



0. WESTERN TOWNS - Story Preface

1. THE AMERICAN WILDERNESS

2. SCENES OF UNSPOILED BEAUTY

3. FREE LAND!

4. WAGON TRAINS GO WEST

5. TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

6. THE RAILROAD IS FINISHED

7. TRAINS GO WEST

8. PEOPLE GO WEST

9. WESTERN TOWNS

10. THE PRICE of FREE LAND

People who settled on land in the Great Plains sometimes used sod to build their homesteads. This image depicts such a sod house. The image is online via the University of Tampere, in Finland.

Many towns, some with large populations today, had inauspicious beginnings as westward migration continued:

- [Santa Fe](#), New Mexico (1866).
- [Virginia City](#), Nevada (1867-68).
- [Cheyenne](#), Wyoming, on the Oregon Trail (1876).
- [Deadwood](#), a South Dakota Territory gold rush town, in 1876.
- Tucson (the scene of a [deadly tragedy](#) in which Arizona's chief federal judge, [John M. Roll](#), was killed in 2011) still had wide-open spaces [in 1880](#). (All the victims of that Tucson shooting were [eulogized by President Obama](#).)
- [Oklahoma City](#) (Indian Territory), by 1889, had U.S. government buildings, a railroad station, a water tank, and soldiers from the 13th Infantry guarding lumber and an uncompleted cemetery.
- [Midland](#), Texas experienced severe sandstorms like the one which obscured windmills and houses on February 20, 1894.
- In 1895, children studied in a [sod schoolhouse](#) in Woods County (Oklahoma Territory).
- [Lamon's Log Cabin](#) was the first one built in Yosemite Valley (California Territory) in 1895.
- The University of Oklahoma got its start, in Norman, as a [territorial university](#) (1897-98).
- [Flagstaff](#) (Arizona Territory) had a post office as well as other buildings by 1899.
- Children [gathered fruit](#) from Oklahoma [family farms](#) in 1900.

- Oil was discovered in Cleveland (Oklahoma Territory) in 1904. A year later, the town had been transformed into a city of oil derricks.
- The mountain valleys of Idaho sprouted tent towns as westward movement continued in 1909.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WESTERN-TOWNS-Go-West-U.S.-Westward-Expansion>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WESTERN-TOWNS-Go-West-U.S.-Westward-Expansion>

Media Stream

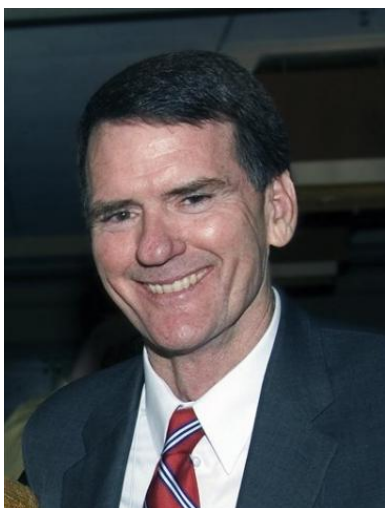


Tucson in 1880 - Carleton E. Watkins

Cropped image of photograph by Carleton W. Watkins, online courtesy Arizona Historical Society - AHS Photo Number 18233.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tucson-in-1880-Carleton-E.-Watkins>



Judge John Roll - Victim of Tucson Shooting

Image of Judge John McCarthy Roll, courtesy U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Quoted biography of Judge Roll, online courtesy [Federal Judiciary Center](#).

Source for quotations from Judge Roll's November 24, 2010 letter - [Arizona Daily Star](#).

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WESTERN TOWNS

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President Obama - Tucson Memorial Speech

Video of President Obama's speech, at the University of Arizona - Tucson Campus - January 12, 2011. Video and transcript online, courtesy the White House.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/President-Obama-Tucson-Memorial-Speech>