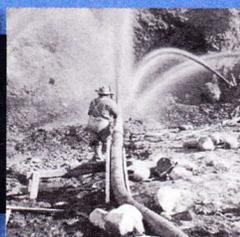


There's More Online!

- ✓ CHART/GRAPH Gold and Silver Production
- ✓ IMAGE Chinese Immigrant Miners
- ✓ IMAGE Nat Love
- ✓ IMAGE "Old West" Miners
- ✓ IMAGE Women Branding Cattle
- ✓ MAP Cattle Ranching and the Long Drive
- ✓ VIDEO Miners and Ranchers
- ✓ INTERACTIVE SELF-CHECK QUIZ



## LESSON 1

# Miners and Ranchers

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** • Why would people take on the challenges of life in the West?

### IT MATTERS BECAUSE

The migration of miners and ranchers to western territories resulted in populations large enough to qualify for statehood. People mined for gold, silver, and lead or shipped longhorn cattle to the East.

### Reading HELPDESK



#### Academic Vocabulary

- extract • adapt
- prior

#### Content Vocabulary

- vigilance committee
- hydraulic mining
- open range
- hacienda
- barrios

#### TAKING NOTES:

##### Key Ideas and Details

**Organizing** As you read, complete a graphic organizer like the one below listing the locations of mining booms and the discoveries made there.



## Growth of the Mining Industry

**GUIDING QUESTION** How did mineral discoveries shape the settlement of the West?

Mining played an important role in the settling of the American West. Demand for minerals rose dramatically after the Civil War as the United States changed from a farming nation to an industrial nation. Mining also led to the building of railroads to connect the mines to factories back east.

### Boomtowns

In 1859 a prospector named Henry Comstock staked a claim near Virginia City, Nevada. When others found a rich source nearby, Comstock claimed he owned the land and quickly struck a deal to share the fortune. He later sold his claim for thousands of dollars, not realizing that the sticky, blue-gray clay that made mining in the area difficult was nearly pure silver ore worth millions.

News of the Comstock Lode, as the strike came to be called, brought a flood of prospectors to Virginia City. So many people arrived that, in 1864, Nevada was admitted as the thirty-sixth state in the Union. This occurred many times in the American West. News of a mineral strike would start a stampede of prospectors. Almost overnight, tiny frontier towns were transformed into small cities. Virginia City, for example, grew from a town of a few hundred people to nearly 30,000 in just a few months. It had an opera house, shops with furniture and fashions from Europe, several newspapers, and a six-story hotel.

These quickly growing towns were called boomtowns. The term *boom* refers to a time of rapid economic growth. Boomtowns were

rowdy places. Prospectors fought over claims, and thieves haunted the streets and trails. Often, “law and order” was enforced by **vigilance committees**—self-appointed volunteers who would track down and punish wrongdoers. In some cases, they responded with their own form of justice, but most people respected the law and tried to deal firmly but fairly with the accused.

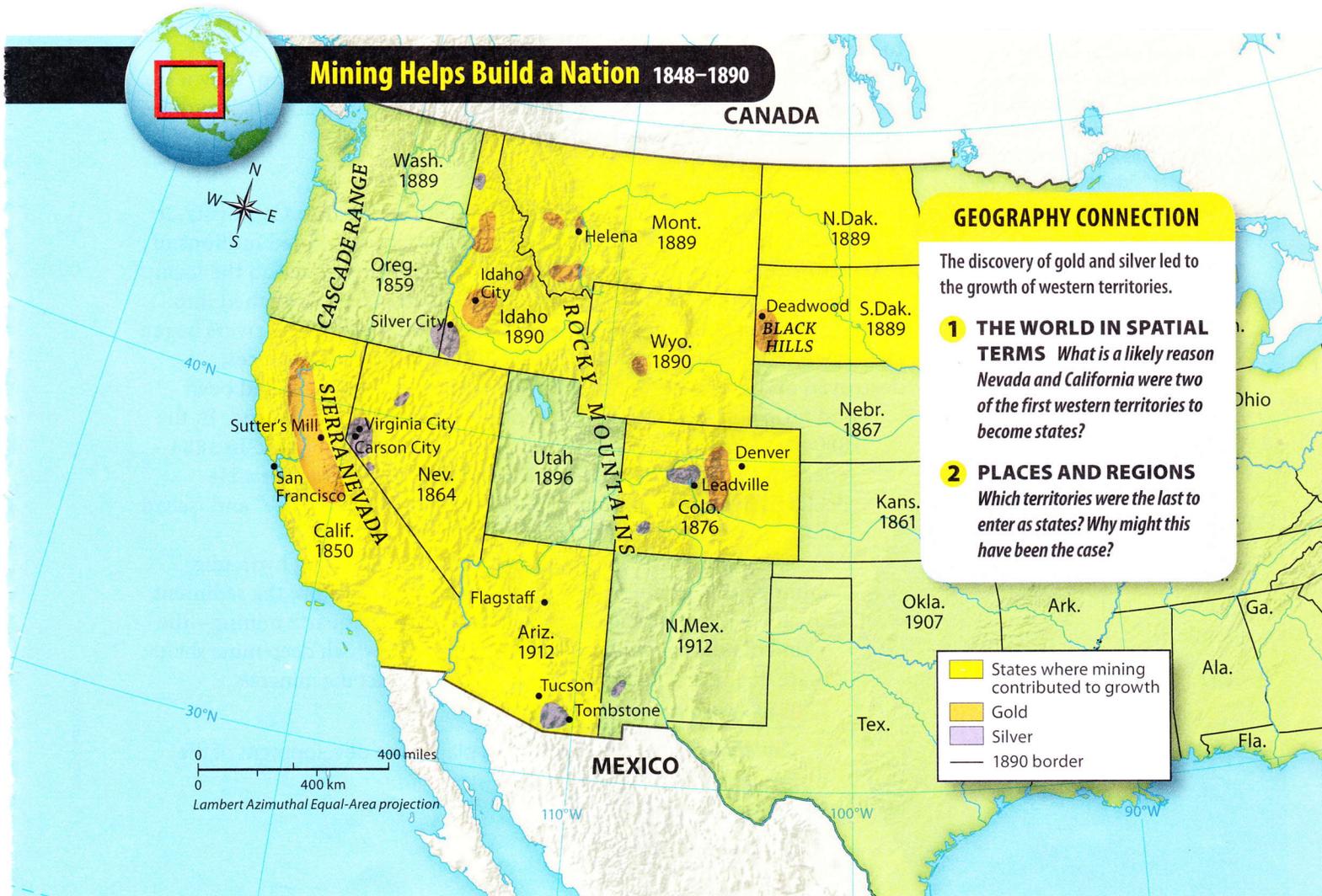
Eventually, the mines that supported the boomtown economy would be used up. A few boomtowns were able to survive when the mines closed, but many of them did not. Instead, these boomtowns went “bust”—a term borrowed from card games in which players lost all of their money. In Virginia City, for example, the silver mines were exhausted by the 1880s, and most residents moved on; only about 500 people remained by 1930. Other towns were completely abandoned and became ghost towns.

### Mining Leads to Statehood

After gold was discovered in 1858 in Colorado near Pikes Peak, miners rushed to the area, declaring “Pikes Peak or Bust.” Many panned for gold without success and headed home, complaining of a “Pikes Peak hoax.” In truth, the Colorado mountains contained plenty of gold and silver, although much of it was hidden beneath the surface and hard to **extract**. Deep deposits of lead mixed with silver were found at Leadville in the 1870s. News of the strike attracted as many as 1,000 newcomers a week, making Leadville one of the West’s most famous boomtowns. This bonanza spurred the building of railroads through the Rocky Mountains and transformed Denver, the supply point for the mining areas, into the second-largest city in the West, after San Francisco.

### vigilance committee

group of ordinary citizens who organize to find criminals and bring them to justice



**extract** to remove by force

The discovery of gold in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory and copper in Montana drew miners to the region in the 1870s. When the railroads were completed, many farmers and ranchers settled the area. In 1889 Congress admitted three new states: North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana.

In the Southwest, the Arizona Territory followed a similar pattern. Miners had already begun moving to Arizona in the 1860s and 1870s to work one of the nation's largest copper deposits. When silver was found at the town of Tombstone in 1877, it set off a boom that attracted a huge wave of prospectors to the territory.

The boom lasted about 30 years, and during that time Tombstone became famous for its lawlessness. Marshal Wyatt Earp and his brothers gained their reputations during the famous gunfight at the O.K. Corral there in 1881. Although Arizona did not grow as quickly as Colorado, Nevada, or Montana, by 1912 it had enough people to apply for statehood, as did the neighboring territory of New Mexico.

**hydraulic mining** method of mining by which water is sprayed at a very high pressure against a hill or mountain, washing away large quantities of dirt, gravel, and rock and exposing the minerals beneath the surface

Miners used high-pressure water to wash loose earth into ditches. The ditches carried the water and earth into riffle boxes that agitated the water, causing the silver or gold to settle out. The leftover debris, called tailings or "slickens," was then washed into a nearby stream.

#### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Determining Cause and Effect** How might this mining practice have helped miners in their search for minerals?

## Mining Technology

Extracting minerals from the rugged mountains of the American West required ingenuity and patience. Early prospectors extracted shallow deposits of ore in a process called placer mining, using simple tools like picks, shovels, and pans.

Other prospectors used sluice mining to search riverbeds more quickly than the panning method. A sluice diverted the current of a river into trenches. The water was directed to a box with metal "riffle" bars that caused heavier minerals to settle to the bottom of the box. A screen at the end kept the minerals from escaping with the water and sediment.

When deposits near the surface ran out, miners began **hydraulic mining** to remove large quantities of earth and process it for minerals. Miners sprayed water at very high pressure against the hill or mountain they were mining. The water pressure washed away the dirt, gravel, and rock and exposed the minerals beneath the surface.

## Changes to the Land

Hydraulic mining began in the Sierra Nevada mountains in California. It effectively removed large quantities of minerals and generated millions of dollars in gold. Unfortunately, it also had a devastating effect on the local environment. Millions of tons of silt, sand, and gravel were washed into local rivers. This sediment raised the riverbed. As a result, the rivers began overflowing their banks, causing major floods that wrecked fences, destroyed orchards, and deposited rocks and gravel on what had been good farm soil, destroying thousands of acres of rich farmland. In the 1880s, farmers fought back by suing the mining companies. In 1884 federal judge Lorenzo Sawyer ruled in favor of the farmers. He declared hydraulic mining a "public and private nuisance" and issued an injunction stopping the practice.

Congress eventually passed a law in 1893 allowing hydraulic mining if the mining company created a place to store the sediment. By then, most mining companies had moved to quartz mining—the kind of mining familiar to people today—in which deep mine shafts are dug, and miners go underground to extract the minerals.

#### ✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Explaining** What role did mining play in the development of the American West?



## Ranching and Cattle Drives

**GUIDING QUESTION** *Why was cattle ranching an important business for the Great Plains?*

The lure of the Great Plains brought other Americans west to herd cattle. The Texas longhorn, a cattle breed descended from Spanish cattle introduced two centuries earlier, was well **adapted** to this region and flourished on scarce water and tough prairie grasses. By 1865, some 5 million roamed the Texas grasslands. Another boon to cattle ranching was the **open range**, a vast area of grassland that the federal government owned. Here, ranchers could graze their herds free of charge and unrestricted by private property.

### The Long Drive Begins

**Prior** to the Civil War, ranchers had little incentive to round up the longhorns and move them to market. Beef prices were low, and moving cattle to eastern markets was not practical. But during the war, eastern cattle had been slaughtered in huge numbers to feed the armies of the Union and the Confederacy. After the war, beef prices soared. Also, by this time, railroads had reached the Great Plains, heading to towns in Kansas and Missouri. Ranchers and livestock dealers realized that if they could move their cattle to the railroad, the longhorns could be sold for a huge profit and shipped east to market.

In 1866 ranchers rounded up about 260,000 longhorns and drove them to Sedalia, Missouri—the first “long drive.” Other cattle trails soon opened, including the route to Abilene, Kansas, as the railroads expanded in the West. Cowboys from major ranches went north with the herds, which could number anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 cattle.

### The End of the Open Range

Before long, sheep herders moved their flocks onto the range and farmers came in, breaking up the land for their crops. Eventually, hundreds of square miles of fields were fenced cheaply and easily with a new invention—barbed wire. The fences blocked the cattle trails. The cattle industry faced other struggles. Prices plunged in the mid-1880s, and many ranchers went bankrupt. The harsh winter of 1886–1887 buried the Plains in deep snow. Many cattle froze or starved to death.

Although it survived these terrible blows, the cattle industry was changed forever. The era of the open range ended, and cowboys became ranch hands. From then on, herds were raised on fenced-in ranches.

### **READING PROGRESS CHECK**

**Analyzing** Describe the reasons for the growth of the cattle industry on the Great Plains.

## Settling the Hispanic Southwest

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What was the relationship like between Hispanics in the Southwest and new settlers?*

For centuries, much of what is today the American Southwest belonged to Spain's empire. After Mexico won its independence, the region became the northern territories of the Republic of Mexico. When the United States defeated Mexico in 1848, it acquired this vast region. According to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war, the region's residents retained their property rights and could become American citizens.



Cowboys drove millions of cattle north from Texas to the railroads in Kansas and points beyond.

### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Making Generalizations** What effect did the increased ability to move cattle to different parts of the country have on the cattle industry?

**adapt** to change in order to meet the demands of a certain environment or circumstance

**open range** vast areas of grassland owned by the federal government

**prior** before or previous

**hacienda** a huge ranch

## Landowners and Newcomers

In California, the Spanish mission system had collapsed by the early 1800s. In its place, a society dominated by a landholding elite had emerged. These landowners owned vast **haciendas**—ranches that covered thousands of acres. The heavy influx of “Forty-Niners” during the California gold rush of 1849, however, changed this society dramatically. California’s population grew from about 14,000 to around 100,000 in less than two years. Suddenly, Hispanic Californians were vastly outnumbered.

Some Hispanic Californians welcomed the newcomers and the economic growth that resulted. Others distrusted the English-speaking prospectors, who tried to exclude them from the mines. When California achieved statehood in 1850, Hispanics served in many state and local offices. Increasingly, however, the original Hispanic population found its status diminished, and Hispanics were often relegated to lower-paying and less desirable jobs.

As they had done with Native Americans, settlers from the East clashed with Mexican Americans over land. Across the region, many Hispanics lost their land to the new settlers. Mexican American claims to the land often dated back to Spanish land grants. These grants were hundreds of years old and defined the boundaries of property in vague terms. When more than one person claimed ownership of a property, American courts frequently held that the old land grants were insufficient proof of ownership. This allowed others to stake claim to the property. In some instances, outright fraud was used to take land illegally from Mexican Americans.

The cattle boom of the 1870s and 1880s had a tremendous impact on Hispanics in the Southwest, where many had long worked as vaqueros (the Spanish word for “cowboys”). Spanish vaqueros had a long history of sharing their techniques for managing cattle. They shared methods of branding with Florida cattlemen as far back in history as when Florida was a Spanish colony. This interaction with American cowboys enriched the English language with such Spanish words as *lariat*, *lasso*, and *stampede*.

In the mid-19th century, most Hispanics in the Southwest lived on large haciendas where they worked in the fields or helped tend cattle.

### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Identifying Central Ideas** How might the change from being the majority to becoming the minority have affected Hispanics in the Southwest?



## Clashes and Compromises in the Southwest

With the increasing demand for beef in the eastern United States, English-speaking ranchers wanted to expand their herds and claimed large tracts of land of Mexican origin. In some cases, the Hispanic population fought back. In New Mexico, residents of the town of Las Vegas were outraged when English-speaking ranchers tried to fence in land that had long been used by the community to graze livestock. In 1889 a group of Hispanic New Mexicans calling themselves *Las Gorras Blancas* (“The White Caps”) raided ranches owned by English speakers, tore down their fences, and burned their barns and houses. Attempts were made to call in federal troops to stop the raids, but the president refused to send them. The raids finally ended in 1891.

Despite the influx of English-speaking settlers, Hispanics in New Mexico remained more influential in public affairs than did their counterparts in California and Texas. Hispanics remained the majority, both in population and in the territorial legislature. In addition, a Hispanic frequently served as New Mexico’s territorial delegate to Congress.

As more railroads were built in the 1880s and 1890s, the population of the Southwest continued to swell. The region attracted not only Americans and European immigrants from the East but also immigrants from Mexico. Mexican immigrants worked mainly in agriculture and on the railroads. In the growing cities of the Southwest—such as El Paso, Albuquerque, and Los Angeles—Hispanics settled in neighborhoods called **barrios**. These neighborhoods had Spanish-speaking businesses and Spanish-language newspapers, and they helped keep Hispanic cultural and religious traditions alive. As native Californian Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo explained in 1890:

### PRIMARY SOURCE

“No class of American citizens is more loyal than the Spanish Californians, but we shall always be especially proud . . . to honor the founders of our ancient families, and the saints and heroes of our history since the days when Father Junipero planted the cross at Monterey.”

—quoted in *Foreigners in Their Native Land*

### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Describing** How did vaqueros contribute to the cattle industry in the West?



A fancily dressed vaquero, known as a *charro*, poses for a photo in 1890.

### CRITICAL THINKING

**Making Generalizations** Based on the appearance of the vaquero, what generalizations can be made about the man?

**barrios** Spanish-speaking neighborhoods in a town or city

## LESSON 1 REVIEW



### Reviewing Vocabulary

**1. Analyzing** What was the significance of barrios to Hispanic culture in the West?

### Using Your Notes

**2. Listing** Review the notes that you completed throughout the lesson and list the discoveries that attracted prospectors and settlers to the boomtowns of the American West.

### Answering the Guiding Questions

**3. Determining Cause and Effect** How did mineral discoveries shape the settlement of the West?

**4. Summarizing** Why was cattle ranching an important business for the Great Plains?

**5. Analyzing** What was the relationship like between Hispanics in the Southwest and new settlers?

### Writing Activity

**6. ARGUMENT** Suppose that you are a farmer near Nevada City, California, in the 1880s. Write a letter explaining why hydraulic mining endangers your livelihood and therefore should be banned.