Aditya Patel

APUSH

Period 4

11/30/2020

CH 16 Test

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1. Gold Miners

A massive source of migration to the West were the miners, emigrating from the Eastern States, Asia, and Europe in hopes of quickly striking gold and becoming rich. The first California Gold Rush of 1849 was on of the first of these and is a prime example of what would happen in a gold rush. As news broke out of gold found, people from across America would leave their homes and land, thinking that future would be full of gold. However, they stuck to rivers in hopes of finding gold, finding little. The great profiteers were those like Levi Strauss, who sold equipment to the bourgeoning market. The Comstock Lode was another location drawing miners, in Nevada, for silver. Corporations also pushed in with the gold miners, but instead focused on resources such as copper in the Anaconda Copper Mines. These miners eventually stopped working alone in their dreams and joined the corporations, instead being tortured in terrible working conditions.

1. Cowboys

The West was synonymous with the cowboy, and Americans envied the free-spirited and open lives of the cowboys. In novels such as The Virginian and other media, cowboys were mythicized to be white, freedom-loving, decent, courageous, and the ideal of the American man. This vision was spread across the world and engrained into society with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, which reinforced the glamor of the cowboy, and preserving it for centuries to come. However, the life of the cowboy was not as seen on these mass media. The low-pay, dirty, and tedious cow driving life of these people is largely swept aside in favor in calling them “Natural Men”. They were not all white men, as a great percent of them were black or Hispanic, which was once again not mentioned by the media. These cowboys didn’t last long, and were seen as extinct as soon as 1890, with the publication of Frederick Turner’s Thesis. Their memory was greatly misremembered, and greatly exaggerated.

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1. Farmers

Early in the 1850s, the West was viewed as a desert, a view that changed greatly over the century. The Rocky Mountain School was one of the first to change minds about the west, and spread word of its beautiful, rugged, wilderness far. This and ideas like Frederic Remington’s, that the romance and lack of constraints of civilization, combined to create an attractive vision of the West, and was thought to have inspired thousands there. However, the reality was much more grounded. Government policies of the Homestead Acts drove much more farmer immigration than any idea, distributing farmland to thousands. The government-like railroads also played a huge part, giving the opportunity for trade, business, and transport to the West. The romantic image of the west was a mirage for the loneliness and isolation found to many farmers in the west. Eventually, these optimistic ideas for farming in the West faded, with Jason Edwards spreading that it was as lone and hot as previously thought.

1. Native Americans

Despite contributing invaluably to the country, Natives continued to be viewed as savages. Much of the mythology of the West thought of it as a land waiting to be civilized, empty of people. The “Conservation” Policy used before this western migration was changed to newer methods, and instead forced different tribes together. The moving whites destroyed the natives’ Buffalo and ruined a food and cultural resource for the natives. Another way that the whites “made space” for their “civilization” was by practicing in Indian Hunting, where they would murder Natives for sport. They did this because they believed that the land was put out for their own use, and to develop “civilization”. Americans were willing to wage war on Natives to clear out the land in their quest to conquer the West. The Dawes Act was their final message to Natives, to tell them to assimilate or fall. Their myths forced them to push the Natives out of their own land and to take it from them.

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