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The impact of US expansionism on Native American culture from 1865-1900

During the 19th century the United States federal government acquired vast land in the west of the Mississippi River. The result of this acquisition was an extensive migration to the west, known as Westward Expansion. This expansion affected American society in a significant manner. This essay will analyze the effects of US expansionism on Native American culture from 1865-1900.

Farmers in the old west in America heard about the Allegheny Mountains in Pennsylvania. They were optimistic about the opportunities in the New West. The federal government also encouraged these farmers to move towards the west. Thus, thousands of went to west ton pursue a new life in the West. Before this migration in the mid of the nineteenth century, the land of the Mississippi was mainly uncharted. Early explorers who visited these lands before the mid-nineteenth century also confirmed about the territory that it was as an arid wasteland (Shi and Tindall).

However, when the Federal government started offering different incentives to farmers to take the challenge of grasping these bumpy lands, they started moving. Government-aided them on their trip and bearded the cost of moving families. The government changed its focus towards commercial farming in the West due to the economic Panic of 1837. Thus, there came the Dawes Act in 1887 and required each Native American to get some land in the West.

Consequently, the main reason for migration was economic but there were also some philosophical and cultural reasons. Americans had a strong belief in Manifest Destiny. They consider it their duty to spread in the world and advance the lives of the native populations. Moreover, during the first half of the 19th century, the debate about the continuation of slavery or abolishing it grew intense (Billings). This also served as a major factor in the migration towards the West.

This migration has wedged American society in numerous ways. People were migrating to the west of the Mississippi River for prospecting gold and silver prospecting as well as for the development of land for agriculture and industry. Thus, one of the major impacts of migration was the establishment of American industries. After the migration of American to West, there arose the need for products and merchandise to survive. As a result, there was an establishment of different industries. Additionally, opportunities for gold also resulted in massive wealth in society (Shi and Tindall). The California Gold Rush of 1849 also caused people from all over the world to come to this region. These industries were further supported by the transport system such as the building of the National Road.

Also, the migrations also resulted in the population and cultural expansion. US territories stretched to the Pacific Ocean.  People after migration shared civilized unity. These people were given free land as well as jobs were offered to them. The arid western part also required the establishment of Massive irrigation projects to supply water to lands (Shi and Tindall). There started damming and diverting rivers as well as the use of different farming techniques. All these strategies resulted in devastations of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s.

The migration also impacted American society negatively. During the migration, the military killed a great number of natives (Billings). Consequently, treaties were also made to mediate any cultural differences. The results of the development of railroads were also negative. The development not only used a lot of lands but it also used Chinese salves. Besides, the government did not treat Native American tribes as autonomous nations. They started confining them to different reservations to divide them into states. This put the cultural identity of these Native American at stake.

Works cited

Billings, Dwight B. *Planters and the Making of a" New South": Class, Politics, and Development in North Carolina, 1865-1900*. UNC Press Books, 2017.

Shi, David E., and George Brown Tindall. *America: A Narrative History*. WW Norton & Company, 2016.