Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date \_\_ \_ \_ Period:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Part I.** [**The Forgotten Black Cowboys, BBC Documentary**](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p016tnfw)

**While listening to the story, list 5 ideas that you did not previously know. Prepare to discuss as a class.**

**Part II. Turner’s Thesis: On the American Frontier**

Historian **Frederick Jackson Turner** developed a thesis on the American Frontier and American national character. All of his ideas are contained in the essay “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” which he presented as a lecture in Chicago in 1893. In 1890, the national Census declared that there was **no longer a discernible frontier** – **a line of demarcation dividing “civilization” from “savagery.”** In other words, the **United States was conquered and Manifest Destiny was fully obtained.** This information from the census bureau encouraged Turner to think about the role of the frontier in American history and culture. In essence, Turner’s thesis is that American character was developed *because of* our westward frontier.

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| **Thesis** | **Summary** | **Turner Quote** |
| The Frontier | The frontier thesis is the assertion that the American character, including traits such as democracy and materialism, comes from the frontier experience. | “The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession (shrinking as more people claim land), and the advance of American settlement, explain American development.” |
| The Safety Valve | The safety valve thesis is the assertion that the frontier, as a place of opportunity and escape, defused (lessened) social discontent in America. | “So long as free land exists, the opportunity for a competency exists, and economic power secures political power.” |

“Now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history,” Turner questioned how American culture and history would develop and whether Americans would keep “that coarseness [toughness] and strength combined with acuteness [intensity] and acquisitiveness [drive]. . . that dominant individualism” bred by expansion now that the frontier was closed.

**Source:** Frederick Jackson Turner, The Significance of the Frontier in American History

1. ***According to Turner, what was the most important factor in the development of American history?***
2. ***Without a “frontier,” what did Turner begin to question?***
3. ***What do you believe is the “next frontier” to be explored after the West?***

**Part III Closing the Frontier**

**Instructions:** Begin by reading the material from the web site listed below. Then, take jot notes on the significant events, individuals, and themes in the history that is covered in each of the subtopics on the left side of the chart. **Source:** [**http://www.ushistory.org/us/40.asp**](http://www.ushistory.org/us/40.asp)

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| **Subtopic** | **Significant Events, Individuals, and Themes** |
| **Closing the Frontier** |  |
| **The Massacre at Sand Creek** |  |
| **Custer’s Last Stand** |  |
| **The End of Resistance** |  |
| **Life on the Reservations** |  |
| **The Wounded Knee Massacre** |  |