

Chapter 17

The West Transformed (1860-1890)

What You Will Learn

Miners and railroad builders led to settlement of the West. Native Americans struggled to maintain their way of life. Western farmers faced many challenges.

Chapter 17 Focus Question

As you read this chapter, keep this question in mind: How did the growth of big business affect the development of the West?

Section 1

Mining and Railroads

Section 1 Focus Question

How did mining and railroads draw people to the West? To begin answering this question,

- Find out about the boom and bust of the gold and silver rushes.
- Learn about the railroad boom.

Section 1 Summary

Americans rushed west after gold was discovered. Railroad companies helped open up the West to settlement.

Boom and Bust

In 1865, the western frontier stretched from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. It took in mountains, prairies, deserts, and forests. Settlers heading west passed over the Great Plains, which they thought were barren.

The trickle of settlers headed west became a flood when gold was discovered in California in 1849. Miners spread from California to South Dakota. **49ERS**

In 1859, silver was found in the Sierra Nevada. The find was known as the Copiestock Lode. It became one of the richest silver mines in the world. Only big companies had the machinery to mine the ore deep underground. By the 1880s, western mining had become big business.

Key Events

- 1867** The cattle drive on a sheepskin flap.
- 1867** Dawes Act breaks up Native American tribal lands.
- 1889** Oklahoma opens to homesteaders.

Reading Strategy

Reread the bracketed paragraph. It describes a cause and an effect. Underline the cause and circle the effect.



Miners lived in boomtowns that sprang up overnight. These towns supplied food, board, and tools to the miners at very high prices. Women could make a good living running boarding houses, restaurants, and laundries.

Almost half of miners were foreign-born. They often faced hostility and discrimination. For example, laws restricted Chinese miners to claims abandoned by others.

Mining towns sprouted so fast that law and order were hard to find. People formed groups of vigilantes, or self-appointed law keepers. Vigilantes hunted down people they considered criminals and punished people as they saw fit. As towns grew, residents created more lasting forms of government. But in some towns, when all the ore was taken, miners and merchants left. Boomtowns became ghost towns. ✓

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The Railroad Boom

Before 1860, the railroads stopped at the Mississippi River. The federal government offered the railroad companies subsidies, or grants of land and money, to build out their lines. For every mile of track they laid, railroads got ten square miles of land next to the track. Very quickly, the railroads owned over 180 million acres. *GREAT DEAL*

In 1862, Leland Stanford and his partners won the right to build a railroad eastward from Sacramento. Their company was called the Central Pacific Railroad. It would build the western leg of the transcontinental railroad, a railroad line spanning the continent. At the same time, the Union Pacific Railroad was building west from Omaha. On May 10, 1869, the two lines met in Promontory, Utah.

With the transcontinental railroad in place, the west became a fixed part of the U.S. economy. Goods flowed between the East and the West. Railroad stops turned into towns that grew rapidly. Eight western territories became states in the period from 1864 to 1890. ✓

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Vocabulary Builder

Based on context clues from reading, write your own definition of a boom.

✓ Checkpoint

List three kinds of businesses women ran in boomtowns.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

✓ Checkpoint

Name the two companies that built the transcontinental railroad.

1. _____

2. _____

Check Your Progress

1. What was the Comstock Lode?

2. How did railroads come to own millions of acres of land?

Section 2**Native Americans Struggle to Survive****Section 2 Focus Question**

What were the consequences of the conflict between the Native Americans and white settlers? To begin answering this question,

- Discover who the people of the Plains were.
- Find out about broken treaties.
- Learn about the last stand for Custer and the Sioux.
- Read about Native American efforts at resistance.
- Understand the failure of reform.

Section 2 Summary

The gold rush and the railroads meant disaster for Native Americans of the West.

People of the Plains

When Europeans arrived, they introduced horses and guns to Native Americans. This allowed Native Americans to kill more game and travel faster and farther. Many Plains nations followed the buffalo herds. As a result (buffalo hunting played a key role in people's survival)

In many Plains nations, women managed village life. Men were hunters and warriors. Often, they also led religious life. ✓

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Broken Treaties

U.S. treaties promised to safeguard Native American lands. As miners and settlers pushed west, they broke the treaties. In 1851, Plains nations signed the Fort Laramie Treaty. This treaty said their lands would be protected by the United States if they stopped following the buffalo. However, the United States soon broke the treaty.

Native Americans protested. In response, Colonel John Chivington and 700 volunteers attacked a band of Cheyenne under army protection at Sand Creek in eastern Colorado in 1864. Chivington attacked anyway. The Sand Creek Massacre helped to ignite an era of war. ✓ A.K.A. Chivington Massacre

Last Stand for Custer and the Sioux

Native Americans were moved to (reservations) or land set aside for Native Americans to live on. But they were unable to thrive on them. The land they were given was so poor no

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Key Events

1867

First cattle drive on Chisholm Trail.

1887

Dawes Act breaks up Native American tribal lands.

1889

Oklahoma opens to homesteaders.

✓ Checkpoint

Describe the roles of women and men in the Plains nations.

Women: _____

Men: _____

✓ Checkpoint

Name the event that helped start an era of war.

Reading Strategy

Why are the events described in this section called a "Last Stand"?

✓ Checkpoint

Name two Native American leaders who resisted the reservation system.

- 1.
- 2.

✓ Checkpoint

Name the event that marked the end of the Indian Wars.

✓ Checkpoint

List two things the Dawes Act did.

- 1.
- 2.

The Sand Creek Massacre
(1864) — start

end. — (1890)
The Battle of Wounded Knee

settlers would take it. If gold was discovered on reservation land, the land was taken away.

In June 1876, Colonel George Custer attacked the Sioux and Cheyennes. He was ordered to force them onto a reservation. Chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse won the Battle of Little Bighorn, but the Sioux and Cheyennes were ~~rounded up~~ rounded up a winter or two later by a larger force. ✓

Other Efforts at Resistance

Under pressure, many Nez Percés agreed to go to a reservation. When Chief Joseph and a large band of Nez Percés tried to flee to Canada, they were captured near the border.

The Navajos of the Southwest resisted removal to reservations until 1864. They were then sent to the Pecos River in Arizona. The Apaches, led by Geronimo, fought until 1886, when they, too, were sent to a reservation.

In the 1880s, soldiers worried about the (Ghost Dance). Native Americans said the dance gave them visions of returning to their old ways. In 1890, Sitting Bull was killed by Native American police sent to stop the dance. Then soldiers surrounded a group of Sioux fleeing to avoid more violence. While the Sioux were giving up their guns, a shot was fired. The army opened fire. They killed nearly 200 Sioux men, women, and children. This Battle of Wounded Knee ended the Indian Wars. ✓

The Failure of Reform

Reformers criticized the government for its harsh treatment of Native American nations. Hoping to improve Native American life, Congress passed the Dawes Act in 1887. The act tried to end Native Americans' wandering and turn them into farmers. It set up schools and gave Native American men 160 acres to farm. But few Native Americans took to farming, and with the buffalo hunt gone, they remained poor. Many grew dependent on the government. ✓

Check Your Progress

1. How did the Plains nations' lives change after the arrival of Europeans?

2. Why did the Dawes Act fail?

Section 3

The Cattle Kingdom

Key Events

1867 First cattle drive on Chisholm Trail

1867 Dawes Act breaks up Native American tribal lands

1889 Oklahoma opens to homesteaders.

✓ Checkpoint

Name the type of cattle that roamed the open range of Texas.

✓ Checkpoint

Name three types of clothes American cowhands borrowed from the vaqueros.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NOT
EASY

Section 3 Focus Question

What factors led to boom and bust in the cattle industry? To begin answering this question,

- Find out about the rise of the cattle industry.
- Explore life on the trail.
- Learn about the Wild West.
- Learn why the cattle boom went bust

Section 3 Summary

Cattle towns and the life of the cowhand on the trail helped create the (Wild West) But the boom was short-lived.

The Rise of the Cattle Industry

Wild longhorn cattle had roamed the open range, or unfenced land, of Texas for years. When the railroads crossed the Plains in the 1860s, Texas ranchers saw a way to get these cattle to market. They could drive the cattle to the railroad towns. Then the cattle could be shipped by rail to slaughterhouses and then sold in the East. These cattle drives meant herding cattle over very long distances. Texan cattle were driven as far as 1,000 miles to rail lines. ✓

Life on the Trail

Cowhands who drove the cattle had to have nerves of steel. They had to control thousands of cows and keep the herds together through rivers, fires, and droughts. Yet, for all their efforts, their pay was low.

The first cowhands were the Spanish and Mexican vaqueros (vah KAYR os). This Spanish word for cowhand or cowboy comes from vaca, the Spanish word for "cow." Americans learned how to ride, rope, and brand from vaqueros. They also adopted the vaqueros' spurs, chaps, and cowboy hats. About one third of all cowhands on the trails were Mexican. Many others were African American or white Civil War veterans. ✓

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The Wild West

Railroad towns were the destination of the cattle drives. Abilene, Kansas, was the first big (cow town), or settlement at the end of a cattle trail. It was founded in 1867 by Joseph

McCoy, where the Chisholm Trail met the Kansas Pacific Railroad.

★ Cow towns were filled with unruly men. Their saloons, gambling, dance halls, and gun fighting helped spread the myth of the Wild West.

William "Buffalo Bill" Cody promoted the Wild West with his traveling show. Starting in 1883, it had gun-slinging cowboys, Native Americans on horseback, and reenactments of battles from the Indian Wars. But the West was being transformed. Native Americans were on reservations, and big companies ran mining and ranching. Most cow towns were quieting down. ✓

Boom and Bust in the Cattle Kingdom

The cattle boom lasted from the 1860s to the 1880s. At its height, ranchers could buy a calf for \$5 and sell a grown steer for \$60. The region dominated by the cattle industry and its ranches, trails, and cow towns became known as the cattle kingdom.

By the 1880s, the open range had more cattle than the land could support. Two years of (hard weather) in 1886 and 1887 killed millions of cattle. A depression in eastern cities lowered demand for beef. Farmers fenced in the open range. As the railroads expanded, their lines moved closer to the ranches. The cattle drives ended, as did the cattle boom itself. ✓

cause / effect

Check Your Progress

1. Why did ranchers have to drive their cattle so far?

2. How was Buffalo Bill's Wild West show out of date?

Vocabulary Builder

Reread the bracketed paragraph. Based on context clues in the paragraph, write a definition of the word *transform*.

✓ Checkpoint

List three ways the West was changing in the 1880s.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

✓ Checkpoint

List three factors that hurt the cattle industry.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Section 4

Farming in the West

Section 4 Focus Question

How did farmers on the Plains struggle to make a living? To begin answering this question,

- Find out about the impact of homesteading.
- Discover the hardships of life on the Plains.
- Learn about the last rush for land.
- Read about how farmers organized politically.

Section 4 Summary

Homesteading boomed in the West after the Civil War, but times were not easy for farmers. **WHY?**

Homesteading

The Homestead Act of 1862 offered 160 acres on the Great Plains to those who agreed to live on and farm the land for five years. This created thousands of homesteaders settlers who acquired free land offered by the government.

But only one third of homesteaders on the Great Plains lasted the required five years. On the dry Plains, 160 acres was not enough land to support a family.

The railroads also promoted farming. They gave away some of the 180 million acres that they got from the government. More farms meant more shipping for the railroads. ✓

business

A Hard Life on the Plains

Life on the Great Plains was not easy. Water was scarce, and crops were hard to grow. The soil of the Plains was fertile, but the tough sod, a thick layer of roots of grasses tangled with soil, had to be removed. This was backbreaking work.

New farming methods helped Plains farmers. They used steel plows, which were stronger and lighter than other plows. New drills allowed them to bury seeds deep down where there was moisture. They used reapers to harvest crops and threshers to beat off the hard coverings of the grains. Farmers used windmills to pump water from deep underground. They used barbed wire, a new type of twisted wire, to keep cattle from trampling their crops.

By the 1880s, 70,000 African Americans had settled in Kansas. They were known as Exodusters because they felt like the Jews who fled slavery in Egypt, a biblical story told in the book of Exodus. ✓

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Key Events

1867

First cattle drive on Chisholm Trail.

1887

Dawes Act breaks up Native American tribal lands.

1889

Oklahoma opens to homesteaders.

Vocabulary Builder

Based on context clues, define homestead.

✓ Checkpoint

Name two conditions that homesteaders had to live up to.

1. _____

2. _____

✓ Checkpoint

List two things that made farming the Plains so difficult.

1. _____

2. _____

✓ Checkpoint

How much land was up for grabs in the Oklahoma Land Rush?

supply/demand

Reading Strategy

Reread the bracketed paragraphs. Then, using one of the blank pages at the back of this book, create a timeline of the events described in the paragraphs.

✓ Checkpoint

Name two things that Populists wanted.

1. _____

2. _____

Inflation is a general rise in prices.

A Last Rush for Land

By the 1880s, few areas on the Plains remained free to settlers. In 1889, nearly 100,000 people gathered at a line in Oklahoma. They were ready to enter what was once Indian Territory to claim some of the two million acres being offered by the government. A few people, known as (sooners) had already sneaked onto the land. They came out of hiding to claim the best land. By 1890, the free land had run out. ✓

boomers vs. sooners

Farmers Organize

As in mining and ranching, farming had a few big organizations that did well. But small farmers scraped by. Overproduction drove down prices. Small farmers borrowed money to expand or to buy new equipment. When prices for their crops fell, the farmers could not pay off the loans, and they lost their land.

Many farmers formed (granges) groups that met for lectures, sewing bees, and other events. In 1867, local granges joined to form the National Grange. In the 1870s and 1880s, Grangers demanded the low rates from railroads and grain warehouses that big farmers got. In time, farm cooperatives were formed. These were groups of farmers who pooled their money to make large purchases of tools, seed, and other supplies at a discount. SMART

In 1892, farmers joined labor unions to form the Populist Party. They pushed for social reforms like public ownership of railroads and warehouses to control rates. They called for both an income tax to replace property taxes and an eight-hour workday. Populists also wanted the government to back the dollar with silver as well as gold. They hoped this would bring on inflation, or a general rise in prices. This would raise crop prices. But after the presidential election of 1896, which Populist candidate William Jennings Bryan lost, Populism faded away. ✓

Check Your Progress

1. Why did railroads support farming on the Plains?

2. What did the National Grange demand?