The Closing of the Western Frontier
Railroad
May 10, 1869 at Promontory, Utah

“The Wedding of the Rails”

Central Pacific and Union Pacific
The “Chinese Question”

- Exclusion Act (1882)
  - Oriental Exclusion Act
  - Chinese Exclusion Act
The Cattlemen
Barbed Wire

Joseph Glidden
The Cowboys
Black Cowboys: Exodusters
The MINERS
Prospecting

GOLD PROSPECTORS HANDBOOK

- How to pan gold
- Prospect streams
- Gold in lode
- Retorts
- Geology
- Sampling techniques
- Tools and how to use them
- Sluices
- Portable dredges
- Glossary
- Other valuable minerals
Mining Centers: 1900

- Chief manufacturing cities
- Copper mining
- Iron and steel mills
- Iron ore
- Coal mining
- Silver and gold mining
The Farmers
Frontier Settlements: 1870-1890
Homestead Act

- Policy to settle Americans across the Great Plains
  - Sell cheap land or give away land
- Land difficult to settle and farm… called ‘Great American Desert’
  - Poor soil, arid (dry) climate, and natives who followed buffalo
- Act gave each American 160 acres of land for a small registration fee.
- Encouraged Homesteaders to move to Plains and started settlement of last bit of USA
What is the Message of this Picture?
The Realty -- A Pioneer's Sod House, SD
Great Plains Farming

A hard crust on poor quality soil made it hard to start farming.

Farmers could not afford a plough or machines that could help them farm better.

There were not enough workers for times of harvest.

Had to hire migrant workers.

High winds blew soil away.

Drought + arid ...

very little rain

- Only 38cm of rainfall in a year, and the summers were hot

Often fires swept through burning dried up crops

Insects such as locusts ate up crops

Railroads were run as monopolies and farmers were at their mercy:

- Overcharged, prices not set
Success?

Federal government built universities: promoted the study of agriculture to improve farming

Dry Farming:
Farmers put a layer of dust on the soil after rain to stop evaporation

Use of wells with irrigation run by wind power

Farming Equipment becomes cheaper: now being mass produced by workers in the east... paid practically nothing

Federal government gave grants to farmers to encourage them to try new methods and grow different crops

Increase protection and law and order
Plains
Indians
2nd Treaty of Ft. Laramie (1868)

Reservation Policy:
Place natives away from settlers
Restricted movement
Isolated from other tribes
• Take away food source from Natives
• They will be forced to submit to gov’t policy
• They will have little choice but to go to the reservations
Gold Found in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory! 1874
The Battle of Little Big Horn
1876

Chief Sitting Bull

General George Armstrong Custer
Out Numbered
Sitting Bull: Lakota Sioux Holy Man & Chief

- Led resistance to against US in northwestern Great Plains
- Major victory at Battle of Little Bighorn against Lt. Col. Custer and US 7th Cavalry
- Retreated to Canada
- He surrendered
- Briefly toured as a performer in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show
Helen Hunt Jackson: Her book causes Americans to change methods in dealing with natives

- Writes about gov’t abuses natives have faced since founding of this country
- Shames many Americans
- Many call for change
- Federal gov’t decides to promote “assimilating” natives to American culture
- Leads to DAWES ACT
Americanization or assimilation

- Adopt Christianity
- White education
- Individual land ownership
- Adopt agriculture

Take away food source to force to Reservations = tracks of land
Pupils at Carlisle Indian school, Pennsylvania. Established in 1879 by Richard Pratt, school attempted to assimilate Indian children into "white man's world" through education and financial support.
Dawes Act, 1887

- Quicker **Americanization**
  - Assimilate into US society
  - Adopt Christianity and “white education”
    - Children sent to Indian schools
    - Teach them to be good servants
- Promote private land ownership & farming
- Abandon tribe culture & become farmers
- If they farmed land for 25 years...
  - they get to “keep” it to pass to children
  - ...and they got to be citizens
- This policy did not win over many natives...
- 1924 gain citizenship and right to vote
The Ghost Dance Movement - 1890

- Many people resist Dawes Act
- Many promote idea of returning to “old” ways... Native culture:
  Hunt buffalo, only wear native clothing, use natives names, and return to native religion
- Religion sparked a movement called “Ghost Dance”
- Religion promised if natives returned to their culture... they would see an end to westward expansion of whites and they would have lands returned.
- Went against Assimilation and inspired rebellion.
7th Calvary rounded up starving and freezing Sioux and took them to Wounded Knee camp.

They attempted to confiscate all weapons.
A civilian burial party and US Army officers pose over a mass grave trench with bodies of Native American Lakota Sioux killed at Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota. (Jan 3, 1891)
William "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Wild West Show

BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST
AND CONGRESS OF ROUGH RIDERS OF THE WORLD.

A COMPANY OF WILD WEST COWBOYS, THE REAL ROUGH RIDERS OF THE WORLD WHOSE DARING EXPLOITS HAVE MADE THEIR NAMES SYNONYMOUS WITH DEEDS OF BRAVERY