

TOPIC 6.2: WESTERN GROWTH AND SETTLEMENT

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Learning Objective 1:

- Explain the causes and effects of Western growth settlement during the period after the Civil War.

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- A. Following the Civil War, government subsidies for transportation and communication systems helped open new markets in North America.

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Pacific Railway Act

- Authorized land grants and loans for the building of the first Transcontinental Railroad



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- B. The building of transcontinental railroads, the discovery of mineral resources, and government policies promoted economic growth and the creation of commercial centers.

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Transcontinental Railroad

- Union Pacific
 - Built west from Nebraska
 - Labor – war veterans, Irish immigrants
 - Challenge – attacks from Indians
 - Portable town followed railroad



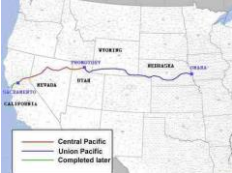

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- Central Pacific
- Built east from California
- Labor – Chinese immigrants
- Challenge – geography (Sierra Nevada Mountains)




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- Promontory Point, Utah
- “golden spike”

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- Impact
- Linked continent for first time
- Settlement
- Communication and commerce
- Time zones



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Mineral Resources

- Comstock Lode (Nevada)
- 340 million in gold, silver by 1890



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Government Policies

- Homestead Act (1862)
- Passed to encourage farming on Great Plains
- 160 acres of free public land
- Settle and improve for 5 years
- 500,000 took advantage



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- C. In hopes of achieving self-sufficiency and independence, migrants moved to both rural and boomtown areas of the West for opportunities such as mining, farming, and ranching.

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Mining

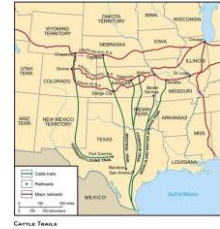
- Discovery of minerals led to "boomtown" areas
- Saloons, dance halls, violence
- "ghost towns"
- Virginia City, Nevada



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Ranching

- Pre-railroad boom
- Vaqueros – Mexican cowboys
- App. 5 million cattle "free ranged"
- Cattle drives – Chisolm Trail
- "cow towns"



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- After railroad boom
- End of cattle drives, railroads to stockyards
 - Abilene, Dodge City
- Decline of "open range"
 - Overgrazing
 - Blizzard
 - Homesteading, barbed wire



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- D. Improvements in mechanization helped agricultural production increase substantially and contributed to declines in food prices.

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Characteristics of Great Plains

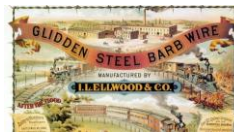
- "Great American Desert"
- "sod busters"
- challenges



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Mechanization and Innovations

- Barbed wire – Joseph Glidden
- "dry farming"
- Russian strains of wheat



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- E. Many farmers responded to the increasing consolidation in agricultural markets and their dependence on the evolving railroad system by creating local and regional cooperative groups.

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Economic Problems

- Falling prices
- High price of machinery
- Homestead land – not enough profit

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Railroad Problems

- "long haul, short haul"
- Pools
- rebates



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Farmer Responses

- National Grange Movement
 - Established cooperatives
 - Lobbied for Granger Laws
- National Alliance
 - Ocala Platform
 - Direct election of Senators
 - Lower tariffs
 - Graduated income tax



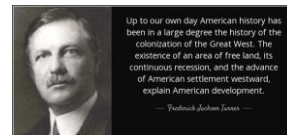
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- F. As migrant populations increased in number and the American bison population was decimated, competition for land and resources in the West led to an increase in conflict.

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Context

- Turner Thesis
 - Frontier was a "safety valve" for discontent
 - Closing of frontier would lead to class conflict, problems like in Europe



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Causes of Conflicts

- Migration
- Decimation of buffalo
- Railroads



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- G. The U.S. government violated treaties with American Indians and responded to resistance with military force, eventually confining American Indians to reservations.

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Indian Wars

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Reservation Policy

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- H. Many American Indians preserved their cultures and tribal identities despite government policies promoting assimilation, and they attempted to develop self-sustaining economic practices.

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Spark for Assimilation

- Helen Hunt Jackson – *A Century of Dishonor*
 - Push for formal education, job training, conversion to Christianity



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Attempts to Assimilate

- Carlisle Indian School
- Dawes Severalty Act (1887)
 - Allowed federal government to break up Indian lands
 - 160 acre plots
 - if accepted, farm and improve land
 - Citizenship after 25 years

