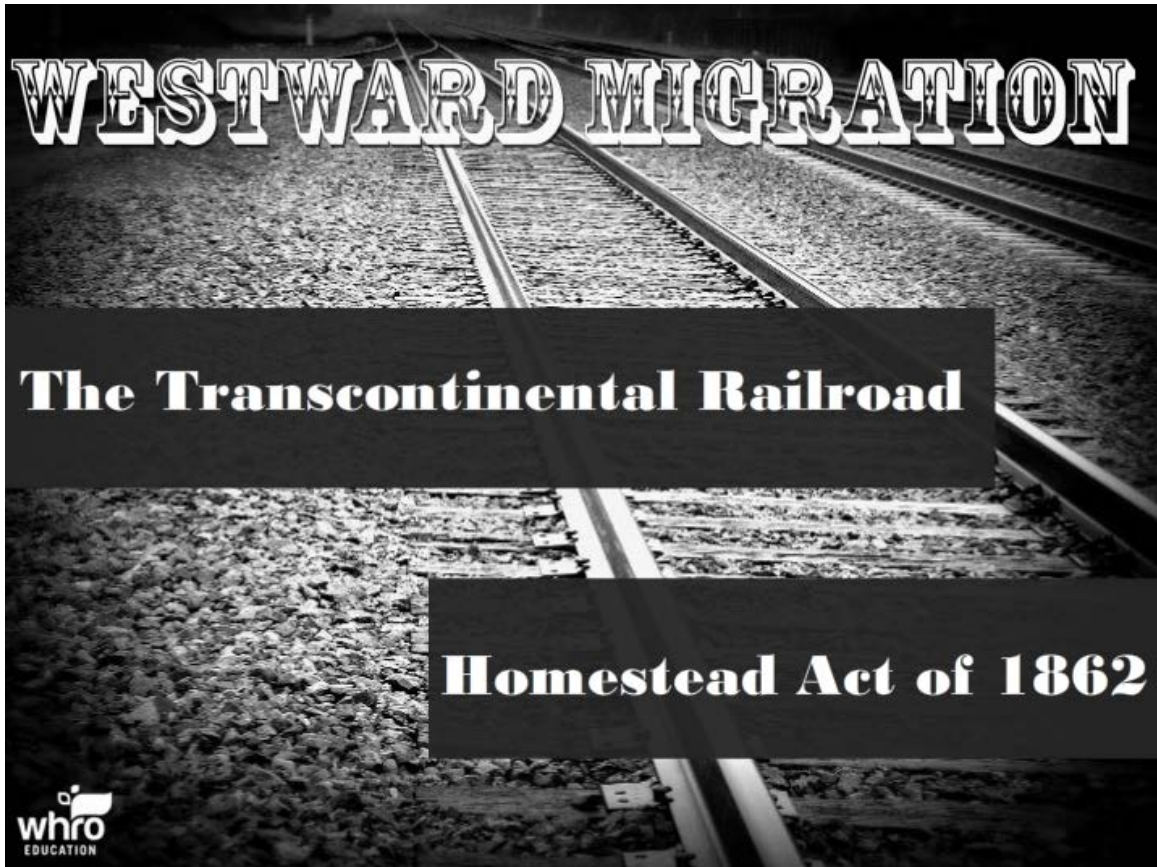


Module 6: A Nation Grows - 1877 to the 1900s

Topic 1 Content: Westward Migration Notes

Introduction



Due to greater access created by the railroad system and the Homestead Act of 1862, westward migration intensified after the Civil War. Click Transcontinental Railroad or Homestead Act of 1862 to explore westward migration.

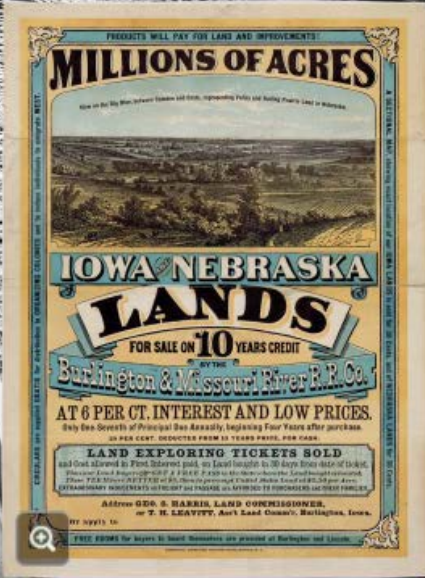
Module 6: A Nation Grows - 1877 to the 1900s

Topic 1 Content: Westward Migration Notes

Railroads

The Transcontinental Railroad

- From 1850 until 1871, railroads were funded by the federal government.
- In order to finance the building of the railroads, the companies were given huge land grants.
- Railroad companies advertised and sold the land to homesteaders.



An advertisement selling land, 1872

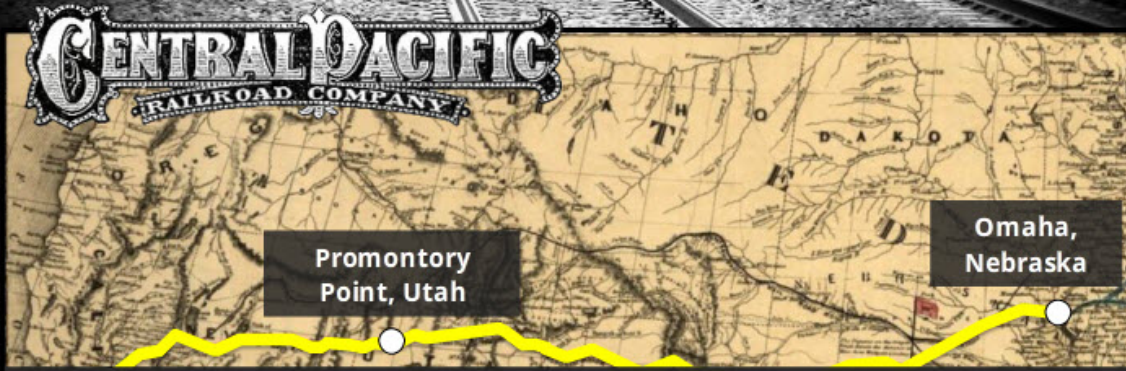
From 1850 until 1871, the Federal Government funded railroads. In exchange for laying railroad tracks, railroad companies received enormous land grants equating to 170 million acres of land. Then the railroad companies advertised and sold the land to homesteaders in order to finance the construction of additional railroads. Homesteaders were settlers who moved westward and became self-sufficient by living off the land.

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Topic 1 Content: Westward Migration Notes

Railroads

The Transcontinental Railroad



The image shows a historical map of the Central Pacific Railroad Company. A yellow line traces the route from Promontory Point, Utah, to Omaha, Nebraska. The map includes state names like TH, O, DAKOTA, and NE. The Central Pacific Railroad Company logo is prominently displayed at the top of the map area.

- The transcontinental railroad revolutionized the settlement and economy of the West.
- Farming in the West was made profitable because products and resources could be quickly shipped to the East.

Menu >

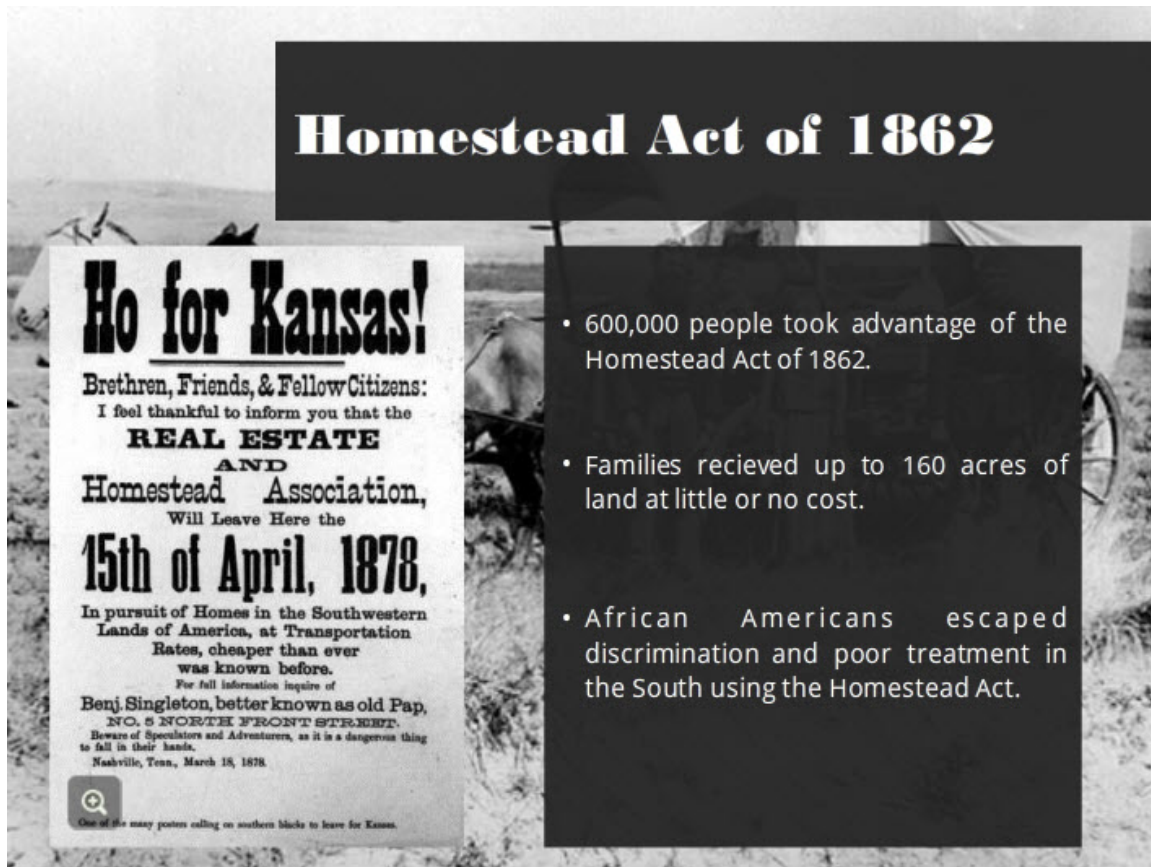
The amount of land a company received depended on how much track the company laid. This created a race between two railroad businesses, the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific.

The Central Pacific began in Sacramento, California and built the railroad heading eastward. The Union Pacific started in Omaha, Nebraska. On May 10, 1869, the two companies met and the transcontinental railroad was completed. The United States now had one continuous railroad line that started west of the Mississippi River and continued to San Francisco Bay. This line connected with railroad lines already in place on the East Coast. The transcontinental railroad revolutionized the settlement and economy of the West. It made farming in the West profitable because products and resources could quickly be shipped to eastern markets.

Module 6: A Nation Grows - 1877 to the 1900s

Topic 1 Content: Westward Migration Notes

Homestead Act of 1862

A historical black and white photograph of a desert landscape with a sign and a text box. The sign is a poster for a real estate association, and the text box contains bullet points about the Homestead Act of 1862.

Homestead Act of 1862

Ho for Kansas!
Brethren, Friends, & Fellow Citizens:
I feel thankful to inform you that the
REAL ESTATE
AND
Homestead Association,
Will Leave Here the
15th of April, 1878,
In pursuit of Homes in the Southwestern
Lands of America, at Transportation
Rates, cheaper than ever
was known before.
For full information inquire of
Benj. Singleton, better known as old Pap,
NO. 5 NORTH FRONT STREET.
Beware of Speculators and Adventurers, as it is a dangerous thing
to fall in their hands.
Nashville, Tenn., March 15, 1878.

- 600,000 people took advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862.
- Families received up to 160 acres of land at little or no cost.
- African Americans escaped discrimination and poor treatment in the South using the Homestead Act.

One of the many posters calling on southern blacks to leave for Kansas.

Since relocation was difficult, the government created the Homestead Act of 1862 to provide settlers with land ownership in the West. For those willing to relocate, the Homestead Act offered free land to the head of the household. Advertisements like the one shown were used to entice settlers to move westward and take advantage of the free land.

An estimated 600,000 people took advantage of the Homestead Act, with each individual or family receiving 160 acres of land. To escape the discriminatory South in hopes of a better life, African Americans took advantage of the act, and moved westward to receive land.