

Every country has a past that seems to be embraced within their contemporary character, projected on both themselves and to the wider world. Words and words associated with this period continue to be adopted in reverence to this unique part of American history, such as the US Army adopting tribal names for its helicopters, like the AH-64 Apache gunship. We all have an idea of what the Wild West was like, with visions of gunfights in the streets between heroes and villains, cattle trains thundering across open plains, bandits leaping on trains to rob its passengers, and enduring animosity between the white settlers and the indigenous peoples. However, the story of the real cowboys isn't all what it was cracked up to be. The vast, unspoiled land of the West was seen as ideal ground for expanding America's agricultural base with the railroads allowing food produce to now be transported to markets back East, as well as the shipping hubs on both coasts for exporting before any of its spoiled, as would have been the case with horse-drawn wagons. This led to a decline in the popularity of the Western genre and pop culture, with the exceptions of major blockbuster films, such as 1993's *Tombstone*, which tells the fictionalized account of the gunfight at the OK Corral, focusing on the battle between law and order rather than between white settlers and Native Americans. Coined in 1845, this was the philosophical notion that the people of the United States, specifically those of a white, Christian denomination, were destined by God to expand their dominion across the untamed land to the west, spreading democracy, capitalism, and of course Christianity, all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Given America's state and federal legal systems, there was little in the way of regulation to control many of these wild west towns, and anyone with the money to build a business was usually free to do so. During its heyday, the comparatively affluent town of Tombstone had no less than 110 saloons, 14 gambling halls, numerous dance halls, brothels, four churches, three newspapers, two banks, an ice house, a school, and an ice cream parlor. The Langreese Allen St. Joseph Theatre Company, for example, played to audiences in Missouri and Kansas, enacting such productions as *Ten Nights in a Bar Room*, *Toodles*, *Lady of Lions*, *Hamlet*, *Inglemar the Barbarian*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *Othello*. After the first pioneers pushed through the lands largely on their own wits, or as a part of exploratory expeditions such as that undertaken by Lewis and Clark, routes were established that would lead them into the heart of the new territories before they would branch off into new areas to establish their settlements. Some of the most well-known routes included the Santa Fe Trail, which ran from the Missouri River along the divide between the tributaries of the Arkansas and Kansas rivers, to the site of the Great Bend in Kansas, where it then turned along the Arkansas River before branching southwest to Santa Fe, New Mexico. But finally, as if the terrain, the incoming winter weather, and the threat of attack weren't enough, the populations of the wagon trains also had to contend with disease and hunger as time went on. On the Oregon California Trail, Colorado ravaged through many wagon trains and was all the more frightening by the suddenness of the disease taking hold. When Europeans ventured to new lands such as Africa, Asia, and America, they employed the doctrine of discovery, which disregarded territorial claims by the local populations and instead granted immediate sovereignty of the new land to the European explorers. This also prevented the native peoples from exercising any rights as an independent nation, and could not have any more dealings with foreign nations without first sparking war with the U.S. While American settlers moved west, believing it was their god-given right to claim the new lands, the indigenous populations didn't see it that way. The

wagons took their name from the Conestoga Creek region of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where they originated and were ideally suited for hauling freight over rough terrain. The lack of fresh fruits on the trail also saw a marked degradation in overall health, due to the lack of essential vitamins leading to some people even getting scurvy, a disease more commonly associated with sailors along sea voyages. Doctors would use coltar extracts to induce sleep while in 1866 a doctor recommended a liniment mixture of sulfuric ether, aqua ammonia, and amiriate of ammonia. The story of the Old West is often dominated by tales of the American spirit taming the wild lands, but a factor often overlooked in this narrative are the Native American peoples who already occupied the land and had done so for centuries. For this reason, the Native American population has often been perceived as the enemy in tales of the West, who stand in the way of progress, a trait inherited from the opinions of the first American settlers who viewed them as inferior savages. In 1823, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Johnson v. McIntosh* that this recognized international legal principle, used by European settlers, was also applicable to the United States as it pushed west and encountered native peoples. The legend of the Old West and the heroic frontier folk who forged it were already beginning to form stories of the experiences on the trails, filtering back east and leading to greater interest in moving out west amongst the remaining population. Many of their white clientele were miners and railroad workers, who were increasingly finding themselves being undercut by cheap Chinese laborers, and this meant they became the focus of the men's frustrations with violence being a common occurrence. Other breeds included the Meteor Heriford, which, as the name implies, originated from Herodfordshire in England, but as the animals were left unsupervised, it was not uncommon for the two types to cross breed. Ella Watson's farm was growing legally, and this threatened her neighbor, the wealthy Albert John Bothwell, who was known to engage in such illegal activities as fencing off public land for his use and sending his cowboys to threaten and intimidate anyone who complained. The gunmen's initial incursion in the territory aroused the small farmers and ranchers, as well as the state law men, and together they formed a posse of around 200 armed men that resulted in a bitter armed standoff. Included in the deal was the Mississippi River, which would become a major artery for American commerce and provided a considerable boost to the economic development of the United States at a time when the first American railroads were still almost 30 years away. It was this belief that granted the American peoples the moral authority to disregard the historical territorial claims of the Native American population who were regarded as inferior savages standing in the way of American destiny. Shortly after the Louisiana Purchase, President Jefferson commissioned an expedition westward to explore and map the new territory and find a practical route to the Pacific Ocean for future expeditions and settlements. Meanwhile, America and Great Britain sought to draw a border between the expanded U.S. lands and British Canada, concluding in a treaty in 1846 which allowed President James K. Polk to instead focus on acquiring California from Mexico after Florida was granted statehood in 1845. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the fighting in 1848, added an additional 525,000 square miles of territory to the U.S., including the modern-day states of California, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. The expansion of the American settlers, many of whom had themselves immigrated from Europe, also greatly increased the exposure of diseases to native American populations, for which they did not have any natural

immunity. No trail was ever considered easy, but the Oregon, California Trail was particularly difficult, involving oppositional-ridden terrain that included large territories still occupied by Native Americans. But the meat industry was dependent on getting the animals to their markets, and for that, the cattle had to be driven from their grazing lands to the railroad towns that would then transport them to the cities for slaughter and processing. This was such a concern that many areas formed vigilante groups to warn off the cattle drives to protect their own livestock until the federal government enacted laws preventing the transport of infected animals. The range detective who acted on Bothwell's claims was murdered soon after and triggered a series of tit-for-tat killings until the wealthier ranchers hired gunmen to invade Johnson County. Geronimo, birth name Goyakla, was part of the Apache tribe residing in modern-day Arizona when his wife and three children were butchered by Mexican troops. The Nez Perce are an indigenous people who have lived in the Columbia River Plateau in the Pacific Northwest region for at least 11,500 years before the white settlers came. In response, 50 U.S. President James Monroe warned European nations not to interfere with American expansion to the west, making a formal declaration that they intended to settle as far as the Pacific Ocean and that further encroachment on the American continent by Europeans would be seen as an act of war. Tribes that didn't resist found their hunting and farming lands being restricted, or in some cases, were forced to relocate entirely, often because they lived on a patch of land ideal for white settlers. It then crossed the first of three towering mountain ranges before heading across the arid and desolate Great Divide Basin and stretching through Idaho before finally reaching the territory of Oregon. Others were businessmen, hoping to take their skills and acumen to the new settlements where the competition was less fierce, and they could establish a monopoly before the settlements grew. Pulled by up to six horses, the wagon had a carrying capacity of up to six tons, and the floor curved up at each end to prevent the contents from shifting inside on uneven ground, while a distinctive white canvas cover protected against rain and provided shade from the heat. Over the coming decades, the settlements swelled into towns and cities to serve the gold mines, or act as rest stops for trains or cattle drives. Popular myths of the wild west often depict these shows as being less than cultured affairs, and while there were less reputable companies touring the west, many of them worked hard to bring the culture of the big cities on the east coast to the western frontier. Folklore tells of railroad workers hanging in the red lamps outside the brothels, while they had their time inside, and this gave rise to the term Red Light District, which has since come to refer to an area of a town or city embroiled in prostitution. Prospectors and miners would trade in whatever they mined from the countryside, but the economics of the West would change dramatically once their transcontinental railroads began to open in the late 1860s. Journeys that once took months now took days and was significantly less risk, leading to an explosion of the Western population, and more importantly, linking the West with the economy of the Eastern states. Again, the expansion of the railroads especially saw increased trade union activities through the 1870s, but many of these trade unions were limited to specific jobs in the industry, such as the train drivers, conductors, and maintenance personnel. The Knights of Labor aimed to protect the interests of anyone who is considered a producer, be they from the mining or agricultural sectors, and including those in the logistical chain, such as the railroad workers. Even before the American population moved west, though, much of the land had been used for

farming and rearing cattle by the Spanish, and many of the practices, traditions, and even words we now associate with the culture of the cowboy have its origins from Spain. The main cattle breeds that dominated the industry on the open range was the Longhorn, which was descended from the original Spanish Longhorns imported from the 16th century onwards. In order to determine the ownership of individual animals, they were marked with a distinctive brand applied with a hot iron, usually while the cattle were still young calves. This gave rise to America's open-range laws, where unless the landowner made efforts to inform the cattle drives that they were not permitted on the land with either signs or fencing, then the cattle drives could enter the lands, claimed or otherwise. The latter was especially true for Native American tribes who found their own food stocks, such as the buffalo, increasingly diminished by American expansion west. Cattle companies had been ruthlessly persecuting alleged wrestlers, often on flimsy evidence gathered by so-called range detectives. Cattle had been brewing for quite some time with the way the big companies were behaving towards the small ranchers that made up the local community, but it was the hanging of Ella Watson and her husband that would prove the spark for the coming frontier war. As a result, many communities resorted to the age-old tribal mentality in that they looked out for each other, resulting in vigilantes and armed posses pursuing known or suspected criminals. Given this, a mythos grew around the many sheriffs who found themselves the subject of stories of their exploits, often with wild exaggerations thrown in, and usually fueled by a bottle of whiskey consumed during the retelling. Both the fictional and factual tales of Jesse James were symbolic of the law and order legends as a whole in the Wild West, and are the defining aspects to our collective understanding of the time period at large. However, as the American government increased their program of restriction on Native American tribes, forcing many of them to resist violently, American military leaders would quickly learn to respect their native foes. Capitalizing on this were the introduction of dime novels, cheaply produced short books, many of which used the western setting to tell dramatic, shocking and exciting stories regardless of how close to reality they were. During the Civil War, Cody undertook dangerous scouting missions for the Union Army, while afterwards he was hired to hunt buffalo to feed construction crews working on the Union Pacific Railroad. The show featured trick shooting, hard riding cowboys, and Native Americans, along with recreations of a buffalo hunt, the capture of the Deadwood stagecoach and a Pony Express ride. The last of the great gold rushes had ended by 1900, and many of the towns that had sprung up to support the mines were now being abandoned, creating numerous ghost towns dotted across the landscape. In the end, like those real pioneers in indigenous tribes who faced adversity in their way forging the West, it seems the legend of the Wild West still endures and will continue to inspire Americans in all respects of the word for many years to come. In the early 1770s, Britain controlled swaths of territory along the eastern seaboard of North America, organized into 13 distinct colonies. This naturally evolved into friction between the colonies in Britain until 1775, when the American colonists weren't an open revolt. It also meant that the local tribes' people were subjects of the U.S. government, albeit in a purely administrative capacity, rather than becoming equal citizens. Recognizing the threat, some tribes even banded together to face the U.S. Army and armed settlers who appeared hell-bent on destroying them, both militarily and culturally. It began in Independence, Missouri before traversing northeastern Kansas, southern Nebraska, and southern

Wyoming. Some were sold on the tales of adventure, conceiving images of battling bears or the native people and earning glory for themselves in the process. Some wagon trains would have an excess of 100 wagons amongst them, and getting such a huge convoy moving was an extraordinary challenge for their leaders. Of course, there was also the threat from the Native American tribes, who often tracked the long lines of wagons snaking through the territory that their ancestors had lived on for millennia. And when an attack did come, every able-bodied person was involved in the defense, even if it was just by reloading the next rifle and allowing the shooter to keep firing at the attacking tribesmen. Out west, the earlier wagon trains established settlements, and the railroads were soon opening them up to more travelers looking to find new, more prosperous lives. A small settlement established in 1858 on the banks of the South Platte River during the Pikes Peak Gold Rush was the beginning of the city of Denver, Colorado. While this may have introduced many Americans to the term, red lights have actually been used by prostitutes in Holland since the 17th century to advertise their services, and it's equally possible Dutch immigrants continued this practice in the United States. However, one group who certainly didn't have a choice were the thousands of Chinese sex slaves purchased cheaply from their parents in China, where they were seen of little value and shipped to the West. Chlamydia was one of the leading causes of urinary tract infections, causing problems with passing urine and the onset of blindness. A four-year-old boy from Nebraska had his scalp reattached by a doctor, using 35 searchers, and a wet skull cap on his head, which was kept wet with a solution of boric acid, the child miraculously recovered. These railroads crisscrossed the Western landscape, making the wagon trains obsolete. Even then, it was not uncommon for them to be limited to a specific region, all of which conspired to inhibit their overall effectiveness. Many of the breeds farmed by the cowboys had been brought to America by Europeans and were allowed to live semi-wild on the open ranges where they grazed for much of the year. The Longhorns reared in Texas often had ticks growing in their fur that carried Texas fever, a malaria-like disease that is transferable to both humans and local cattle. The American Civil War between 1861 and 1865 severely restricted the movement of cattle not intended to feed the soldiers, and without the matured animals being sold off, herd numbers drew dramatically, leading to a fall in their price. Many of those accused were merely new settlers who competed with the companies for land, livestock, and water rights, at a time when the open range was in severe decline, seeing the cattle companies become increasingly desperate. Only the intervention of the United States Cavalry on the orders of President Benjamin Harrison did the standoff subside, but even then the violence continued sporadically for months afterwards. Often funded by rich backers from the east, the railroads and mines employed gun hands to protect their property from opportunistic thieves. Probably the name most famously associated with law enforcement in the Old West is Wyatt Earp, whose exploits have been immortalized in books, TV shows, and movies. All around the western United States, it was easy for even the most minor disagreements to turn into full-blown feuds, such as that between their Earps and Eitklanten or David Tutten, Wild Bill Hicog. Both the Confederates and Union soldiers performed shocking acts of brutality on one another and civilians, and the hatred over such acts were not tempered by the end of the war. On June 25, after a previous U.S. Army force had been defeated, General George Custer's 7th Cavalry was scouting ahead of their main force when they stumbled upon the encampment. 268 U.S. soldiers were

killed, but while it was a powerful symbolic victory for Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, the massacre outraged the U.S. government, who used the incident to further justify their clampdowns on the Native American tribes. At just eleven he found himself in a gunfight with a Native American who attacked the cattle train he was a part of. This story quickly earned him a legendary status as the youngest indigenous fighter on the prairie. Cody's exploits provided exciting material for newspapers and the dime novelists, and he quickly found himself becoming a Western folk hero. Tributes came from far and wide after his passing, including from Britain's King George V. Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II and US President Woodrow Wilson, such was the impact that he had on the world. Communication was also vastly improved, thanks to the widespread adoption of electrical telegraphs and eventually, telephones and radio. Many of the towns and cities that did not survive adopted the new industries that were cropping up, thanks to the Industrial Revolution, and soon they began to resemble the cities back East. For the Nordic nations of Sweden and Norway, it's their Viking ancestry. These colonies enjoyed a high degree of self-determination and intercolonial cooperation and trade, leading to the colonists losing their sense of identity as British and instead identifying as Americans. Disillusioned, they began to look to the largely unexplored territory to the west with the idea of establishing new settlements which could one day grow into new cities and eventually new states. As the tribes would stop the wagon trains, and demand they pay tribute to them in the form of food, mules, rifles, or other goods.