

The Taming of the “Wild West”

Factors that make possible the settlement of the west

- **Manifest Destiny**
- **Genocide of the Indians**
- **Government Assistance**
 - **Homestead Act, Timber Culture Act, Desert Land Act, Timber and Stone Act**
 - **Land grants to railroads**
- **Transcontinental Railroads**
- **Technological Advances**

Essential Questions

1. What national issues emerged in the process of closing the western frontier?
2. Why does the West hold such an important place in the American imagination?
3. In what ways is the West romanticized in American culture?

Key Tensions

Native
Americans



Buffalo Hunters
Railroads
U. S. Government

Cattlemen



Sheep Herders

Ranchers



Farmers

Key Tensions

Ethnic
Minorities



Nativists

Environmentalists



Big Business Interests
[mining, timber]
Local Govt. Officials
Farmers
Buffalo Hunters

Lawlessness of
the Frontier



"Civilizing" Forces

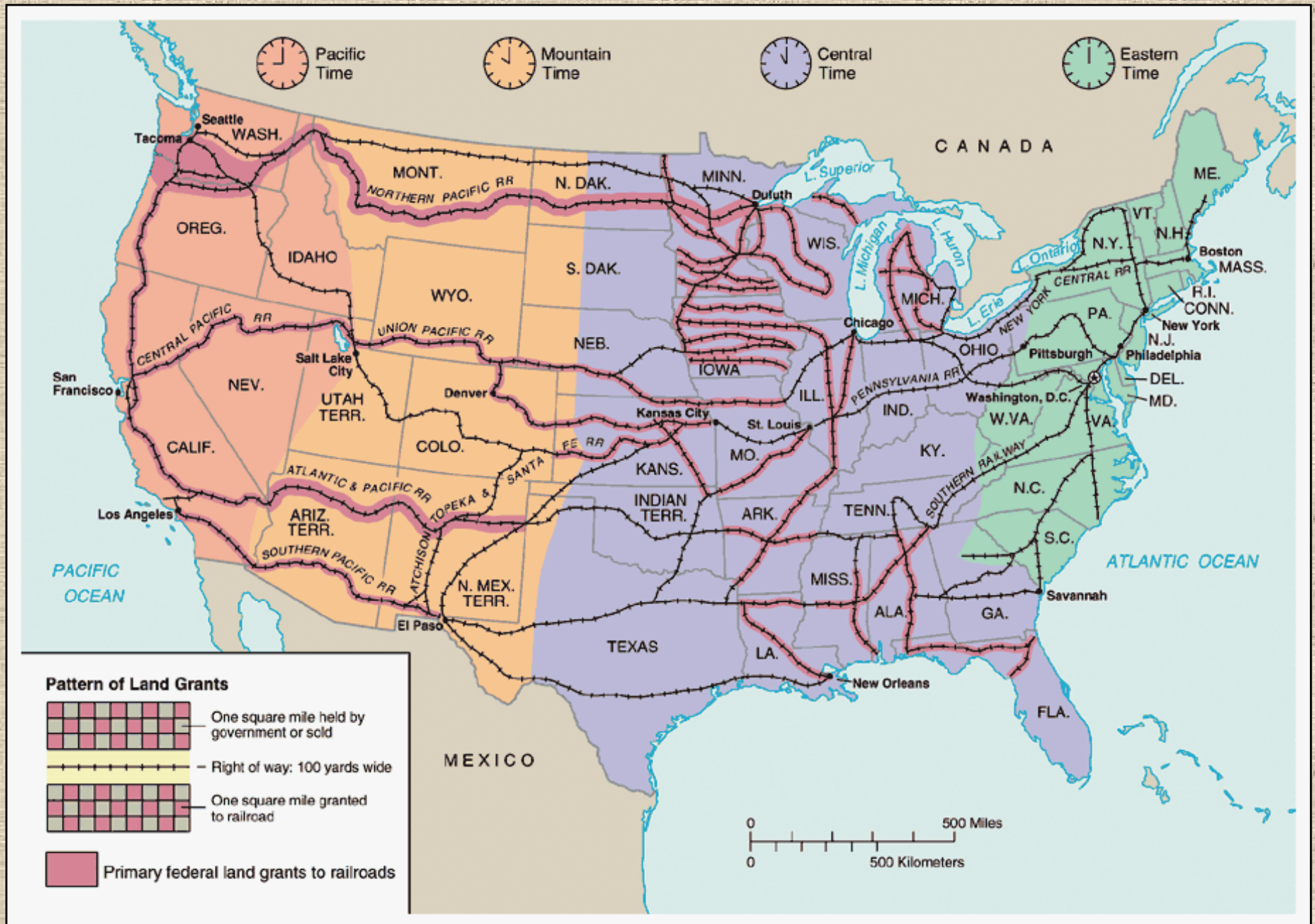
[The "Romance" of the West]

the
Railroad
builders

Land for the Taking: Speculators and Railroads

- Most land acquired by wealthy investors
- Speculators send agents to stake out best land for high prices
 - river bottoms
 - irrigable areas
 - control of water
- Railroads settle grants with immigrants

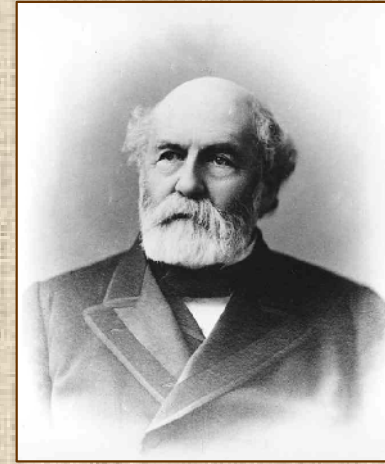
Railroad Construction



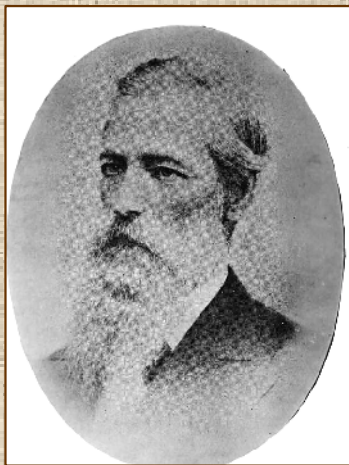
"The Big Four" Railroad Magnates



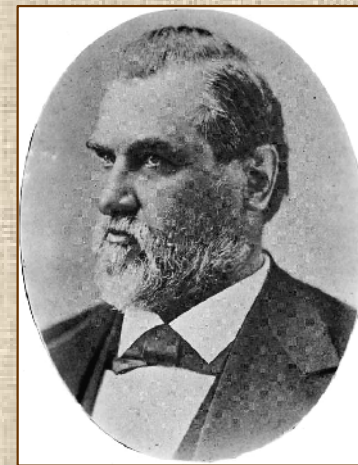
Charles Crocker



Collis Huntington



Mark Hopkins



Leland Stanford

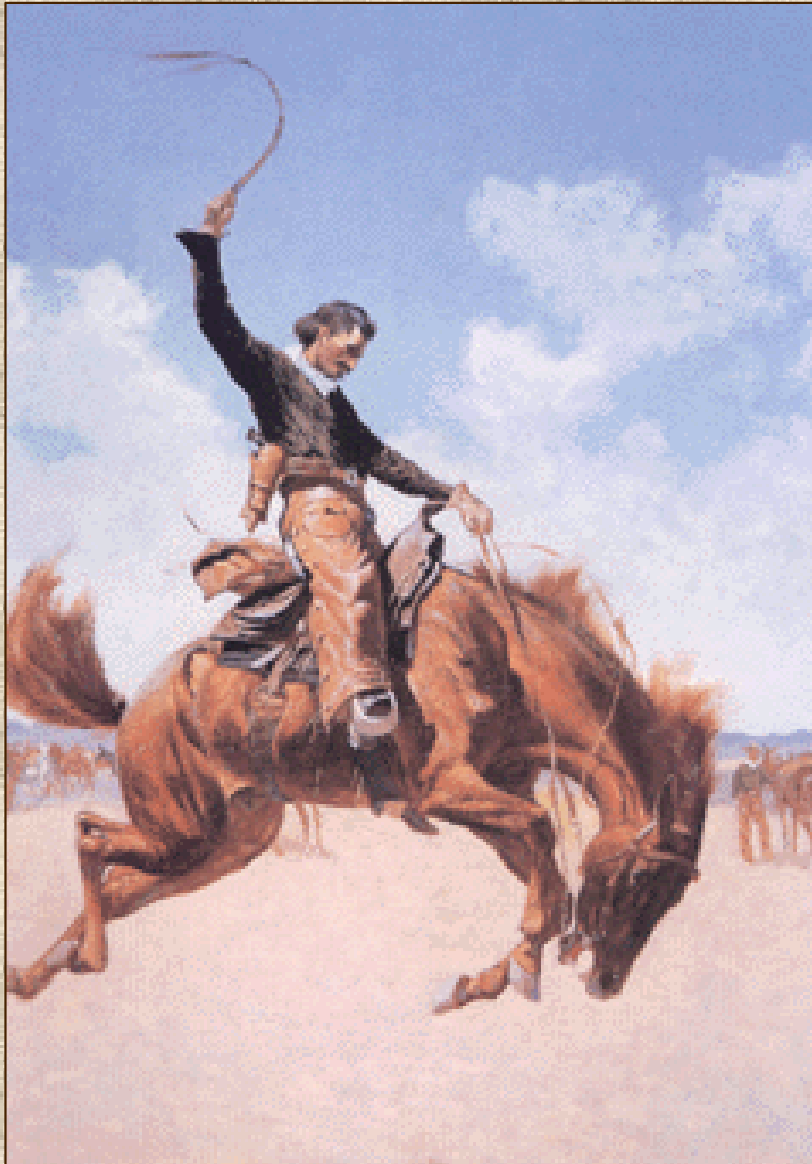
Promontory Point, UT (May 10, 1869)



the

cowboys

The Bronc Buster Frederick Remington



Black Cowboys



the

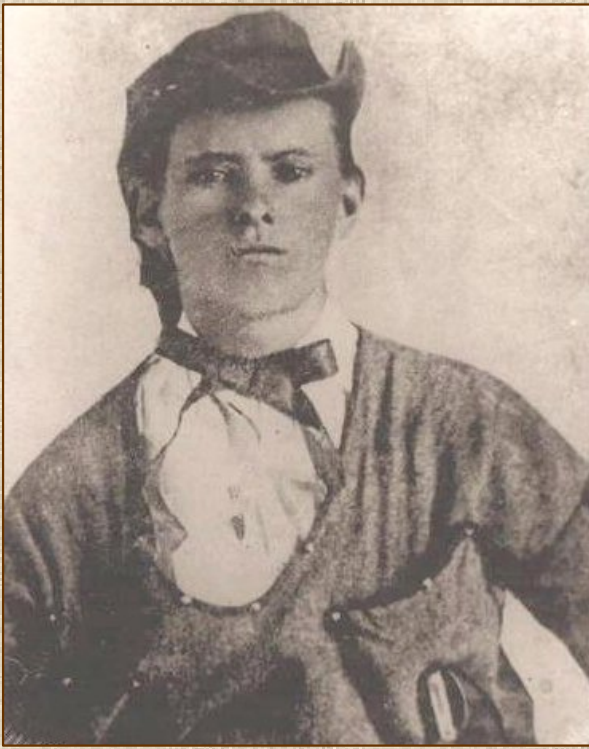
GUNSLINGERS

Colt .45 Revolver



*God didn't make men equal.
Colonel Colt did!*

Legendary Gunslingers & Train Robbers



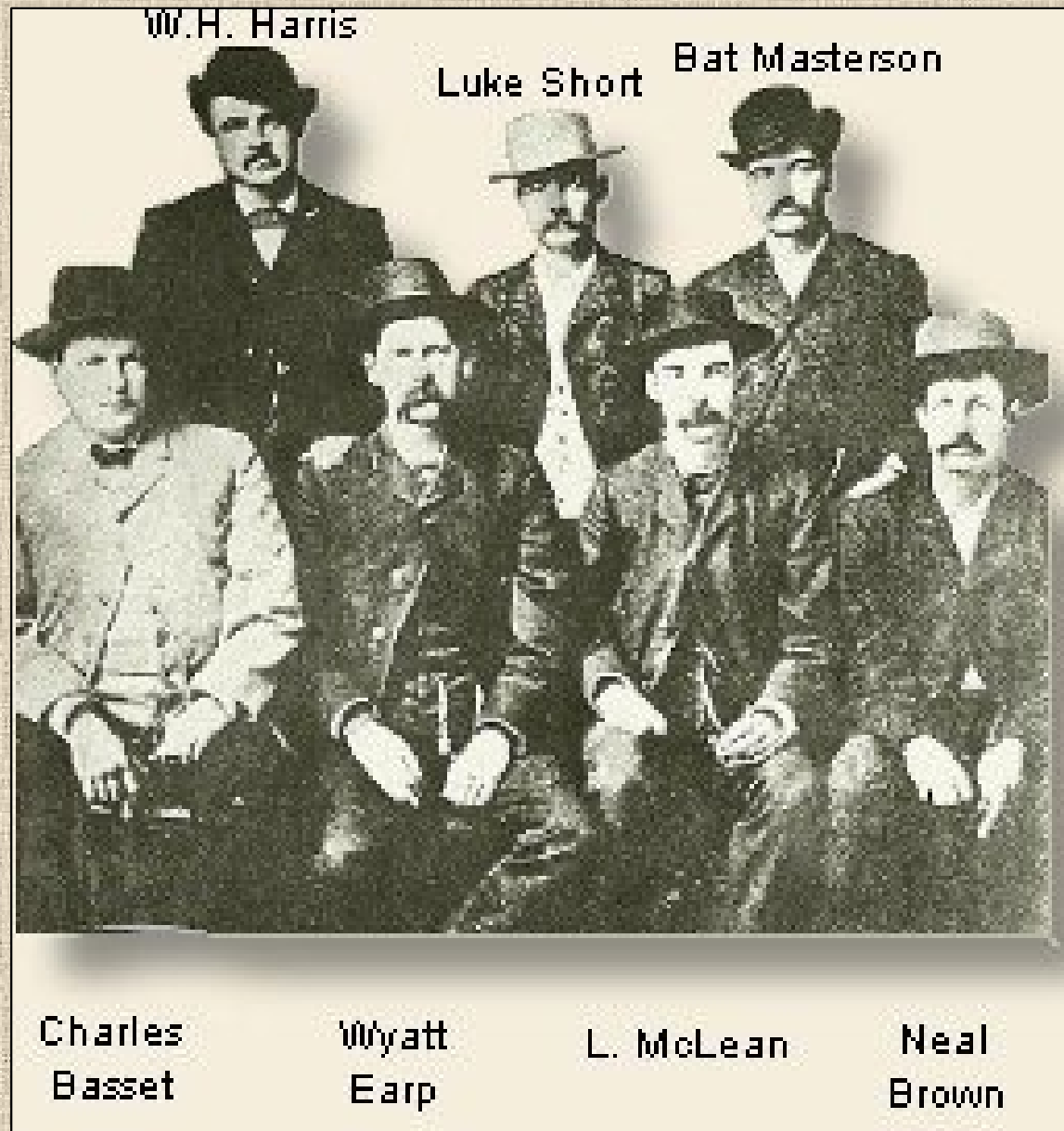
Jesse James



Billy the Kid



Dodge City Peace Commission, 1890



the

MINERS

The Bonanza West

- Quest to “get rich quick” produces:
 - uneven growth
 - boom-and-bust economic cycles
 - wasted resources
 - "instant cities" like San Francisco
- Institutions based on bonanza mentality

Mining Regions of the West



Mining Bonanza: Camp Life

- Camps sprout with each first strike
- Camps governed by simple democracy
- Men outnumber women two-to-one
- Most men, some women work claims
- Most women earn wages as cooks, housekeepers, and seamstresses

Mining Bonanza: Ethnic Hostility

- 25-50% of camp citizens were foreign-born
- French, Latin Americans, Chinese hated
- 1850--California Foreign Miner's Tax drives foreigners out
- 1882--federal Chinese Exclusion Act suspends Chinese immigration for 10 years

Mining Bonanza: Effects of the Mining Boom

- Contributes millions to economy
- Helps finance Civil War, industrialization
- Relative value of silver and gold change
- Early statehood for Nevada, Idaho, Montana
- Invaded Indian reservations
- Scarred, polluted environment
- Ghost towns

Mining Centers: 1900



Mining (“Boom”) Towns-- Now Ghost Towns



Calico, CA

The
Cattlemen
& the
Sheep Herders

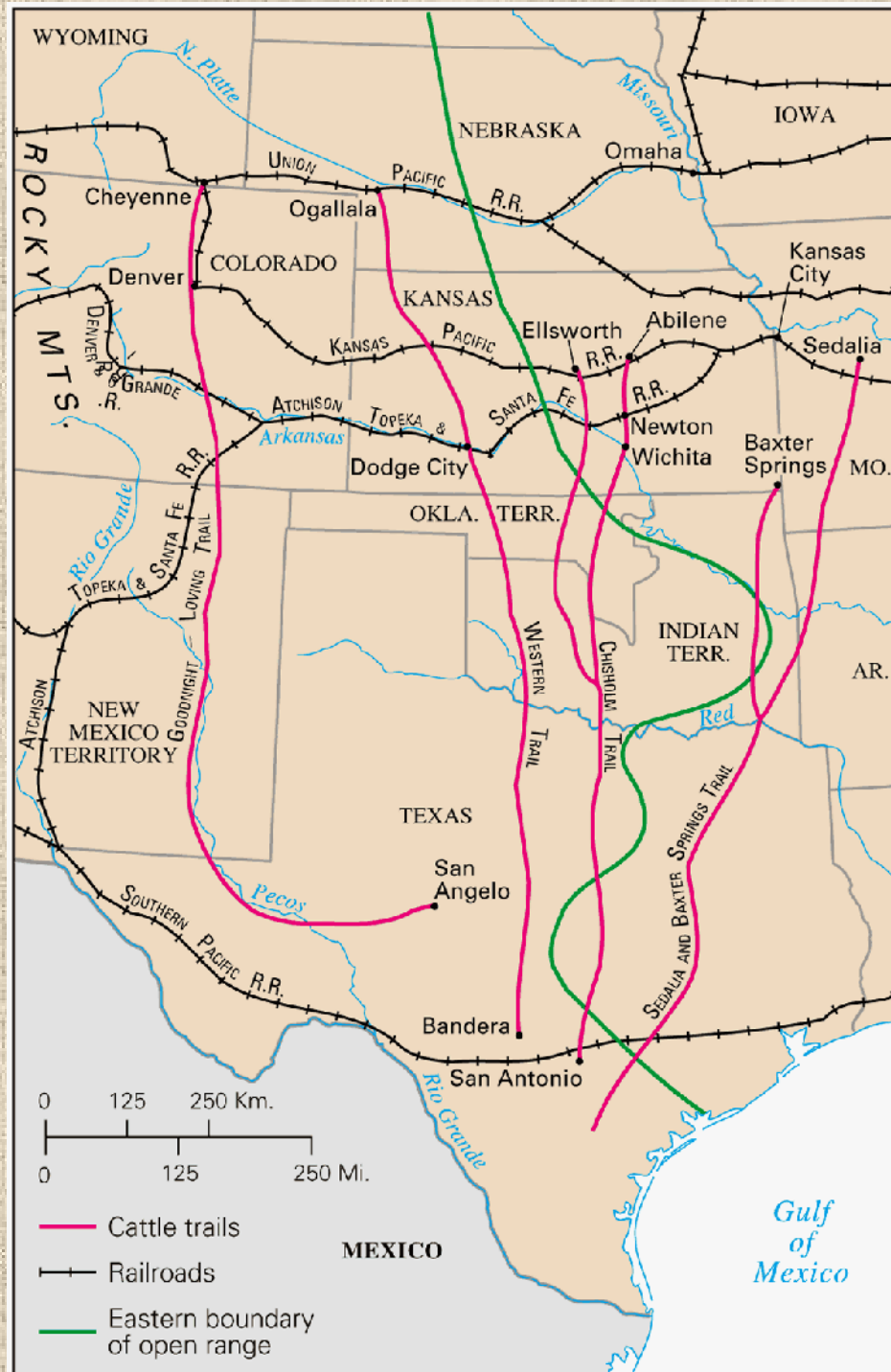
Gold from the Roots Up: The Cattle Bonanza

- The Far West ideal for cattle grazing
- Cattle drives take herds to rail heads
- Trains take herds to Chicago for processing
- Profits enormous for large ranchers
- Cowboys work long hours for little pay
- Cowboys self-governing

Gold from the Roots Up: The Cattle Bonanza (2)

- By 1880 wheat farmers begin fencing range
- Mechanization modernizes ranching
- 1886--harsh winter kills thousands of cattle
- Ranchers reduce herds, switch to sheep

The Cattle Trails



Land Use: 1880s



The Range Wars



Why were there conflicts sometimes between Homesteaders and Cattle Drivers?

- **Competition**

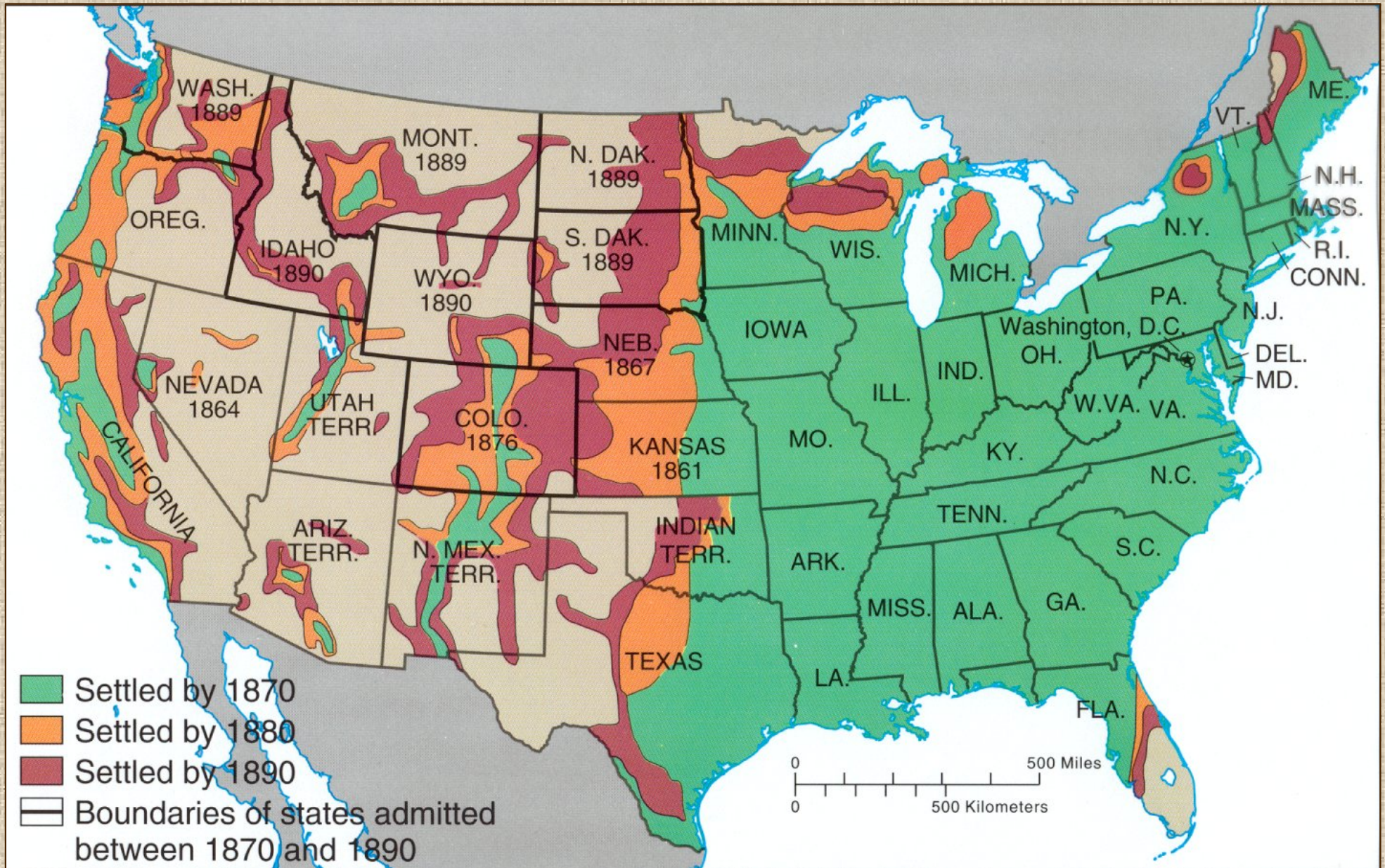
- **As more homesteaders settled the Plains there was less...**

- **Grazing land**
- **Access to water**

- **“Range wars” would sometimes take place**

The
Farmers

Frontier Settlements: 1870-1890



1887 Land Promotion Poster for the Dakota Territories



What is the Message of this Picture?



The Reality--A Pioneer's Sod House, SD



What challenges faced Homesteaders on the Plains?

- Isolation
- Natural disasters...
 - Blizzards
 - Droughts
 - Insects/Pests
- “breaking” the soil
- Access to markets
- Lack of ground water
 - Drove the need for effective windmills

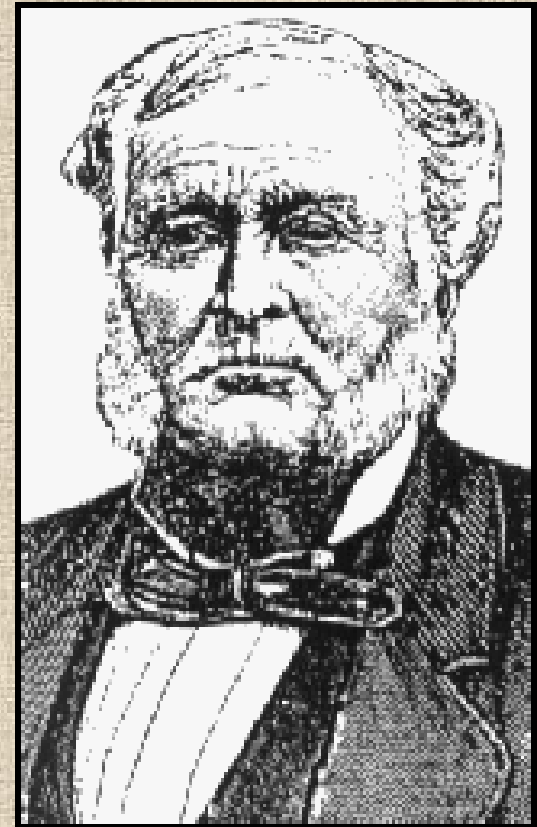
Sodbusters on the Plains: The Farming Bonanza

- 1870-1890 farm population triples on plains
- African-American “Exoduster” farmers migrate from the South to escape racism
- Water, building materials scarce
- Sod houses common first dwelling

New Farming Methods

- Barbed wire allows fencing without wood
- Dry farming--deeper tilling, use of mulch
- New strains of wheat resistant to frost
- 1885-1890--drought ruins bonanza farms
- Small-scale, diversified farming adopted

Barbed Wire



Joseph Glidden

New Agricultural Technology



"Prairie Fan"
Water Pump

Steel Plow ["Sod Buster"]



Discontent on the Farm

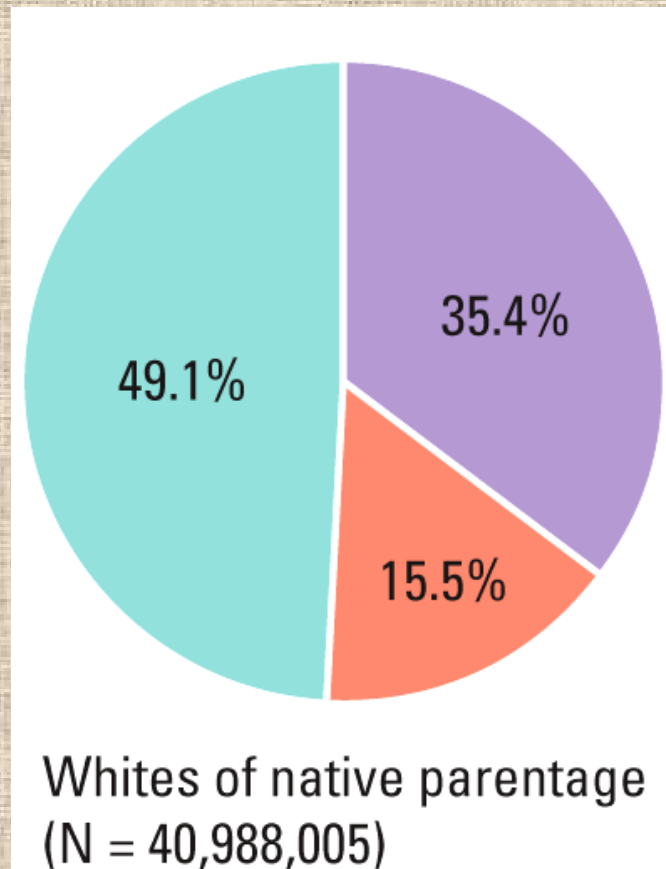
- Farmers' grievances
 - declining crop prices
 - rising rail rates
 - heavy mortgages
- The Grange becomes a political lobby
- Trans-Mississippi farmers become more commercial, scientific, productive

Minority
groups
in the West

The Spanish-Speaking Southwest

- Spanish-speakers of Southwest contribute to culture, institutions
 - irrigation
 - stock management
 - weaving
 - natural resource management
- Spanish-Mexican Californians lose lands after 1860s

Regional Population Distribution by Race: 1900

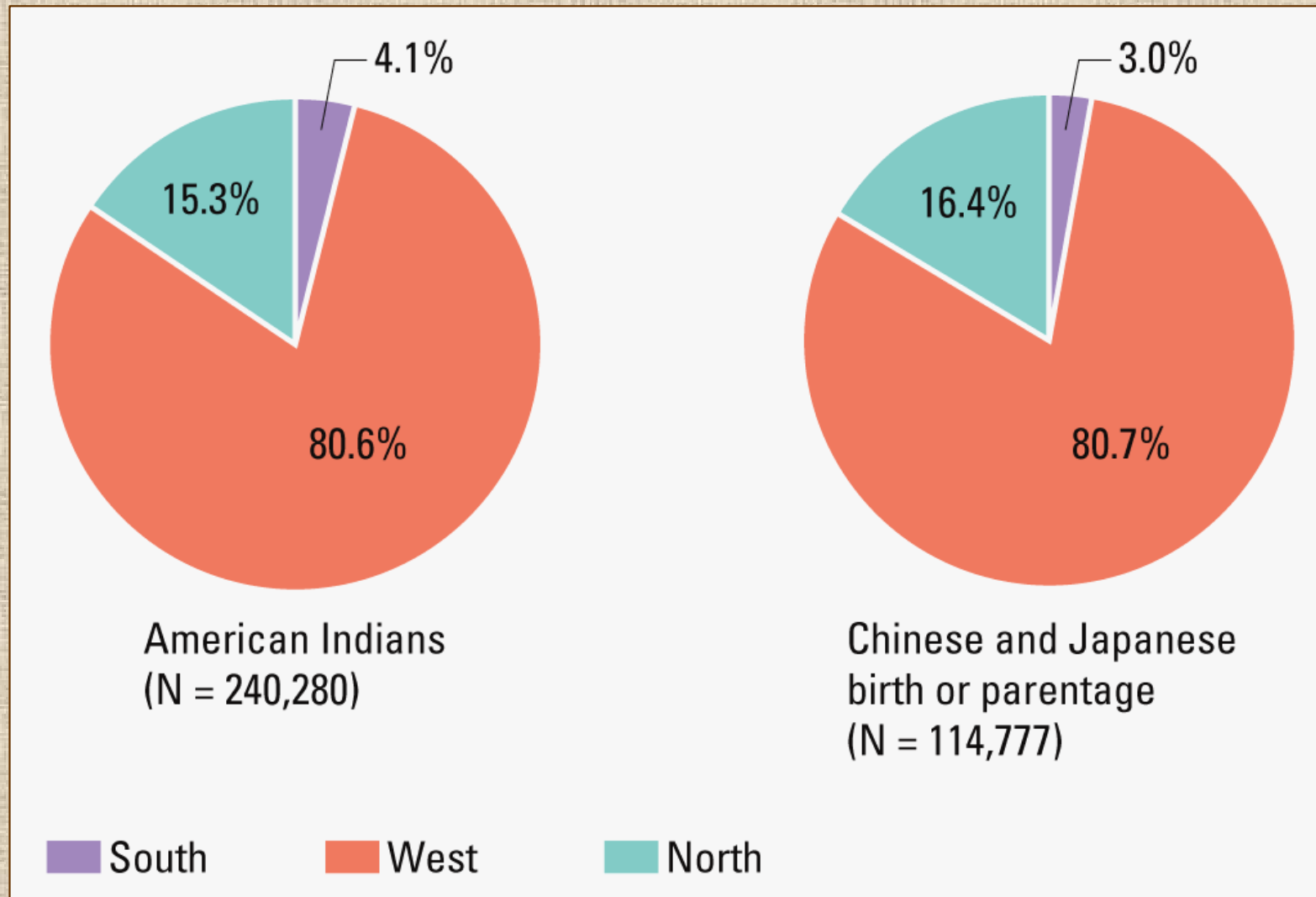


South

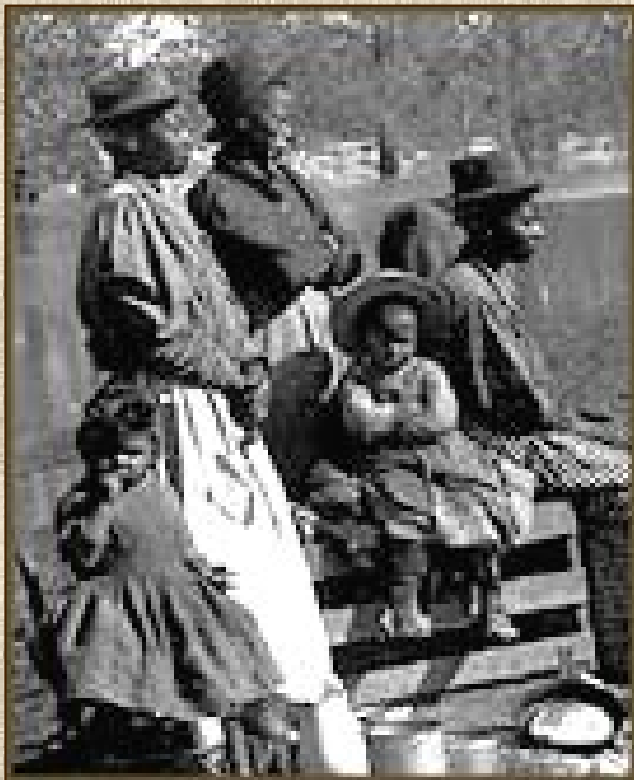
West

North

Regional Population Distribution by Race: 1900



Black “Exoduster” Homesteaders



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,

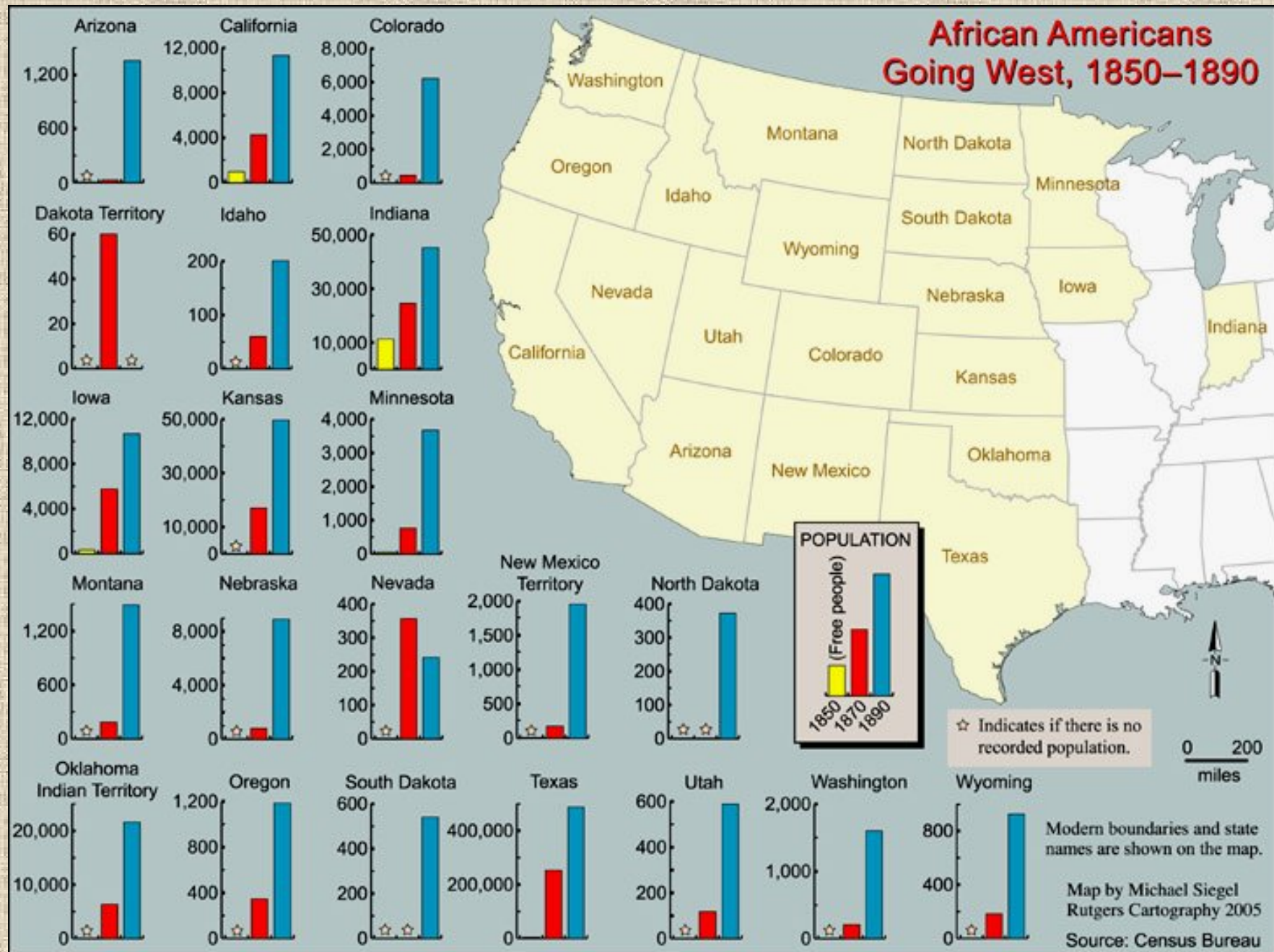
BE IT RESOLVED, That we do now organize ourselves into a Colony, as follows:— Any person wishing to become a member of this Colony can do so by paying the sum of one dollar (\$1.00), and this money is to be paid by the first of September, 1877, in instalments of twenty-five cents at a time, or otherwise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

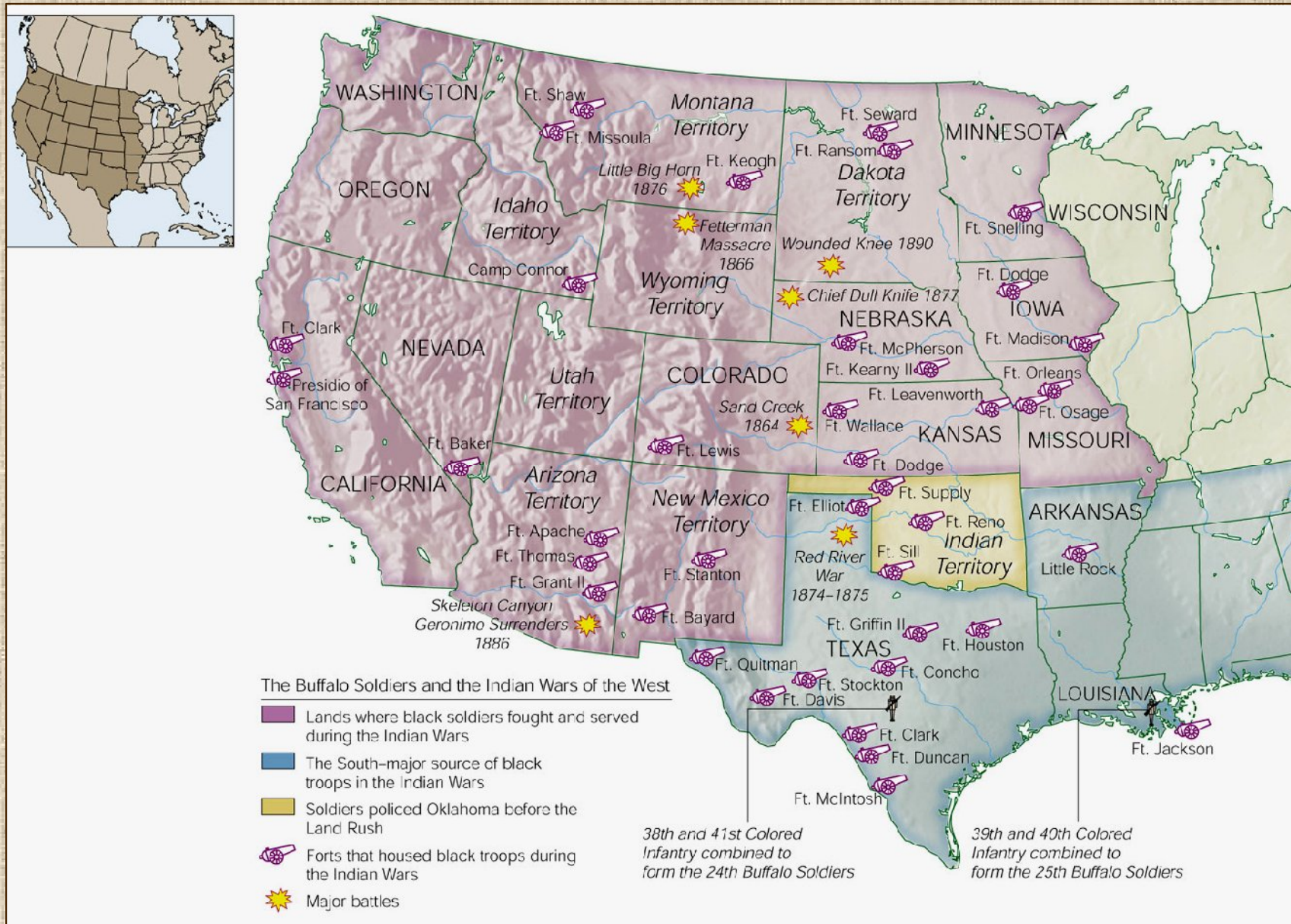
Blacks Moving West



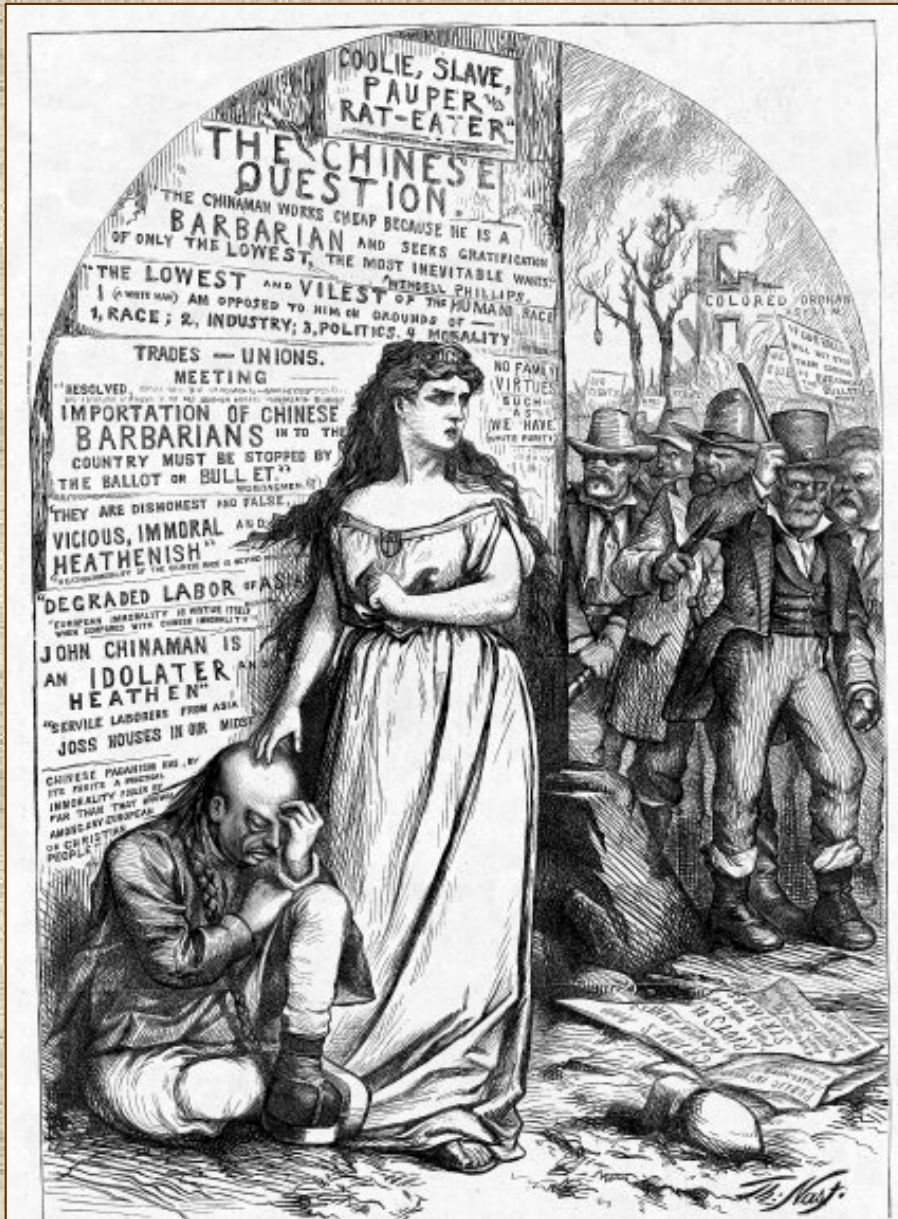
The Buffalo Soldiers on the Great Plains



The Buffalo Soldiers & the Indian Wars



The “Chinese Question”



- Exclusion Act (1882)
 - Oriental Exclusion Act
 - Chinese Exclusion Act

The Tong Wars: 1850s-1920s



Began in San Francisco in 1875.

African American & Chinese Populations: 1880-1900

State or Territory	Blacks		Chinese	
	1880	1900	1880	1900
Arizona Ter.	155	1,846	1,630	1,419
California	6,018	11,045	75,132	45,753
Colorado	2,435	8,570	612	599
Idaho	53	293	3,379	1,467
Kansas	43,107	52,003	19	39
Montana	346	1,523	1,765	1,739
Nebraska	2,385	6,269	18	180
Nevada	488	134	5,416	1,352
New Mexico Ter.	1,015	1,610	57	341
North Dakota	113	286	NA	32
Oklahoma Indian Ter.	NA	56,684*	NA	31
Oregon	487	1,105	9,510	10,397
South Dakota	288	465	NA	165
Texas	393,384	620,722	136	836
Utah	232	672	510	572
Washington	325	2,514	3,186	3,629

NA— not available.
*Combined total for Indian and Oklahoma territories.

The Final Fling

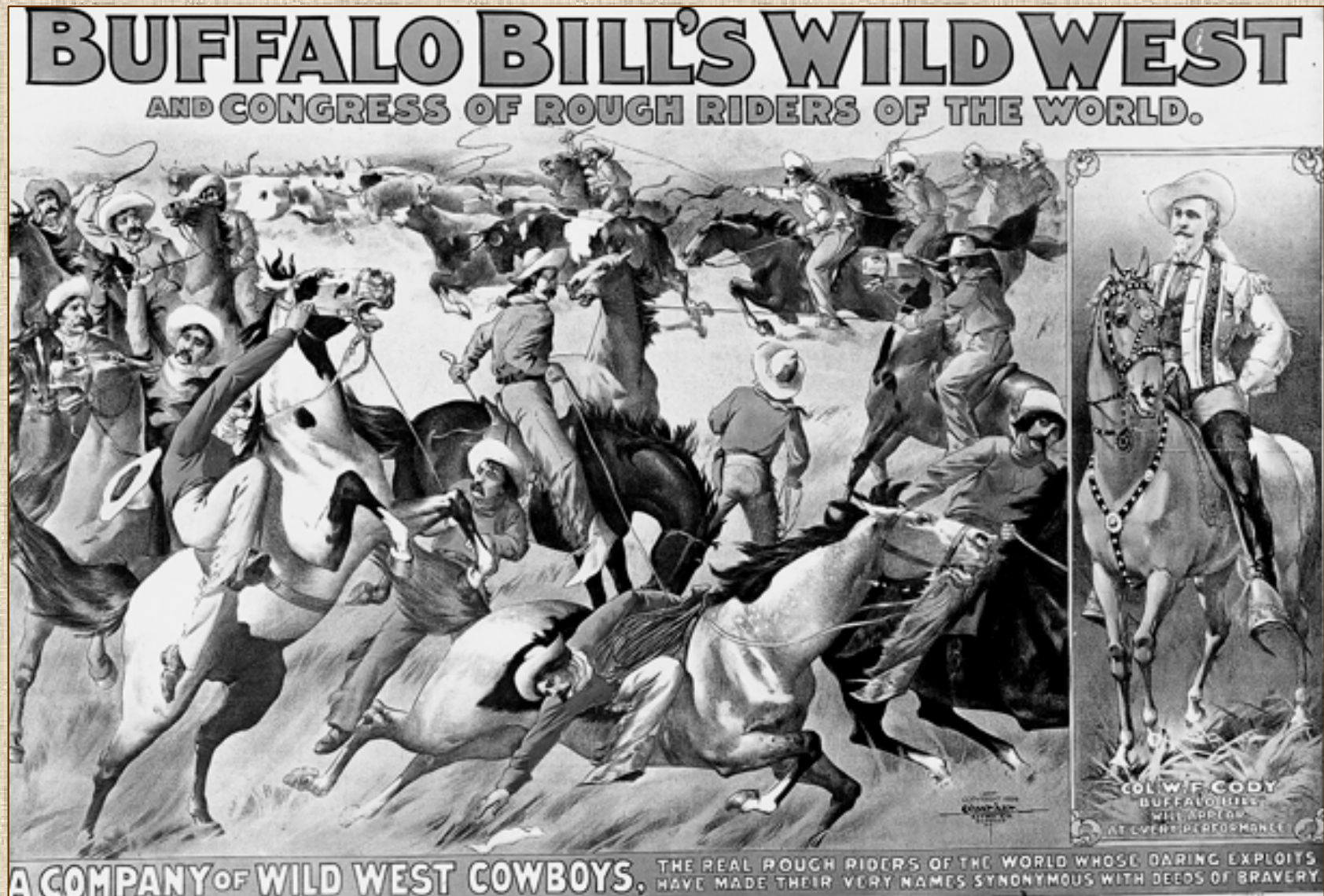
- 1889 -- Oklahoma opened to white settlement
- Changing views of Far West
 - “Frontier thesis” treated West as cradle of individualism, innovation
 - New Western History sees West as arena of conflicting interests, erosion of environment

the myth
& legend
of the west

The Traditional View of the West



William "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Wild West Show



“Buffalo Bill” Cody & Sitting Bull



Legendary Female Western Characters



Calamity Jane



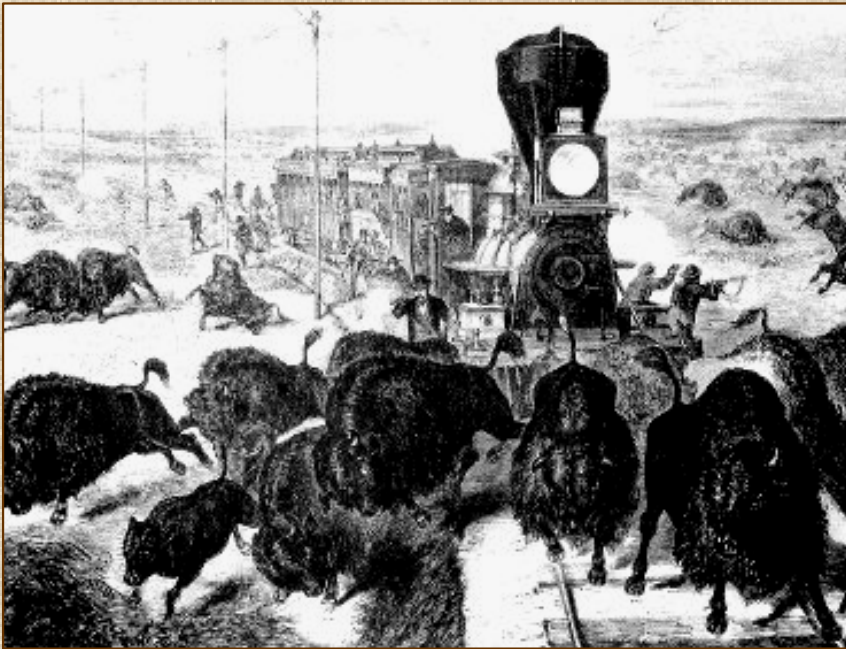
Annie Oakley

The Fall of the Cowboy Frederick Remington



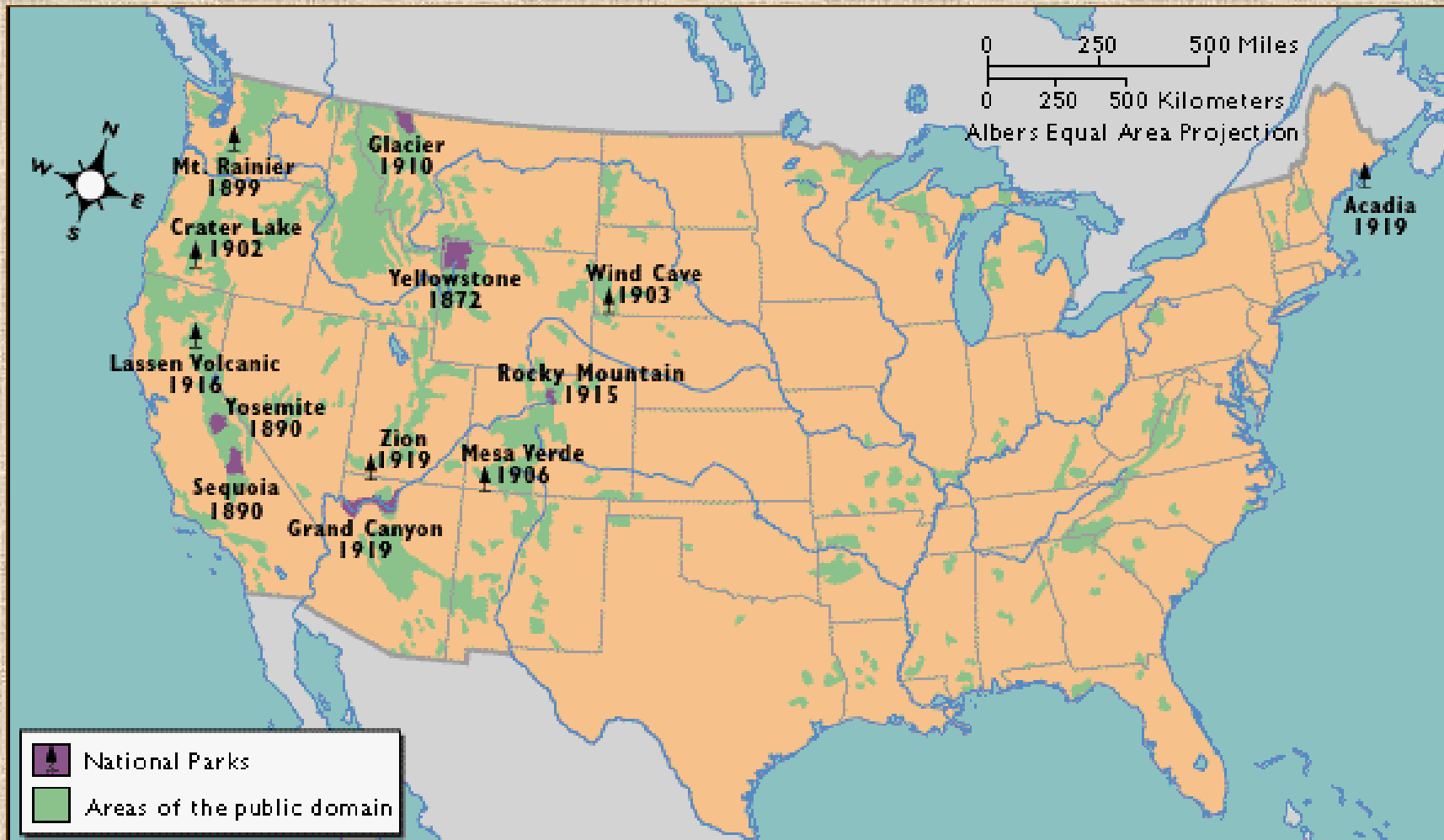
what were the
long-term effects
of the westward
experience?

Destruction of the Buffalo Herds



The near extinction of the buffalo.

National Parks



Conservation Movement



John Muir



**With President
Theodore Roosevelt**

Sierra Club



Founded in 1892