

American History Chapter 4 Settling the West

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Miners and Ranchers Section 1

The section discusses how miners and ranchers migrated West after the Civil War to search for economic opportunities. The West's rich deposits of gold, silver, and copper attracted droves of settlers to the Rocky Mountains. News of a mineral strike could turn a sleepy frontier outpost into a bustling boomtown seemingly overnight. The flurry of mining activity throughout the West spurred the building of railroads through the Rocky Mountains and turned supply posts into large cities. Not all settlers headed west to find their fortunes in mining. Some Americans began establishing huge cattle ranches on the Great Plains. On the open range, cow-



hands rounded up Texas longhorns and drove them along cattle trails to the railroad for shipment east. The open-range cattle industry was beset with problems as "range wars," overproduction, and nature affected

ranchers' profits. The arrival of new settlers changed life for the original Hispanic inhabitants of the Southwest. Over time, the Hispanic population found their status diminished.



Prospectors like Potato Creek Johnny looked to strike it rich with a bonanza. Johnny gained fame when he found one of the largest nuggets of gold on record.

BONANZA

BONANZA! That was the exclamation when a large vein of valuable ore was discovered. Thousands of optimistic Americans and even a few foreigners dreamed of finding a bonanza and retiring at a very young age.

Ten years after the 1849 CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH, new deposits were gradually found throughout the West. Colorado yielded gold and silver at PIKES PEAK in 1859 and LEADVILLE in 1873. NEVADA claimed COMSTOCK

LODE, the largest of American silver strikes. They produced not only gold and silver, but zinc, copper, and lead, all essential for the eastern Industrial Revolution. Soon the West was filled with ne'er-do-wells hoping to strike it rich.

Reading Checks

- What role did mining play in the development of the American West?
- How did heavy investment in the cattle industry affect the industry as a whole?
- How did Vaqueros contribute to the cattle industry in the West?

Farming the Plains Section 2

Section 2 describes the settlement of the "Great American Desert"—the Great Plains. The construction of the railroads provided settlers easy access to the vast western Plains. Settlers were drawn by the railroads' offers of cheap land and a new law that protected their property rights. Life on the Great Plains was difficult, and settlers faced threats of fire, insect swarms, and extreme weather. Both small family farms and huge bonanza farms profited from new farming methods and machines, and by the 1880s the United States had become the world's leading exporter of wheat. In the 1890s, farmers fell on hard times when overproduction dropped the price of wheat and drought destroyed crops. By 1890, the growing populations of settlers in the West signaled that the frontier was closing.



The Homestead Act allowed settlers to get land mostly by living on it and improving it. Over 1/2 million families who couldn't afford to buy land before took advantage of the Act in the following 40 years.

Reading Checks

- What is the relationship between private property rights and settlement of the Great Plains?
- What technological innovations helped farmers cultivate the plains?

THE HOMESTEAD ACT

The Homestead Act, enacted during the Civil War in 1862, provided that any adult citizen, or intended citizen, who had never borne arms against the U.S. government could claim 160 acres of surveyed government land. Claimants were required to "improve" the plot by building a dwelling and cultivating the land. After 5 years on the land, the original filer was entitled to the property, free and clear, except

for a small registration fee. Title could also be acquired after only a 6-month residency and trivial improvements, provided the claimant paid the government \$1.25 per acre. After the Civil War, Union soldiers could deduct the time they had served from the residency requirements. Although this act was included in the Republican party platform of 1860, support for the idea began decades earlier. Even under the Articles of Confederation, before 1787, the distribution of government lands generated much interest and discussion.

The act, however, proved to be no panacea for poverty. Comparatively few laborers and farmers could afford to build a farm or acquire the necessary tools, seed, and livestock. In the end, most of

those who purchased land under the act came from areas quite close to their new homesteads (Iowans moved to Nebraska, Minnesotans to South Dakota, and so on). Unfortunately, the act was framed so ambiguously that it seemed to invite fraud, and early modifications by Congress only compounded the problem. Most of the land went to speculators, cattlemen, miners, lumbermen, and railroads. Of some 500 million acres dispersed by the General Land Office between 1862 and 1904, only 80 million acres went to homesteaders. Indeed, small farmers acquired more land under the Homestead Act in the 20th century than in the 19th.



Native Americans Section 3



Section 3 explains how the Plains Indians struggled as American settlers moved West. The farmers, miners, and ranchers that poured onto the Plains during the late 1800s deprived Native Americans of their hunting grounds and often forced Plains Indians to relocate. Between 1862 and 1890, the Plains Indians attempted to defend their land and preserve their way of life. Battles between Native American nations and the American army led to bloodshed. Congress tried to put an end to Native American resistance by establishing reservations on the Plains and giving the army authority to deal with those who

refused to report or remain there. Within a few years, Native Americans began leaving the reservations to hunt the dwindling numbers of buffalo that lived on the open Plains. As the army tried to rein in Native Americans, bloody battles ensued. In 1890 at Wounded Knee, Native American resistance came to an end. Attempts by the government to replace Native American culture with a new lifestyle failed. Their traditional way of life, based on the migrating buffalo, had been wiped out with the herds.

Reading Checks

- What proposal did the Indian Peace commission present to the Plains Indians?
- What effect did Helen Hunt Jackson's book *A Century of Dishonor* have?

CUSTER' LAST STAND

On the morning of June 25, 1876, Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer and the 7th Cavalry charged into battle against Lakota Sioux and Northern Cheyenne Indians. Custer's orders were to wait for reinforcements at the mouth of the Little Big Horn River before attacking the Indians, but Chief Sitting Bull had been spotted nearby, and Custer was impatient to attack.

A treaty had given the Sioux exclusive rights to the Black Hills, but when gold was later discovered in the area, white miners flocked to the territory. Despite the treaty, the U.S. government ordered the Indians away from the invading settlers and

back to their reservations. Custer's job was to force the Indians back to their reservations. Some of the Indians refused to leave their sacred land, and other hunters were camped in remote places and never learned of the order. The U.S. Army prepared for battle anyway.

Custer planned to attack the Indian camp from three sides, but Chief Sitting Bull was ready for them. The first two groups, led by Captain Benteen and Major Reno, were immediately forced to retreat to one side of the river, where they continued to fight as best they could. Custer was not as lucky.

Custer's troops charged the Indians from the north. Quickly encircled by their enemy, Custer and 265 of his soldiers were killed in less than an hour. The Indians retreated two days later when the troops Custer had been ordered to wait for arrived.

The Battle of Little Big Horn was a short-lived victory for the Native Americans. Federal troops soon poured into the Black Hills. While many Native Americans surrendered, Sitting Bull escaped to Canada.

WOUNDED KNEE

On the morning of December 29, the troops went into the camp to disarm the Lakota. One version of events claims that during the process of disarming the Lakota, a deaf tribesman named Black Coyote was reluctant to give up his rifle claiming he had paid a lot for it.^[1] A scuffle over Black Coyote's rifle escalated and a shot was fired which resulted in the 7th Cavalry opening firing indiscriminately from all sides, killing men, women, and children, as

well as some of their own fellow troopers. Those few Lakota warriors who still had weapons began shooting back at the attacking troopers, who quickly suppressed the Lakota fire. The surviving Lakota fled, but U.S. cavalrymen pursued and killed many who were unarmed.

By the time it was over, at least 150 men, women, and children of the Lakota Sioux had been killed and 51 wounded (4

men, 47 women and children, some of whom died later); some estimates placed the number of dead at 300. Twenty-five troopers also died, and 39 were wounded (6 of the wounded would also die). It is believed that many were the victims of friendly fire, as the shooting took place at close range in chaotic condition.

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Chapter 4 Daily Plan

Monday Sep 26th, Tuesday Sep 27th

*Read 4-1 page 162-165 Notes and WKS Groups
will make foldables for the bulletin board*

Wednesday Sep 28th , Thursday Sep 29th

Read 4-2 page 166-169 Notes and WKS

Friday Sep 30th, Monday Oct 3rd

*Read 4-2 page 170-175 Notes and WKS Quiz over
section 2*

Tuesday Oct 4th , Wednesday Oct 5th End of chapter

questions and review for the test

Thursday Oct 6th, Friday Oct 7th. Test

The Tombstone Epitaph, A FATAL GARMENT, July 25, 1880

About 7 o'clock last evening the pistol was used with fatal effect on Allen Street, resulting in the death of T.J. Waters from gunshot wounds from a weapon in the hand of E.L. Bradshaw. The causes which led to this unfortunate tragedy are brief. Waters was what is considered a sporting man, and has been in Tombstone several months. He was about forty years of age, powerful build, stood over six feet in height and weighed about 190 pounds. When sober he was a clever sort of man but quite the opposite when under the influence of liquor. Yesterday he won considerable money and had been drinking a great deal, hence was in a mood to be easily irritated. Bradshaw was an intimate friend of Waters but a very different character, being a man of medium size, over fifty years of age and very reserved and peaceable in his disposition. We understand that these two men had prospected together and when Waters first came to Tombstone he lived in Bradshaw's cabin. Yesterday morning Waters purchased a blue and black plaid shirt, little dreaming that the fated gar-

ment would hurl his soul into eternity before the sun had set. It so happened that several good natured remarks were made about the new shirt during the day until Waters had taken sufficient liquor to make the joking obnoxious to him, and he began to show an ugly resentment and was very abusive, concluding with, "Now, if anyone don't like what I've said let him get up, G-d d-n him. I'm chief. I'm boss. I'll knock the first s--- of a b--- down that says anything about my shirt again." This happened in the back room at Corrigan's saloon and as Waters stepped into the front room Bradshaw happened in, and seeing what his friend was wearing made some pleasant remark about it, whereupon Waters, without a word, struck Bradshaw a powerful blow over the left eye which sent him senseless to the floor. Waters then walked over to Vogan & Flynn's, to see, as he said, "if any s--- of a b--- there didn't like this shirt." He had just entered the street when Ed Ferris made some remark about the new shirt, which Waters promptly resented in his pugilistic style. After some more rowing

Waters went back to Corrigan's saloon. As soon as Bradshaw recovered from the knockdown he went into the back room, washed off the blood, went down to his cabin, put a bandage on his eye and his pistol in his pocket. He then came up to Allen Street and took his seat in front of Vogan & Flynn's saloon. Seeing Waters in Corrigan's door, Bradshaw crossed towards the Eagle Brewery, and walking down the sidewalk until within a few feet of Waters, said: "Why did you do that?" Waters said something whereupon Bradshaw drew his pistol and fired four shots, all taking effect, one under the left arm probably pierced the heart, two entered above the center of the back between the shoulders and one in the top of the head ranged downward toward the neck, any one of which would probably have resulted fatally. Waters fell at the second shot and soon expired. Bradshaw was promptly arrested and examination will be had in the morning before Justice Gray.