



# American West

Paper 2 = 20% of GCSE

## Topic 2

The Development of the Plains

1862 – 1876

Consequences

# Key dates and events

## The Early Settlement of the West 1835 - 1862

**1862** Homestead Act

**1862** Pacific Railroad Act

1862 Little Crow's War

**1864** Sand Creek massacre

**1865** American Civil War ends

**1866-1868** – Red Cloud's War

**1867** Cattle Drives to Railroad towns begins

**1868** Fort Laramie Treaty

**1869** Railroad completed

**1871** Indian Appropriation Act

**1873** Timber and Culture Act

**1874** Joseph Gliddon invents  
Barbed wire

**1874** Gold discovered in Black Hills

**1875** Southern Buffalo herd destroyed

# Event 1

## 1862 Homestead Act

- In **1862 President Abraham Lincoln** signed the Homestead Act.
- This had been opposed by the Southern States before the War began
- This allowed anyone (including slaves, women and immigrants) who had not taken up arms against the United States to claim **160 acres** of public land for **Free**
- Provided they lived and farmed there for **5 years**
- This was an attempt by the government to encourage settlement of the land and to fulfil their **Manifest Destiny**
- **2.5 million Acres** of land were opened up.
- Between **1862 and 1900** more than **600,000** people claimed land under this Act

# Event 1

## 1862 Homestead Act

- Consequences of Homestead Act

1. **Increased settlement** as it gave 160 acres of free land allowing ordinary people to own land. 600,000 people moved West to settle on the Plains between 1862 and 1900
2. **Destruction of Indians** as it opened up 2.5 million acres of land on the Great Plains. This was land that Indians and buffalo lived on and resulted in the destruction of habitats

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## Event 2

# 1861-2 Little Crow's War

- In **1851** the Fort Laramie Treaty first introduced reservations. The Indians were given an annual payment and were taught to be self sufficient farmers
- **12,000** Sioux Indians lived on a reservation in Minnesota where the land was not suitable for farming.
- In **1861** the **cutworms** destroyed their **corn crops** and they did not receive their payment from the government
- They could not grow or buy food
- Little Crow tried to restrain his starving people but violence erupted when **4 settlers were killed**.
- Fighting continued throughout 1861 and **700 settlers** were killed.
- Massive reinforcements were sent in by the US government to stop the violence

## Event 2

# 1861-2 Little Crow's War

### Consequences of Little Crow's War

1. **38 Sioux were sentence to death** by President Lincoln and where hung in Dec 1862. It should have been 303 but Lincoln reduced the sentences
2. **The Sioux were transferred to a new reservation** called Crow Creek which was so barren that 400 Indians died in the first winter. Led to anger amongst the Indians – in particular Sitting Bull who visited

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# Event 3

## 1865 End of the Civil War

- The Civil War began in **1861** and was fought between the **Confederates** (South) and **Unionists** (North) over slavery amongst other things
- The Union Armies numbered **2 million** and the Confederates **800,000**. the war consisted of both battles and sieges.
- Over **200,000 men died** from the fighting and another **416,000 from disease**
- During the war the troops from the West were taken to fight the Civil war, untrained men took their place and this had disastrous consequences for relations with the Indians.
- The war ended on **9<sup>th</sup> April 1865** when the Confederate General Lee meet the Union General U. Grant to surrender

# Event 3

## 1865 End of the Civil War

- Consequences of the end of the Civil War
  1. **Speed up the building of the Railroad.** This had been delayed during the war but from 1865 onwards the two companies (Union Pacific and Central Pacific) sped forward determined to finish and claim the \$16,000 per mile of level track
  2. **Resulted in further wars against the Indians or increased settlement of the West** as thousands of freed slaves and ex soldiers went West to claim their 160 acres of land= Homestead Act.

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# Event 4

## 1867 Cattle Drives north begin

- In **1866 Charles Goodnight** and Oliver Loving decided to target the Western Markets for beef.
- They opened the Goodnight and Loving trail in 1866 making it possible to move cattle from **Texas to Wyoming**
- Here they could sell the beef to the **army in New Mexico** at **Fort Sumner** and to the **US government to feed the Indians** on the reservations
- From there they could continue North to the **Miners in Colorado** (Gold rush of 1858)
- By **1870** the US government was buying between **50,000 and 60,000** head of cattle per year.
- This made the Cattle industry very profitable.
- Other trails followed such as the **Western trail, the Chisholm trail, and the Shawnee trail**

# Event 4

## 1867 Cattle Drives north begin

- Consequences of Cattle Drives

1. **Growth of the Cattle Industry** as it people realised that they could get rich quickly by breeding cattle – Goodnight and Loving were selling 50,000 head of beef to the US government. In Texas \$5 per head, in the North \$50
2. **Conflict between the Cattle Ranchers (Cowboys) and Homesteaders** the cows from Texas carried a tick which caused Texas Fever. This spread to the Homesteaders cows causing anger when the homesteader cows died. The cows also crossed the homesteader land and trampled their crops before barbed wire was invented

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## Event 5

### **1869** – Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad

- The Transcontinental Railroad was begun in **1862** with the Pacific Railroad Act. Prior to this the Government had been unable to decide where to begin building
- The **Central Pacific Railroad** company began building from **Sacramento** in the West and the **Union Pacific Railroad** began building from **Omaha in Nebraska**. They would then meet in the Middle
- The government gave each company **\$16,000 for every mile of level track built** (\$48,000 for every mile in the Mountains) and **6,400 acres** of land alongside it.
- Progress was slow during the Civil War as the government had other priorities but progressed much quicker after 1865.
- On **10<sup>th</sup> May 1869** the two companies met in **Utah** and the railroad was complete.

## Event 6

**1869** – Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad

### Consequences of completion of the Transcontinental Railroad

- 1. Encouraged the growth of the Cattle industry**  
= cowtowns built along the tracks. Examples include Abilene
- 2. Improved law and order** = areas were huge – allowed the sheriffs and US Marshalls to move around more quickly



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# Event 6

## 1874 The Invention of Barbed Wire

- In the initial years of homesteading the Homesteaders struggled for survival as they could not grow crops successfully.
- One of the main reasons was that they had no way to **protect them from the cattle and buffalo** that wandered the land.
- Due to **lack of wood** on the Plains if the crops did grow they would be eaten or trampled. This changed in 1874 when **Joseph Gliddon** invented Barbed Wire
- This was **cheap (2 cents per pound)** and readily available for the homesteaders due to the completion of the railroad

# Event 6

## 1874 The Invention of Barbed Wire

- Consequences of the invention of Barbed Wire

1. **Lead to conflict between the Homesteaders and the ranchers.** Homesteaders used barbed wire to fence land as cattle would often eat crops. Ranchers were not very happy about this so would cut the fences An example of where this caused conflict was in Johnson County in 1891.
2. **Farmers could protect their crop from wandering livestock.** There weren't many trees on the plains = fences could not be built and crops were hard to grow and would get destroyed. Barbed wire allowed homesteaders to build effective fence. Purchasing wood was expensive whereas barbed wire quickly became cheap –just 2 cents per pound of wire by the 1880s. The barbs were effective at keeping livestock away so the crops were safe

# Homework

## Explain the consequences (results) of ...

Choose one of the questions below

1. Explain 2 consequences of the Homestead Act 1862
2. Explain 2 consequences of the end of the American Civil War 1865
3. Explain 2 consequences of the Second Fort Laramie Act 1868
4. Explain 2 consequences of the discovery of Gold in the Black Hills