Aditya Patel

APUSH

Period 4

11/20/2020

CH 16 Focus Qs # 1,2, and Debating the Past Question #1

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1. Prior to 1867, Congress had separate treaties with each Native American tribe, giving each tribe land to govern as independent nations in “Conservation” Policy. As miners and farmers moved West, small-scale fighting began between the groups. In 1864 Colorado, fighting between miners and Natives led to the Territorial Militia committing the Sand Creek Massacre, where 133 natives were slaughtered. At the same time, “Indian Hunting” grew in popularity, and some whites hoped for elimination of Indians. Soon after the massacre, Congress created the Bureau of Indian Affairs to move all Indians into two reservations, where they could be more easily managed. This movement was poorly executed but worked to decrease Native land. Violence continued and even increased with the Indian Wars, where Americans killed under flags of truce1 and massacred Natives. In the 1880s, Congress took a new stance with assimilation and the Dawes Act, which instead hoped to destroy Native culture and forcibly Americanize. Throughout this period, Natives lost power, and were eventually cast aside for “progress”.
2. The West was very diverse during its growth. Before migration, it was a land of Mexican Elites, who lived there for decades, some as part of Spanish Missions. As Americans migrated, their land was often taken, they were put into poverty, and some who resisted were jailed2. The Chinese also arrived in large numbers at the same time, and after some brief success in business, were also put to the lower rungs of society. While they were adapting to America, they were exploited into building the Transcontinental Railroad, irrigation, and public works. Many of the White miners, and many Chinese, that arrived as part of Gold Rushes, arrived as single males, creating a heavy gender imbalance in the West. Prostitution, violence, and a lack of communities developed in cities as a result. The farmers who moved west as a result of the Homestead Act were much more familial, and they were the ones to push and attack Natives out of their land.

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1. The American West has always been mythicized as a land of freedom, and this was the original view on it by Jackson Turner, the first significant historian to write about the West. He claimed that whites turned a desolate land into a civilized and free one, which some could argue was not civil or free, as Whites stripped Natives of their cultural heritage and self determination3. The land wasn’t desolate, with Mexicans and Natives living there for centuries. It could be said that whites decimated the West even more, with their Decimation of the Buffalo. His preaching of individualism was also false, with much their opportunities boosted by the Key Role of the Railroad and the governments subsidizing many of the farmers. Later historians, in the early 1900s, believed that Turners’ depictions were mythicized, and challenged his ideas of individualism with inheritance and continuity. However, this still ignores the declining status of Hispanics, who had much of the power before the White migration. Their inheritance was destroyed by the exploitation of Whites. This idea was once again challenged by historians in the late 1900s, who claimed that Whites conquered the West, but not fully, as many different ethnicities continued to live alongside whites. This conquering view was in line with the Indian Wars, where people like Chief Joseph were chased away, and their spirits crushed with their “Ghost Dance” Idea. However, the Whites did not live alongside other ethnicities in the West, as Hispanics and Asians continued to be second class citizens. Asians were especially discriminated against with Anti-Coolie Clubs becoming popular as a way of politically reducing the power of Asians. These clubs and others greatly suppressed minorities in the West, leaving the whites in power in both cities and farms. All of these historical views improved on the previous to be more accurate, but all of the views had flaws, rooted in the American Mythicizing of the West.

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Sources:

#1, The New York Times, [The Little Horn Massacre](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1143), 1

#2, Tiburcio Vásquez, Resistance in California, 1

#3, Luther Standing Chief Bear, The Struggle for Self-Determination, 2