The Promised Land

Chapter 15
The Unassigned Lands

- Not used by the Indian tribes
- Sometimes used for railroad or feeding cattle
- People wanted to move into that land.
- Homestead Act: ¼ section or 160 acres if you live on it and improve it for five years
The Boomers

- Freed slaves thought that land would be used to provide homes but the government said it’s not public land.
- Charles C. Carpenter: said he would lead a group into the “promised land”, threatened him with cavalry patrols, imprisonment
- Boomers!: they “boomed” about opening the land to non-Indian settlement to newspapers across the nation
- David L. Payne: “Prince of Boomers”, organized Oklahoma Colony
Invading the Land

• Direct invasion of Indian Territory in spring of 1880.
• Set up imaginary city, planned it out
• Cycle of invasion, expulsion, re-invasion
The Commercial Imperative

- The Railroad companies wanted the land opened too because it would increase their business.
- Retail merchants also wanted the land opened to provide more business because the new settlers would need all kinds of goods.
Opening the Territory

- Midwestern Congressmen were listening to the demands and pushed for legislation.
- 1889: an amendment to the Indian Appropriations Act paid Creeks and Seminoles for the Unassigned Lands
- President Benjamin Harrison opens the land at high noon on April 22, 1889.
Land Runs and Other Openings

- This first land run started the process for all Indian land to be opened to settlers.
- Lotteries were another method for opening land instead of a run or race.
Life in the Territory

- It was difficult and required a lot of hard work such as clearing the land, beginning the crops, building fences, prepare homes and barns.
- Soddies: homes built of thick blocks of grass and dirt
Surviving without crops the first year was difficult. Some openings were too late in the year to plant. The turnip was the staple food, given as gifts because there was nothing else.

 Churches, schools (including colleges) and hospitals, opened right away. Many are still here today.
The Townspeople’s Frontier

- Some people chose a town site instead of the 160 acres.
- Townspeople had to plat the town---mark off its streets and alleys and designate its lots.
- Having a railroad was extremely important.