

Railroad college essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Not everyone would benefit from that transformation. The transcontinental railroad was not the beginning of white settlers battles with native Americans. it the final nail in the coffin. But it was an irrevocable marker of encroaching white society, that unstoppable force which would force Indians onto reservations within decades.

New treaties scattered the Indians to reservations and opened the last great Native American holding to the settlers so steadily branching outward from the iron road. And the buffalo herds upon which Indians depended had been nearly depleted. They were easy prey to sport-hunters brought to the plains by the carload. More disastrously, the railroad introduced the herds to American industrial production for which they became one more resource to be mined en masse.

Millions of buffalo fell to indiscriminate slaughter their hides shipped back along the rails to the markets of the East. As it encouraged the growth of American business so too did it promote evolution of the nation's public discourse and intellectual life. Americans could travel across the length of the continent in a matter of days and gaze upon their country in its entirety from the windows of their train cars. Conversations begun in the east ended in the west. Books written in San Francisco found homes on New York shelves just one week after their publication.

The rails carried more than goods they provided a conduit for ideas a pathway for discourse. With the completion of its great railroad America gave birth to a transcontinental culture. And the route further engendered another profound change in the American mind. Here was manifest destiny

wrought in iron; here were two coasts united; here was an interior open to settlement. but identification to land and fellow American grew in inverse proportion.

The railroad shipped \$50 million worth of freight coast to coast every year. Just as it opened the markets of the west coast and Asia to the east, it brought products...