The South and the West Transformed

- What were the economic and political policies of the states in the post-Reconstruction South?
- How did segregation and political disenfranchisement shape race relations in the New South?
- What were the experiences of farmers, miners, and cowboys in the West?
- What were the consequences of late-nineteenth-century Indian policy?

- After the Civil War the South and the West provided enticing opportunities for American inventiveness and entrepreneurship.
  - The Federal government encouraged western settlement and economic exploitation
  - Construction of railroads, military conquest of Indians, liberal land-distribution policy
    - 200,000 miles of railroad by 1897
    - Expensive to build railroads—led to panic of 1893
    - Rail lines were rebuilt in the South
  - Proponents of the “New South” after 1865 wanted to pursue industry

The New South

The Fresh Vision

- Prominent leaders insisted that the South must create modern society and bustling cities
  - Henry W. Grady, editor of Atlanta Constitution
  - Vision that New South would be an example of democracy
  - More diversified agriculture and education would lead to material success

Economic Growth

- The chief accomplishment of the New South movement was an expansion of the region’s textile production
  - Number of cotton mills and mill workers increased fivefold—demand for cotton went up eightfold
- Tobacco also increased significantly
  - Duke family of North Carolina
  - American Tobacco Company
    - Supreme Court ruled that the company was in violation the Sherman Anti-Trust Act
  - Buck Duke moved on to hydroelectric power and aluminum
- Systematic use of other natural resources
  - Coal production
- Industrial growth spawned need for housing, and after 1870 lumbering became a thriving industry
  - Southern pine product outdistanced textiles
- New industries: fertilizers, oysters, vegetables, fruits, ships, battleships, leather, liquors, glass, clay, stone

Agriculture Old and New

- Industrialization was not profound
  - King Cotton survived the Civil War and expanded over (1879 regained prewar levels)
- Majority of southern farmers were not flourishing, despite new diversity
Prolonged deflation in crop prices—more difficult to own land
- Sharecropping and tenancy among blacks and whites grew
- Most farms were worked by people who did not own land

**How did sharecropping and tenancy work?**
- Sharecroppers worked in return for supplies and share of the crop (about a half)
- **System was horribly inefficient and corrupting**
  - Tenants and landowners were suspicious of each other

**Acute shortage of capital**
- People had to devise ways to operate without cash
- **Crop-lien system:** country merchants furnished supplies to farmers in return for mortgages on crops
  - To some, it was a hopeless cycle of debt
  - Merchants charged interest

**Stagnation of rural life held millions, white and black, in bondage**

**Tenancy and the Environment**
- Leached nutrients from the soil
- Tenants had no incentive to take care of farmland
- Fertilizer used to accelerate growing cycle
  - Depleted soils
- Deep gullies, red clay, streams were clogged with silt

**The Bourbon Redeemers**
- **In post-Civil War southern politics, habits of political elitism still prevailed**
  - People gravitated around the rich elite
  - These groups were known as redeemers, or Bourbons
  - **Included rising class of entrepreneurs**
    - Those who opposed redeemers labeled them Bourbons to depict them as reactionaries, not progressives
    - They generally pursued a government fiscal policy of frugality
      - Slashed state expenditures
      - Urge to reduce state expenditures created convict leasing
  - **Wartime destruction of prisons + demand for cheap labor = leasing of convict workers**
    - Way to avoid penitentiary expenses
  - **Bourbons reduced state expenditures and public debt**
    - Repudiated debt
  - Established boards of agriculture and public health, stations for agricultural experimentation, state colleges
  - Democratic party of the time was coalition of Unionists, secessionists, businessmen, small farmers, hillbillies, planters, even some Republicans
    - Against Reconstruction Radicals
    - Bourbon regimes never achieved complete unity
  - **Southern politics remained surprisingly democratic—allowed blacks and whites despite Bourbon control**
    - Disenfranchisement of African Americans remained inconsistent under Bourbon rule
  - Racial segregation appeared before the end of Reconstruction, especially in schools, churches, hotels
The ultimate achievement of the New South prophets and their allies, the Bourbons, was that they reconciled tradition with innovation.

- Relative moderation in racial policy allowed them to embrace and keep control
- Promoted growth of industry
- Textile industry

**Disenfranchising African Americans**

- Moderate attitudes toward race evaporated in 1890s
- **Negrophobia**
  - Many whites resented signs of black success and influence
  - Education of blacks was threatening
  - New Negroes were more assertive

**Racial violence and repression surged to the fore during the last decade of the nineteenth century**

- New South began to resemble Old South
- Ruling whites imposed their will, racial subjugation
- **Jim Crow** laws mandated public separation

**Political dynamics of the 1890s exacerbated social tensions**

- Rise of populism—courting black votes to swing
- Farm-based protest
- Bourbons revived the race issue in response to bringing of blacks into prominent positions by populists
  - Argued that black vote should be eliminated in the South
  - Disenfranchisement was indirect due to the fifteenth amendment

**Mississippi led the way to near-total disenfranchisement of blacks and poor whites**

- Constitutional convention to change suffrage
- More states followed
- **Residence requirements**—struck at tenant farmers
- Conviction qualifications
- Taxes to vote
- Literacy test
- Other states added variations to these guidelines
  - Louisiana’s **Grandfather Clause**—illiterates could vote if their grandfathers or fathers could vote

**The Spread of Segregation**

- **Jim Crow laws symbolized segregation, political disenfranchisement followed**
  - First target was the railway train
    - Separate rail cars
  - Segregation violated Civil Rights Act
    - **Supreme Court ruled against blacks in rulings**
    - Their interpretation left as an open question the validity of state laws requiring separate racial facilities under the rubric of “separate but equal”

- **Plessy v. Ferguson** challenged rail car ruies
  - Plessy refused to leave white car because he was only 1/8 black
  - Racial segregation extended to every area of southern life

- Violence accompanied Jim Crow laws
Lynchings
Legalized racial discrimination: segregation of public facilities, political disenfranchisement, vigilante justice

How did African Americans respond?
Some left the south
Majority stayed in their native region
Most accommodated to white supremacy
Not total submission—they turned inward
Churches continued to provide hub of community life
  - Political activities, meeting grounds
Churches offered leadership roles to black men
  - Racial pride and dignity

Irony of state-enforced segregation is that it opened up new economic opportunities for blacks
New class of African-American entrepreneurs
Blacks formed their own fraternal clubs
  - Independent Order of Odd Fellows

Middle-class black women formed a network of racial uplift organizations
Engines of social service
Sponsored welfare, clinics, etc.
Converged into National Association of Colored Women
  - Meant to combat racism
  - Mary Church Terrell

Ida B. Wells
One of the most outspoken activists
Denied a railroad car because she was black
First African American to file suit against discrimination
Became editor of *Memphis Free Speech*
Launched crusade against lynching
Helped found National Association for the Advancement of Colored People NAACP

Washington and Du Bois
Booker T. Washington
  - Argued that blacks should first establish an economic base for their advancement before striving for social equality
  - Endorsed segregation, supported work and money
  - Sacrificed broad education civil rights for acceptance of white conservatives and economic opportunities

W.E.B. Du Bois led criticism of Washington
  - Assaulted Booker’s accommodationist philosophy
  - Supported ceaseless agitation for civil rights
  - Suggested that education should be broad, not just for occupation
The New West

- The Post-Civil War West offered the promise of democratic individualism, economic opportunity, personal freedom
- Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and western Minnesota: spread of farmers
- Miners from California, cowboys from Texas
- Great Plains were barren
- Discovery gold, completion of railroads, destruction of buffalo, collapse of Indian resistance, rise of range-cattle industry,
  - New techniques of dry farming and irrigation

The Migratory Stream

- During second half of nineteenth century, stream of migrants flowed into West
  - African Americans, Mexicans, European and Chinese immigrants
  - Most settlers were relatively prosperous white, native-born farming families
    - Most were men
    - The poor could not afford to relocate due to expense of transportation
- The largest number of foreign immigrants came from northern Europe and Canada
  - Germans, Scandinavians, and Irish were most numerous in the northern plains
  - Those from China and Mexico were less numerous but significant
- African Americans also migrated after collapse of Radical Republicans
  - The foremost promoter of black migration to the West was Benjamin Pap Singleton
    - Convinced that God was calling him to rescue his brethren
    - Led colonists
    - Established Dunlop community in Kansas
  - Many blacks followed Singleton into Kansas—southerners worried about loss of labor
    - Whites closed access to Mississippi River
- Black exodus to West died out by early 1880s
  - Many settlers were unprepared
  - Drought, working conditions, not self-sufficient
  - Resources drained due to influx of people
- Life on the frontier was not the promised land that settlers expected
- In 1866 Congress passed legislation establishing two “colored” cavalry units and dispatched them to the western frontier—buffalo soldiers
  - They were mostly Civil War veterans from Louisiana and Kentucky
  - Built and maintained forts
  - Mapped vast areas, strung telegraph lines, protected railroad crews, subdued Indians, captured outlaws

Mining the West

- Valuable mineral deposits continued to lure people to the West after the Civil War
  - The California miners of 1849—forty niners—set the typical pattern
    - Sudden, disorderly rush of prospectors
    - Lawlessness and vigilante rule
- Drama of the gold rush was reenacted
  - Colorado became a state in 1876
Comstock Lode discovered in Nevada

- Nevada became a territory

Demand for orderly government in the West led to hasty creation of new territories and admission of new states

- Democrats were reluctant to create states that were heavily Republican
- Republican domination led to admission of the Dakotas, Montana, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico

Mining and the Environment

- Mining became a mass-production industry as individual prospectors gave way to large companies
  - After “placer” deposits were exhausted, efficient mining required large-scale operations
  - Hydraulic mining, dredging, hard-rock mining
  - Dirt and debris, clogged rivers, farmland and orchards destroyed
  - Irate California farmers formed Anti-Debris Association and won in court:
    - Woodruff v. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company—first major environmental ruling

The Indian Wars

- Indians were forced out of their Western refuge
  - Indian tribe gathering at Fort Laramie—Plain Indians decided to settle Wyoming Territory and leave whites alone, allow them to pass through
    - Initially effective but fighting resumed
    - Emigrants began to encroach
  - Untrained militia in Colorado killed peaceful Indians
- Congressional committee gathered evidence of hostility against Indians
  - “Report on the Condition of Indian Tribes” led to Indian Peace Commission charged with removing causes of Indian wars
  - Encroachment continued
- 1867 conference at Medicine Lodge, Kansas
  - Some Indian tribes accepted land in western Oklahoma
  - Other agreed to settle in Dakota Territory
  - Indian resistance in the southern plains continued until Red River War—Indians forced to disband
- Trouble in the north
  - Miners filtered into the Black Hills, Sioux hunting grounds despite promises of the North to stay out
- Great Sioux War
  - Largest military event since Civil War
  - Largest campaign against Indians
  - Colonel Custer’s men were destroyed because they were isolated from main body of soldiers
  - Indians celebrated instead of pursuing victory
  - US army reclaimed offensive and forced Sioux’s to give up land and goldfields
- Sioux were forced onto reservations on the least valuable land
  - Struggle to exist
- Blackfeet and Crows had to leave their homes in Montana
- Chief Joseph—kept his dignity, was respectful of Indians, surrendered
- Indian wars ended in 1886 with capture of Geronimo, chief of Apaches
The Demise of the Buffalo

- Decimation of buffalo herd contributed to collapse of Indians
  - By 1850, less than 10 million buffalo
  - By 1900, only few hundred left
  - Harvesting of buffalo by white hunters
  - Demand for buffalo robes, leather, fertilizer from bones

- Buffalo population decreased for environmental reasons as well
  - Drought
  - Competition with horses, sheep, cattle
  - Cattle-borne disease
  - Plain Indians

Indian Policy

- Slaughter of buffalo and Indians ignited widespread criticism
  - Politicians and religious leaders spoke out against mistreatment of Indians
  - Helen Hunt Jackson: *A Century of Dishonor*
  - Indian policy gradually became more benevolent but did little to east plight of Indians
  - Reservation policy inaugurated by Peace Commission did little
    - Partly humanitarian in motive but also saved money

- Well-intentioned breformers sought to “Americanize”
  - Dealt with them as individuals, not tribes
  - Dawes Severalty Act of 1887: divided land of any tribe, granting 160 acres to each head of a family and lesser amounts to others
  - To protect Indian property, government held it in trust for 25 years after which Indian became citizen
  - Burke Act of 1906: Indians who took up life apart from their tribes became citizens immediately

- Despite best intentions, Dawes Act created more opportunity for white plundering of Indians
  - It broke up reservations
  - Undistributed land was sold
  - Indians’ inexperience with private ownership

Cattle and Cowboys

- Mexican roots
  - Spanish horses and livestock
  - Saddle, spurs, cowboy tools made in Mexico

- Texas longhorns evolved through natural selection
  - Little value
  - In upper Mississippi River valley, cattle was in demand after war

- New opportunities arose as railroads pushed farther west, where cattle could be driven through relatively vacant lands
  - Joseph McCoy—moved cattle trade west, Abline, Kansas
• **Cowboys**
  - Diverse backgrounds
• Population of Kansas and Nebraska increased
  - The secret to higher profits for the cattle industry was to devise a way to slaughter the cattle in the Midwest and ship the dressed carcasses east and west—required refrigeration
  - Gustavus Swift developed mechanical refrigeration
• The dangers of the trail, wear and tear, charges on drives across Indian territory, advance of farms persuaded cattlemen to work near railroads—cattle business spread with railroad
• In absence of laws governing the open range, cattle ranchers worked out a code of action
  - Keep animal out of other’s territory
  - Joseph Glidden—barbed wire

**The End of the Open Range**
• Combination of factors put an end to the open range
  - Barbed-wire wars—due to crowding
  - Associations formed to keep intruders out
  - Sheepherding
  - Severe winters and drought in 1886 and 1887

**Range Wars**
• Conflicting claims over land and water rights ignited violent disputes between ranchers and farmers
  - Cattle ranchers clashed with farmers and shepherders, who were typically Mexican Americans
  - Strain of ethnic and religious prejudice
• Perennial tension between large and small cattle ranchers
  - To survive, smaller ranchers cut fences
  - Fence Cutter’s War in Texas—state ended it by passing legislation

**Farmers and the Land**
• Federal land laws offered farmers favorable terms
  - Homestead Act of 1862: settler could realize the old dream of free land simply by staking out a claim and living on it for five years, or he could but land at $1.25 an acre after six months
• Environmental forces shaped development
  - Dry land
  - Where farming was impossible, ranchers simply established dominance by control of the water, regardless of law
  - Newlands Reclamation Act: set up Bureau of Reclamation
    - the proceeds of public land sales in sixteen states created a fund for irrigation projects
    - Reclamation Bureau set about building major projects like Hoover Dam
• Lands were passed on from private hands, more so than form government
• Even though land was cheap, farmers found it hard to survive financially due to expenses
• New innovations: sodbuster plow
• Bonanza farms—gigantic agricultural producing and processing

**Pioneer Women**
• West remained largely male society
• Women could not own property without husband approval, could not sell property, divorce, sue, etc
• **Fight for survival made men and women equal somewhat**
  - Women became more independent

• **Individual character**

**The End of the Frontier**

• **End of the frontier was not distinguishable anymore due to population increase and spread**
• Turner’s frontier thesis guided several generations of scholars and students in their understanding of distinctive characteristics of American history
  - Homogenizing effect of frontier environment