In effect, the Indians became the "wards" of the federal government. The government promised to provide food, blankets, and seed, but all too often the officials charged with delivering these supplies ignored or deliberately cheated the Indians.

In the 1860s and 1870s, most U.S. government officials believed the Indians should enjoy a large degree of independence on their reservations. Reservation lands, however, were usually quite different from the lands the tribe had lived on before. Frequently they were located in infertile and undesirable areas. Moreover, tribal customs generally encouraged hunting and discouraged men from farming. Teachers sent to instruct children in the reservation schools attempted to convert them to Christianity while telling them that their most cherished tribal beliefs were wrong.

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Thousands of buffalo skulls in a pile

Case Study

The Sioux Indians of the Great Plains

The treatment of the Sioux Indians provides one example of the American Indian experience.

- ▶ **1862** When a tribe of Sioux braves are denied their promised supplies, they massacre hundreds of settlers in Minnesota. In response, thirty-eight of the Sioux are executed.

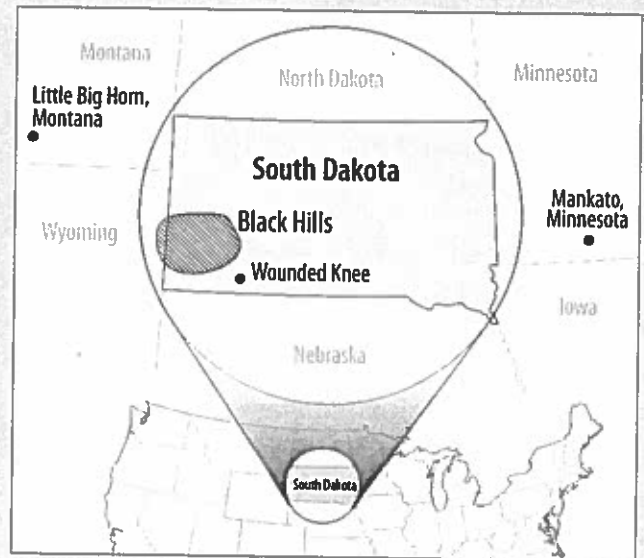


Mass hanging of Sioux in Mankato, Minnesota

- ▶ **1868** Sioux leaders agree to withdraw to the Black Hills of South Dakota, sacred to them as the home of the "Great Spirit." The United States agreed to abandon its forts in the area in another Treaty of Laramie.
- ▶ **1871–1874** Hunters and railroad agents, encouraged by the army, slaughter millions of buffalo, upon which the Sioux rely for their food.
- ▶ **1875** Gold is discovered in the Black Hills of South Dakota.
- ▶ **1876** The Sioux are asked to move out of the Black Hills. **Sitting Bull**, a Sioux holy man, inspires them to resist. **Crazy Horse** and other warriors surround **General Custer** and his 700 men at **Little Big Horn**. Custer and 267 of his men are killed.



Custer and his men are defeated at Little Big Horn



- ▶ **1877** Crazy Horse is captured and killed in captivity; the Sioux are forced onto reservations.
- ▶ **1881** Sitting Bull surrenders. He later joins Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" show, entertaining audiences in the Northeast and Midwest with shows dramatizing the defeat of the Indians.
- ▶ **1890** The Sioux on reservations begin the "Ghost Dance" in the belief that the "Great Spirit" is about to return control of the Great Plains to them and to restore the buffalo; fearing another Sioux rebellion, U.S. Army troops massacre as many as 200 Sioux men, women, and children with rapid-fire artillery guns in the final tragedy of the "Indian Wars," at **Wounded Knee**, South Dakota.

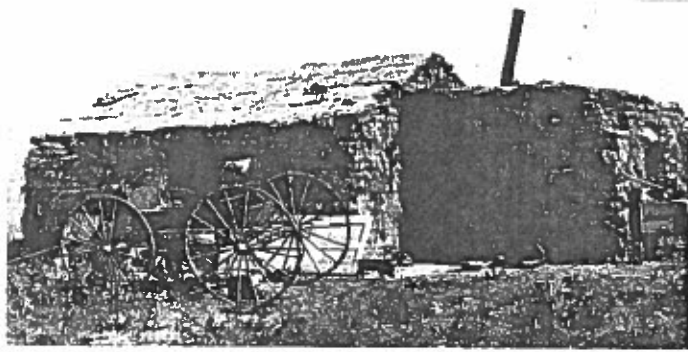


The Availability of Cheap Land

The slaughter of the buffalo and the removal of the Indians opened up vast tracts of new land for settlement. Immigrants from Europe and farmers from the East and Midwest of the United States were attracted by the prospect of cheap land. Railroads often misled settlers by advertising that farming conditions on the dry western plains were the same as those back east.

- ▶ The Homestead Act of 1862 promised settlers 160 acres of land for \$1.65 an acre after improving it for six months, or for free if they farmed it for five years.

- ▶ Railroads sold land cheaply to attract settlers. The railroads expected to make later profits by charging the settlers for shipping their freight.
- ▶ In 1889, the federal government authorized the sale of two million acres of land in Oklahoma—formerly known as “Indian Territory.” This land had been set aside for the Indians, but the government yielded to public pressure. On April 12, 1889, fifty thousand eager settlers waited along the border of the Oklahoma Territory for America’s first and greatest “land run.”



The Historian’s Apprentice

- ▶ Have your class hold a debate on Frederick Jackson Turner’s “frontier thesis.” Do you think Turner was right in emphasizing the impact of the frontier on the American character?
- ▶ Place American government leaders on trial for their treatment of the Plains Indians. Should they be condemned for the way they took the Indians’ land away?
- ▶ Which do you think was the most important factor behind the closing of the American frontier: the discovery of mineral resources, government land grants and promotions, or the completion of the railways? Use evidence to support your answer.
- ▶ Why did Congress make cheap land available under the Homestead Act?

Stages in the Evolution of the American West

America's "last frontier" generally evolved through a series of stages based on different economic activities. Particular regions differed in their development, depending upon their local resources.

The Mining Boom

In many parts of the West, miners were the first to arrive. Gold and silver discovered in California, the Rocky Mountains, and the Black Hills doubled the world's gold supply during the second half of the nineteenth century. Once a discovery was made, thousands of prospectors and adventurers were attracted to the spot in the hopes of striking a fortune. A rough-and-ready "boom" town sprang up overnight. There were few women: in 1860, Nevada and Colorado had nine men for every woman. Even as late as 1880, California was still 60% male. Boom towns often arose before a system of laws could be adopted. Violence was controlled by citizen's committees, known as "vigilantes."

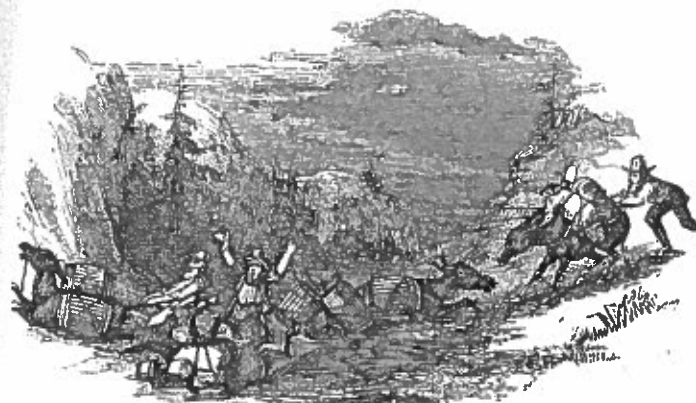
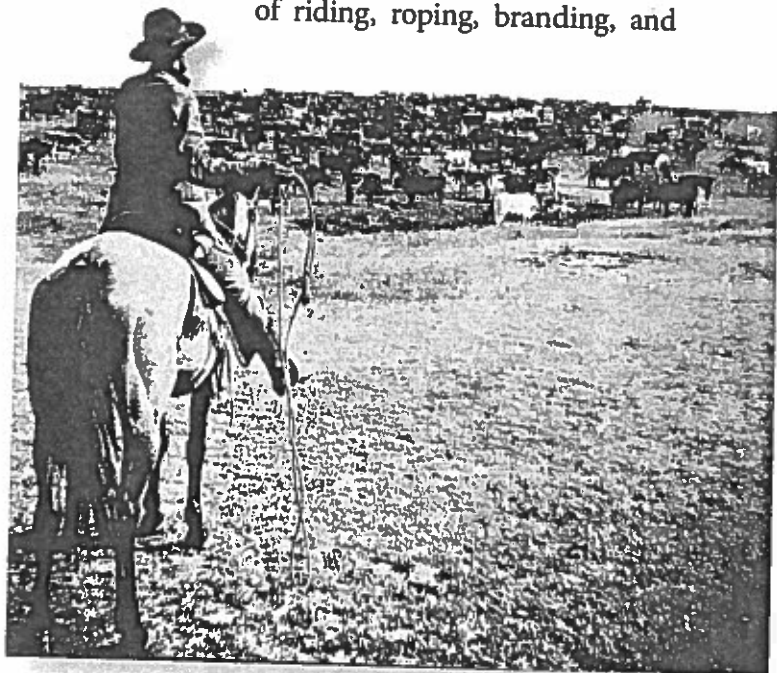
Individual miners, with few resources, were generally limited to primitive techniques, like panning streams and rivers for gold. After the surface minerals wore out, many mining towns became abandoned "ghost towns" almost as suddenly as they had arisen. In others, mining companies with heavy machinery moved in to exploit valuable mineral ores that still lay beneath the surface. Remaining miners were reduced to laborers and frequently clashed with the mining companies that employed

them. The mining companies also brought in immigrants—often Europeans skilled at mining. Some California miners moved to Nevada where silver was discovered in the Comstock Lode; others moved to Colorado where gold was discovered only a decade after the California Gold Rush.

The Cattle Kingdom and the "Open Range"

The "Cattle Kingdom" was a short-lived boom, which lasted about twenty years. At the end of the Civil War, there were several million wild longhorn cattle grazing on the Great Plains in Texas. Some Texans decided to drive these cattle northwards to the nearest railroad lines in Kansas. From Kansas, the cattle were shipped by rail to Chicago to be slaughtered. Then the cuts of beef were shipped in new refrigerated railroad cars to cities in the Northeast.

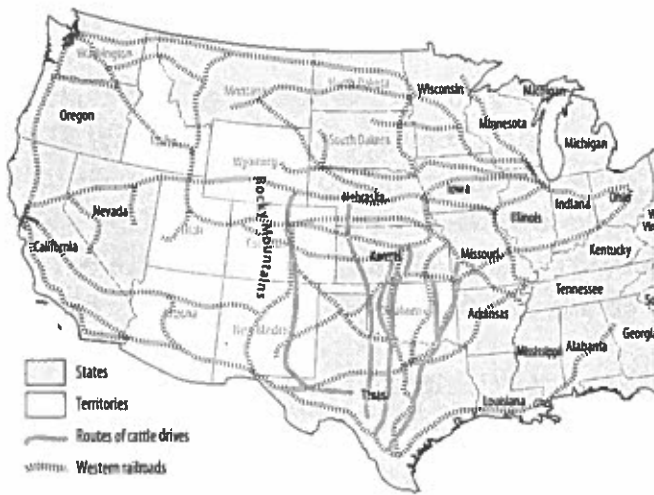
It took about three months to drive the cattle herds northward from Texas to Kansas, along the Chisholm Trail. On this "long drive," the cattle grazed on the short grasses of the "open range"—public lands not belonging to anyone and not fenced. The plains had abundant grass and water to support the moving herds. Cowboys, who had learned special techniques of riding, roping, branding, and



CARAMBOI—CARAJAI—SACRAMENTO—SANTA MARIA—DIAVOLO

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Western Railroads in 1890



dehorning cattle from the Mexican *vaqueros*, kept the herds moving together northward. As many as one in five American cowboys was African-American. The image of the “cowboy” has since become a romantic symbol of the American spirit, but many cowboys led lonely, isolated lives.

In the late 1870s and 1880s, the cattle herds were driven farther north a year before they were ready for slaughter. The cattle then fattened themselves by grazing on the northern plains of Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas. However, by 1886 overgrazing had destroyed much of the grass. Moreover, sheepherders and farmers had bought up much of

the “open range” and enclosed it with barbed wire fences. Economic hard times in the Northeast also meant prices fell and some cattle went unsold. Two severe winters and an unusually hot and dry summer killed millions of cattle in the years 1886 and 1887, finally putting an end to the “long drive.”

Cattle ranchers nonetheless remained on the plains. They bought their own lands, bred cattle on the “closed range,” and sent their young cattle eastwards by train to be fattened and slaughtered. Before long, railroad lines reached Texas.

The Farming Frontier

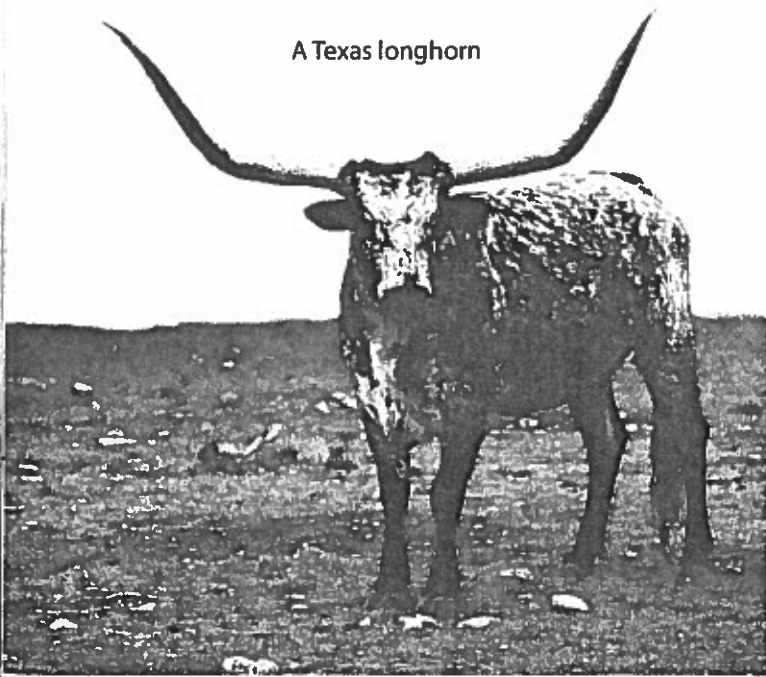
The railroads made it far easier for farmers to occupy the Great Plains. The Homestead Act and the sale of land by railroads greatly encouraged farmers’ movement westwards. The railroads also enabled them to sell their produce back east. Many of the settlers on the Great Plains were immigrants arriving directly from Europe; others were the children of farmers in the East and Midwest.

At first, these farming families had faced the hostility of both the Plains Indians and the cattlemen. The Indians, however, were soon defeated by federal troops and moved onto reservations. The cattlemen formed their own associations to oppose the farmers. Some even hired gunmen to commit acts of violence against the homesteaders. Eventually, the farmers won the contest against the ranchers. They came in greater numbers and began enclosing their properties with barbed wire fences.

Even more serious than the opposition of Indians and ranchers were the many natural obstacles that the farmers faced. From the railroad advertisements, they had expected to find amply watered, wooded lands like those in the East. Instead, they were shocked to find little rainfall, tough soil, few trees, extreme temperatures, plagues of grasshoppers, and a painful sense of isolation caused by the wide distances between neighboring farms. Some of the earliest settlers even starved or died of exposure. Large numbers of homesteaders gave up and moved back

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A Texas longhorn



east. In those families that stayed, women and small children were often forced to engage in strenuous physical labor for countless hours. During the cold, snowy winters, families might be locked in complete isolation for months at a time. Nevertheless, with technological ingenuity, the farmers were eventually able to overcome many of the obstacles they faced:

► **Obstacle:** Remoteness of markets

Solution: The railroads allowed the farmers to ship their produce eastwards.

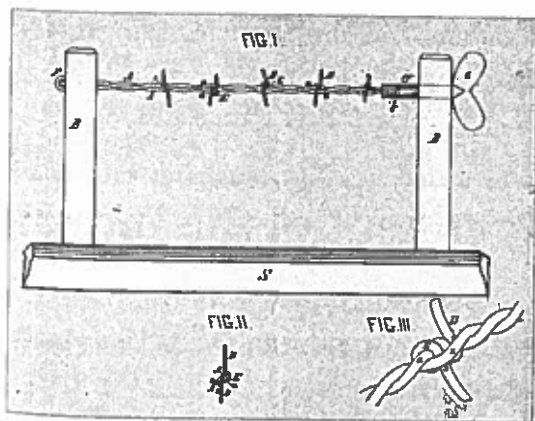
► **Obstacle:** Lack of wood, clay, or rock for homes

Solution: The farmers built “sod-houses,” made from thick clumps of grass and soil cut into bricks.



► **Obstacle:** Lack of wood for fencing

Solution: The farmers used barbed wire, first invented in 1874. Wire was twisted together at intervals to create sharp barbs that kept cattle and other animals from jumping over or crawling through the fence.



Patent drawing for barbed-wire fencing

► **Obstacle:** Lack of rainfall

Solution: Farmers on the Great Plains used drilling equipment to dig wells hundreds of feet deep in order to tap into groundwater. Windmills powered pumps that brought this water to the surface.

► **Obstacle:** Tough, dry soil

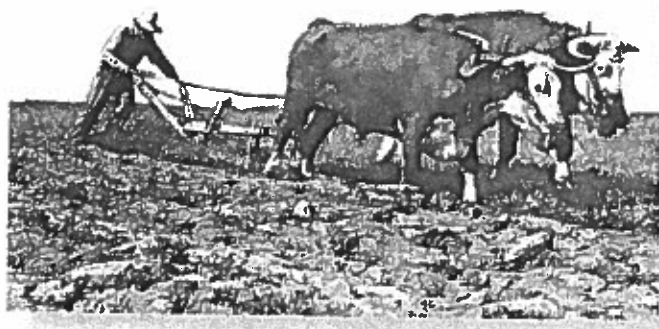
Solution: Farmers used steel or chilled-iron plows and plowed more deeply to preserve surface moisture in the soil. These new techniques came to be known as “dry farming.”

► **Obstacle:** Lack of fuel

Solution: The farmers burnt “buffalo chips” (*dried buffalo manure*) for fuel.

► **Obstacle:** Lack of manpower

Solution: They used machinery, such as horse-drawn harvesters and threshers, to farm more acres with fewer workers. In fact, some machinery was actually easier to use on the treeless plains than elsewhere.



With the use of these techniques, combined with the development of new varieties of wheat that needed less water and were more resistant to cold, farmers were able to turn the Great Plains into productive farmland and the main source of America’s wheat.

A Diversity of Experiences

Earlier historians—and popular literature—once depicted the American West as an area of conflict between American Indians and white settlers, or between white ranchers and farmers. Today, historians

see the settling of the West as much more of a multi-cultural affair. While it is true that there were Indians and white, English-speaking Americans, there were also many others. These included German, Scandinavian, Irish, Chinese, Italian, French, Russian, and Japanese immigrants; African-American freedmen and soldiers; and Spanish-speaking Mexicans who occupied the same lands they had lived on before the

Mexican-American War. Chinese and Irish immigrants helped to build the railroads, and large numbers of Chinese, mainly men, remained in California. German and Scandinavian farming families came by steamship to America to settle the northern Great Plains. "The west," concludes historian Rodman W. Paul, "was a land of many races, many ethnic backgrounds, many national origins."



The Historian's Apprentice

- ▶ Pretend you are working for a railroad company in 1870. Design a poster to attract farming families to the Great Plains.
- ▶ Pretend you are a newspaper reporter in 1882. Write an imaginary article reporting violence between ranchers and farmers on the Great Plains in Wyoming. Use the Internet to gather information.
- ▶ Imagine you are a settler on the Great Plains. Write a letter to your relatives back home, describing the conditions around you.
- ▶ Earlier in this chapter, you learned about the **push-and-pull** factors that led to the migration of people from one place to another. Identify two such factors and explain how they led different groups—miners, ranchers or farmers—to migrate to the Great Plains or the Far West.
- ▶ During periods of migration, **border areas** where migrants first arrive are often especially affected. Write a short essay explaining how border areas of the West were affected by the mixture of peoples who came there.
- ▶ In one sense, the diversity of the American West can be explained by its location at a crossroads where peoples from many different regions interacted—from the expanding United States in the east, from Mexico to the south, and from Asia across the Pacific. There were African Americans coming from the South, Indians being moved onto reservations, and immigrants arriving directly from Europe and Asia. Make your own map or chart illustrating this diversity.

A Public Outcry against the Mistreatment of the Indians

While farmers were developing new techniques for transforming the Great Plains into productive farmland, conditions for the Indians on the reser-

vations only worsened. Some bold reformers began to protest their mistreatment. Helen Hunt Jackson criticized the federal government for breaking its

promises to the Indians in her popular books, *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) and *Ramona* (1884). Indeed, new associations formed to protect Indian interests.

“Americanization”

Some reformers urged the Indians to become “Americanized.” By adopting so-called “American” ways and institutions, such as private property, it was thought that the Indians could become part of “mainstream” society. These well-intentioned reformers did not fully appreciate that “Americanization” might actually endanger the survival of traditional Indian culture.

The Dawes Act, 1887: A Misguided Attempt at Reform?

Congress passed the Dawes Act to “Americanize” the Indians. Each male Indian was permitted to claim 160 acres of reservation land as his own private property (the same amount of land given to homesteaders). The reformers hoped that private property would gradually replace communal tribal lands and that the Indians would be transformed into a class of prosperous farmers. Those who exercised the right to claim their own lands were to be rewarded with U.S. citizenship and the right to vote.

Shortcomings of the Dawes Act:

- ▶ Despite its good intentions, the Dawes Act threatened the survival of Indian culture. Individual farm ownership was contrary to Indian traditions of tribal sharing, and many tribes had never even engaged in farming. Assimilation into American “mainstream” society meant the destruction of tribal ways.
- ▶ Indians continued to face severe economic hardships. Often reservation lands were arid and infertile. The federal government never gave the assistance it had promised to Indian farmers. Reservation schools provided an inferior education. Indians suffered from

malnutrition and health problems on the reservations without proper medical attention.


- ▶ The Dawes Act actually led to a sell-off of reservation lands. Originally, the act had protected the Indians by prohibiting individual Indians from selling their 160 acres for a period of 25 years. However, this restriction was lifted in 1906. Speculators and other buyers quickly persuaded many Indians to sell their private plots at low prices. Almost two-thirds of all reservation lands were sold before the government put a halt to this practice. What was left was often the most infertile and undesirable land. Meanwhile, those Indians who bravely left their reservations for the cities usually faced discrimination, unemployment, and poverty.

INDIAN LAND FOR SALE

GET A HOME

OF
YOUR OWN

EASY PAYMENTS



PERFECT TITLE

POSSESSION
WITHIN
THIRTY DAYS

FINE LANDS IN THE WEST

IRRIGATED GRAZING AGRICULTURAL
IRRIGABLE DRY FARMING

IN 1910 THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SOLD UNDER SEALED BIDS ALLOTTED INDIAN LAND AS FOLLOWS:

Location	Acres	Average Price per Acre	Location	Acres	Average Price per Acre
Colorado	5,211.21	\$7.27	Oklahoma	34,664.00	\$19.14
Idaho	17,013.00	24.85	Oregon	1,020.00	15.43
Kansas	1,684.50	33.45	South Dakota	120,445.00	16.53
Montana	11,034.00	9.86	Washington	4,879.00	41.37
Nebraska	5,641.00	36.65	Wisconsin	1,069.00	17.00
North Dakota	22,610.70	9.93	Wyoming	865.00	20.64

FOR THE YEAR 1911 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 350,000 ACRES WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE. For information as to the character of the land write for booklet, “INDIAN LANDS FOR SALE,” to the Superintendent U. S. Indian School at any one of the following places:

CALIFORNIA: San Joaquin, Colusa, Butte, Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Santa Ana, San Diego, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Santa Inez, Santa Lucia, Santa Margarita, Santa Monica, Santa Ynez, Stanislaus, Tulare, Yuba. CANADA: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, Labrador, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut.	ILLINOIS: Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Madison, McHenry, Will, Winnebago, Woodhull. IOWA: Adams, Boone, Bremer, Buena Vista, Cherokee, Clarke, Dallas, Des Moines, Dubuque, Emmet, Hamilton, Hancock, Harrison, Howard, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Keosauqua, Keokuk, Linn, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Mitchell, Montgomery, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Simpson, Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, Winnebago, Woodbury, Wright, York, Buchanan, Hamilton, Hancock, Harrison, Howard, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Keosauqua, Keokuk, Linn, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Mitchell, Montgomery, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Simpson, Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, Winnebago, Woodbury, Wright, York, Buchanan.	MISSOURI: Adams, Boone, Bremer, Buena Vista, Cherokee, Clarke, Dallas, Des Moines, Dubuque, Emmet, Hamilton, Hancock, Harrison, Howard, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Keosauqua, Keokuk, Linn, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Mitchell, Montgomery, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Simpson, Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, Winnebago, Woodbury, Wright, York, Buchanan. NEBRASKA: Adams, Boone, Bremer, Buena Vista, Cherokee, Clarke, Dallas, Des Moines, Dubuque, Emmet, Hamilton, Hancock, Harrison, Howard, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Keosauqua, Keokuk, Linn, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Mitchell, Montgomery, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Simpson, Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, Winnebago, Woodbury, Wright, York, Buchanan.	NORTH DAKOTA: Adams, Boone, Bremer, Buena Vista, Cherokee, Clarke, Dallas, Des Moines, Dubuque, Emmet, Hamilton, Hancock, Harrison, Howard, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Keosauqua, Keokuk, Linn, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Mitchell, Montgomery, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Simpson, Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, Winnebago, Woodbury, Wright, York, Buchanan. SOUTH DAKOTA: Adams, Boone, Bremer, Buena Vista, Cherokee, Clarke, Dallas, Des Moines, Dubuque, Emmet, Hamilton, Hancock, Harrison, Howard, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Keosauqua, Keokuk, Linn, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Mitchell, Montgomery, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Simpson, Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, Winnebago, Woodbury, Wright, York, Buchanan.	WASHINGTON: Adams, Boone, Bremer, Buena Vista, Cherokee, Clarke, Dallas, Des Moines, Dubuque, Emmet, Hamilton, Hancock, Harrison, Howard, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Keosauqua, Keokuk, Linn, Lucas, Mahoning, Marion, Mitchell, Montgomery, Muscatine, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Shelby, Simpson, Tama, Taylor, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne, Winnebago, Woodbury, Wright, York, Buchanan.
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WALTER L. FISHER,
Secretary of the Interior.

ROBERT G. VALENTINE,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.



The Historian's Apprentice

- ▶ What were the effects of migration to the West? Prepare a PowerPoint presentation or oral report describing how the Great Plains and the Plains Indians were affected by the migration of other peoples to the Great Plains in the late 19th century.
- ▶ Some historians say that federal policy towards the Indians has swung back and forth like a pendulum. In some periods, the government promoted greater **autonomy** (*independence and self-government*) for the Indians. It let Indian communities preserve their traditions and go their own way. In other periods, the government attempted to "Americanize" (or *assimilate*) the Indians. It tried to make them more like other Americans. Make your own timeline tracing federal policies towards the American Indians. Use the Internet to find additional information.

Review Cards

Key Terms

Migration: The movement of people from one place to another

"Push" Factors: Factors that cause people to leave a place, like ethnic persecution, drought or poverty

"Pull" Factors: Factors that attract people to a new place, such as cheap land, political freedom, mineral discoveries or other economic opportunities

Frontier: The imaginary line separating "settled" and "unsettled" areas

Settlement of the Last American Frontier: the Great Plains and Far West

Great Plains Rolling, treeless, grassy plains with little rain but fertile soil

"Pull" Factors Leading to Settlement of the West:

1. Discoveries of precious metals
2. Completion of transcontinental railroad
3. Relocation of Indians: "Indian Wars" & Reservations
4. Cheap or free land: Homestead Act of 1862

Evolution of Different Parts of the American West

Mining: Boom towns sprang up overnight where gold and silver were discovered.

"Cattle Kingdom": Cowboys drove cattle, grazing on the "open range," to railroads. The "open range" ended in the late 1880s, to be replaced by the "closed range."

Farmers: Adapted to the dry conditions of the Great Plains by using barbed wire fences, sod houses, wells for groundwater, windmills to pump water, steel plows, and farm machinery.

The American Indian Experience

Plains Indians: Hunted buffalo on the Great Plains

"Indian Wars" (1864–1890): Federal troops stationed in forts defeated the Indians in a series of clashes and removed them to remote reservations:

- ▶ The Cheyenne and the Sand Creek Massacre (1864)
- ▶ Sioux—Black Hills; Custer and Crazy Horse at Little Big Horn; Wounded Knee Massacre (1890)
- ▶ Chief Joseph and Nez Percé flight to Canada
- ▶ Apaches and Comanches in the Southwest

Reservation System: Tribes forced onto reserved lands, often dry and undesirable. Federal Indian agents and religious teachers provided some services like schools, but government agents often did not keep their promises.

Dawes Act (1887): Shock at mistreatment of Indians by Helen Hunt Jackson and other reformers led to this attempt to "Americanize" Indians. An Indian could apply to take his own private land from the tribe's reservation land. The Dawes Act actually led to a sell-off of Indian lands.

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