

Textbook: Chapter 8 THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC by Glencoe use with Chapter 8* if applicable

Overview: Congress in 1862 fundamentally alters the landscape of the west with the passage of the Homestead Act and The Pacific Railway Act. When Americans settle out west and view the "untouched" wilderness, it is important for students to remember Native America Indians had been in those areas for many years. There is a spirit of freedom and wildness in Americans that may be attributed to the beauty and the wildness of the land. The Homestead Act and The Pacific Railway Act change the landscape of America. The beauty of America and the city skyline both come to represent our country. The city skyline will come to represent beauty to America in the 20th century much the same way landscapes represent beauty.

Essential Question:

What does the untouched American Landscape represent in our history and culture?
How would the Civil War affect the government's ability to fund the cost to settle The Great Plains and the West?

How would the changing of the American landscape alter the Native America's perceptions of the settlers?

Does the American landscape come to represent the essential freedom that many Americans think they are entitled to?

How does owning land come to represent freedom?

Connections to the Curriculum:

American History, Language Arts, Geography,

National Standards

This lesson addresses the following national curriculum standards.

- **History**
established by the National Center for History in the Schools
 - Era 4 Standard 2E
The Student understands the settlement of the West. Therefore the student is able to: Analyze cultural interactions among diverse groups in the trans-Mississippi region.
 - Era 6 Standard 1C
The student understands how agriculture, mining, and ranching were transformed. The student is therefore able to: Analyze the role of the

federal government — particularly in terms of land policy, water, and Indian policy — in the economic transformation of the West.

- Standard 2A
The student understands the sources and experiences of the new immigrants.

Connections to the National Geography Standards:

Standard 4: "The physical and human characteristics of places"

Time:

One block class period or 2 45 minute periods

Materials Required:

The Homestead Act

The Pacific Railway Act

Picturing America reproduction or displayed on projector:

Postcards of famous city sky lines and landscapes

Looking Down Yosemite Valley, California, 1865

Albert Bierstadt (American, b. Germany, 1830–1902)

Charles Sheeler's American Landscape 1930

Readings

Objectives:

Students will

- 1.) Relate the use of the American landscape as a tool for understanding American identity culture and history.
- 2.) Explore how the Homestead Act and the Pacific Railway Act began to change the American landscape of America.
- 3.) Identify themes in the movement out west and the pride in the American spirit in conquering the "wildness" of America.
- 4.) Discuss the "untouched" version of Native American Landscape as compared to American landscapes settled by European Americans.

S u g g e s t e d P r o c e d u r e

Opening: Introduction of the postcards-discuss beauty and representation of America

Introducing chapter objectives and readings and settlement of the west.

Selected reading from Stephen Long

Review of the rainfall in the Great Plains after 1870 that indicates rainfall becoming average** read famous quote "RAIN FOLLOWS THE PLOW"

Development: Students will trace the Great Plains on a map, Compare the document, study the landscape and develop a reflection journal entry on the idea of land and freedom.

Closing: Students will complete reflective journal entries in their notebooks.

Explore Sheeler's American Landscape 1930 and compare it to 1862 California.

Suggested Student Assessment:

Complete a graphic organizer that has a center "Things that encourage settlement of the West"

Writing a letter to Congress on behalf of the Native Americans protesting the railroad in certain areas.

Research the brief rise of the railroad

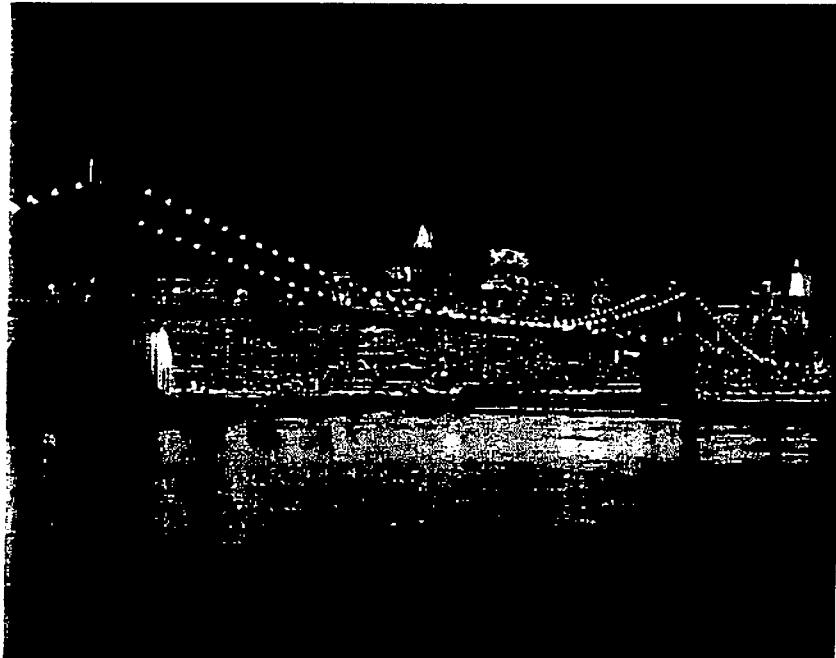
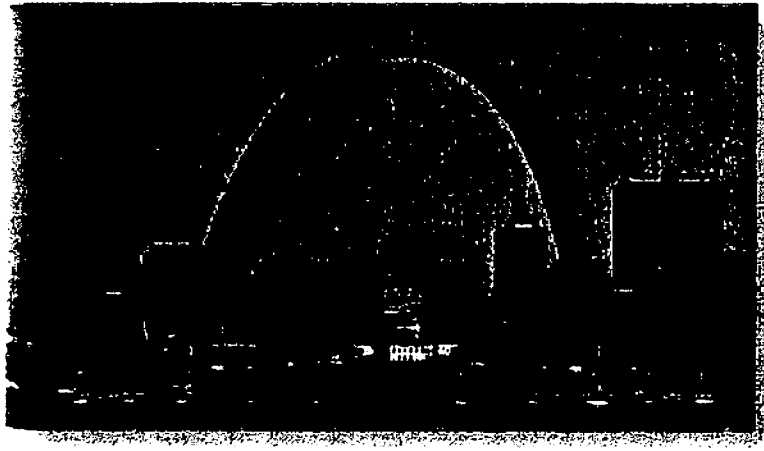
Create a flyer for the Acts or Wilbers writings

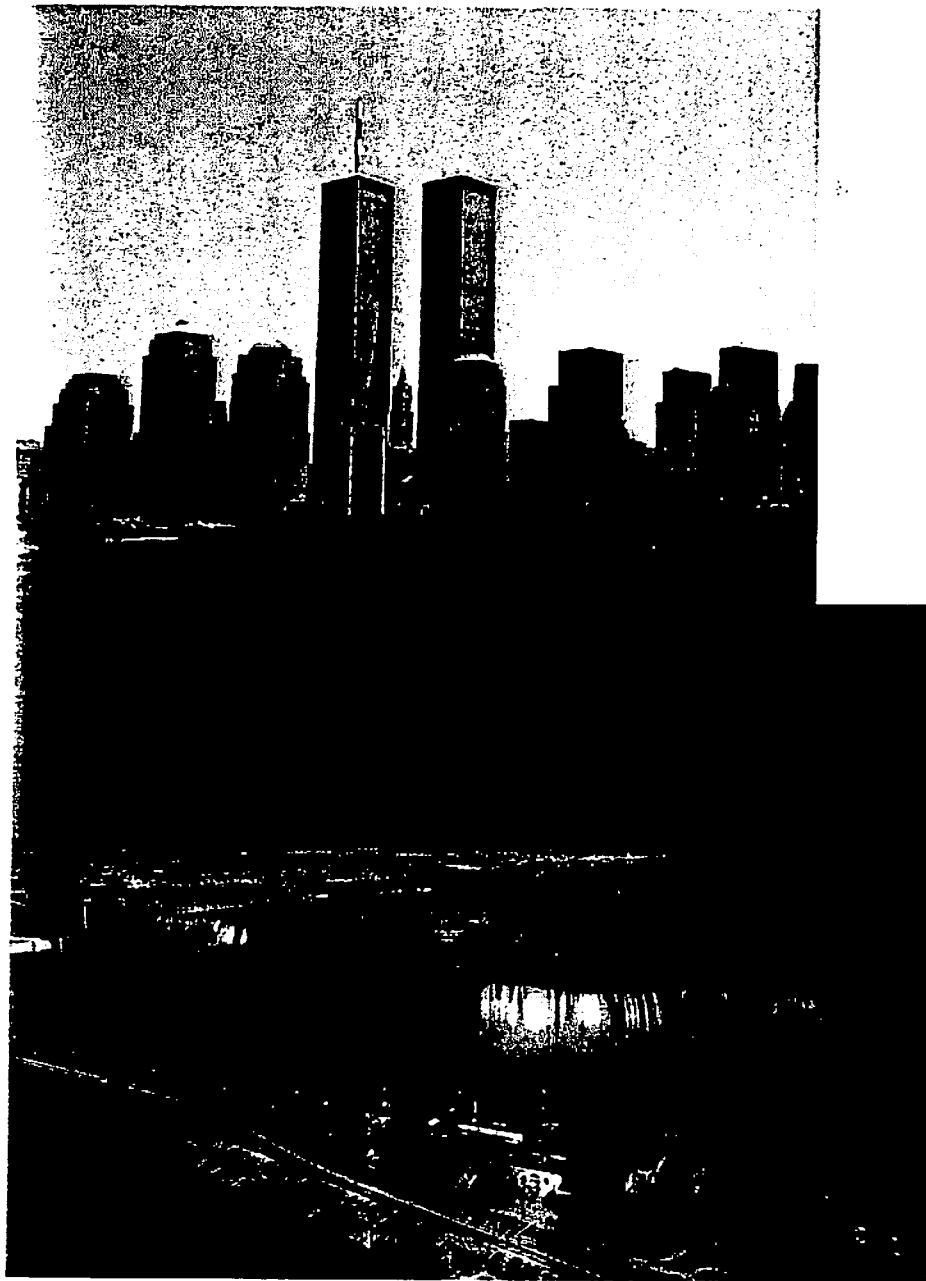
Define: Dry farming, wheat belt, homestead, region, Great Plains, sodbuster, bonanza farm,

Suppose (an army of frontier farmers) 50 miles, in width, from Manitoba to Texas, could acting in concert, turn over the prairie sod, and after deep plowing and receiving the rain and moisture, present a new surface of green growing crops instead of dry, hard baked earth covered with sparse buffalo grass. No one can question or doubt the inevitable effect of this cooling condensing surface upon the moisture in the atmosphere as it moves over by the Western winds (sic). A reduction of temperature must at once occur, accompanied by the usual phenomena of showers. The chief agency in this transformation is agriculture. To be more concise. Rain follows the plow.

--Charles Dana Wilber, 1881, in

"The Great Valleys of Nebraska"





Major Stephen H. Long (1784–1864), army topographical engineer, commanded a scientific expedition that explored portions of the Rocky Mountains and the Platte, Arkansas, and Canadian Rivers during the summer of 1820. His party departed Pittsburgh on 5 May 1819 as the scientific arm of a larger expedition with orders to explore the Upper Missouri by steamboat. Technical difficulties, disease, delay, and lack of funding compelled the abandonment of this venture during the winter of 1819– 1820. As an alternative, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun ordered Long's party to travel overland from its winter quarters at Engineer Cantonment near Council Bluffs to explore the Arkansas and Red Rivers.

Long's party, which included the entomologist Thomas Say, the artists Titian Peale and Samuel Seymour, and the physician-naturalist Edwin James, began its journey on 6 June 1820. They moved westward along the Platte and arrived in early July at the Rocky Mountains, where James and other members of the party made the first recorded ascent of Pike's Peak. The party then divided into two groups that turned south and east. One group was ordered to travel down the Arkansas River, and the other, led by Long himself, intended to find the source of the Red River. It failed to do so, mistaking the Canadian River for the Red. Exhausted by hunger and thirst, the two groups reunited at Belle Point on the Arkansas River on 13 September 1820.

Though Long failed to make any significant contributions to formal geographical knowledge of the region, his party gathered extensive scientific and ethnographic data, recording their observations of the Pawnees and identifying numerous new plant and animal species. In 1823 James published a compilation of the expedition's journals, which brought the results of the expedition to a wider audience. Some historians have chastised Long for characterizing the Great Plains in present-day Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma as a "Great American Desert" in his report to Calhoun. However, others have pointed out the accuracy of Long's description of the arid plains as unsuitable for agriculture, given the technological resources of his era. Long undertook another major exploration, this one of the Minnesota River and the Great Lakes, in 1823. This expedition concluded his career as an explorer, though he remained an active member of the army engineers until a few years before his death.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Benson, Maxine, ed. *From Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains: Major Stephen Long's Expedition, 1819–1820*. Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum, 1988. Edited and annotated version of the James report.

The Pacific Railway Act

July 1, 1862

(U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XII, p. 489 ff.)

An Act to aid in the Construction of a Railroad and Telegraph Line from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean. . . .

Be it enacted, That [names of corporations]; together with five commissioners to be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior... are hereby created and erected into a body corporate... by the name... of "The Union Pacific Railroad Company"... ; and the said corporation is hereby authorized and empowered to lay out, locate, construct, furnish, maintain and enjoy a continuous railroad and telegraph... from a point on the one hundredth meridian of longitude west from Greenwich, between the south margin of the valley of the Republican River and the north margin of the valley of the Platte River, to the western boundary of Nevada Territory, upon the route and terms hereinafter provided...

Sec. 2. That the right of way through the public lands be... granted to said company for the construction of said railroad and telegraph line; and the right... is hereby given to said company to take from the public lands adjacent to the line of said road, earth, stone, timber, and other materials for the construction thereof; said right of way is granted to said railroad to the extent of two hundred feet in width on each side of said railroad when it may pass over the public lands, including all necessary grounds, for stations, buildings, workshops, and depots, machine shops, switches, side tracks, turn tables, and water stations. The United States shall extinguish as rapidly as may be the Indian titles to all lands falling under the operation of this act...

Sec. 3. That there be... granted to the said company, for the purpose of aiding in the construction of said railroad and telegraph line, and to secure the safe and speedy transportation of mails, troops, munitions of war, and public stores thereon, every alternate section of public land, designated by odd numbers, to the amount of five alternate sections per mile on each side of said railroad, on the line thereof, and within the limits of ten miles on each side of said road... Provided That all mineral lands shall be accepted from the operation of this act; but where the same shall contain timber, the timber thereon is hereby granted to say company...

Sec. 5. That for the purposes herein mentioned the Secretary of the Treasury shall... in accordance with the provisions of this act, issue to said company bonds of the United States of one thousand dollars each, payable in thirty years after date, paying six per centum per annum interest... to the amount of sixteen of said bonds per mile for each section of forty miles; and to secure the repayment to the United States... of the amount of said bonds... the issue of said bonds... shall ipso facto constitute a first mortgage on the whole line of the railroad and telegraph...

Sec. 9. That the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western Railroad Company of Kansas are hereby authorized to construct a railroad and telegraph line... upon the same terms and conditions in all respects as are provided [for construction of the Union Pacific Railroad].... The Central Pacific Railroad Company of California are hereby authorized to construct a railroad and telegraph line from the Pacific coast... to the eastern boundaries of California, upon the same terms and conditions in all respects [as are provided for the Union Pacific Railroad].

Sec. 10 ...And the Central Pacific Railroad Company of California after completing its road across said State, is authorized to continue the construction of said railroad and telegraph through the Territories of the United States to the Missouri River... upon the terms and conditions provided in this act in relation to the Union Pacific Railroad Company, until said roads shall meet and connect...

Sec. 11. That for three hundred miles of said road most mountainous and difficult of construction, to wit: one hundred and fifty miles westerly from the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, and one hundred and fifty miles eastwardly from the western base of the Sierra Nevada mountains... the bonds to be issued to aid in the construction thereof shall be treble the number per mile hereinbefore provided... and between the sections last named of one hundred and fifty miles each, the bonds to be issued to aid in the construction thereof shall be double the number per mile first mentioned...

The Homestead Act May 20, 1862

(U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XII, p. 392 ff.)

AN ACT to secure homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain.

Be it enacted, That any person who is the head of a family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and is a citizen of the United States, or who shall have filed his declaration of intention to become such, as required by the naturalization laws of the United States, and who has never borne arms against the United States Government or given aid and comfort to its enemies, shall, from and after the first of January, eighteen hundred and sixty-three, be entitled to enter one quarter-section or a less quantity of unappropriated public lands, upon which said person may have filed a pre-emption claim, or which may, at the time the application is made, be subject to pre-emption at one dollar and twenty-five cents, or less, per acre; or eighty acres or less of such unappropriated lands, at two dollars and fifty cents per acre, to be located in a body, in conformity to the legal subdivisions of the public lands, and after the same shall have been surveyed: Provided, That any person owning or residing on land may, under the provisions of this act, enter other land lying contiguous to his or her said land, which shall not, with the land so already owned and occupied, exceed in the aggregate one hundred and sixty acres.

Sec. 2. That the person applying for the benefit of this act shall, upon application to the register of the land office in which he or she is about to make such entry, make affidavit before the said register or receiver that he or she is the head of a family, or is twenty-one or more years of age, or shall have performed service in the Army or Navy of the United States, and that he has never borne arms against the Government of the United States or given aid and comfort to its enemies, and that such application is made for his or her exclusive use and benefit, and that said entry is made for the purpose of actual settlement and cultivation, and not, either directly or indirectly, for the use or benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever; and upon filing the said affidavit with the register or receiver, and on payment of ten dollars, he or she shall thereupon be permitted to enter the quantity of land specified: Provided, however, That no certificate shall be given or patent issued therefore until the expiration of five years from the date of such entry; and if, at the expiration of such time, or at any time within two years thereafter, the person making such entry -- or if he be dead, his widow; or in case of her death, his heirs or devisee; or in case of a widow making such entry, her heirs or devisee, in case of her death -- shall prove by two credible witnesses that he, she, or they have resided upon or cultivated the same for the term of five years immediately succeeding the time of filing the affidavit aforesaid, and shall make affidavit that no part of said land has been alienated, and that he has borne true allegiance to the Government of the United States; then, in such case, he, she, or they, if at that time a citizen of the United States, shall be entitled to a patent, as in other cases provided for by law: And provided, further, That in case of the death of both father and mother, leaving an infant child or children under twenty-one years of age, the right and fee shall inure to the benefit of said infant child or children, and the executor, administrator, or guardian may, at any time within two years after the death of the surviving parent, and in accordance with the laws of the State in which such children for the time being have their domicile, sell said land for the benefit of said infants, but for no other purpose; and the purchaser shall acquire the absolute title by the purchase, and be entitled to a patent from the United States, and payment of the office fees and sum of money herein specified.. ..

1. Questions for Students Re: Homestead Act

- a. What does Congress hope to achieve with this act?
- b. How much per acre did land under the Homestead Act cost?
- c. Define term "public domain"?
- d. Who is eligible for a grant of land?
- e. How is excluded from getting a grant of land?
- f. Write a short letter to your friend advising them on how to obtain their grant following the terms of the act.
- g. What is the time frame before having the actual ownership or title to the land?
- h. How does the government attempt to help people obtain their farm land?

2. Questions for the Pacific Railway Act

- a. What are the goals of the Pacific Railway Act?
- b. What powers does the Union Pacific Railroad have from this act?
- c. How are the telegraph poles next to the railroad an indicator of the changes in the American landscape?
- d. Is this land really public domain? How will the poles and track affect the landscape? What will they represent to the Native Americans?
- e. How much land next to the tracks is taken by this act?
- f. How will the government deal with the Native American Indians?
- g. How will the railway be paid for?
- h. What will happen to the land given to the railroads?
- i. How can a competing railroad going east be built and funded?
- j. What are the challenges of the track in the Sierra Nevadas?

For the Landscape

1. What are the two/three major images found in the portrait?
2. Why are these objects significant to you as an individual?
3. What about this landscape do you find yourself most drawn toward?
4. What is the significance of the landscape?
5. Does the use of the space in the canyon signify this land is open for settlers in this work?
6. How does the landscape represent freedom in the 1860's?