Chapter 26
The Great West & the Agricultural Revolution

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Expanding Into the Great Plains
- Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and “Indian Territory,” or Oklahoma
  - Areas in which settlers turned out in record numbers
- A clash of cultures on the plains
  - Native Americans numbered about 360,000 in 1860
  - As Whites expand westward, Native Americans are forced to scatter
  - Numbers severely decline
    - Buffalo hunted to near extinction through wholesale butchery by whites

Expanding Into the Great Plains
- Native Americans are forced onto reservations
- Small pockets of humanitarians advocated for the kind treatment of the Indians although they had no more respect for traditional Indian culture than those who sought to exterminate them
- United States military is sent in to move or exterminate Native Americans
  - “Buffalo Soldiers” were African American soldiers who served in the United States Calvary
Expanding Into the Great Plains

• Native Americans strike back
  – Fetterman Massacre – Sioux war party attempting to block construction of the Bozeman Trail
  – Massacred and mutilated 81 soldiers and civilians
  – General Custer leads an expedition into the Black Hills of South Dakota in search for gold
  – The aggrieved Sioux took to the warpath, inspired by the influential and wily Sitting Bull
  – Custer is completely wiped out by Sitting Bull’s war party
    • One of very few Indian victories in the Great Plains wars
    • United States Military hunts down and destroys all Native Americans involved

Expanding Into the Great Plains

• Apache tribes led by Geronimo were the most difficult to subdue (AZ and NM)
  – Apache women were exiled to Florida ultimately causing the Apache to give in
  – The settled in OK and became successful farmers
• The Dawes Act – 1887
  – Dissolved many tribes as legal entities
  – Tried to make rugged individualists of the Indians
  – Wiped out tribal ownership of land
  – Promised Indians US citizenship in 25 years
  – American culture and religion forced upon the Native Americans
Expanding Into the Great Plains

• After exploring much of the West, geologist John Wesley Powell warned in 1874 that land west of the 100th meridian could not be farmed without extensive irrigation

• In 1890, when the superintendent of the census announced that a stable frontier line was no longer discernible, Americans were disturbed because the idea of an endlessly open West had been an element of America’s history from the beginning

• Western cities like Denver and San Francisco served as safety valves by providing home for economically struggling farmers, miners and easterners
  – Most Western cities become safety valves

Expanding Into the Great Plains

• The Farm becomes a factory
  – In the last decades of the 19th century the volume of agricultural goods increased and the price of these goods decreased
  – Farmers were slow to organize and promote their interest because they were, by nature, highly independent and individualistic
  – Farmers had to specialize in one crop which presented many problems
    • Farmers become extremely unhappy
  – The National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry— better known as the Grange— was organized in 1867
    • Original purpose was to stimulate self-improvement through educational and social activities

Expanding Into the Great Plains

• The Farmers’ Alliance
  – Originally formed to break the economic grip of the railroads through farmers’ cooperatives
  – Unfortunately, the Alliance weakened itself by ignoring the plight of landless tenant farmers, share-croppers, and farm workers
  – Even more debilitating was the Alliance’s exclusion of blacks, who counted for nearly half the agricultural population of the South
  – Out of the Farmers’ Alliance is born a new political party known as the Populists
  – The severe economic depression of the 1890’s strengthened the Populists’ argument that wage earners and farmers alike were victims of an oppressive economic system
Expanding Into the Great Plains

• Coxey’s Army and the Pullman Strike
  - Jacob Coxey marches on Washington DC to fight for the rights of the unemployed
  - The Pullman Palace Car Company was hit hard by depression
  - The workers finally struck—in some places overturning Pullman cars—and paralyzed railway traffic.
  - Grover Cleveland sends in federal troops to break up the strike on the grounds that it was preventing the transit of US mail
  - Richard Olney – US attorney general who brought in federal troops to crush the strike
  - Eugene V. Debs – Head of the American Railway Union that organized the strike
  - George Pullman – Owner of the “palace railroad car” company and the company town where the strike began
  - John P. Altgeld – Governor of Illinois who sympathized with the striking workers

Election of 1896

• Republican William McKinley defeats Democrat William Jennings Bryan
  - Major issue of the Election of 1896 was the free and unlimited coinage of silver
  - Populists supported Bryan which essentially had them abandoning their identity
  - Populists who stayed true to their colors supported Mark Hanna because they feared the radicalism of William Jennings Bryan and his free silver cause
  - The outcome was a resounding victory for big business, the big cities, middle-class values, and financial conservatism
  - The 1896 election marked the last time a serious effort to win the White House would be made with mostly agrarian votes
  - Bryan goes on to lose three presidential elections

Ch. 26 Quiz – Period 3

• What animal was hunted to near extinction during this time?
• What were “Buffalo Soldiers?”
• What tribe did Geronimo lead?
• What Native American chief lead the charge to defeat General Custer?
• What was the Dawes Act?
Ch. 26 Quiz – Period 5

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