

Law and order in the American west

1. What can you learn from this source about the Mormon settlement at Salt Lake City?

From source A, I have learnt a lot about how Mormons settled in the Salt Lake City. I can see in the picture that they planned out to build houses, schools, shops and farms in a good structure, instead of building them anywhere. The roads were well built and made equally between each street as you can see from the picture. There are a few great big buildings at the front of the picture which suggests that they were organised. Industrial factory which probably manufactured the raw materials like metal and wood for the housing, there are also other big buildings that look like schools and shops, this tells us that the children were not just wandering around the street causing complete chaos or mischief but were educated by going to school and the adults were employed in factories or shops. The farming land shows that they were total self-sufficient and made their own food. Overall the engraving of the Salt Lake City looks peaceful and non-violent town.

2. Use this source and your own knowledge to explain why there were difficulties such as those described here in living in early mining towns.

From source B, I have learnt that there were a lot of difficulties living in early mining towns. It tells us people were robbed and guns were in existence and this caused a problem because everyone carried 'a trusty rifle, protect his own'. This tells us there was 'no safety', that guns were available and no official federal law enforcement. The town people held a primitive code of honour to solve things themselves and even they outnumbered the criminals and took law into their own hands, because of different ethnic groups they did not trust each other and this led to racial attacks. The federal government did not train sheriffs to do their jobs properly, which led to sheriffs such as Henry Plummer to organise his own gang which were known as the 'Roughs.' He was not trustworthy and made crimes take place instead of stopping them. The Roughs had an advantage thanks to their leader Henry Plummer who was supposed to protect the innocent citizens but they rebelled against him and set up their own group, the Vigilantes to protect themselves. They hanged the villain, Henry Plummer without a court case.

3. Use this source and your own knowledge to explain what other problems there were in mining towns apart from law and order.

From source C, I have learnt that the miners built their own cabins to sleep in and do their own cooking. The cabins were made of wood beside the muddy earth soil and were not very comfortable. Diseases such as Typhoid could spread very easily because of the poor conditions in the cabins. There were a lot of miners when gold was found and this led to cramped towns. Other diseases spread, such as cholera, fevers, scurvy, malaria and chills. The easy way to get to gold on the surface of rivers, supplies were all used up. Big machines were needed to mine gold underground. Ordinary miners could not afford such machinery or tools so they had to work for

big companies in mining districts. The miners received an income of \$ 20 a day, which was not enough to buy what they needed because the merchants were charging 'sky-high prices' for the food like flours which was selling at \$11 per pound and New England ram at \$5 per pound. Mining equipment was also selling at 'sky-high prices'. Gambling and prostitution took all of their money because prostitutes charged up to \$400 per night. The main food of the miners was stewed beans and flag jacks which were eaten 21 times a week. This would have given the miners a heart burn or upset stomach. The miners needed treatments which were available such as Epsom, pills and salts, so again it was sold at 'sky-high prices'. The miners could drink excess whiskey while they were working because there were no health care service even doctors or medicinal help to advice them not to drink too much. But source C tells us that women cared for the sick miners.

4. How useful are sources D, E & F for finding out about problems of law and order in early western towns.

Source D is useful in telling us that gangs existed in early western towns. It shows that guns were available, as most people in the picture have one. The source shows that violence and murder occurred on the streets. Source D also show the image that there was no official law enforcement present when bank raid were committed. It is useful to tell us about types of crimes. But it is not useful because it was what an artist pictured a bank raid to be in Northfield, Minnesota in 1876 might have looked like, and he was not at the scene when a bank raid took place.

Source E suggests that there no official law enforcement in early western towns, as normal citizens took the law into their own hand and formed vigilante committees. It is apparent that the problems most have been serious, as hanging without a trial was used a deterrent. This source is both useful as it was actually written by the vigilantes and explains what they did. The source is not useful because it does not describe problems which caused vigilantes to act in this way.

Source F back ups the question that there were problems with law and order in early western towns, as there a lot of crime because all the jails were full and a police force was set up. The source is useful for telling us that settlers were organized against crime and the source also shows an organised system of law enforcement. but is not useful because it written by a journalist which may have exaggerated and a biased view. He may have probably done this to make the story bigger.

5. Use source B and D your own knowledge to explain the statement in source E

Source E tells us about vigilante and how they took the law into their own hands, and source B and D help to explain the reason behind the vigilantes. From source B it is obvious that they were criminals and crimes were committed, so law enforcement was needed. There was no safety for life or properties suppose that there was no official law Enforcement such police or sheriff. This meant that the residents used the primitive code honour

stepped in to make them take the law in their own hands own hands. Source B tells us that the criminals were organised. This would have meant that the citizens of the towns needed to form organised groups to oppose them. The fact that Bannack's own sheriff – Henry Plummer – was organising crime would have increased the need for vigilance committees, as the citizens would want to rid of their main crime organiser. Source D is obviously showing disorder in town in 1876. it indicates that there was lawlessness and no government help with law and order in the western towns. Examples of this Anarchy are the murders in the streets, the allowance of guns, and the general disruption of mining towns. The reason for the lawlessness in these early mining towns is that federal law has not yet reached them due the sheer vastness of the American west and the speed at which mining towns were erected. The main crimes that the miners were angry about were murder and claim jumping. The villains will steal plots of land already claimed by miners, potentially ruining their income. The miners set up miner's courts to deal with criminals and punish them accordingly, with a trial. for reasons such as too much violence, lying and intrigue, these mining courts could not cope with rough justice. The ordinary citizens became concerned and set up units called vigilance committees, and handled justice themselves. they would search out an indication in they would hold an instant trial to a criminal suspect, and having no alternative due to the extent of crime, to perform lynch law occurring. This would have resulted in a suspect villain hanging dead from a nearby tree, with note such source E, pinned on their chest as a warning to other criminals. The vigilantes had to resort to such brutal punishment in order to have any effect on justice, as previous, less violent attempts, such as miner's courts, had failed.

6. Source G blames the early settlers for the problems of lawless in early western towns. Use all the sources and your knowledge to explain whether you think this is fair comment.

Source G state that if the homesteaders had organised more peaceful, law abiding states, they would have been safe from the start .on balance from my opinion, the statement in source G is an unfair comment. This is shown by the weight of the evidence in the sources lying against the statement. There are more, stronger arguments against the comment, than for it.

Some of he sources argue that it was the homesteaders who made the western states unsafe, and that there were no other factors.

Source a seems to support the comment in source g. it is Proof that it is possible for settlers to create a law abiding, stable community in the early western towns. The engraving of claim organised Mormon settlement shows what could be archived by working together rather than thinking about money .yet it could be argued that the early settlers' soul interests were getting rich quick and revelling in "gold, whisky, and fights." According to journalist mark twain, they were the ultimate dregs of society and had little desire in law and order or harmonious community in the towns. They pent their money on extravagances such as prostitutes, gambling and alcohol, rather than improving the neighbourhood.

Source b shows the value and attitudes of early settlers, including the primitive code of honour, which meant that it was “your responsibility to settle things or your self”, supporting the quote, “life and property might have been safe”, and from source g .guns were easily accessible and extremely common.

These issues compared together. Were destined to result in violence. This attitude and the consequence were very selfish of the earlysettlers, as they were not prepared to collaborate as team. Another supporting issue of the statement I source g is the effect of racism in early western towns. Mobs of miners were more interested in driving Mexicans from their claims, harassing the Chinese and slaughtering Indians instead of putting effort in to combating crime.

Source e demonstrates that the early settlers went too far in attempting to deal with transgressions. They acted irresponsible by forming vigilant groups and performing appalling acts of murder and punishments, which they said was in the name of justice. “Lynch law” used, where the suspected criminals would b convicted and punished by groups, without a legal trial they were often murdered and hung from trees, as in source e , without substantial evidence ,trial or right to appeal. Arguably, the vigilantes made law and order worse in early western towns, as they committed crimes themselves. A governor of Idaho (source g) recommended that instead of dealing with criminals themselves, they should have invested in “public affairs” and elected honest men who would deal with villains, into power.

Other sources oppose the comment in source g, and imply that other, more important factors