Chapter 18 – Americans Move West

Section Notes

1. Miners, Ranchers, and Railroads
2. Wars for the West
3. Farming and Populism

Quick Facts

Causes and Effects of Westward Expansion
Effects of the Transcontinental Railroad
Chapter 18 Visual Summary

Video

The Impact of the West on American Culture

Maps

Routes West
Native American Land Loss in the West, 1850-1890
Skills Page Maps: Migration

Images

Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad
The Plains Indians
Pioneer Family
Deadwood, South Dakota

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Farming and Populism

The Big Idea

Settlers on the Great Plains created new communities and unique political groups.

Main Ideas

- Many Americans started new lives on the Great Plains.
- Economic challenges led to the creation of farmers' political groups.
- By the 1890s, the western frontier had come to an end.

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Laying the Groundwork for homesteading

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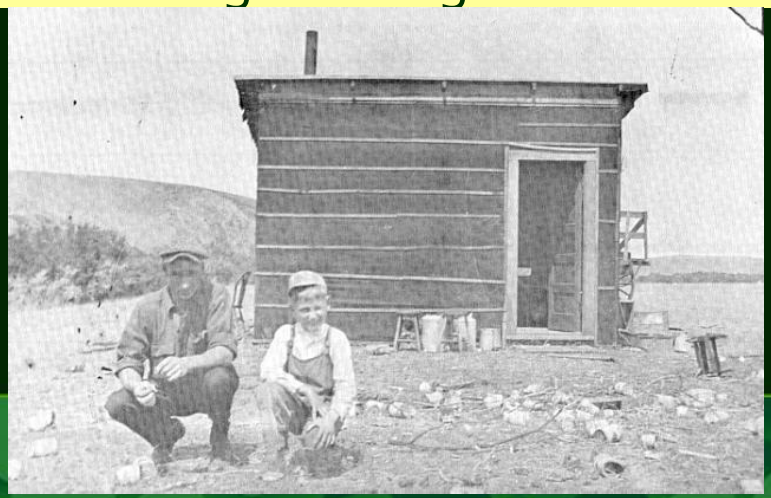
Main Idea 1: Many Americans started new lives on the Great Plains.

- Two important land-grant acts helped open the West to settlers in 1862.
  - The **Homestead Act** gave government land to farmers.
  - Get 160 Acres and live on land for 5 years.
  - The **Morrill Act** gave federal land to states to sell in order to fund colleges to teach agriculture and engineering.



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How did the Homestead Act and the Morrill Act open up the West?

Land grants to small farmers: land for states to sell to build colleges

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Every foot in sight can be plowed

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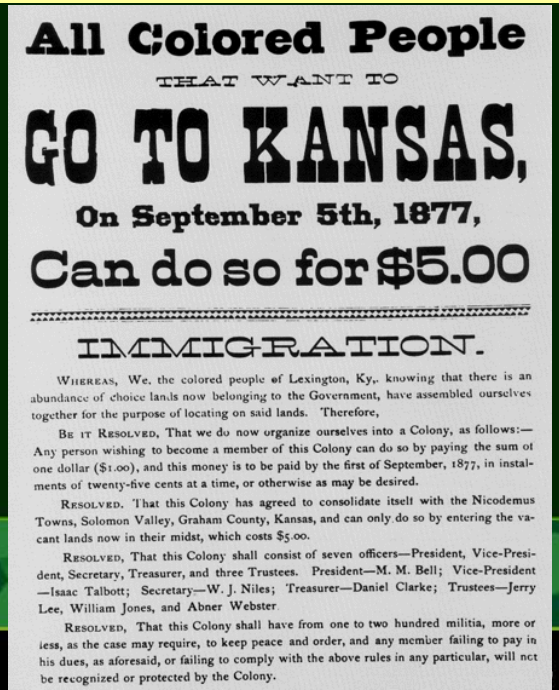
Main Idea 1:
Many Americans started new lives on the Great Plains.

- People who made new lives in the West included women, immigrants(Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, German and Czech), and African Americans.
  - Thousands of southern African Americans, known as **Exodusters**, moved to Kansas.



All Colored People

THAT WANT TO

GO TO KANSAS,

On September 5th, 1877,

Can do so for $5.00

IMMIGRATION.

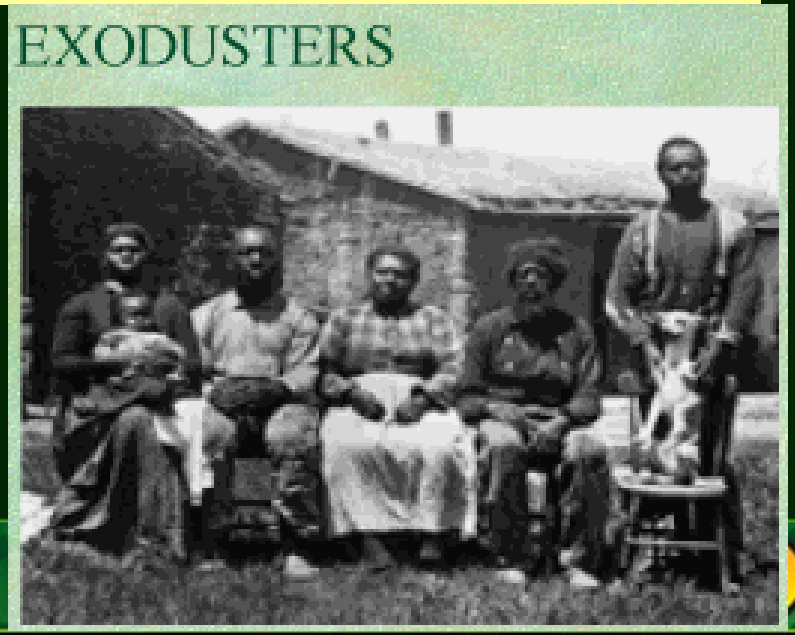
WHEREAS, We, the colored people of Lexington, Ky,. knowing that there is an abundance of choice lands now belonging to the Government, have assembled ourselves together for the purpose of locating on said lands. Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we do now organize ourselves into a Colony, as follows:—Any person wishing to become a member of this Colony can do so by paying the sum of one dollar ($1.00), and this money is to be paid by the first of September, 1877, in instalments of twenty-five cents at a time, or otherwise as may be desired.

RESOLVED. That this Colony has agreed to consolidate itself with the Nicodemus Towns, Solomon Valley, Graham County, Kansas, and can only do so by entering the vacant lands now in their midst, which costs $5.00.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall consist of seven officers—President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Trustees. President—M. M. Bell; Vice-President—Isaac Talbott; Secretary—W. J. Niles; Treasurer—Daniel Clarke; Trustees—Jerry Lee, William Jones, and Abner Webster.

RESOLVED, That this Colony shall have from one to two hundred militia, more or less, as the case may require, to keep peace and order, and any member failing to pay in his dues, as aforesaid, or failing to comply with the above rules in any particular, will not be recognized or protected by the Colony.



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Frontier Women

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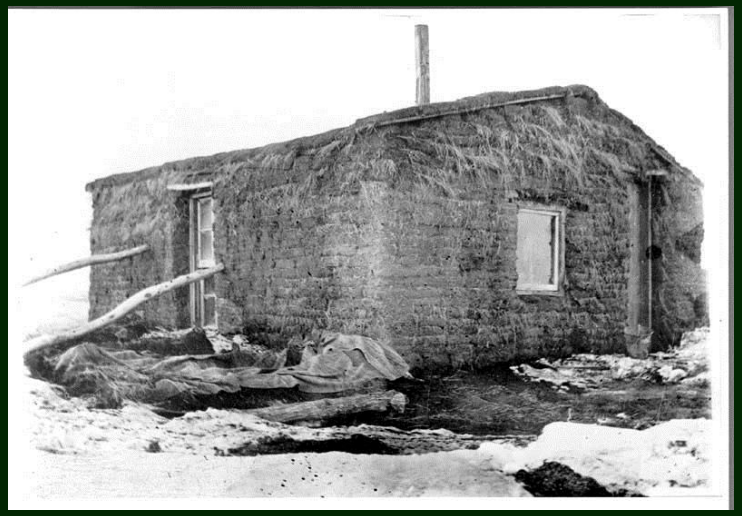
New Lives in the West

Farming

- Weather was Extreme
- Breaking up tough grass on the Plains earned farmers the nickname "**sodbusters**."
- 1880s—Mechanical farming was becoming common.
- 1890s—Farmers began **dry farming**, growing hardy crops such as red wheat.
- Work more quickly with few workers.
- Crops were shipped east by train and then overseas; the Great Plains became known as the breadbasket of the world.



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What were some of the challenges of farming on the Plains?

Extreme weather, tough soil

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Family Life

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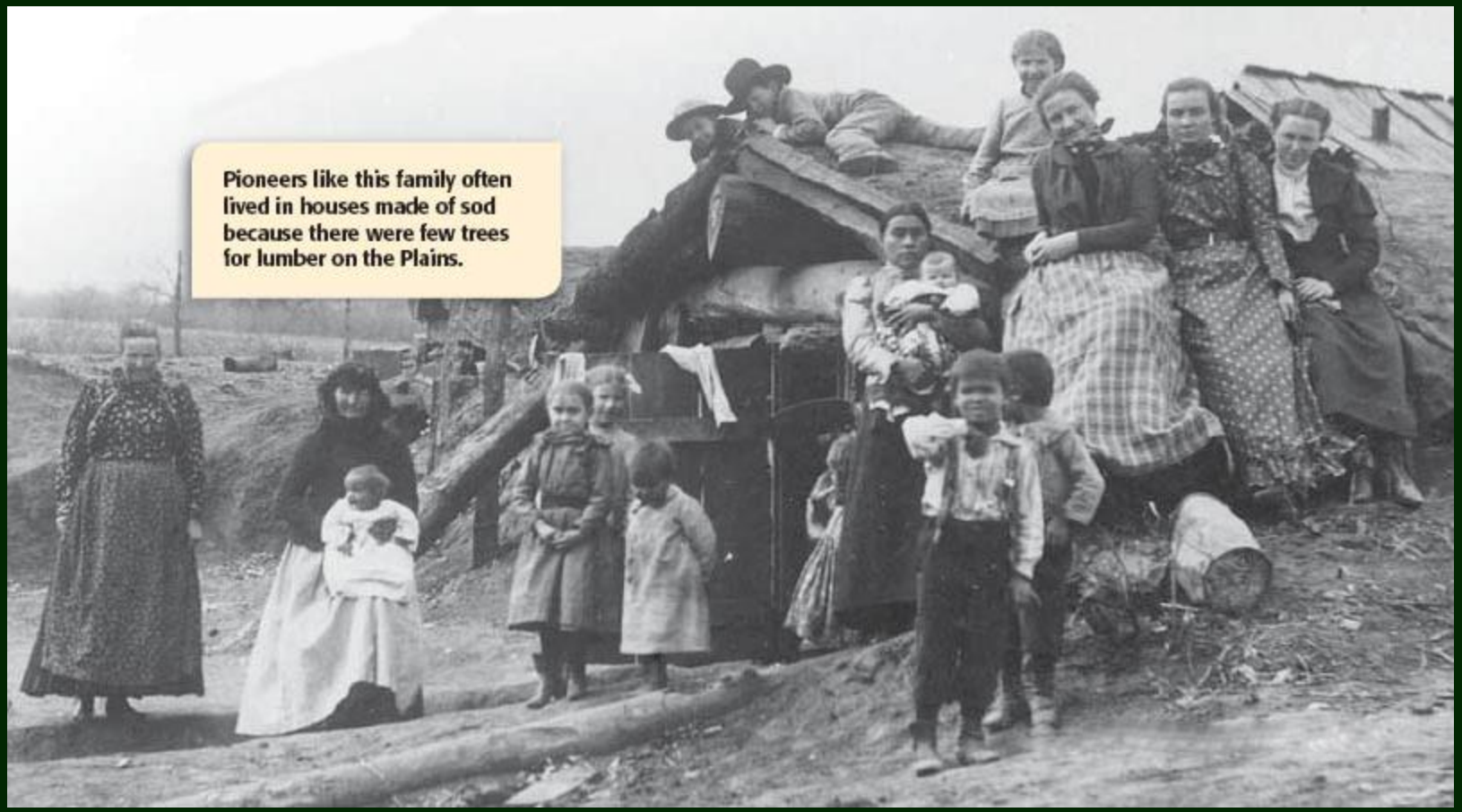

Pioneers like this family often lived in houses made of sod because there were few trees for lumber on the Plains.

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New Lives in the West

Building Communities

- Women were an important force in settling the frontier.
- Est. Women Suffrage and Temperance.
  - **Annie Bidwell**, a founder of Chico, California, supported many social causes.

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Who was Annie Bidwell?

Community founder who supported a variety of moral and social causes

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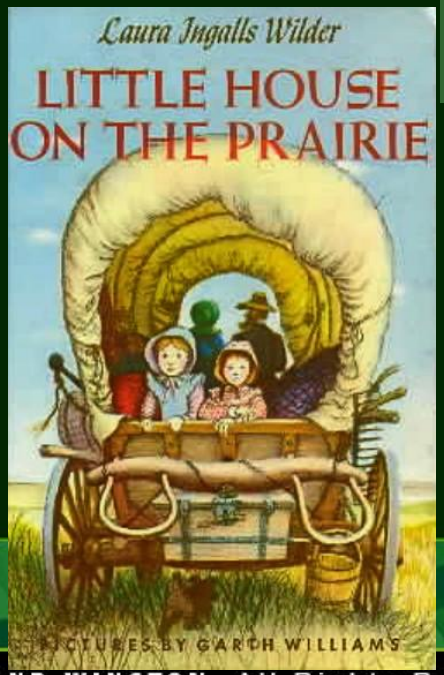
New Lives in the West



Building Communities

- Harsh life on remote farms led farmers to form communities, creating churches and schools.
- Children helped with many chores on the farm.
- Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote books about prairie life.

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Main Idea 2:
Economic challenges led to the creation of farmers' political groups.

- The United States was growing during the period 1860-1900.
  - The population more than doubled.
  - The number of farms tripled.
  - Farmers could harvest a bushel of wheat 20 times faster in 1900 than in 1830.

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Main Idea 2:
Economic challenges led to the creation of farmers' political groups.

- Farm incomes fell.
  - More farms and greater productivity led to overproduction, which led to lower prices.
  - Many farmers lost their farms and homes and became tenant farmers.
  - By 1880, one-fourth of all farms were rented by tenants.
- Farmers formed associations to protect their interests.

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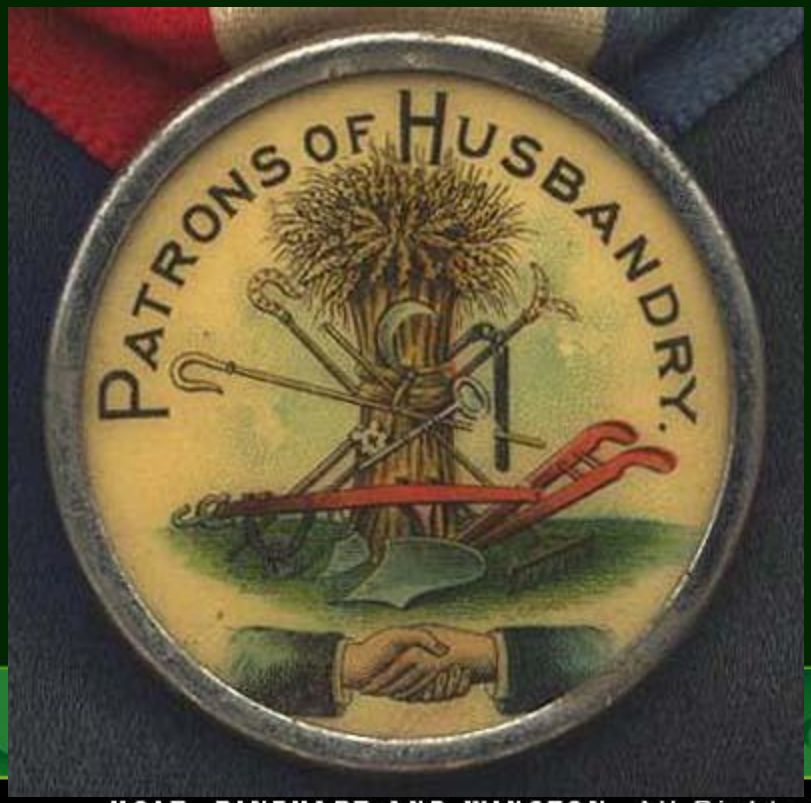
The National Grange and the Railroads

The **National Grange** of the Patrons of Husbandry was a social and educational organization for farmers.

The Grange called for laws to regulate railroad rates.



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Why did farm income fall?

Overproduction led to falling crop prices.

What is the National Grange?

Social and educational organization for farmers.

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The National Grange and the Railroads

The Supreme Court ruled:

- 1877 that the government could regulate railroads
- 1886 that government could regulate only companies doing business across state lines

Congress passed the Interstate Commerce Act in 1887 to provide national regulations for trade, but could not enforce them.

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Free Silver Debate and the Populist Party

Free Silver Debate

- The U.S. had been on the gold standard since 1873, resulting in **deflation**.(Decrease in money supply and overall lower of price)
- Many farmers supported the unlimited coining of silver and the backing of paper currency with silver.
- Congress passed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act to increase the amount of silver purchased for coinage, but it did not help farmers much.

WHAT THE GOLD BUGS ARE DOING FOR UNCLE SAM.

The Situation; The Result of Interest Bearing Bonds and Sherman

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Free Silver Debate and the Populist Party

Populist Party

- The Farmers' Alliances formed the Populist Party to have power and a candidate that would represent them.
- It supported government ownership of railroads and communication systems, free silver, and labor regulation.

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Populist Party

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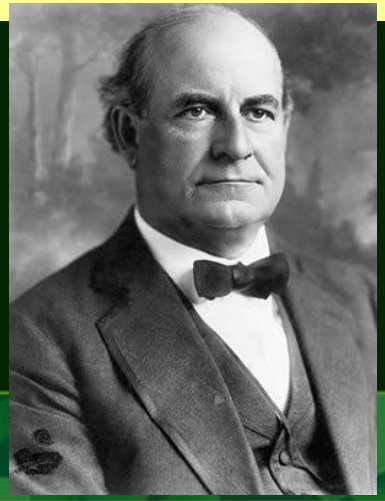
William Jennings Bryan

- Politician from Nebraska; served in Congress
- Supported free silver coinage
- Populist
- Influential speaker and newspaper editor
- Democratic candidate for president in 1896
- Populists supported Bryan instead of splitting the silver vote.



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William Jennings Bryan

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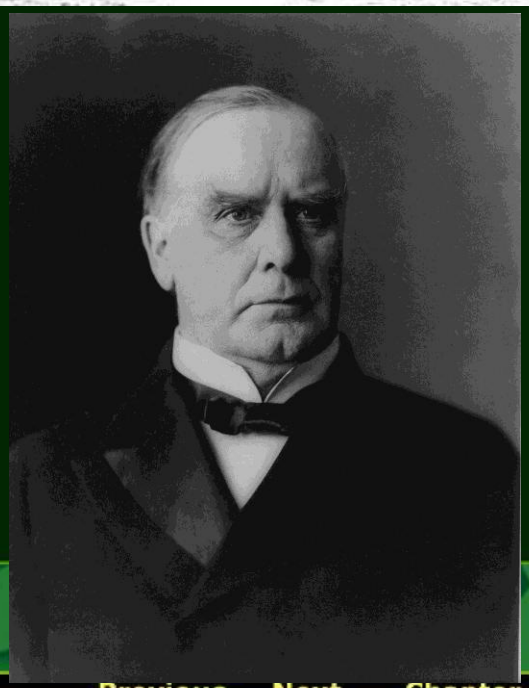
Free Silver Debate and the Populist Party

Populist Party

- It supported **William Jennings Bryan** in the election of 1896, but his defeat marked the end of the Farmers' Alliance and the Populist Party.
- Election of 1896
- Republican Candidate William McKinley.
- Democrat Candidate William Jennings Bryan.
- Populist support Bryan.
- McKinley won the Election.



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Main Idea 3:
By the 1890s, the western frontier had come to an end.

- Only small portions of the Great Plains remained unsettled by 1870.
- U.S. officials allowed homesteaders to settle the Indian territory in what is now Oklahoma in 1889.
  - Settlers claimed more than 11 million acres of former Indian land (belonged to Creek and Seminole) in the Oklahoma land rush.
  - Land Rush 50,000 raced to claim land.
  - Sooners- People claimed land before rush began.

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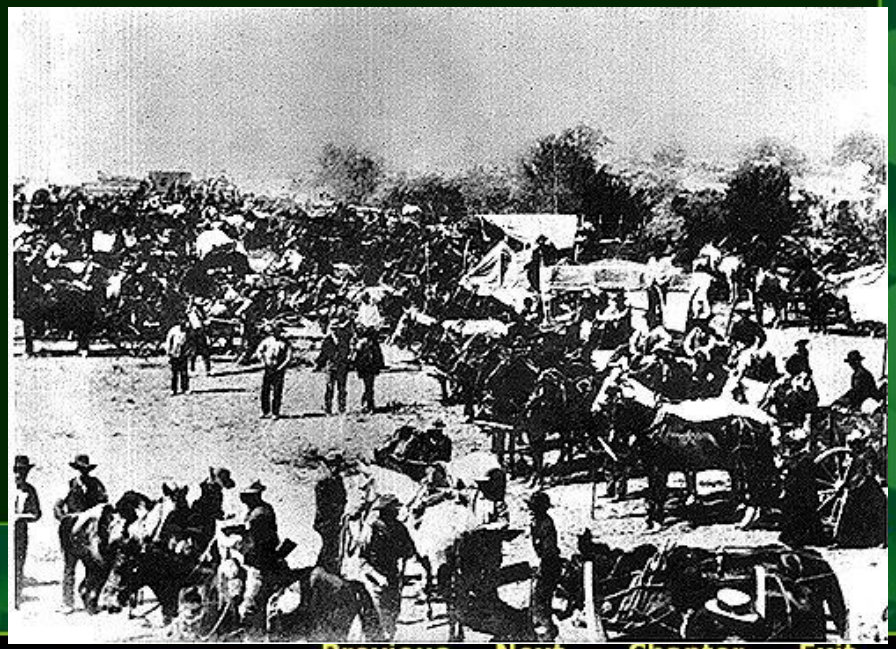

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Main Idea 3:
By the 1890s, the western frontier had come to an end.

- The frontier had ceased to exist in the United States by the early 1890s.

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Visual Summary

Use the visual summary below to help you review the main ideas of the chapter.

QUICK FACTS

The American West

As settlers moved to the West, they came into conflict with American Indians. The U.S. government defeated Indian resistance and moved many tribes to reservations.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 opened the West to more settlement. Gold and silver strikes also drew people hoping to get rich.

The railroads helped make the rise of the Cattle Kingdom possible. Cowboys drove huge herds of cattle from ranches to railway stations to be shipped to the East.

Farmers settled the Great Plains in large numbers. They overcame many hardships to make the Plains the breadbasket of America.

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