

Settlement of the West

The Western Career of Wild Bill Hickok

James Butler Hickok was born in Troy Grove, Illinois on 27 May 1837, the fourth of six children born to William and Polly Butler Hickok. Like his father, Wild Bill was a supporter of abolition. He often helped his father in the risky business of running their "station" on the Underground Railroad. He learned his shooting skills protecting the farm with his father from slave catchers. Hickok was a good shot from a very young age, especially an outstanding marksman with a pistol.

He went west in 1857, first trying his hand at farming in Kansas. The next year he was elected constable. In 1859, he got a job with the Pony Express Company. Later that year he was badly mauled by a bear.

On 12 July 1861, still convalescing from his injuries at an express station in Nebraska, he got into a disagreement with Dave McCanles over business and a shared woman, Sarah Shull. McCanles "called out" Wild Bill from the Station House. Wild Bill emerged onto the street, immediately drew one of his .36 caliber revolvers, and at a 75 yard distance, fired a single shot into McCanles' chest, killing him instantly. Hickok was tried for the killing but judged to have acted in self-defense. The McCanles incident propelled Hickok to fame as a gunslinger. By the time he was a scout for the Union Army during the Civil War, his reputation with a gun was already well known. Sometime during his Army days, he backed down a lynch mob, and a woman shouted, "Good for you, Wild Bill!" It was a name which has stuck for all eternity.

On July 21, 1865, in the town square of Springfield, Missouri, Hickok killed Davis Tutt, Jr. in a "quick draw" duel, perhaps the first of its kind. Hickok first met former Confederate Army soldier Davis Tutt in early 1865. Hickok often borrowed money from Tutt.

They were originally good friends, but they eventually fell out over a woman. Hickok refused to play cards with Tutt, who retaliated by financing other players in an attempt to bankrupt him. According to the accepted account, the dispute came to a head when Tutt called in a loan from Hickok. Tutt took Hickok's watch, which was lying on the table, as collateral. Hickok warned Tutt not to wear it or he, Hickok, would shoot him. The next day, Tutt appeared in the square wearing the watch prominently, and Hickok warned Tutt not to approach him while wearing the watch. Both men faced each other sideways in the dueling position and both fired almost simultaneously. Tutt's shot missed, but Hickok's didn't. Hickok's shot hit Tutt in the chest. Tutt called out "Boys, I'm killed", ran onto the porch of the local courthouse and then back to the



street where he collapsed and died. Hickok calmly approached the dying Tutt and recovered his watch.

After being wounded in a skirmish with Cheyenne Indians in 1868, Hickok ended his scouting career and became the U. S. Marshal of the wild town of Hays City, Kansas. In his first month as sheriff, he killed two men in gunfights. The first was Bill Mulvey, who "got the drop" on Hickok. Hickok looked past him and yelled, "'Don't shoot him in the back; he's drunk," which was enough distraction to allow Wild Bill to win the fight. The second was a cowboy named Samuel Strawhun. Hickok and his Deputy were called to a saloon where Strawhun was causing a disturbance at 1am. After Strawhun made remarks against Hickok, Wild Bill drew his pistol and shot him in the head. Strawhun died instantly. At Strawhun's inquest, despite "very contradictory" evidence from witnesses, the jury found that Hickock had shot the man in self defense.

On July 17, 1870, Marshal Hickock was involved in a gunfight with disorderly soldiers of the 7th U.S. Cavalry. Two troopers, Jeremiah Lonergan and John Kile set upon Hickok in a saloon. Lonergan pinned Hickok to the ground while Kile put his gun to Hickok's ear, however it misfired allowing Hickok to reach his own guns. Lonergan was shot in the knee while Kile, who was shot twice, died the next day. After several more shooting incidents, the citizens of Hays city elected someone else. Wild Bill moved on. On April 15, 1871, Hickok became marshal of Abilene, Kansas, replacing the former marshal, who had been killed on November 2, 1870.

While working in Abilene, Hickok and Phil Coe, a saloon owner, had an ongoing dispute that later resulted in a shootout. On October 5, 1871, Hickok was standing off a crowd during a street brawl. Coe appeared on the street and fired two shots. Hickok ordered him to be arrested for firing a pistol within the city limits. Coe explained that he was shooting at a stray dog, but suddenly turned his gun on Hickok and fired at him and missed. Wild Bill drew and killed Coe. Immediately thereafter, Hickok caught a glimpse of someone running toward him and quickly fired off two more shots in reaction, accidentally killing his Deputy Marshal who was coming to his aid. This event haunted Hickok for the remainder of his life. Incidentally, the voters of Abilene decided that they no longer wanted a gunslinger for a lawman. Hickok was dismissed and would never work as a lawman again.

According to some reports, he met and married actress Agnes Lake in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1875, but Bill never liked the tame life. He soon left for the wild and rowdy Black Hills mining town of Deadwood, Dakota Territory. There, in the Black Hills, Calamity Jane would also claim to be married to him, but no proof for this has ever been established, and most historians consider it another one of Calamity's many tall tales.

Martha Jane "Calamity Jane" Canary was an expert with a horse and rifle. She was also an expert at cussing and drinking, two "sins" which did nothing to endear her to other women. Calamity Jane became one of the Old West's most famous, and colorful, characters. Often clad in men's clothes, Jane warned that to offend her was to court calamity.

On 2 August 1876, Wild Bill Hickok sat playing poker in the Number Ten Saloon in Deadwood. He was older, slower, and suffering the early stages of blindness, so he normally sat with his back to the wall, where he could study the room. On this day, his back was to the door. Jack McCall, a drunken prospector and gambler who had lost \$110 to Hickok the previous day, walked up behind Wild Bill. McCall yelled, "Take that, Hickok," and immediately shot him in the back of the head with a .45. The hand that Wild Bill held, two pairs—black aces and black eights—has gone down in history as the "Dead Man's Hand." Calamity, on learning of Bill's

death, stormed all over Deadwood looking for McCall. Wild Bill Hickok lies buried in Mount Moriah Cemetery in Deadwood, South Dakota.

In many ways James Butler Hickok is a poster child for the Western legend. He has a lot in common with other Western heroes like, Wyatt Earp, “Buffalo” Bill Cody, Doc Holliday, and even bad boys like Jesse James and John Wesley Hardin. They were impatient wanderers who moved from place to place, from job to job. Folks like Hickok, Earp and Doc Holliday often hopped from one side of the law to the other. They were morally ambivalent, personifications of John Wayne’s famous maxim that, “A man’s gotta do what a man’s gotta do.” For example, during his lifetime Wyatt Earp was a buffalo hunter, a real estate speculator, a saloon and brothel owner, a stagecoach driver and guard, a vigilante, a U.S. marshal, a saloon owner, a gambler, sometimes a lawman and sometimes a pretty shady character. Often his actions, even as a lawman, are outside of the acceptable limits of Eastern— and even western—social norms. We have seen that Wild Bill’s frequent shootings as marshal in Hayes City, Kansas, were so extreme that the voters of the county refused to elect him to a second term. But whichever side of the law they chose, they lived violent lives. They also exemplified the basic traits that opened up the West in the later 19th century.

While the South was being humbled by the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the North was expanding its industrial clout, a new economic and social order was beginning to develop in the great Trans-Mississippi West. A number of factors contributed to the settlement of the West. Today we will look at some of those factors, and at the West in general.

Contributing factors:

1. Courage and perseverance of the American pioneers.
2. Business interests that provided capital and incentives to encourage settlement.
3. A government policy of support for western settlers and business interests
4. Advancements in technology from the extension of the railroad into the West to the development of the revolver and repeating rifle

The Western Frontiers

the Great Plains and Prairie, the Desert Plateaus and High Mountains possessed great resources. But, before they could be exploited the West had to be made suitable for settlement and exploitation. The railroads helped to make this possible, but the West would not be safe for white settlers until the American Indians were pacified. Migration to the West took place in four stages, four basic American frontiers:

1. Trappers and Explorers—The first trappers and explorers began to move into the Trans-Mississippi region in the early 1800s. They were loners, wildly independent and eager to get away from the cities and social stratification of the East. But for all of their independence, trappers worked together in large camps called fur brigades in order to defend themselves.
2. Miners—As news of the discovery of gold in California in 1849 went east, individuals who were eager to find gold and other metals went west in response. Rich mineral deposits were found in several locations in the West, and prospectors hastened to move west to “strike it rich.” Few did. The Mining frontier began in 1849, and continued almost up to the 20th century.
3. Cattlemen—The opening of the rail lines into the Great Plains after the Civil War brought a new cattle industry to Texas and Oklahoma. A large area of the Southwest would be devoted to the

cattle business until the 1880s. The development of the cattle industry brought Americans new heroes, heroines and villains—almost all of them cowboys.

4. Farmers—This last group to cross the Mississippi in search of new livelihood were the most numerous, and would become the dominant strain in the West. These settlers on the Great Plains and the fertile Pacific West would eventually tame the West and those less civilized products of the earlier migrations.

Over the next few days we'll take a look at the post war mining, cattle and farming frontiers. But first, next time, we'll look at the Indians of the West and the contacts and conflicts between whites and natives.



James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok's last hand.

Indians

The arrival of whites from the East quickly changed the lives of the Western Indians. The white man brought almost unendurable hardships to the Indians—disease (measles and smallpox), the near extinction of the bison, war, and the reservation system. The aims of the settlers of the West were incompatible with the lifestyles and culture of the Plains Indians. Settlers wanted to partition the Great Plains into farms, rail lines and towns. The Indians needed the Plains open so that they could follow the migration of their most important subsistence product, the bison. Both settlers and Indians were at an impasse in terms of goals from the start. The Plain Indians only numbered some 225,000 at the end of the Civil War, but they were probably the most effective light cavalry in the world, and they resented the encroachment of whites. While some tribes were generally friendly toward the whites (Crow, Arapaho, Blackfoot), others (Sioux, Apache, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa) were increasingly hostile. As many as 30,000 US troops served in the West to defend settlers and other U.S. interests from the Indians.

From 1865 to about 1890, there was almost constant warfare between Indians and whites in the West. The fighting was fierce. Many of the regular army troops were veterans of the Civil War. Among the Civil War veteran leaders were Generals Sherman, Sheridan ("the only good Indian is a dead Indian") and Custer. All of these commanders had won their glory in the Civil War and gathered further fame in the West. Often the most savage white commanders were those who had achieved only dubious fame in the Civil War. Perhaps, felt that war against the Indians offered another chance for glory and advancement. Amazingly ambitious, but never promoted to full general, George Armstrong Custer provides one such example. Another may be Colorado militia Colonel J. M. Chivington.

The Sand Creek Massacre, November, 1864

At Sand Creek, Colorado, in 1864, Colonel J.M. Chivington's Colorado militia massacred some 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians who thought they had been promised immunity. They were even flying the American flag and a white flag of truce. Assured by the US government's promises of peace, Chief Black Kettle sent most of his warriors hunting, leaving only around 60 men in the village, most of them too old or too young to participate in the hunt, so there were no braves, called the Dog Soldiers, when Chivington attacked.

Colonel Chivington, ironically an ordained Methodist minister and leading abolitionist preacher before the Civil War, was among the most hostile military commanders when it came to Indians. He once stated:

Damn any man who sympathizes with Indians! ... I have come to kill Indians, and believe it is right and honorable to use any means under God's heaven to kill Indians.

The U.S. forces lost 15 killed and more than 50 wounded, mostly due to friendly fire caused by their heavy drinking just before the engagement. In testimony before a Congressional committee, Chivington argued that 500-600 Indians were killed and that only a few of them were women or children. A Cheyenne witness said that about 53 men and 110 women and children were killed. One of Chivington's officers, Captain Silas Soule, believed that the Indians were peaceful, and refused to follow Chivington's order and told his men to hold fire.

Chivington declared that his forces had fought a battle with hostile Indians and the action was initially celebrated as a victory. However, the testimony of Soule and his men forced an

investigation into the incident, which concluded that Chivington had acted wrongly. The testimony of Soule and his men supported the Cheyenne's contention that most of the dead were women and children.

Chivington was condemned for his part in the massacre, but he had already left the Army, and the general post-Civil War amnesty meant that criminal charges could not be filed against him. But an Army judge publicly stated that the Sand Creek massacre was "a cowardly and cold-blooded slaughter, sufficient to cover its perpetrators with indelible infamy, and the face of every American with shame and indignation." Public outrage at the brutality of the massacre, was intense and it may have convinced the US Congress to later reject the idea of a general war against the Indians of the midwest.

Conflict with the Sioux: The Sioux nation of the Northern Great Plains was one of the most powerful and numerous tribal groups in the West. They were also a nation of soldiers. Their technique of light cavalry combat was excellent. The Sioux would become a difficult problem for Army commanders in the Trans-Mississippi West.

The Sioux and Little Big Horn: The Sioux, or Lakota peoples of the northern Great Plains were originally tribes that lived along the western shores of lakes Michigan and Lake Superior. They lived in permanent villages and had a mixed subsistence. In the spring and summer they fished the lakes and planted corn, beans and squash. In the fall, their men went west to hunt bison on the neighboring plains. The tribes were collectively called the Dakota when French explorers first encountered them in the late 1600s. By about 1700, the Dakota had acquired the horse both from trading with whites and from occasional raids against white settlers. The acquisition of the horse caused an abrupt and revolutionary change in the Dakota tribes.

- ★ they became more aggressive, learning and innovating light cavalry warfare.
- ★ they moved west, taking lands from the plains tribes like the Mandan, Cheyenne and Kiowa tribes that had settled the plains to their west.
- ★ they became a nomadic people moving with the bison constantly migrating herds of bison.

By 1765, one tribe of Lakota, as they called themselves by now, led by Chief Standing Bear discovered the Black Hills. A decade later, in 1775, the Oglala and Brulé Lakota tribes moved into the Black Hills. In 1776, they defeated the Cheyenne who were living in the area, and gained control of the land which became the center of the great Lakota universe. The Sioux remained a nomadic people, but the center of their culture and, by the mid-1800s, the mythical, claimed home became the Black Hills of South Dakota.

The relationship between the Lakota and Americans was usually pretty strained. They had ordered the expedition of Lewis and Clark not to sail through their land, but had agreed to let them pass when the party prepared to fight for the right. The Lakota sort of expanded the definition of their territory when they claimed that Fort Laramie was being built on their land. In 1851, the builders of Fort Laramie concluded a treaty with the Lakota that accepted the Indians' claim to control of the hills in the north in return for safe passage of settlers on the Oregon Trail. In 1859 and 60 the Lakota worried about increased expansion of settlers first into the western Great Lakes, then into eastern South Dakota. The Indians raided a number of settlements, killing settlers and taking supplies. In response to these raids, on September 3, 1855, 700 soldiers under American General William S. Harney attacked a sedentary Dakota village, killing 100 men, women, and children. Other wars followed in 1862–1864. Refugees

from the "Dakota War" in Minnesota fled west to their Lakota allies in the Dakota Territory, the war followed them.

In the late spring of 1876, members of all of the tribes of the Sioux nations were invited to Camp Robinson near the Black Hills to accept a treaty from the US Government. The treaty was probably contrived to anger the Sioux. If it was not, it showed just how little understanding of the Sioux the US Government had. The treaty would require that the Sioux nation give up all claims to their sacred Black Hills, and move to reservations. After about two days of negotiations, the Sioux simply disappeared into the Black Hills.

Col. George Armstrong Custer (below right) and elements of the 7th Cavalry were moved into the area of the Rosebud river to scout any Indian activity. Custer's expedition was a scouting party. He had been ordered not to engage any large bodies of Indians, only to report any intelligence from the scouting action back to general Alfred Terry who was moving in to the Rosebud with a much larger force.

On the morning of June 25th, while advancing into the valley of the Little Bighorn River, Custer's column sighted a number of Indian teepees along the bank of the river. Custer split his column into three groups, one group went north along the gullies and bluffs toward Greasy Grass Hill, another group under his own command advanced on the Indian settlement. A third column under command of Major Reno approached the settlement from the North. Reno's command group blundered into what turned out to be an enormous camp of Lakota and numerous allies. Reno was forced to withdraw. Custer's column was forced to withdraw north where they met the other column at Greasy Grass (below).

There, on the slope of the Greasy Grass Bluff, Custer's entire command (about 250) men was slaughtered by the Sioux and their allies, some 2,000 warriors.

The courageous resistance of the Sioux was gradually broken by constant fighting after the Battle of Little Bighorn. By 1880, the Sioux no longer posed a serious threat to white expansion.



Other Indian Conflicts: The Nez Perce Indians of Idaho were pressured into warfare in 1877, when gold seekers trespassed upon their beaver streams. Chief Joseph was their noble and unusually humane leader. These Indians were captured on their way to Canada.

Fierce Apache tribes of Arizona and New Mexico were the most difficult to subdue. Led by Geronimo, they were pursued into Mexico by federal troops. They were finally persuaded to surrender after their women had been exiled to Florida.

Extermination of the Buffalo: The Plains Indian depended heavily upon the buffalo for their food, clothing, shelter, tools and even fuel for their fires. The slaughter of the herds of American Bison by whites between 1865 and 1885 was an important factor in the decline of the Indians of the Plains. Buffalo robes and skins were in great demand in the 20 years after the Civil War. Hunters such as William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, hunted the bison all over the plains. Cody claimed that he had killed more than 4,000 bison in less than 2 years. By 1885 only a few small herds remained of the great bison population that had probably numbered some 15 million in the years just after the Civil War. Although the American bison survived under strict government supervision, the Indians who had depended upon the bison for their very existence were forced to give up their lifestyle or die.

A National Indian Policy: In the 1880s, a more rational policy of dealing with Indian tribes began to develop. Unfortunately, it began to develop only after a long period of needless wars, fraudulent treaties and dishonest dealing with the Indians had taken place. For almost two decades the Department of War had advocated the extermination of Western Indians and had worked at cross purposes with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (in the Department of the Interior). The Bureau had frequently complicated things by providing Indians with weapons where were given to the Indians for the purpose of hunting. These weapons were all too often used to shoot soldiers and settlers.

The Reservation System: As warfare between the US and the Indian tribes dwindled, an increasing number of Indians were placed on reservations. There, they found themselves completely dependent upon the federal government for their welfare. Federal support was never adequate and was often made worse by corrupt Bureau administrators who helped themselves to the money and supplies that were meant to support the natives. The major goal of the reservation administration was to force the Indians into an agricultural economy. By 1885 there were some 170 reservations in the United States and its territories. Administration of the reservations was often very corrupt. The government agents made fortunes by supplying Indians with liquor (actually prohibited on reservations), shoddy goods, and bad food. Agents and real estate speculators cheated Indians out of their lands in fraudulent land deals and cattlemen, railroad companies and miners, with the help of the federal and state governments encroached on reservation land when it suited them.

The Reform Movement: In 1881 Helen Hunt Jackson wrote *A Century of Dishonor*, a book about the scandalous treatment of the American Indian. A small, but vocal reform movement began to develop in support of better treatment of the Indian. Unfortunately, the movement itself was quickly split between a group that wanted to hasten the assimilation of the Indian into the mainstream of American agriculture, and a group of that wanted to preserve the native Indian life and customs. Initial federal reform consisted of creating larger appropriations for the education of young Indians in arts and crafts and agriculture. In the belief that Indians should be better prepared to enter the American mainstream,

The Dawes Act: Congress passed the Dawes Act in 1887. This act granted 160 acres of land and US citizenship to any heads of Indian families if they would abandon their tribal membership. The right to dispose of the land was withheld for 25 years. Citizenship was generally not granted to Indians until they had lived on the land for twenty-five years. Congress had two motives for the creation of the Act.

1. They desired to make Indians Americans—that is to assimilate American Indians into the mainstream of American culture and agriculture
2. Congress wanted to make more federal lands available to white settlers. Reservation land not needed for allotment under the Dawes Act would be made available to white settlers.

The Burke Act: Cattlemen and settlers who were seeking western land profited from the Dawes Act more than the Indians. The Burke Act was created to try to correct the defects of the Dawes Act. It was passed in 1906. The Burke Act made the waiting period for citizenship shorter so long as the Indians on the land could prove that they had managed the land effectively. Both of these laws illustrate what had become of the new maxim for the treatment of Indians by the federal government—"The only good Indian is an Indian who is just like a successful white small farmer." In 1924, the federal government granted citizenship to all Native Americans.



Frederic Remington : The Buffalo Hunt 1890. Picture used for educational purposes, not for commercial use.

The Mining, Cattle and Farmers' Frontiers

Among the strongest attractions that drew people into the West were the discoveries of rich mineral resources in several areas beyond the Mississippi. During the third quarter of the 19th century vast mineral resources were discovered and quickly exploited. The first mineral strike in the West was made at Sutter's Mill near present day Sacramento, California, in 1848. This gold strike brought eager prospectors from all over the East to California in 1849 (the 49'ers). More gold deposits were discovered in the Pikes Peak District of the Colorado Territory in 1858. In 1859 the Comstock Lode, a rich silver deposit, was discovered near what became Virginia City, Nevada. Deposits of gold were also found in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Copper was found in Montana in 1881. As the 1880s progressed more deposits were found in the West. Where these resources were found, mining towns grew to cater to the needs of the miners who worked near them. Saloons, dance halls, bordellos, hotels and gambling houses grew up rapidly in these towns, all with the same purpose—to offer diversions and entertainment to the solitary miners, and at the same time to separate them from their hard-earned wealth. In some cases these “boom towns” became permanent settlements that gradually became tamed as settlers moved in and demanded schools and churches and public order. In other cases (until the minerals ran out) the towns a brief, wild prosperity and simply faded into ghost towns as the wealth ran out and the prospectors moved on. Towns like Virginia City, Deadwood Gulch (South Dakota) and Tombstone, Arizona, grew up as a direct result of rich mineral discoveries. The wild lifestyles of their citizens, both good and bad, like Wyatt Earp, Doc Holiday, Wild Bill Hickcock, and Calamity Jane became a part of our national folklore. These characters acquired reputations and personalities which were bigger than life. Mining soon became the major industry of the mountainous regions of the West. Mineral resources, although abundant, required special techniques to exploit and process. In most mineral regions mining did not become profitable on a wide scale until heavy machinery was introduced by large mining companies. Since the introduction of this machinery was very costly, profits went more often to Eastern investors than Western prospectors.

The mining frontier produced the following important results:

1. The growth of settlement brought new states into the Union. (California 1850; Nevada 1864; Colorado 1876; Montana 1889; Wyoming 1890)
2. Provided enough gold and silver that the money supply kept pace with the expansion of American business enterprise.
3. Offered new opportunities for investment in American industry. This form of investment was often very speculative, but fortunes could be made by those willing enough to invest, and lucky enough to pick a winner.
4. Gave many settlers in new communities a chance to experiment with how to handle the problems of rapidly growing towns, and procedures of self-government and law enforcement in often chaotic circumstances.
5. Leading to improvements in western transportation and postal service. Improvements included stage coaches, the Pony Express, and finally railroads.

The Cattle Frontier

As the threat of Indians grew smaller in the Southwest (especially Texas and Oklahoma) and as the railroads began to move into the area, the cattle country became an important feature.

Cattlemen discovered that the treeless grasslands of the Southern Great Plains were ideal for grazing herds of cattle. After the Civil War, large herds of cattle were driven from Texas to the rail centers in Wyoming, Kansas and Missouri. From these rail centers the cattle were shipped to cities in the Midwest and East where the beef was processed for American tables.

The Life of the Cowboy: The cowboy's work was difficult and lonely. During the long drives, cowboys "lived in the saddle." They wore clothes and carried equipment that were chosen for their practicality and durability. Important items were blue jeans, a broad-brimmed hat, rifle and pistol, lariat, high-heeled boots (the heel was designed to keep the foot from slipping out of the stirrups), and spurs. The most strenuous work a cowboy did was during the roundup and drive.

Trails and Cow Towns: Cattlemen saw great advantages in fattening their herds on the grasslands of Texas on the free open range. But they had to drive the cattle to the nearest rail centers in order to get them to eastern markets. The most important trails they used were:

1. Goodnight-Loving (named after Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving) to Cheyenne, Wyoming
2. The Western Trail to Dodge City, Kansas
3. The Chisolm Trail ending in Ellsworth, Abilene, or Wichita, Kansas
4. The Seedly Trail (also called the Shawnee Trail) ending in either Kansas City or Sedalia, Missouri

Peak and Decline of the Cattle Business:

The period from 1875 to 1885 was the heyday of the long cattle drives. During this time some 300,000 cattle were driven annually from Texas to the midwestern stockyards. At its peak profits from the great drives were enormous (as much as 40 percent). A number of factors combined to cause the decline of the cattle business in the Southwest.

1. The advance of the farmers' frontier and subsequent fencing in of the open range
2. Legislation in some states that required that Texas cattle be inspected before they could be driven across state boundaries



3. Competition with cattle farmers in the Midwest, especially Wisconsin and Minnesota
4. High freight rates at the railroad centers
5. Over-expansion of the cattle industry. As more and more cattle were driven to market, the trade became less profitable.

The Farmers' Frontier

It was farmers rather than miners or cattlemen who became the dominant force in the American West. Farmers became more numerous and carried more political clout as their numbers increased. They gradually put an end to the chaos of the mining towns, and fenced in the open range, which impeded cattle grazing. They were blessed with government benefits and new inventions that made settlement possible. Among the most important inventions were the revolver and readapting rifle, and barbed wire. The new weapons gave the farmer and his family the ability to protect themselves from Indians, bandits, and cattlemen. Barbed wire was used to keep cattle off of farmlands. Another important factor in the settlement of the West by the farmer was government land policies.

1. The Homestead Act: Passed in 1862, the Homestead Act provided any head of a household who was a citizen, or intended to become one, with 160 acres of surveyed land. The homesteader had to pay a small registration fee to obtain the land and reside on the land for at least five years to obtain ownership. By 1880 almost 20 million acres had been claimed by homesteaders under this program.
2. The Timber Culture and Desert Land Acts: Although the Homestead Act provided ample land for those who wished to farm the Midwest or the humid South, the acreage involved was too small for those who wanted to settle in the drier lands of the Great Plains and Far West. The Timber Culture and Desert Land Acts provided additional land allotments to persons who
 - a. Used a portion of their land to plant trees (timber culture) or
 - b. Agreed to irrigate their lands. If they agreed to irrigate the settler could purchase extra acreage at \$1.25 an acre.
3. The Morell Act gave generous allotments of land to the states for the development of agricultural and mechanical colleges. Some of this acreage was made available to developers and settlers at reasonable prices so that the states could raise money to support the A & M colleges.
4. The transcontinental railroads that had received large land grants from the federal government made some of this land available to settlers and developers. They did so because this created farm towns and production facilities close to the rail lines.

New Methods and Tools: Two problems faced the early settlers in the West—how to keep cattle off productive farmland and home defense.

1. How to keep cattle off productive farm land—Hedges and ditches would not work and the lack of lumber on the Plains made it too expensive to build fences that would keep cattle out. Regular fence wire would not stop cattle. In 1857 Joseph Glidden patented barbed wire. The barbs on the wire would discourage cattle from pushing against the fence. Finally farmers had a solution to the problem of cattle destroying their fields. Needless to say, cattlemen were not very happy about barbed wire.
2. Home defense—Home defense was made possible by the development of inexpensive, dependable repeating weapons. In or shortly after 1874, Colt made their famous military .45 caliber pistol available to the American consumer. It was known by various nicknames (peacemaker, equalizer, plow handle) and became a favorite weapon of lawmen, badmen, and

farmers. Slightly later (around 1876) the Winchester repeating rifle became available to the American public. It was an excellent weapon, both for hunting (some of the Plains farmer's meat supply was still wild) and for home defense. An interesting note: Although the Winchester repeating rifle was far superior to the single-shot carbine issued by the military (the Springfield carbine), the army refused to issue them. In some cases (among them Little Big Horn) hostile Indians had repeating rifles while the calvary still had the slow, jam prone Springfield carbine.

Cattlemen vs. Farmers: Cattlemen viewed farmers as a threat to their very existence. Farmers competed with cattle for grazing land and for water. In the 1880s this rivalry between cattlemen and farmers broke into open "Range Wars." Farmers gradually won this war as law and order was restored by federal lawmen and as the market for cattle decreased.

Agrarian Immigrants: Although the bulk of settlers of the Mississippi Valley and the Great Plains were from older eastern states, some foreign immigrants also settled on the eh prairie. Thousands of farmers from Europe, primarily Scandinavia and Germany, settled in Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas.

The Closing of the Frontier

The farmers who had settled the lands of the West brought an enormous area of the West under cultivation. By 1880, although there was still a great deal of land left to settle, the Bureau of the Census announced that the American frontier was no more. By definition the frontier was a large inhabitable area whose population was less than two per square mile. The frontier was considered by some historians (Frederick Jackson Turner) to be the greatest force in the shaping of American democracy. Turner theorized that the frontier acted as a safety valve that allowed those who were disillusioned by the East to move west away from the populous, conservative eastern cities. He also felt that democracy and individual liberty thrived in areas that were sparsely populated. After 1880, the West would become an area of conservation and consolidation. America would look beyond the Pacific Ocean for expansion.