

## Topic #15 Overview

### **Main Themes:**

1. The varied and vibrant ethnic and racial cultures that characterized the American West and how Anglo-European whites enforced their dominant role by the latter part of the nineteenth century.
2. The transformation of the far West from a sparsely populated region of Indians and various early settlers of European and Asian background into a part of the nation's capitalistic economy.
3. The closing of the frontier as Indian resistance was eliminated, miners and cowboys spearheaded settlements, and railroads opened the area for intensive development.
4. The development of mining, ranching, and commercial farming as the three major industries of the West.
5. The problems faced by farmers as the agricultural sector entered a relative decline.

### **Objectives: [You should be able to explain each of these in some detail]**

1. The cultural characteristics of the varied populations of the region.
2. The pattern of settlement on the last American frontier and the significance of the frontier in American history.
3. The impact of the discovery of gold and silver in the West, both on the region and on the nation as a whole.
4. The development of the cattle industry in the American Southwest after 1860.
5. The methods used by the federal government to reduce the threat of the Plains Indians and the Indians' ultimate fate.
6. The reasons for the transition from subsistence farming to commercial farming and the effect of the change on the West.
7. The "Turner Thesis," its supporters, and its critics.