Chapter 18: Conquest and Survival: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1860–1900

Chapter Review

I. AMERICAN COMMUNITIES The Oklahoma Land Rush

In the 1830s, the federal government set aside the future state of Oklahoma for the Five Civilized Tribes who had been forcibly removed from their eastern lands. All five tribes reestablished themselves as sovereign republics in Indian Territory. The Civil War took a heavy toll as new treaties required the Five Tribes to cede western Oklahoma to thousands of newly displaced peoples from additional tribes. Eventually, more than 80,000 tribal people were living on 21 separate reservations governed by agents appointed by the federal government. The unassigned far western district of Oklahoma, known as No Man’s Land, was opened to homesteaders on April 22, 1889. In a little more than two months, 6,000 homestead claims had been filed. The land rush of 1889 was only one in a series of events that dispossessed Oklahoma’s Indians of their remaining land. First, the federal government broke up the estates held collectively by various tribes and divided them into individual claims of 160 acres. In 1898, Congress passed the Curtis Act, which abolished tribal jurisdiction over all Indian Territory. Members of the former Indian nations were directed to dismantle their governments, abandon their estates and join the ranks of the other homesteaders. American “manifest destiny” left little room for Indians in Oklahoma.

II. INDIAN PEOPLES UNDER SIEGE

The Indians living west of the Mississippi River felt the pressure of the gradual incorporation of the West into the American nation. California Oregon became states by 1859, and Congress granting territorial status to Utah, New Mexico, Washington, Dakota, Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. The California gold rush, the opening of western lands to homesteaders in 1862, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 186 all brought settlers west. These advances made federal officials more determined than ever to end tribal rule and to bring Indians into the American mainstream.

a. Indian Territory

Before 1492, various Indian tribes had occupied western lands for more than 20,000 years. Invasion by the English, Spanish, and other Europeans brought disease, religious conversion, and new patterns of commerce. Geographic isolation gave many tribes a margin of survival unknown to tribes in the East. In 1865, approximately 360,000 Indian people lived in the trans-Mississippi West. The federal government regarded Indian tribes as autonomous nations residing within American boundaries and had negotiated numerous treaties with them. Several states violated these treaties so often that the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The Cherokees challenged this legislation and the Supreme Court ruled in their favor in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia. President Jackson ignored the Court’s ruling and forced many tribes to cede their land.
and move west to Indian Territory. In 1854, the federal government abolished the northern half of Indian Territory in order to open Kansas and Nebraska territories for white settlement.

b. The Reservation Policy and the Slaughter of the Buffalo

As early as the 1840s, American officials had determined that individual tribes would live within clearly defined reservations and, in exchange, the Bureau of Indian Affairs would provide guidance, while U.S. military forces ensured protection. This reservation policy reflected the vision of many “Friends of the Indian,” educators and Protestant missionaries who aspired to “civilize the savages.” Several tribes signed treaties regarding the reservation policy, although they often did so under duress. Those tribes that did move to reservations often found federal policies inadequate to their needs. Corrupt officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs routinely diverted funds for their own use and reduced food supplies, a policy promoting malnutrition, demoralization, and desperation. The mass slaughter of the buffalo, brought about by traders avidly seeking fur for coats, hides for leather, and bones for fertilizer, meant a crisis situation for the Indian tribes that depended on the buffalo for their very existence. Army commanders encouraged the slaughter of the buffalo, accurately predicting that starvation would break tribal resistance to the reservation system.

c. The Indian Wars

In 1864 Colorado governor John Evans encouraged a group of white civilians, the Colorado Volunteers, to stage raids through Cheyenne campgrounds, leading to the Sand Creek Massacre. Oglala Sioux warrior Red Cloud fought the U.S. Army to a stalemate in 1865–67 and forced the government to abandon its forts, which the Sioux then burned to the ground. Despite the 1868 Ft. Laramie Treaty, white prospectors hurriedly invaded the territory in 1874. Lt. Col. George A. Custer, sent to subdue the Sioux and their allies, foolishly divided his forces and was wiped out at the Little Bighorn. “Custer’s Last Stand” gave Indian haters the emotional ammunition to whip up public excitement. Pursued by the U.S. Army, the Apaches earned a reputation as intrepid warriors, but, along with their Comanche and Kiowa allies, they were crushed in the 1874–75 Red River War. By 1877 the Sioux joined them in defeat.

MHL document: Congressional Report on Sand Creek Massacre (1867) at www.myhistorylab.com

d. The Nez Perces

For generations, the Nez Perces had regarded themselves as good friends to white traders and settlers, occasionally assisting American armies against hostile tribes, and many of them were converts to Christianity.

After the discovery of gold on Nez Perce territory in 1860, prospectors, mining companies and government officials demanded that the Nez Perces cede 6 million acres, nine-tenths of their land, at less than ten cents per acre. At first, federal officials listened
to Nez Perce complaints against the treaty and allowed them to remain on their land. When a Nez Perce truce team approached U.S. troops, violence ensued and Chief Joseph led his people on a long march toward Canada. Trapped in the Bear Paw Mountains of northern Montana, just 30 miles from the Canadian border, Joseph surrendered and the remnants of his band were deported under guard to a non-Nez Perce reservation in Washington, where Chief Joseph died in 1904 “of a broken heart,” and where his descendants continue to live in exile to this day.

III. THE INTERNAL EMPIRE

Since the time of Columbus, America had inspired Europeans as a land of incredible wealth, free for the taking. In the nineteenth century, the North American continent, stretching unsettled toward the Pacific Ocean, revived this fantasy. Determined to make their fortunes, be it from copper in Arizona, wheat in Montana, or oranges in California, adventurers traveled west, carrying out the largest migration and commercial expansion in American history.

But the settlers also became the subjects of a huge “internal empire” whose centers of power remained in the East. Only a small number of settlers actually struck it rich in mining, lumbering, ranching, and farming. Meanwhile, older populations—Indian peoples, Hispanic peoples, and more recently settled communities like the Mormons—struggled to create places for themselves in this new expansionist order.

a. Mining Towns

Mining camps and boomtowns speeded the urban development of the West, bringing the area into a vast global market for capital, commodities, and labor. The mining industry quickly grew from its treasure-hunt origins into a grand corporate enterprise. Occasionally, ore veins lasted long enough—as in Butte, Montana, center of the copper-mining district—to create permanent cities.

Labor unions arose to organize white miners, but excluded Chinese, Mexican, Indian, and African American workers. When prices and ore production fell sharply, not even unions could stop the owners from shutting down the mines and leaving ghost towns in their wake. Hydraulic mining, which used water cannons to blast hillsides and expose gold deposits, drove tons of rock and earth into the rivers and canyons. Underground mining continued unregulated, using up whole forests for timbers and filling the air with dangerous, sulfurous smoke.

MHL map: Resources and Conflict in the West at www.myhistorylab.com

MHL video: The Real West Is an Urban West at www.myhistorylab.com

MHL document: John Lester, Hydraulic Mining (1873) at www.myhistorylab.com

b. Mormon Settlements
Led by Brigham Young, the Mormons migrated in 1846–47 from the Midwest to the Great Salt Lake Basin to form the independent theocratic state Deseret, affirming the sanctity of plural marriage, or polygamy. By 1870, more than 87,000 Mormons lived in Utah Territory, in communal farming settlements. Relying on agricultural techniques learned from local Indians, the Mormons built dams to irrigate the desert soil. Eventually, nearly 500 Mormon communities spread from Oregon to Idaho to northern Mexico.

As territorial rule tightened, the Mormons saw their unique way of life once again threatened. The newspapers and the courts repeatedly assailed the Mormons for the supposed sexual excesses of their system of plural marriage, condemning them as heathens and savages. Restrictive federal laws enacted in 1862 and 1874 were upheld when the Supreme Court ruled against polygamy in the United States v. Reynolds (1879), recognizing the freedom of belief but not of practice. By the early 1890s, Mormon leaders officially renounced the practice of plural marriage.

Although Brigham Young wed 27 women and fathered 56 children, no more than 15 to 20 percent of Mormon families practiced polygamy and even then, two wives was the norm.

MHL document: Elizabeth Cady Stanton speaks to Mormon Women in Utah (1871) at www.myhistorylab.com

c. Mexican Borderland Communities

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo allowed Hispanics north of the Rio Grande to choose between immigrating to Mexico or staying in what was now the United States. What gradually emerged was an economically and socially interdependent zone, the Anglo-Hispanic borderlands linking the United States and Mexico. For a time, Arizona and New Mexico seemed to hold out hope for a mutually beneficial interaction between Mexicanos and Anglos. With the Anglos came land closures as well as commercial expansion, prompted by railroad, mining, and timber industries. Many poor families found themselves crowded onto plots too small for subsistence farming. In the 1880s, Las Gorras Blancas, a band of agrarian rebels in New Mexico, destroyed railroad ties and farm machinery and posted demands for justice on the fences of the new Anglo farms and ranches. In 1890, Las Gorras turned from social banditry to political organization, forming El Partido del Pueblo Unido (The People’s Party).

IV. THE OPEN RANGE

Texas longhorns, introduced by the Spanish, numbered over 5 million at the close of the Civil War, a plentiful supply of beef for eastern consumers. In the spring of 1866, Joseph G. McCoy opened a cattle market where the Kansas Pacific Railroad provided transportation links to slaughtering and packing houses and commercial distributors in Kansas City, St. Louis, and Chicago. In 1880, nearly 2 million cattle were slaughtered in Chicago alone. For two decades, cattle represented the West’s bonanza industry.
a. The Long Drives

The great cattle drives depended on poorly paid seasonal or migrant cowboys, working sunup to sundown, with short night shifts for guarding the cattle. In the 1880s, Texas and Wyoming cowboys struck successfully for higher wages. Indian cowboys worked mainly on the northern plains and in Indian Territory; the *vaqueros*, who had previously worked on the Mexican cattle haciendas, or huge estates, predominated in South Texas and California. African American cowboys worked primarily in Texas, where the range cattle industry was founded. Woman largely stayed on the ranch, although Elizabeth Collins became known as “Cattle Queen” after taking over her husband’s Montana business; not until 1901 did a woman enter a cowboy rodeo.

MHL document: *Perspectives on the American Cowboy (1884, 1886)* at www.myhistorylab.com

b. The Sporting Life

Saloons, gambling establishments, and dance halls were regular features in frontier settlements. The hurdy-gurdy, a form of hand organ, supplied raucous music for cowboys eager to spend money and blow off steam after the long drive with dancing partners called hurdy-girls or hurdies. Although some women worked in trailside “hoghouses,” the best-paid prostitutes congregated in the brothel districts. Most cattle towns boasted at least one bawdy house. Dodge City had two: one with white prostitutes for white patrons; another with black prostitutes for both white and black men. Until they were shut down, brothels and prostitution supplied these women with the largest source of employment outside the home. Like the cowboys who bought their services, most prostitutes were unmarried and in their teens or twenties. Often fed up with underpaid jobs in dressmaking or domestic service, they found few alternatives to prostitution in the cattle towns, where the cost of food and lodging was notoriously high.

c. Frontier Violence and Range Wars

Personal violence was commonplace in cattle towns and mining camps populated mainly by young single men. Local specialty shops and mail-order catalogues continued to sell weapons with little regulation. After the Civil War, violent crime rose sharply throughout the United States. The “range wars” of the 1870s produced violent conflicts. Sheep chew grass down to its roots, making it practically impossible to raise cattle in the same fields. Great cattle barons fought back against farmers by ordering cowboys to cut the new barbed-wire fences. Finally, during 1885–87, a combination of summer drought and winter blizzards killed 90 percent of the cattle in the northern Plains. Many ranchers fell into bankruptcy.
V. FARMING COMMUNITIES ON THE PLAINS

“The Great Desert,” stretching west from Kansas and Nebraska, north to Montana and the Dakotas, and south again to Oklahoma and Texas, challenged American dreams of a fertile garden in the West. With few trees and little water, it took massive improvements in transportation and farm technology—as well as unrelenting advertising and promotional campaigns—to open the Great Plains to wide scale agriculture.

a. The Homestead Act

The Homestead Act of 1862 offered farmers a quarter section (160 acres) of the public domain free to anyone who lived on and improved the land for five years. Settlers could buy the land for $1.25 per acre after only six months’ residence. Although restricted to heads of households, the Homestead Act encouraged adventurous unmarried women to file between 5 and 15 percent of the claims. Homesteaders were most successful in the central and upper Midwest, where the soil was rich and weather relatively moderate. Settlers lured to the Great Plains by descriptions of land as “a sylvan paradise” struggled with the harsh climate and arid soil. The dream of a homestead nevertheless died hard. Rather than filing a homestead claim with the federal government, most settlers acquired their land outright from state governments and land companies which held the most valuable land near transportation and markets; many farmers were willing to pay a hefty price for those benefits. The big-time land speculators and railroad companies profited as well selling free or cheap land grants at premium prices.

b. Populating the Plains

The railroads—vital to the region’s growth—wielded tremendous economic and political power throughout the West. Unlike the railroads built before the Civil War, the western lines preceded settlement. Bringing people west became their top priority, and the railroad companies conducted aggressive promotional and marketing campaigns in the east as well as in Europe. Immigrants who settled in tight-knit communities modeled on Old World villages found life on the Great Plains difficult but endurable. Those who settled as individual families rather than as whole communities faced an exceptionally solitary life on the Great Plains. Communities eventually flourished in prosperous towns like Grand Island, Nebraska; Coffeyville, Kansas; and Fargo, North Dakota, that served the larger agricultural region. Built alongside the railroad, they grew into commercial centers, home to banking, medical, legal, and retail services.
c. Work, Dawn to Dusk

“Wheat never looked better and it is nothing but wheat, wheat, wheat.” Most farm families survived, and even prospered, through hard work, often from dawn to dusk. Women tended to the young children, sometimes taking in boarders, usually young men working temporarily in railroad construction. Many women complained about the ceaseless drudgery, especially when they watched their husbands invest in farm equipment rather than in domestic appliances. Neighbors might agree to work together haying, harvesting, and threshing grain. A well-to-do farmer might “rent” his threshing machine in exchange for a small cash fee and, perhaps, three days’ labor. When annual harvests were bountiful, even the farm woman’s practice of bartering goods with neighbors and local merchants—butter and eggs in return for yard goods or seed—diminished sharply, replaced by cash transactions. Less successful farmers lost their land altogether. The Garden of Eden was not to be found on the prairies or on the plains, no matter how hard the average farm family worked.

VI. THE WORLD’S BREADBASKET

Hard-working farmers brought huge numbers of acres under cultivation, while new technologies allowed them to achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency in the planting and harvesting of crops. As a result, farming became increasingly tied to international trade, and modern capitalism soon ruled western agriculture, as it did the mining and cattle industries.

a. New Production Technologies

Even after trees and grassroots were cleared, the sod west of the Mississippi did not yield readily to cultivation and often broke eastern farmers’ cast iron plows. New technology was as vital as the farmers’ hard labor. John Deere’s steel plow, McCormick’s reaper, and later thresher, corn planter and mowing machines boosted productivity. Agricultural colleges funded by the Morrill Act provided support, but even the best planning and science could not overcome blizzards, droughts, floods and plagues of locusts.

b. California Agribusiness

The trend toward bonanza farming reached an apex in California, where farming as a business surpassed farming as a way of life. Farms of nearly 500 acres dominated the California landscape in 1870; by the turn of the century, two-thirds of the state’s arable land was in 1,000-acre farms. As land reformer and social commentator Henry George noted, California was “not a country of farms but a country of plantations and estates.” By 1890, cherries, apricots, and oranges, packed with mountains of ice, made their way into homes across the United States. California growers learned quickly that they could satisfy consumer appetites and even create new ones. Meanwhile, California’s grape growing grew into a big business. Long considered inferior to French wines, California wines found a ready market at lower prices. By the turn of the century, amid intense legislative battles over land and irrigation rights, it was clear that the rich and powerful
dominated California agribusiness, employing growing numbers of Chinese tenants and field hands who had come earlier to build railroads and mine.

d. The Toll on the Environment

While farmers “improved” the land by introducing exotic plants and animals from other regions and continents, native species from bears to wolves to buffalo were pushed toward extinction. Commercial agriculture also took a heavy toll on inland waters. Rainfall that had drained naturally into lakes, underground aquifers, and watering spots was rerouted and dammed to irrigate crops, causing many bodies of water to disappear and the water table to drop significantly. The Newlands or National Reclamation Act of 1902 added 1 million acres of irrigated land, and state irrigation districts added more than 10 million acres. Western state politicians and federal officials debated water rights for decades, rarely considering the environmental impact of their policies. Lake Tulare in California’s Central Valley shrank from 760 to only 36 square miles and finally disappeared, leaving an alkaline wasteland. The need to maintain the water supply indirectly led to the creation of national forests and the Forest Service. Western farmers supported the General Land Revision Act of 1891, which gave the president the power to establish forest reserves to protect watersheds against the threats posed by lumbering, overgrazing, and forest fires. The federal government would now play an even larger role in economic development of the West, dealing mainly with corporate farmers and ranchers eager for improvements.

VII. THE WESTERN LANDSCAPE

Americans celebrated western expansion as “manifest destiny,” and marveled at the region’s natural and cultural wonders. Easterners craved stories about the West and visual images of its sweeping vistas. Artists and photographers built their reputations on what they saw and imagined in the unique western landscape.

a. Nature’s Majesty

While scientists studied the lands, writers had described spectacular, breathtaking natural sites like the Grand Tetons and High Sierras, inspiring a “Rocky Mountain School” of painters and photographers. The federal government began to set aside huge tracts of land as nature reserves. In 1872, Congress named Yellowstone the first national park. Yosemite and Sequoia in California, Crater Lake in Oregon, Mount Rainier in Washington, and Glacier in Montana all became national parks between 1890 and 1910.

MHL document: Muir, The Yosemite at www.myhistorylab.com

b. The Legendary Wild West

The West, Roosevelt insisted, meant “vigorou manhood.” Competing against stories about pirates, wars, crime, and sea adventures, westerns outsold the others. Cowman Joseph McCoy staged Wild West shows in St. Louis and Chicago, where Texas cowboys
entertained prospective buyers by roping calves and breaking horses. “Buffalo Bill” Cody
made sharpshooter Annie Oakley a star performer. Cody also hired Sioux Indians and
hundreds of cowboys to perform in mock stagecoach robberies and battles. Cody’s Wild
West Show attracted masses of fairgoers at the World’s Columbian Exposition, the
spectacular celebration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s landing in the New
World held in Chicago in 1893. The same year Frederick Jackson Turner’s paper, “The
Significance of the Frontier in American History,” made a compelling argument that the
continuous westward movement of settlement allowed Americans to develop new
standards for democracy. The “frontier thesis” lived on, however, although most
historians no longer consider the frontier as the key to all American history.

c. The “American Primitive”

A young German American artist, Charles Schreyvogel, saw Buffalo Bill’s tent show in
Buffalo and decided to make the West his life’s work. Charles Russell, Frederick
Remington, and many other “cowboy artists” documented the west and its fateful events,
such as “Custer’s Last Stand,” with varying degrees of accuracy. Photographers often
produced highly nuanced portraits of Indian peoples. President Theodore Roosevelt
praised Edward Sheriff Curtis for vividly conveying tribal virtue. Painters and
photographers led the way for scholarly research on the various Indian societies by
ethnographers such as Lewis Henry Morgan and his study of the Cheyenne.

In 1885, Alice Cunningham Fletcher produced for the U.S. Senate a report titled Indian
Education and Civilization, one of the first general statements on the status of Indian
peoples. As a founder of the American Anthropological Society and president of the
American Folklore Society, she encouraged further study of Indian societies. Inspired by
Indian culture, the Elks and Eagles borrowed tribal terminology. The Boy Scouts and Girl
Scouts, the nation’s premier youth organizations, used tribal lore to instill strength of
character, and Indians and buffalo adorned American coins and stamps.

VIII. THE TRANSFORMATION OF INDIAN SOCIETIES

In 1871, the U.S. government formally ended the treaty system, largely abolishing Indian
sovereignty. Using a mixture of survival strategies from farming and trade to the leasing of
reservation lands, tribes persisted, adapting to changing conditions and maintaining old
traditions.

a. Reform Policy and Politics

By 1880, many Indian tribes had been forcibly resettled on reservations, but very few had
adapted to white ways and poverty and misery plagued the tribes as they suffered from
white fraud and corruption. A few reformers resisted the widespread assumption that
Indian ignorance, and not government policy, caused such problems. Helen Hunt Jackson
threw herself into the Indian Rights Association, an offshoot of the Women’s National
Indian Association (WNIA), formed in 1874 to promote assimilation. The two
organizations sent Protestant missionaries West to convert Indian to Christianity and
“save” their children by sending them to white-run boarding schools. By 1882, the WNIA had gathered 100,000 signatures on petitions urging Congress to phase out the reservation system, to establish universal education for Indian children, and to award title to 160 acres to any Indian individual willing to work the land. The resultant Dawes Act successfully undermined tribal sovereignty but offered little compensation. “Indian schools” forbade Indian languages, clothing styles, and even hair fashions in order to “kill the Indian … and save the man,” as one schoolmaster put it. Treated as savages, Indian children fled most white schools. Within the next 40 years, the Indian peoples lost two thirds of their reservation and homestead lands. In 1877, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act, which affirmed the integrity of Indian cultural institutions and returned some land to tribal ownership.

MHL document: Helen Hunt Jackson, from A Century of Dishonor (1881) at www.myhistorylab.com

b. The Ghost Dance

In 1889, Wovoka, a Paiute holy man, had visions prophesying that the white man could be destroyed and Indian culture restored through a ritual dance. As the Ghost Dance spread, alarmed whites officials and Christian missionaries tried to repress the movement. After U.S. cavalry troops broke up a ceremony, and Sitting Bull and his son were killed in an intertribal skirmish, white soldiers pursued the Sioux to Wounded Knee, where an Indian surrender turned into a massacre in December 1890. Four hundred years after Columbus, the slaughter marked the final conquest of indigenous Americans.

b. Endurance and Rejuvenation

The most tenacious tribes occupied land rejected by white settlers or distant from white communities. Even those such as the Arizona Pima found that assimilation brought few rewards and their lands and resources were stolen by whites. The California Yahi chose simply to disappear into remote caves. Many tribes found it difficult to survive in the proximity of white settlers. Intermarriage, although widely condemned by the white community, drew many young people outside their Indian communities. Some tribes such as the Flatheads deliberately chose a path toward assimilation, but still lost most of their lands. For those tribes who remained on reservations, the aggressively assimilationist policies of the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) challenged their traditional ways. Some tribes such as the Southern Ute, despite accepting reservation life, continued traditional communal practices. The Cheyenne adapted by becoming horse traders and later Christians and farmers, retaining parts of their culture. The Navajos survived by stubbornly clinging to lands unwanted by white settlers, and by adapting to drastically changing conditions. Another desert tribe, the nearby Hopis, had lived for centuries in their remote cliff cities and ultimately won white respect for their unique culture. Fortunate Northwestern tribes remained relatively isolated from white settlers until the early twentieth century, although they had begun trading with white visitors centuries earlier. Northwestern peoples maintained their cultural integrity in part through connections with kin in Canada, as did southern tribes with kin in Mexico. At the end of
the nineteenth century, Indian populations and culture reached a low point; not until well into the twentieth century would a resurgence occur.

IX. CONCLUSION

Oklahoma’s rapid development stands as a microcosm of the nineteenth-century West. As railroads, mining, cattle, and farming “tamed” the region and its challenging environment, white settlers adapted their culture to the frontier. Marginalized in national economics and politics, Westerners, along with Southerners, would turn restive by century’s end and demand their fair share of national wealth, challenging the political system.

Learning Objectives

Students should be able to answer the following questions after studying Chapter 18:

1. What was the impact of U.S. western expansion on Indian societies?
2. In what ways was the post–Civil War West an “internal empire,” and how did its development depend on the emergence of new technologies and new industries?
3. How did the open range offer different opportunities to men and to women?
4. How did agribusiness differ from forms of family farming?
5. What place did the West hold in the national imagination?

Discussion Suggestions and Possible Answers

1. What was the role of federal legislation in accelerating and shaping the course of westward expansion?

   **Answer:** Laws such as the Homestead Act of 1862 accelerated the movement of people westward. Government support for the construction of the transcontinental railroad also encouraged people to move to the West. The Dawes Act of 1887 moved native peoples onto reservations and sought to replace the communal ownership of land with private plots for Native Americans. The Federal Government also passed legislation to regulate water and timber usage in the West.

2. How did the incorporation of western territories into the United States affect Indian nations such as the Sioux or the Nez Perces? What were the causes and consequences of the Indian Wars, the significance of reservation policy, and the impact of the Dawes Severalty Act on tribal life?

   **Answer:** The movement of people westward, especially as natural resources such as gold and silver were discovered, brought settlers and Indians into frequent and violent confrontation. The Sioux and Nez Perces each resisted government efforts to push them onto reservations, but in the end were forced to succumb to the U.S. Army. The Dawes Severalty Act replaced communal ownership with private property on reservations, and the result was that more than 60 percent of the land reserved to Indians was taken by whites.
3. What were some of the major technological advances in mining and agriculture that promoted the development of the western economy?

**Answer:** Technology such as hydraulic mining enabled ore to be mined from deep in the earth, but at considerable economic cost. For farmers, the McCormick Reaper and “singing plow” enabled farmers to harvest much greater acreage with the same amount of labor. In addition, the Morrill Act and the Hatch Act encouraged new research into agricultural and other technologies.

4. Describe the unique features of Mexicano communities in the Southwest before and after the mass immigration of Anglos. How did changes in the economy affect the patterns of labor and the status of women in these communities?

**Answer:** The Mexicano communities of the Southwest occupied the borderland region between Mexico and the United States. While these communities initially worked to maintain the unique identity, the rise of local elites, both Anglo and Mexicano, pushed out many poorer Mexican families. Some adopted by performing seasonal labor on the farms and ranches, while others sought jobs in the railroad and mining industries. A few vestiges of Mexican culture, in particular the Catholic Church, remained in the region.

5. What role did the Homestead Act play in western expansion? How did farm families on the Great Plains divide chores among their members? What factors determined the likelihood of economic success or failure?

**Answer:** The Homestead Act of 1862 offered the first incentive—160 acres of land—for families who moved west. Early speculators and the railroad companies had already claimed much of the best land, however, and homesteaders found themselves in a fierce struggle with the harsh climate and poor soil. Families survived through hard work, from dawn to dusk. Men labored in the fields during planting and harvest time, performing labor, construction and caring for livestock at other periods. Women were responsible for cooking and cleaning, canning fruits and vegetables and other domestic chores. Success or failure came to factors such as hard work, but also luck as the climate and soil frequently determined whether or not the harvest would be enough for a family to survive.

6. How did the photographs, paintings, and stories of artists, naturalists, and conservationists to the western landscape shape perceptions of the West in the East?

**Answer:** People in the east craved the stories, paintings, and photographs of the West. These typically depicted majestic mountain ranges, large rivers, and waving meadows of long grasses. The landscapes were so vivid that they projected a divine aura of the majestic West. “Buffalo” Bill Cody captured the public’s imagination with his Wild West Show, featuring cowboys and the famous Annie Oakley performing stunts with pistols and lassoes.
Lecture Outline

American Communities: The Oklahoma Land Rush

Indian Peoples Under Siege
  Indian Territory
  The Reservation Policy
  Slaughter of the Buffalo
  The Indian Wars
  The Nez Perces

The Internal Empire
  Mining Towns
  Mormon Settlements
  Mexican Borderland Communities

The Open Range
The Long Drives
  The Sporting Life
  Frontier Violence and Racism

Farming Communities on the Plains
  The Homestead Act
  Populating the Plains
  Work, Dawn to Dusk

The World’s Breadbasket
  New Production Technology
  California Agribusiness
  The Toll on the Environment

The Western Landscape
  Nature’s Majesty
  The Legendary Wild West
  The “American Primitive”

The Transformation of Indian Societies
  Reform Policy and Politics
  The Ghost Dance
  Endurance and Rejuvenation
Resources (Web, Films/Video)

Web
Mountain Meadows Massacre Trials:
http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/mountainmeadows/leetrial.html

Wyatt Earp Trial: www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/FTrials/ftrials.htm

Films/Video

Frontier House, PBS Video, 2002. This reality series documents the efforts of three modern families to survive on the American Frontier in 1883.

The West (537 minutes). PBS Video, 1996. Ken Burns’ documentary history of the West from the viewpoints of both Native Americans and Europeans.

Dances with Wolves (180 minutes). Tig Productions, 1990. A U.S. Army Lieutenant is sent to the frontier in the 1860s. He gradually sheds the ways of the white man as white settlers and the Army arrive to settle the area.

Unforgiven (131 minutes). Malpaso Productions, 1992. The Oscar-Award winning “new” western, which depicts life in the West in the 1860s and the thin line between heroism and villainy in a frontier society.

Blazing Saddles (93 minutes). Crossbow Productions, 1974. A new, black sheriff rides into a town in the Wild West in this satire of westerns that pokes fun at every ethnic and racial stereotype.

My History Lab Connections

Reinforce what you learned in this chapter by studying the many documents, images, maps, review tools, and videos available at www.myhistorylab.com.

Read and Review

Read the Documents
Congressional Report on Sand Creek Massacre (1867)
John Lester, Hydraulic Mining (1873)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton speaks to Mormon Women in Utah (1871)
Perspectives on the American Cowboy (1884, 1886)

History Bookshelf
Muir, The Yosemite
Helen Hunt Jackson, from A Century of Dishonor (1881)

See the Map
Resources and Conflict in the West

Research and Explore

Read the Documents
Exploring America: Dakota Sioux Conflict

Read the Biographies
George Armstrong Custer
Helen Hunt Jackson

Hear the Audio
Omaha Funeral Song

See the videos
The Real West is an urban West
The Plains

Critical Thinking Exercises

The West through Film: Use a variety of films, from classics like Stagecoach and High Noon, satires such as Blazing Saddles to more recent films like Unforgiven and True Grit to discuss the myth of the American West and how that myth has changed over time.