

# The American West



# Conflicts with Native Americans

- White settlers streamed into the lands of the Sioux, Cheyenne, Blackfoot, Kiowa, and Comanche, who were known as the Plains Indians.
- Plains Indians did not settle in towns and did not think land should be bought or sold, while white settlers thought it should be divided up into claims.
- In the mid-1800s, the U.S. government's Indian policy changed: they seized Native American their lands and created reservations for them to live in.
- Being confined to these reservations threatened the buffalo-centered Native Americans' way of life. The buffalo were being driven to extinction by white settlers.
- Tensions between Plains Indians and settlers led to a long period of violence known as the Indian Wars.

# Events of the Indian Wars

## ➤ ***Sand Creek Massacre***

- 1864: The Army persuaded a group of Cheyenne to stop raiding farms and return to their Colorado reservation.
- Then army troops attacked, killing about 150 people, and burned the camp.
- Congress condemned the actions but did not punish the commander.

# Events of the Indian Wars

## ➤ Battle of the Little Bighorn

- The Sioux responded to government relocation by joining other tribes near the Little Bighorn River.
- Led by **Sitting Bull**, they slaughtered **General Armstrong Custer's** smaller U.S. force.

# Events of the Indian Wars

## ➤ **Wounded Knee Massacre**

- Army troops captured Sitting Bull's followers and took them to a camp at Wounded Knee Creek.
- Fighting began, and the soldiers slaughtered 300 Native American men, women, and children.
- The massacre shocked Americans and broke Native American resistance.

# Resistance Fades into Reservation Life

- In 1877, the Nez Percé relocated to a smaller reservation in Idaho, some killed white settlers on the way, they fled with their leader, **Chief Joseph**, to Canada where they were captured.
- In the Southwest, the Apache were moved to a reservation in Arizona, but their leader, **Geronimo**, fled the reservation and led raids on the Arizona-Mexico border for years, until they were captured in 1886.
- In creating the reservations, the U.S. wanted to Americanize the Native Americans, or make them abandon their traditional culture in favor of white American culture.
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs managed reservations, set up public schools often far from children's homes, and forced them to speak English.
- The **Dawes Act** (1887) broke up some reservations and divided the land for people, but the best land was usually sold to white settlers.

# Mining Culture

- After the California gold rush, each new strike inspired more settlers westward in hopes of finding the next Comstock Lode or Klondike River.

# Mining Culture

## ➤ Mining Communities

- Most miners were men, but some families and single women also came.
- Mining camps were usually just groups of tents and shacks.
- Some camps grew into towns with stores and businesses.
- As more families arrived, churches, schools, and newspapers sprang up.
- Some camps grew into major cities such as Denver, Colorado.

# Mining Culture

## ➤ Mining as a Business

- At first individual prospectors worked mines with hand tools.
- When surface deposits ran out, large companies moved in to prospect with machinery.
- At that point, most miners went to work for large companies giving up on striking it rich.
- It was dangerous work, and some miners tried to organize unions for better working conditions, but mining companies resisted.

# Ranching Culture

## ➤ Ranching on the Plains

- After the Civil War, cattle ranching dominated the Plains.
- Spanish and Mexicans became skilled at raising cattle in harsh conditions at first. They interbred Spanish and English cattle to breed Texas Longhorns, which were hearty and thrived on the Plains.
- The Spanish also brought sheep ranching to the Plains, which grew after the Civil War when demand for wool expanded.
- Sheep farmers cattle owners clashed over grazing land and became violent.

# Ranching Culture

## ➤ Cattle Drives

- Demand for beef grew in the East, so ranchers hired cowboys, usually white teens, for three–months–long cattle drives to railroad towns for shipping.
- The **Chisholm Trail** from San Antonio to Kansas was a major cattle trail.

# Ranching Culture

## ➤ Ranching as Big Business

- The invention of barbed wire helped cattle owners manage large herds.
- Between 1882 and 1886 more than 400 cattle corporations sprang up in the West, but fencing led to conflict when land owners who enclosed their land left landless cattle owners with nowhere to graze their cattle.

# Farmers on the Great Plains

- With encouragement from the government, people started pouring onto the Great Plains to build farms.
- In 1862 Congress passed three acts to encourage settlement
  - The Homestead Act
  - The Pacific Railway Act
  - The Morrill Act

# Farmers on the Great Plains

## ➤ **Homestead Act**

- let any head of household over 21 to claim 160 acres of land, as long as they built a home, farmed for five years, and made improvements.

# Farmers on the Great Plains

## ➤ Pacific Railway Act

- gave millions of acres to railroad companies to build tracks and telegraph lines.

# Farmers on the Great Plains

## ➤ Morrill Act

- gave the states land to build colleges that taught agriculture and mechanics. This was the first federal government assistance for higher education.

# Farmers on the Great Plains

- The Oklahoma Land Rush occurred when a lobbyist found 2 million acres of land not assigned to any Native American nation. Despite the government's ban against settlers' entry into the Indian Territory, settlers were still able to claim the land.
  - On April 22, 1889, would-be settlers lined the border until it opened, when 50,000 people rushed in and claimed homesteads.

# The New Settlers

## ➤ New groups of settlers moved to the West

- White Settlers
- African American Settlers
- European Settlers
- Chinese Settlers

# The New Settlers

## **White Settlers**

- Came mainly from states in the Mississippi Valley
- Were mostly middle-class farmers or business people
- Could afford supplies and transportation

# The New Settlers

## **African American Settlers**

- Some left the South because of the Black Codes and Ku Klux Klan violence.
- Rumors spread that the federal government would set Kansas aside for former slaves, which wasn't true but brought settlers anyway.

# The New Settlers

## European Settlers

- Came for economic opportunity
- Many Northern Europeans came because they were land-poor.
- Irish who came to work on the railroads settled on the Plains.
- Mennonite Protestants from Russia brought farming experience

# The New Settlers

## Chinese Settlers

- Came for the gold rush and railroads but turned to farming
- Helped establish California's fruit industry
- Laws often barred Asians from owning land, so many became farm workers, not owners.

# Challenges and Solutions

- Farming on the Plains presented challenges because of the harsh climate—bitter cold, wind and snow in the winter, intense heat and drought in the summer.
  - Many families used wells powered by windmills.
  - Some settlers learned irrigation from Hispanic and Native American farmers.
- Wood for houses was in limited supply.
  - Settlers used the earth itself to build by digging into the sides of hills or making homes from sod.
- Farming was challenging in the hard soil of the Plains.
  - New machinery like new, sharper-edged plows and combine harvesters helped Plains farmers.
  - Large companies started giant bonanza farms that were like factories, which profited in good years but were too expensive to survive bad growing years.

# Western Migration Ends

- In 1890 the U.S. Census Bureau issued a report that declared the frontier closed, because there was no new land left to settle.

# Western Migration Ends

## ➤ Causes of Western Migration:

- Economic Potential

- ⑩ Opportunity for land and gold

- ⑩ Farming, ranching, and rail jobs

- Native Americans end resistance

- ⑩ As Native Americans lose battles, they are relocated off valuable land

- ⑩ Government allowed settlers into Indian Territory

# Western Migration Ends

## ➤ Effects of Western Migration:

- Traditional Native American ways of life are destroyed.
- Mining communities are established.
- Ranches are established, and the cattle industry booms.
- Farmers settle on the Plains despite challenges.

# The Age of Oil and Steel

## Oil

- In the mid-1800s people began to refine oil found on coastal waters and lakes for kerosene lamps.
- In 1859 Edwin L. Drake drilled for oil in Pennsylvania, starting the first commercial oil well.
- Wildcatters, or oil prospectors, struck oil near Beaumont, Texas, which began the Texas oil boom.
- It lasted less than 20 years, but oil remains big business in Texas to this day.

## Steel

- In the 1850s a new method made steel-making faster and cheaper and by 1910 the U.S. was the world's top steel producer.
- Steel helped transform the U.S. into a modern industrial economy.
- It was used to make bridges, locomotives, and taller buildings.
- Factories used steel machinery to make goods faster.

# Railroads Expand

- In the 1850s train tracks crossed the Northeast and reached into the Southeast and the Great Lakes area, but between 1865 and 1890 the number of track miles increased by five times.
- The federal government helped by giving land to railroad companies, and cheap steel enabled the railroad to expand.
- Congress authorized two companies to build railroads to the West Coast: the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific.
- Workers raced for six and a half years to complete the first transcontinental railroad, or a track that crossed the country.
- In May 1869 the two rail lines met in the Utah Territory, linking east and west. Throughout the country railroads expanded into a vast network.
- The railroads promoted trade, created jobs, and helped western settlement.
- Railroads also led to the adoption of standard time, because rail schedules could not accurately depend on the sun's position, as most people did.

# The Rise of Big Business

- Big business grew in the late 1800s when **entrepreneurs**, or business risk-takers, started businesses within an economic system called **capitalism**, in which most businesses are privately owned.
- Under **laissez-faire** capitalism, which is French for “leave alone,” companies operated without government interference.
- There were inequalities under capitalism, but many believed that Charles Darwin’s theory of **social Darwinism**, or survival of the fittest, explained how business was like nature: only the strongest survived.
- A new type of business organization developed called the corporation, which was owned by people who bought stock, or shares, in a company, was led by a board of directors and run by corporate officers.
- Corporations raised money by selling stock and could exist after their founders left. Stockholders could lose only what they invested.
- To gain dominance, some competing corporations formed trusts that led several companies to form as one corporation and dominate an industry.
- Mass marketing helped retailers maximize their profits and department stores and mail-order catalogues revolutionized shopping for consumers.

# Industrial Tycoons Made Huge Fortunes

## **John D. Rockefeller**

- Started Standard Oil as a refinery
- Used vertical integration, buying companies that handled other aspects of oil business
- Used horizontal integration by buying other refineries
- Refined half of the U.S. oil by 1875

## **Cornelius Vanderbilt**

Began investing in railroads during the Civil War

Soon his holdings stretched west to Michigan and north to Canada.

Vanderbilt gave money to education for the public

## **Andrew Carnegie**

- Grew up poor in Scotland and, at 12, came to the U.S. to work on railroads
- Began to invest and started Carnegie Steel Company, which dominated the steel industry
- In 1901, sold the company to the banker J.P. Morgan for \$480 million and retired as a philanthropist

## **George Pullman**

- Made his fortune when he designed and built sleeper cars to make long distance train travel more comfortable
- Built an entire town near Chicago for his employees that was comfortable, but controlled many aspects of their daily lives.

# Workers Organize

- In the laissez-faire climate of the 1800s, government did not care about workers. Many workers scraped by on less than \$500 per year while tycoons got very, very rich.
- The government grew worried about the power of corporations, and in 1890 Congress passed the **Sherman Antitrust Act**, which made it illegal to form trusts that interfered with free trade, though they only enforced the law with a few companies.
- Factory workers were mostly Europeans immigrants, children, and rural Americans who came to the city for work.
- Workers often worked 12-to-16-hour days, six days a week, in unhealthy conditions without paid vacation, sick leave or compensation for common workplace injuries.
- By the late 1800s working conditions were so bad that more workers began to organize, trying to band together to pressure employers into giving better pay and safer workplaces.
- The first effective group was the Knights of Labor, which campaigned for eight-hour work days, the end of child labor, and equal pay for equal work in Philadelphia.

# Strikes and Setbacks for Workers

- ⑩ At first, the union preferred boycotts to strikes, but strikes soon became a common tactic.
- ⑩ Some famous strikes include
  - **Great Railroad Strike**- first major rail strike, stopped freight trains for almost a week, caused violence, and was put down by the army.
  - The **Haymarket Riot** in Chicago was a result of a protest against police actions toward strikers. It killed 11 people and injured over 100.

# Strikes and Setbacks for Workers

- Employers struck back by forcing employees to sign documents saying they wouldn't join unions and blacklisting troublemakers.
- Samuel Gompers founded the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1886, winning wage increases and shorter workweeks.
- Unions suffered setbacks when Carnegie employees seized control of a plant and 16 people were killed and when federal troops crushed the American Railway Union strike

# City Growth Spurs Transportation Advances

## **Streetcars**

- Horse-drawn passenger vehicles were the earliest mass transit.
- By the 1830s horsecars, or streetcars, rolled along street rails.
- Cable cars were built in cities with steep hills such as San Francisco.
- By 1900 most cities had electric streetcars, or trolleys.

# City Growth Spurs Transportation Advances

## Subways

- As cities grew, traffic became a serious problem, especially in urban centers such as Boston and New York.
- The city of Boston opened the first U.S. subway line in 1897.
- The New York subway line opened in 1904.

# City Growth Spurs Transportation Advances

## **Automobiles**

- A German engineer invented the internal combustion engine, and soon inventors tried to use it for a new “horseless carriage.”
- In 1893 Charles and Frank Duryea built the first practical American motorcar.

# City Growth Spurs Transportation Advances

## Airplanes

- Human beings had dreamt of flying for centuries.
- Two American brothers were the first to build a successful airplane.
- On December 17, 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright flew their tiny airplane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

# Inventors Revolutionize Communication

## ➤ Telegraph

- Samuel F. B. Morse invented the telegraph in 1837, which sent messages instantly over wires using electricity.
- Operators tapped out patterns of long and short signals that stood for letters of the alphabet, called Morse Code.
- The telegraph grew with the railroads, because train stations had telegraph offices.

# Inventors Revolutionize Communication

## ➤ Telephone

- Two inventors devised ways to transmit voices by using electricity.
- Alexander Graham Bell patented his design first, in 1876.
- By 1900 there were more than a million telephones in offices and households across the country.

# Inventors Revolutionize Communication

## ➤ Typewriter

- Many inventors tried to create a writing machine.
- Christopher Latham Sholes, a Milwaukee printer, developed the first practical typewriter in 1867.
- He later improved it by designing the keyboard that is still standard for computers today.
- Businesses began to hire woman as typists.

# Thomas Edison

- Thomas Alva Edison was one of America's most famous inventors.
  - invented the first phonograph and a telephone transmitter.
  - Edison was the first to come up with a safe electric light bulb that could light homes and street lamps.
  - Edison and his team later invented a motion picture camera and projector. In all, he held over 1,000 U.S. patents.