

## I. Indians in the West

### a) White population in the West

1. In the 1860s, almost no whites lived between the frontier line & California
2. Exceptions are the Mormons in Utah, a few mining camps, occasional trading posts, and a few Spanish-Mexican settlements in the SW
3. Huge land area -- a giant square measuring 1000 sq. miles on each side
4. By 1890 -- the area will be converted into states and four territories: Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma as pioneers flood in.

### b) Indians Population in the West

1. Native American pop = 360,000 in 1860, most in the vacant territory west of the Mississippi
2. 1860-1890, white settlers pressing from both directions
3. "an inevitable clash...between an acquisitive civilization and a traditional culture" looms.

### c) Plains Indians

1. Numerous tribes of buffalo-hunting Indians on the Great Plains
2. Introduction of the horse by the Spaniards in the 16th century had transformed these cultures: more Nomadic and more inter-tribal warfare
3. Skilled riders and fighters

## II. Relations with the Indians

### a) Environmental factors undermine Indian culture

1. White settlers spread cholera, typhoid, smallpox
2. Reduction of the buffalo herds through hunting and grazing of livestock on the plains
3. Reduction of herds leads tribes to compete for an ever-diminishing supply, leads to increased warfare
  - e.g., Sioux Indians -- pushed from Minnesota to the Dakotas by displaced Chippewas; expand and conflict with Crow, Kiowas, and Pawnees.
  - Pawnee seek refuge from the Sioux by moving to a reservation in 1873

### b) Relations with the US Government

1. 1850s: Treaties of Ft. Laramie (1851) and Ft. Atkinson (1853)
  - these mark the beginning of the reservation system in the West
  - separate each tribe into boundaries, create large "colonies" of Indian tribes in the Northern and Southern Plains
  - concepts of confinement into an established area entirely foreign to Indian nations.
2. 1860s: intensification of the this process
  - Indians herded into ever smaller reservations: the Great Sioux Reservation in the Dakotas and the Indian Territory (Oklahoma)
3. In exchange for removal to reservations, US Government promises food, supplies, and that Indians will be left alone
  - corrupt Indian Agents often abuse their authority and supply tribes with defective provisions
  - settlers continue to flood into Indian lands - leads to conflict

## III. The Indian Wars

### a) Non-stop warfare between mid-1860s to 1890

1. fighting is fierce, occurs in various places throughout the west
2. atrocities committed by both sides
  - Indians mutilate victims, attack migrants passing through
  - Whites often kill innocent Indians in revenge, for sport, or to make sure they don't cause trouble

### b) The Indian Fighters

1. mostly Civil War veterans
  - immigrants
  - blacks = 1/5th of the soldiers on the frontier
  - Generals include William T. Sherman, Phillip H. Sheridan, and George Armstrong Custer (demoted to colonel after the Civil War)
2. face a tougher "enemy" than the colonists did
  - Plains Indians are highly mobile, better riders, and are often better-equipped than US soldiers (use repeating rifles, not muzzle loaders)

### c) Significant events in the Indian Wars

1. 1864 - Sand Creek Massacre
  - killed 400 Indians while under a flag of truce at Sand Creek, Colorado
  - men, women, children killed and mutilated

2. 1866 - Fetterman Massacre
    - Sioux Indians attempt to block construction of the Bozeman Trail to Montana's goldfields
    - ambush Capt. William J. Fetterman's command; kill 81 soldiers and civilians
    - leave no survivors, grossly mutilate the corpses
  3. 1868 - 2nd Treaty of Ft. Laramie
    - Government abandons construction of the Bozeman Trail, promise to not impede on the Great Sioux Reservation
  4. 1874 - Gold discovered in the Black Hills
    - expedition led by Col. George A. Custer
    - leads to swarms of settlers and prospectors streaming in the Black Hills (Sioux territory)
    - Sioux determined to fight; Sitting Bull among their leaders
  5. 1876 - Battle of Little Bighorn
    - Custer and 7th Cavalry given task of suppressing the Sioux and returning them to their reservation
    - all 264 of his officers and men (including Custer) were wiped out when they attacked 2500 Sioux at the Little Big Horn River
- d) Subduing the Tribes in the Far West & the Southwest
1. Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce
    - Gold discovered on the Nez Perce reservation in 1877
    - prompts US Government to reduce the Nez Perces territory by 90%
    - 700 Nez Perce led by Chief Joseph attempt to evade US authorities -- flee to the Canadian border where they hoped to join with Sitting Bull
    - surrender after a 3-month, 1700-mile trek, only 30 miles from the Canadian border
    - told they would be returned to Idaho, but are instead sent to Oklahoma - 40 % die of disease
  2. The Apache in the Southwest
    - the most difficult tribes to subdue
    - under Geronimo, they leave the reservation and are pursued by federal agents for 5 years
    - finally suppressed in 1886

#### IV. The Destruction of Indian Civilization - Factors contributing to the demise of the Indian way of life:

- a) Railroads
  1. cut through Indian territory
  2. bring unlimited #'s of settlers, supplies, troops, farmers, cattlemen, shepherds, miners
- b) Disease
- c) Extermination of the buffalo
  1. 15 million in western plains in 1865
  2. demand for buffalo hides and meat (especially tongues) leads to mass hunting of herds (railroads allow for these to be shipped back east)
  3. some killed simply for sport; shot from passenger trains
  4. By 1885, only a few thousand were left
- d) White efforts to "civilize the Indians" -- Forced Assimilation
  1. Helen Hunt Jackson's A Century of Dishonor (1881) helps create sympathy for Indians
  2. misguided do-gooders try to help the Indians by getting them to "walk the white man's road"
  3. Christian (especially Catholic) reformers run education operations on the reservations with little regard to Native American culture or religion
    - e.g. = The Carlisle Indian School in PA.: children sent away to learn English, white customs, etc.: Motto: "Kill the Indian and save the man"
- e) Dawes Severalty Act (1887)
  1. an attempt to civilize the Indians "for their own good"
  2. dissolves many tribes as legal entities & wipes out tribal ownership of land
  3. sets up individual land ownership by granting 160 acres to family heads
  4. promises full citizenship and full possessing of the land grant, if the Indians behave like "good white settlers" for 25 years.
  5. land not sold used to fund efforts to educate and civilize the tribes -- boarding schools and field matrons
  6. A failure...by 1900 Indians had lost 50% of the 156 million acres allotted.