*Blazing Saddles* Notes: The First Five Minutes

Use these notes as a guide for your own observations throughout the film:

* Richard Pryor—black comedian who advocated for using the “N” word, and then later denounced its usage
* Title song: western tune, but about a black man (instead of a strong white male)
* Takes place during Reconstruction, just after the Civil War. Building trains—Transcontinental was the 1st Railroad, finished in 1869
* Chinese Exclusion Act🡪prevented Chinese immigrants from entering the US from 1882-1943
* Chinese man falling down represents the low public opinion of the Chinese during the 30 years preceding the act.
* Use of “Chink” and “Nigger” 🡪Blacks and Asians are on the same side of the train tracks, whites on the other
* Frank Sinatra Song🡪Whites considered “classy”, yet they don’t understand the reference
* Minorities trick white into singing “The Camp Down Ladies”
* Wide World of Sports🡪highlights the “game” this was to those in power
* Gay slur🡪Done on purpose? Or just thrown in as a cheap shot? Does it matter?
* Horses > Freed Blacks
* Bart is far more clever and eloquently spoken than the white men in charge
* Quicksand as a metaphor🡪Stuck in any situation
* “We are in trouble🡪he doesn’t care
* Save the cart, leave the men
* Bart🡪clever idea to escape the quicksand
* Willful ignorance of these two men in the quicksand could represent the willful ignorance of whites to the plight of the Black American
* “Tell them I said…OW!”🡪obliviousness, to the point of violence
* Sign on door🡪became attorney general because of assistance to governor, potentially sexual favors
* Painting of two married blacks facing away from Abraham Lincoln bust, American Flag, and whites in power
* Lamarr likes the quicksand: “Splendid!” Does he enjoy suffering, or is he ignorant?