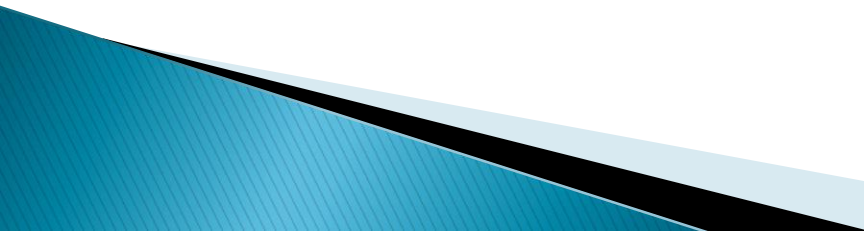


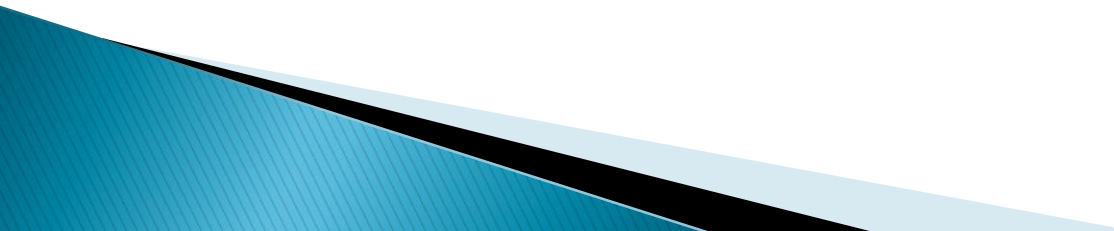
Settling the West

Warm-up: In a few sentences, describe how the discovery of a scarce resource can result in economic boom.

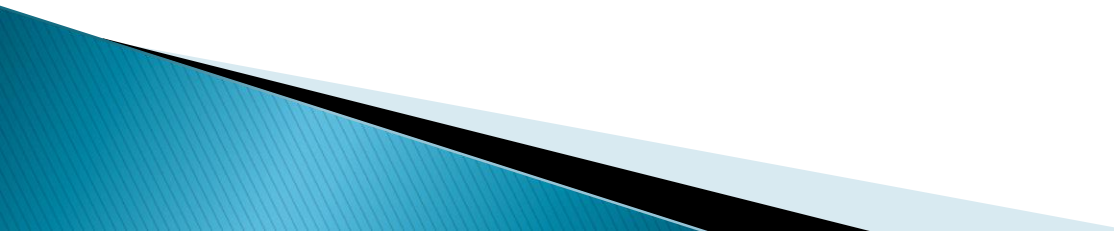
Boomtowns

- ▶ Industries in the East needed the West's rich deposits of gold, silver, and copper
 - ▶ In 1859 prospector **Henry Comstock** staked a claim for a silver mine in Six-Mile Canyon, Nevada
 - ▶ Virginia City, Nevada, Outpost to a boomtown
 - ▶ Several years later, the mines ran out of silver and the boomtown became a ghost town
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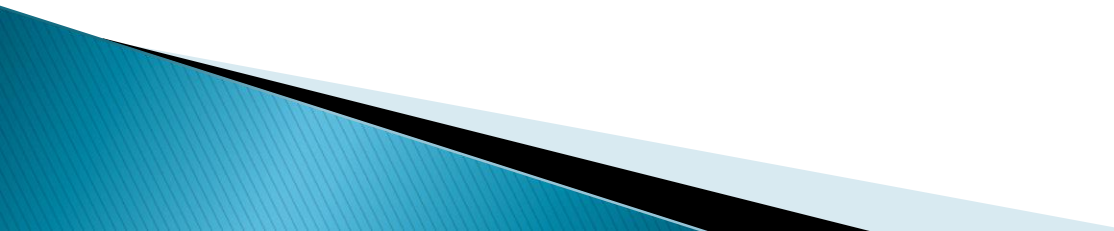
Growth

- ▶ Mining helped the growth of Colorado, the Dakota Territory, and Montana
 - ▶ More Railroads
 - ▶ Denver became the supply point, 2nd largest city in the West
- 

The Great Plains

- ▶ The **Great Plains** region extends westward to the Rocky Mountains from the central Dakotas through western Texas
 - ▶ Major **Stephen Long** explored the Great Plains with an army expedition in 1819
 - ▶ He called it the “Great American Desert” and unfit for farming
- 

The Chisholm Trail

- ▶ After the Civil War, many Americans began building large cattle ranches on the Great Plains
 - ▶ Ranching grew in part because of the **open range**—vast areas of grasslands owned by the federal government
 - ▶ Cattle raisers could graze herds free
 - ▶ **Chisholm Trail** – Major cattle route that went from Texas to Kansas
 - ▶ The long cattle drives ended, in part, when the open range was largely fenced off with **barbed wire**
- 

CATTLE TRAILS



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Movement** Describe how cattle made their way from Texas to markets in the north. Use the map key to help you.
 - 2. Region** Why were longhorns suited to this journey?
- See **Skills Handbook**, p. H19



Texas longhorns are well named, sporting horns that can span four feet. Six million of these docile beasts made the long journey to market during the cattle boom.

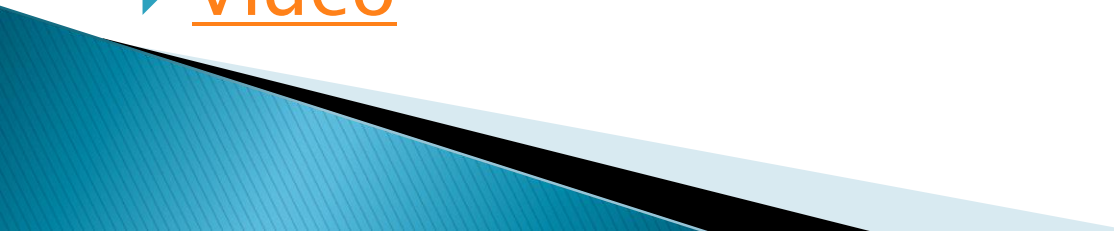
Critical Thinking

- ▶ Answer the following questions in your notes:
- ▶ 1) Explain how mining helped create boomtowns.
- ▶ 2) Why would boomtowns and mining lead to more Railroads?
- ▶ 3) Why were the Great plains originally thought to be useless?
- ▶ 4) Why was the Open Range so appealing to cattle ranchers?
- ▶ 5) In your opinion, what could be some of the problems with the huge growth in the west?

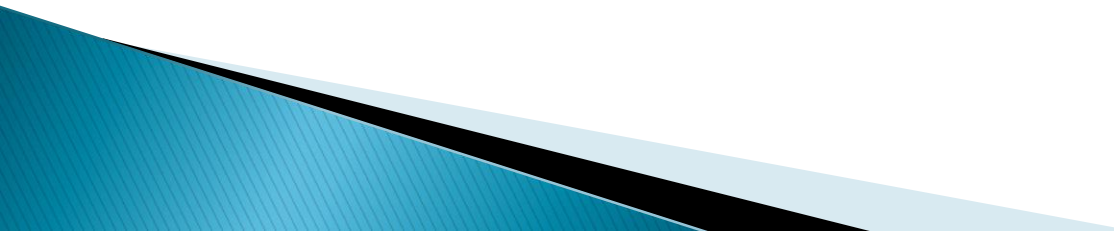
Incentives for settlement

- In 1862, Congress passed three acts to turn public lands into private property.
 - The **Homestead Act** gave 160 acres of land to heads of household.
 - The **Pacific Railway Act** gave land to the railroad companies to build lines.
 - The **Morrill Act** gave lands to states for colleges for agriculture and the mechanic arts.

Dry Farming

- ▶ **Dry farming** method—planting seeds deep in the ground where there was enough moisture for them to grow
 - ▶ By the 1860s, farmers on the Great Plains were using newly designed steel plows, seed drills, reapers, and threshing machines
 - ▶ Farmers who plowed the soil on the Great Plains were called **sodbusters**
 - ▶ [Video](#)
- 

The Wheat Belt

- ▶ During the 1860s and 1870s, new technology made farming more profitable.
 - ▶ Wheat withstood drought better than other crops, – became the most important crop on the Plains
 - ▶ The **Wheat Belt** began at the eastern Plains and included the Dakotas and parts of Nebraska and Kansas
- 

QUICK FACTS

Challenges for Farmers

- **Harsh climate:** from bitter snowstorms to fierce heat and drought
- **Scarce water:** low rainfall and few rivers
- **Lumber shortage:** few wood sources for home-building or heating

Pumps powered by windmills drew water from deep underground.



Sod Houses

“Home, Sweet Soddie”

► The humble sod house had the advantage of being cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Notice the cow grazing on the roof.



Critical Thinking

- 1) How did the Homestead Act encourage people to move west?
 - 2) The Pacific Railway Act gave land to companies to build more rails, how would this help settle the West?
 - 3) Explain how the Morrill Act could lead to better farming and perhaps better machines for farming.
 - 4) Dry farming was essential in the Plains. Why?
 - 5) Advances in farm equipment led to widespread Wheat farming in the Plains. Compare the impact of new farm plows to the impact of the Cotton Gin in the early 1800s.
- 