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The American West is thought of by many as cowboy's and Indian's, although this concept is part of the American West it is not the only history from the West. The West brought about the nation's future and, how the country is today in working order, with racisms, social standings, economics, politics and the need for individualism and freedom of choice, to be able to choose your job, your home your friends and your education. The initiation of the expansion of the west brought many people to live there. The west had opportunities for just about everyone, whether it be in railroads, cattle, mining, hunting, land, farming, or just the simple appeal the west had on so many. The history of the West created many avenues that is still used today in many areas of life; Individualism, classes, racisms, economy, and freedom of choice.

The history of the West frontier is one of forming a nation to come together in constructing communities and businesses opportunities, people and cultures, the adventure and the survival. The West was an opportunity for a nation to come together, and learn from the happenings and grow into a great nation. In *The Legacy of conquest*, written by Patricia Limerick, she describes the frontier history, "Frontier, then, in an unsubtle concept in a subtle world. Even so, the idea of the frontier is obviously worth studying as a historical artifact. The idea played an enormous role in national behavior, but so did the ideas of savagery and civilization, concepts that are currently not well respected as analytic terms. I certainly do not discount the power of the concept "frontier" in American history. My point is that historian is obligated to understand how people saw their own times, but not obligated to adopt their terminology and point of view."(25) Limerick describes the concept of the word frontier as one that should not be over looked and should be seen for what it is. The past creates history, which is available for us to the use in the present, and makes life better or in some cases worse. What is taken away from the past can create good or evil, and in the case of the West it created both.

As the population of the East increased with incoming immigrants, the need for westward expansion became one of relief and necessity to the hustle and bustle of city life. The West had an appeal of adventure, opportunity and was said to have been a great place for self-sufficiency, and individualism. Heather Richardson describes the notion in her book *West from Appomattox*, "The search for a world uncorrupted by special interests also affected the way easterners looked at the West. In their romantic view, the West was a world where unlimited resources were free for the taking by unfettered individuals, a pristine world untouched by the corrupt struggles of eastern government."(113-114Richardson) The need to go West and find ones way and to have reprieve from the exploits of government with a constant watching eye made the West a great escape. Opportunities seemed to be everywhere and there for the taking.

Many had heard of the great fortunes, and self-reliability that lay in the West, from farming, to mining to cattle ranching, to land ownership and were eager to take the chance. The freedom of choice gave individuals the chance to try their hand at having a go at the resources available for the taking.

The government pushed for westward expansion and in doing so created a need for government support. With the loss of business adventures gone abstruse, whether it be from natural causes to farming or over population to mining claims the need for support would continue to grow. The fight for individualism still claimed many westerners' as Heather Richardson, in her book, *West from Appomattox* describes individualism, "Indeed, the idealized image of the American West increasingly emphasized individualism, economic opportunity, and political freedom at the same time that mainstream justification for government activism grew."(221 Richardson) While this was a two-sided coin, on one side people were going west for a chance at a better life, with opportunities and self-satisfaction. The government played a small role during the beginning of Westward expansion when it came to individuals; laws were few and far between. On the other side of the coin, the government was still there portraying the West as a desirable place to go, while crops were failing, markets were dropping and transportation of goods were increasing, and the government was being called upon to help supplement the loss of the profits from family run farms, cattle ranching and mining claims, that were unable to be made.

As the West expanded peoples and cultures came together, some relied on one another while others clashed, such as it was for the Native Americans. Home was what the Indians had called the West, until the white Americans came and stripped everything from the land to make their lives better without the consideration of the ones whom already lived and made a life there. Richardson claims, "the west seemed to be a region of inexhaustible resources, where labor could easily realize profit from nature as soon as resistant Native Americans could be overcome. With the backing of western resources and the nationalization of the free labor ideal, a growing cadre of northern farmers, laborers, mid-level business men, and government officials (joined by some southern Americans who hoped to make the best of the postwar economy) were determined to make America the greatest nation on earth."(37 Richardson). While making America the greatest nation on earth many were populations were sacrificed, the Native Americans, Chinese and Irish were at the top of the list. The Native American were used and then discarded, being placed on reservations when the entire West had been their home. Buffalo were hunted to the point of almost extinction leaving no food for the Indians. Water was being detoured throughout the West for farming, cattle ranching and mining leaving fishing and fresh water hard for the Indians to come by. The white Americans played the victim to savagery of the Indians and in turn required government to put an end to these unruly people.

Racisms have plagued America throughout time and is still very prevalent in today's society. The white American moving West was no different, instead of

trying to learn from others, Americans tried to change the unknown peoples. Limerick states, "Something had been holding blacks back, and that oppressive force was slavery. But what was holding Indians back, preventing them from taking the opportunity to adopt civilized ways? The Mohonk reformers gave white people some of the blame; Indians had been held back by the failure of white Americans to give them the help and opportunity they needed. But the main force of oppression in Indian life, the reformers concluded, was tribalism."(196, Limerick) Tribalism was the Indians way of life and should have been left alone. As has been seen throughout history when cultures are not the same, as the conquering people's culture, they do not learn from it but insist on changing it to what they know. If changing the culture does not work then they erase it form existence, which is what the white Americans did to the Native Americans.