



"The Fall of the Cowboy"

Frederic Remington painted "The Fall of the Cowboy" in 1895. It is now hanging at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. When you look at the oil painting, you see two cowboys. One of them is closing a wooden gate, but the rest of the fence is made of barbed wire. The atmosphere of the painting is sad. The painting is showing the end of an era -- the end of the open range and the life of the cowboy. The open range was being fenced in by barbed wire, thus preventing cattle from grazing on unfenced land. Two forces which contributed to the end of the free range, but which are not seen in this painting, were the railroad and the homesteader. The painting serves as an illustration of Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis on the closing of the frontier. Remington was born in 1861 and died in 1909. He created over 2,700 prints, paintings, and drawings and over 20 bronze sculptures of the American West. He was an illustrator for magazines including "Century," "Scribner's," "Outing Magazine," and "Harper's Monthly." This painting was published in "Harper's Monthly" because Remington had ideas for several paintings depicting the closing of the frontier and he asked Owen Wister to write an accompanying article.

Using the image and your knowledge of geography, answer the following questions:

WorldView Software: World Geography

ART: Question 1

What are the two cowboys doing in the painting?

Question 2

How does the artist set the mood of the painting?

Question 3

Explain how the coming of the railroad and the homesteader led to the demise of the traditional cowboy.

Question 4

Why did ranchers and farmers fence in their land?