



AMERICA'S FRONTIER WEST

“Distance and inadequate training in agricultural pursuits closed the frontier to eastern workingmen; instead America was settled by successive waves of farmers who were already skilled in wrestling a living from the soil. Farming, even before the day of mechanization, was a highly technical profession; frontiering required a knowledge of even more specialized techniques. Clearing the land, building a home, fencing fields, solving the problem of defense, and planting crops on virgin soil all demanded experience few workingmen could boast. . . . Romantic characters took part [in frontier migration] . . . trappers and leatherclad ‘Mountain Men,’ starry-eyed prospectors and hard-riding cowboys, badmen and vigilantes. But the true hero of the tale was the hard-working farmer who, ax in hand, marched ever westward until the boundaries of his nation touched the Pacific.”

Ray Allen Billington (historian), *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 1949

“The rapid expansion of wagework in the United States . . . and the most intensive phase of the exploitation and settlement of the western third of the continent were roughly contemporaneous processes that occurred during a 70-year interval [beginning in 1848]. Yet, at first glance, the terms ‘frontier’ and ‘wagework’ seem to describe mutually exclusive conditions. . . . In actuality, . . . one such conjunction [of these terms] was the wageworkers’ frontier. . . . The wageworkers’ frontier . . . was foremost a predominantly male community of manual labor dependent upon others for wages in the extractive industries of the sparsely settled Rocky Mountain and Pacific regions of the United States. . . . It also represented a zone of extremely rapid transition from wilderness to industrial, post-frontier society. . . . The wageworkers’ frontier was a fragile entity forever at the mercy of the outside world’s pricing of its basic [export] commodities. . . . All [commodities] were shipped out of the west because the Rocky Mountain and Pacific regions contained too few people . . . to constitute a viable home market. Settlements on the wageworkers’ frontier tended to resemble factory towns in Pennsylvania or Massachusetts.”

Carlos A. Schwantes (historian), “The Concept of the Wageworkers’ Frontier,” 1987

1. Using the excerpts above and your knowledge of United States history, answer (a), (b), and (c).
 - a) Briefly describe ONE major difference between historical interpretations of Billington and Schwantes regarding the American West.
 - b) Briefly explain how ONE specific event or development during the period 1848 to 1898 that is not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support the argument offered by Billington.
 - c) Briefly explain how ONE specific event or development during the period 1848 to 1898 that is not explicitly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support the argument offered by Schwantes.

Write your response to SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION 1 on this page within the box. Use BLUE or BLACK pen only.

Q1

End of response area for Q1.