

R.S1 Key events in the American West

In 1848 , a carpenter called James Marshall discovered gold in California . Once news of the discovery spread, thousands of migrants made the journey to California to seek out gold.	In 1874 , barbed wire was invented. This invention changed the lives of settlers who had moved West, because for the first time they could protect their new land holdings from wandering cattle. This allowed them to become more prosperous.	In 1890 , a group of US soldiers opened fire on a group of Sioux Indians who were simply performing a ritualistic dance. The event became known as the Wounded Knee Massacre .
The Indian Frontier Act of 1834 meant that there was a permanent divide between lands designated to the Plains Indians, and 'white American' lands.	In 1890 , the US government announced the closure of the Indian Frontier . After this point Plains Indians were not considered to have their own identity: they had to integrate into US society and culture.	In 1837 , the USA suffered an economic depression , which saw many banks in the East collapse. People lost their savings, wages fell and unemployment rose. Many people decided to seek their fortunes in the West.
Cattle ranching had been established in Johnson County since the 1870s, and wealthy ranch owners wanted to extend their power. In 1892 , the cattle barons employed a vigilante group to get rid of 'rustlers' stealing their cattle.	In the 1850s , vigilance committees were formed in response to the crime and violence that went on between cowboys and cattle ranchers in the new towns of the West.	In 1867 , Joseph McCoy realised the potential of the city of Abilene as a transit point for cowboys wanting to move their cattle to the big cities of the North.
The 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty said that certain lands belonged to Plains Indians, as long as the Indians allowed white migrants to travel across those lands.	In 1846-7 , a large group of Mormons - facing persecution and discrimination in the East - decided to migrate to Salt Lake City in Utah. The migration took several months, and the journey was hard.	Billy the Kid was a famous gunfighter, employed by a group of ranchers to protect their business interests against rival businesses. Billy was eventually killed in 1881 after a bounty was put on his head.
The Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 provided funding for two railroad companies to extend the railroads further West. The completed railways allowed even larger-scale migration westward.	An armed force led by a US colonel attack Black Kettle's camp of Cheyenne Indians at Sand Creek in 1864 . The attack happened in revenge for Plains Indian attacks on the wagon trains of settlers.	The 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn saw the US army defeated by the Plains Indians, and the famous US army leader, General Custer, killed.
The 1870s saw a ' beef bonanza ', as demand for beef in the big cities increased dramatically. This allowed several cattle ranchers to become very rich, and they became known as 'cattle barons'.	Between 1861 and 1865 , the Northern US states fought a Civil War against the Southern states. Eventually, the Northern states won. Keen to consolidate their hold over the whole of the USA, the Northern government encouraged migration West.	In 1889 , Ella Watson and Jim Averill - the owners of a homestead in Wyoming - were accused of stealing cows from local ranchers . The ranchers decided to take it upon themselves to eradicate 'rustlers', and both Watson and Averill were killed.

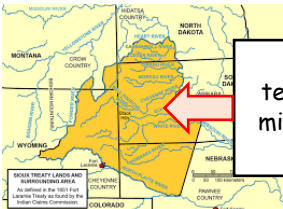
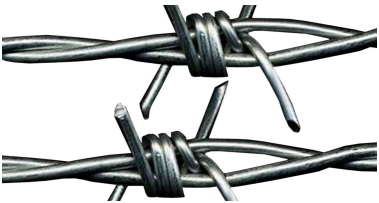
R.S2 Images relating to key events



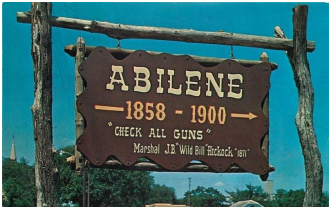
The ritualistic 'Ghost Dance'.



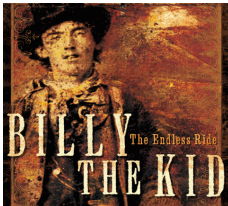
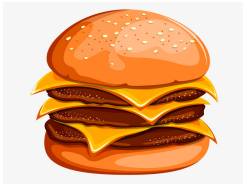
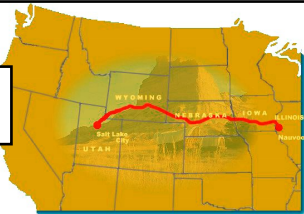
The Indian Frontier of 1834 was established to the right of the Indian Territory.



The Plains Indian territory which white migrants were allowed to cross.



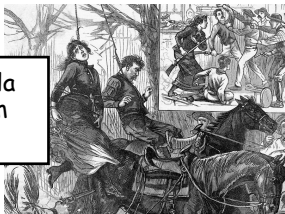
Route of the Mormon migration.



General Custer..



The death of Ella Watson and Jim Averill.



WARNING!

NOTICE IS GIVEN that any person found Pilfering, Stealing, Robbing, or committing any act of Lawless Violence will be summarily

HANGED

Vigilance Committee.