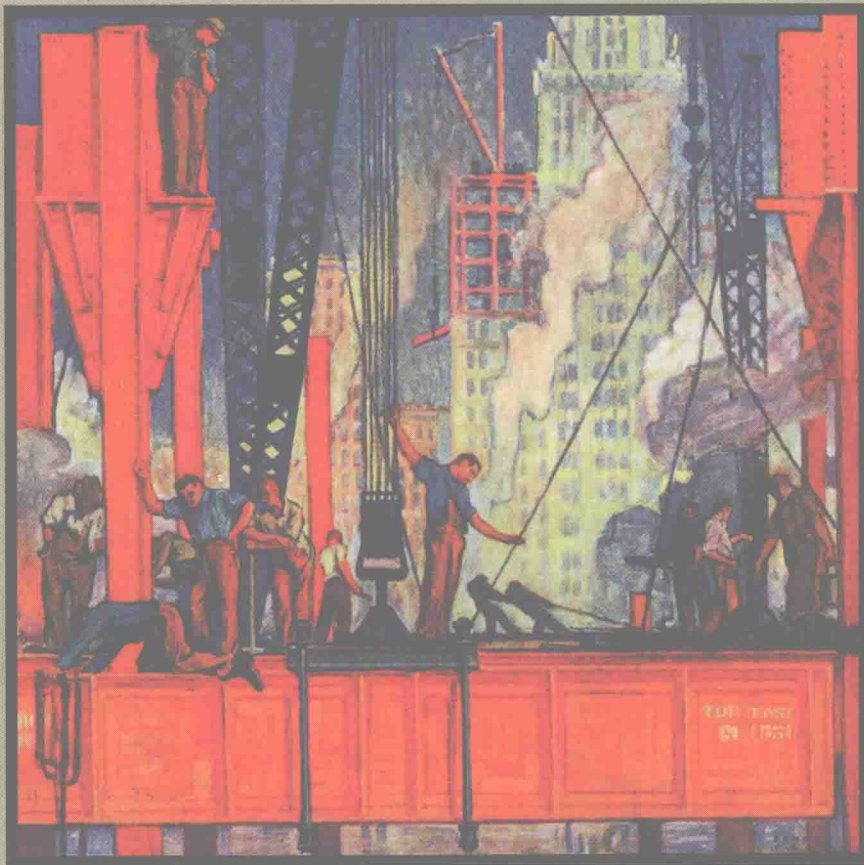


Telecourse Guide for
America in Perspective

U . S . H I S T O R Y S I N C E 1 8 7 7

THIRD EDITION



KENNETH G. ALFERS

DALLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Telecourse Guide
for



**A M E R I C A
IN PERSPECTIVE**

U.S. History Since 1877

Third Edition

Kenneth G. Alfors, Ph.D.

Produced by:



DALLAS TELECOURSES
Dallas County Community College District



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Telecourse Guide
for



A M E R I C A
IN PERSPECTIVE

U.S. History Since 1877

Dedication

To Molly, Andrew, and Michael
and
To all students of history

Acknowledgments

Special thanks are due to some special people who greatly enhanced the quality of this course. Nora Busby, Instructional Designer, constantly kept the focus of my work on student learning. Her commitment to quality is unquestioned and unrelenting, and she has my utmost respect. The work of Phil Johnson, Producer/Director, is most obvious in the twenty-six video programs, which demonstrate his brilliance and insight. Dr. Bill Mugleston, my colleague for over fifteen years, served as a Research Associate on this project. In addition to uncovering documentary and visual sources, his thoughtful comments always improved the final product.

David Molina, Associate Producer, and Darise Error, Production Assistant, were always available with whatever logistical support I needed. Paul Bosner, Project Manager, gave us all the benefit of his experience and encouragement. My colleagues on the national and local advisory committees deserve recognition for their constructive comments throughout the entire process.

In addition to those mentioned above, I would like to thank Pamela K. Quinn, Dorothy J. Clark, Bob Crook, Ted Pohrte, Bob Peterson, Terry Error, Mary Bills, Janet Fulton, Steven Richards, Jacquelyn Tulloch, Betsy Turner, Evelyn Wong, and all other members of the staff of the R. Jan LeCroy Center for Educational Telecommunications for making my work with the Center so pleasant and rewarding. Although not directly associated with the LeCroy Center, Margot Olson, a test design specialist, helped clarify hundreds of items in the test bank.

—Kenneth G. Alfers
History Content Specialist

To the Student

How often do you hear that something “needs to be put in perspective”? In other words we are constantly seeking a meaningful relationship among all the facts and happenings to which we are constantly exposed in our information age. This is essentially what I and the others involved in the production have endeavored to do in this telecourse, *America in Perspective*. We want you to reach a better understanding of how and why the United States came to be what it is today. In the process of accomplishing that goal, we have produced a comprehensive course of study that challenges you to think. We have tried to help you develop an analytical frame of reference which you can use to make sense of the past as well as the present.

I have been teaching American history at the college level for over twenty-five years. During the 1990-91 and 1991-92 academic years, I concentrated totally on preparing materials for this telecourse. Friends, colleagues, and former students sometimes smile and wonder why I devoted so much time to the creation of a new history course. After all, what changes in history? Indeed, that is a great part of my fascination with the discipline for there is always more to learn. For example, I hope you will be as intrigued as I was by the remarks of the forty-one nationally recognized scholars whom we interviewed for *America in Perspective*. Their insights make this course truly unique.

America in Perspective surveys United States history since 1877 in twenty-six lessons. In each lesson, we try to connect you with ordinary people who lived in earlier times. In addition, each video program uses location footage to remind us that we all encounter the past in our daily lives and in our contemporary communities.

In summary, I want you to think about the American people, past and present, and to consider the relationship of the United States with the rest of the world. Our personal lives, our nation, and our world demand that we analyze, evaluate, and make reasoned judgments about people, leaders, positions, and issues. Our future depends on the prudent application of our knowledge. Through this course of study, it is my hope and expectation that all of us can more thoughtfully put America in perspective.

—Kenneth G. Alfors

About the Author

Dr. Kenneth G. Alfors is a teacher, writer, and historian. He received the Dallas County Community College District's Outstanding Teacher Award in 1983. He was the Content Specialist for *America: The Second Century*, an award-winning telecourse used around the country since 1980. He received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Creighton University and his M.Ph. and Ph.D. degrees from The George Washington University.

A Final Note

With careful and thoughtful application of your time and energy to the material presented in this course, you should have a rewarding experience in the broadest sense of that term. I, along with other members of the production team, have put forth our best efforts to create a quality course. However, my experience teaches me that any course can be improved, so I encourage you to share any ideas about it with me. Please send your comments to Kenneth G. Alfors, R. Jan LeCroy Center for Educational Telecommunications, 9596 Walnut Street, Dallas, TX 75243-2112.

Telecourse Organization

America in Perspective is designed as a comprehensive learning package consisting of three elements: Telecourse Guide, Textbooks, and Video Programs.

TELECOURSE GUIDE

The telecourse guide for this course is:

Alfers, Kenneth. *Telecourse Guide for America in Perspective*, 3rd edition. Addison Wesley Longman, 1998.

The telecourse guide acts as your daily instructor. If you follow the Study Guidelines carefully, you should successfully accomplish all the requirements for this course. (See the section entitled, "Study Guidelines.")

TEXTBOOKS

In addition to the Telecourse guide, there are two books required for this course:

Text: Nash, Jeffrey, et. al., *The American People, Volume II: Since 1865*, 4th edition. Addison Wesley Longman, 1998.

As the title suggests, this text emphasizes the people who have created the nation and the society in which we live. In addition, the authors incorporate the latest scholarship and provide fresh interpretations of the American past.

Reader: Alfers, Pool, and Mugleston, *Perspectives on America: Volume II: Readings in United States History Since 1877*. American Heritage Custom Publishing, 1997.

This collection of articles, provide opportunities to explore specific topics in more depth.

The specific reading assignment appears at the beginning of each lesson in the Telecourse Guide. Be sure to read this material before viewing the video program.

VIDEO PROGRAMS

The video program series for this telecourse is:

America in Perspective.

Each video program is correlated with the Telecourse guide and the lesson assignment for that lesson. Be sure to read the Video Focus Points in the Telecourse guide before you watch the program. The video programs are presented in a documentary format and are designed to bring analysis and perspective to the issues being discussed. Watch them closely.

If the programs are broadcast more than once in your area, or if video or audio tapes are available at your college, you might find it helpful to watch the video programs more than once or to listen to an audio tape for review. Since examination questions will be taken from the video programs as well as from the reading, careful attention to both is vital to your success.

Study Guidelines

Follow these guidelines as you study the material presented in each lesson:

1. LESSON ASSIGNMENT—

Review the Lesson Assignment in order to schedule your time appropriately. Pay careful attention; the titles and numbers of the textbook chapter, the telecourse guide lesson, and the video program may be different from one another.

2. OVERVIEW—

Read the Overview for an introduction to the lesson material.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES—

Review the Learning Objectives and pay particular attention to the lesson material that relates to them.

4. TEXT FOCUS POINTS—

To get the most from your reading, review the Text Focus Points, then read the assignment. You may want to write responses or notes to reinforce what you have learned.

5. READER FOCUS POINTS—

To get the most from your reading, review the Reader Focus Points then read the assignment. After completing the assignment, write responses and/or notes to reinforce what you have learned.

6. VIDEO FOCUS POINTS—

To get the most from the video segment of the lesson, review the Video Focus Points, then watch the video. You may want to write responses or notes to reinforce what you have learned.

7. ENRICHMENT IDEAS—

The Enrichment Ideas are not required unless your instructor assigns them. They are offered as suggestions to help you learn more about the material presented in this lesson.

8. SUGGESTED READINGS—

The Suggested Readings are designed to encourage you to go beyond the elements required in the course.

9. PRACTICE TEST—

To help you evaluate your understanding of the lesson, turn to Appendix B and complete the Practice Test for the lesson. The Practice Test contains multiple-choice and essay questions, followed by a Feedback Report with correct answers and references.

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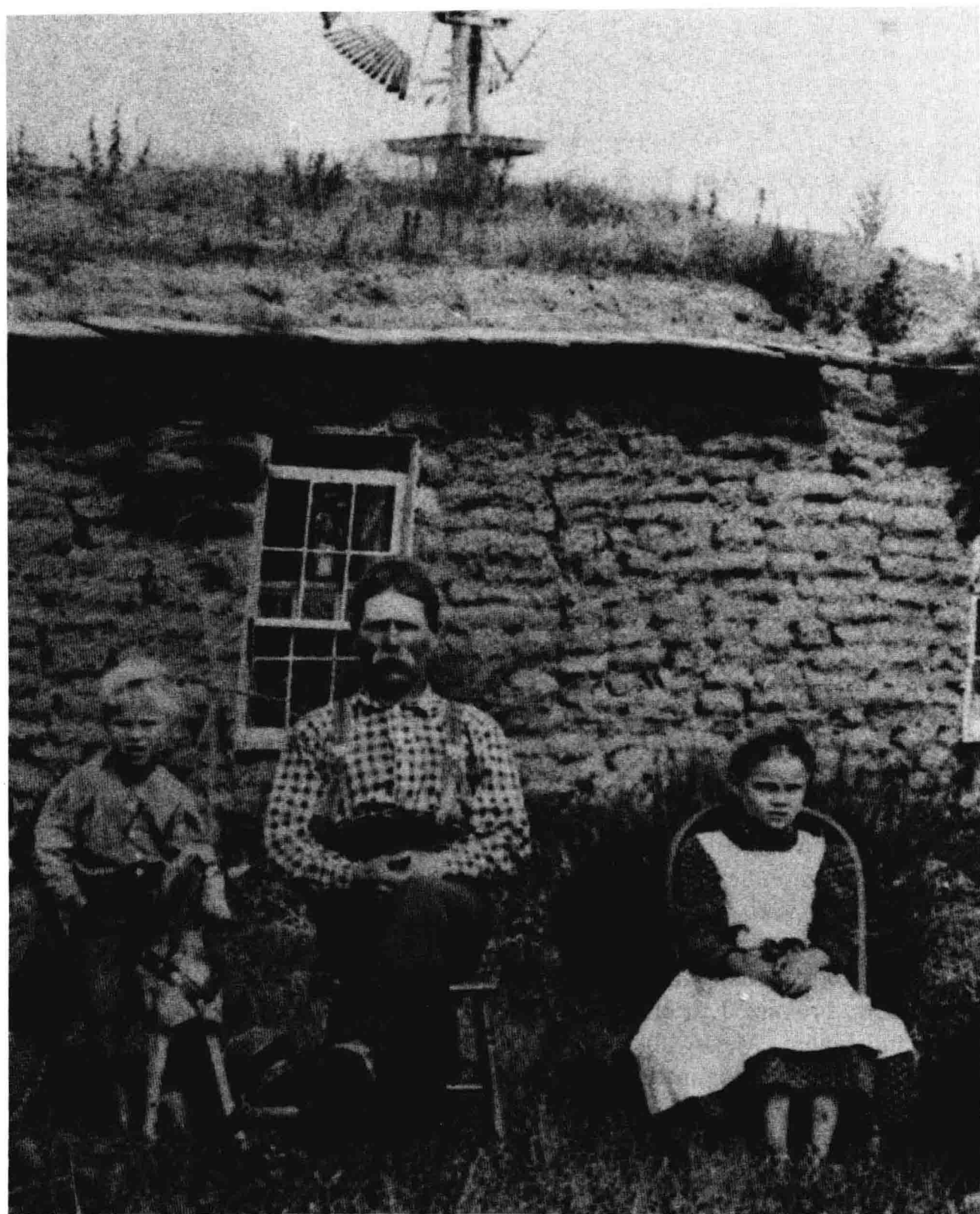
Unit One:

An Industrializing People

1877-1900

1. The Closing of the Frontier
2. The Rise of Big Business
3. Labor's Struggle
4. The Huddled Masses
5. The American Dream Deferred
6. The Populist Challenge
7. War and Empire

By 1877, the turmoil of the Civil War and Reconstruction was over for most Americans. People now became more absorbed in the on-going transformation of the United States into an industrial nation. The process of closing the last frontier satisfied neither the American Indians nor the settlers who took their place. Meanwhile, industrialization, urbanization, and immigration changed America forever. People shared the joys of daily life and coped with their hardships. Minorities, particularly American Indians and African Americans, seemed almost helpless as their dreams were deferred. Those better able to protest against their plight, laborers and farmers, organized to challenge the power of the political and economic establishment. Meanwhile, by the late 1890s, the industrial nation stretched its influence into the international arena as never before. The nation and the world would never again be the same.



Lesson 1

The Closing of the Frontier

LESSON ASSIGNMENTS

Review the following assignments in order to schedule your time appropriately. Pay careful attention; the titles and numbers of the textbook chapter, the telecourse guide lesson, and the video program may be different from one another.

Text: Nash et al., *The American People, Volume Two: Since 1865*
Part IV Introduction, pp. 573-575; and
Chapter 17, "The Realities of Rural America," pp. 576-596.

Video: "The Closing of the Frontier,"
from the series, *America in Perspective*.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson we want to examine the myths and the realities of the non-Indian settlement of the "last frontier." Most of the non-Indians who moved into the Great Plains area in the late nineteenth century had visions of adventure, opportunity, and perhaps even wealth. For many, the realities of life on the plains were quite disillusioning. Meanwhile, the Plains Indians viewed this frontier settlement from a vastly different perspective. Their way of life was being threatened, and many of their hopes and dreams were being shattered. In some ways this clash of cultures, which had gone on for centuries, was coming to an end that left both groups dissatisfied and desperate.

At the close of the Civil War, there still existed a vast reservoir of land untapped by non-Indian settlers. The expanse of plains, mountains, and desert between the Missouri River and California lay ready for development. Within a single generation, almost all the land was occupied. The United States Census Report of 1890 summed up a significant turning point in American history when it

stated that “the unsettled area had been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line.”

Miners and range cattle ranchers generally preceded farmers into the “last frontier,” but the farmers became more permanent settlers. Lured by a generous federal land policy and enticing railroad promotions, farmers moved into an area previously thought not to be conducive to agriculture. They hoped that use of new technology, such as windmills, steel plows, barbed wire, and ultimately all sorts of farm machinery, would help them perpetuate the “myth of the happy yeoman.” This concept held that the farmer, or yeoman, was an exceptional human being. Working close to nature, the farmer had a special calling and was the center of all enterprise. The farmer was thought to be hard working, dependable, scrupulously honest, and satisfied with life. Life on the plains, and the fact that farming in general was becoming more of a business, challenged the “happy yeoman” ideal.

Meanwhile, the American Indians who lived in the area being “settled” by non-Indians tried to maintain their territory and their identity. Long unfairly stereotyped as “merciless Indian savages” by those desiring their land, their choices were the same as they had been for centuries: resistance or accommodation. Even though Indian resistance was doomed to fail, we can understand why some Indians made that choice. By 1890 the era of Indian “wars” was over. Years earlier, in 1877, Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé had given eloquent expression to the plight of the Indians in the late nineteenth century: “Hear me my chiefs, I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.”

So, by the 1890s the centuries-long process of settling the frontier had come to an end. Life on the agricultural frontier was difficult, yet some survived and established homesteads which were passed down for generations. Others, who had looked to the frontier for freedom and opportunities, began to look elsewhere. As farming became more of a business, the ideal of the “happy yeoman” became even harder to achieve. American Indians could find little consolation, for their situation seemed almost totally depressing. Their lives would never be the same, and they and the rest of society have been adjusting ever since. For many farmers and most Indians, the future looked bleak in 1890. America was well on its way to becoming a nation of factories and cities

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Goal—The purpose of “The Closing of the Frontier” is to increase our understanding of the reasons for the settlement of the last frontier and the realities of life on the frontier for both the non-Indian settlers and the American Indians already in the area.

Objectives—Upon completing this lesson, you should be able to:

1. Describe the myth and reality regarding farming in the late nineteenth century.
2. Describe and explain the reasons for the relatively rapid settlement of the Great Plains between 1865 and 1890.
3. Discuss the characteristics of cattle ranching.
4. Examine the realities of life on the California frontier.
5. Examine the results of the cultural and military conflict between American Indians and non-Indians during the late nineteenth century.

TEXT FOCUS POINTS

The following questions are designed to help you get the most from your reading. Review them before you do your reading. After completing the assignment, write responses and/or notes to reinforce what you have learned.

Text: Nash et al., *The American People*, Part IV Introduction, pp. 573-575; and Chapter 17, pp. 576-596.

1. What was the “rural myth?” Describe the reality of farming.
2. How and why did farming become a business in the late nineteenth century?
3. How did falling prices for farm products affect farming operations?
4. What factors encouraged farmers to settle the plains in the late nineteenth century? Which immigrant groups were most likely to settle on the plains? What was life like on the plains?
5. What factors explain the rise of the cattle frontier? How and why did cattle ranchers have to adjust by the late nineteenth century?