Chapter 13: Changes on the Western Frontier
The culture of the Plains Indians declines as white settlers transform the Great Plains. Meanwhile, farmers form the Populist movement to address their economic concerns.

13 1: Cultures Clash on the Prairie
13 2: Settling on the Great Plains
13 3: Farmers and the Populist Movement

13 1: Cultures Clash on the Prairie
The cattle industry booms in the late 1800s, as the culture of the Plains Indians declines.

I. The Culture of the Plains Indians
   A. Great Plains—vast grasslands in west–central portion of the U.S. (about the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains)
      1. Some commonalities exist among various tribes
   B. Life on the Plains
      1. East: hunting, farming villages; west: nomadic hunting, gathering
   C. The Horse and the Buffalo
      1. Horses, guns lead most Plains tribes to nomadic life by mid–1700s
      2. Trespassing others’ hunting lands causes war; “count coup” for status
         a. Touching a live enemy!
      3. Buffalo provides many basic needs:
         a. hides used for teepees, clothes, blankets
         b. meat used for jerky, pemmican
   D. Family Life
      1. Form family groups with ties to other bands that speak same language
      2. Men are hunters, warriors; women butcher meat, prepare hides
      3. Believe in powerful spirits that control natural world
         a. men or women can become shamans
      4. Children learn through myths, stories, games, example
      5. Communal life; leaders rule by counsel

II. Settlers Push Westward
   A. Clash of Cultures
1. Native Americans: land cannot be owned; settlers: want to own land
2. Settlers think natives forfeited land because did not improve it
3. Since consider land unsettled, migrants go west to claim it

B. The Lure of Silver and Gold
1. 1858 discovery of gold in Colorado draws tens of thousands
2. Mining camps, tiny frontier towns have filthy, ramshackle dwellings
3. Fortune seekers of different cultures, races; mostly men

III. The Government Restricts Native Americans
A. Railroads Influence Government Policy
1. 1834, government designates Great Plains as one huge reservation
2. 1850s, treaties define specific boundaries for each tribes
3. Natives and Whites continue to ignore treaties

B. Massacre at Sand Creek
1. Troops slaughter over 150 Cheyenne, Arapaho at Sand Creek winter camp

C. Death on the Bozeman Trail
1. Bozeman Trail crosses Sioux hunting grounds
   a. Red Cloud asks for end of settlements; Crazy Horse ambushes troops, kill 80
      i. a.k.a. The Fetterman Massacre
2. Treaty of Fort Laramie—U.S. closes Bozeman trail; Sioux to remain on reservation
   a. Sitting Bull, leader of Hunkpapa Sioux, does not sign treaty

IV. Bloody Battles Continue
A. Treaty of Fort Laramie a temporary truce

B. Red River War
1. 1868, Kiowa, Comanche engage in 6 years of raiding
2. 1874–1875, U. S. Army crushes resistance on Plains

C. Gold Rush
1. 1874 George A. Custer reports much gold in Black Hills (reserved for natives), white prospectors and settlers rush in

D. Custer’s Last Stand
1. 1876, Sitting Bull has vision of war at sun dance
2. Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Gall crush Custer’s troops
3. late 1876, Sioux are defeated; some take refuge in Canada
   a. people starving; Sitting Bull surrenders 1881

V. The Government Supports Assimilation
   A. Assimilation: Native Americans would give up their beliefs and way of life and become part of the white culture
   B. The Dawes Act
      1. 1881, Helen Hunt Jackson exposes problems in A Century of Dishonor
      2. 1887, Dawes Act to “Americanize” natives, break up reservations
         a. gives land to individual Native Americans
         b. sell remainder of land to settlers
         c. money for farm implements for natives
      3. In the end, Natives Americans receive only 1/3 of land, no money
   C. The Destruction of the Buffalo
      1. most significant blow to tribal life
      2. Tourists, fur traders, “sport” destroy population

VI. The Battle of Wounded Knee
   A. Ghost Dance—prophet sees vision of Native restoration—dance a ritual to regain lost lands
      1. spreads among Sioux on Dakota reservation
         a. Dec. 1890, Sitting Bull is killed when police try to arrest him
         b. Seventh Cavalry takes about 350 Sioux to Wounded Knee Creek
      2. Battle of Wounded Knee—cavalry kill 300 unarmed Native Americans
      3. Battle effectively ends significant Indian wars for all, Sioux dream of regaining old life

VII. Cattle Become Big Business
   A. As Native power continues to fade, horses and cattle flourish
   B. Vaqueros and Cowboys
      1. American settlers learn to manage large herds from Mexican vaqueros
         a. adopt way of life, clothing, vocabulary
      2. Texas longhorns—sturdy, short-tempered breeds brought by Spanish
3. Cowboys not in demand until railroads reach Great Plains

C. Growing Demand for Beef
   1. After Civil War demand for meat increases in rapidly growing cities

D. The Cow Town
   1. Cattlemen establish shipping yards where trails and rail lines meet
   2. Chisholm Trail becomes major cattle route from San Antonio to Kansas

VIII. A Day in the Life of a Cowboy
   A. A Day’s Work
      1. 1866–1885, up to 55,000 cowboys on plains
         a. 25% African American, 12% Mexican
      2. Cowboy works 10–14 hours on ranch; 14+ on trail
      3. Expert rider, roper; alert for dangers that may harm, upset cattle

   B. Roundup
      1. Longhorns found, herded into corral
      2. Separate cattle marked with own ranch’s brand; brand calves

   C. The Long Drive
      1. Herding of animals or long drive lasts about 3 months
      2. Cowboy in saddle dawn to dusk; sleeps on ground; bathes in rivers

   D. Legends of the West
      1. Celebrities like “Wild Bill” Hickok, Calamity Jane never handled cows

IX. The End of the Open Range
   A. Changes in Ranching
      1. Overgrazing, bad weather from 1883 to 1887 destroy whole herds
      2. Ranchers keep smaller herds—yield more meat per animal
      3. Fence land with barbed wire; turn open range into separate ranches
13.2: Settling on the Great Plains

Settlers on the Great Plains transform the land despite great hardships.

I. Settlers Move Westward to Farm
   A. Railroads Open the West
      1. 1850–1871, huge land grants to railroads for laying track in West
      2. 1860s, Central Pacific goes east, Union Pacific west, meet in Utah
         a. By 1880s, 5 transcontinental railroads
      3. Railroads sell land to farmers, attract many European immigrants
   B. Government Support for Settlement
      1. 1862 Homestead Act offers 160 acres free to any head of household
         a. 1862–1900, up to 600,000 families settle
      2. Exodusters—Southern African–American settlers in Kansas
      3. Railroad, state agents, speculators profit; 10% of land to families
      4. Government strengthens act, passes new legislation for settlers
   C. The Closing of the Frontier
      1. 1872, Yellowstone National Park created to protect some wilderness
      2. 1890s, no frontier left; some regret loss of unique American feature

II. Settlers Meet the Challenges of the Plains
    A. Dugouts and Soddies
       1. Few trees, so many settlers dig homes into sides of ravines or hills
       2. In plains, make soddy or sod home by stacking blocks of turf
    B. Women’s Work
       1. Homesteaders virtually alone, must be self–sufficient
       2. Women do men’s work—plowing, harvesting, shearing sheep
       3. Do traditional work—carding wool, making soap, canning vegetables
       4. Work for communities—sponsor schools, churches
C. Technical Support for Farmers
   1. Mass market for farm machines develops with migration to plains

D. Agricultural Education
   1. Morrill Act of 1862, 1890 finances agricultural colleges

E. Farmers in Debt
   1. Railroads, investors create bonanza farms—huge, single-crop spreads
   2. 1885–1890 droughts bankrupt single-crop operations
   3. Rising cost of shipping grain pushes farmers into debt

13.3: Farmers and the Populist Movement

Farmers unite to address their economic problems, giving rise to the Populist movement.

I. Farmers Unite to Address Common Problems
   A. Economic Distress
      1. Farmers buy more land to grow more crops to pay off debts
      2. After Civil War, government takes greenbacks out of circulation
         a. Debtors have to pay loans in dollars worth more than those borrowed
      3. Prices of crops fall dramatically
      4. 1870s, debtors push government to put more money in circulation
         a. 1878 Bland–Allison Act—money supply increase not enough for farmers
   B. Problems with the Railroads
      1. Lack of competition lets railroads overcharge to transport grain
      2. Farms mortgaged to buy supplies; suppliers charge high interest
   C. The Farmers’ Alliances
      1. 1867, Oliver Hudson Kelley starts Patrons of Husbandry or Grange
      2. Purpose is educational, social; by 1870s, Grange fighting railroads
3. Farmers’ Alliances—groups of farmers and sympathizers
   a. lectures on interest rates, government control of railroads, banks
   b. gain over 4 million members

II. The Rise and Fall of Populism
   A. The Populist Party Platform
      1. Populism—movement of the people; Populist Party wants reforms
         a. Economic: increase money supply, graduated income tax, federal loans
         b. Political: Senate elected by popular vote; secret ballot; 8-hour day
      2. 1892, Populist candidates elected at different levels of government
         a. Democratic Party eventually adopts platform
   B. The Panic of 1893
      1. RRs expand faster than markets; some go bankrupt
      2. gold supply depleted, leads to rush on banks
         a. businesses, banks collapse
         b. panic becomes depression
   C. Silver or Gold
      1. Political divisions also regional:
         a. Republicans: Northeast business owners, bankers
         b. Democrats: Southern, Western farmers, laborers
      2. Bimetallism—system using both silver and gold to back currency
      3. Gold standard—backing currency with gold only
      4. Paper money considered worthless if cannot be exchanged for metal
         a. Silverites: bimetallism would create more money, stimulate economy
         b. Gold bugs: gold only would create more stable, if expensive currency
   D. Bryan and the “Cross of Gold” 1896
      1. Republicans commit to gold, select Wm McKinley
      2. Dems favor bimetallism, choose Wm Jennings Bryan
         a. Populists endorse Bryan, choose own VP to maintain party identity
   E. The End of Populism
1. McKinley gets East, industrial Midwest; Bryan South, farm Midwest
2. McKinley elected president; Populism collapses; leaves legacy:
   a. powerless can organize, have political impact
   b. agenda of reforms enacted in 20th century