Chapter 14: The Western Crossroads

Section 1: War in the West

Indian Country

- 1851: Treaty of Fort Laramie: gave indians all lands on Great Plains
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Desire to keep Indians on reservations & make them farmers
- Most tribes followed buffalo herds
- Gov't failed to honor most treaties
- Angered many Indians

Years of Struggle

- 20,000 Army soldiers worked to confine Indians on reservations

Sand Creek: Colorado Territory; 1864
- Cheyenne chief Black Kettle
- Wanted peace; camped along Sand Creek
- 700 US troops showed up & fired on group--200 died (mostly women & children
- "right and honorable to use any means to kill Indians."
- Angered Americans and Indians
- Increased Indian attacks on white Americans

Little Bighorn: 1876; Montana

- Chief Sitting Bull; Sioux
- Spiritual & military leader
- Mocked other Indians that stayed on reservations
- General George Custer & 600 soldiers attacked at Little Bighorn River
- Sitting Bull's troops killed every last American
- Last Sioux victory
- Sped up American efforts to put Indians on reservations

The Ghost Dance:

- Wovoka: Paiute spiritual leader
- Ghost Dance: Religious movement featuring dance ritual that promised to bring Indians back to power
- Gave people hope--special shirts could stop bullets
- Worried many in US Army--desire to stop the dance before rebellion
- Led to final arrest of Sitting Bull in 1890--fight breaks out--14 Indians & Sitting Bull killed

Wounded Knee:
- Many Indians fled west to avoid Americans
- Wounded Knee Creek in SD
- Dec. 1890: US soldiers tried to disarm Sioux
- Used Hotchkiss guns
- 150 Indians killed
- Custer is avenged
- Shocked many but fighting was over

The End of Resistance

- **Chief Joseph**: head of Nez Perce in Idaho
- Gave up lands willingly--wanted to move to Canada
- Tribe was arrested & put in reservations around country (SCATTERED)
- Apache leader **Geronimo** fled his reservation
- Raided settlements in Arizona
- 1886: arrested and send to prison camp in Florida

Assimilating American Indians

- **Dawes General Allotment Act**: gave each Indian family 160 acres to farm
- Moved Indians away from homelands to new lands
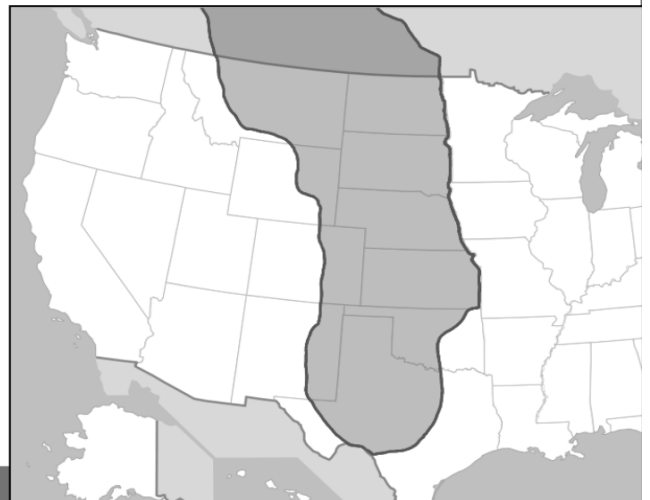- Hope was to "assimilate" Indians--make them "white"

Section 2: Western Farmers

Economic Development of the West

Land Acts
- **Homestead Act**: allowed any citizen to take 160 acres free to farm--own it in 5 years
- 400,000 families
- **Pacific Railway Act:** gave land to railroad companies to connect east & west coast
- **Morrill Act:** gave 17 million acres to states to create colleges

Moving West

- 3 main groups: Whites from east, former slaves, & immigrants
- **Exodusters:** former slaves that moved west
- wanted to earn wealth or racial tolerance
- Immigrants from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Russia, Ireland, Germany, China

Western Environments & Farming

- Little water in parts of Southwest
- Hispanics/Indians used irrigation systems--white farmers struggled
- Trees in Great Plains were rare--little wood for building
- Sod houses & buffalo manure for fuel
- Farmers had to dig deep wells for water
- **US Department of Agriculture:** created to teach farmers "dry" farming
  - Stronger plow blades
  - "Self binding" harvesters/combines
  - New steam-engine
  - Equipment was too expensive for many

Farm Life on the Plains

- Sod houses--warm & fireproof
- Dirty, wet, leaked & sometimes collapsed in heavy rain
- winter in Great Plains was hard--extreme cold & blizzards
- summer droughts--killed trees & cracked ground
- Grasshopper swarms
- Prairie fires
- Farms run by whole family
- Birth rate increased

14-3 & 14-4 (Cattle & Mining Boom)

Ranching in the West
- Spanish ranchers in 1500s
- **Texas Longhorn:** special cattle bred w/ English & Spanish cattle
    - Could travel long distances
    - Survived on grass
    - Immune to more diseases
    - Replaced dying buffalo
- Sheep ranching was popular

Cattle Industry

- Cowboys
    - Former Confederates
    - Black, Mexican, and Mexican-Ameri
    - **Long Drive:** movement of thousan
    - Danger of stampedes

Cattle Towns
- **Railhead:** town located on railroad
- Cattle towns
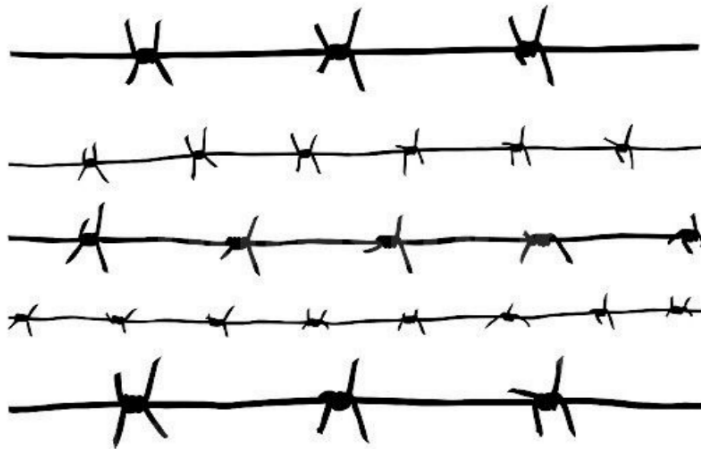- General store, hotel, railroad

Ranching
- **Open Range**: gov't allowed open use of public lands for free grazing
- Large companies made large ranches
- Most ranchers owned small ranches & needed access to open range
- Fights over water rights
- Ranching was family affair
- Lonelinessdue to distances btw ranches

The End of the Cattle Boom

- 1874: **Barbed wire** invented by Joseph Glidden
- Used to control water rights
- Ended use of open range
- Fights between ranchers--bloodshed
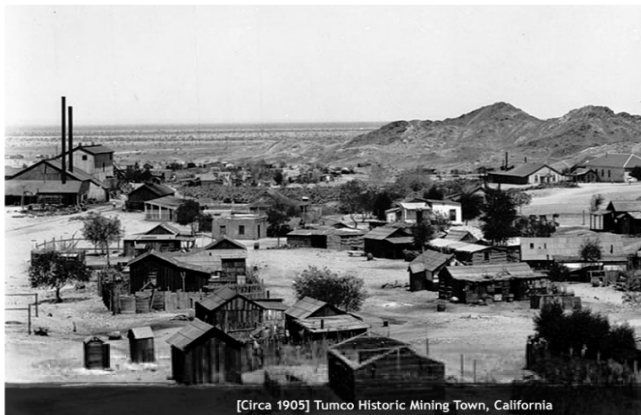- Droughts & blizzards through 1880s made ranching more difficult

The Mining Boom

- Race across continent to get rich
- 1849: 1st Gold Rush in California
- 1850s: gold found in Dakotas, Nevada, Arizona, & Colorado
- Massive excitement & exaggerations
- **Comstock Lode**: one of world's largest silver mines found in Nevada
- 1867: "Seward's Folly"--US bought Alaska from Russia
    - **Klondike Gold Rush:** 1897-1902 rush to Alaska

Life in Mining Communities

- Thousands of men & few women
- Wide variety of people
- Competition led to discrimination of Hispanics & Chinese
    - Most Chinese left Rocky Mountains due to abuse
- Very few "comforts" in homes
- Few police officers: violence, gambling
- Crimes dealt w/ "mob justice"
- Cowboy gangs
- Law & Order came when businesses/families moved into mining towns

[Circa 1905] Tumco Historic Mining Town, California

Mining as Big Business

○ Mining was expensive--small miners didn't do well
○ **Hydraulic Mining:** high pressure water--devastated environment & caused flooding
○ **Hard-Rock Mining:** deep shafts dug into ground
  ○ Dangerous
  ○ Dark
  ○ Poor air
  ○ Hot
  ○ Cave-ins & explosions