

# Chapter Eighteen

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**Conquest and  
Survival:  
1860–1900**

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# Part One:

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## Introduction

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# Conquest and Survival

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- ★ How does this painting illustrate the many facets of conquest and survival in the West?

# Chapter Focus Questions

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- ★ What was the impact of western expansion on Indian societies?
- ★ How did new technologies and new industries help the development of the West as an “internal empire”?
- ★ How were new communities created and old communities displaced?
- ★ What was the myth and legend of the West?



## Part Two:

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# American Communities

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# The Oklahoma Land Rush

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- ❖ Map: Oklahoma Territory
- ❖ Thousands gathered for the Oklahoma land rush.
- ❖ Land promised to Indians who had been forcibly relocated in the 1830s was first opened to white settlement in 1889.
- ❖ In a little over two months settlers filed 6,000 homestead claims.
- ❖ The land rush symbolized the movement toward white settlement and the reconstruction of the West.
- ❖ This transformation came at the expense of Indian peoples.

## Part Three:

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# Indian Peoples under Siege

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# On the Eve of Conquest

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- ❖ Indians had occupied the plains for more than 20,000 years, developing diverse ways of adapting themselves to the environment.
- ❖ The Europeans brought disease and the need for Indians to adapt to European ways.
- ❖ Tribes in the West were able to survive due to geographic isolation and adaptability.
  - ◆ The Plains Indians learned to ride horses and shoot guns.
  - ◆ Some tribes learned English and converted to Christianity.
- ❖ Legally, tribes were supposed to be regarded as autonomous nations residing within American boundaries.
  - ◆ Treaties were negotiated but force was often used instead.

# Reservations and the Slaughter of the Buffalo

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- ✿ Map: Major Indian Battles and Indian Reservations, p. 533
- ✿ The federal government had pressured Indian tribes to migrate West into a permanent Indian Territory.
  - ◆ Whites' desires for western land led the federal government to pressure western Indians to move to reservations.
- ✿ Farmers found that the reservation lands were inadequate for the subsistence farming.
- ✿ Nomadic tribes found their freedom curtailed and their buffalo destroyed both by the railroad and white hunting.

# The Indian Wars

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- ❖ A treaty granted the Black Hills to the Sioux.
  - ◆ The discovery of gold brought prospectors to the hills.
  - ◆ The Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho formed an alliance to protect the Black Hills, wiping out Custer's regiment before being defeated by the army.
- ❖ One of the bloodiest conflicts was the Red River War of 1874–1875.
- ❖ In the Southwest, Apaches under Geronimo waged a 10-year guerilla war.
- ❖ Clashes erupted when whites violated treaties.
- ❖ Even tribes like the Nez Perce, who tried to cooperate with whites, were betrayed.



## Part Four:

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# The Internal Empire

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# Empire-Building in Perspective

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- ❖ Map: Railroad Routes, Cattle Trails, Gold and Silver Rushes, 1860–1900, p. 539
- ❖ Settlers found themselves subjects of an “internal empire” controlled from the East.

# Mining Towns

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- ❖ Mining fostered western expansion.
- ❖ Gold discoveries brought thousands of fortune seekers.
- ❖ Most fortunes went to corporations that bought out the smaller claims.
- ❖ Although some mine communities eventually became permanent settlements, most were short-lived boomtowns.

# Western Labor

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- ★ The western labor movement emerged in this rough and often violent climate.
- ★ Unions refused membership to Chinese, Mexican, and Indian workers.
- ★ Unions were unable to stop owners from closing down mines when the ore ran out, leaving ghost towns and environmental blight.

# Mormon Settlements

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- ❖ Map: Mormon Cultural Diffusion, ca. 1883, p. 540
- ❖ Mormons migrated to the Great Basin in Utah beginning in 1846.
- ❖ They shared land and water as they built agricultural communities.
- ❖ The federal government assumed control of the Utah territory.
- ❖ Mormon society soon resembled the individualist East the original settlers had sought to escape.

# Mexican Borderland Communities

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- ❖ The Southwest saw a series of clashes between Anglos and Mexicanos over control of the land.
- ❖ Some Mexicano elites continued to maintain wealth and power.
- ❖ The majority of Mexicans found themselves trapped in poverty and turned to migratory work or moved to urban areas to work for wages.
- ❖ Mexicanos maintained key elements of their traditional culture.

## Part Five:

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# The Open Range

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# The Long Drives

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- ✿ The destruction of buffalo opened the path for the western cattle industry.
- ✿ Cowboys rounded up herds for \$30 a month (at best) and lived under harsh circumstances, stimulating efforts to unionize.
  - ◆ Workday lasted from sunup to sundown with night shifts to watch the cattle.
  - ◆ There was no protection from the elements.
  - ◆ Poor diet often led to disease.
  - ◆ The drive could be as far as 1,500 miles.
- ✿ One-fifth to one-third of cowboys were Indian, Mexican, or African American.

# The Sporting Life

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- ✿ Few women worked on the open range.
- ✿ Some 50,000 women worked as prostitutes in the West during the second half of the nineteenth century.
  - ◆ There were few jobs for women and many resorted to prostitution simply to pay the bills.
- ✿ Their life was quite harsh and seldom paid well.

# Community and Conflict

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- ❖ Personal violence was commonplace in the cattle towns and mining camps.
- ❖ Horse theft rose rapidly during the peak years of the cattle drives.
- ❖ During the 1870s, range wars turned violent when farmers, sheep ranchers, and cattle ranchers battled over the same land.
- ❖ By the mid-1880s the cattle business went bust.
  - ◆ Overstocking led to herds depleting sparse grasslands.
  - ◆ Bad weather from 1885 to 1887 killed 90 percent of western cattle, and prices plummeted.

## Part Six

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# Farming Communities on the Plains

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# The Homestead Act

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- ❖ 160 acres were given to any settler who lived on the land for at least 5 years and improved it.
  - ◆ Nearly half of all homesteaders failed to improve the land and lost their claims.
  - ◆ Homesteaders had their greatest success in the central and upper Midwest where the soil was rich and the weather was relatively moderate.
- ❖ This act sparked the largest migration in U.S. history but only 10 percent of all farmers got their start under its terms (most farmers bought their land outright).
  - ◆ Railroads and speculators were able to cash in by selling land to farmers.
    - Farmers were willing to pay hefty prices.

# Populating the Plains

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- ✿ Railroads held great power in developing and settling the West.
  - ◆ Railroads delivered crops and cattle to eastern markets and brought back goods.
- ✿ Railroads put communities “on the map.”
  - ◆ Railroads in the West preceded settlement.
  - ◆ Professional promoters were sent to Europe and throughout the United States to recruit settlers.
  - ◆ Towns along the railroad lines flourished.
- ✿ Immigrants formed tight-knit communities.
  - ◆ Many groups retained their native languages and customs.

# Work, Dawn to Dusk

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- ❖ Farm families survived and prospered through hard work.
  - ◆ Men's work tended to be seasonal.
  - ◆ Women's activities were usually more routine.
  - ◆ Children worked running errands and completing chores by about age nine.
- ❖ Community was an important part of life.
  - ◆ People depended on neighbors for help in times of need and for a break from the hard work and harsh climate.
- ❖ The barter system developed due to lack of cash.



## Part Seven:

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# The World's Breadbasket

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# New Production Technologies

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- ✿ Preparing western lands for cultivation was a difficult process because of the tough sod.
- ✿ New technologies greatly increased the amount of land that could be farmed.
- ✿ Through federal aid, land-grant colleges, and other sources of scientific research, farmers developed new techniques for cultivation.

# Producing for the Market

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- ❖ Farmers always had to cope with natural forces that were not always cooperative.
- ❖ Most farmers produced primarily for the cash market and adapted their crops.
- ❖ Pioneers to new areas frequently achieved considerable success; latecomers often found that the choice land was gone.
- ❖ Startup costs for a farm could keep a family in debt for decades.
  - ◆ The large capitalized farmer had the advantage over the small one.

# California Agribusiness

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- ❖ California led the way toward large-scale commercial farming that defined agribusiness.
- ❖ By the turn of the century California had become the showcase for heavily capitalized farm factories employing large numbers of tenant and migrant workers.
- ❖ Fruit and vegetable growers manipulated consumer tastes to create new markets for their products.

# The Toll on the Land

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- ★ Map: National Parks, p. 552
- ★ Farmers destroyed existed plant and animal species and introduced new ones.
- ★ Replacing buffalo with cattle and sheep, introduced animals that ate grasses down to the roots and created the possibilities of huge dust storms.
- ★ Commercial agriculture took a heavy toll on existing water supplies.
- ★ The federal government created the Forest Service to safeguard watersheds.

## Part Eight:

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# The Western Landscape

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# Nature's Majesty

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- ❖ Writers described in great detail the wonder of nature's majesty in the West.
- ❖ The federal government created national parks in 1871, and sent a team of scientists and photographers to record the region's beauty.
- ❖ Landscape painters from the Rocky Mountain School piqued the public's interest in the West.

# The Legendary Wild West

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- ★ More popular presentations emphasized the West as a source of “vigorous manhood.”
- ★ Thousands of “dime novels” appeared that portrayed the region in romantic, heroic terms.
- ★ Wild West show promoters like “Buffalo Bill” Cody brought the legendary West to millions of people around the world.

# The “American Primitive”

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- ❖ The West continued to captivate American imagination.
- ❖ The public sought depictions of bold cowboys and exotic savages.
- ❖ Charles Schreyvogel, Charles Russell, and Frederic Remington helped to shape Americans’ perception of the region.
- ❖ Scholars like Lewis Henry Morgan and Alice Cunningham Fletcher studied Indians and began to develop a scientific understanding of their lives.
- ❖ The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts incorporated a large dose of tribal lore into their character-building programs.

## Part Nine:

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# **Transformation of Indian Societies**

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# Reform Policy and Politics

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- ❖ The federal government's tradition of treating Indian tribes as separate nations ended in 1871.
- ❖ Reformers like Helen Hunt Jackson advocated policies designed to promote Indian assimilation and eradicate distinct tribal customs.
- ❖ The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 was a disaster for most Indians and undermined tribal sovereignty.
  - ◆ Individuals were granted land if they chose to sever from their tribes.
  - ◆ Indian religions and sacred ceremonies were banned along with the telling of Indian myths.
  - ◆ “Indian schools” forbade Indian clothing styles, language, and even hair fashions.

# The Ghost Dance

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- ✿ A Paiute prophet, Wovoka, had a vision that a divine judgment was coming and led the Sioux to practice the Ghost Dance.
  - ◆ White authorities grew fearful and demanded an end to the practice.
- ✿ An incident led whites to gun down 200 people at Wounded Knee.

# Endurance and Rejuvenation

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- ❖ Those tribes that survived best were those living on land unwanted by whites.
- ❖ A majority of tribes dwindled to the brink of extinction; some even disappeared.
- ❖ The Navajo, Hopi, and northwestern tribes managed to adapt to the new situation or were sufficiently isolated to survive.
- ❖ The traditional way of life for most was gone.
- ❖ It was several generations before a resurgence of Indian sovereignty occurred.



## Part Ten:

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# Conclusion

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# Conquest and Survival

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Media: Chronology, p. 560