



General Certificate of Secondary Education
Specimen for June 2015 examinations

History (Specification A)

91402A

Unit 2

Option A: The American West, 1840–1895

Sources Booklet

Sources A to E for use in answering Question 1

Source F for use in answering Question 2

Source G for use in answering Question 3

A view of life on the Plains

Source A An early settler's home

This painting was done in 1867 by Fanny Palmer. Fanny Palmer travelled widely on the Plains. Her paintings were popular in the East and were reproduced in magazines.



Source B A letter written by Paul Hansen, who had settled in Minnesota on the Great Plains. It was published in a Norwegian newspaper in August 1869.

All who have seen this land say it offers so many advantages for European farmers that immigrants are likely to flood here within the next year. The soil is fertile. Railroads are to run through the middle of the valley. In the summer the heat may be great but the atmosphere is always fresh. In the winter time the snow is usually two or three feet deep and lies in a solid mass over the whole prairie.

A different view of life on the Plains**Source C**

A settler's home, 1885

**Source D**

In 1878 Dr Cass G Barns and his wife arrived in Nebraska. He described his house, as follows.

'We had a good house by June but the joints between the sods needed new fine clay occasionally to keep the rainwater from trickling through. When it rained the roof leaked dirty water onto our bed and I would wake up with water running through my hair. It was not completely the fault of the sod house that contagious diseases were common. The open dug well, the outdoor toilet (or no toilet at all) shared the blame with a lack of ventilation and overcrowding. The earth floor was not possible to scrub or disinfect.'

Source E A view of the Homesteader's life, 1887

This cartoon, entitled 'A farmer's life is not a happy one' or 'The woes of Western Agriculture' was published in *The Puck Magazine*. This magazine began in 1876 and was very successful in the 1880s, selling 80000 copies a week. The magazine tackled social and political issues.



Source F An account of the temptations in Virginia City, Nevada in the 1860s

Gold was everywhere and the gamblers, traders and women who had come with the miners did anything to obtain it. Nearly every third cabin was a saloon where vile whiskey was bought and sold for fifty cents in gold. Many saloons had gambling tables.

Adapted from NP Langford, *Vigilante Days*, 1983

Source G An account of Mormon customs from a letter written by a non-Mormon woman from Nauvoo in September, 1843

A Mormon man returned from England bringing with him a wife and child, although he had left a wife and family here when he went away. I am told that his first wife is happy. Her husband and his Mormon friends have persuaded her that polygamy is taught in the bible – Abraham and all the old prophets had several wives. If it was right for them then it was right for the Mormons.

END OF SOURCES

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