

Transforming the West 1865-1890

Karen H. Reeves

Transcontinental Railroad

- Construction
 - ◆ 1st completed 1869
 - ◆ 5 completed during 19th C
 - ◆ Used Irish (east) and Chinese (west) workers
- Consequences for the Plains
 - ◆ Helped wipe out buffalo + Plains Indians
 - ◆ Brought troops, miners, ranchers, farmers
 - ◆ Cattle replaced buffalo



Federal Indian Policy

- Before 1830's whites/Indians separate
- Acquisition of western lands open West
- Destroyed Indian culture:
 - Ruined forests, pastures
 - Eliminated bison
 - Disease: Cholera (40% death rate)

Government paid stipends then placed in reservation guarded by military:

- ❖ Plains could be farmed
- ❖ RR needed land for tracks

Fig. XXX.



Carl Bodmer pinc. ad nat.

De Gars & Doherty sc.

Frontier Wars

Coblenz bei J. Hölscher.

London, published by Ackermann & C° 90, Strand.

Paris, Arthus Bertrand, éditeur.,

Sand Creek Massacre

1864 Colorado

- *Gold found on land given to Cheyenne, Arapaho (led by Black Kettle)**
- *John Chivington led militia raid on sleeping Cheyenne camp (flying U.S. flag)**
- *“Kill & scalp all, big and little” → “nits make lice”**
- *“They were scalped, their brains knocked out; they used knives, ripped open women, clubbed little children, knocked them in the head with their guns, beat their brains out, mutilated their bodies in every sense.”**

Second Treaty of Fort Laramie 1868

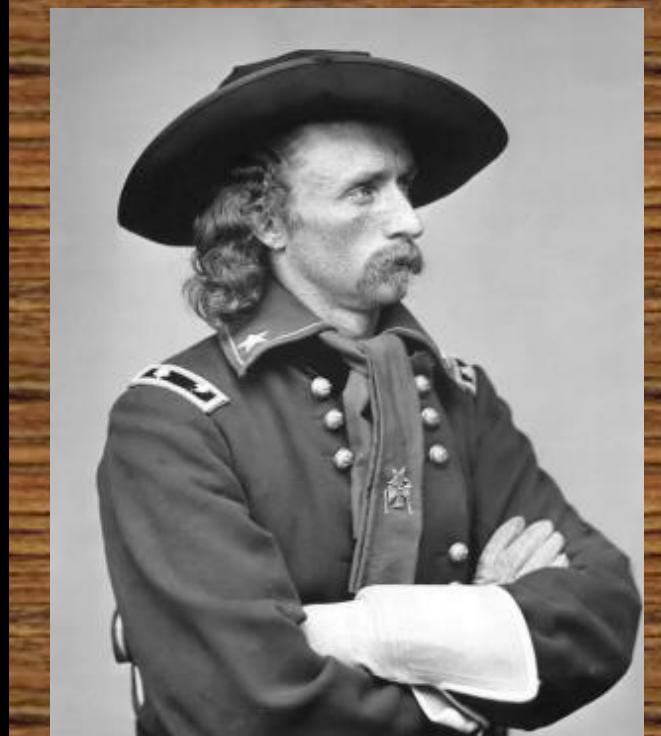
1st Treaty = bought land
**2nd Treaty = U.S. abandoned
trails, forts on Sioux territory**

Problems in the West

- *Sherman, Sheridan saw problems fighting Sioux**
- *1872 Northern Pacific RR planned line through Sioux territory (Sherman saw as way of “cleaning up west”)**
- *Telegraph, Gatling gun**
- *1872-4 over 4 million bison killed**

Battle of Little Bighorn (1876)

- *George Armstrong Custer sent to survey Black Hills for military post, to confirm gold
- *Miners moved to Sioux land = Sioux refused to move
- *Ogala Sioux (led by Crazy Horse) joined with Sioux (led by Sitting Bull) + Cheyenne, Arapaho





WORLD FAMOUS - THE ONLY SURVIVING
PHOTOGRAPH OF THE GUSTAV MANDERSON
REGIMENTAL HORSE. HISTORY OF THE 10TH
REGIMENTAL ORDERS OF THE 10TH
CAVALRY AS TO THE DATE OF
MANSON AS LONG AS HE
LIVED PHOTOGRAPHED AND
RIGHTED BY A.O.
MUNN

End of Freedom

- *Sitting Bull surrendered in Canada**
- *Nez Perce (ran from U.S. troops over 1500 mi. Canadian border): exhausted, move to Oklahoma = 1/3 died of illness**
- *Chief Joseph: “I will fight no more forever....”**



Sitting Bull

I am a red man. If the Great Spirit had desired me to be a white man he would have made me so in the first place. He put in your heart certain wishes and plans, in my heart he put other and different desires. Each man is good in his sight. It is not necessary for Eagles to be Crows. We are poor... but we are free. No white man controls our footsteps. If we must die...we die defending our rights.

- Sitting Bull Hunkpapa Sioux (Tatanka Iyotake)



Crazy Horse





Chief Joseph

*Let me be a free man,
free to travel, free to
stop, free to work, free to
trade where I choose,
free to choose my own
teachers, free to follow
the religion of my
fathers, free to talk,
think and act for myself
-- and I will obey every
law or submit to the
penalty.*

*Hin-mah-too-yah-lat-
kekht has spoken
for his people.
- Chief Joseph*



Geronimo

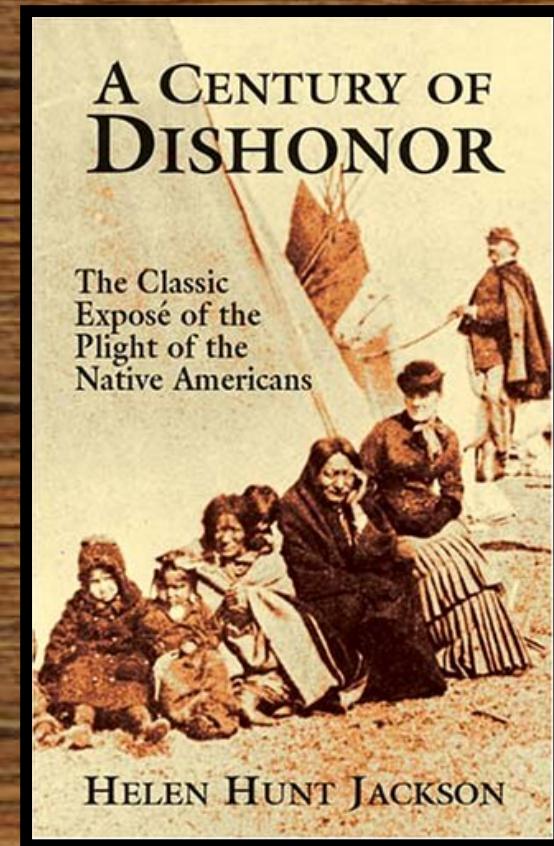


- *Attempts to “Americanize” destroyed culture
- *Bureau of Indian Affairs (est. law vs. Indian religious practices) 1884-1933
 - *Banned Sun Dance
 - *1890 Wounded Knee, S.D., 365 troops (U.S. 7th Cavalry) fired into group of Lakota Sioux during Ghost Dance = 200 killed (men, women, children)



Century of Dishonor (1881)

- ◆ Written by Helen Hunt Jackson
- ◆ Raised public awareness of U.S. government's broken promises and poor treatment of Native Americans



Dawes Act 1887

***Goal:** 1. Reform U.S. policy
2. Assimilate NA by dissolving
tribal land ownership/legal
status

***Over by 1900.....**

*Ignored tribal culture
*1900, lost 50% of 156 million acres
held 20 years previously
*Indian Reorganization Act (1934)
restored tribal status

Fading Frontier

- *1890 U.S. census reported that there was no longer a “frontier line”
- *Frederick Jackson Turner wrote *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*
- *cheap land made U.S. more democratic
- *Shaped American spirit of equality
- *Eastern workers found new economic opportunities
- *Nationalism & individualism
- *No hereditary landed aristocracy

Exploitation of the Land

Mining

- ◆ 1st Rockies gold rush in Co. (1859)
- ◆ Comstock Lode in Nev. (1859)
- ◆ Mining camps = male-dominated, group violence
- ◆ Mining
 - ◆ Pans, picks
 - ◆ Hydraulic
 - ◆ Lode (hard rock)
- ◆ Required capital investment, RR, smelting plants

Problems

- ① Destroyed environment**
- ② Limited opportunities for miners
(dangerous working conditions,
ex: power hoist = “man-killer”)**
- ③ Miners formed unions but state
governments pressured by
mining companies**
- ④ “Legalized violence” blacklisting,
government injunctions**

Ranching

Cattle Drives

- ◆ Texas “Longhorn” intro. From Mexico in late 18th C.
- ◆ 1867 Chisholm Trail opened through Indian Terr. To Abilene = cattle driven north on “long drives” (2-3 months)

Cowtowns

- ◆ Not as violent as portrayed: handgun control, police, “sin” taxes on gambling, prostitution
- ◆ Eventually became farming communities
- ◆ By 1890 most urbanized part of country (2/3 population lived in towns)

Ranching

Open Range Herding

- ◆ Ranchers used public lands to graze
- ◆ 1880's attract investment capital = large corporations = began to enclose to cut costs
- ◆ Speculation collapsed ranching
 - ◆ Overgrazed pastures
 - ◆ Drought
 - ◆ Blizzards of 1886-7 (millions froze)

Changes

- ◆ Reduced range sizes
- ◆ Supplemented food with hay/sorghum
- ◆ Drilled wells
- ◆ Independent cowboy myth by 1886

Homesteads

Homestead Act of 1862 (example Oklahoma Land Rush = 2 mill)

- ◆ 160 acres = live & works land 5 years
- ◆ Results
 - ◆ Land next to Transportation taken 1st
 - ◆ Speculators tied up good land
 - ◆ Midwesterners had to buy own land
 - ◆ East didn't invest in large –scale farms
 - ◆ RR charged to ship goods to East
 - ◆ Speculators advertise in Europe
 - ◆ Scandinavians = Minnesota
 - ◆ Jews = Kansas, Nebraska
 - ◆ Mormons = Utah

Homesteaders

Exodusters

- ◆ Blacks from South --- Kansas, Nebraska Range
- ◆ Sod houses, buffalo chips, single women owned land

Farming

- ◆ New farming techniques
- ◆ Barbed wire
- ◆ Water problems (dry farming, windmills, specialized crops)
- ◆ Grain elevators, mechanical loaders
- ◆ Steel plows, harrows, grain drills
- ◆ 1890's 18X more wheat
- ◆ Farms foreclosed: increased European production, RR shipping costs, Eastern bankers

