

INTRODUCTION

Between the 1880s and 1890s, the United States witnessed the rise of multinational corporations, the geographic incorporation of the former Confederacy and the West, and the integration of immigrants from all over the world. In this workshop, participants will explore this time period and the mass social movements, tremendous economic change, and national consolidation occurring in America at that time. The workshop activities are designed to deepen teachers' understanding of how post-Reconstruction America dealt with domestic issues unique to the United States—and the influences of government and business into the twentieth century.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this session, teachers will

- understand how the decades following Reconstruction brought bitter conflicts over land, resources, and labor, and that many of the most dramatic of these conflicts happened in the West;
- be able to explain how the landscapes in the arid West challenged newcomers' assumptions about an endless, bountiful frontier;
- demonstrate their understanding of how post-Reconstruction policies prompted calls for a more fair and humane economy by identifying how these policies presaged twentieth-century reforms in government.

Before You Begin

Before the day of the workshop session, familiarize yourself with the reading materials assigned to the participating teachers. Review this facilitator's guide. Be sure to prepare the correct number of overheads and handouts needed for each activity. Each participant should read the text materials for the unit before attending the workshop (estimated reading time: two hours), and should bring these materials with them to the workshop session. Activities during the session will draw heavily on the content in the text materials, as well as the video.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- This *America's History in the Making* facilitator's guide
- Text Materials for Unit 13: *Taming the American West*

- VHS tape and VCR, DVD and DVD player, or access to streaming video of *America's History in the Making* video for Unit 13: *Taming the American West* available at www.learner.org
- Overhead projector and colored pens
- Multiple copies of handouts (in the Appendix of this guide)
- Pens and paper for participating teachers and facilitator
- Chalkboard or additional blank transparencies for reporting out

OVERHEAD AND HANDOUT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using Appendix A, "Themes for *Taming The American West*," create an overhead transparency.
2. Using Appendix B, "Topographical Map of the United States," create one handout for each pair of participants.
3. Using Appendix C, "The Myth of the Gilded Age," create one handout of each item.
4. Using Appendix D, "The Myth That the West Was an Endless, Bountiful Frontier," create one handout of each item.
5. Using Appendix E, "The Myth of an Era of Weak Government and *Laissez-faire* Culture," create one handout of each item.
6. Using Appendix F, "Conservation and Preservation Questions," create an overhead transparency.
7. Using Appendix G, "Content Knowledge Assessment Scoring Guide," create an overhead transparency.

Facilitator's Note: You may want to prepare overheads of the questions for teachers to reference during the activities.

LEADING THE SESSION

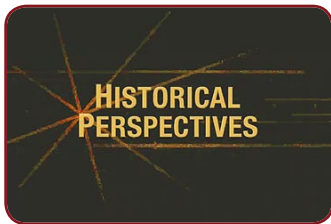
As participating teachers arrive, have an overhead set up that lists the main themes of the unit for teachers to review (Appendix A).

After you have completed any housekeeping announcements, ask one of the teachers to read the themes aloud. Explain that they will expand their understanding of these three themes through activities and video segments that build on the reading they did prior to the workshop session.

Warm-up and Activity 1 (15 minutes)

Consider the uses of land in different regions of America during the decades following the Civil War. Divide participants into pairs, and give each pair a copy of the Topographical Map of the United States (Appendix B). Have the participants divide the outline map of the United States into three regions: the South, the East, and the West. Once these regions have been identified, ask the pairs to think of the different **uses** of land in these three regions of America. What **attitudes** defined how land was best used/conserved in these regions? On the outline map of North America, write these uses and attitudes in the appropriate regions.

Merge the established pairs with other pairs to form groups of four. Have these groups discuss specific examples of each of the three regional uses and attitudes about land. Encourage the participants to refer to their reading and knowledge of this period.



Watch Video Segment 1:
Historical Perspectives (approximately 10 minutes)

Activity 2 (70 minutes)

In this activity, teachers will examine three common myths about this period. They will gather evidence from primary sources, and then reframe and/or recast the myth so it is a more accurate portrayal of reality.

Part 1 (35 minutes)

Divide the participants into three groups, and assign each group one of the following myths from this time period:

1. The myth of the Gilded Age
2. The myth that the West was an endless, bountiful frontier
3. The myth that the post-Reconstruction decades were an era of weak government and *laissez-faire* culture.

Have each group first discuss evidence that supports this myth. (In other words, why did this myth ever develop in the first place?)

Following this discussion, have each group examine primary sources that might help refute this myth. The appendices contain primary sources for each myth as follows:

- Appendix C: The Myth of the Gilded Age
- Appendix D: The Myth That the West Was an Endless, Bountiful Frontier
- Appendix E: The Myth of an Era of Weak Government and a *Laissez-faire* Culture

Participants should look at these sources and refer to the text, the video they just watched, and their own knowledge. If they have access to the Internet, they may also search for evidence regarding this myth.

Part 2 (15 minutes)

Each group should compose a statement that they think is a more accurate depiction of this era than the traditional myth. Emphasize that the statement should be built on the evidence they collected from their various sources.

Part 3 (20 minutes)

Have each group share with the larger group what they found, how the primary sources helped and directed their finding, and a recommendation for how teachers might think about their “myth” in the future.

Introduction to Video Segment

Luna Kellie, Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Bonin), and William Henry Jackson each made important contributions to the history of the West. However, these three individuals are often overlooked in history courses. Prompt the participants to be search the video segment for how these three people contributed to the history of the West.



Watch Video Segment 2:
Faces of America (approximately 10 minutes)

Activity 3 (10 minutes)

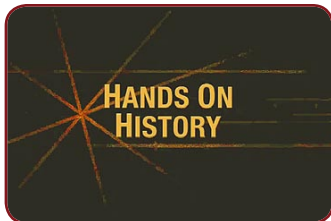
As a whole group, brainstorm contributions that Kellie, Zitkala-Sa, and Jackson made to this period. Examine one individual at a time and create a three-column list on the board (one column for each person).

Have the teachers form groups of three. Ask each group to come up with at least one lesson idea that will help students learn about each historical figure. Be sure the groups identify what contribution(s) they want their students to understand, and how they would help their students learn about Kellie, Zitkala-Sa, and Jackson. To help the participants identify these contributions, place the the themes of the “Taming the American West” online text on the overhead (Appendix A).

These themes serve as a catalyst to delve deeper into the contributions of each person. Ask the participants to consider the following questions as they think about the lesson ideas:

- How does each person demonstrate ideas represented in the themes?
- Who is most closely tied to each theme? Why?
- How do the subject of the biographies reveal overlap in the themes?

If time permits, have each group share their ideas with the large group. Encourage the participants to take notes on these ideas.



Watch Video Segment 3: Hands on History

(approximately 5 minutes to the end of the tape)

Activity 4 (10 minutes)

In this activity, participants will consider the ideas of conservation and preservation as they relate to managing the landscape.

Put the “Conservation and Preservation Questions” (Appendix F) on the overhead. Have the participants discuss their answers to the questions with the whole group.

1. Think about the concept of an “original state.” How does one determine an original state of something? How do primary sources help establish the original state of a certain area?
2. Consider what you learned about Native Americans’ and Euro Americans’ management of the land during this period. Compare and contrast the different attitudes about managing land. How does returning land to its original state compare with the uses and attitudes about land that we discussed in the warm-up activity at the start of this workshop?
3. Think about the concept of environmental history. How does our understanding of ecology inform our understanding of history? How has this perspective changed over time?
4. How does a site like the one viewed in the video help us reconsider the historical account of western movement?

Activity 5 (15 minutes)

After the warm-up activity, participants challenged the accuracy of three myths about America during the 1880s and 1890s: The myth of the Gilded Age; the myth that the West was an endless, bountiful frontier; and the myth that the post-Reconstruction decades were an era of weak government and “laissez faire” culture. Participants then made connections between the unit themes and the three subjects of the Faces of America video segment (Kellie, Zitkala-Sa, and Jackson).

This final activity serves as a conclusion to this session of the workshop. It provides participants an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned from the text and the workshop activities. This activity also reviews the Scoring Guide, which participants will use to assess their understanding of the content and historical thinking skills learned in this unit.

In previous activities, participants worked either in small groups or with the full group to complete the activities. For this activity, participants should work alone to reflect on what they’ve learned and then write their answers on paper (or type them on a computer). This final activity also models the type of assessment that the participants will be required to take to receive credit for the course.

Direct them with the following statements:

1. Look again at the image in Appendix C titled “The Breaking Point. A Heavy Load for an Old Woman.” Analyze and put in writing how this image helps you explore the theme: “Post-Reconstruction policies prompted calls for a more fair and humane economy, presaging twentieth-century government reforms in government.”
2. On the same page, describe what historical thinking skills you used in your analysis. What specific aspects of the artifact helped you understand the theme better?

As a whole group, look at the criteria for full credit on the Content Knowledge Assessment Scoring Guide (Appendix G). Ask participants to review what they wrote and share the types of answers that they believe will result in a score of 3 or 4.

APPENDICES – *Taming the American West*

- A: “Themes for *Taming the American West*”
overhead transparency
- B: “Topographical Map of the United States”
one handout for each pair of participants
- C: “The Myth of the Gilded Age”
one handout each of three items
- D: “The Myth That the West Was an Endless Bountiful Frontier”
one handout each of four items
- E: “The Myth of an Era of Weak Government and Laissez-faire Culture”
one handout each of four items
- F: “Conservation and Preservation Questions”
overhead transparency
- G: “Content Knowledge Assessment Scoring Guide”
overhead transparency

Appendix A: Themes for *Taming the American West*

THEME 1

The post-Reconstruction decades brought bitter conflicts over land, resources, and labor; many of the most dramatic of these conflicts happened in the West.

THEME 2

Landscapes in the arid West challenged newcomers' assumptions about an endless, bountiful frontier.

THEME 3

Post-Reconstruction policies prompted calls for a more fair and humane economy, presaging twentieth-century government reforms in government.

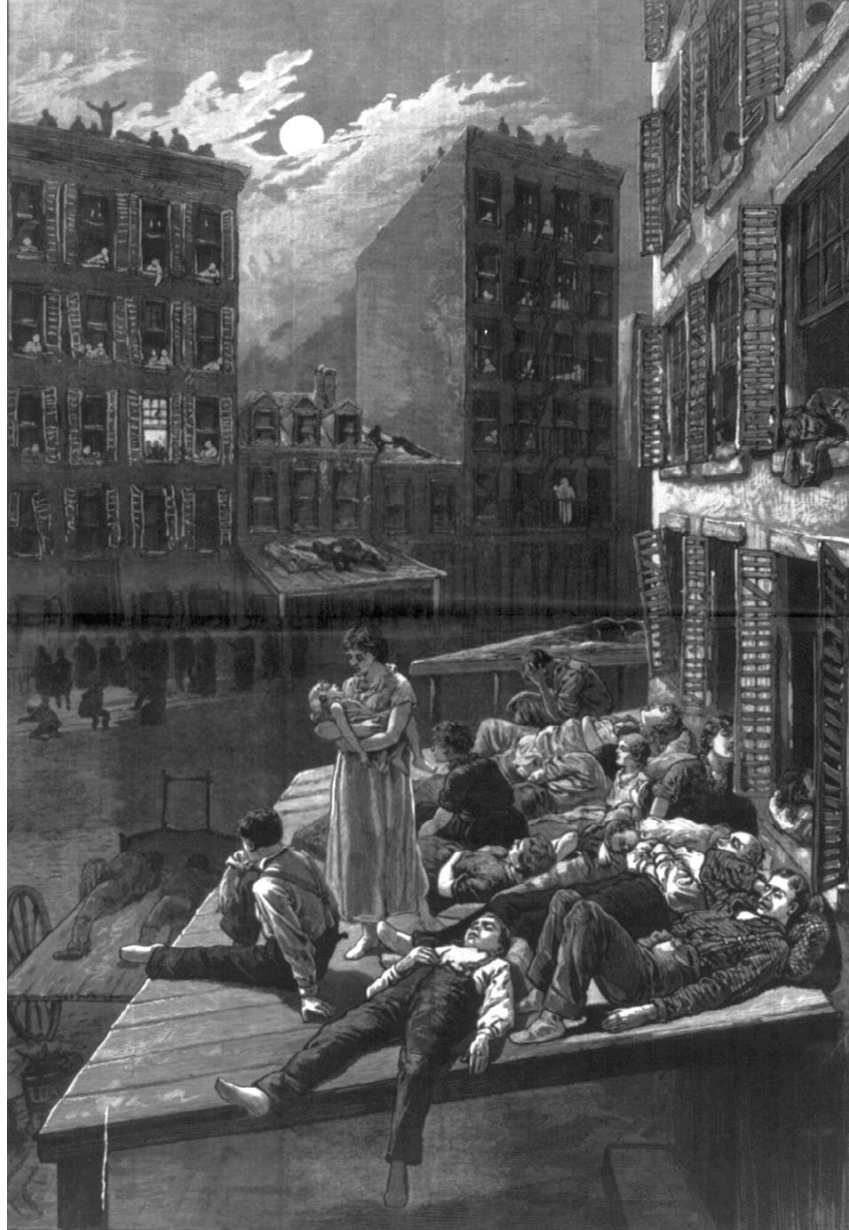
Appendix B: Topographic Map of the United States



Item 6527

Bergmann Graphics, created for *America's History in the Making*,
TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF THE UNITED STATES (2007). Courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting.

Appendix C: The Myth of the Gilded Age



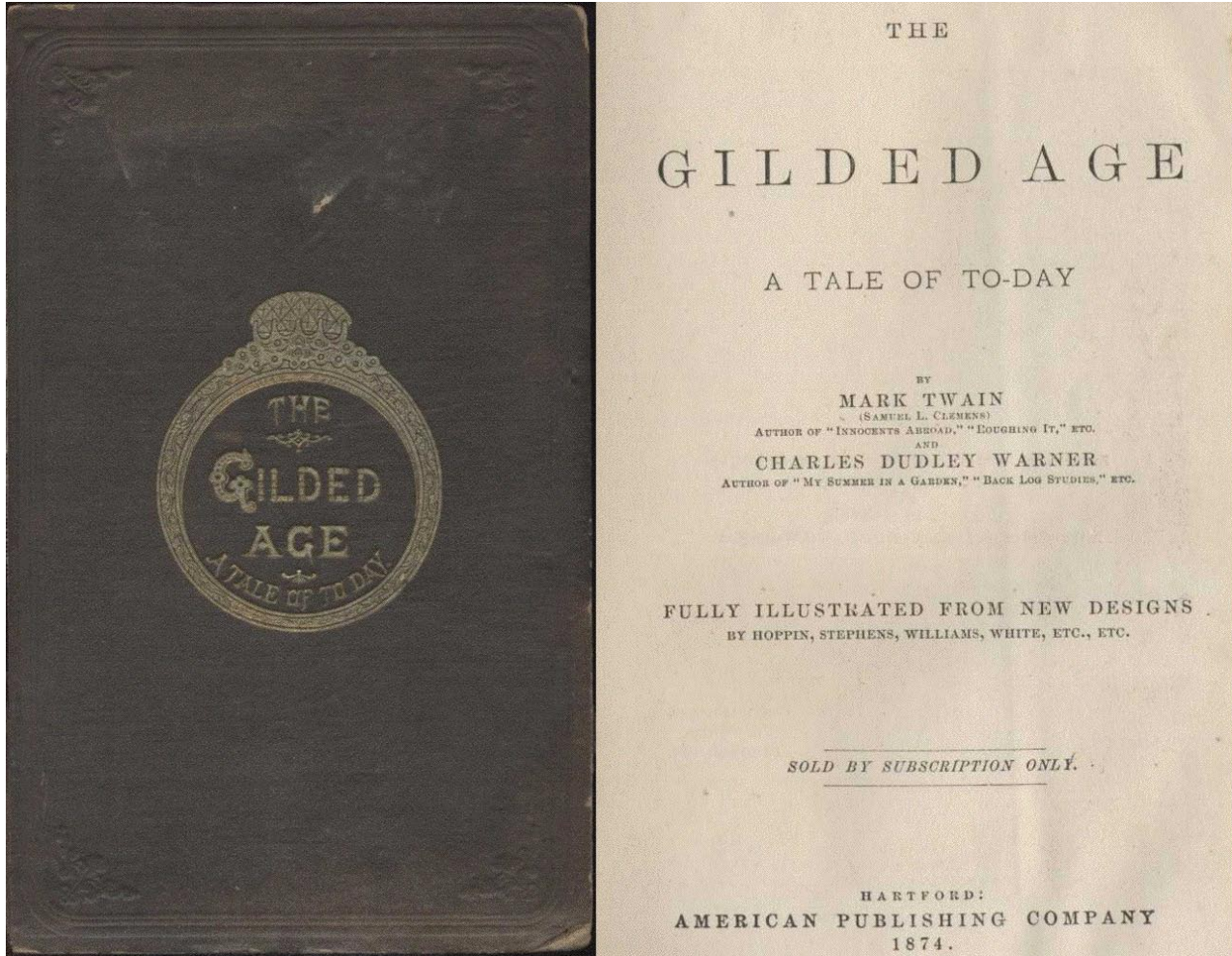
Context:

A night scene on the East Side. Tenement dwellers sleeping on roofs and windowsills.
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Aug. 12, 1882, p. 393.

Item 5262

Unknown, NEW YORK CITY-THE RECENT "HEATED TERM" AND ITS EFFECTS UPON THE POPULATION OF THE TENEMENT DISTRICTS (1882). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Appendix C: The Myth of the Gilded Age



Context:

Mark Twain with colleague Charles Dudley Warner published the book *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* in 1874. It was a scathing commentary on American society during this time. Twain's title coined the term "Gilded Age" and reflects the greed, corruption, social injustice and poverty hidden by the shiny veneer that covered up the guilt of the wealthy who rarely, if ever, took action to cure the nation's ill. This is a fictional story but depicts the American society riddled with corruption, scandal, and enormous economic disparity among its citizens.

Item 6788

Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, COVER AND TITLE PAGE TO *GILDED AGE: A TALE OF TODAY* (1874).

Courtesy of Project Gutenberg.

Appendix C: The Myth of the Gilded Age



Caption:

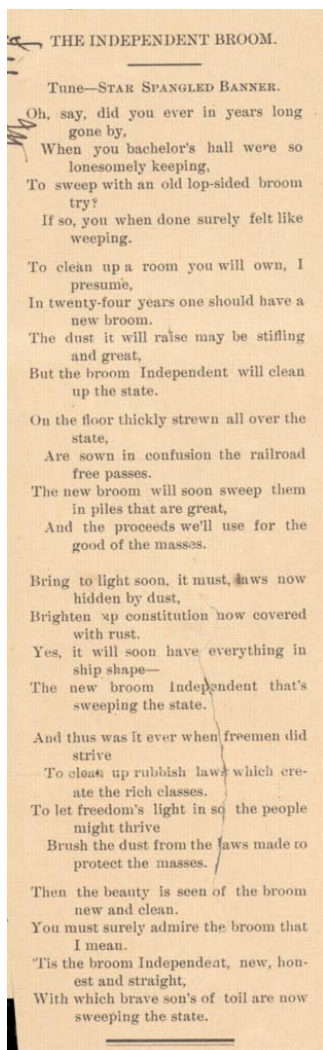
Women working near Lafayette St., below Astor Place in New York City.

Item 4410

Lewis Wick Hine, THE BREAKING POINT. A HEAVY LOAD FOR AN OLD WOMAN (1912).

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Appendix D: The Myth That the West Was an Endless, Bountiful Frontier



Item 6620:
Luna Kellie, The "INDEPENDENT BROOM" FARMERS' ALLIANCE CAMPAIGN SONG (n.d.). Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society Photograph Collection.

Context:

The "Independent Broom" campaign song written for the Farmers' Alliance by Mrs. J. T. (Luna) Kellie while working as a Farmers' Alliance secretary and activist. Campaign songs were a way for settlers of the Nebraska region to learn about as well as participate in the political activities undertaken first by the Grangers and later the Farmers' Alliance.

TRANSCRIPT:

THE INDEPENDENT BROOM

Tune – STAR SPANGLED BANNER

Oh, say, did you ever in years long gone by,
When you bachelor's hall were so lonesomely keeping
To sweep with an old lop-sided broom try?
If so, you when done surely felt like weeping.

To clean up a room you will own, I presume,
In twenty-four years one should have a new broom.
The dust it will raise may be stifling and great,
But the broom Independent will clean up the state.

On the floor thickly strewn all over the state,
Are sown in confusion the railroad free passes.
The new broom will soon sweep them in piles that are great,
And the proceeds we'll use for the good of the masses.

Bring to light soon, it must, laws now hidden by dust,
Brighten up constitution now covered with rust.
Yes, it will soon have everything in ship shape—
The new broom Independent that's sweeping the state.

And thus was it ever when freemen did strive
To clean up rubbish laws which create the rich classes.
To let freedom's light in so the people might thrive
Brush the dust from the laws made to protect the masses.

Then the beauty is seen of the broom that I mean.
'Tis the broom Independent, new, honest and straight,
With which brave son's of toil are now sweeping the state.

Appendix D: The Myth That the West Was an Endless, Bountiful Frontier



Context:

Mr. Ware proudly holds a copy of the *Alliance Independent*, a Populist newspaper published in Lincoln, Nebraska. The name was changed to the *Alliance Independent* on 30 June 1892, so this photograph was taken after that date.

Item 6612

Solomon D. Butcher, ISAAC WARE AND FAMILY, SOUTHWEST CUSTER COUNTY, NEBRASKA (1892).

Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society Photograph Collection.

Appendix D: The Myth That the West Was an Endless, Bountiful Frontier



Caption:

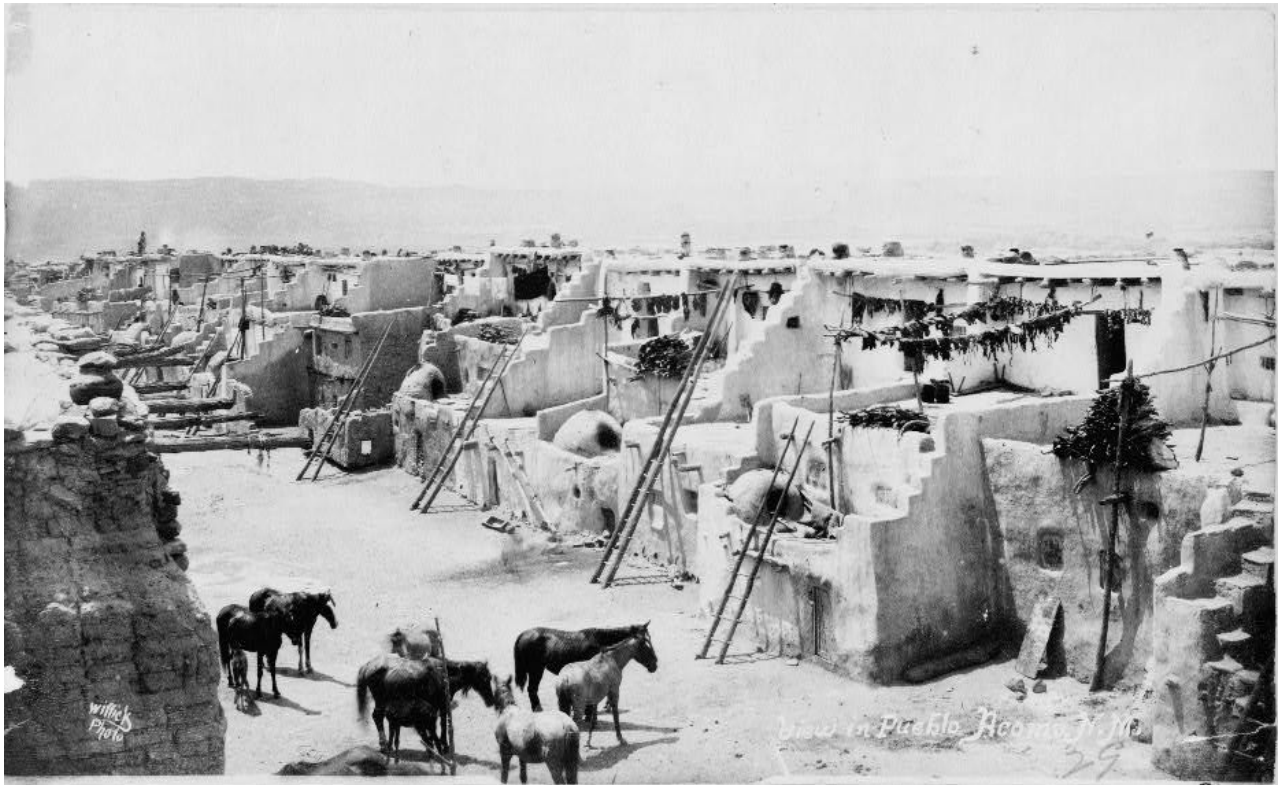
Photo taken in Terry, Montana of corn destroyed in dry fields and susceptible to being eaten by grasshoppers.

Item 6279

Arthur Rothstein, CORN WITHERED BY HEAT AND CHEWED BY GRASSHOPPERS (1939).

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Appendix D: The Myth That the West Was an Endless, Bountiful Frontier



Context:

Acoma Pueblo, abundantly populated in the nineteenth century, not empty and bountiful as settlers may have thought, creating unintended consequences when civilizations met.

Item 6777

Ben Wittick, VIEW OF PUEBLO, ACOMA, NEW MEXICO (1897).

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Appendix E: The Myth of an Era of Weak Government and *Laissez-faire* Culture



Context:

This booklet was issued by the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad in Nebraska sometime in the early 1870s. It advertised that prosperity may be expected from a typical farm during the first six years of settlement.

Item 4017
Burlington & Missouri River Railroad, CZECH LANGUAGE LAND PROMOTION BOOKLET (1870s). Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society Photograph Collection.

Appendix E: The Myth of an Era of Weak Government and *Laissez-faire* Culture



Context:

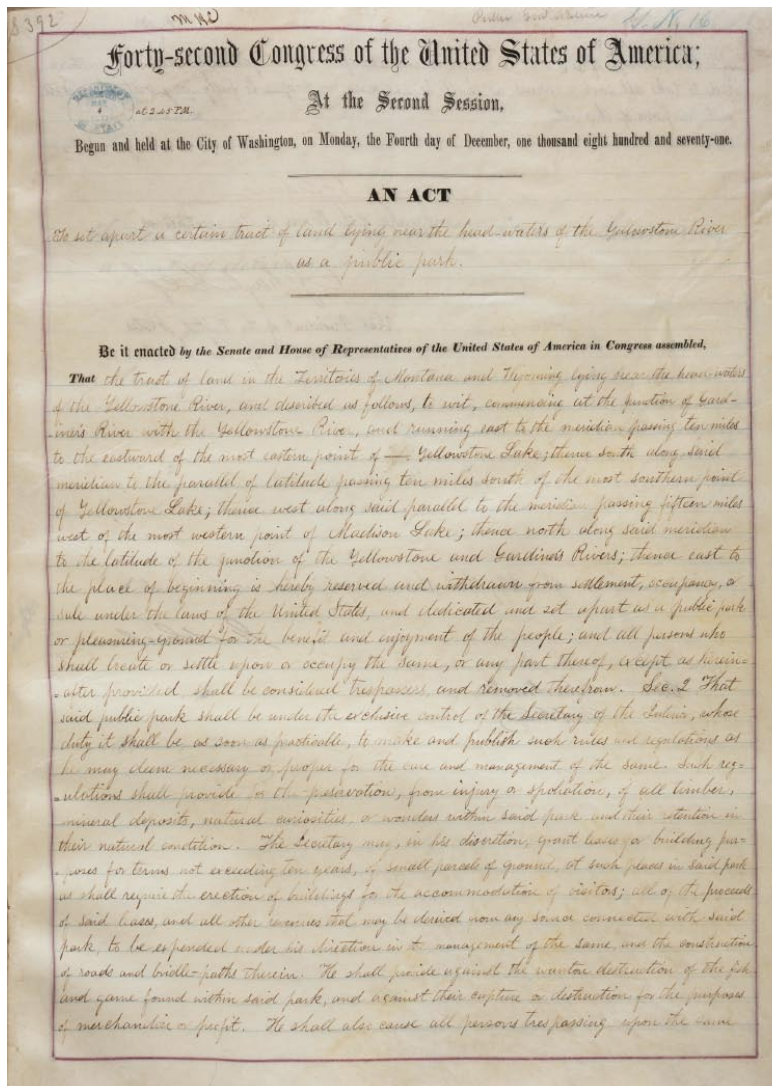
Federal policies, both legal and corrupt, and friendly to railroad companies, allowed for increased settlement in the West along major railroad routes.

Item 6307:

Unknown, FREE HOMES, GOVERNMENT LANDS, AND CHEAP DEEDED LANDS IN SOUTH DAKOTA (1890).

Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Appendix E: The Myth of an Era of Weak Government and *Laissez-faire* Culture



Context:

Yellowstone became the first federally protected national park by the Act of Congress signed into law on March 1, 1872. The photographs taken by William Henry Jackson in concert with the paintings of Thomas Moran while on the Hayden Expedition helped to persuade the United States Congress to designate Yellowstone as a federally protected national park in 1872.

Item 6259

U.S. Congress, ACT ESTABLISHING YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK (1872).

Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Appendix E: The Myth of an Era of Weak Government and *Laissez-faire* Culture

TRANSCRIPT:

Forty-Second Congress of the United States of America;

At the Second Session, Begun and held at the City of Washington, on Monday, the Fourth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one.

AN ACT to set apart a certain tract of land lying near the headwaters of the Yellowstone River as a public park.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the tract of land in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming, lying near the headwaters of the Yellowstone River, and described as follows, to wit, commencing at the junction of Gardiner's river with the Yellowstone river, and running east to the meridian passing ten miles to the eastward of the most eastern point of Yellowstone lake; thence south along said meridian to the parallel of latitude passing ten miles south of the most southern point of Yellowstone lake; thence west along said parallel to the meridian passing fifteen miles west of the most western point of Madison lake; thence north along said meridian to the latitude of the junction of Yellowstone and Gardiner's rivers; thence east to the place of beginning, is hereby reserved and withdrawn from settlement, occupancy, or sale under the laws of the United States, and dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people; and all persons who shall locate or settle upon or occupy the same, or any part thereof, except as hereinafter provided, shall be considered trespassers and removed therefrom.

SEC 2. That said public park shall be under the exclusive control of the Secretary of the Interior, whose duty it shall be, as soon as practicable, to make and publish such rules and regulations as he may deem necessary or proper for the care and management of the same. Such regulations shall provide for the preservation, from injury or spoliation, of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities, or wonders within said park, and their retention in their natural condition. The Secretary may in his discretion, grant leases for building purposes for terms not exceeding ten years, of small parcels of ground, at such places in said park as shall require the erection of buildings for the accommodation of visitors; all of the proceeds of said leases, and all other revenues that may be derived from any source connected with said park, to be expended under his direction in the management of the same, and the construction of roads and bridle-paths therein. He shall provide against the wanton destruction of the fish and game found within said park, and against their capture or destruction for the purposes of merchandise or profit. He shall also cause all persons trespassing upon the same after the passage of this act to be removed there from, and generally shall be authorized to take all such measures as shall be necessary or proper to fully carry out the objects and purposes of this act.

Appendix F: Conservation and Preservation Questions

1. Think about the concept of an “original state.” How does one determine an original state of something? How do primary sources help establish the original state of a certain area?
2. Consider what you learned about Native Americans’ and Euro Americans’ management of the land during this period. Compare and contrast the different attitudes about managing land. How does returning land to its original state compare with the uses and attitudes about land that we discussed in the warm-up activity at the start of this workshop?
3. Think about the concept of environmental history. How does our understanding of ecology inform our understanding of history? How has this perspective changed over time?
4. How does a site like the one viewed in the video help us reconsider the historical account of western movement?

Appendix G: Content Knowledge Assessment Scoring Guide

Points	Description
4	<p>Exceeded Expectations—The answer met all of the expectations (see the description “Fully Met Expectations” below) and exceeded those expectations by demonstrating advanced understanding in any of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides rich and detailed historical knowledge • Questions, critiques, or extends the theme • Uses the exhibit to provide an in-depth analysis of the era • Refers to one or more additional and relevant primary sources
3	<p>Fully Met Expectations—The answer responds to the prompt in all of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates how the exhibit supports the theme • Draws on relevant historical knowledge to connect the exhibit to the theme • Demonstrates an understanding of the theme • Provides relevant historical knowledge of the era • Provides an analysis of the exhibit
2	<p>Partially Met Expectations—The answer did not meet all of the expectations (see the description “Fully Met Expectations” above) but did demonstrate understanding in all of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the theme, though understanding may be incomplete • Provides relevant historical knowledge of the era • Provides analysis of the exhibit that may be limited
1	<p>Did Not Meet Expectations—The answer did not meet expectation because of one or more of the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not address the theme • Did not demonstrate historical knowledge of the era • Did not discuss or misinterpreted the exhibit
0	<p>Did Not Answer—The answer did not address the prompt.</p>



NOTES
