8.95 Analyze how significant inventors and their inventions, including barbed wire, the six shooter, windmills, sod housing, and the steel plow changed life in the West. (C,E,H,P)

BARBED WIRE

As Americans moved westward to the new frontier and the cattle industry increased, the traditional fencing materials became scarce and expensive. Barbed wire, first invented in 1867 by Lucien B. Smith of Ohio, replaced these previous materials. In 1873 Joseph F. Glidden made modifications to barbed wire and is credited with the invention as we know it today. Barbed wire helped out the cattle rancher greatly by giving them a cheaper and easier way to contain cattle.

TABLE 1.1:

http://www.ideafinder.com/history/inventions/barbedwire.htm

Pictured Above: Barbed wire fencing

SIX SHOOTER

The six shooter was invented by Samuel Colt in 1836. The Colt revolver, a many pistols are known by, gets its name from its inventor. The pistol held 6 bullets in a revolver that would move after pulling the hammer back to full cock. This would allow the gun to be shot multiple times without reloading. This pistol was used in the Texas border conflicts and on both sides during the Civil War. Many cowboys and ranchers also used the six shooter.

WINDMILLS

Windmills have been around for a long time and date back until sixth to eighth centuries A.D. Windmills have been improved over time. Daniel Halladay is credited with inventing a windmill that could pull water from hundreds of feet below ground. Halladay’s factory is still in business today and is located in Illinois. Windmills were used by ranchers and farmers on the new western frontier. The first windmills were wooden.
As settlers moved westward there was not enough trees to build all the houses needed. On the prairie there were no trees, but there was a thick layer of grass, called sod, growing on the ground. The earlier settlers had moved to the areas with wooded rivers and streams. They were able to use the trees to build homes and fires. For the later settlers, lumber was too expensive to buy to build homes. Settlers would cut the sod in bricks and use them to construct houses. The sod would keep the houses cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

STEEL PLOW

The steel plow was invented by blacksmith John Deere in 1837. Most plows at the time were made of wood or iron. The heavy sod in the Great Plains was tough and many plows broke. The soil would also stick to the plows and farmers would continually have to clean the mud off of the blades. John Deere’s invention of the steel plow made farming much easier because it was much stronger and lighter than previous plows.

Pictured Above: John Deere’s steel plow. The shape and steel blade made turning the earth in the Great Plain’s soil much easier.