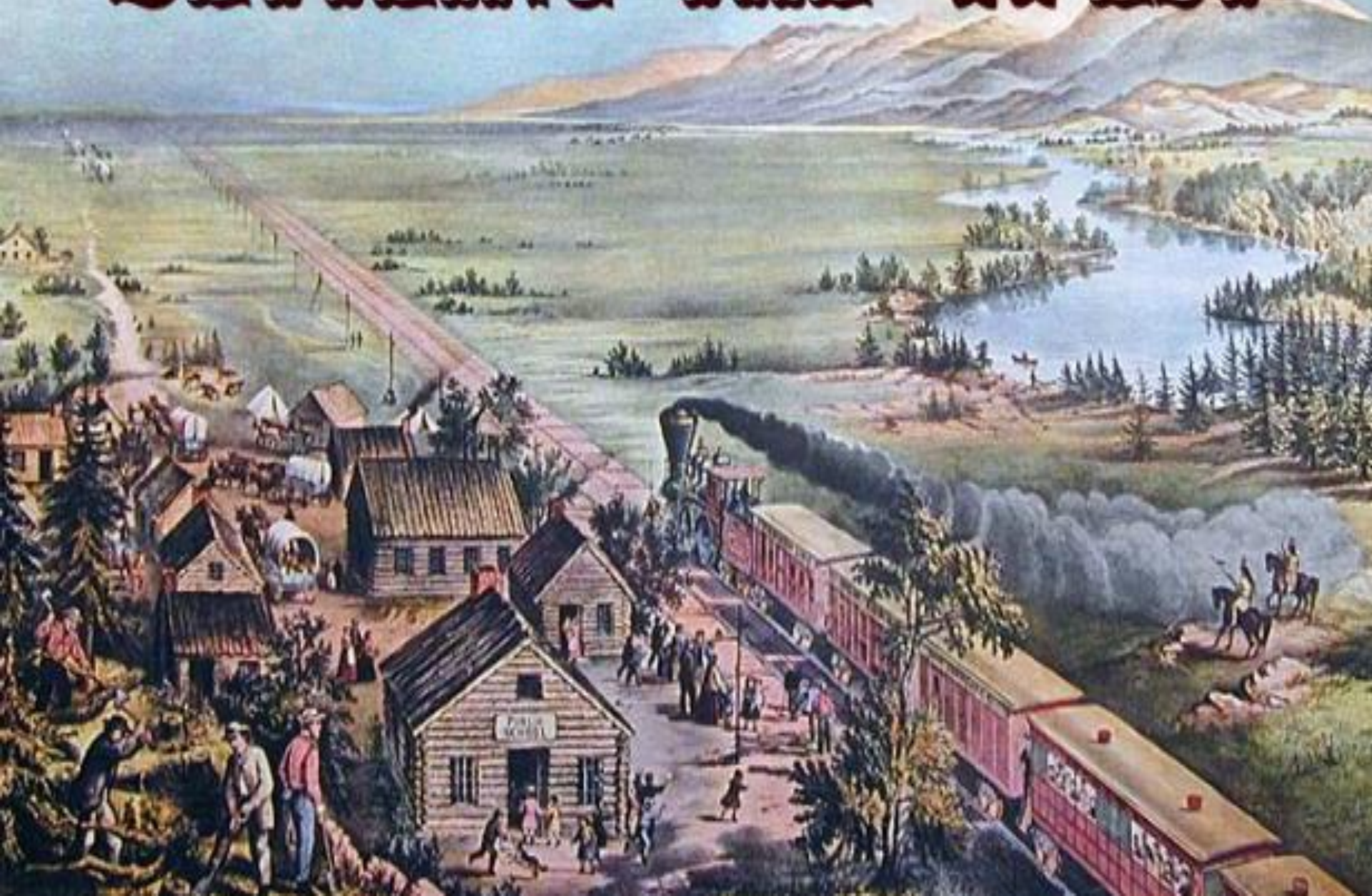


SETTLING THE WEST



Railroads Help Settlers Move West

-1862: federal govt distributes 180m acres to railroad companies for free to encourage construction

(Amount equivalent in size to land in Texas and Oklahoma)

-Federal land policy + transcontinental railroads = rapid settlement of the West

-Two RR companies race to lay RR track:

1. Union Pacific
2. Central Pacific



-The Central Pacific and Union Pacific tracks meet at Promontory Point, Utah 10 May 1869, completing the Transcontinental Railroad



-RR Laborers:

1. Civil War vets
2. Irish immigrants
3. Chinese immigrants
4. Blacks



Government Help Settlers Move West

-Homestead Act of 1862: offers 160 acres of “free” land to any citizen or head of household - must improve land within 5 years

1. 1862-1900: over 600,000 families take advantage
2. “Exodusters”- blacks who move from the South to Kansas

-Problems encountered by homesteaders:

1. RR companies buy up land
2. Govt withholds land
3. Cattle drivers encroach upon land
4. Miners & woodcutters claim natural resources



Bonanza Farms

-Huge acreages sold by the Northern Pacific RR to investors (to cover its debts) → produced large, profitable wheat crops

-Absentee landowners hired local managers to run farms
(Minnesota and North Dakota became the largest U.S. wheat producing areas from 1875-1890)

-Use of new machinery and huge crews of cheap hired labor → land exhausted & no longer profitable → investors sell or rent used-up land to small farmers

-Ends by the 1920s



Agricultural Support through the 1800s

1837: John Deere invents steel plow

Cyrus McCormick invents the mechanical reaper

1841: grain drill manufactured in U.S. to plant seed

1869: spring-tooth harrow patented to prep soil

1874: Joseph Glidden invents barbed wire

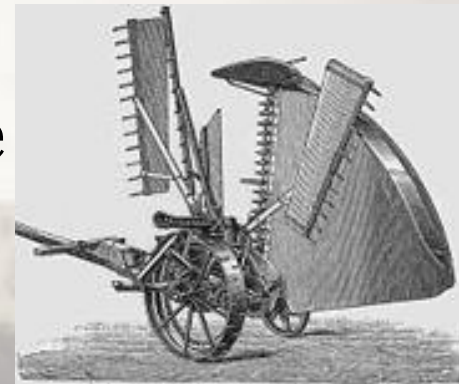
1878: corn binder-reaper becomes available

-Outcome:

1. More grain available to wider market

1830: busheling took 183 min

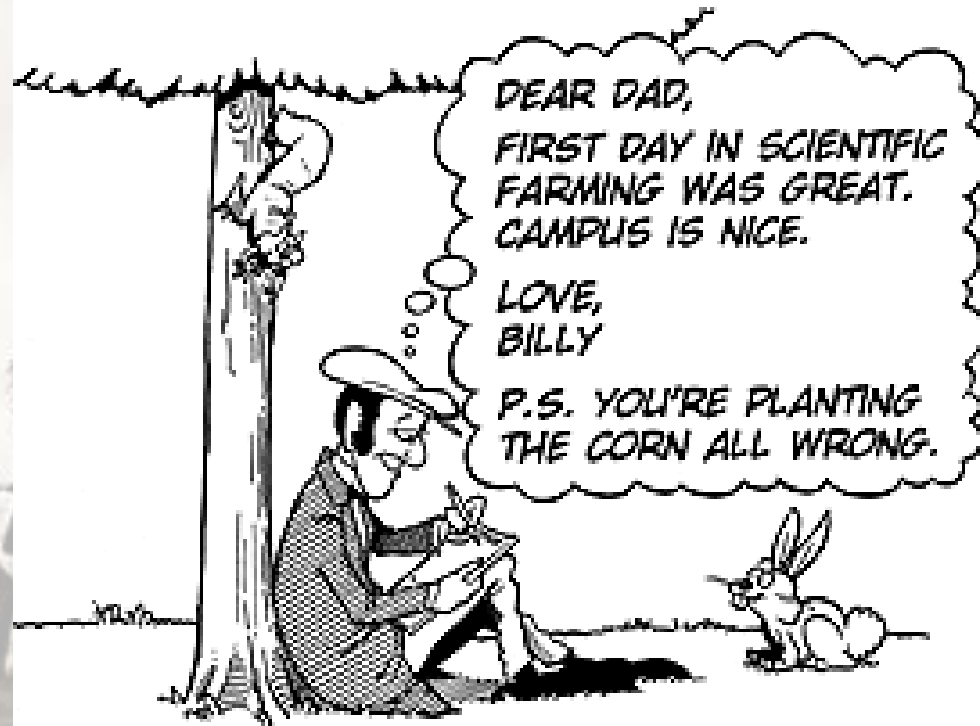
1900: busheling took 10 min



Educating Farmers

- Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 & 1890: federal govt gives land to states to establish agricultural colleges
- Hatch Act of 1887: establishes experimental “stations” for development of new agricultural tools

Great Plains earns nickname: “*The Breadbasket of the Nation*”



Courtesy [Iowa State University](#).

Land grant universities were founded to be open to students of all social classes, to research and teach agriculture and other practical subjects, and to share the knowledge. But, there may have been some parents who weren't thrilled with some of the results.

Land-Grant Colleges and Universities



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

Homesteader - settlers who moved onto lands given by the Homestead Act

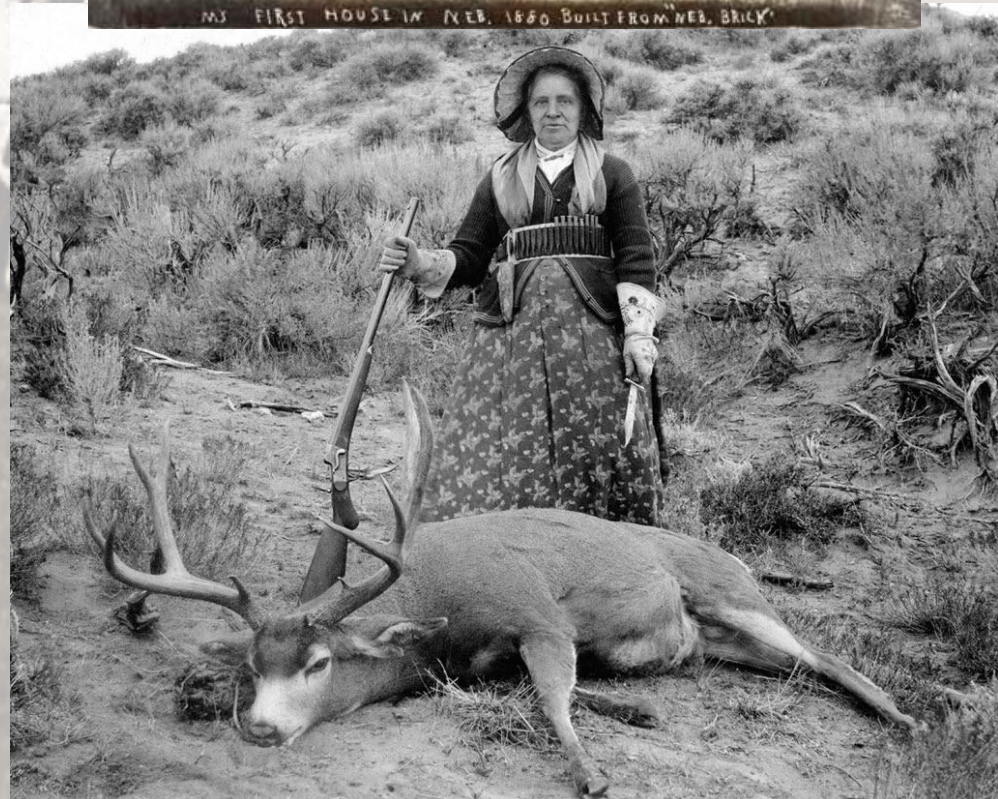


Life on the Plains

-Trees scarce → built their homes from the land itself:

“Soddy”/Sod House - intricate root system found in plain soil kept it dense

-Women’s roles increased on the frontier → more support for suffrage out West



Hardships Faced by Frontier Farmers

- Obtaining enough land, food, and shelter to support a family
- Medical care
- Bad weather, prairie fires, pests, theft (NAs and outlaws)
- Must be completely self-sufficient
- Financial problems



“The Significance of the Frontier in American History”



By Frederick Jackson Turner:

- 1890 Census announced the end of the frontier as a clear dividing line between settled and undeveloped areas
- Stressed that the availability of free land and influence of the frontier had played a major role in development of democracy in the U.S.
- Posed the question of what would happen to the nation now that the availability of free land and a new life in the West was vanishing

INFLUENCE OF THE FRONTIER ON U. S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Provided continuous supply of fresh land



Encouraged wasteful methods of farming



Caused labor scarcity and high wages in East



Supplied East with a market for her goods

