Chapter 18 The West (1850–1890)

As settlers moved onto the Great Plains, conflicts developed with American Indians, who were eventually pushed off their lands and onto reservations. The West continued to grow, with mines and railroads leading the development of industry. In addition, the Cattle Kingdom rose and fell during this period. As you study this chapter, consider the ways that a government might promote economic development in a new region, how the actions of one group might affect the culture of another, and the ways that people adjust to living in a different environment.

Chapter 18

Section 1: The Wars for the West

In this section you will learn that as settlers moved farther west they conflicted with American Indians. As you study this material, pay attention to the following terms:

Fort Laramie Treaty

reservations

Sand Creek Massacre

Bozeman Trail

Treaty of Medicine Lodge

Battle of the Little Bighorn

Long Walk

Ghost Dance

Massacre at Wounded Knee

Dawes General Allotment Act

You will also want to keep the following questions in mind as you review this material:

- What was life like for American Indians on the Great Plains?

- What were the causes and the results of conflict between American Indians and U.S. settlers in the West?

- How did the reservation system and the Dawes Act affect American Indians?

Chapter 18.1 Section Summary

Many American Indian tribes lived on the Great Plains. They used horses to follow and hunt buffalo herds. Indians used buffalo for food, shelter, and tools. These ways of life were interrupted as settlers began moving onto Indian land in the mid-1800s.

During this period, the U.S. government negotiated treaties with many Indian nations. The first major agreement was the **Fort Laramie Treaty**, signed with northern Plains tribes in Wyoming in 1851. Other treaties established **reservations**, areas of federal land set aside for Indians. Some Indian tribes refused to leave their traditional homelands and fought with the U.S. Army when it tried to force them to relocate. Many Cheyenne Indians who refused to stay on a reservation were killed by U.S. troops in the 1864 **Sand Creek Massacre**.

Many pioneers and miners moved west along the **Bozeman Trail**, from Wyoming to Montana. The Bozeman Trail passed through Sioux territory, which angered the local Indians. In 1866 Sioux leaders Red Cloud and Crazy Horse killed 82 cavalry troops in an ambush. Two years later they forced the U.S. Army to close the Bozeman Trail and abandon its forts along the trail.

In 1867 the United States signed the **Treaty of Medicine Lodge** with many southern Plains tribes. Most of these tribes agreed to live on reservations. In 1874, soldiers discovered gold on the Sioux reservation. The U.S. government insisted that the Sioux sell their reservation land. The Sioux refused to give up their land, which led to fighting between the Sioux and the U.S. Army. At the **Battle of the Little Bighorn**, the Sioux badly defeated the U.S. Army. This battle was the last major victory for the Sioux.

In the Southwest, the government ordered Navajo Indians to settle on a reservation. When the Navajo refused, the government forced them to walk 300 miles to the reservation. Hundreds of Navajo died during this journey, known as the **Long Walk**. During the 1870s and 1880s, the U.S. Army also tried to push the Apache and Nez Percé peoples onto reservations. Although Apache leader Geronimo and Nez Percé chief Joseph tried to resist the army, they were eventually forced to surrender.

During this period a religious movement known as the **Ghost Dance** began among Plains Indians. The leader of this movement, Wovoka, predicted the arrival of a paradise where the great buffalo herds would return and settlers would disappear. U.S. officials feared that the Ghost Dance would inspire the Sioux to rebel. In a

confrontation, U.S. troops killed 150 Sioux at the **Massacre at Wounded Knee** in South Dakota.

Indians living on reservations often could not farm or hunt, and many starved. In 1887 Congress passed the **Dawes General Allotment Act** to divide reservation land among individual Indians. The Dawes Act did not grant Indians U.S. citizenship, as promised, nor did it improve their lives.

Chapter 18

Section 2: Miners and Railroads

In this section you will learn how the expansion of the mining and railroad industries motivated many more people to move west. As you study this material, pay attention to the following terms:

Comstock Lode

bonanza

boomtowns

Pony Express

transcontinental railroad

Pacific Railway Acts

You will also want to keep the following questions in mind as you review this material:

- What were some of the challenges of mining in the West?
- What obstacles did the builders of the transcontinental railroad face?
- How did the transcontinental railroad affect the settlement and development of the West?

Chapter 18.2 Section Summary

After the California Gold Rush, people continued to search for gold in Colorado, Idaho, and Montana. In 1859, miners discovered gold and silver in western Nevada. The mine became known as the **Comstock Lode**. It turned out to be a **bonanza**, or a large deposit of precious ore.

Mining was a dangerous business. Miners faced poisonous gases, intense heat, unexpected explosions, and dust that caused lung diseases. In addition to these dangers, many miners faced discrimination because they were immigrants. Often, immigrants were forced to work long hours for less pay than U.S. citizens.

The huge numbers of people moving to mining areas led to the development of **boomtowns**—communities that grew up quickly when a mine opened and disappeared after a mine closed down. These towns lacked law and order. Few women lived in mining towns.

As more people moved west, the **Pony Express** began to transport mail across the country. This system of messengers traveled on horseback to carry mail along a 2,000-mile route. The Pony Express did not last long, however, because telegraph lines carried messages more quickly.

Soon companies began to build a **transcontinental railroad**, a system of tracks that would connect the East Coast to the West. The federal government passed the **Pacific Railway Acts** in 1862 and 1864. These acts gave railroad companies loans and large land grants to help them build the railroads.

Railroad workers faced many obstacles. They had to blast apart rock formations in the mountains in order to lay tracks. Workers in the mountains got trapped in snowstorms, while workers on the Great Plains also faced severe weather. Once construction of the transcontinental railroad was completed, it increased economic growth and the population in the West.

Chapter 18

Section 3: The Cattle Kingdom

In this section you will learn that huge ranches developed in the West during the late 1800s. The cattle boom led to increased competition between large ranchers, small ranchers, farmers, and sheep owners. As you study this material, pay attention to the following terms:

Texas longhorn

Cattle Kingdom

open range

range rights

vaqueros

roundup

cattle drive

Chisholm Trail

range wars

You will also want to keep the following questions in mind as you review this material:

- What factors led to a cattle boom in the 1870s?

- What was life like for cowboys?

- What caused the decline of the Cattle Kingdom?

Chapter 18.3 Section Summary

In the mid-1800s Texas ranchers gathered up huge herds of wild cattle, including **Texas longhorns**. These lean, tough cattle could survive harsh climates and many diseases.

As the population grew in the eastern United States, there was a greater demand for meat. The new railroads allowed ranchers to transport their cattle to markets farther north. At the same time, cattle grazing expanded onto the **open range**, or public land, of the Great Plains. The many ranches stretching from Texas to Canada formed the **Cattle Kingdom**.

Although ranchers did not always own their land, they did buy the **range rights**, or water rights, to ponds and rivers. This meant they had a steady supply of water for their herds.

The workers who took care of a rancher's cattle were known as cowhands or cowboys. They borrowed many of their techniques from **vaqueros**, or Mexican cowboys. Cowboys held a **roundup** every spring, at which they branded young calves and horses.

Cowboys also worked in **cattle drives**, herding cattle to market or to grazing areas, often over hundreds of miles. Constantly watching over the cattle and riding through storms made the cattle drive very difficult. Cowboys often followed the **Chisholm Trail**, a popular

route for cattle drives. The trail ran from San Antonio, Texas, to Abilene, Kansas.

As more people moved to the Great Plains, farmers started to buy grazing land. In addition, small ranchers began competing with large ranchers for land. Ranchers tried to protect their land by fencing it in. This competition for land led to **range wars**, or disputes between large ranchers, small ranchers, farmers, and sheep owners. Although large ranchers often won these battles, ranchers could no longer let their cattle roam free on public land.

By the 1880s there were too many cattle on the Great Plains, and prices began to fall. The large numbers of cattle led to a shortage of feed grass, and several harsh winters caused thousands of cattle to die. These problems led to the decline of the Cattle Kingdom.

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Chapter 18

Section 4: Farming the Great Plains

In this chapter you will learn that the U.S. government opened up huge areas of land for settlement on the Great Plains. Immigrants from all over the world came to farm in the harsh Plains environment. As you study this material, pay attention to the following terms:

Homestead Act

Morrill Act

Exodusters

sodbusters

dry farming

You will also want to keep the following questions in mind as you review this material:

- Why did settlers move to the Great Plains?
- What challenges did farming families face on the Plains?
- What was daily life like on the Plains?

Chapter 18.4 Section Summary

In 1862 Congress passed two land grant acts that encouraged settlers to move west. The **Homestead Act** gave 160 acres of land to small farmers if they promised to live on the land for five years. The **Morrill Act** granted more than 17 million acres to the states. The states were required to sell the land and use the profits to build colleges.

Many people moved west, hoping to find prosperity by starting their own farms. Land had become expensive in the East, and the West provided more opportunities. At first many settlers used the Oregon Trail to travel west. Soon more settlers traveled by train.

The promise of land drew many African Americans west. Those from the South were known as **Exodusters**, because they moved west in a large departure, or mass exodus, from the South. They moved to find not only economic opportunity but also equal rights.

Immigrants also sought western homesteads. Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, German, and Czech immigrants created many small communities on the Great Plains.

Settlers found that farming in the harsh environment of the Great Plains was difficult. Winters were colder and summers were hotter than regions in the East. Also, there was often not enough rain to

water crops, and the hard soil often broke farmer's plows. John Deere invented a deep steel plow that made it possible to break through the sod, or hard soil. Farmers and the plows they used were nicknamed **sodbusters** for the hard work they had to do to break up the sod. They also used a new method called **dry farming**. This method focused on planting crops such as red wheat, which needed less water than crops such as corn.

Life on the Plains was hard. Settlers had to build their own houses, often out of sod. Daily chores for women included making and mending clothing, washing, cooking, growing vegetables, and raising chickens. Men had to work hard in the fields, plowing, planting, and harvesting crops. Children often helped out with chores and worked in the fields.