



# The West

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The Impact of the Transcontinental  
Railroad System



# The West- Economic Development

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**Explain the causes and effects of the settlement of the West from 1877 to 1898.**

Following the Civil War, government subsidies for transportation and communication systems helped open new markets in North America.

The building of transcontinental railroads, the discovery of mineral resources, and government policies promoted economic growth and created new communities and centers of commercial activity.

Improvements in mechanization helped agricultural production increase substantially and contributed to declines in food prices.

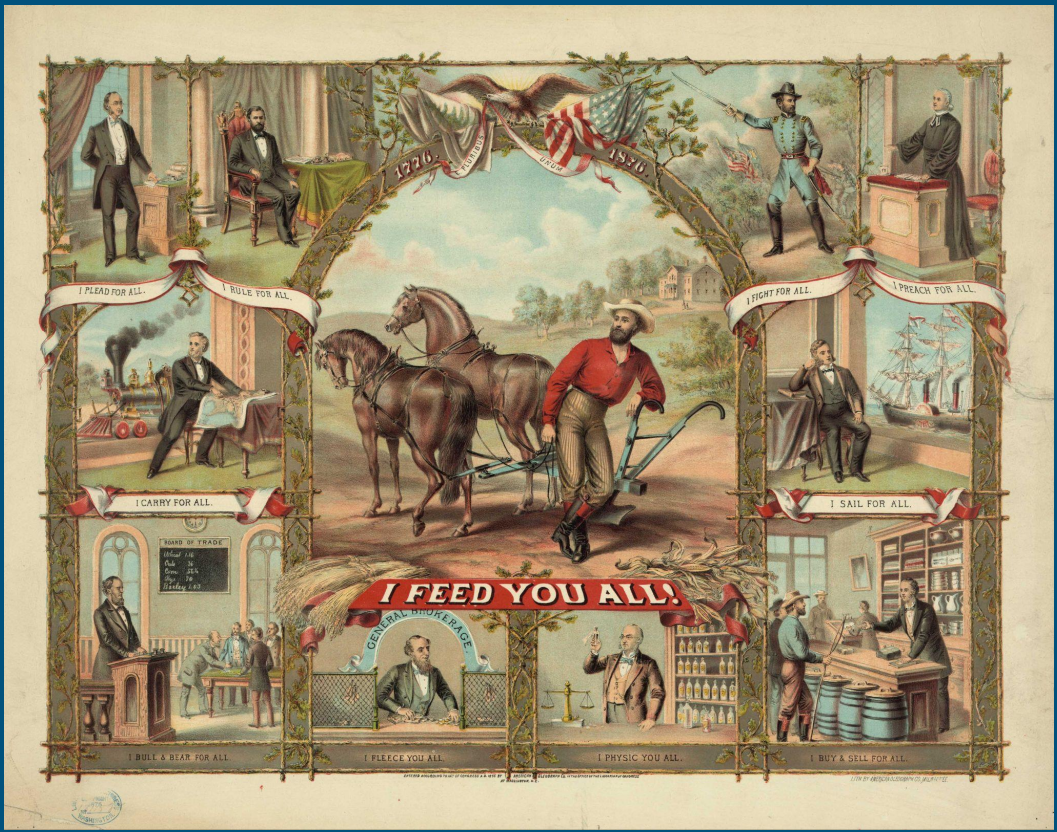
Many farmers responded to the increasing consolidation in agricultural markets and their dependence on the evolving railroad system by creating local and regional cooperative organizations.

# Historical Image Analysis

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## OPTIC

- Use OPTIC to analyze the two images from this lesson. OPTIC stands for O-overview, P-parts, T-title, I-interrelationships, and C-conclusion.
- What do the two images tell us about the importance of the development of the Transcontinental Railroad system and how farmers viewed their place in American society during the Gilded Age?



A Grange Poster- 1873

## Railroads of the Transcontinental Era 1865-1900



Map of Transcontinental Railroads- 1865-1900

# Thought Questions

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- a. What led to the development of the Transcontinental Railroad system?
- b. How did the development of the Transcontinental Railroad system influence the creation of a more dynamic national market economy?
- c. Which two acts from the federal government would accelerate the economic development of the American West?
- d. Which two innovations would have a tremendous impact on the development of the meat industry in America?
- e. How did farmers try to deal with the hardships that were brought about by the Panic of 1873 and falling crop prices?