

# Frontier Encounters

1865–1896

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## CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading and studying this chapter, students should be able to:

1. Explain the expansion to and settling of the trans-Mississippi West. Describe the backgrounds and motives of male and female settlers of various ethnic and racial backgrounds, the economics of the frontier, ideologies about expansion, and the incentives that the federal government provided to encourage settlement.

2. Compare and contrast the image and reality of the American West. Explain what people thought they would find when they went west and what they actually found, and consider the purpose and uses of the romanticized image of the frontier: who promoted it, who embraced it, and how it influenced the expectations and behavior of settlers.

3. Identify the methods the United States utilized to address the existence of Native Americans in the West. Explain the strategies of removal, treaty making, violence, and assimilation; consider the motives for each strategy and its benefits and drawbacks for settlers, Native Americans, and the United States.

4. Assess the experiences of women who migrated to the West. Explain both how gender informed their experience and how it offered them opportunities to deviate from traditional

expectations, participate in politics, and shape the social structure and culture of the West.

5. Describe the significance of the West as a component of American identity. Analyze how industries like mining, farming, and ranching transformed the American economy, and explain how these industries influenced and were influenced by industrialization.

## ANNOTATED CHAPTER OUTLINE

The following annotated chapter outline will help you review the major topics covered in this chapter.

### I. Opening the West

#### A. The Great Plains

1. As Americans were expanding westward in the post–Civil War era, their first frontier was located in the Great Plains region, lying on both sides of the Rocky Mountains and encompassing North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.
2. The region was semiarid and grassy, with animals like bison, antelope, prairie dogs, and jackrabbits, and the land was cultivated and hunted by Indian tribes such as the Apache, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa.

3. In 1878 geologist John Wesley Powell argued that the land beyond the plains was unsuitable for small-scale farming and contended that large farms would be better suited to the landscape. Other Americans held fast to the conventional belief that the plains could sustain small-scale farming with the right investment and ambition.
- B. Federal Policy and Foreign Investment
1. Though the myth of the West emphasizes the image of an individual farmer blazing a trail, the government and foreign investors offered incentives for settlers and companies to migrate and contribute to the development of the West.
  2. The British were particularly essential to investing in the developing American West and provided essential funds for expanding railroad systems, which fostered the movement of people and industries.
  3. In 1862 Congress committed itself to supporting the completion of the transcontinental railroad, providing railroad companies with vast areas of land to lay tracks or sell to raise funds for construction.
  4. Chinese and Irish workers flooded into railroad-building areas, and in 1869 construction crews working from opposite ends of the railway line met at Promontory Point, Utah. The completion of the transcontinental railroad was an important symbol of American reunification after the Civil War and an essential component in the democratization of the West.
  5. While the railroad promoted expansion, it also opened the door for corruption, particularly among Union Pacific promoters, who created a phony company called the *Crédit Mobilier* that they used to steal government money and to bribe officials. Congress exposed these wrongdoers in 1872.

## II. Conquest of the Frontier

### A. Indian Civilizations

1. When Americans moved westward, they entered territory that was already populated by a range of Native American groups and Mexicans.
2. The Native American groups that lived west of the Mississippi included tribes that had been in the region for centuries prior to European conquest, as well as tribes that had been removed from the eastern United States earlier in the nineteenth century.
3. Each native group adapted to the land in a way that reflected its own cultural values, the climate, and the natural landscape; for example, the Pueblos irrigated the land, while the Pawnees burned the land to create regenerative agriculture.
4. Each tribe had unique interactions with Europeans and Americans as they expanded westward. Plains Indians participated in trade with Americans, and many native groups engaged in violent conflicts with one another and with Americans.
5. Most Native American groups practiced a communal style of living and rejected private ownership of land, believing that all of nature was connected and interdependent.
6. Indian society depended on bison, or buffalo, which provided meat, material to construct shelter and clothes, bones for tools and weapons, and dung for fuel. The bison's central role in Indian culture also laid the foundation for Native American spiritual traditions.
7. Gender divisions in Indian society were a defining feature of daily life; men rode horses to hunt bison, and women processed the bison when the men returned. Women were empowered by their role in feeding, clothing, and sheltering their tribespeople.

## B. Changing Federal Policy toward Indians

1. In the mid-nineteenth century, the federal government treated Indian groups as autonomous nations, which facilitated treaty making.
2. The 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, which created designated areas for tribes on the northern plains, was intended to keep white encroachment at bay. In 1853 the treaty was expanded to cover tribes on the southern plains.
3. White settlers ignored the treaty and pushed onto Indian land, and on November 29, 1864, at Sand Creek, Colorado, a peaceful group of 700 Cheyennes and Arapahos who believed they were under U.S. protection were attacked by Colonel John M. Chivington and his troops.
4. In spite of the Indians raising a white flag of surrender, Chivington's troops scalped and killed about 270 Indian women and children, prompting a congressional investigation.
5. The U.S. government faced a backlash for the Sand Creek massacre, as the Lakota Sioux led a series of Indian wars throughout the central plains in the late 1860s.
6. The two sides signed a second Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868, which allowed northern tribes to control parts of Wyoming, Montana, and the Dakotas. Another treaty placed the southern tribes in a new reservation in western Oklahoma.
7. The Nez Percé settled in a section of the Oklahoma reservation after being pushed into a treaty in which they relinquished most of their territory in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho to the United States.
8. Nez Percé chief Joseph led his people in a grueling march into Montana and Wyoming with the intention of going to Canada, but the group was intercepted by federal troops and removed to Oklahoma.
9. In response to Chief Joseph's efforts at mobilizing the political system to live up to its promises and treaties, Congress helped the Nez Percé return to a reservation in Washington.
10. In spite of the negotiations that benefited the Nez Percé, violence and conflict continued, and General William Tecumseh Sherman ordered his troops to push Indians off their land by destructive force.
11. In November 1868, Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer massacred more than one hundred Cheyennes; almost a decade later, Lakota Sioux took revenge by killing Custer and his troops at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, an assault that triggered violent retribution from the U.S. army.
12. Among the U.S. troops were African Americans who participated in Indian wars as an opportunity to find new and lucrative opportunities to work in the West; these so-called "buffalo soldiers" included Sergeant George Jordan of the Ninth Cavalry, who in 1880 earned a Congressional Medal of Honor for fighting off Apache raiders in New Mexico.

## C. Indian Defeat

1. In spite of their skill at warfare, Indian tribes stood little chance against the U.S. army's superior transportation and communication technologies and its seemingly unlimited weaponry. The long history of tensions among competing Indian tribes weakened their collective position against the United States.
2. Alongside the violence and political repression, Native Americans also suffered the consequences of European diseases, the decimation of native culture, and the rapidly declining bison population, which diminished their ability to wage war.

3. Gold drove American settlers into territory that treaties had previously set aside for native use, which fostered further conflict. Congress encouraged white homesteaders to move into territory Indians had occupied in western Oklahoma in 1889.

#### D. Reforming Indian Policy

1. Though the U.S. army, settlers, and industry investors were interested mainly in removing Native Americans from the path of American expansion, reformers promoted a different Indian policy that embraced assimilation as a path to peace.
2. In 1881 Helen Hunt Jackson, a key advocate of Indian policy reform, published a treatise on injustices perpetrated against Indians called *Century of Dishonor*, which inspired the Women's National Indian Association and other groups to push for better treatment of Native Americans.
3. While many of the Indian policy reforms decimated native cultural heritage, they also offered a gentler approach, condemning violence in favor of cultural assimilation that would help natives become more like white Americans.
4. Lewis Morgan, who wrote *Ancient Society* in 1877, believed that Indians were savages and barbarians but that they could become civilized by embracing white culture. His ideology influenced men like Richard Henry Pratt, who founded the Carlisle Indian School to assimilate Indians.
5. Some Americans rejected the doctrine of assimilation, believing that Native Americans had inborn traits incompatible with civilization, but the reform movement nonetheless had sway in politics.
6. The politician with the most influence on Indian policy reforms was Senator Henry Dawes of Massachusetts, who promoted the assimilation and Christianization of

Native Americans through individual landownership.

7. In 1887 the Dawes Act divided Indian land into 160-acre parcels, each of which would go to an individual family. At the end of twenty-five years, Indians who lived on these parcels would earn American citizenship in exchange for abandoning the practice of cultural rites, native religions, oral traditions, and the use of medicine men; the remaining land after this reallocation (and the amount was considerable) would go up for sale to support Indian education.
  8. The Dawes Act was a failure—first, because Indians were provided with inadequate tools for farming, and second, because whites profited off the sale of land to the detriment of Indians. Landownership among Indians declined from 155 million acres in 1881 to about 77 million acres by 1897.
  9. Assimilation efforts also increased tensions by forcing parents to send their children to boarding schools, where they were stripped of their Indian cultural markers and Americanized. This schooling failed to create equality for Indian children.
- #### E. Indian Assimilation and Resistance
1. Some Indians resisted cultural assimilation and individual ownership of land, while others such as Ohiyesa, a Lakota also known as Charles Eastman, embraced the process of assimilation but remained loyal to Indian cultural heritage.
  2. The prophet Wovoka of the Paiute tribe devised one of the most distinctive forms of resistance to assimilation: the Ghost Dance, which would allow Indians to reestablish control and force whites to disappear. The Ghost Dance spread among the Lakota Sioux tribes in the northern plains region.
  3. The Ghost Dance drew the ire of the U.S. army, which saw it as a sign of renewed

resistance. On December 29, 1890, at Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, a confrontation between the Seventh Cavalry and a group of Lakota ghost dancers resulted in the deaths of some 250 Native Americans.

4. The Wounded Knee massacre cemented the United States' investment in destroying Native American culture entirely.

### III. The Mining Frontier

#### A. The Business of Mining

1. The Comstock Lode in the Sierra Nevada provided one of the biggest draws in the Gold Rush West, attracting an international group of men, mainly from the United States, Mexico, and China.
2. These men initially mined for gold and silver on an individual basis, but as the supply became increasingly difficult to access, big businesses took over the mining industry.
3. Mining was dangerous and poorly paid work that led to some three hundred deaths between 1863 and 1880, and accidents left many men unable to work and without any financial resources.
4. The mining industry fostered the creation of unions, and in the mid-1860s, unions that came out of the Comstock Lode areas encountered violent resistance from mining companies, private police forces, and state militias that were politically entangled with mining companies.
5. In 1892 the Idaho governor deployed the National Guard to crush a strike, and seven workers were killed; the following year, mine workers formed the Western Federation of Miners, a powerful but exclusive union that barred Chinese, Mexican, and Indian workers from participation.

#### B. Life in the Mining Towns

1. Women entered mining towns alongside men, making up as much as half the

population in towns such as Storey County, Nevada. Most worked as domestics in hotels, homes, and boardinghouses or as prostitutes, which presented significant danger and health risks to the young women, who had few other opportunities.

2. Industries that supported the lifestyles of miners boomed. Taverns, brothels, opium dens, and boardinghouses proved important to sustaining mining towns, but when the gold and silver started to disappear, so too did the towns.
3. Some mining towns, like Butte, Montana, survived, and the inhabitants established families, built neighborhoods, and divided themselves by class and ethnicity, creating communities that resembled those back east.

### IV. Ranching and Farming Frontiers

#### A. The Life of the Cowboy

1. Cowboys symbolized the frontier West as independent, manly, honorable defenders of female virtue who were essential to taming the Wild West.
2. Cowboy life defied the myths, though, as wages were low, work was monotonous, conditions could be dangerous, and long, hard days were spent pushing cattle on the Long Drive, a 1,500-mile trek along the Chisholm Trail.
3. While most cowboys were white southerners, blacks and Mexicans also made a life out of tending cattle, though they faced racial discrimination and pay discrepancies.
4. The cowboys' grueling work made large-scale ranchers rich; the expansion of railroad systems along with the creation of refrigerated railroad cars enabled the burgeoning of a beef market in the East.
5. As the cattle industry grew, fewer than 40 ranchers held more than 20 million acres of land; one ranch in Texas spanned 200 miles and stocked 150,000 steers each year. By the middle of the 1880s, the

industry was an essential part of the national economy.

6. The rapid growth of the ranching industry was a harbinger of economic decline. Oversupply drove prices down, Argentina and Canada provided competition, and increasing settlement in the West divided much of the open range into individual homesteads.
7. Between 1885 and 1887 cold winters and a summer drought led to the destruction of a vast majority of the cattle in the northern plains region, and the cattle industry suffered dramatically.
8. Economic power in the ranching industry was increasingly consolidated into the hands of a few powerful individuals, and cowboys became laborers.

#### B. Farmers Head West

1. The U.S. government provided incentives to farmers who wanted to move west, and in the midst of the Civil War, the Republican-controlled Congress passed the Homestead Act, which distributed 160-acre lots to western settlers.
2. Initially, farmers saw success in the West, but as geologist John Wesley Powell would demonstrate, the climate was unsuited to the type of farming envisioned by homesteaders.
3. Technology improved farmers' prospects, and they utilized imported wheat from Russia, new machines designed to allow farmers to plow land more easily, and equipment that allowed farmers to have improved access to water.
4. The farmers who ended up in the West were from a range of backgrounds; about one-third of those who migrated to the northern plains were immigrants.
5. Incentives for movement to the West included opportunities with railroad companies in addition to farming, and the two industries supported one another in the project of developing the West.

6. The railroad industry used advertising to lure prospective settlers onto the rail lines, enticing them with descriptions of the potential in the West and with discount rail fares. Family members were also essential to populating the West; as settlers described their adventures and prospects in letters to relatives back east, more people migrated.
7. Homes in the West were typically constructed of sod and were dark, damp, and often intruded upon by pests and rain that leaked through the roof. Outside conditions were not much better; droughts and a plague of grasshoppers in the 1870s destroyed much of the vegetation, and extreme temperatures made the experience of settling the plains difficult.

#### C. Women Homesteaders

1. Women bore responsibility for keeping the house comfortable and also contributed to the economic welfare of the family by taking in boarders and selling goods such as milk, butter, and eggs.
2. It also was not unusual for a woman to claim a homestead for herself in order to take advantage of a potential economic opportunity or to support a family after a husband's death. Across nine counties in the Dakotas, more than 4,400 women owned land.
3. Women in the West also served as a force for democracy and reform on the frontier by advocating for temperance, and in the late 1870s women in Kansas joined the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, established by Amanda M. Way, which campaigned for an amendment against the sale of liquor.
4. Temperance in the West fed into other movements that drew women into politics. In 1884 women in Kansas established the Equal Suffrage Association, which in 1887 succeeded in winning women the right to vote and to run for office in municipal elections.

#### D. Farming on the Great Plains

1. For farmers, economic success was often elusive, as few were able to self-sustain off the land, and most relied on barter and short-term credit to buy the land and machinery necessary to survive.
2. Farmers emphasized cash staples like corn and wheat instead of crops that would sustain their families, and their economic stability depended on the prices of those crops as determined by the international market.
3. When corn and wheat prices fell in the 1880s and 1890s, corn growers used their excess crops to fatten up hogs and sell them for a bigger profit; wheat growers were more susceptible to fluctuations in the market, however, and many abandoned their farms during hard times and moved to cities.
4. Over the second half of the nineteenth century, the farming industry, like the mining industry, was increasingly consolidated into the hands of big businessmen who commercialized the industry.
5. Just as it had provided incentives to individual farmers, the federal government also provided incentives to big businesses. The Desert Land Act (1877), which offered 640 acres to settlers who would irrigate the land, was impractical for small homesteaders, so larger companies benefited.
6. The Timber and Stone Act of 1878 sold forestland parcels of 160 acres for \$2.50 an acre, which lumber companies jumped at, using “dummy entrymen” to file claims and then transferring the titles to the companies.

#### V. Pushing Further West

##### A. Mormons Head West

1. In addition to providing business opportunities and adventure, the West also offered the opportunity for a degree of freedom from religious persecution, which

was most notably embraced by Mormons, or members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

2. By 1870, the Utah Territory housed more than 85,000 inhabitants, who embraced freedom from government control over religious practices like polygamy, or the marriage of one man to more than one woman, which Mormons believed was a blessing that would provide all parties with an exalted place in the afterlife.
3. Opponents of polygamy believed that it was a form of involuntary servitude and expressed disapproval of the religion; in reality, most Mormons did not engage in polygamy, and those who did typically had just two wives.
4. Mormons embraced communal farming and divided land among church elders; the church also encouraged its members to learn Native American languages as a path to the conversion of Indians, an attempt to foster a peaceful environment in their surroundings.
5. By the 1870s, Mormons faced increasing persecution from the federal government. In *Reynolds v. United States* (1879), the Supreme Court solidified the illegality of the practice of polygamy, and in 1882 Congress passed the Edmunds Act, which took away the voting rights of polygamist men.
6. Emmeline B. Wells emerged as a Mormon proponent of women’s suffrage, who also argued that polygamy was a choice Mormon women were capable of making for themselves; opponents argued that enfranchising women was Mormon men’s backhanded way of ensuring that the practice of polygamy was protected.
7. In the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act, the federal government rescinded women’s suffrage in the Utah Territory, and it was restored only after Utah applied for statehood, which occurred once Mormons had formally disavowed polygamy.

## B. Californios

1. The West Coast of the United States was inhabited by Native Americans as well as by Spanish and Mexican farmers and ranchers known as *Californios*, who had technically acquired American citizenship after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War.
2. Though they were U.S. citizens, Californios paid a “foreign miners tax,” and Californio landowners lost much of their land because, according to Anglo politicians, Californios did not use the land efficiently.
3. By the end of the nineteenth century, two-thirds of all the land formerly belonging to Californios was in Anglo hands, and Californios suffered the effects of poverty; they were forced into poorly paying jobs and lost significant influence in the politics and economics of their region.
4. Spanish and Mexican inhabitants of the Southwest met a similar fate, but they fought back by forming a group called *Las Gorras Blancas* (The White Caps), which in 1889 and 1890 burned Anglo property and railroads. They were nonetheless overpowered by the influx of white settlers.

## C. The Chinese in the Far West

1. Chinese immigrants were drawn to California and the West Coast in a wave of migration away from conflict and poverty in China that also brought Chinese settlers to Australia, Hawaii, and Latin America.
2. Chinese immigrants first settled in California during the 1848 gold rush and later worked on the transcontinental railroad. By 1880, 200,000 mostly male Chinese settlers lived in the West and had established culturally Chinese communities.
3. Anti-Chinese settlement was high in the West, and whites routinely blamed

economic difficulties on the Chinese, arguing that the willingness of the Chinese to work for low wages made it impossible for white workers to get better pay and that the Chinese were racially inferior.

4. By the 1870s, anti-Chinese sentiment had morphed into a political movement with significant influence. The Workingmen’s Party started boycotts of Chinese-made products and endorsed laws that restricted Chinese labor, and vigilantes engaged in violence, arson, and vandalism in an effort to intimidate Chinese settlers.
5. Anti-Chinese sentiment had influence at the federal level as well, and in 1882 Congress responded to pressure by passing the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned further Chinese immigration and barred the Chinese who were already in the United States from becoming naturalized citizens.
6. In spite of the legislation, which cut off Chinese immigration until the Second World War, violence continued in the mid-1880s, as whites pushed the Chinese out of mining towns and cities across the West.

## CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Following are answer guidelines for the Review & Relate, Documents, and Document Project questions that appear in the textbook chapter. For your convenience, the questions and answer guidelines are also available in the Computerized Test Bank.

## Review &amp; Relate

What role did the federal government play in opening the West to settlement and economic exploitation? (See section “Opening the West” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Land incentives:* The government offered land incentives through measures like the Homestead Act to encourage Americans to migrate westward and



engage in independent, self-sufficient farming. It also offered cheap land to domestic and foreign companies in the mining, lumber, and railroad industries, who could then lure more settlers.

- *Completion of the transcontinental railroad:*

By developing transportation networks, the government invested in making the West more accessible for adventurers, homesteaders, and businesses. The transcontinental railroad allowed both people and goods to move more quickly and in greater numbers than before. Anyone who could afford a railroad ticket could go to the West.

Explain the determination of Americans to settle in land west of the Mississippi River despite the challenges the region presented. (See section “Opening the West” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Patriotic idealism over science:* In spite of research by men like John Wesley Powell that indicated that the land and climate would be difficult terrain for farming, Americans clung to an idea that had been a theme in American history since the Jeffersonian era: that western expansion by small farmers would be an important force in democratizing the continent. Americans turned instead to the ideas of Charles Dana Wilber, who encouraged them to go west and turn the Great Plains from desert into fruitful agricultural terrain.

How and why did federal Indian policy change during the nineteenth century? (See section “Conquest of the Frontier” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Indian sovereignty:* Initially, the federal government treated Native Americans as autonomous nations and gave them control over the land they occupied. Mid-nineteenth-century treaties like the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie were intended to prevent whites from expanding into Indian lands.

- *U.S. violation of treaties:* In spite of the treaties, whites routinely violated the boundaries of Indian lands in order to take advantage of economic opportunities in mining areas. The federal government tended to protect the interests of white settlers, along with its own economic interests in the West, instead of upholding the terms of the treaties.

- *U.S. army assaults:* The U.S. army contributed to a deteriorating situation by failing to protect Indians from white encroachment. The Sand Creek massacre on November 29, 1864, illustrated the

army’s role in increasing the tension in U.S.-Indian relations.

- *Indian wars and reservations:* The United States’ violation of treaties prompted resistance among Native Americans, who were then pushed to sign new treaties, including a second Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868, which created new reservations on the northern plains and in Oklahoma. The treaties were unsuccessful at establishing peace between the two sides, and violent conflict continued as Americans continued to push westward.

- *Assimilation:* In an attempt to quell continued violence, the U.S. government adopted policies that encouraged assimilation in order to make Indians appear and behave more like white Americans. Reformers such as Helen Hunt Jackson and Richard Henry Pratt pushed for Indians to embrace the style of dress, the speech patterns, and the religious beliefs of whites. The Dawes Act of 1887 offered Indians individual tracts of land in exchange for their abandonment of communal landownership practices and native cultural rituals.

Describe some of the ways that Indian peoples responded to federal policies. Which response do you think offered their greatest chance for survival? (See section “Conquest of the Frontier” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Fighting back:* Through resistance, compromise, and violence, Native Americans tried to maintain their sovereignty in the face of American expansionism. The Nez Percé, for instance, attempted to flee to Canada rather than move to a reservation in Oklahoma, and the tribe eventually negotiated with the U.S. government to return to Washington. Other natives used warfare to fight for their territory and fought back ferociously, as at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

- *Assimilating:* Some Indians, such as Charles Eastman, determined that assimilation would provide the most effective path to peace, though he later criticized the decimation of Indian culture. Native American parents were typically forced to send their children to institutions like the Carlisle Indian School in an effort to assuage cultural tension. Assimilation offered a complex path, as it did not erase violence and racism among whites.

- *Reifying native traditions:* Some Indians resisted white encroachment by tightening their embrace of native traditions and practices. Partly in response to the Dawes Act, the Lakota embraced the

ritual of the Ghost Dance, which they believed would bring back ancestors and wipe out white influence.

- *Greatest chance for survival:* Though assimilation offered the path least likely to bring about violent destruction, it nonetheless decimated native cultures. Physical survival was most likely in this scenario; the chances for cultural survival were slim. Fighting back and reifying native traditions were more likely to ensure that a culture survived, and in some scenarios such tactics provided Native Americans with leverage and grounds for compromise with the U.S. government. The Nez Percé, for instance, achieved more success through their tactics than did many other groups. In the case of the ghost dancers, clinging to native culture brought about physical destruction, but the Ghost Dance stood as a vital symbol of native culture that persisted beyond the decimation of the Lakotas.

How and why did the nature of mining in the West change during the second half of the nineteenth century? (See section “The Mining Frontier” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Individual prospectors:* A series of gold and silver strikes over the course of thirty years drew fortune-hunting individuals to places like Washington, Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, and the Dakotas. Individual miners extracted about \$350 million in silver from the Comstock Lode in the Sierra Nevada alone. Their equipment was basic, and they were primarily mining gold and silver from surface areas.

- *Prospecting industrializes:* Once the surface ore was extracted, miners needed better equipment to reach the ore below the surface of the earth, but the necessary equipment was financially out of reach for most prospectors. Businesses took over the mining industry, and businessmen who could afford the expensive equipment hired miners, turning prospectors into workers. The pay was reasonable but the work was dangerous, as mines were hundreds of feet deep and sometimes filled with noxious gases or scalding water. Work changed with industrialization, as mine workers no longer had the opportunity to embrace the tradition of individualism in the West. Miners became laborers, and the mines became an industry, one that transformed the economy, landscape, and demographics of the West.

- *Unionization:* As they transitioned from individual prospectors to waged workers, miners fought back against poor working conditions and

formed unions. Unionization efforts provoked violent confrontations between management and striking workers, including an incident in Idaho in 1892 that resulted in the deaths of seven miners. In 1893 white miners formed the Western Federation of Miners, a racially exclusive and very militant union. This union was significant in transforming mining and the West because it cast the West as a central player in the burgeoning labor movement. Just as industrialization transformed mining in the West, so too did unionization. It turned the West from a place where individuals sought to escape the social, economic, and political problems of the East into a place where patterns of modern responses to labor disputes offered improved circumstances to ordinary miners.

How did miners and residents of mining towns reshape the frontier landscape they encountered? (See section “The Mining Frontier” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Women’s work:* While the frontier is often perceived as having been male terrain, women flocked to the mining frontier to take advantage of opportunities to perform domestic work in boardinghouses, homes, and hotels. They also worked as prostitutes, a dangerous but financially lucrative job.

- *Boomtown culture:* Businesses to support the recreation of miners sprang up in mining towns. These included brothels, taverns, and opium dens. Bars sported names that reflected the filth of the towns, and drugs, alcohol, and prostitutes were the primary sources of entertainment.

- *Boomtown to ghost town:* As mines were depleted, prostitutes, miners, and businesses abandoned the boomtowns. Eventually the mining industry shifted its focus to metals other than gold and silver, and as the industry increasingly drew on big business, the culture in the towns changed. Boomtowns that survived the transition became slightly more stable, creating space for families and fostering patterns of ethnic segregation in increasingly permanent neighborhoods.

How did market forces contribute to the boom and bust of the cattle ranching industry? (See section “Ranching and Farming Frontiers” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Boom:* Initially, cowboys drove cattle for the benefit of ranchers, who profited as railroads with

refrigerated cars made it possible to ship beef from the West to the East. Ranchers had consolidated their wealth and their holdings, Europeans and Easterners invested in the cattle boom, and the cattle industry became an important part of the national economy.

- *Bust:* As the market internationalized and American ranchers contributed to an oversupply of beef, cattle prices declined. In addition, the expansion of farming and the parceling out and fencing off of land tracts broke down the open range. Extreme climate conditions in 1885–1887 depleted the cattle population in the northern plains.

How did women homesteaders on the Great Plains in the late nineteenth century respond to frontier challenges? (See section “Ranching and Farming Frontiers” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Homemaking:* Some women on the frontier embraced traditional roles and made the unpleasant living conditions in frontier households more bearable. They cooked and cleaned and canned fruits and vegetables. Frontier women also contributed to the economic welfare of the family by taking in boarders and selling homemade and agricultural goods like butter, milk, and eggs.

- *Homesteading:* Some women claimed homesteads on their own, as doing so provided them with an opportunity to self-sustain. Many were single women, but others were widows who sought a means for sustaining their families.

- *Reform and politics:* The prevalence of drunkenness and vice on the frontier provided women with an opportunity to become a civilizing force. Women responded to the rowdiness of the frontier by engaging in activism to promote social reform. Many fought to end the sale of liquor through the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, which was founded by Amanda M. Way. Temperance also paved a path to politics for frontier women, who were the first women in the United States to gain the right to vote at the municipal and state levels.

What migrant groups were attracted to the far West? What drew them there? (See section “Pushing Farther West” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Mormons:* Mormons, a religious minority, moved to the Utah Territory to escape religious

persecution that stemmed predominantly from criticism of the Mormons’ practice of polygamy. In Utah Mormons established communal farming and attempted to convert Native Americans by learning their languages.

- *Chinese:* Many Chinese immigrated to the west coast of the United States to flee economic despair in China. They followed word of the 1848 gold rush to California and later took advantage of opportunities to work on the transcontinental railroad.

Explain the rising hostility to the Chinese and other minority groups in the late-nineteenth-century far West. (See section “Pushing Farther West” in your textbook.)

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Job competition:* In response to an economy on the decline, whites in California blamed Chinese migrants for working for low wages. Economic strife mobilized racism in whites, who used racial stereotypes to explain the willingness of the Chinese to work for low wages.

- *Land:* In the case of the Californios, who theoretically had U.S. citizenship, white migrants’ desire for land led to the use of underhanded and hostile tactics. Migrants to California wanted land and mobilized the legal system to get it. Californios lost two-thirds of all their land and were forced into poverty.

## Document 15.1: Granville Stuart: Gold Rush Days, 1925

### Interpret the Evidence

How did the expectations of newly arrived prospectors differ from reality?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Ample, easily accessible gold:* Stuart describes the gullibility of new prospectors, who believed that they would easily find fast fortunes. In reality, prospecting was slow, tedious, and difficult work. Any money made by prospectors was quickly spent, and vast fortunes were few and far between.

How would you characterize Stuart’s attitude toward the scenes he describes?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Bemusement:* Stuart's narrative ridicules the new prospectors, who followed rumors of fortunes but ended up back in Virginia City.

### Put It in Context

As western towns grew more crowded and the mining process became more complex, who profited from the frenzied atmosphere of mining regions?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Who profited:* The local rancher in Stuart's account profited from the gold rush because prospective miners depended upon him for food during their trip to search for gold. As mining towns grew more crowded and there was less ore to mine, taverns, brothels, and boardinghouses were more likely to be profitable than mining itself.

## Documents 15.2 and 15.3: Cowboy Myths and Realities: Two Views

### Interpret the Evidence

What does the placement of Cody's portrait in the poster suggest about the role of white men in the West?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Cody's portrait:* The placement of Cody's portrait in the poster separates white men from the mayhem and barbarity of the West. He stands apart from the conflict, and his placement presents him as a spectator. He appears dignified, clean, and calm. His placement suggests that whites in the West are outsiders but are essential for progress in the region. The whites involved in the conflict depicted in the poster are portrayed as rugged, dominant, assertive, and, to an extent, frenzied. They are keeping control over the Indians. Buffalo Bill, while a significant component of that image, is also removed from the fray. He is a symbol of whiteness in the West, but in this image at least he does not have the same daily experience with conflict in the West. In some ways, he represents for viewers both the whites in the image—rugged, in-control whites conquering the West—and non-Western outsiders, who are looking at the chaos from a distance. Buffalo Bill, in the

poster, is the latter group's point of access to the West.

How does Duffield's experience of the West differ from that conveyed in the poster?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Difference between Duffield's experience and the poster's portrayal of the West:* The diary entry on the 12th indicates that Duffield is integrated with Indians in his cattle drive. He depicts the West as unglamorous, dirty, and hard. Compared to Cody's romantic and oversimplified version of the West, Duffield's diary offers a much grittier and more realistic point of view.

### Put It in Context

Why do you think Americans remember Buffalo Bill's version of the West rather than Duffield's?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Historical memory:* Buffalo Bill's romanticized version of the West has maintained its iconic status due in part to the significance and popularity of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows. Duffield's diary was published in 1924, well after Cody's representation of the West had influenced popular imagination. Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows also capitalized on a popular culture genre that had long-standing appeal in the United States. Triumph has long claimed a significant place in historical memory; mainstream histories often highlight victories over struggles with ambiguous results.

## Document 15.4: Gro Svendsen: Letter from a Homesteader, 1863

### Annotated Document Questions

What emotions does Svendsen express about her life in America?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Unimaginable:* Svendsen's new life is full of surprises. She feels nostalgic for Norway. Her reality does not match her expectations, which makes her feel even more foreign.

What differences between life in Norway and life on the Great Plains does this letter indicate?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Differences:* Svendsen highlights the climate and its effect on making and preserving food. She cannot make cheese because of the bugs on the Plains. She talks about brining or salting butter and about brining bacon, and she points out that everything about daily life and chores is new.

Why would Svendsen's relatives think she might be exaggerating?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Relatives' disbelief:* Svendsen herself finds her new life surprising and different, and she notes that she had heard all of this before coming but did not believe it, so it is not unreasonable for her to expect her relatives to doubt her description. Her letter suggests that the life she left behind was fundamentally different from the life she is experiencing in the United States, and it is likely that her family would have no frame of reference for understanding her life.

### Put It in Context

What particular challenges did homesteaders who emigrated from other countries face?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Challenges:* Immigrants likely had less contact with stories of the West than did eastern Americans, who were aware of the image of the West and its cultural significance. Thus, immigrants would be less familiar with the climate, Native Americans, and daily ways of life. For Svendsen, her way of life in Norway and her way of life in the United States were completely different from each other. She could not do things in the United States that were commonplace and mundane in Norway, such as making cheese, because of climate conditions and insects. In addition, immigrants were less likely to have a safety net to return to back east if they were unsuccessful. Contact with family members back home would have been more difficult for immigrants to maintain than it would have been for Americans who had migrated from other parts of the United States because transportation was so slow. This was likely to foster a sense of isolation among immigrants.

## Document 15.5: White Caps Flier, 1890

### Interpret the Evidence

Whom do the White Caps claim to represent, and what are their grievances?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Representation:* The White Caps represent individuals who are the victims of unjust practices, particularly those who are suffering the effects of racism, disfranchisement, and poverty. They point out that whites are attempting to control water supplies, behaving as partisans, disavowing free elections and an unbiased justice system, and taking over the land without regard for those who are already there.

How did the White Caps support their claim to be law-abiding citizens? How might Anglo authorities have responded to their claims?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Claims:* The White Caps called attention to the fact that they were hungry and destitute, and they argued that their degraded condition was the result of white practices. Their grievances provide evidence of how whites might have responded to these claims. They are already defending themselves against allegations of vigilantism and violence. Whites had claimed ownership and governance of the land, fencing off parcels for individual farming and breaking down the system of communal farming that had existed before. Whites moving westward associated individual farming with civilization. They also routinely disregarded the citizenship rights of individuals who had been granted citizenship through the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Once Anglo authorities parceled off the land and faced attacks from the White Caps, they would have no reason, given this perspective, to respect the rights of the people who had already occupied the land. They would defend their "bossism" with assertions of cultural supremacy, arguments for civilization, and claims to individual property.

### Put It in Context

What kinds of difficulties did nonwhites face as white Americans moved westward during the nineteenth century?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Difficulties:* Nonwhites such as *Las Gorras Blancas*, Californios, and Native Americans were all subject to the same kinds of difficulties, though their individual experiences varied. Each group suffered the loss of its land, either through removal, legal acts, or corrupt practices. Each group also came into conflict with whites who dismissed the concept of communal landownership in favor of individual or corporate capitalism in the fields of farming, ranching, and mining. The White Caps and the Californios—who were U.S. citizens according to the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo—faced the prospect of losing their civil rights and becoming foreigners on the land they had occupied for generations.

## Document Project 15: American Indians and Whites on the Frontier

### Interpret the Evidence

1. On what basis does James Michael Cavanaugh (Document 15.6) claim to be in a better position than Benjamin Butler to judge the best way to deal with Indians?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Experience:* Cavanaugh highlights his own time on the frontier and exposure to Indians as his qualifications for crafting Indian policy. He argues that he has had personal contact with Indians who were incapable of civilization, whereas Butler has had exposure to Native Americans only through literature.

2. How does Thomas Nast's illustration (Document 15.7) compare with the arguments made by Congressman Cavanaugh?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Comparison:* The Nast cartoon depicts a settler whose home has been attacked by Indians and who is being berated by a government official, perhaps for laying the groundwork for conflict. The cartoon suggests that the government has neither fostered the conditions for peace between settlers and Indians nor found an appropriate method for handling settlers' grievances. Nast suggests that the government should play a more significant role in helping settlers navigate their new world in the West,

and that the United States' approach to Indian relations in the West has fueled conflict. Cavanaugh, on the other hand, suggests that Indians should be exterminated. He argues that the men crafting Indian policy have had limited encounters with Indians who are "upon the war-path." He suggests that government officials do not have the personal experience to understand what frontier settlers encounter daily, and he argues that the only sensible path is to rid the nation of Indians. Cavanaugh's argument deals with themes that are similar to those touched on in the Nast cartoon, which argues that the government has yet to devise an appropriate Indian policy in the West. The solution that Cavanaugh supports, however, is an extreme one.

3. What assumptions about Indians and their culture underlay the policy of assimilation advocated by reformers such as Helen Hunt Jackson (Document 15.8)?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Monolithic victimization narrative:* Jackson declares that "The story of one tribe is the story of all," suggesting that the individual conditions of each encounter are irrelevant to the creation of Indian policy.

- *Barbarism:* Jackson declares that not all Native Americans are prepared for citizenship. She argues that a process of civilization is essential before tribes are granted U.S. citizenship, and U.S. democratic values and Christianity shape her interpretation of civilization.

- *Indians want to be Americans:* Jackson's work assumes that all groups, Indians included, desire to embrace American democratic values and that, once they are treated properly, Indians will automatically want to be Christian Americans.

4. What options did Indians have when confronted with white determination to eradicate their culture? What choice did Zitkala-Ša make (Document 15.9)? Why?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Options:* The whites who administered Indian schools left few options for students who were assimilated by force. Zitkala-Ša's efforts to resist assimilation were futile.

- *Zitkala-Ša's choice:* Zitkala-Ša attempted to hide when she realized that the whites at her school planned to cut her hair; to her, "shingled" hair would be a symbol of weakness and cowardice. She describes losing her spirit, and she ruminates on the

cultural significance of her hair. She explains that with this loss of spirit and part of her culture, she felt like an animal.

5. How did Chief Joseph's experience (Document 15.10) reflect the fundamental contradiction of federal policy toward Indians?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Contradictions:* Chief Joseph points out that many different individuals have spoken with him on behalf of the U.S. government and that they have failed to be consistent in their message. They all claim to be friends, but none of them have done anything to quell the violence, inequality, and injustice perpetrated against the Indians. He also points out that whites proclaim that Indians must stay on reservations, but whites are able to settle and explore anywhere they like.

### Put It in Context

Imagine that you are an American president in the second half of the nineteenth century and can design Indian policy. Based on what you have read in these documents and in the chapter, what would you do, and why? What challenges might you face as you attempted to implement your policy?

*Answer would ideally include:*

- *Consideration of various demands:* There are many significant demands a politician faces when crafting policy, and the various groups of individuals in the West have a range of needs. White settlers, businessmen, Native Americans, immigrants, and so on, all have unique demands, and to satisfy everyone would be impossible. Though settlers might not be satisfied at not having complete access to all available land, it is important to acknowledge the claims that Native Americans have to territory in the West. At all points, efforts at compromise are important. The dignity and reputation of the United States must remain intact, and in order for that to happen, the United States must make good on its word. All treaties and agreements with Indians must be honored. Settlers must treat their new neighbors with respect, and businessmen must not let their lust for fortune overtake their commitment to good relations with Native Americans. Immigrants must abide by the same standards as U.S. citizens and should be treated kindly by employers and American settlers alike. If conflict should arise between the United States and Native Americans, it is imperative that genuine diplomacy is the first step toward

resolution. It is impossible to reverse the course of U.S. history and leave the West entirely to Native Americans, but it is possible to lay the groundwork for future good relations, collaboration, and mutual respect. For the good of the United States, this is imperative.

## LECTURE STRATEGIES

### Lecture 1: The Business of the West

This lecture explores the role of western expansion in the development of the post-Civil War U.S. economy, emphasizing the development of railroads, mining businesses, corporate ranching, and large-scale farming. Begin by refreshing students' memories on some of the goals behind earlier pushes for western expansion to help frame the ways that political and economic systems transformed the role of the West in U.S. economic growth. Remind students of, or briefly introduce to them, Jefferson's ideal of an agrarian republic with small-scale yeomen farmers, and touch on the market and transportation revolutions. Also remind students of the need and desire to rebuild and reunify the national economy in the post-Civil War era. Use this background to explain the incentives the federal government used to encourage people to move to the West: the Homestead Act, the consolidation and removal of Native Americans, and the academic and intellectual efforts to explain, advertise, and manipulate the landscape to make it suitable for agriculture.

This introduction will guide students through the growth process of American capitalism in the West and will be useful for linking it to patterns of urbanization and industrialization around the turn of the century. Focus on the importance of the completion of the transcontinental railroad, and ask students to think about what this vast expansion of transportation technology might have meant for people living in various parts of the United States. Consider as well the workers who built the railroad—their national origins, motivations, and fates in the United States—and explain that their contributions to western expansion contributed to a re-creation of postwar American identity. Then explain how climate conditions, difficult work, depleted supplies, economic fluctuations, and the landscape itself made it difficult for individual farmers, cowboys, or miners to self-sustain, which facilitated the transition to corporate mining, ranching, and farming. Compare and contrast for

students the expectations that people carried west for their families and their economic futures, as well as their desire for adventure and the realities of the hardship, isolation, and despair they encountered.

In addition to helping students understand how the West went from a place for rugged, individualistic, self-sustaining adventurers to a place for big business, this lecture will help to explain some of the efforts to manage the presence of Native Americans in the West. Explain the problem that Native Americans presented for both individuals and big businesses that hoped to expand and capitalize on the land, and explain the various efforts to control Native Americans and their influence. Emphasize the ways in which American ideas about land use conflicted with the belief in communal ownership embraced by Native Americans. Then explain how the Dawes Act, in an effort at assimilation, also attempted to create productive farmers who might participate in corporate agriculture. Conclude by asking students to consider whether or not the corporate takeover of the West was a foreseeable consequence of expansion.

### **Lecture 2: The Image and Reality of the West**

This lecture introduces students to the role the West played in shaping American culture in the post-Civil War era. Start by describing some of the features of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows. Point students to the advertisement for Buffalo Bill's show displayed in the book to provide a starting point for discussion. Explain how the shows were created to highlight and promote a specific image of the West that both romanticized and oversimplified the daily encounters between frontiersmen and Native Americans. Ask the students to think about how their own ideas about the Wild West stack up against these late-nineteenth-century representations of the frontier.

With this background, explain the realities of the West for both settlers and Native Americans. Describe the realities that settlers confronted: loneliness and isolation; difficult, dangerous, and poorly paid work; lack of family or community; a challenging climate and terrain; hostile Indian neighbors; and the easy accessibility of vice. Talk about the realities for Native Americans: new diseases; violence from settlers and the U.S. army; treaties that attempted to quell violence but that were routinely violated; being pushed off land, even land they had been pushed onto in earlier years; and being subjected to assimilation tactics, only to find that no matter how American they became, they were still too "Indian." Explain that these realities complicated

not only the experiences that Native Americans and settlers had when they encountered one another, but also the experiences of the U.S. government as it tried to settle the West, the fortunes of companies that sought to build their wealth in the West, and the images of the West held in the imaginations of Americans back east. Referring students to the works of Helen Hunt Jackson and Zitkala-Ša that are reprinted in the book will be helpful here.

The examples that highlight the realities of the West do not simply create the foundation for wholesale dismissal of the popular image of the West, however. It is important to encourage students to understand that the image of the West was not simply a myth perpetuated by easterners and those who hoped to profit off their imaginations. Explain, for instance, that Annie Oakley's life highlights a unique combination of the image and the reality of the West. While she had a difficult upbringing, the West offered her opportunities that would have likely eluded a woman in other parts of the country. Her career and fame as a sharpshooter existed because she was a part of the West. Oakley's career and opportunities open the door for discussing other women in the West who had political aspirations, were driven by reform impulses, and embraced a different image of womanhood itself because of the region they inhabited. Highlight suffrage movements and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union as examples.

Explain also that Native Americans experienced the image and reality of the frontier differently from settlers. Use the Wild West shows to explain perceptions of Native Americans, and explain the complex nature of the participation of Native Americans such as Geronimo in the shows. Then explain cultural practices like the Ghost Dance. Describe the origin of the Ghost Dance as a response to repression and an expression of Indian solidarity and cultural preservation. Then explain how the United States responded to the Ghost Dance by trying to stop it, culminating in the massacre at Wounded Knee. Highlight as well how fierce fighting in Indian wars transformed post-Civil War American culture by providing a place for military engagement and contributing to the reunification of the United States through the engagement of North and South in a common cause.

### **Lecture 3: Diversity in the West**

This lecture explores the complex relationships among the various groups that encountered one another in the West. It helps students to break away



from the idea that only white Americans and Indians collaborated and clashed with each other. Open the lecture by talking about the completion of the transcontinental railroad. Explain that the laborers were essential to the building of the railroad, and then ask students to think about who those laborers were. It might be helpful to remind students that during this period the United States was experiencing an influx of immigrants in the East, and that many of those immigrants moved westward to take advantage of opportunities and escape crowded cities. Note that immigrants were also coming to the North and South American continents from China, and that the encounters among these immigrants, whites, blacks, Mexicans, and Indians represent an important aspect of western expansion.

Ask the students to think about the benefits and drawbacks of a diverse West, and have them consider how racial attitudes and class structures might have influenced the experiences of various groups. Remind students that many of the migrants in the post–Civil War West were white southerners who embraced a distinctively white supremacist worldview. Explain to students that blacks from the South and the North also went west in an effort to find opportunities that offered them more freedom and better economic prospects than sharecropping. Then explore the presence of Mexicans in the Southwest and California. Explain how, in the aftermath of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, Californios gradually lost power over the territory they had occupied for many years and became foreigners in their native land. Reiterate the story of Chinese migrants since the Gold Rush. Link the stories of all of these groups to the industries in which they were the majority of the workforce, and explore how those industries handled this diversity. For instance, emphasize to students how large-scale ranchers paid black and Mexican cowboys less than whites. Describe how Californios, in spite of their purported American citizenship, were taxed at the same rate as foreigners in the mining industry. Use the *Las Gorras Blancas* flier from the text (Document 15.5) to add another layer to this story. And explore with students how labor competition led to rabid anti-Chinese sentiment, which catalyzed Congress’s passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Consider as well the significance of gender in each of these stories.

In addition to exploring racial and ethnic diversity in the West, remind students that earlier migrants had religious reasons for heading west. Describe the Mormons’ trek from upstate New York

to Utah, and describe some of the tenets and criticisms of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, including the role of polygamy. Explain to students the complex relationship of women to the church, highlighting Emmeline B. Wells as a key figure. Describe the Mormons’ relationship with Native Americans. Then explore the U.S. government’s efforts to control and suppress polygamy within the Mormon church, emphasizing its use of political rights for the state to manipulate church leaders.

Close the lecture by reviewing the experiences of different groups in the West. Highlight for students the importance of understanding how these diverse encounters shaped post–Civil War American identity.

## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS AND DIFFICULT TOPICS

### 1. Indian assimilation was an easy, positive solution to the problem of Indian relations.

The effort to assimilate Native Americans was part of a long pattern of problematic and inconsistent Indian policy in the United States; however, in that moment it was perceived by its proponents as a positive alternative to systemic violence. It is possible that some students will find the benefits and drawbacks of assimilation efforts difficult to understand. Some may fail to see the harm in this tactic for nonviolently resolving a long pattern of conflict in the West. Others might not see how assimilation could have any positive side when those attempting to push for assimilation also decimated cultures.

To help students understand how assimilation came about, functioned, and both succeeded and failed, explain a little bit about U.S. Indian policy in the nineteenth century. At the outset, the United States did not devise any specific, consistent strategy for handling the fact that the land Americans wanted to inhabit was already occupied. You might refer to Jefferson’s belief that Native Americans had the potential to become civilized through assimilation, and explain that the five tribes affected by the Indian Removal Act had previously made extensive efforts at assimilation. For students who are unable to see the drawbacks of assimilation, explain that in spite of the fact that Indians who participated in these projects looked, sounded, and acted like Americans, they continued to face rejection, discrimination, and

maltreatment in the face of an American racial ideology that marked them as inferior. They were simultaneously too “American” to be Indian and too “Indian” to be American.

For the architects of assimilation tactics, the preservation of Indian culture was not a concern. Assimilationists, it is useful to remind students, were interested in promoting Christianity and a distinct style of civilization as a path to salvation for Native Americans and as a way to halt the spread of warfare.

When discussing the consequences of assimilation, use men like Charles Eastman and Geronimo as examples. You might also highlight the story of the Ghost Dance as one response to the Dawes Act. These examples will offer students a way of understanding the complicated successes and failures of assimilation.

## 2. The West was a male domain.

In popular imagination, the frontier was a male domain, and the nineteenth century is perceived as an era in which gender roles were strict and hard. Some students might have difficulty breaking away from those ideas in order to understand the ways in which the West offered women opportunities that were completely unavailable to them in the East. To help students move beyond any preconceived ideas, remind them that women have always had complex social obligations and that the ability to subsist and thrive often depended on women breaking away from traditional roles. It is also useful to remind students that the normative gender roles of male breadwinner and female homemaker were normally a middle- and upper-class luxury. For women who were poor and unmarried, moving west offered a chance to start a new life and to self-sustain. For married women who moved west with their husbands, the frontier offered them an opportunity to contribute to the well-being of their household and community in a new way.

Themes you might highlight to help students understand the complexity of women’s experiences in the West include female homesteaders, prostitutes, women who operated boarding houses, Mormon women, and women who became active in politics. Each of these groups offers a unique lens for understanding how women participated in and experienced the process of western expansion. It might also be helpful to explain to students how men’s perceptions of women’s work changed when the pace of daily life changed in the West.

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

### Class Discussion Starters

Have students discuss the ways in which big businesses expanded into the West. Ask them why individuals could not self-sustain in each industry, and then have them explain the process of corporatization in ranching, farming, and mining. Have them think about the ways in which the West represented a core component of American identity in the post–Civil War era, and ask them what it meant that the West transitioned from an individual domain to a corporate one. Ask them to think about what might have happened had individuals been better able to self-sustain, and ask them to consider whether the corporatization of the West was inevitable.

### Document Project Activities

#### Contradictory Perspectives

Break students into three groups and assign each group one of the following sets of individuals: James Michael Cavanaugh, Benjamin Butler, and Chief Joseph; or Helen Hunt Jackson and Zitkala-Ša. Have them imagine a conversation between the individuals in their assigned set, starting with the following question: Where do you come from, and what is your perspective on western expansion in the United States? Students should draw on the specific experiences of the individuals they represent and take on their perspectives in crafting their conversations, which should highlight the development of Indian policy in the American West. How do the conversations go? Do conflicts emerge, or are the conversations fruitful? How do individuals with dramatically different perspectives communicate over issues on which they disagree? Where appropriate, students should also draw on knowledge they gained from reading the chapter in order to inform their responses.

#### Letter to the Editor—Homework

After reading the documents, students should have a good understanding of the varying perspectives on Indian relations in the West. For homework, have them imagine that they have just read one of the documents in their local newspaper in the document’s year of origin. Then ask them to write a

letter to the editor in response, using their understanding of the issue at hand to either support or oppose the ideas in the document.

## Using Film and Television in the Classroom

Several episodes of PBS's *American Experience* are useful for this chapter: "Annie Oakley" (2006); "Custer's Last Stand" (2012); segments of *We Shall Remain* (2009), including "Geronimo"; "The Iron Road" (1990); segments of *The Mormons* (2007); and *Buffalo Bill* (2008). Each provides academic commentary and primary sources that narrate very clearly. While the PBS reality series *Frontier House* is not an academic source, watching a segment of the series might offer students an interesting opportunity to critique the interpretations presented and to imagine through the eyes of their contemporaries what life might have been like.

The Library of Congress's American Memory Web site has several clips from Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows that are each less than a minute long, as well as longer segments. The clips are from 1894—giving you a chance to briefly mention the development of photographic technology—and represent an interesting opportunity to provide students with specific, accurate visuals of the Ghost Dance, the Buffalo Dance, and Annie Oakley's sharpshooting. The clips are also useful for demonstrating the availability of a wide range of interesting primary sources on the Web. For the two Indian dances, ask students to think about why people feared these forms of cultural expression and what it meant that those dances were performed in a Wild West show.

## Historical Debates

For this debate, ask students whether post-Civil War western expansion was essential to rebuilding national unity, or if the patterns that emerged (poor pay for nonwhites, anti-Chinese sentiment, conflicts between whites and Spanish and Mexican cowboys and miners, and violence against Native Americans) simply created more divisions. Have students think about what it meant to be reunited in the post-Civil War era. Ask them to consider whether

discrimination and persecution were core pieces of American identity that were essential to rebuilding, or whether they were side effects that stood in the way of creating true American democracy.

## ADDITIONAL BEDFORD/ ST. MARTIN'S RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER 15

### PowerPoint Maps, Images, Lecture Outlines, and i>Clicker Content

These presentation materials are downloadable from the Media and Supplements tab at [bedfordstmartins.com/hewittlawson/catalog](http://bedfordstmartins.com/hewittlawson/catalog), and they are available on our Bedford Lecture Kit CD-ROM. They include ready-made and fully customizable PowerPoint multimedia presentations built around lecture outlines that are embedded with maps, figures, and selected images from the textbook and are supplemented by more detailed instructor notes on key points. Also available are maps and selected images in JPEG and PowerPoint format; content for i>clicker, a classroom response system, in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint formats; the Instructor's Resource Manual in Microsoft Word format; and outline maps in PDF format for quizzing or handouts. All files are suitable for copying onto transparency acetates.

### The Bedford Series in History and Culture

Volumes from the Bedford Series in History and Culture can be packaged at a discount with *Exploring American Histories*. Relevant titles for this chapter include:

- *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West Was Lost*, edited with an introduction by Colin G. Calloway, Dartmouth College
- *The McGuffey Readers: Selections from the 1879 Edition*, edited with an introduction by Elliott J. Gorn, Brown University
- *Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre: A Brief History with Documents*, Marilynn S. Johnson, Boston College

To view an updated list of series titles, visit [bedfordstmartins.com/history/series](http://bedfordstmartins.com/history/series).

**Online Study Guide at [bedfordstmartins.com/hewittlawson](http://bedfordstmartins.com/hewittlawson)**

The Online Study Guide helps students review material from the textbook as well as practice historical skills. Each chapter contains assessment quizzes and interactive activities accompanied by page number references to encourage further study.