

Open Range Definition Us History



Open Range Definition U.S. History: A Frontier Legacy

The Wild West. Images of cowboys, cattle drives, and seemingly endless grasslands immediately spring to mind. But this romanticized vision rests on a specific historical reality: the era of the open range. Understanding the open range definition within the context of U.S. history is key to grasping the complexities of westward expansion, economic development, and the shaping of the American identity. This post will delve into the precise definition of open range, exploring its origins, impact, and eventual decline, providing you with a comprehensive understanding of this pivotal period in American history.

What is the Open Range Definition in U.S. History?

The open range, in its simplest definition, refers to a vast expanse of unfenced grazing land in the American West, primarily utilized for cattle ranching during the late 19th century. Unlike the fenced pastures of the East, this land was largely unclaimed or held under loosely defined claims, allowing ranchers to freely graze their herds across immense territories. This system was born from necessity, fueled by the abundance of available land and the demand for beef in burgeoning eastern cities. The open range wasn't simply a physical space; it was a system, a way of life, and a critical element of the American frontier narrative.

The Rise of the Open Range: Factors Contributing to its Development

Several interconnected factors facilitated the rise of the open range system:

Abundant Land: The vast, relatively unpopulated Great Plains offered seemingly limitless grazing land. The Homestead Act of 1862, while intended for small-scale farming, inadvertently contributed by making land available, even if much of it was unsuitable for agriculture.

The Long Drive: The development of the "long drive," the herding of cattle over hundreds of miles from Texas to railheads in Kansas, became a crucial element. This process showcased the practicality and profitability of open range ranching.

Technological Advancements: While seemingly rudimentary, the development of barbed wire in the late 1870s and early 1880s proved revolutionary. Before its invention, controlling and defining grazing territories was practically impossible.

Demand for Beef: The growing populations of eastern cities created a significant demand for beef, making cattle ranching a lucrative enterprise. This demand fueled the expansion of the open range system.

The End of the Open Range: Factors Leading to its Decline

The open range era, while seemingly boundless, was ultimately finite. Several factors contributed to its demise:

Barbed Wire: Ironically, the same technology that initially enabled the long drive also led to its downfall. The widespread adoption of barbed wire effectively ended the free-range system, dividing the land into private properties.

Overgrazing: The open range system, while initially abundant, ultimately suffered from overgrazing. The sheer number of cattle exceeding the carrying capacity of the land led to widespread land degradation and resource depletion.

Severe Weather: A series of harsh winters, particularly the winter of 1886-1887, decimated large numbers of cattle, highlighting the vulnerability of the system to unpredictable environmental factors.

Increased Competition and Land Claims: As more ranchers and farmers moved West, competition for land intensified, resulting in conflicts and legal battles over property rights, ultimately ending the free-for-all nature of open range ranching.

The Open Range's Legacy: Impact on U.S. History and Culture

The open range era profoundly impacted U.S. history and culture. It played a crucial role in westward expansion, shaping the development of the American West and influencing its mythology. The romanticized image of the cowboy persists in popular culture, fueled by narratives and stories that often gloss over the harsh realities of open range life. The open range era, however, also represents a pivotal shift in land use and resource management, showcasing the limitations of unchecked exploitation and the transition to a more regulated and defined system of land ownership.

Conclusion

The open range definition within the context of U.S. history is far more nuanced than a simple description of unfenced grazing land. It represents a unique period of rapid economic expansion, fueled by ambition, opportunity, and ultimately, the limitations of a system predicated on seemingly limitless resources. Understanding the rise and fall of the open range provides invaluable insight into the complexities of westward expansion, the development of the American West, and the evolving relationship between humans and the environment.

FAQs

1. What were some of the major conflicts arising from the open range system? Conflicts often arose over grazing rights, water access, and land ownership. Cattle rustlers also posed a significant threat, leading to vigilante justice and the further blurring of legal boundaries.
2. How did the open range system impact Native American populations? The expansion of the open range directly conflicted with the traditional way of life for many Native American tribes, leading to displacement, resource depletion, and further marginalization.
3. What were the long-term economic consequences of the open range era? While initially lucrative, the unsustainable practices of the open range system ultimately led to land degradation and economic instability for many ranchers. The shift to fenced ranching and more sustainable practices was a necessary, albeit painful, adjustment.
4. How did the open range system contribute to the development of the American cowboy mythos? The open range era provided the backdrop for the development of the romanticized image of the American cowboy, emphasizing independence, skill, and rugged individualism. However, this often overlooks the harsh realities and inequalities inherent in the system.
5. What lasting environmental impacts did the open range system leave behind? Overgrazing during the open range era resulted in soil erosion and desertification in certain areas, impacting the long-term ecological health of the Great Plains. This underscores the importance of sustainable land

management practices.

Open Range Definition US History: A Frontier Legacy

The vast, seemingly limitless expanse of the American West conjures images of cowboys, cattle drives, and untamed wilderness. Central to this iconic imagery is the concept of "open range," a system of land use with profound implications for US history. This post delves into the precise definition of open range in US history, exploring its origins, its impact on westward expansion, the eventual decline of the system, and its lasting cultural legacy. We will unravel the complexities of this historical practice, moving beyond simplistic notions to understand its true significance.

What is the Open Range Definition in US History?

The open range system, prevalent in the late 19th century, refers to a method of livestock grazing where ranchers allowed their cattle to roam freely across vast, unfenced territories. Unlike today's carefully managed ranches, the open range lacked defined property lines and relied on a loosely organized system of shared grazing lands. This wasn't simply a matter of carelessness; the sheer scale of the land, coupled with the relatively low density of cattle, made fencing impractical and unnecessary in the early stages of westward expansion. The open range definition, therefore, encompassed not just the physical landscape, but also a specific social and economic order.

The Rise of the Open Range: Factors Contributing to its Growth

Several factors converged to create the conditions for the open range system. Firstly, the vast expanse of the Great Plains offered seemingly endless grazing opportunities. Secondly, the relatively low cost of land acquisition, particularly after the Homestead Act of 1862, encouraged ranchers to claim large tracts of territory. Thirdly, the development of railroads opened up new markets for beef, fueling the demand for cattle and incentivizing ranchers to expand their herds. Finally, a lack of clear property boundaries and weak governmental regulation allowed the system to flourish, at least for a time.

The Open Range and the Cowboy: An Iconic Partnership

The image of the lone cowboy herding cattle across the open range is deeply ingrained in American culture. The cowboy, far from being a romanticized figure, was essential to the functioning of the open range system. They were responsible for herding, branding, and protecting the cattle from

predators and thieves. Their skills and resilience were crucial to the success of the open range, creating a unique and enduring symbiosis between man and nature. The cowboy's lifestyle and cultural contributions are inextricably linked to the history of the open range.

The Decline of the Open Range: Factors Leading to its Demise

The open range system, while seemingly boundless, ultimately proved unsustainable. Several factors contributed to its demise. Firstly, the increase in cattle numbers led to overgrazing, degrading the land and causing conflicts between ranchers. Secondly, severe weather events, such as droughts and blizzards, decimated herds and highlighted the vulnerabilities of the system. Thirdly, the invention of barbed wire revolutionized land management, allowing ranchers to define property boundaries and control access to grazing lands. This technology effectively ended the era of open range, transforming the landscape and leading to the consolidation of land ownership. Finally, increasing government regulation and the growth of large-scale ranching operations further contributed to the decline of the open range system.

The Legacy of the Open Range: Cultural and Economic Impacts

Despite its relatively short lifespan, the open range era left a lasting impact on American culture and economy. The open range system shaped the development of the American West, influencing land use patterns, the growth of towns and cities, and the evolution of the cattle industry. Its legacy is evident in American folklore, literature, and art, continuing to capture the imagination and inspire countless narratives. The economic shifts that resulted from the transition away from the open range system laid the groundwork for the modern cattle industry, establishing new practices and regulations that persist to this day.

Conclusion

The open range system represents a pivotal chapter in US history. Its story is one of boundless opportunity, entrepreneurial risk-taking, environmental challenges, and ultimately, transformative technological change. By understanding the open range definition within its historical context, we gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities of westward expansion, the development of the American West, and the enduring cultural legacy of the cowboy era.

FAQs

1. What was the primary cause of the end of the open range? While several factors contributed, the invention of barbed wire is widely considered the most significant factor, allowing for the effective enclosure of land and the end of free-range grazing.
2. Did the open range system benefit everyone equally? No, the benefits of the open range were unevenly distributed. Large ranchers often benefited the most, while smaller ranchers and indigenous populations faced displacement and hardship.
3. How did the open range system impact Native American populations? The expansion of the open range directly contributed to the displacement and dispossession of Native American tribes from their traditional lands.
4. What were some of the environmental consequences of the open range? Overgrazing resulted in soil erosion, desertification, and the degradation of grasslands, highlighting the environmental limitations of unregulated land use.
5. How is the legacy of the open range still relevant today? The legacy of the open range continues to influence discussions about land management, environmental sustainability, and the preservation of cultural heritage in the American West.

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open range definition us history: U.S. History P. Scott Corbett, Volker Janssen, John M. Lund, Todd Pfannestiel, Sylvie Waskiewicz, Paul Vickery, 2024-09-10 U.S. History is designed to meet the scope and sequence requirements of most introductory courses. The text provides a balanced approach to U.S. history, considering the people, events, and ideas that have shaped the United States from both the top down (politics, economics, diplomacy) and bottom up (eyewitness accounts, lived experience). U.S. History covers key forces that form the American experience, with particular attention to issues of race, class, and gender.

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open range definition us history: *The Whiskey Rebellion* Thomas P. Slaughter, 1988-01-14 When President George Washington ordered an army of 13,000 men to march west in 1794 to crush a tax rebellion among frontier farmers, he established a range of precedents that continues to define federal authority over localities today. The Whiskey Rebellion marked the first large-scale resistance to a law of the U.S. government under the Constitution. This classic confrontation between champions of liberty and defenders of order was long considered the most significant event in the first quarter-century of the new nation. Thomas P. Slaughter recaptures the historical drama and significance of this violent episode in which frontier West and cosmopolitan East battled over the meaning of the American Revolution. The book not only offers the broadest and most comprehensive

account of the Whiskey Rebellion ever written, taking into account the political, social and intellectual contexts of the time, but also challenges conventional understandings of the Revolutionary era.

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open range definition us history: *The Federalist Papers* Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Madison, 2018-08-20 Classic Books Library presents this brand new edition of "The Federalist Papers", a collection of separate essays and articles compiled in 1788 by Alexander Hamilton. Following the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776, the governing doctrines and policies of the States lacked cohesion. "The Federalist", as it was previously known, was constructed by American statesman Alexander Hamilton, and was intended to catalyze the ratification of the United States Constitution. Hamilton recruited fellow statesmen James Madison Jr., and John Jay to write papers for the compendium, and the three are known as some of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Alexander Hamilton (c. 1755-1804) was an American lawyer, journalist and highly influential government official. He also served as a Senior Officer in the Army between 1799-1800 and founded the Federalist Party, the system that governed the nation's finances. His contributions to the Constitution and leadership made a significant and lasting impact on the early development of the nation of the United States.

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open range definition us history: *A Nation Under Our Feet* Steven Hahn, 2005 Emphasizing the role of kinship, labor, and networks in the African American community, the author retraces six generations of black struggles since the end of the Civil War, revealing a nation under construction.

open range definition us history: *Texas Women on the Cattle Trails* Sara R. Massey, 2006 Tells the stories of sixteen women who drove cattle up the trail from Texas during the last half of the

nineteenth century.

open range definition us history: Oxford English Dictionary John A. Simpson, 2002-04-18
The Oxford English Dictionary is the internationally recognized authority on the evolution of the English language from 1150 to the present day. The Dictionary defines over 500,000 words, making it an unsurpassed guide to the meaning, pronunciation, and history of the English language. This new upgrade version of The Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition on CD-ROM offers unparalleled access to the world's most important reference work for the English language. The text of this version has been augmented with the inclusion of the Oxford English Dictionary Additions Series (Volumes 1-3), published in 1993 and 1997, the Bibliography to the Second Edition, and other ancillary material. System requirements: PC with minimum 200 MHz Pentium-class processor; 32 MB RAM (64 MB recommended); 16-speed CD-ROM drive (32-speed recommended); Windows 95, 98, Me, NT, 200, or XP (Local administrator rights are required to install and open the OED for the first time on a PC running Windows NT 4 and to install and run the OED on Windows 2000 and XP); 1.1 GB hard disk space to run the OED from the CD-ROM and 1.7 GB to install the CD-ROM to the hard disk: SVGA monitor: 800 x 600 pixels: 16-bit (64k, high color) setting recommended. Please note: for the upgrade, installation requires the use of the OED CD-ROM v2.0.

open range definition us history: The New South Henry Woodfin Grady, 1890

open range definition us history: American Buffalo David Mamet, 1977 In a Chicago junk shop three small-time crooks plot to rob a man of his coin collection, the showpiece of which is a valuable Buffalo nickel. These high-minded grifters fancy themselves businessmen pursuing legitimate free enterprise. But the reality of the three--Donny, the oafish junk shop owner; Bobby, a young junkie Donny has taken under his wing; and Teach; a violently paranoid braggart--is that they are merely pawns caught up in their own game of last-chance, dead-end, empty pipe dreams.

open range definition us history: Cowboy Culture David Dary, 1989 A colorful account of five centuries of cowboy culture details the life, history, customs, status, job, equipment, and more of the cowboy from sixteenth-century Spanish Mexico to the present.

open range definition us history: The Last Indian War Elliott West, 2011-05-27 This newest volume in Oxford's acclaimed Pivotal Moments series offers an unforgettable portrait of the Nez Perce War of 1877, the last great Indian conflict in American history. It was, as Elliott West shows, a tale of courage and ingenuity, of desperate struggle and shattered hope, of short-sighted government action and a doomed flight to freedom. To tell the story, West begins with the early history of the Nez Perce and their years of friendly relations with white settlers. In an initial treaty, the Nez Perce were promised a large part of their ancestral homeland, but the discovery of gold led to a stampede of settlement within the Nez Perce land. Numerous injustices at the hands of the US government combined with the settlers' invasion to provoke this most accommodating of tribes to war. West offers a riveting account of what came next: the harrowing flight of 800 Nez Perce, including many women, children and elderly, across 1500 miles of mountainous and difficult terrain. He gives a full reckoning of the campaigns and battles--and the unexpected turns, brilliant stratagems, and grand heroism that occurred along the way. And he brings to life the complex characters from both sides of the conflict, including cavalymen, officers, politicians, and--at the center of it all--the Nez Perce themselves (the Nimiipuu, true people). The book sheds light on the war's legacy, including the near sainthood that was bestowed upon Chief Joseph, whose speech of surrender, I will fight no more forever, became as celebrated as the Gettysburg Address. Based on a rich cache of historical documents, from government and military records to contemporary interviews and newspaper reports, The Last Indian War offers a searing portrait of a moment when the American identity--who was and who was not a citizen--was being forged.

open range definition us history: Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 United States. Bureau of the Census, 1943

open range definition us history: Land Law and Real Property in American History Kermit L. Hall, 1987 This work is a collection of articles examining the public policy questions posed by the evolution of the law of real property and public lands, emphasizing the public policy changes

in the area of proper use and taking of property.

open range definition us history: A Devil of a Whipping Lawrence E. Babits, 2011-02-01 The battle of Cowpens was a crucial turning point in the Revolutionary War in the South and stands as perhaps the finest American tactical demonstration of the entire war. On 17 January 1781, Daniel Morgan's force of Continental troops and militia routed British regulars and Loyalists under the command of Banastre Tarleton. The victory at Cowpens helped put the British army on the road to the Yorktown surrender and, ultimately, cleared the way for American independence. Here, Lawrence Babits provides a brand-new interpretation of this pivotal South Carolina battle. Whereas previous accounts relied on often inaccurate histories and a small sampling of participant narratives, Babits uses veterans' sworn pension statements, long-forgotten published accounts, and a thorough knowledge of weaponry, tactics, and the art of moving men across the landscape. He identifies where individuals were on the battlefield, when they were there, and what they saw--creating an absorbing common soldier's version of the conflict. His minute-by-minute account of the fighting explains what happened and why and, in the process, refutes much of the mythology that has clouded our picture of the battle. Babits put the events at Cowpens into a sequence that makes sense given the landscape, the drill manual, the time frame, and participants' accounts. He presents an accurate accounting of the numbers involved and the battle's length. Using veterans' statements and an analysis of wounds, he shows how actions by North Carolina militia and American cavalry affected the battle at critical times. And, by fitting together clues from a number of incomplete and disparate narratives, he answers questions the participants themselves could not, such as why South Carolina militiamen ran toward dragoons they feared and what caused the mistaken order on the Continental right flank.

open range definition us history: Political Debates Between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858 in Illinois Abraham Lincoln, 1895

open range definition us history: The Pig Book Citizens Against Government Waste, 2013-09-17 The federal government wastes your tax dollars worse than a drunken sailor on shore leave. The 1984 Grace Commission uncovered that the Department of Defense spent \$640 for a toilet seat and \$436 for a hammer. Twenty years later things weren't much better. In 2004, Congress spent a record-breaking \$22.9 billion dollars of your money on 10,656 of their pork-barrel projects. The war on terror has a lot to do with the record \$413 billion in deficit spending, but it's also the result of pork over the last 18 years the likes of: - \$50 million for an indoor rain forest in Iowa - \$102 million to study screwworms which were long ago eradicated from American soil - \$273,000 to combat goth culture in Missouri - \$2.2 million to renovate the North Pole (Lucky for Santa!) - \$50,000 for a tattoo removal program in California - \$1 million for ornamental fish research Funny in some instances and jaw-droppingly stupid and wasteful in others, The Pig Book proves one thing about Capitol Hill: pork is king!

open range definition us history: The Cattle Towns Robert R. Dykstra, 1983-01-01 Excellent . . . readable and persuasive. . . . One of the most refreshing and rewarding approaches to be applied to western history topics in many years.-American Historical Review

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open range definition us history: Reading Like a Historian Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin, Chauncey Monte-Sano, 2015-04-26 This practical resource shows you how to apply Sam Wineburg's highly acclaimed approach to teaching, Reading Like a Historian, in your middle and high school classroom to increase academic literacy and spark students curiosity. Chapters cover key moments

in American history, beginning with exploration and colonization and ending with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

open range definition us history: The Death of a President William Manchester, 2013-10-08 William Manchester's epic and definitive account of President John F. Kennedy's assassination. As the world still reeled from the tragic and historic events of November 22, 1963, William Manchester set out, at the request of the Kennedy family, to create a detailed, authoritative record of the days immediately preceding and following President John F. Kennedy's death. Through hundreds of interviews, abundant travel and firsthand observation, and with unique access to the proceedings of the Warren Commission, Manchester conducted an exhaustive historical investigation, accumulating forty-five volumes of documents, exhibits, and transcribed tapes. His ultimate objective -- to set down as a whole the national and personal tragedy that was JFK's assassination -- is brilliantly achieved in this galvanizing narrative, a book universally acclaimed as a landmark work of modern history.

open range definition us history: U.S. Health in International Perspective National Research Council, Institute of Medicine, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Committee on Population, Panel on Understanding Cross-National Health Differences Among High-Income Countries, 2013-04-12 The United States is among the wealthiest nations in the world, but it is far from the healthiest. Although life expectancy and survival rates in the United States have improved dramatically over the past century, Americans live shorter lives and experience more injuries and illnesses than people in other high-income countries. The U.S. health disadvantage cannot be attributed solely to the adverse health status of racial or ethnic minorities or poor people: even highly advantaged Americans are in worse health than their counterparts in other, peer countries. In light of the new and growing evidence about the U.S. health disadvantage, the National Institutes of Health asked the National Research Council (NRC) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to convene a panel of experts to study the issue. The Panel on Understanding Cross-National Health Differences Among High-Income Countries examined whether the U.S. health disadvantage exists across the life span, considered potential explanations, and assessed the larger implications of the findings. U.S. Health in International Perspective presents detailed evidence on the issue, explores the possible explanations for the shorter and less healthy lives of Americans than those of people in comparable countries, and recommends actions by both government and nongovernment agencies and organizations to address the U.S. health disadvantage.

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open range definition us history: We Pointed Them North E.C. "Teddy Blue" Abbott, Helena Huntington Smith, 2015-02-16 E. C. Abbott was a cowboy in the great days of the 1870's and 1880's. He came up the trail to Montana from Texas with the long-horned herds which were to stock the northern ranges; he punched cows in Montana when there wasn't a fence in the territory; and he married a daughter of Granville Stuart, the famous early-day stockman and Montana pioneer. For more than fifty years he was known to cowmen from Texas to Alberta as Teddy Blue. This is his story, as told to Helena Huntington Smith, who says that the book is all Teddy Blue. My part was to keep out of the way and not mess it up by being literary.... Because the cowboy flourished in the middle of the Victorian age, which is certainly a funny paradox, no realistic picture of him was ever drawn in his own day. Here is a self-portrait by a cowboy which is full and honest. And Teddy Blue himself says, Other old-timers have told all about stampedes and swimming rivers and what a terrible time we had, but they never put in any of the fun, and fun was at least half of it. So here it is—the cowboy classic, with the terrible times and the fun which have entertained readers everywhere. First published in 1939, We Pointed Them North has been brought back into print by

the University of Oklahoma Press in completely new format, with drawings by Nick Eggenhofer, and with the full, original text.

open range definition us history: US History in 15 Foods Anna Zeide, 2023-01-12 From whiskey in the American Revolution to Spam in WWII, food reveals a great deal about the society in which it exists. Selecting 15 foods that represent key moments in the history of the United States, this book takes readers from before European colonization to the present, narrating major turning points along the way, with food as a guide. US History in 15 Foods takes everyday items like wheat bread, peanuts, and chicken nuggets, and shows the part they played in the making of America. What did the British colonists think about the corn they observed Indigenous people growing? How are oranges connected to Roosevelt's New Deal? And what can green bean casserole tell us about gender roles in the mid-20th century? Weaving food into colonialism, globalization, racism, economic depression, environmental change and more, Anna Zeide shows how America has evolved through the food it eats.

open range definition us history: *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals* Pisc, 2002 Animal welfare considerations are becoming increasingly important for the keeping and farming of animals, both in Australia and internationally. Practices that may have once been deemed acceptable are now being reassessed in light of new knowledge and changing attitudes. The minimum standards outlined in this Code are intended to help people involved in the care and management of poultry to adopt standards of husbandry that are acceptable. Special requirements for various species are given in the appendices. This Code of Practice is intended as a guide for people responsible for the welfare and husbandry of domestic poultry. It recognizes that the basic requirement for welfare of poultry is a husbandry system appropriate to their physiological and behavioral needs. The Code emphasizes that--whatever the form of husbandry--managers, employees and all others responsible for the day-to-day needs of domestic poultry have a responsibility to care for poultry under their control.

open range definition us history: A People's History of the United States Howard Zinn, 2003-02-04 Since its original landmark publication in 1980, A People's History of the United States has been chronicling American history from the bottom up, throwing out the official version of history taught in schools -- with its emphasis on great men in high places -- to focus on the street, the home, and the workplace. Known for its lively, clear prose as well as its scholarly research, A People's History is the only volume to tell America's story from the point of view of -- and in the words of -- America's women, factory workers, African-Americans, Native Americans, the working poor, and immigrant laborers. As historian Howard Zinn shows, many of our country's greatest battles -- the fights for a fair wage, an eight-hour workday, child-labor laws, health and safety standards, universal suffrage, women's rights, racial equality -- were carried out at the grassroots level, against bloody resistance. Covering Christopher Columbus's arrival through President Clinton's first term, A People's History of the United States, which was nominated for the American Book Award in 1981, features insightful analysis of the most important events in our history. Revised, updated, and featuring a new afterword by the author, this special twentieth anniversary edition continues Zinn's important contribution to a complete and balanced understanding of American history.

open range definition us history: The Log of a Cowboy Andy Adams, 1903

open range definition us history: *West from Appomattox* Heather Cox Richardson, 2007-03-28 "This thoughtful, engaging examination of the Reconstruction Era . . . will be appealing . . . to anyone interested in the roots of present-day American politics" (Publishers Weekly). The story of Reconstruction is not simply about the rebuilding of the South after the Civil War. In many ways, the late nineteenth century defined modern America, as Southerners, Northerners, and Westerners forged a national identity that united three very different regions into a country that could become a world power. A sweeping history of the United States from the era of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, this engaging book tracks the formation of the American middle class while stretching the boundaries of our understanding of Reconstruction. Historian Heather Cox

Richardson ties the North and West into the post-Civil War story that usually focuses narrowly on the South. By weaving together the experiences of real individuals who left records in their own words—from ordinary Americans such as a plantation mistress, a Native American warrior, and a labor organizer, to prominent historical figures such as Andrew Carnegie, Julia Ward Howe, Booker T. Washington, and Sitting Bull—Richardson tells a story about the creation of modern America.

open range definition us history: Shays's Rebellion Leonard L. Richards, 2014-11-29 During the bitter winter of 1786-87, Daniel Shays, a modest farmer and Revolutionary War veteran, and his compatriot Luke Day led an unsuccessful armed rebellion against the state of Massachusetts. Their desperate struggle was fueled by the injustice of a regressive tax system and a conservative state government that seemed no better than British colonial rule. But despite the immediate failure of this local call-to-arms in the Massachusetts countryside, the event fundamentally altered the course of American history. Shays and his army of four thousand rebels so shocked the young nation's governing elite—even drawing the retired General George Washington back into the service of his country—that ultimately the Articles of Confederation were discarded in favor of a new constitution, the very document that has guided the nation for more than two hundred years, and brought closure to the American Revolution. The importance of Shays's Rebellion has never been fully appreciated, chiefly because Shays and his followers have always been viewed as a small group of poor farmers and debtors protesting local civil authority. In *Shays's Rebellion: The American Revolution's Final Battle*, Leonard Richards reveals that this perception is misleading, that the rebellion was much more widespread than previously thought, and that the participants and their supporters actually represented whole communities—the wealthy and the poor, the influential and the weak, even members of some of the best Massachusetts families. Through careful examination of contemporary records, including a long-neglected but invaluable list of the participants, Richards provides a clear picture of the insurgency, capturing the spirit of the rebellion, the reasons for the revolt, and its long-term impact on the participants, the state of Massachusetts, and the nation as a whole. Shays's Rebellion, though seemingly a local affair, was the revolution that gave rise to modern American democracy.

open range definition us history: After Appomattox Gregory P. Downs, 2019-08-13 “Original and revelatory.” —David Blight, author of *Frederick Douglass* Avery O. Craven Award Finalist A Civil War Memory/Civil War Monitor Best Book of the Year In April 1865, Robert E. Lee wrote to Ulysses S. Grant asking for peace. Peace was beyond his authority to negotiate, Grant replied, but surrender terms he would discuss. The distinction proved prophetic. After Appomattox reveals that the Civil War did not end with Confederate capitulation in 1865. Instead, a second phase of the war began which lasted until 1871—not the project euphemistically called Reconstruction, but a state of genuine belligerence whose mission was to shape the peace. Using its war powers, the U.S. Army oversaw an ambitious occupation, stationing tens of thousands of troops in outposts across the defeated South. This groundbreaking history shows that the purpose of the occupation was to crush slavery in the face of fierce and violent resistance, but there were limits to its effectiveness: the occupying army never really managed to remake the South. “The United States Army has been far too neglected as a player—a force—in the history of Reconstruction... Downs wants his work to speak to the present, and indeed it should.” —David W. Blight, *The Atlantic* “Striking... Downs chronicles...a military occupation that was indispensable to the uprooting of slavery.” —*Boston Globe* “Downs makes the case that the final end to slavery, and the establishment of basic civil and voting rights for all Americans, was ‘born in the face of bayonets.’ ...A remarkable, necessary book.” —Slate

open range definition us history: Fire in America Stephen J. Pyne, 2017-01-27 From prehistory to the present-day conservation movement, Pyne explores the efforts of successive American cultures to master wildfire and to use it to shape the landscape.

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