

American History: Chapter 16

The Conquest of the Far West



Yosemite from The Best General View, Carleton Watkins, 1866

The Societies of the Far West

- Plains Indians:
 - Sioux – hunted buffalo
 - Relied heavily on horses – introduced by Europe
- Many Indians were still vulnerable to diseases
- As railroads expanded (1880s – 1890s), Indian life was drastically altered:
 - Lost land, buffalo almost became extinct
- Chinese immigration:
 - Settled in California, worked in gold mines and railroads
 - Were discriminated against - hard to unionize – language barriers
 - Lived and worked in cities



Driving of the golden spike at Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869
Completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad with the Central Pacific
on left and Union Pacific on right.

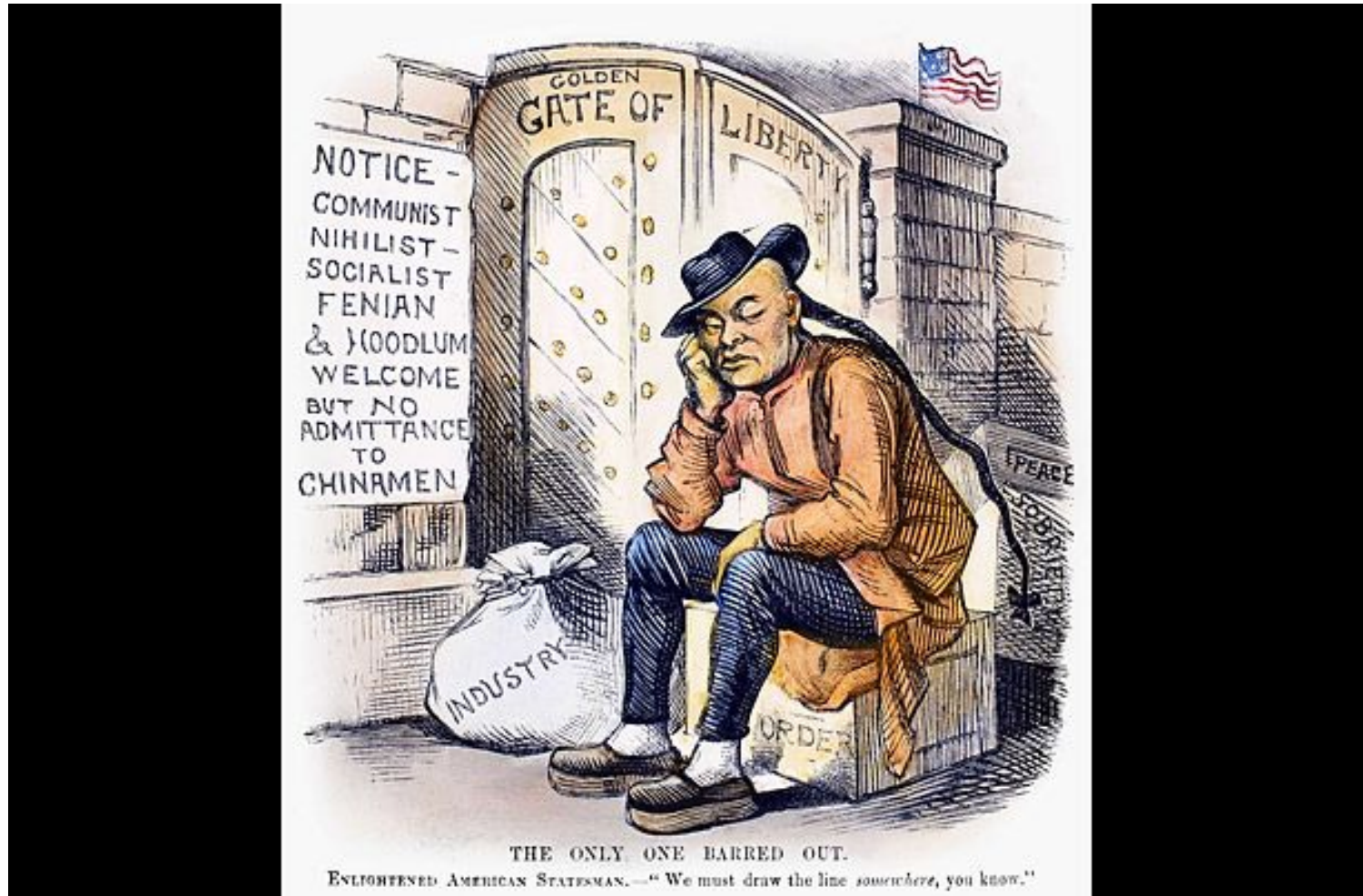
The Societies of the Far West

- **Anti-Chinese Sentiment:**
 - **Anti-Coolie clubs:** Wanted to ban Chinese employment
 - **Workingmen's Party:** Party that emerged based on hostility to Chinese
 - **Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882**
 - Banned Chinese immigration, made it harder for those in America to become citizens
- **Western Settlement:**
 - **Homestead Act (1862):**
 - 160 acres of low cost land, must live on and improve it for 5 years
 - Not always the best land, fraud by corporations
 - 1869 – completion of the transcontinental RR
 - **Timberland Culture Act (1873), Desert Land Act (1877)**
 - Opportunities for additional land if improvements were made
- Utah admitted as a state in 1896, abandoning polygamy



Chinese workers constructing the transcontinental railroad

Political cartoon from 1882, showing a Chinese man being barred entry to the "Golden Gate of Liberty". The caption reads, "We must draw the line *somewhere*, you know."



The Changing Western Economy

- West became increasingly connected to east:
 - Railroads, cattle, mining, etc.
- The West was often seen as a place of opportunity for all
 - “safety-valve” theory – in tough economic times, one could always move West and start anew
- Labor in mines was very arduous and dangerous
- Cattle:
 - Large business for some (TR tried in the 1880s)
 - Could be unstable – winters of 1885-86 and 1886-87
- Women’s suffrage was higher in the West than East:
 - Wyoming was the first state to guarantee women’s suffrage

FRANK LESLIE'S
ILLUSTRATED
NEWSPAPER

NEW YORK—FOR THE WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 24, 1888. (PRICE, 10 CENTS.)



WOMAN DEFENDING IN WYOMING TERRITORY. SCENE AT THE POLL IN CHEYENNE.

601201

Women voting in Cheyenne,
Wyoming, Nov. 1888

Rocky Mountain School: Similar to Hudson River school, primarily painted landscapes



The Grand Canyon of the Colorado River- Thomas Moran

Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone- Thomas Moran

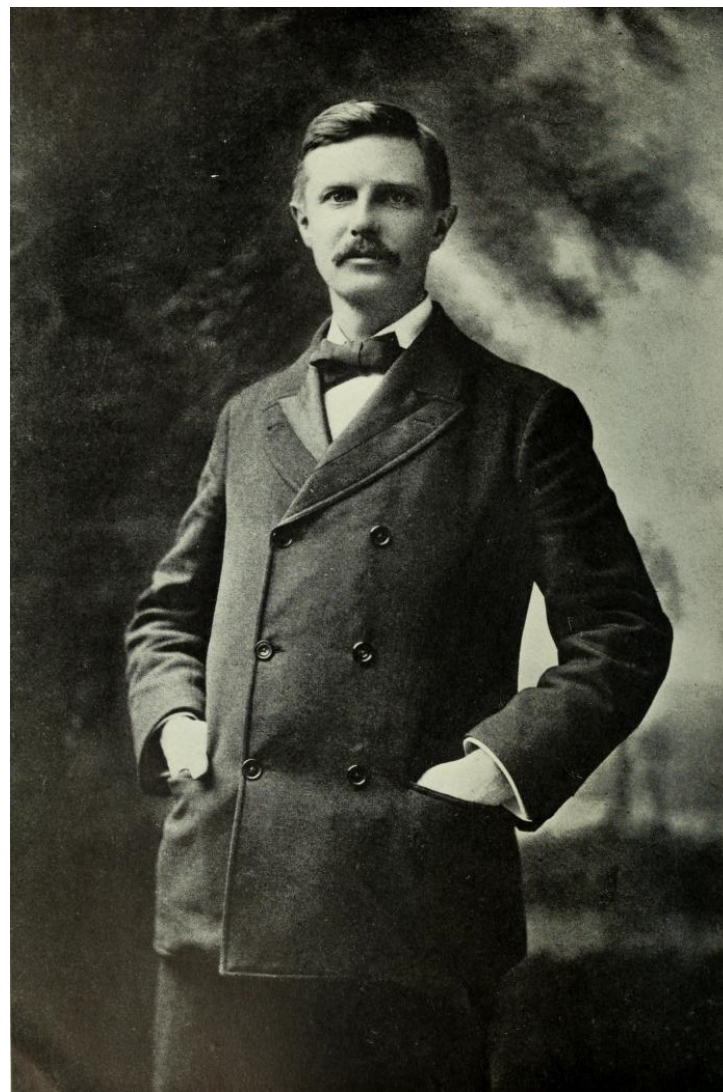


The Three Tetons by Thomas Moran,
a copy of which is located in oval office



The Romance of the West

- Why was the West so appealing?
 - *The Virginian* - romanticized the cowboy
 - West was seen as the last frontier
- Frederick Jackson Turner:
 - The Significance of the Frontier in American History
 - Frontier ended in 1890 (used census data)
 - Frontier gave America a unique identity, promoted democracy

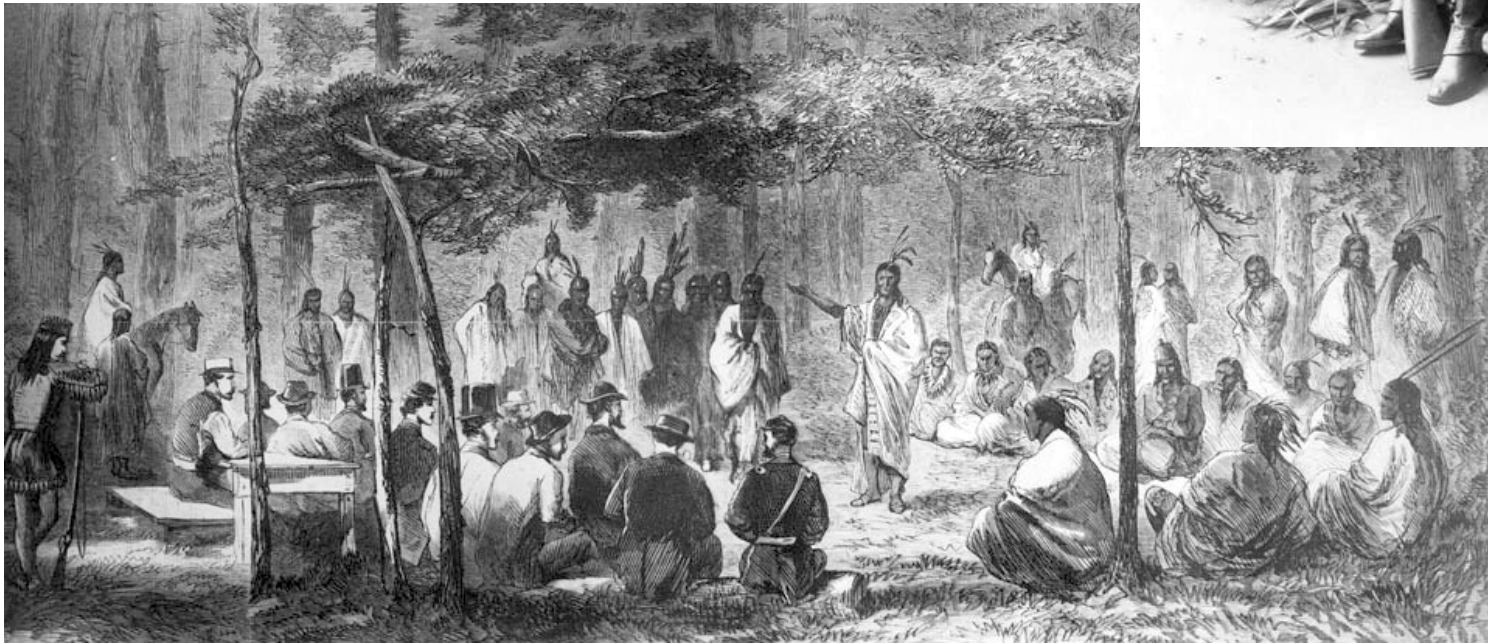


The Dispersal of the Tribes

- Helen Hunt Jackson
 - *A Century of Dishonor* – chronicled deceit, abuse, and broken treaties between federal government and Native Americans
- During and after Civil War, conflicts increased between government and Natives
- Indian Peace Commission:
 - Recommended to move Plains Indians to reservations in Oklahoma and the Dakotas
- Bureau of Indian Affairs:
 - Created to distribute land and supplies; not very successful
- Buffalo:
 - Almost became extinct – RR companies, “Buffalo Bill Cody”

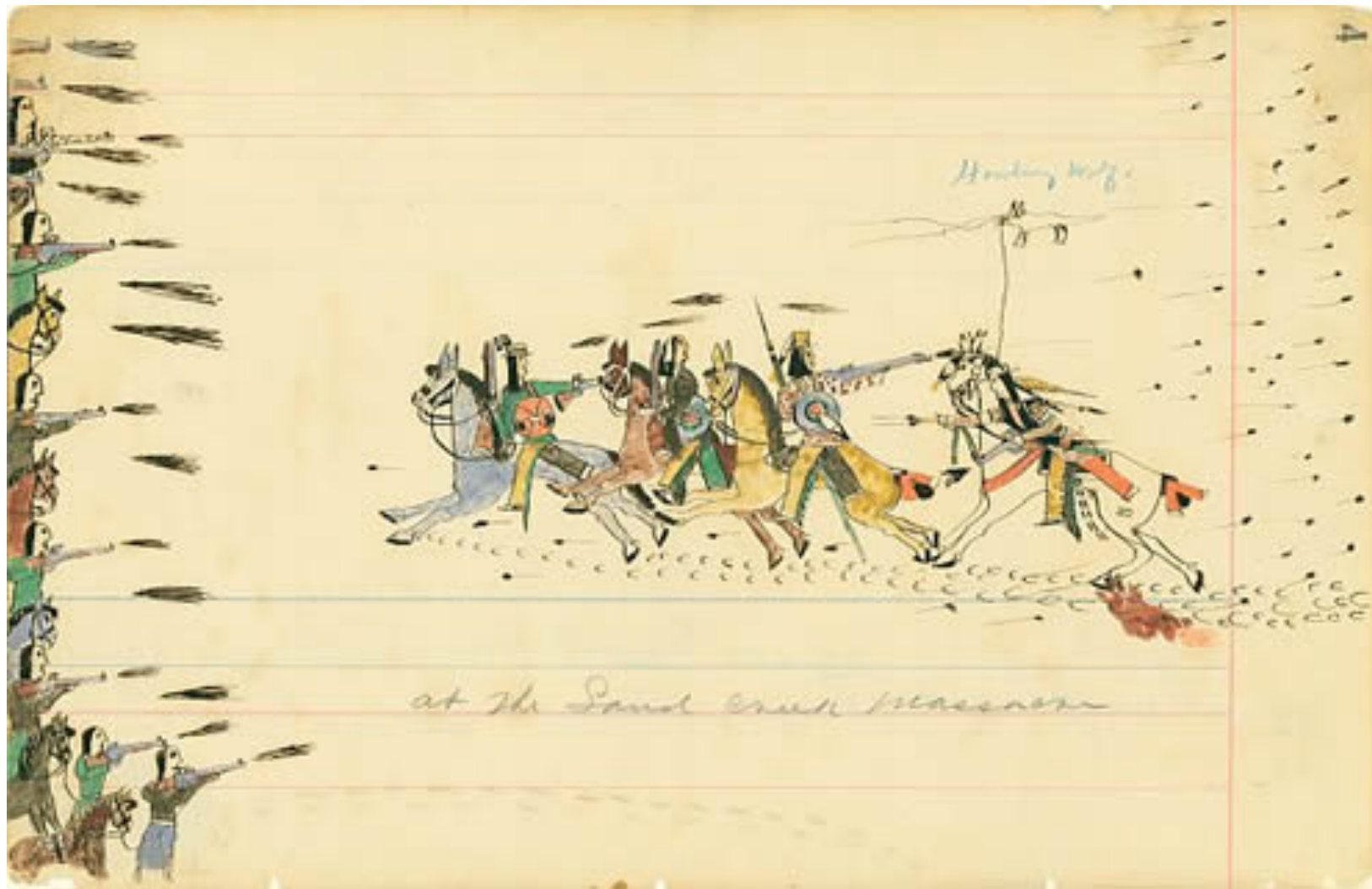
Buffalo Bill Cody

Indian Peace Commission and the Council at Medicine
Lodge Creek, drawing from Harpers Weekly



The Dispersal of the Tribes

- Sand Creek Massacre:
 - 133 Natives were killed, 105 were women and children
- “Indian Hunting”
 - California, 5,000 Natives were massacred between 1850 - 1880
 - 150,000 Natives in CA prior to Civil War, 30,000 in 1870
- Battle of Little Bighorn (Custard’s Last Stand):
 - George Custard and 264 members of regiment were killed
- Nez Percé
 - Chief Joseph urged members to flee, almost made it to Canada



Depiction of the Sand Creek Massacre by Cheyenne eyewitness and artist Howling Wolf

Depiction of the Battle of Little Bighorn



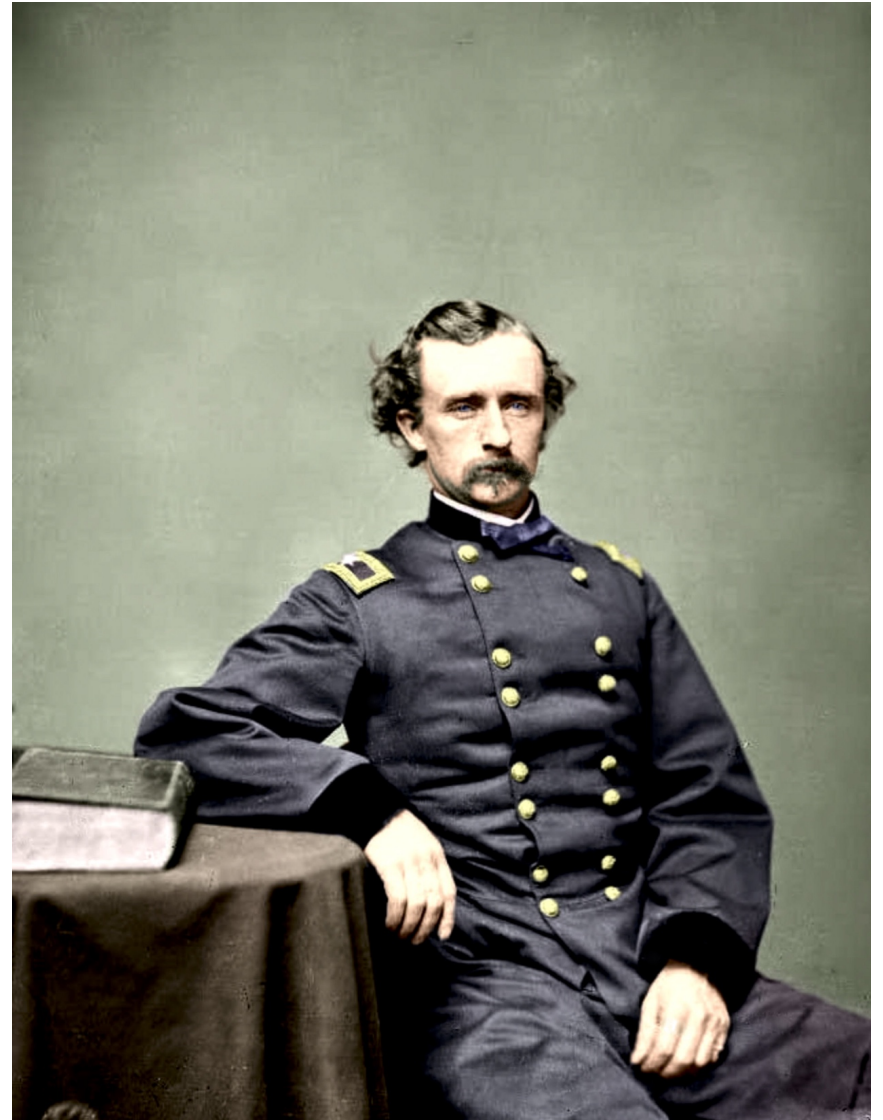
The Custer Fight- Charles Marion Russell, 1902





Sitting Bulling

George Armstrong Custer



The Dispersal of the Tribes

- Ghost Dance
 - Ritual that believed buffalo would return and whites would leave Natives alone
 - Government wanted to end the Dance
- Wounded Knee, 1890
 - Fighting between soldiers and Natives in South Dakota
 - 40 soldiers, 300+ Natives were killed (many women and children)
- Dawes Act
 - Purpose was to assimilate or “Americanize” Natives
 - Eliminated tribal lands, provided 160 acres of land for individuals
 - Some children sent to boarding school
 - Promoted Christianity

Burial of the dead after the massacre of Wounded Knee. U.S. Soldiers putting Indians in common grave; some corpses are frozen in different positions. South Dakota.



The Rise and Decline of the Western Farmer

- 1862, Congress authorized and subsidized transcontinental routes
- State governments encouraged railroad development also:
 - Financial aid and land
- Railroad companies advertised to attract settlement of lands
- Joseph Glidden and I.L. Ellwood:
 - Developed and marketed barbed wire – hurt ranches
- Farms produce so much, prices drop, bankrupting some farms
- Farmers' Grievances:
 - Railroads – unfair pricing, warehouse facilities
 - High interest rates by banks
- Farmers advocated increasing the money supply