Economic Development of the West in the Late Nineteenth Century

An Online Professional Development Seminar

Sponsored by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.
Economic Development of the West

GOALS

- To explore the forces behind the settlement and integration of the West after the Civil War.

- To consider in turn how the West influenced the nation and reflected the forces creating modern America.
GOALS

To provide background and context for material from three Library of Congress Collections

American Memory Timeline:
• The American West, 1865-1900
• Railroads in the Late 19th Century

Primary Resource Set
Westward Expansion:
Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads

(Links on seminar webpage)
FROM THE FORUM

➢ What role did railroads play in the development of the West?

➢ Which force motivated western expansion more, the nation’s desire for resources or the cultural and civilizing imperatives of Manifest Destiny?

➢ What forces inhibited western expansion in the 1850s?

➢ Was Congress able to pass the Homestead Act in 1862 only because the South was not represented?
FROM THE FORUM

- What role did the influx of immigrants after the Civil War play on western settlement?

- What impact did the advent of cattle production have on the West and on cities to the east?

- How accurate were Turner's ideas about the closing of the frontier and the West’s role as a "safety valve" for the eastern half of the U.S.?

- Did many Freemen/African Americans move West after the Civil War?
Economic Development of the West

Elliott West

Alumni Distinguished Professor of History
University of Arkansas

Research focuses on the American West and the American Indian

*The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (2009)

[Winner of five awards including the Francis Parkman Prize and PEN Center Award]

[Winner of the Western Heritage Award]

*Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier* (1989)
Expansion to the Pacific (1845-1848) played as significant a role as the Civil War in transforming America. Following the Civil War, the new West was integrated into the nation with remarkable speed.

Especially important were three factors—
• the encouragement of an expanded and more powerful federal government,
• the role of new powerful and wealthy corporations, and
• the advantages of a technological revolution in transportation and communication.

Many of the romanticized episodes of western history, such as the cattle kingdom and the mining frontier, in fact are best understood as Gilded Age businesses and examples of industrialization.

As it was being settled and integrated into the nation, the West was also becoming part of a distinctive American myth reflecting prominent values of the day.
“An Act to secure Homesteads to actual Settlers on the Public Domain”
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Homestead
No. 1

Land office at
Brownville, Neb., January 29, 1870.

I, David Freeman, of Gage County, Nebraska Territory, do hereby apply to the Secretary of the Interior under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved March 3, 1862, as amended, to locate a Homestead in the Public Domain, viz., the south half of section 26, T. 42 N., R. 63 W. 3d. Majestic TER. in Township 42 N., Range 63 W., East of the Missouri River, containing 160 acres, being part of my Pre-emption. I agree to enter it on the eighth day of September 1870.

David Freeman

Land office at
Brownville, Neb., January 29, 1870.

I, Richard J. Barrows, Register of the Land office at Brownville, do certify that the above application is for homestead lands in the County of Gage, Territory of Nebraska, and that the applicant and all other persons having an interest in the application have complied with all the laws and regulations of the United States as far as the same are known to me.

Richard J. Barrows

Register

Proof Required Under Homestead Acts May 20, 1862, and June 21, 1864.

We, Joseph Coggs, of Gage County, Nebraska Territory, do solemnly swear, that the above affidavit is true in all material particular, and that all the things therein set forth are true and correct in all material particular.

Joseph Coggs

Register

We certify that the above affidavit is true in all material particular, and that all the things therein set forth are true and correct in all material particular.

Henry W. Coggs

Register
“We moved into a dugout. It is a nasty, dark place…I am awful homesick.” [March 15, 1871]

“This morning we saw 6 buffaloes coming down to the river…. Louie shot 5 times. How they did run!” [April 9, 1871]

“Louie and I went to water his horses. I rode one and he the other. Then Gena rode one back. It was fun.” [July 1, 1871]
“Standing, as I do to-day, in the centre of the great Republic of North America, and by consequence in the centre of the world, it were no great stretch of fancy to imagine that we feel the eternal currents of the trade winds; that we hear the restless roar of the Ocean tides; or, that we can behold the grand procession of the centuries. We do behold, in reality, the progression of the noblest and the grandest work mankind has ever seen—the Union Pacific Railway—a work of untold benefit to our country and the world.”

—Speech of Honorary C. D. Hubbard, West Virginia
New trans-continental map of the Pacific R.R. and routes of overland travel to Colorado, Nebraska, the Black Hills, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, California and the Pacific Coast.

Map of the western United States showing relief by hachures, drainage, cities and towns, stage routes, railroads completed and projected. Main lines in heavy black.
From the Library of Congress, Westward Expansion: Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads
“Does not SUCH a meeting make amends?” May 29, 1869
“American Progress” by George A. Crofutt, c. 1873. After 1872 painting of the same title by John Gast.

From the Library of Congress, Westward Expansion: Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads
“Does not SUCH a meeting make amends?”
May 29, 1869

“American Progress”
Pattern of Land Grants

- One square mile held by government or sold
- Right of way: 100 yards wide
- One square mile granted to railroad
- Primary federal land grants to railroads
Land Distribution: Homesteads v. Railroads

Land “proved up” under Homestead Act, 1862-1880:
19,265,000 acres

Land granted to railroads, 1862-1880:
127,000,000 acres
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Millions of acres. Iowa and Nebraska. Land for sale on 10 years credit by the Burlington & Missouri River R. R. Co. at 6 per ct interest and low prices ... Buffalo. N. Y. Commercial advertiser printing house [n. d.].

View on the Big Blue, between Camden and Crete, representing Valley and Rolling Prairie Land in Nebraska.

From the Library of Congress, American Memory Timeline, Railroads in the Late 19th Century.
“This young man conceived the idea of opening up an outlet for Texan cattle....Realizing the great disparity of Texas values and Northern prices of cattle, he set himself to thinking and studying to hit upon some plan whereby these great extremes would be equalized.”

—Joseph G. McCoy
Cattle Trails
“The range life didn’t stack up to home life, with a good bed to bunk in and a mother to fuss over fixing the chuck… but the work got into my blood and I couldn’t leave it. I stayed with the cattle and hoss business so long as I was able to work.”

—George Martin
U.S. Gold and Silver Production

U.S. Gold Production, 1840-1910

U.S. Silver Production, 1860-1910
Source: Historical Statistics of the United States
All the Gold in the World, 1780-1900
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Railroad bridge over the White River in Vermont, 1848.
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Square-set timbering
Hydraulic Mining
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Water Cannon
“Lofty hills, broad plains, and long cliffs are washed away, and their ruin completed by nothing else than a shaft of water a few inches in diameter….There is no more spirit in the work here than there is in the work of a granite quarry.”

— Albert F. Webster, “A Day at Dutch Flat”
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“I fancy [the California miners] a living polyglot of the languages, a perambulating picture-gallery illustrative of national variety in form and feature.”

—Dame Shirley
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From the Library of Congress, Westward Expansion: Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads
### Economic Development of the West

#### States with the Highest Percentage of Foreign-born in 1870

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>60 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>53 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>44 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>39 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>39 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>37 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>35 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota</td>
<td>34 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>26 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“It is useless any longer to attempt the occupation of these plains in common with these tribes….The hungry Indian, …deprived of his accustomed subsistence, will steal rather than starve, and will kill in order to steal. With such opposing interests, the races cannot live together, and it is the Indian who must yield…. [The government should adopt a] double policy, of peace within their reservations and war without.”

—Report of the Secretary of War, 1868
American Indian and Oklahoma Territories.

Indian Territory, 1889.  Indian and Oklahoma territories, 1892.

Custer’s Last Fight

1889 Lithograph based on painting by F. Otto Becker, based on 1884 painting by Cassilly Adams
Kicking Bear’s Depiction of the Battle of the Little Big Horn
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Tribes take up fight to retain sovereignty

By Timothy Egan
The New York Times

SKULL VALLEY, Utah — Not long after the Goshute Indians stopped resisting the Mormons who had poured into the sun-cracked bowl of the Great Basin, the tribe seemed to disappear — gone like most natives into sepia tones of the past. But then, nearly a century and a half after the first state lines were stam ped on an area once known as the Great American Desert, the Goshutes reappeared.

Suddenly last year, the most powerful politicians in the West became deeply concerned about the actions of a tiny tribe that had been left in the alkaline dust of central Utah.

With barely 100 members, the Skull Valley Band of Goshutes declared what few people outside the reservation had taken seriously: that they were a sovereign nation.

As such, the Goshutes — looking for a multimillion-dollar infusion — have offered to lease part of their reservation as the temporary storage ground for high-level civilian nuclear waste. Utah’s governor and congressional representatives are outraged, vowing to block the border of Indian country to any shipments.

The Goshute proposal is a very un-Indian-like thing to do, critics...
Oglala war party. Edward Curtis, c. 1907.

From the Library of Congress, Westward Expansion: Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads
The Idaho Indian War.

Chas. W. Phillips, photographer. Walla Walla, c. 1877.

From the Library of Congress, Westward Expansion: Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads
“The Indian school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, has done wonders in showing what can be effected for the education of our children. The test there made is a reliable one, inasmuch as that school is made up of pupils from more than sixty different tribes, from all parts of the United States….As to the future of our race, it seems to me almost certain that in time it will lose its identity by amalgamation with the dominant race. No matter how distasteful it may seem to us, we are compelled to consider it as a probable result.”

—Simon Pokagon, “The Future of the Red Man”
Apache Children at Carlisle, Before and After
Images of Ishi
Video of and about Ishi

http://www.travelchannel.com/video/ishi-man-from-the-wild

http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/article/lecturer-creates-history-of-ishi-video-74832

http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/ishi_the_last_yahi#
“Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.”

—Frederick Jackson Turner

“The Significance of the Frontier in American History”
“‘What world am I in?’ I said aloud. ‘Does this same planet hold Fifth Avenue?’ And I went to sleep, pondering over my native land.”

—Owen Wister, The Virginian
Frederic Remington
“The Coming and Going of the Pony Express” (1900)
Final slide.

Thank You

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