

**MOVING WEST in 50s - 70s**

- Push factors - 1861 – 1865 the Northern States of the Union fought 11 States of the Confederacy over differences about federal vs state power and slavery. The Union won which meant 4m slaves were freed and many of them chose to settle in West. They were joined by ex-soldiers who could no longer live in the East, Jews who were persecuted, those affected by a depression in Europe and the loss of farmland in Scandinavia and lack of it in the East.
- Enabling factors – During the Civil War the Union wanted to expand West so they passed the Pacific Railroad Act in 1862. The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 meant it was much quicker to West helped by Indians being forced onto smaller reservations after Fort Wise 1861.
- Pull factors – During the Civil War the government passed the Homestead Act in 1862 which enabled poorer migrants to settle in the West. This was helped by railways who sold 5 acres on either side of the track and advertising agents like C B Schmidt who attracted 60,000 Germans (Kansas) and others brought 10,000 Scandinavians (Nebraska.)

**SETTLERS AND HOMESTEADERS**

**SOLUTIONS**

- Promotions downplayed difficulties. Be Singleton in 1873 and Henry Adams convinced about 40,000 black ‘Exodusters’ to homestead in Kansas (Illinois, Missouri and Indiana) by 1879 in towns like Nicodemus but they settled difficult upland areas and yellow fever so were aided by the Kansas governor who created association to help them out.

- After railroads, it was easier to access markets and it ended isolation – particularly for women. Before that women helped homesteads survive buy looking after the children, teaching them to read, acting as doctors, doing the farming and collecting buffalo chips for fuel and cooking. With towns people had entertainment and ideas and could sell and buy industrial goods.
- Technology – 1854 Halladay invented self-governing windmills for water 30ft below the surface, when steel blades were added they could fetch water from 100-400ft and were easier to maintain. David Webster Campbell developed dry farming after 1879 with seed drills and Turkey Red Wheat brought over by the Mennonites in 1873. 50,000 steel Sulky Ploughs after 1875 also made farming easier but most still used walking sodbusters until the 1880s but steel ones were used by 1880 for dry farming. Barbed wire also made fencing off of land easier after ts investion by Glidden in 1873. By 1890 homestead life had become manageable, far more comfortable and even profitable to a point.

**GOVERNMENT ACTS**

- The Homestead Act 1862 replaced Public Domain Land which gave 640 acres at \$1 an acre but was mostly taken by rich investors. It gave ordinary people 160 acres for a \$10 filing fee. Anyone over 21 wanting citizenship could file a claim, even AAs and women and under 21 if an ex-soldier. If they worked for 5 years they could ‘prove up’ the land and buy it for \$30. This was not available for Native Americans.
- However, it was very hard to do this. Many sold their land for £1.25 an acre after 6 months for a profit to rich investors. Many Cattle Barons like Goodnight bought up patchwork claims to make huge chessboard ranches. Other homesteaders just sold their land for a profit and worked on the investors land.
- By 1876, 6m acres of the Plains were homesteads. Eventually, 80 million acres of public land were settled which helped Nebraska gain statehood in 1867. However, this was only 16% of Public Domain Land. By 1884, Only 13 million acres\_of claims had been ‘proved up’ by 1884 and 60% were never were.
- The Timber Culture Act 1873 gave an extra 160 acres of trees were planted on a 1/4 of it. This would protect crops and provide resources to develop homesteads. So the number of homestead failures declined. 16m acres had been claimed under this Act by 1878.

**PROBLEMS**

- 1850s industrial farms in California were shipping crops to Far East. In 1854 Nebraska and Kansas were formed and people settled more in Plains but soil was very hard (Nebraska Clay) so crops often died and hard to plough – needed \$1,000 and a sodbuster. Little rainfall bad for livestock and crops and no rivers to transport goods or people so hard to make money.
- No or very few trees meant no timber for fuel or building houses. They had to use buffalo chips which burned quickly so needed lots. Lived in isolated (hard for women) sod houses so lots of insects, dusty in summer and muddy in winter. Crops were also killed by heat, heavy winds, prairie fires and grasshoppers (1874 120 billion destroyed 300,000km2).

**RAILWAYS**

- Problems – huge costs – 1853 \$150,000 just to survey. Huge outlay (track, resources bridges, tunnels) with very little return. Both South and North wanted track to San Fran to join up with their network west of Missouri. Indian rights were an issue.
- Resolved – Pacific Railroad Act in 1862 created connection to West with North as Union in charge, created Central Pacific (Sacramento – Utah) and Union Pacific (Omaha – Utah) and all Indians rights against railroad already gone in Fort Laramie Treaty so govt. extinguished rights as went along. Expense - \$16,000 (\$48,000 in Mountains) land to railroad for very mile laid, given 45m acres of land and \$61m for railroad. Railroads could also sell 5 acres either side of railroad. By 1890 300m acres were settled.
- Impact – immigration easier as 324,000 km of track after two companies met at Promontory Point in 1869. NY to San Fran went from 10 months to 10 days, Omaha to Sacramento 6 days. Also made territories into states – only 4 territories in 1890 (unity). Also 7-10,000 Chinese were brought in to help build the railroad along with numerous Irish (could handle very difficult conditions)
- Helped by higher standard of living- agricultural centres met cities, homesteads got technology, timber, household goods and towns (Denver, Dallas), and telegraphs allowed for communication with relatives. However Indian life destroyed.
- Economic – cattle industry grew, San Fran could export Eastern goods to China, timber, mining and steel industries grew and jobs for miners, factory workers, builders, architects, lumberjacks etc. railway workers.