Settlement of the

WEST

1865-1890
GUIDING QUESTIONS 1 & 2

1. What factors shaped the economic and social development of the West beyond the Mississippi?
   - hardy individualism,
   - the natural environment,
   - market forces,
   - the federal government,
   - other cultures

2. For whom and to what extent was the American West a land of opportunity from 1865 to 1900?
The “West”
► Changing meanings of “THE WEST”
► “Great American Desert”
Population Growth of the West 1860-1900

Source: Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970
Settlement of the West 1860-1890
CLASH OF CULTURES

A variety of cultures coming from many directions shaped the West

- Europeans
- Indians
- Hispanic
  - Tejanos
  - Californios
- Asian
  - “Coolies”
  - “tongs”
  - Chinese
  - Exclusion Act
MINERS
CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH

► Gold is discovered at Sutter’s Fort in 1848
► Word of the gold strike reaches the rest of the US by late 1848
► In 1849, over 80,000 Americans flock to the gold fields
► San Francisco grows to 50,000 people by 1855
MINERS

- Comstock Load
- Black Hills
- Boomtowns

Mining Regions of the West
Copper Smelting, Butte, Montana

- Individual miners looking to get rich were many of the first settlers
- Large mining companies, often based in East, end up dominating mining
- Products of Western mining fuel the developing industrial economy
RAILROADS
Workers were the real heroes of the building of the Iron Road.

Workers for the Union Pacific
Mission accomplished: Promontory Point, Utah, May 10, 1869.

Promontory, 1869: Who is missing?
RANCHERS & COWBOYS
RANCHERS

► “long drives”
► range wars

► What fuels the development of large-scale cattle ranching?
► Why does the golden age of ranching end? Who ends up dominating the industry?
Frontier Settlement 1870-1890
FARMERS

► Homestead Act
► Morrill Land Grant Act
► Role of railroads
► Sodbusters

Kansas emigrants

Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries
Shores Family, Nebraska, 1887
The Farmers’ Complaints

► Weather: drought, blizzards, etc
► Declining crop prices
► Railroad rates / railroad monopolies
► Debt
► Money supply
► High tariffs

• Who dominates farming by 1900? What kind of farms?
• Opportunity?
• Role of Industrial market economy?
WESTERN INDIANS
GUIDING QUESTION 3

3. How were the lives of the Plains Indians in the second half of the 19th century affected by the development of the West?

- government actions?
- technological developments
Native Americans: 19th Century

1. Removal (West of the Mississippi R.) (1830s-40s)
2. Concentration (1860s-1880s)
   - Indian Wars
   - Reservations
3. Assimilation (1880s-1930s)
   - Dawes Act
"Indian Removal" (1820-1843)

THE REMOVAL OF NATIVE AMERICANS, 1820-1843

- Ceded lands
- Indian reservations
- Routes of Indian removal
- United States forts
- State and territory boundaries in 1846
INDIANS
► “concentration”
► reservations
► Bureau of Indian Affairs
Buffalo Lying Dead, 1872
INDIANS

► Sand Creek Massacre

► Crazy Horse
► Sitting Bull
► George Armstrong Custer
► Battle of Little Big Horn
“Ghost Dance”
Wounded Knee
Chief Joseph, Leader of the Nez Perce
Troops Burying Bodies, Wounded Knee
INDIANS

► Assimilation  ► Dawes Severalty Act (1883)
THE MYTH
4. “Popular fascination with the cowboy, the pioneer, and the stories of Horatio Alger in the period 1870-1915 reflected Americans’ uneasiness over the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society.”

Assess the validity of this statement.
Turn-of-the-century tourists at Yosemite
The Establishment of National Parks and Forests
MYTHS & MEANINGS OF THE WEST

- Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show
- Helen Hunt Jackson
- Frederick Jackson Turner

Buffalo Bill Cody and Sitting Bull, 1884
Frederick Jackson Turner
“Frontier Thesis”

“The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession and the advance of settlement westward, explain American Development.”

Why was this a new interpretation at the time? How accurate is it?