

# [The great west and the agricultural revolution](https://assignbuster.com/the-great-west-and-the-agricultural-revolution/)

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| 1. The Clash of Cultures on the Plains

Receding Native Population Bellowing Herds of Buffalo The End of the Trail Mining: From Dishpan to Ore Breaker Beef Bonanzas and the Long Drive The Farmers’ Frontier The Far West Comes of Age The Fading Frontier The Farm Becomes a Factory Deflation Dooms the Debtor Unhappy Farmers The Farmers Take their Stand Prelude to Populism Coxey’s Army and the Pullman Strike Golden McKinley and Silver Bryan Class Conflict: Plowholders Versus Bondholders Republican Standpattism Enthroned  | 1. Roughly a million square miles, the West, home to Indians, bison, and other wildlife, beckoned to White settlers who continued migrating west after the Civil War
2. White settlers competed with the Indians for both land and bison, spread their diseases and caused internal conflict among the Indians.
3. The federal government signed treaties with many Indian Chiefs at Fort Laramie in 1851 and Fort Atkinson in 1853. However, these chiefs did not represent all of the Indians who didn’t recognize authority outside of their families.
4. In the 1860s, the U. S. government increased the moving of Indians from their ancestral lands into reservations Indians with the promise that they wouldn’t be bothered further. These promises were often broken.
5. Many Native American tribes fought back against the U. S. Army.
6. The Indian Wars saw savage violence from both sides.
7. Colonel Custer’s discovery of gold in 1874 in the Black Hills of South Dakota started another round of conflict when gold-seekers invaded the Sioux reservation.
8. Sitting Bull and the Sioux annihilated Custer’s Seventh Cavalry at Little Big Horn. The Apaches of Arizona and New Mexico, led by Geronimo, proved most difficult to subdue.
9. The Indians were subdued due to a combination of various factors such as the railroad, diseases, the extermination of the buffalo, wars, and losing their land to the Whites.
10. In the early days, tens of millions of bison roamed the American prairie, but the development of the railroad started the buffalo massacre. Buffalo were killed for their meat, their skins, or their tongues, but many were killed just for sport.
11. By 1885, the buffalo were almost extinct with fewer than 100 left.
12. Helen Hunt Jackson’s book, A Century of Dishonor , helped to prick the nation’s moral conscience. Humanitarians wanted to help the Indians become westernized while hard-liners wanted to exterminate them. No one cared about preserving Indian culture.
13. The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 dissolved tribes as legal entities but the Indians could get their citizenship and lands back in 25 years for good behavior.
14. The Dawes Act tried to reform the Indians from being tribally organized to being individualists, by removing their land. By 1900, the Indians had lost half the land they had held just 20 years before.
15. In 1858, gold was discovered at Pike’s Peak in Colorado and in 1859, the Comstock Lode in Nevada was discovered. More than $340 million was mined.
16. After the surface gold has been mined, expensive ore-breaking machinery was used for the mining.
17. Women found new economic opportunities as well as got voting rights in Wyoming Utah, Colorado and Idaho.
18. The problem of transporting meat profitably to the eastern markets was solved by the new refrigerated rail cars. A highly industrialized meat-packaging industry sprang up.
19. Cowboys herded cattle in the “ Long Drive” to railroad terminals in Kansas. Dodge City, Abilene, and Cheyenne became favorite stopovers.
20. The arrival of homesteaders who fenced their land forced cattle breeders learned to fence their ranches and become highly organized.
21. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowing people to get 160 acres in return for living on it for five years, and paying a fee of $30. 00, spurred landownership. However, dry weather and drought meant that 160 acres was not enough to earn a living.
22. Railroads helped develop agriculture in the West, which proved to be surprisingly fertile once ploughed and watered.
23. Huge federally financed irrigation projects such as dams over the Missouri and Columbia Rivers, irrigated more than 45 million acres across seventeen states.
24. The Great West experienced a population explosion. Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Washington, Idaho, and Wyoming were established as new states.
25. In Oklahoma, the U. S. government made available former Indian land, and thousands of “ Sooners” illegally went into Oklahoma, often forcing U. S. troops to evict them. Oklahoma became the “ Sooner State” in 1907.
26. In 1890, the superintendent of census announced that a clear cut frontier was not visible.
27. The frontier was supposed to be a safety valve for folks who could simply move West during hard times and take up farming.
28. In reality, few city-dwellers left the cities for the West, still, free acreage did attract many immigrant farmers to the West. The real safety values were the cities, as failed farmers and others made Chicago and San Francisco into large cities.
29. Farming also changed as farming became large scale increasingly producing single “ cash” crops, and buy manufactured goods.
30. Mechanization of farming led to enormous farms, such as those in the North Dakota and California’s Central Valley.
31. This one crop dependency led American farmers to ruin in the 1880s and 1890s, when world markets produced more crops and depressed prices.
32. Thousands of homesteads foreclosed and farm tenancy increased.
33. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, droughts, grasshopper plagues and floods made farmers miserable and poor.
34. Adding to their burden, lands were over-assessed forcing the farmers to pay painful taxes. The railroads increased freight prices and the farmers had to pay for their harvesters, barbed wire, and fertilizer.
35. In 1890, farmers still made up one half of the U. S. population but were disorganized.
36. In 1867, the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, known as The Grange, was founded by Oliver Kelley to improve the lives of isolated farmers.
37. The Grange tried to improve the plight of the farmers by establishing cooperatively owned stores and warehouses.
38. The farmers found a vent in the Greenback Labor Party. In 1878, the Greenback Laborites won over a million votes and elected 14 members of Congress.
39. The Farmers’ Alliance, founded in the late 1870s, was another coalition that tried to break the status quo through cooperative buying and selling. However, it ignored Black farmers and landless farmers.
40. From these alliances, Populists from the newly formed People’s Party called for nationalizing railroads, telephone and creating a new federal sub-treasury.
41. The Panic of 1893 resulted in many armies of unemployed marching to protest their plight. The most famous was “ General” Jacob Coxey’s Army that marched on Washington. The march ended with them being arrested for walking on grass.
42. The Pullman Strike in Chicago led to federal troops being called in to break up the strike.
43. McKinley was the leading Republican candidate in 1896. The Democrats fielded William Bryan after his “ Cross of Gold Speech” at the Democratic National Convention. Fearing McKinley, the Populists endorsed the Democrats and Bryan during the Election of 1896.
44. McKinley won decisively, getting 271 electoral votes, in what would be called the “ gold vs. silver” election.
45. The election was a victory for big business, and middle class conservative values.
46. This victory also established Republican control of the White House for 16 years.
47. After McKinley took office in 1897, the Dingley Tariff Bill replaced the Wilson-Gorman law, raising the tariff level to 46. 5 percent.
48. Prosperity returned in 1897. Farm prices rose and industrial activity hummed.
49. The Gold Standard Act was passed in 1900. New deposits of gold were discovered in the Klondike and the new cyanide process for extracting gold was cheap.
50. Inflation became moderate.
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