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## A Study on the Discovery of America

During the late 19th Century after the end of the Reconstruction Era many citizens of the United States began to explore the frontier of the country and moved west in large numbers. This was predominately caused by the need for resources for growing industry and because of seemingly promising chances of economic prosperity in the West. Also many of the freemen (former slaves) from the civil war were in search of land, prosperity, and less social restrictions from resentful southerners still present in the south. Although more accurately called the resettlement of the west due to area previously being settled by Native Americans and Hispanics; it was the first major migration of Americans from the East coast to the West. This movement to the west during the late 19th century was relived through the life of Marbel Barbee Lee in her book titled Cripple Creek Days. The book situates itself in the authors life as a little girl in the family of western settlers. Her father, Jonce, an ex confederate soldier and prospector moved west to Utah after the south lost the war. Jonce later married a woman, Kitty, and started a family in Silver Reef, Utah. After a tragic loss in the family of the younger daughter of two the couple had Jonce decides the move to Cripple Creek a mining camp south of Colorado Springs, Colorado; while sending Kitty and Marbel to stay with family in Kansas while he gets situated in Cripple Creek. Thus, through the book there are many insights into the life of a westerner as the family reunites and lives in Cripple Creek the reader then sees many aspects as to which the development of Cripple Creek reflects the settlement of the west in the late 19th century.

One aspect of the book that reflects the westward movement in the late 19th century was most apparent was the town of Cripple Creek itself. A small settlement originally lacking any type of major buildings and housing most settlers lived in tents, as did the Lee family for some time at the beginning of the stay in Cripple Creek. Furthermore the town was settled as a mining town just South of Colorado Springs in hopes of becoming a major ore supplier, as did many small towns in that region during the westward settlement. Thus as the book is even read very far you can see how the book will begin to unfold in a common mining town of the west that with time will grow into a large city with not one tent in it.

Another aspect of the book that reflects the settlement of the west during this time was the mentality of Jonce the father. At many points in the book you get the feeling that the family is constantly thrilled and driven to be moving and be on the frontier despite the hard times through which the family endured. This was especially evident through Jonces work ethic. Although as Kitty later reveals in the book had connections in Mississippi to have a profitable business he would rather be on the frontier prospecting for valuable minerals waiting to strike rich on the Hill one day. This reflects the mentality of many settlers of the west. Many of them were hoping to strike rich through the Gold rushes or through the Homestead Act in producing crops. But as many found it was very rare to strike rich although it did happen many settlers became worse off as they moved west. Thus we can see that Jonces mentality resembled that of many western settlers due to his constant drive to striking rich on the Hill.

But most importantly as the book progresses you can directly see the aspects of western settlement through the changes Cripple Creek undergoes as it grows in age. One major aspect in the cities development that was the most major aspect of the western settlement was arrival of a railroad system (Rio Grande) in Cripple Creek. This was an essential part to the growth of

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the economy during the settlement of the west. The railroads caused many changes on the city to be. It allowed for the city to become physically connected with markets in other cities and states so that goods could be sold for more in places where the demand was higher for that good. As seen when Jonce was talking of going places to sell his ore he found as he could get more for the ore in other towns that were connected by the railroad. Also goods and supplies were then sent to Cripple Creek more efficiently and thus most likely lowered the costs of the goods needed by the towns settlers. Also the Rio Grande allowed for the town to have important people such as future President Theodore Roosevelt to visit Cripple Creek and thus make the town more politically connected. Thus as the town grew it was mainly with the aid of the Rail Roads which helped with the prices of the towns main source of wealth ore and maintain steady resource supplies to the town.

Also as the book is examined for small details into its depiction of the westward settlement one part of the book was very specific into the mentality of the settlers towards foreigners. Although surprisingly the book had no mention of Native Americans and their interactions with settlers, which was a big aspect of the settlement to the west, it did mention the mentality of the people of Cripple Creek towards Asians, Hispanics, and Italians. As Marbel wrote, The first act was to run all the dagoes, bohunks, hunkies as well as chinks out of town (31). This was the mentality of many western settlers who resented the fact of foreigners coming to small mining towns and willing to work for lower wages than settlers from the east. This was also apparent with the Chinese working for free on the Rail Roads. Thus this would take away jobs from the American people and give them to the people of foreign descent. As a result of this mind set the settlers had many mining towns especially in the Pikes Peak area miners devised mining codes, which often discriminated against those of foreign descent forbidding them from working in the mines. Thus, this showed the reader another aspect of the settlement of the west.

Lastly the last aspect of the settlement of the west that was mentioned in the book Cripple Creek Days that was important was the tie it had to the mythical story of Buffalo Bill. Although the book lacked the situation between Indians and settlers and the slaughtering of the Buffalo on the western plains it still exemplified the legend to some extent. The book showed how important the Railroads were in the development of the city like how important the railroads were for Buffalo Bills job in supplying the railroads with Buffalo to eat. Thus, in both situations the railroads came to provide economic opportunity in some fashion. Also the mentality of many people in the book that wanted to strike rich and become the next millionaires were all driven by this almost propaganda like idea that was later portrayed in Wild West movies inspired by Buffalo Bills legend. So although it was directly seen that this legend was in fact part of the book it was in terms of how the people no matter for what reasons moved west for hopes of bettering there lives in some fashion. If it be to hunt Buffalo and hunt Indians or be it strike rich in the mines.