Chapter 5: Changes on the Western Frontier

I. Cultures Clash on the Prairie (Chapter 5, Section 1)

A. The Culture of the Plains Indians

1. Native American cultures were much more advanced than easterners believed
2. Great Plain—grassland in the Midwest and extended into the west
3. The Horse and the Buffalo
   a. Horses (intro. By Span. In 1598) changed Native American life
      i. Native Americans left farms and hunted in plains
      ii. Native Americans wars followed when hunting groups infringed on other tribes’ hunting land
   b. Buffalo was the target hunt and they used everything productively
      i. Meat—high protein food
      ii. The Skull—considered sacred and used in rituals
      iii. Horns—carved into bowls and spoons
      iv. Bones—made into hide scrappers, tool handles, sled runners
      v. Hoofs—ground up and made into glue
      vi. Hides—made into clothing, tepees, arrow shields, etc.
4. Family Life
   a. Native Americans lived in small family groups
   b. Men trained to be hunters and warriors while women trained to cooks and clothing makers
   c. Native Americans believed in the balance of spirits and their cohesion in that world
   d. The tribe existed as a whole and not as individuals

B. Settlers Push Westward

1. Indians believed that land was not for people to own
2. Settlers believed that land could be owned and that people lost the right to their land if they did not “improve” it—opens the door for the taking of Native American lands
3. Many different people moved westward
   a. White Americans from East—mainly middle-class farmers moved in search of fertile soil while others (Civil War veterans from south) sought a new start.
   b. African Americans from South—moved to escape violence and seek a new life.
      Biggest rush was called Kansas Fever Exodus of 1870 in which 20,000—40,000 African Americans moved.
   c. Many European immigrants (including Irish, German, and Polish) also sought a new life in the west.
   d. Chinese immigrants also sought to farm in the west after gold rush was over.
4. The Lure of Silver and Gold
   a. The idea of finding gold attracted many westward
   b. Gold rush also pulled many new immigrants—including Irish, German, Polish, Chinese, and African-Americans

C. The Government Restricts Native Americans

1. By 1850s, the US government wanted to restrict all Native Americans to designated areas to allow for western expansion
2. Massacre at Sand Creek
   a. US pressured the Cheyenne and Arapaho to sell their land—most refused and clashed with the army.
   b. Forces fought the entire summer of 1864, before Chief Black kettle tired and wanted to surrender.
   c. Cheyenne and Arapaho were on their way to surrender when they camped at Colorado’s Sand Creek
   d. They were attacked by US troops (while warriors were out hunting) killing 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho (mostly women and children)
3. **Death on the Bozeman Trail**  
   a. Bozeman Trail was a path followed by settlers that went through Sioux hunting grounds.  
   b. After appealing to US government failed, Sioux warrior Crazy Horse ambushed Captain William J. Fetterman and killed 80 soldiers—became known as the Fetterman Massacre.  
   c. Treaty of Fort Laramie—US closed the Bozeman Trail and the Sioux agreed to live on a reservation along the Missouri River—Sitting Bull (Tatanka Iyotanka), leader of the Hunkpapa Sioux, never signed the treaty.

D. **Bloody Battles Continue**  
   1. The Treaty of Fort Laramie only temporarily stopped the fighting.  
   2. **Red River War**  
      a. Starting at the end of 1868, Kiowa and Comanche engaged in six years of raiding which led to the Red River War of 1874-1875.  
      b. US Army, under command of General Phillip Sheridan, herded friendly Indians onto reservations and attempted to kill all others.  

3. **Gold Rush**  
   a. Shortly after the Treaty of Fort Laramie, US secretly surveyed Sioux lands in the Black Hills for gold—which they found.  
   b. US tried to negotiate a new treaty to gain the land, however, the Sioux refused.

4. **Custer’s Last Stand**  
   a. Colonel George A. Custer and the 7th Calvary met the Sioux at the Little Bighorn River and the Native Americans were ready for them.  
   b. Custer and all of his men (over 200) were killed.  
   c. The Battle of the Little Bighorn forced US to take action and helped bring an end to Indian resistance.

E. **The Government Supports Assimilation**  
   1. Assimilation—the idea that Native Americans give up their own beliefs and take up those of white culture to blend (assimilate) in  
      a. Many government officials felt the only way to ensure Indian survival was absorption into “white America.”  
      b. Government established schools where kids were forced to speak only English, wear “proper” clothes, and to change their names to “American” ones.  
      c. Government officials tried to convince American Indians to farm but it did not take.  
      d. Dawes Act to try and encourage individualism.  
   2. **The Dawes Act**  
      a. Passed by Congress in 1887, sought to break up reservations and give land to individuals of the tribe (160 acres to each head of household and 80 acres to each unmarried adult).  
      b. Remaining lands were sold to white settlers; Native Americans received no money from the sale of this land.  
   3. **The Destruction of the Buffalo**  
      a. Tourist, fur traders, and soldiers shot buffalo for sport and then let them rot on the plains.  
      b. Horses and Cattle ate the pastures of the west thus decreasing the food for the buffalo.  
      c. Native Americans had little hope of maintaining an independent existence on the Plains without the buffalo.  
      d. 1800—65 million buffalo; 1890—fewer than 1,000 buffalo; 1900—one single buffalo herd.  

F. **The Battle of Wounded Knee**  
   1. Ghost Dance—was spiritual movement that could supposedly cause white settlers to vanish, dead Indian ancestors to return to life, the buffalo to return, and tradition Indian ways of life to return.
2. When the Ghost Dance spread to Sitting Bull’s reservation—the army surrounded his cabin and fire broke out killing 14 Indians including Sitting Bull

2. Wounded Knee
   a. US Army rounded up remaining Sioux (approx. 350) and took them to Wounded Knee Creek
   b. In attempting to get weapons from them, a shot went off which caused a chain reaction leading to the slaughter of 300 unarmed Native Americans—became known as Battle of Wounded Knee
      i. “I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back . . . I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch . . . And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people’s dream died there. It was a beautiful dream.”—Black Elk Speaks

G. MINING DISCOVERIES
   1. Starts with the California Gold Rush
      1. 1858 - Pike’s Peak, Colorado
      2. 1859 - Comstock Lode silver vein in Carson River, Nevada
      3. 1896 - Klondike district in the Yukon Territory, Canada
   2. Encouraged rapid migration to the West
   3. TYPES OF MINING
      1. Hydraulic mining – using water under pressure to strip away surface rock to expose the minerals beneath
         a. Caused flooding as sediment deposited in rivers
         b. Surface erosion destroyed habitats
      2. Hard-rock mining – sinking a deep shaft and extracting the gold directly from the rock usually by digging and blasting. Once brought to the surface, the rocks were crushed and the gold was separated out by using arsenic or mercury
         a. Released toxins into environment
         b. Caused erosion
         c. Use of timber in mine shafts and towns causes deforestation and erosion
      3. Mining comes to be dominated by large companies because these more effective methods were expensive
   4. Mining Towns
      1. Mining towns develop near discoveries and were characterized by:
         a. Almost entirely male residents
         b. Absence of law enforcement
         c. Vigilante committees to combat theft and violence
         d. Tension between ethnic groups; discrimination common
         e. Atmosphere of intense competition
      2. Mining towns eventually evolved into urban centers
         a. Attracted business that miners needed – stores, laundries, boarding houses, etc.
         b. As businesses grew, more women and children moved in which led to schools and churches being established
         c. Examples: Denver, Colorado; Boulder, Colorado; Carson City, Nevada; Helena, Montana
   5. ABANDONED MINING TOWNS
      1. While some mining camps flourished and became cities, others were abandoned, like this town in Colorado, when the mine no longer produced.

H. CATTLE BECOMES BIG BUSINESS
   1. Ranching became increasingly profitable
   2. Texas rangers learned how to handle the Texas Longhorns from Mexican rangers
3. The Texas longhorn was the most popular because it could travel long distances on little water, could live year-round on grass, and was immune to Texas fever.

4. Lots of vocabulary came from the Mexican Vaqueros
   1. Chaparreras—chaps—leather overalls
   2. Charqui—jerky—dried strips of meat
   3. Bronco caballo—rough horse—bronco
   4. Mestenos—mustang
   5. Rancho—ranch
   6. Also:
      a. Vanilla, mosquito, pronto, tuna, stampede, tornado, chili, cigar, shack, savvy, siesta, wrangler, lasso, lariat, corral, burro, canyon, bandit, fiesta, guerrilla, hurricane, matador, plaza, rodeo, vigilante, desperado, cockroach, buckaroo

5. GROWING DEMAND FOR BEEF
   1. After the Civil War the demand for beef surged
   2. Urbanization and the rise of the railroad was instrumental in the increase of beef consumption
   3. Chicago Union Stock Yards was a famous market after 1865
   4. Cattle towns popped up along the major trails (such as the Chisholm Trail)
   5. A railhead was a town located at a railroad station at the end of a particular trail

I. A Day’s Work—worked 10-14 hour days
   1. Roundup
      1. Cattle grazed open range during fall and winter
      2. In Spring, cowboys rounded up as many cattle as they could find and put them in a corral—kept ones with their brands and branded all those that were not branded
      3. Cattle was left in corral until so hungry that once on drive they would not run away, just eat
   2. The Long Drive—Cowboys drove the herd along a path to stockyard or a railhead

J. THE END OF THE OPEN RANGE
   1. Almost as soon as ranching became big business, the cattle frontier met its end
   2. Ranchers crowded the plains with too many cattle causing prices to drop
   3. When Joseph Glidden invented the barb wire, many ranches went to it which closed up the west
   4. Bad weather—a severe winter in 1885-86 and a drought in 1886 diminished many herds
II. Settling on the Great Plains (Chapter 5, Section 2)
   A. Settlers Move Westward to Farm
      1. Railroads Open the West
         1. 1850–1871, huge land grants to railroads for payment to lay track
         2. 1860s, Central Pacific goes east, Union Pacific west, meet in Utah
         3. By 1880s, 5 transcontinental railroads completed
         4. Railroads sell land to farmers, attract many European immigrants
      2. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR SETTLEMENT
         1. Federal land policy and the completion of the transcontinental railroad led to the rapid settlement of American west
         2. 1862 Homestead Act offers 160 acres free to any head of household
         3. 1862–1900, up to 600,000 families settle
         4. Exodusters—Southern African-American settlers in Kansas
         5. Railroad, state agents, speculators profit; 10% of land to families
      3. THE CLOSING OF THE FRONTIER
         1. 1872, Yellowstone National Park created to protect some wilderness (3,472 square miles)
         2. 1890s, no frontier left; some regret loss of unique American feature
      4. OKLAHOMA SOONERS
         1. In 1889, a major governmental land giveaway in what is now Oklahoma attracted thousands
         2. In less than a day, 2 million acres were claimed by settlers
         3. Some took possession before the government had officially declared it open – thus Oklahoma became known as the “Sooner State”
   B. SETTLERS ENCOUNTER HARDSHIPS
      1. The frontier settlers faced extreme hardships – droughts, floods, fires, blizzards, locust plagues, and bandits
      2. Despite hardships, the number of people living west of the Mississippi grew from 1% of the nation’s population in 1850 to almost 30% in 1900
      3. DUGOUTS & SODDIES
         1. Most settlers built their homes from the land itself
         2. Pioneers often dug their homes out of the sides of ravines or hills (Dugouts)
         3. Those in the flat plains made freestanding homes made of turf (Soddies)
      4. INCREASED TECHNOLOGY HELPS FARMERS
         1. 1837 – John Deere invented a steel plow that could slice through heavy soil
         2. 1847 – Cyrus McCormick mass-produced a reaping machine (harvester)
         3. Other inventions included a grain drill to plant seed, barbed wire, and corn binder
      5. FARMER EDUCATION SUPPORTED
         1. The federal government financed agricultural education
         2. The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 gave federal land to states to help finance agricultural colleges
            a. The Ohio State University
            b. Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (Texas A&M)
      6. Farmers in Debt
         1. Railroads, investors create bonanza farms— huge, single-crop spreads
         2. 1885–1890 droughts bankrupt single-crop operations
         3. Rising cost of shipping grain pushes farmers into debt
III. Farmers and the Populist Movement (Chapter 5, Section 3)

A. THE FARMERS’ PLIGHT—FARMERS UNITE

1. growing populations (cities) required food and farmers grew more
2. Supply eventually outgrew demand (decrease price)
3. farmers responded by buying more land and growing more crop to make money, resulted in even more surplus and decrease in prices
4. ECONOMIC DISTRESS
   1. Hard money—coins and paper money that was backed by gold (could be exchanged for gold)
   2. Greenbacks—paper money issued during Civil War but it could not be exchanged; it was worth less than hard money of the same value
      a. The nearly $500 million in greenbacks was taken out of circulation
      b. Increased the value of the money that stayed in circulation thus hurting farmers
3. Farmers (now in debt) had to pay back their loans in dollars worth more than the dollars they had borrowed
4. At the same time, they were receiving less money for their crops (i.e. wheat in 1867 was $2.00 a bushel and in 1887 it was $0.68 a bushel)
5. Bland-Allison Act of 1878 (Sherman Silver Purchase Act)—required government to issue more money into circulation
   a. Government had to buy and coin at least $2 million to $4 million worth of silver each month
   b. However, did not make a big enough impact in increasing the money in circulation
5. PROBLEMS WITH THE RAILROADS
   1. Farmers had to ship their crop to the cities
   2. Lack of competition led to railroads being able to overcharge (cheaper to ship from Chicago to England by boat than Dakotas to Minneapolis by rail)
6. THE GRANG MOVEMENT
   1. Farmers were unable to make changes up to this point because they were not united
   2. National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry (National Grange) was first major farmers’ organization
      a. Started as social organization by Oliver Hudson Kelly in 1867, the group soon focused on economic and political issues to help farmers
      b. Some members formed cooperatives in which they pooled their money and resources to buy and sell goods
      c. The Granges main focus turned to regulate railroad freight and grain-storage rates
3. Pressure from group forced many states to form commissions enforcing “Granger laws”
4. Interstate Commerce Act in 1887 prohibited railroads from giving secret rebates, or refunds to large shippers or charging more for short hauls than for long hauls over the same line
7. THE FARMERS’ ALLICANCE
   1. The Farmers’ Alliance was an alliance was made of three organizations:
      a. the National Farmers’ Alliance
      b. the all-white Southern Alliance
      c. the Colored Farmers’ Alliance
   2. The Alliance lobbied bank regulations, government ownership of railroads, and graduated income tax (tax on higher incomes at higher rate) an addition to railroad regulation, formed cooperatives
   3. Mary Elizabeth Lease from Kansas was a major Alliance leader
4. African American farmers began to stay away from Colored Farmers’ Alliance due to violence that broke out which resulted in the power and influence of the Colored Farmers’ Alliance to fade during the 1890s’

IV. The Rise and Fall of Populism

A. THE POPULIST PARTY PLATFORM

1. The Populist Party (The People’s Party): formed by farmers, labor leaders, and reformers
   a. Party called for
      i. Graduated income tax
      ii. Bank regulations
      iii. Government ownership of railroad and telegraph companies
      iv. Coinage of silver (which would increase money supply thus producing a rise in prices received for goods and services)
      v. Restrictions on immigration
      vi. Shorter workday
      vii. Voting reforms (direct election of senators)
   b. Lost presidential election of 1892 but got 10 members elected to congress

2. THE PANIC OF 1893
   a. Panic of 1893, a financial panic that sent stock prices plunging, occurred
   b. New discoveries of silver caused a decrease in value and a rush for people to exchange their currency for gold which caused a strain on Treasury’s gold reserves
   c. Silver was blamed and the Bland-Allison Act of 1878 (Sherman Silver Purchase Act) was repealed
   d. The panic also spread to the stock market where stock prices plunged
   e. By the end of the year, over 15,000 businesses and 500 banks had failed (more than 3 million unemployed)

3. MONEY QUESTION: SILVER OR GOLD
   a. “Silverites” favored bimetallism—monetary system which is backed by gold and silver
      i. Backing with both would make more currency which would make the value of a dollar worth less—more purchasing power
      ii. Supporters believed it would help stimulate the economy
      iii. Supporters also believed it would allow farmers and others to be able to pay off their debt to banks
   b. “Gold Bugs” favored gold standard—backing dollars solely with gold
      i. Supporters argued retaining the gold standard would provide a more stable currency
      ii. Industrialists and bankers would not lose money from the loans they had made

4. Backing Currency—Silver and gold standards
   a. From 1792, when the Mint Act was passed, the dollar was pegged to silver and gold
   b. In 1862, paper money was issued without the backing of precious metals, due to the Civil War—Greenbacks. Silver and gold coins continued to be issued and in 1878 the link between paper money and coins was reinstated
   c. In 1900, the bimetallic standard was abandoned and the dollar was defined as 23.22 grains of gold. Silver coins continued to be issued for circulation until 1964, when all silver was removed from dimes and quarters, and the half dollar was reduced to 40% silver. Silver half dollars were last issued for circulation in 1969
   d. Today, like the currency of most nations, the dollar is fiat money, unbacked by any physical asset—i.e., a holder of a Federal Reserve note has no right to demand an asset such as gold or silver from the government in exchange for a note. Instead, the currency is backed by future claims to wealth of American taxpayers and other income sources of the Treasury
   e. In September 2004, it was estimated that if all the gold held by the U.S. government (261.7 million ounces) were again required to back the circulating U.S. currency
($733,170,953,704), gold would need to be valued at $2,800/ounce (current value is $1,313/ounce)

5. Inflation
   1. Inflation is:
      a. decline in money’s value
      b. when purchasing power of money decreases—it takes more money to buy goods
      c. price of goods goes up
   2. The value of money changes according to the supply
      a. If the number of dollars in circulation increases while there is no increase in the amount of goods and services for sale, the dollar buys less (prices go up)
      b. If the number of dollars in circulation decreases while there is no decrease in the amount of goods and services for sale, the dollar buys more prices go down—deflation
   3. In the three decades after the Civil War, the production of agricultures supplies nearly quadrupled while the supply of money did not increase—prices dropped by two-thirds

6. “Cross of Gold”
   1. 1896 Presidential Election, Republicans stand behind Gold Standard and nominate Ohioan William McKinley
   2. Democrats support bimetallism and William Jennings Bryan
   3. Bryan delivered his famous “Cross of Gold Speech at the Democratic Convention
   4. Having behind us the producing masses of this nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold—Democratic convention speech, Chicago, July 8, 1896

7. The End of Populism
   1. Bryan loses support for election
   2. “Gold Bug” democrats nominated their own candidate
   3. Populists would not support his Vice-Presidential candidate (Maine banker Arthur Sewall) and nominated their own candidate (Thomas Watson of Georgia)
   4. Support in cities waivered, as citizens believed bimetallism would cause inflation—cost of goods to go up
   5. McKinley wins the 1896 Presidential Election
      a. McKinley received about 7 million votes while Bryan received about 6.5 million
      b. With McKinley’s election, Populism collapsed