Chapter 16: The Economy of the West after the Civil War

Labor

Most people thought the West would be **poor farmland, with extreme temperatures and little rain**. They imagined the land had **few trees**.

The West included **California, Oregon, and Washington, and the 6 great plains states**.

Only **4% of Americans lived in the West in 1840**.

Getting people to move West

Under the **Donation Land Law, an American married couple could get 160 acres if they moved there before the end of 1850 and agreed to four years of farming.**

Under the **Homestead Act, people could have 160 acres if they farmed and settled on the land. If they farmed the land for 5 years, they could have the land for free. They could have the land right away if they payed $1.25 for each acre.**

The **Desert Land Act** and the **Timber and Stone Act** were other cheap ways for people to get land in the West.

Problems with cheap land

Some thought the **160 acres were too big for a farm, and too small for raising cattle.**

Southwest farmers had trouble irrigating because **they needed to cooperate with their neighbors, and it was hard to rally all the people they needed.**

The Mormons in Utah had many neighborly bonds, making cooperation while irrigating easier.

Some **people illegally tried to get large amounts of land**. For example, **a Southwest rancher might buy lots of land using different names.**

Western immigrants

The Chinese was the largest group of immigrants to the West.

Immigrants worked in a variety of trades, such as **mining, railroad working, small businesses, farming and ranching.**

Cities

San Francisco was the **largest Western City** until World War I.

Western population growth

17 million American citizens lived in the West in the 1900, and most of the Western territory was divided into states. .

Most Westerners lived in **California**.

Most people lived in the **urban Midwest** and **East.**

Natural Resources

People found that the Plains area was **excellent for farming wheat and grazing cattle.**

Gold and silver miners often **came to the West first.**

Copper was used in electric wiring, so it became valuable after electricity became widely used.

 Lead became more valuable because it was used in plumbing.

Growing industries, **especially the railroad, made coal and iron more profitable.**

Equipment and Tools

Farm equipment

The new steel plow, reaper, and **other new farm equipment helped simplify farming in the Great Plains.**

Water problems

With **mechanical well drilling**, **farmers were able to dig more wells**. They could also make them deeper.

Dry land farming: some land remains unfarmed for a year so that it can store water for the next round of crops.

Barbed wire

The first North Americans to have large amounts of cattle were the Mexicans.

Once **barbed wire** was created, people could keep livestock out of other farmer's crops.

Transportation

The transcontinental railroad

The government developed the **transcontinental railroad** to make Western travel easier and faster.

The **Union Pacific** railroad, which began in **Omaha, Nebraska**, was mostly **laid down by ex-soldiers and Irish immigrants**. The **Central Pacific**, which started in **Sacramento, California**, was worked largely by **Chinese immigrants**.
The government paid the railroad for each mile of track, so **companies got more money for longer, less direct routes**. In addition, longer, winding routes reached more towns. The railroad company received even more money from the towns it reached.

The Union and Central Pacific railroads both ended in **Promontory Point, Utah.**

Other railroads

The railroads helped Western Industry. **They brought them farming supplies, coal, and other important materials. They also took the farmers's products to the East.**

Cattle – A new business

The West, especially Texas, had lots of cattle. **In the east, the cattle were over ten times more expensive.** Ranchers realized that they could make money if they drove the cattle East.

Some Native Americans were angry because the cattle drives went through their lands. Sometimes, the **Native Americans attacked the ranchers and the first drives lost money.**

Cattle drives went through many cities, starting with **St. Louis, Kansas City, and Sedalia, Missouri. Next, they included Abilene, Kansas; Cheyenne, Wyoming; and Dodge City, Kansas.**

Once the ranchers started using the railroad for cattle, they were more successful.

As more of the open Western land was developed, cattle drives could not move as easily over the land. Bad weather also killed much of the cattle. As new railroads came, cattle drives were less necessary.

Demand for Product

1) Western **grain became increasingly needed by union soldiers during the Civil War**.
2) The **growing population of urban cities also led to demand for grain**.

3) **In Europe, famine and war also led to increased grain exports.**
Regional economies

In a **regional economy,** products are made to supply a limited area.

In Minneapolis, wheat from the Plains states was milled by factories and made into cereal, flour, etc.

Money and Credit

Banks charged high interest to farmers and ranchers because they knew that farms and ranches often failed. **Bankers preferred to lend money to big mining corporations and the railroads, because they were more likely to be able to pay back.**

Profit

The large corporations enjoyed the most profit in the West. Farmers, ranch and railroad workers, and miners, made much less money.

Farmers had a hard time making money because they **had to pay fees to the railroads for product shipment**. They also had to pay **high interest rates**. Sometimes, the demand for their products would decrease, and the farmers could not charge as much for their products.

People's Rights Problems from Western Migration
People's Rights Problems of Native Americans

Lewis Cass, U.S. Secretary of War in the early 1800's, **promised the Native Americans that the government would not take their land**. However, many settlers did move into their land, sometimes taking it by force. Consequently, the Native Americans distrusted the whites.

Annuities

When they were placed on reservations, Native Americans sometimes received annuities of food, such as corn, flour, beef, sugar, and beans.

The **Indian Peace Commission** thought that if Native American tribes were disbanded and assimilated into the white culture, then mistreatment might be able to be solved.

Native American responses to federal government

Native Americans reacted to the loss of their land by **forming treaties** or **fighting the white men.**

Navajo

The **Navajo** fought to defend their land from the settlers moving into New Mexico and Arizona. Eventually, they agreed to go to a reservation and the government gave them a large amount of land, where they continued their customs.

Apache

Geronimo and his followers kept fighting for their land. They thought the **Apache** treaty would prevent them from keeping their traditions. Eventually they were imprisoned in Florida, where many of them died because of the foreign climate.

Cheyenne

The Colorado militia massacred many **Cheyenne** people and **Black Kettle**. When gold was found, whites became more eager to take their land.

Santee Sioux

The **Santee** signed a treaty, which stated that the Federal government would give them **annuity** payments. After the Civil War, the government was slow in paying the promised money. **Santee** people were starving, and they could not hunt on what used to be their land, so in 1862, they raided nearby farms and killed settlers. Eventually, the **Santee** were made to leave Minnesota.

Olgala Sioux

Gold was found on the **Oglala Sioux** land, and they fought to save their land and preserve their people and traditions.

At **Custer's Last Stand**, **Crazy Horse** and the **Sioux** fighters killed **Custe**r and his men.

The **Sioux** lost to the U.S. Army, and **Crazy Horse** was killed. **Sitting Bull** escaped to Canada, but eventually returned to the reservation.

The Ghost Dance

Some Native Americans thought the **Ghost Dance** would accomplish three goals: **1**) send the white people back to their own land, **2**) bring ancestors to life, and **3**) make the Buffalo come back.

Wounded Knee

The U.S. Army arrested **Sitting Bull** for spreading the **Ghost Dance**. They killed him when the people rose to stop them.
The massacre at **Wounded Knee** is important – it was the last time the Native Americans on the Great Plains resisted the government.

Government Policy Toward Native Americans

The army decided the treatment of the Native Americans during the Civil War. After the war, missionaries had increasing influence on their treatment.

Education of Native Americans

The missionaries ran schools that taught Native American children white culture and religion.

Land reform

The government used the **Dawes Act** to try to make Native Americans view land as something to own. They wanted people to be independent of their tribes, possessing individual pieces of land. The tribes would not have land, government recognition, or control over their people.

The last of the buffalo

Native Americans got clothing, food, housing, fuel, medicine, and tools from the Buffalo. The Native Americans went to the reservations largely because they didn't have enough food, especially Buffalo.

Mexican American Problems

The **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** promised to protect Mexican land and grant citizenship.

In the late 1800's, many Mexicans started to work on railroads, industries, and big ranches instead of small farming and ranching.

New Mexico

The White Cappers cut the fences put up by white farmers on the open land.

El Paso

Smelters where plants that made metals such as gold and lead usable.

The **barrios** were the areas where Mexicans lived after coming to **El Paso** to work on the railroad or in the **smelters**.

South Texas

In **San Antonio**, many Mexican Americans worked on the railroads or in factories, especially in meat packing, food processing, or clothes making.

Chapter 16 Timeline (adapted from the text)

1840
Gold and silver discovered in West

1859
Transcontinental Railroad begun

1862
Homestead Act

1865
Civil War ends

1866
First **Cattle drives**

1869
Transcontinental Railroad finished

1876
Battle of Little Big Horn

1877-1878
Desert Land Act
Timber and Stone Act

1890
Massacre at Wounded Knee

Battles between U.S. government and Native Americans

Dates	1862	1864	1876	1890
Event	Santee raided nearby farms, fought the U.S. army Santee forced to leave Minnesota	Massacre of **Cheyenne** by the Colorado Militia	**Crazy Horse** and **Sitting Bull** gather many warriors, fight in **Battle of Little Big Horn**, or **Custer's Last Stand**	**Massacre at Wounded Knee** – Last Native American resistance on the Great Plains
People				

The Farmer's **Advantages**	The Farmer's **Struggles**
1) Laws: **Donation Land Law, Homestead Act, Desert Act and Timber Stone Act:** All helped people purchase cheap land 2)Natural Resources: Dakota territory and Montana – good for wheat. Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico – good for cattle 3) Valuable mineral deposits throughout the West, oil. Good for growing automobile industry 4)New Equipment: steel plow, reaper, disc harrow, mechanical well drilling, barbed wire 5)**Transcontinental Railroad**: for important for bringing supplies, moving products to the East.	1) Weather was harsh in the Great Plains 2)160 acres not big enough for a large cattle ranch, but too big for a farm 3)Irrigation difficult in the Southwest 4) Farming profits mostly made by a few large companies 5)Farmers had to pay high interest rates and railroad rates. 6) unpredictable demand for crops 7) fights with neighboring Native Americans over land